



THE GRYPHON

The official newspaper of Leeds University

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Image: Robbie Cairns

Testing Where Students Draw the Line on Animal Experimentation

Leo Kim
Science Writer

Members of Animal Justice Project (AJP) gathered outside the Parkinson Steps on Tuesday 26th February in protest against the University of Leeds' use of animals in experiments. Wearing surgical masks and holding laptops showing emotive footage of animal experimentation, the protesters stood with placards asking students "where do you draw the line?"

Publicised as a 'Lifeline' event, the protest aimed to inform students about the extent of animal experimentation at their university. AJP have published figures suggesting that, in 2017 alone, almost 23,000 animals were used in experiments at the University of Leeds, including 21,616 mice, 593 rats, 358 pigs, 156 birds and 2 rabbits. Between 2007 and 2017, the University is reported to have used 210,103 animals for experimental research under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.

While these figures may surprise students, Leeds pales in comparison to statistics at other universities. In 2017 alone, the University of Oxford used

236,429 animals in experiments, while the University of Edinburgh used 225,366.

The international pressure group has also told The Gryphon that it has filed a complaint to the Information Commissioner against the University of Leeds, for allegedly failing to respond to a freedom of information request within the legally required 20 working days. The Gryphon understands that the request was asking for the figures on animals used in experiments in 2018.

In response to the protests, a university spokesperson said: "The University carries out research using animals to improve the health and welfare of human beings, and of animals. We use animals only when there are no alternatives, and are firmly committed to the replacement, reduction and refinement of the use of animals in research and to publishing information about animal welfare at Leeds."

"It is simply not true to suggest that the University failed to reply appropriately to the freedom of information request from the Animal Justice Project. We responded in January and within the required timeframe. We provided the details they requested about the work of our Animal Welfare and Ethical

Review Committee and explained that the number and species of animals used during 2018 would be published on our website in February, which they were. We are unaware of any subsequent complaint to the Information Commissioner's Office."

Speaking on behalf of the protesters, Claire Palmer, founder of AJP told The Gryphon:

"Decades of systematic reviews and meta-studies overwhelmingly show that animal experiments are unreliable, inaccurate, poorly-conducted, and are in fact a hindrance to real scientific progress. Leeds University is not only failing to provide the information they are required to give us under UK legislation, our own research shows a shocking array of repetitive, pointless and cruel experiment on rodents."

"We had a hugely successful day today with over 20 activists joining together to inform students about animal experiments inside Leeds University, and encourage them to turn their back on animal cruelty!"

Students were split in their opinion towards the protest. While some praised the group's bold approach, others questioned the ethics of using such emotive imagery.

Water Load of Rubbish

Co-op has reintroduced bottled water to the Students' Union after a 10 year ban.

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How are Universities Funded?

Taking a closer look at how much Leeds University really earns from tuition fees.

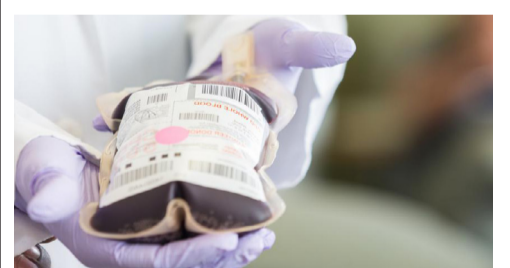
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Bloody Good Stuff?

Science dissects whether the transfusion of young blood is really the answer to the elixir of life.

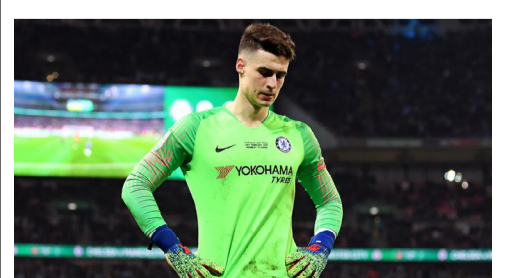
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First Choice Kepa?

Chelsea's recent goalkeeper woes have been dominating sports headlines.

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Editor of the Week

Dom Johnson

Dom sacrificed his Thursday night and rolled back the years this week to take on the role of Newspaper Associate, as Ian White was out on the campaign trail. His company was about as fun as his punny headline suggestions.

Quote of the Week

"I suppose I have played a lot of put-upon women, but it's never bothered me. They've never been weak - they've always got steel in them."

Olivia Colman, who won Best Actress at the Oscars for her incredible role as Queen Anne in *The Favourite*.

Credits

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Polly Hatcher
Ian White

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Giulia Bardelli

Editor's Letter:



Dear readers,

And so here we are, at the end of a week where the record for England's hottest ever day in February was broken only the very next day. The copious amounts of sunshine have seen students sat outside on the grass drinking their Co-op slush puppies, Co-op bottled water and Co-op Smirnoff Ice, questioning whether the warm weather is a blessing from the uni gods

or just another indication of our planet's impending doom. Some students, in an effort to reduce waste and protect their clothes from the damp grass, have been using copies of The Gryphon as makeshift picnic blankets, to which I can only ask that you cease and desist immediately. There's only one source of student journalism in Leeds that deserves smearing your arse all over but, unfortunately, it doesn't exist in a printed form.

Now, while those of you who read my biweekly outbursts may be accustomed to me slandering the 'legacy' of my predecessor, Reece Parker, this week is going to be slightly different. Instead, I'm going to talk about someone who might have been my successor. If you've been on campus over the past two weeks, it's highly likely that you heard of LeadLUU, the university-wide vote which decides who will take over as next year's student exec and Gryphon Editor-in-Chief (EIC). If you've noticed the incessant campaigning, then you probably also noticed the distinct lack of 'Vote Mikhail' banners, for which there is an upsetting reason.

Mikhail is a current Music Editor at the Gryphon, and he was an Editor of the Arts section last year. About two months ago, Mikhail let me know his intentions to use these two years of print and online experience to run for EIC. He was going to organise a talented team, get some solid policies, and plan for a strong campaign. All was well, until a few weeks before the election kicked off, when Mikhail was told that he couldn't run - simply because of his international status.

It goes without saying that Mikhail was gutted. It turned out that, in order to get a VISA, Mikhail would have to land a job which paid £20,800 a year - something the EIC role does not do (my steadily increasing overdraft is a testament to this). While the other exec positions are defined as sabbatical roles, and are therefore eligible for a Tier 4 VISA, the EIC position operates slightly differently, as to be both a trustee of the Union and the main source of holding it to account are two conflicting responsibilities.

I would like to make it clear that this is not the fault of LUU or the University of Leeds - in fact, staff members went above and beyond themselves in trying to find a solution. However, the fact that their efforts could not change what was already set in motion is an indicator to just how deeply ingrained the barriers Mikhail faces actually are. Before Mikhail ran for EIC, nobody knew that someone who lived outside of the EU could not take on the position. It was a total blind spot. And perhaps that's the point; no one had planned for this technicality because no one had taken into account just how poisonous and insidious the UK's immigration laws are.

See, in Theresa May and Sajid Javid's eyes, anything less than £20,800 a year does not constitute a 'skilled job'. Now, as Mikhail has pointed out in his wonderfully written Medium blog (seriously, check it out), the role of EIC involves coordinating

a team of 40+ editors, liaising with Press Officers and curating twelve or more issues of the Gryphon across the year. That in itself is a skill. Even though a silly boy like me, who thinks lumberjack shirts and rolled-up jeans constitute 'style', can somehow manage to stitch together a 48 page newspaper every now and then, this job requires skill - a skill that is vital to the democratic process at LUU. And believe me when I say that Mikhail would have been 10 times the editor I have been, and 100 times the 'editor' that Reece Parker was.

There is no real room for flexibility when it comes to students from outside the EU who are looking to stay in the country and the city which gladly took their money in return for an education. Every step of the immigration process is designed to make it as difficult as possible for someone like Mikhail to migrate, and that's a problem we need to address. Applicants can only apply to government-approved Tier 2 sponsors, and since businesses have to pay to become Tier 2 sponsors, it is remarkably more costly for businesses to hire an immigrant. It is due to these additional costs that wonderfully talented individuals like Mikhail are being prevented from providing to the communities they have come to call home.

As such, in solidarity with Mikhail, I would like to give him his own little space in this week's Editor's Letter, a space which he should have been able to campaign to make his own:

"The reason why the Editor-in-chief is an elected position is that The Gryphon is meant to be the student mouthpiece. What does it say when an international student is barred from running for the role? It turns out that 'the voice of the student body' actually means 'the (UK) voice of the (UK) student body'. Not being able to campaign was, in itself, disappointing enough, but what really hurt was the feeling that I don't belong. I suppose I'll just try and get a job. Thinking about the odds is discouraging; prospects are slim considering there are less than 30,000 employers registered to sponsor immigrants across all the industries in all of the UK. Maybe I'll start saying goodbye to everyone, just in case."

Goodbyes are never really goodbyes until we give up in the face of adversity. I thought it was Gandalf who said that, but it turns out it was just my own profound thoughts on a late Thursday print deadline night. Whatever happens, we will work to ensure that, in the near future, any student, regardless of where they have come from or where they are going to, can become the mouthpiece for students at Leeds - without Theresa May fucking them over at the last minute.

Stay Classy,

Robbie Cairns
Editor-in-Chief
editor@thegryphon.co.uk



Exec Columns:



Union Affairs Officer
Chris Morris

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That's it now, we're old news. The next Exec and Gryphon Editor are announced tonight, in the foyer at 6pm. Firstly, congratulations to everyone who put themselves forward to run in Lead LUU – it's a very difficult choice to put you and your ideas out in public. Every single one of you worked your socks off over the past couple of weeks, running campaigns which reached out to almost 7000 voters!

Over the past week, I've been involved with exploring our links with the wider city, with discussions about how we can link up better with the City Council to show the positive impact you have on everybody in Leeds. I've also been looking at how we can work better with other SUs across the city on common issues which affect students, from health to transport to voter registration.

On 23rd March, thousands of people

will be marching in London to have their voice heard when it comes to Brexit, demanding a say on the Brexit they want. Just like in October, we'll be sending down coaches to London to make it easy for you to be there. You can find the event on the LUU Facebook Page and website – make sure you sign up soon to secure your place!

See you at 6pm tonight for the Lead LUU Results, right in the LUU Foyer.



Education Officer
Serene Esuruoso

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Hello lovelies! This week has been one full of logistics and planning, as myself and members of staff at LUU and the University try to put together a strategy for how we want to provide students with the best possible education over the next five to eight years. Soon, students will be invited to input their own comments to the discussion. So, if you have any suggestions for how the

University could be improved in any way, keep an eye out!

In a similar vein, we had a really productive meeting at the Post Graduate Researcher forum. There's a lot of pressure on young researchers to perform highly at the minute, so it's always great to talk about any issues and how we can work together to support each other better.

We're also reviewing the way we reward loyalty here at LUU. So many students put countless hours into this union, and there should be a better system for rewarding them for their hard work. Again, if you have any ideas, pop into the exec office for a chat.



Community Officer
Tom Oladipo

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Hey guys, this week I finally got to run one of the events I've been most excited about since starting my role as Community Officer. This Tuesday, students from Leeds took over the Rainbow Junktion for the latest instalment in my Culture Cooks programme. There was plenty of delicious Chinese food on offer, and it was great to see so many people getting

together to eat, drink and socialise.

Being able to eat food which makes you think of home is so important for international students, a point I made clear when being interviewed by BBC Leeds Radio. We played a few games and had some interesting prizes on offer to say the least, and I can't wait for the next one!

With LeadLUU taking up most of

everyone's week, I've been offering some helping hands on how we can go about making our city more sustainable. Other than that, myself and the Exec completed our biannual health and safety training this week, meaning we're now even better equipped to pick up heavy boxes and make our way to the designated fire exits – exciting times indeed!



Activities Officer
Lauren Huxley

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What a couple of weeks it has been. If you've seen my posters around campus, then you'll know that I've been re-running in LeadLUU, campaigning to be next years Union Affairs Officer. It's been such a wonderful experience getting to know all the other candidates, who have made the campaign such a lovely and accommodating process. I wish you all the best of luck on results

night – you all deserve a result you can be proud of!

It's easy to get lost in the whole fanfare of campaigning, but I've also still managed to do my job as Activities Officer. I met with representatives from Leeds Council to talk about the cultural impact of our university, where I also took a closer look at how the renovation of Hyde Park Picture House will affect

the Hyde Park community and local economy.

I've also been practising for a dance competition on Saturday, so I think by the end of this weekend I might be just about exhausted. Anyway, I'm now going to have a gin and tonic at Terrace to celebrate a long but exhilarating few weeks!



Equality & Diversity Officer
Tamsin Scott

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Hi everyone! I hope you've all had a lovely week, and a less stressful one than mine.

As I'm sure you've noticed, it's been Lead LUU and all the candidates have been super busy campaigning to be your new Exec. As well as getting people to vote and giving out ice lollies, I've been planning the Sex Sessions that are happening from the 4th-10th March. We have a really full line up, beginning

with a session all about asexuality and ending with a Sex Positive Arts Market!

In between we have so much stuff happening, including a discussion from a porn star who's going to be talking about the reality of porn, condom packing hosted by MESMAC and two lots of sexual health testing in the Union as well as way more! You can find out about all the events on the LUU website, or send me a message to ask

any more questions!

I also took over the Union's Instagram account to livestream the final minutes of LeadLUU. Well done to all the candidates who took part, and to everyone who took time out of their day to exercise their democratic right to vote!



Welfare Officer
Matt Port

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This week we were hosted by Manchester Metropolitan University Union for the NUS Students and Alcohol conference, where we learned lots about the ways in which alcohol interacts (or doesn't interact) with the student experience – in addition to sneaking in a bit of a drug harm reduction chat as well.

I'm sure all the others have mentioned this too, but I've been out chatting to students about voting in Lead LUU.

Thank you to everyone who used the opportunity to really engage and chat about all things University of Leeds and LUU, and obviously thanks to the amazing candidates who have been campaigning hard for your vote. By the time you're reading this we'll either be patiently waiting for the announcement or we'll know who our new student exec are!

I'm still waiting on the results of the

big drugs and alcohol survey we did a few weeks ago, so developments surrounding that should be coming our way soon. On top of that I've been meeting with the University around graduation costs, counselling services, and accommodation costs... I also managed to squeeze in eating lovely chinese food at Tom's amazing Culture Cooks event. It was a packed week as always.



Campus Watch

1 University of Essex Over two hundred students vote against the creation of a Jewish Society

Despite receiving opposition from over 200 students, last week, the University of Essex Students' Union declared that the new University of Essex Jewish Society will be established with immediate effect.

Results from the first vote were declared void, due to an "irregularity." A student from the university's Amnesty International Society allegedly directed students to vote against the proposed Jewish Society on accounts of its manifesto, suggesting that the society would celebrate Israel's Independence Day. Nick Sunshine from the Union of Jewish Students (UJS) said: "The Jewish Society did not say that it would have a narrow stance on Israel or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

The vote was repeated after Dr Maaruf Ali, computer science lecturer at the University, recently accused of posting anti-semitic messages on Facebook,

had been suspended from teaching. The now-deleted posts included a denial of the Holocaust, a shared image from a far-right Nazi-apologist website, and a message reading: "the Zionists next want to create a society here at our university."

Vice-Chancellor, Professor Anthony Foster, announced that the University will launch a review to ensure that Jewish staff and students receive "unequivocal support", and will hold a public event next week demonstrating the University's support for the Jewish community.

Additionally, the Students' Union also announced that the process of forming new societies will undergo review, "to ensure that all students have a safe and welcoming environment."

Maariyah Fulat

2 University of East Anglia Dog-walking initiative introduced to promote pawsitive student wellbeing

The University of East Anglia (UEA) is to introduce dog walking as a new initiative to help improve student wellbeing through physical activity.

The new scheme follows the receipt of £12,000 of funding from British Universities and Colleges Sports (BUCS), awarded to universities to support the development of projects that tackle mental health issues through exercise. The money will be used by UEA+sport to create three new initiatives, including dog walking. Research suggests that there are significant benefits to dog-walking.

Professor Andy Jones, academic at Norwich Medical School, carried out the research and stated: "our studies have shown that dog walking helps people to maintain their physical activity levels. In addition, it is known that there are a wide range of social and mental health benefits."

It was concluded in last year's British Active Students Survey that students who are more physically active also benefit from better mental wellbeing and higher academic grades.

Eleanor Smith

3 University of Kent Bog off Rees-Mogg: students protest politician's visit

Jacob Rees-Mogg, Tory politician and avid Brexiteer, visited the University of Kent on February 22nd to give a talk to members of Liberty Union. The group identifies itself as a "liberty-focused centre to right wing platform for ideas and discussions on campus."

His visit was met with a large demonstration organised by Young Europeans Canterbury. The protest was silent and occurred both outside and inside the Woolf Lecture Hall where Rees-Mogg delivered his talk.

The group wore Rees-Mogg masks and held placards featuring a statement the politician gave in the House of Commons in 2011 calling for a second referendum should the public vote leave.

Iva Divković, Publicity Secretary for Young Europeans Canterbury said: "as a European University, we have already experienced the negative repercussions of Brexit with professors leaving and a decline in student applications, so it is incomprehensible why university societies are interested in favourably accommodating a person like Jacob Rees-Mogg, whose perspectives will lead to the downgrading and further deficit of our University."

Eleanor Smith

4 University of Zululand, South Africa Uni assures it is still open, despite fake poster detailing its closure

The University of Zululand has responded to fake posters circulating that are claiming it will be closed until 2020 following a series of violent student protests.

On Sunday 17th February, the KwaDlangezwa campus was set alight as part of the protests. Unpaid allowances and tuition fees are reportedly the motivations for the protests.

The University released a statement on the matter on Facebook, outlining that "it has come to the University's attention that certain students and individuals are distorting, manufacturing and spreading fake news using university templates. Not only are these actions malicious but they create an environment of distrust and misinformation which could cause harm to the student community and stakeholders."

The post continued: "the trending notice amongst many makes mention that the University will only reopen in 2020. This is not true and the university condemns fake news in the strongest terms and urges students to refrain from spreading misinformation."

Despite this statement, teaching remains suspended at the University and no students are allowed on campus.

Eleanor Smith

5 Roger Williams University, USA University introduces module focused primarily on Marvel's 'Black Panther'

Students at Roger Williams University will be considering the cultural context of *Black Panther* as they undertake a new module titled 'Wakanda Forever: The Racial Politics in Marvel's 'Black Panther''. The module was created by Assistant Professor of American Studies, Aaron C. Allen. Allen stated that "before starting this class, I knew that Black Panther was doing important things, but now I feel like I have a better idea of specifically how."

Students are encouraged to study this piece of popular culture in an analytical and critical way, to discover the comments it makes on power, oppression and resistance.

One student who took the course, Anthony Holehouse, found it gave him a new perspective on how the film represented Hip Hop and African culture. Holehouse continued, saying "it was a piece of work that was meant to educate, empower, and give people like myself a new way to view themselves."

Another student, Emily Craig, expressed her enthusiasm for the module by concluding that "to understand ourselves, and the policies and structures we put in place, we must understand and see our media through a more complex lens."

Eleanor Smith

Co-op Reintroduces Bottled Water to LUU After 10 Year Ban

Megan Cummings
News Editor

Last Wednesday (20th February) saw the grand opening of LUU's new Co-op store.

LUU have said that the decision to transform Essentials into a Co-op would "provide [students] with more choice of products, cheaper options and a speedier shopping experience."

This decision to partner with Co-op was based on their "product range, ethical standpoint, value for money and contribution to the communities they operate in." The store is still managed by Leeds University Union, and run by its staff and members.

However, this change hasn't come without controversy.

In 2008, Leeds students voted to ban the sale of water in Union shops, in a campus-wide referendum. LUU was the first union in the country to make such a decision.

During the academic year 2007-2008, LUU reportedly profited £32,000 on bottled water alone. In banning bottled water, the Union sacrificed profit for sustainability. This was a landmark decision, and one which demonstrated the values of Leeds University Union.

However, the move from Essentials to Co-op has seen the re-introduction of bottled water to LUU's shelves, and this hasn't gone unnoticed. Some shoppers have taken to social media, expressing their anger and frustration over the decision.

"Really disappointed by @coopukfood takeover of @LeedsUniUnion shop. Empty sandwich shelves, but even worse the reintroduction of still bottled water to the union after almost *10 years* of a ban. @UoL_Sus did you know about this? A backwards step for #plasticfree 2023 campaign."

In a follow-up tweet directed at Leeds' Sustainability



Image: Zahra Iqbal

department, they continued "I hope these bottles will be removed soon in line with Union policy!"

In relation to these criticism, Chris Morris, Union Affairs, Officer said:

"Our new partnership with Co-op offers us a great opportunity to work on a national level towards our respective strategic approaches to reducing single-use plastic. We are committed to our target to remove single-use plastics and welcome challenge and support from our students and staff as we take this journey."

LUU's new Co-op has a water fountain within the store, and still sells reusable water bottles. Nonetheless, some still believe that the reintroduction of bottled water shows a complete disregard for Union policy.

On 6th November 2018, the University of Leeds pledged to eliminate all single-use plastic items by 2023.

Some have also voiced their uncertainty online over what the move from Essentials to Co-op means for the #2023PlasticFree campaign. Co-op have committed to making 100% of their packaging easy to recycle by 2023, but haven't revealed plans to eliminate single-use plastics in this time frame.

LUU Student Exec Reflect on Their Time so Far

Megan Cummings
News Editor

If you've been on campus these past few weeks, you're bound to have noticed the widespread posters, banners, and general campaigning for Lead LUU.

Each Spring, LUU's Student Exec are elected in a campus-wide vote. Inevitably, each year this prompts sarcastic remarks from students claiming that the Exec don't do anything meaningful.

A recent anonymous confession on the Facebook page LeedsFess wrote: "I legitimately hate the Union elections. I don't care, none of you change anything, The Gryphon still spouts out the same crap and you all get a pretend job that looks great on your CV."

This year's Student Exec have shown passion and drive to change Leeds University Union for the better. Nonetheless, a stigma still surrounds the roles. Part of the issue is a lack of awareness as to what the Exec actually do.

Given that, I spoke to some of LUU's current Exec about what they'd done so far this year.

LUU's Union Affairs Officer, Chris Morris, keeps the Union up and running, and makes sure students get as great a Union as possible.

Talking to The Gryphon, he said: "I've started the Give & Take, a termly student-run Question Time-style event which brings in external speakers to discuss key issues. So far this year, topics tackled have included 'Mobilising the Black Vote' and 'Decolonising Gender & Sexuality'.

"I organised coaches so students could have their voice heard about Brexit in October. My work around Brexit has also involved representing students in national press, both on TV and in print.

"I've worked to ensure that LUU's outlets provide value options, with 2 for £10 and a meal & drink deals in Old Bar & Terrace. I've pushed the change from Essentials to Co-op to ensure it was right for us and happened at the earliest possible opportunity to give students a better Union shop.

"Both Serene and I sit on University Council - we have both made sure students' needs are being heard in the development of the University's new 2020-25 strategy."

Lauren Huxley is LUU's Activities Officer, but you might know her as Baldy. She said:

"Something I'm really proud of is that I've sorted out a budget for all of the members of the Activities Exec which they can use on category-wide events, which I'm hoping will make a big difference!"

In addition, Lauren has played a key role in writing the new joint Sports Strategy. She lobbied against a suggested change to sports club funding, saving members thousands of pounds.

As Activities Officer, Lauren increased committee engagement with LUU policy, so that members' voices are heard through Executive Category Meetings. She has created links with local organisations and shared opportunities across LUU's clubs and societies.

In addition, she launched the Tell Me More campaign, designed to open up conversations about accessibility

and inclusivity within clubs and societies.

She finished: "I've reviewed the experience of the Activities Exec, so we can improve this opportunity, and offer students the support that they need to become brilliant Reps."

Matt Port, LUU's Welfare Officer, works to support the happiness, health, and wellbeing of Leeds' students.

He told The Gryphon: "So far this year, I've pushed for free sanitary products in LUU toilets, and am still amidst discussions with the University for broadening this out across campus, too.

"I've commissioned primary research and policy work with partners at the Alcohol and Drugs Education Consultancy, which has huge buy-in from the University and will influence a sensible, harm reduction approach to drug use.

"Meeting regularly with the counselling and wellbeing service we've discussed optimising and expanding the service, and I've represented student voices on University projects worth millions of pounds of students' money."

There's no denying that this year's Student Exec have worked hard to improve the student experience at Leeds. By continuing to draw attention to the positive impact they have on the Union, perhaps this will encourage students to engage more with the LeadLUU race, and challenge the cynical view that candidates won't actually change anything.

Practice What You Preach – How Sustainable Are This Year's Community Candidates?

Caitlin Tilley
Lifestyle & Culture Editor

It's that time of the year again, where walls are plastered in brightly-coloured posters promising environmental concern and sustainability – the irony is truly real.

An average campaigner will print off around 200 A4 posters during LeadLUU (formerly known as the leadership race), with many candidates holding the view that the more posters you have around Uni, the more likely people are to remember your face and then vote for you in the election. Many candidates fall into the trap of making promises incompatible with their environmentally-friendly campaigns by printing hundreds of posters.

But then, as a LUU leadership race candidate, how else do you get yourself noticed? Clearly, an online presence is very important. But visibility is key, and this often means reams and reams of paper posters. But there are other options. Chalk, cardboard, cereal boxes, paint and fabric banners are just some of the many examples of other viable campaigning platforms which have proved successful over the past years.

As part of my investigation, I spoke to George Bradley, who ran for Community Officer in 2014 and won the election in 2015. In the 2014 elections, the five community candidates committed to a paperless campaign, agreeing that thousands of posters littering campus were both ineffective and wasteful. They took this as an opportunity to challenge themselves to be



Image: Zahra Iqbal

more creative in their campaigns. Frankie O'Byrne, 2013's Community Officer, reused leftover posters from his previous campaign, thus also keeping in the spirit of recycling.

When Bradley won the position, he took the idea of paperless campaigns to the Forum, where it passed as policy. This meant that for the next three years, all Community Officer campaigns had to use alternative, recycled materials. However, as of 2019, this policy has expired, so today's Community Officers face no regulation on poster printing.

Chris Morris, Current Union Affairs Officer, explained this further, telling The Gryphon:

"There is policy passed about limiting paper usage for candidate campaigns which LUU supports by providing recycled materials such as cardboard, cloth and fabric and old banners and delivering digital training materials for candidates. However, there is not a campaign rule around limiting paper usage

although previous Community candidates have agreed amongst themselves to go paperless."

In 2015, candidates across all Exec roles committed to imposing a limit on paper, although it wasn't an outright ban. This not only inspired and encouraged people to be more environmentally minded during their campaigns, but also helped to save the planet.

Bradley agreed that it's a shame this year's candidates have not followed on with the paperless tradition, which was done in positive spirit and ensured everyone was less wasteful.

One of this year's candidates, Evie Robinson, details in her manifesto that she wants to ban companies from leafleting on campus, whilst flooding the area with her own posters. She also champions more emphasis on reducing food waste, as well as implementing a recycling rewards scheme.

Environmental sustainability is an important topic in our current climate, with the University of Leeds recently embarking on a Plastic Free by 2023 pledge, which Community Officers will no doubt be expected to help enforce.

Past candidates have mentioned that campaigning using recycled materials is a Community Officer tradition, which would seem in line with many of the candidates' policies. Though this isn't strictly a rule, it has remained tradition in past years at Leeds. Although this year's Community Officer candidates don't appear to have kept this up, we can only hope that the chosen candidate will be more environmentally-conscious once elected.

Leeds Little Free Libraries – Committed to Making a Big Difference

Megan Cummings
News Editor

"Take a book, leave a book"; that's the motto of Leeds' Little Free Libraries. After Carry Franklin installed the first Little Free Library in 2017, she was taken-aback by the "incredible" community response. One and a half years later, Leeds is home to 34 of the libraries, spread throughout the Greater Leeds area.

Leeds' Little Free Libraries are totally free flowing book-exchanges. Each library takes the form of a small cabinet on the side of the street. Each cabinet holds around 40 books, and for absolutely no cost, anybody is free to borrow from or donate to them.

Jacky Fleming, another artist who is part of the Leeds Little Free Library core team, has said that the boxes "feel a bit like political acts", combatting the "tide of commercialism, hate, fear and selfishness – they're the opposite of that."

After spotting a little library in London, Franklin enlisted the help of joiner David Ayres to set up the first Little Free Library on Alma Road, opposite Lupton accommodation. The libraries have proved very popular. Franklin has said that the boxes are

never depleted, and showcase an ever-changing selection of books. "Every time I leave the house there are different books in there and someone is standing outside it. It's constant."



Image: Megan Cummings

"With 34 little libraries already up and running, and another 15 commissioned, we are hoping to make Leeds the city of the Little Free Library."

A digital map of all 34 libraries can be found on the Leeds Little Free Library Facebook page. Some Little Free Libraries are funded by individual donors, and others by local businesses. In the past, the project has also secured funding from Leeds City Council's Leeds Inspired scheme, Leeds Community Foundation and Leeds University RAG who kindly donated £500 to the building of a little library in Beeston.

The Little Free Library team are collaborating with Found Fiction for this year's Leeds Lit Fest. From the 4th to the 11th March, ten of the Little Free Library boxes will contain a notebook and pen. Visitors to the Libraries can co-create a story, one which represents their area of the city.

Living in the digital age, where technology is becoming more and more important in the lives of young people, it's refreshing to see such a project encouraging children, and adults, to read books. Leeds Little Free Libraries provide a great, fun means of engaging people with reading, and hopefully have a bright future ahead of them.

University Mental Health Day Conference to be Held at Leeds

Megan Cummings
News Editor

On Thursday 7th March, The James Burks Foundation will team up with LUU's Womens' Football Society to deliver a 'University Mental Health Day Conference', hoping to give a platform to discussions on mental health and wellbeing.

"We are working hard to ensure that we promote a positive message regarding mental health"

Reports consistently show that poor mental health is on the increase, particularly in young people. The Times recently reported an increase of over 70% in prospective freshers reporting mental health issues to their university since 2014.

University Mental Health Day, which falls on Thursday 7th March this year, aims to unite university communities towards prioritising student mental health, and to create ongoing change. This year has a particular focus on the power of using your voice.

The conference will be led by both students and industry professionals, and will include interactive

activities and roundtable discussions on various mental health-related topics.

The James Burke Foundation is a charity which raises awareness of mental health problems and delivers educational programmes, aiming to reduce the number of young people who take their own lives. It was founded after James Burke, a talented rugby player, tragically took his own life in 2017.

LUU's Womens' Football Society works constantly to promote a positive atmosphere regarding mental health. They have fundraised for The James Burke



Image: Yorkshire Evening Post

Foundation and for Stonewall, and last term organised a naked calendar to promote mental health awareness.

Niamh Donnelly, Community Sec for LUU's Womens' Football Society, said:

"In our club, we are working hard to ensure that we promote a positive message regarding mental health, and signposting local services. It is also really important that we make our society as accessible as possible for those experiencing significant difficulties with their mental health. The only way we can do this is to open up the conversation and learn from each

"The way that we engage with mental health is changing, and I am so proud to be about of this change"

other."

Speaking about the upcoming conference, she continued:

"I'm psyched that we are doing this. The way that we engage with mental health is changing, and I am so proud to be part of this change."

Fundraising Campaign Set Up for Container Village for the Homeless

Alice Forney

The organisers of Leeds Tent City have begun a fundraising campaign to set up a shipping container village for the homeless in the city.

The organiser, Hayden Lee Jessop, is setting up the campaign for a new scheme to repurpose old containers as temporary living quarters for the homeless. This would be a first step to help them find permanent accommodation and help them liaise with other services such as mental help and addiction support. In support of the campaign, Mr Jessop outlined that this will not be long-term housing; he continued: "I

believe people need a stepping stone before they are given a house."

At the moment, his organization is liaising with local businesses and registering for charitable status as 'Vulnerable Citizen Support' and hopes to raise around £15,000 for its purpose.

The scheme follows the closure of a homeless camp of 20 tents in Little Queen Street. The 'Tent City' disbanded as the Leeds City Council provided more housing for rough sleepers. The organiser of the camp, Mr David Hedley, agreed that it had served its function.

This follows unrest in recent years about the conditions of rough sleepers in Leeds. In 2016, a protest bred a 'Tent City' of about sixty tents camped outside the Leeds Art Gallery in an attempt to focus attention on the number of homeless people in Leeds. The protest was then evicted off council property and moved to the International Pool car park.

LeedsLive reported last year that paramedics were called to Boar Lane, City Square and Wellington Street 163 times in just three months to deal with issues relating to homelessness, drugs and alcohol. Police were called to the city centre almost 200 times in two months to calls involving homeless people.

In response to this, the Council set up new initiatives such as the Safer Leeds Support Team and Big Change Leeds. The aim of Safer Leeds Support

Team is to "work with the most vulnerable street users to provide ongoing, tailored, wrap around, support to ensure they can move into accommodation where necessary and access appropriate services to enable them to move away from street life." Likewise, Big Change Leeds is a non-profit organisation that "connects local businesses, charities and people to coordinate and provide better help and support for vulnerable people on the streets of Leeds."

"I believe people need a stepping stone before they are given a house"

Leeds City Councillor, Debra Coupar, stated that: "around one in three of those rough sleeping in November's count are known to have tenancies or other accommodation, yet they still feel the streets are the better option for them. We know we have enough accommodation for rough sleepers in Leeds, and it has tailored, ongoing recovery packages to support people to rebuild meaningful lives away from the streets. We cannot, of course, force people to take up this support."



Image: Giant Containers

AMBER CARS

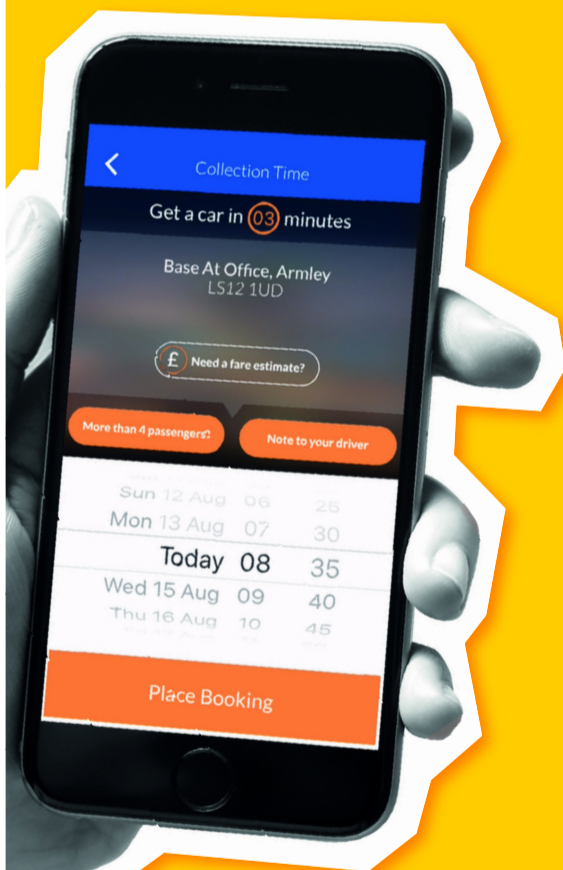
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Are University Tuition Fees a Fair Price?



Image: MEETinLEEDS

Chloe Lovatt

The cost of university tuition fees has consistently been a politically rousing topic. Since fees trebled under the coalition government in 2010, many continue to ask: can you put a price on education? With the promise of a review of higher education funding later this year, it seems that perhaps we may be coming closer to getting an answer.

At the end of last year, a government think tank proposed the idea of cutting tuition fees to £6,500 a year but raising the cost of STEM subjects to £13,500, accounting for the need for specialised equipment and presumed higher earnings. This idea has been criticised by the former Education Secretary, Justine Greening, and by universities themselves. The fear is that by lowering the costs of arts subjects, it places them at a lower value to society; and some argue that a cut in fees could trigger job losses in humanities departments. Many also argue that this proposal would hinder social mobility because this system could push those from lower income backgrounds out of STEM subjects towards subjects with lower fees.

This review puts a new light on the government's attitude towards the student loans system. Until December last year, student loans did not count as government spending. The ONS (Office for National Statistics) changed its mind, creating another £12bn in government deficit. The BBC reported that under the previous system, money lent to students as tuition and maintenance loans did not show up as a negative in public finances, despite the fact that there are £118bn in outstanding student debt.

This raises many questions about the nature of tuition and how universities work as a financial body. It is evident that STEM subjects cost the government more, but should it be the responsibility of the students to foot the extra cost?

Looking at the annual accounts for the University of

Leeds, their net income for 2017/18 was £706m and total expenditure was £697m leaving a £9m profit, a considerable amount for a not-for-profit business. The majority of this funding comes from student fees, the rest coming from grants from various bodies and a small amount from investment and donations. If the majority of courses were to reduce their fees, then where would the extra money come from? Previously this would be from government grants; how Scottish universities are currently funded. The governmental think tank suggests nothing of grants to balance the loss of income. This is what worries Universities because the suggestion of a fee reduction would likely result in job losses to make up the costs – not to mention the loss of international grants expected with Brexit later this year. Universities are understandably worried about any further loss of income.

Radio 4's 'The Bottom Line' interviewed two university chancellors, as well as a Doctor from the Department of Education at Oxford, on the topic of funding. Both chancellors agreed that £9,250 is not pound-for-pound what it takes to host one student for a year, but the cost is distributed more widely, for heating, maintenance and on broader resources rather than just the academic resources for a particular course. Dr Helen Carasso noted that a study revealed that student fees only cover half of the maintenance costs, the rest being footed by the government and other sources. Professor Nick Petford, Vice Chancellor of Northampton University said: "Universities have not done a good job, to be fair, of explaining where that fee goes, I think we need more transparency."

However, a University of Leeds spokesperson said: "The cost of hosting an undergraduate student over a year varies and includes staff costs, student support, and the provision of the best learning environment. The University receives Government grants to help fund higher-cost subjects such as those that require laboratory equipment. Student tuition fees are set by

Government and the funding model for universities is one of the topics for the Government's review of post-18 education."

With the UCU strikes over pensions last year, and net income for academic staff dropping in the last year, the suggestion of redundancies would create a further drop in morale in academic circles. One factor that is hard to reconcile is the slow rise of university fees coinciding with a pay rise for Vice Chancellors. The Tab revealed in an investigation that Vice Chancellors and Principals receive on average 12 times as much as a minimum wage university staff member. Is this a questionably large sum for the head of a public-sector service? This amount would not cover the disparity in direct funding from students and that of other sources, but it does raise questions about the nature of university structures. If the Vice Chancellors are being paid competitive CEO wages, should universities themselves be treated more like private businesses?

I agree with Nick Petford in that there needs to be more transparency, not only over expenditure of universities, but the full details of their income as well. The nature of being a public service is that they are held accountable not only to their students but to the general public. In the current climate, universities teeter somewhere between public and private enterprises, which could very much change dependent on the political outcomes of the next few years. It will be interesting to see what the review will illuminate about university funding and what decisions the government will make in light of it.



The 'Land Issue': an Aftermath of Apartheid?

Image: Daily Mail

The Gryphon discusses the contentious issue of farmland ownership in South Africa.

Tara Lee
Features Editor

The after-effects of colonialism are still creating major issues in the world today, the most recent to make the headlines being the 'Land Issue' in South Africa, which centres itself in a racial and political dispute. Essentially, this is about the unequal share of land between South Africa's white and black populations. The statistics clearly demonstrate this inequality, as while roughly 80 per cent of South Africa's population are people of colour, they only hold 13 per cent of the land.

These tensions have manifested in an increase of murders that often target landowners. The Guardian reported that, between April 2017 and March 2018, the police recorded 62 murders during 58 attacks on farms in South Africa, of which 52 victims were the owners, and 46 of the murder victims were white.

But why do the majority of South Africa's population feel so indignant about not holding the majority of the wealth? In many capitalist countries around the world, the distribution of wealth follows a similar story.

Clearly, the crux of the matter here is one of race which goes deeper, than just skin colour, and to the core of one's history and identity. The fact that South Africa's history, and Africa as a whole, has been fully obliterated, churned up and pushed out into a semi-European mould, has led to undeniable feeling of victimisation, as well as a burning desire for validation amongst South Africa's black population. The effects of slavery, colonialism and apartheid have not left the black population feeling fragile and out in the cold, but instead have reignited a residing sense of entitlement to the land which should be theirs and only theirs, as it was prior to

Europe's colonisation. Is this feeling justified?

Present day Western and European involvement in Africa as a whole is one of economic and military dominance following a highly exploitative nature. The possibility of commodity specification reoccurs through China's expansion, making Africa provide 35 percent of its oil. The United States military's involvement through AFRICOM, on which its 'humanitarian' mission spouts a similar rhetoric as to the colonialists 'civilising' mission, is yet another example.

The line of thought is clear: the West is still exploiting Africa for its own gain, providing yet another reason for the black population to place blame of suffering on anything and anyone associated with the West and therefore retaliate.

Zanele Lwana, the leader of Black First Land First, stated: "Our people have waited for so long... We are going to get everything that you owe, it's ours." Through the use of "our", Zanele Lwana is automatically excluding any South African that is of European descent, deeming a South African citizen to be only a person of colour, irreducible to any other ethnic differentiation. The country's horrific past sufferings have clearly created a confused discourse on identity and what it means to be African and it is now having a serious impact on societal relations.

To address the land issue, the African National Congress are willing to change the laws of the country that are inadequate to tackle the current problem by removing land from the white farmers and sharing the land more equally. Sounds fair right? However, they are planning to do this without offering any compensation.

Again, the sense of residing entitlement comes into play here. Yes, Europeans did steal land from Africa and used it for their own gain. And yes, the

West are still playing an exploitative, imperial role in Africa's economy which needs to be addressed and changed. But does this warrant racial murder of South Africa's white citizens? Does this warrant white farmers being forced to give up land that has been in their family for generations? Race relations in South Africa are clearly problematic and complex, yet to put it simply, retributive action cannot be the answer.

In modern day South Africa, the colour of your skin should not be an entitlement to a monopoly on land and wealth, white or black. The solution to the racial tensions cannot be the switch in favour of one ethnicity to another. There needs to be serious political and societal direction in shaping a national identity that includes the relatively 'new' variations of ethnicities. The tragedies of the past must be accounted for, not repeated.



Image: Infostormer Forum



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An Open Letter to The University of Leeds, from the Student Athlete:

Sports clubs across the University are demanding change over lecture recording policy on match days. Polly Brooks, LUU Women's Lacrosse Club's 1st Team Captain, has led the movement in an Open Letter to the University asking for a reasonable solution to a common problem.

The value of participation in sport at university is widely acknowledged. 94 per cent of employers identify a clear link between university sport participation and valuable skills and strengths in potential employees. "Involvement in sport makes a real, measurable and positive impact not just on the student experience, but also on life beyond higher education" (Simon Shibli, Co-director of the Sport Industry Research Centre). Further, the average graduate who plays sport while studying earns £5,824 (18 per cent) more than those who do not. The University of Leeds acknowledges this value and actively seeks to provide "one of the best sporting experiences in the UK."

Despite this, balancing Wednesday sport and Wednesday lectures is notoriously hard. Games (Home and Away) are scheduled on Wednesday afternoons and often start around 1pm. A 12pm warm-up for a 1pm start anywhere apart from Leeds therefore eliminates the possibility of student athlete attendance at Wednesday morning lectures.

Often, I've heard my peers advocate the abolition of Wednesday lectures entirely, in favour of a Wednesday that focuses on sport. With an offering of 138 subjects and the scheduling of 31,906 students, I recognise and appreciate the logistical impracticality of this.

A simpler solution is already accessible: Lecture Capture. The University of Leeds has invested over £2 million in "one of the largest [lecture capture systems] in Europe." In order to provide a flexible and personalised approach to learning, over 50,000 hours of teaching activity are recorded every year.

A commitment to ensure that only recorded lectures are scheduled for Wednesday mornings would extend this flexibility to student athletes. Those who wish to represent the university on a Wednesday afternoon should not find themselves academically disadvantaged for doing so – especially when such a straightforward solution is readily available.

On behalf of our teams and societies, my peers and I therefore urge you to support your sports players by considering a policy whereby only recorded lectures are scheduled for Wednesday mornings.

Signed, Polly Brooks, Women's Lacrosse: 1st Team capt.



Ellie Richards
Women's Football: Treasurer

Evelyn Cox
Women's Rugby Union Social Secretary

Barney Connaughton
Tennis: 1st Team Capt.

Lucy Ridler
Women's Rugby Union: Club Capt.

Will Dowie
Football: 2nd Team Capt. & Communications Secretary

Pippa Scotcher
Tennis: 2nd Team Capt.

Rosie Blount
Women's Football: 1st Team Capt.

Jack Stirland
Men's Football: Club Capt.

Bea Simmons
Women's Lacrosse: Treasurer

Amy Hunt
Women's Football Secretary

Beth Jones
Women's Lacrosse: Club Capt.

Robyn Wrigley
Women's Football: 2nd Team Capt.

Holly Bartleet
Women's Football: Development Coordinator

Harry Brown
Men's Football: 1st Team Capt.

Will Mckeown
American Football: Club Capt.

Alexandra Clark
Women's Rugby Union: Sponsorship Secretary

James Tooby
Men's Football: Secretary

Kasey Butler
Women's Hockey: Club Capt.

Rory Thompson
Tennis: President & 1st Team Capt.

Matthew Welch
Men's Football Treasurer



"When LUU Tennis Club members were asked why they miss Wednesday match fixtures, almost 61% said it was due to timetable clashes or not wanting to miss contact hours"

Why is this such a problem?

"Due to the effects of the Wednesday timetables not corresponding with university sport, Men's Association Football have had multiple performance members drop out of playing altogether. Across all four squads this number is even larger, with many having to occasionally miss key games."

Jack Stirland
Men's Football: Club Capt.

"Several players within lacrosse have missed out due to lectures on Wednesdays, thus this affects squad performance. It's unfair for players to train every week and then miss out on matches. Sport offers students a well rounded uni experience but this can be hindered by lectures on a Wednesday."

Beth Jones
Women's Lacrosse: Club Captain

"This is absolutely vital to allow students to compete for the uni and more importantly keep up their academics. It has inevitably caused gifted footballers, especially this year, to have to say that they can't offer such commitment because they are unable to miss such important lectures so to have them recorded would see improvements in not just the academic side but also the sporting side of the uni as well."

Will Dowie
Men's Football: Team Capt. & Communications Secretary

"I struggle weekly with balancing sporting and academic commitments, and I am aware that this is an issue for many others within my society. We have had members drop out this year as a result of this problem, which has been an issue for us as a club. This worries me, as I believe that the beneficial impact of participating in sport on mental and physical health is important for academic success and social wellbeing. With such a simple solution at hand I urge the university to consider this proposal, which would not only help current student athletes but may also encourage more participation in sport across the university as a whole."

Bea Simmons
Women's Lacrosse: Treasurer

"We lose players every week due to lectures and practical sessions, who eventually end up stopping altogether."

James Tooby
Men's Football: Secretary

If you are in agreement with this open letter, sign Polly's petition at:

<http://chnng.it/msVyXYj7k5>

In the Middle



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

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Trisha Ranae's swimwear
collection, photographed by
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Stuck in a Loop: Mastercard Merges Artist and Advertising



The corporate industry has continually preyed on the creativity of the artist. Fern McErlane reflects on Mastercard's latest advertising scheme and its implications for the world of music.

In a new advertising avenue, Mastercard assert: “start something priceless.” At first glance, this simply seems another vapid corporate catchline. Yet, behind this statement lies their concept for a new form of song advertisement. The slightly ridiculous sounding “mogo”, referring to musical logo,

is designed to be placed at the end of tracks in order to become the so called aural signature of the track.

Already being used at the end of a recent video advertisement featuring Camila Cabello, the Priceless campaign is well underway. The current “aural signature” consists of six upbeat notes and sounds much like a child haphazardly bashing a xylophone. While the music industry has long been plagued with the expectations of the consumerist market, this modern product placement reaches a new low in music’s merging with capitalism.

Raja Rajamannar, the company’s communications and marketing officer, divulged the reasoning behind the ploy: “In the case of regular ads, it’s a horror story for marketers right now. As a consumer, who likes ads? I don’t like ads. It’s annoying – it’s an interruption of my seamless experience.” Rajamannar speaks some sense here, as indeed services such as Spotify Premium have boomed due to this widespread

advertisement hate. However, he misses the point that any advertisement heard over and over becomes jarring. Will there be complaints? Almost definitely, since the “signature” is bound to be as equally annoying as any other advertising campaign when heard on repeat.

The potential implications for music are considerable. Pop music will expectedly be hit first, with the “signature” jangling across the radio waves thousands of times a day if Mastercard’s efforts are successful. Other genres of music will surely follow, leaving nobody’s playlist untouched. It certainly will affect any participating artist’s claim to musical legitimacy, possibly leaving them branded by their willingness to sell their soul to the so called “corporate machine.”

Ultimately, this can only become about money. Will artists who sign onto this scheme be considered to have “sold out.” It is that age-old concept which repeatedly repulses former fans by the dozens. Think of Johnny Rotten and those butter adverts... I couldn’t believe it either.

Additionally, it could become a money pit for emerging musicians scouted out by Mastercard, propelled to the top of the charts whether they are truly talented or not, and thus diluting genres with corporate plants and irreversibly changing the musical landscape. By compromising integrity, Mastercard threatens the future of unfunded artists

who could otherwise rise to popularity if based upon talent alone.

It will be difficult, however, for Mastercard to implement the campaign due to rules set by the Advertising Standards Agency which states that adverts must explicitly state their nature and be obvious to consumers. Most people will initially be unaware that they are hearing an advert composed solely of musical notes. It almost harks back to the feverish rumours of subliminal messaging in music, back when Rock n’ Roll was feared as “the devil’s work.” In a slightly terrifying statement, composer and Mastercard collaborator David Arnold revealed the science behind the concept: “Music is the only thing in your auditory cortex that fires off every part of your brain simultaneously... When you hear a branded logo, an audio version, it’s like a word or an object.”

In this era of customised advertising based on our personal internet usage and social media presence, it is truly terrifying that Mastercard is attempting to subconsciously interfere with our listening experience. It is a new and frightening milestone in digital advertising. The Priceless campaign attempts to connect emotion and music through thinly veiled pseudo-neuroscience which is ultimately ingenuine. The idea comes across overall as a bit tacky at best, and invasive at worst. Hopefully, Mastercard doesn’t evolve into some form of musical Skynet.

Fern McErlane



In the Middle with Newton Faulkner

Ahead of the release of his new album, *The Best of Newton Faulkner... So Far*, Jennifer Hyman talks with the singer-songwriter about his career to date, tour preparations, his songwriting process and plans for the future.

A household name in the music industry, Newton Faulkner has had numerous notable achievements to date. His debut album, *Hand Built by Robots*, went double platinum and knocked Amy Winehouse off the number 1 spot after its release in 2007. Since then, he has released five albums, sold over 1.5 million records, and had over 180 million online streams. Before he continues to expand his horizons once again, Faulkner is now rounding off the end of an era with a 'Best Of' album.

When I spoke to Faulkner, he'd had a full day of music programming in preparation for his upcoming tour. He claims his playing style and live performances are unlike any other acoustic performer: "I've developed a weird way of doing it that is very technically difficult but also really fun! It is basically a musical slapdash that I've built for myself, that I sit in the middle of."

Of his new sounds, Faulkner hopes that, despite the big differences between the two, he can "keep the people who really like *Studio Zoo* and the people who really like *Human Love* happy." Therefore, in his upcoming live sets, we can expect to see a mix of songs featuring triggered sounds and some purely guitar and vocal numbers.

I wondered why he felt that now was the

time to do a 'Best Of' album. With continuous releases, his journey so far shows no sign of slowing. However, Faulkner explained that "it was all part of the same thought process so it was all striving for a particular thing which I found on the last record. I was looking for that for a really long time. I finally kind of crack it but I feel like I've done that now. And finding it - that was that journey. From the first album to that album was me trying to get to that point via all the other albums via life in general. When I start working on the next batch of stuff it feels quite different."

Since parting ways with his label prior to his fifth album, Faulkner has done the production and programming of his sixth album himself - although he has had the help of friend Dan Dare, the producer artist behind the project *SLANG*. Faulkner claims that Dare was there to help give the album a "modern sprinkle."

The first half of the album, which showcases his original music, has three new tracks. 'Wish I Could Wake Up', 'Don't Leave Me Waiting' and 'Take What You Want.' On 'Take What You

Want', Faulkner said "I've got a really good feeling about that one. I think that'll tap into something that I haven't tapped into for a while." Interestingly, when it comes to the specifics behind his songwriting, Faulkner poignantly considered that "I purposefully avoid having a system because I think that if I sat down and went oh it's time to write a song, let's write a song, it just doesn't feel as satisfying to me." It seems that his music must come from a place of emotion and spontaneity.

"I pretty much go as high and almost as low as I can every night."

The second half of the new album is a covers album featuring songs including, 'Million Reasons' and finishes with a unique take on 'Bohemian Rhapsody'. Of this diverse artistic choice, Faulkner reflects that "I feel like I learnt a huge amount from the covers album. I think I learnt more about producing the covers album than I did the previous two!"

With his next tour coming up, we also discussed Faulkner's pre-gig rituals as well as the differences between his current tour and his previous ones. "I definitely warm up my voice a lot", he says, "I pretty much go as high and

almost as low as I can every night. Which is a big physical ask!" But Newton is no stranger to touring. Describing his previous tour as the touring equivalent of "carpet bombing", Faulkner "toured just the UK on its own for three months solid so instead of doing one big gig we did like five small ones. It was really fun! This is kind of the polar opposite. It's a short run of big dates. It's all big cities and much bigger venues than the last run."

So what's next for Newton? First is the album release on 8th March; the 'Best Of' album is currently available to pre-order and will be shortly followed by a tour of the UK and Europe. Whilst this album signals the end of one sound for the artist, it seems like it is just the beginning of the next step in his career. Hinting at this, Faulkner then elusively went on to mention "a top secret project." It seems fans will have to wait and see exactly what he's got planned in the near future.

Newton Faulkner is playing at Leeds Beckett Student Union on May 1st.

Jennifer Hyman

Gig Round-Up

Flat Moon

Verve Bar,
23/02

In the sweaty depths of Verve Bar comes new Leeds band Flat Moon and their outrageously diverse set: bringing to life a collection of original pieces and carefully curated covers to expel their unique point of view. Playing for just under an hour did not stop the five-piece from etching their sound firmly into the minds of onlookers who flocked in abundance to the underground space, ready to bear witness to the start of something special.

The set brought with it a sense of expression few and far between within the alternative rock genre. Pleasantly surprising with a funk infused rendition of Kendrick Lamar’s ‘I’, guitarist Matthew White stepped forward to nail the verses, whilst the crowd chanted to lyrics of self-love that seemed to resonate with the feeling that the band exuded all evening. The local Leeds fivesome softly delve into simple melodies with intricate lyricism and then expel glorious riffs, rivalling those who they were covering. Classic rock meets rhythm and blues with a touch of Flat Moon speciality, creating their own genre while being clearly influenced by them all.

A newly formed troupe of suitably tenacious members to carry the already distinctive set of singles made it clear that Flat Moon are very much capable of standing out in today’s oversaturated market. Their flare and undeniable skill being only teased at – frontman Jacob Kendrew playing his guitar overhead and backwards saw a thunderous response from bandmates and onlookers alike. Each member bounced off of another, as the lads treated us to what could have been a private jam session – they were clearly having fun with what they love doing.

Leeds is a hub for talent on the rise and Flat Moon dictated that their name was not to be forgotten; their future place in the northern music scene is solid, if an overflowing basement and four happy chaps is anything to go by.

Jessica McCarrick

Cub Sport + Niall Summerton

Headrow House,
20/02



Sometimes the support artist steals the whole show. Niall Summerton’s slow crashing surf embraced all that touched their toes into the band’s melodic waves. With only one song released to date, the Yorkshire native has somehow managed to create the musical embodiment of the meandering stream of students falling down through Hyde Park at sunset. Ironically, I would waste all my life listening to ‘Oh, To Waste My Time!’ if I could – I don’t know if it is the sliding guitar, understated vocals or atmospheric trumpet, but it is an ear worm that will never truly leave my head. Think of a less pretentious Mac De Marco with soul enough to feed a thousand.

That is not to say that Cub Sport were not breathtaking. Quite a juxtaposition from Summerton, the Brisbane quadruplet offered an atmosphere as bright as lead singer Tim Nelson’s rose-gold glittery blazer.

Nelson opened the set unannounced with the acapella ‘Unwinding Myself’, the intro to their latest album. It takes real balls to start a lively set with slow solo vocals, especially at Headrow House, where the audience stand less than an arm away, but he smashed it. With not a moment to waste, they then smashed the silence with ‘Video’ and unbolted a vast discography of songs, with scattered notions of inclusivity and religious metaphors reminiscent of Nelson’s childhood.

Their third album’s recent divulgence into a heavier electro sound was the focus of the night, with ‘Limousine’ taking centre stage as the crowd tried to sing along with the chorus with more sounds than words. Old favourites were left to the end; ‘Chasin’’, the story of Nelson’s acceptance of feelings for Sam, the keyboard player, dispersed one final blast of energy into a crowd heavy-laden with sweat and left everyone beaming from ear to ear.

Jenny Pudney

Wild Nothing

Belgrave Music Hall,
13/02

Wild Nothing proved themselves to be a late-2000s dream pop outfit who have stood the test of time in their triumphant return to Leeds.

Jack Tatum and Co. took to the stage at the music lover’s sanctuary, Belgrave Music Hall, greeted by a mass of eagerly waiting die-hards of all ages. Veterans of the indie community may argue that Wild Nothing’s time has long since gone after the excitement of Diiv’s *Oshin*, Beach Fossils’ *Clash the Truth* and, of course, *Nocturne* from our band in question, died down a few years ago. Adding further to this are growing frustrations with contexts like Zachary Cole Smith’s inconsistencies with album releases due to drug battles. This may have even been an opinion I had held myself over the past year, as the numerous carbon-copies of these dream pop giants made the entire genre feel so exhausted and even somewhat nauseating.

Any comeback album from these three 21st-century, transatlantic dream pop giants since the initial craze has been worthy of a listen, but overall the genre had become rather uninteresting. Nonetheless, as a long-time fan of Wild Nothing, I could not resist but to take this rare opportunity to see them in a live setting.

It would be incorrect to get into the main ‘meat’ of this review by saying something like “I was pleasantly surprised” because that is not entirely true. Wild Nothing have made me very aware of their talent with every release, and I think their musical style makes them somewhat exempt from falling into the wishy-washy black hole of reverb guitar music that the present day has brought. The extent of my impress with the band comes from the gig as a whole and how it reassured me that this genre need not be set aside just yet.

Opening with the grooving ‘Nocturne’, from the aforementioned album of that name, the crowd was instantly hit with rays of nostalgia, cups of overpriced beer oscillating in all the hands of the post-teen slow-dancers. Their set featured a perfect balance of old and new music, ensuring as many people could go home contently humming their personal favourites; singalongs like ‘Summer Holiday’ and psychedelic odysseys like ‘A Dancing Shell’, the latter keeping things interesting with its luxurious saxophone solos.

Technical blips with guitars were resolved rather seamlessly and met with support from the front to the back. While looking around at all the mesmerised people – as young as 18 and as old as 50 – the entire gig proved to be rather symbolic of how Wild Nothing have been able to stay relevant and have overcome the various struggles with the copycats and the new fads, nearly ten years on from their debut *Gemini*. They rounded things up with indie classic ‘Shadow’ to everyone’s gratitude that they could live their bedroom floorfillers from the good old days.

Alfie Whitehead

White Denim + B.C. Camplight

Leeds Beckett Student Union,
19/02

It is rare to go to a gig where the performance is seamless and the energy is relentless throughout a near two-hour set. This, however, is exactly what Texas rockers, White Denim, managed to achieve with their phenomenal show at Leeds Beckett's Student Union.

White Denim embarked on their UK tour earlier this month, debuting 2018's excellent seventh studio album, *Performance*, and teasing the audience with new record, *Side Effects* set for release in March. Support from the evening came from the incredible B.C. Camplight (Brian Christinzio) who delivered a heartfelt and personal performance. Tracks from his latest album, *Deportation Blues*, proved to be the main highlight, particularly when Christinzio encouraged a cry of despair towards Brexit by dedicating 'Fire in England' to Theresa May's prohibition of him residing in the UK.

B.C. Camplight set the bar high but White Denim did not disappoint. They launched into the set with 'Backseat Driver' and 'Moves on', showcasing their infectious sound, which transcends the boundaries of psychedelia, blues and rock. The changes between songs throughout the night were flawless with slick riffs, strong bass and tight drums. Original members of the band, frontman James Petralli and bassist Steve Tribecki, were joined on stage by newest members Greg Clifford on drums and Michael Hunter on keyboard. All are incredibly talented musicians and had the audience completely hypnotised throughout their two-hour set.

Amongst the huge setlist, the songs that received the greatest response included the classic 2008 single 'Shake Shake Shake' and the electrifying 'Pretty Green'. Despite the pleas from the audience, because of playing a multitude of tunes back to back, White Denim ran out of time for an encore and simply played right up until the curfew. White Denim exited the stage leaving the audience exhilarated and impatient for the release of more music in March.

Phoebe Berman

Preview: LANY

Leeds Beckett Student Union
11/03

Love and the experience of it has been at the heart of LANY's music since their very conception. Barely a year on from the release of their phenomenal self-titled debut album, however, came *Malibu Nights*, perhaps their most heart-wrenching yet. Written in the 50 days following frontman Paul Klein's breakup with his then-girlfriend, this is the band at their most vulnerable, following the ups and downs felt in the wake of that heartbreak. Naturally, a world tour was soon to follow, taking LANY's raw, magnetic pop right onto our doorsteps with a show at Leeds Beckett's Student Union in March.



LANY have proven again and again that they are an intrinsically thoughtful band in regard to the artistic elements of their music and their brand – the crescent moon on *Malibu Nights'* artwork is how the moon was expected to look on 5th October, the album's release date. With such miniscule details perfected, it is safe to assume that the Los Angeles natives will not fail to deliver a night that is aesthetically and musically beautiful.

Supported by fellow Los Angeles band, lovelytheband, the night is set to be grounded in dreamy indie-pop and a feel-good vibe – both band's music provides the perfect soundtrack for a day spent lazing in the summer sun.

LANY's return to Leeds is certainly not one you will want to miss – their confessional yet relatable lyrics set to a classic backdrop of infectious synth-pop is one you can enjoy regardless of whether or not you are familiar with the band. It creates the kind of atmosphere where you are free to dance the night away and that isn't one you can turn down easily.

Neive McCarthy

Album Review

Kehlani - While We Wait



Hot on the heels of Ariana Grande, Kehlani delivers a modern pop R&B record that has a similar sound to the mega star.

Kehlani burst onto the scene in 2014 with an eight track album titled *Cloud19* followed by collaborations with the likes of Chance the Rapper in 2015. Shortly after, she signed to Atlantic records and released her first full length album in 2017. With the second album, often cited as the make or break of an artist's career, Kehlani delivers well for the current music climate.

Honest lyrics, layered vocal harmonies, driving beats and a sprinkling of gospel soul are present throughout the duration of *While We Wait*. All four features (MusiqSoulchild, Don Kennedy, Ty Dolla \$ign and 6lack) are great additions to the album. Conceptually, the album discusses the all-too-familiar subject of relationships, sex and love but delivers well on this.

Individual tracks that stand out were 'Morning Glory' and 'Love Language'. The former adds rhythmic interest to the record as a whole, as it uses occasional shifts from a 4/4 pattern - for example, on the word "goodbye" in the chorus.

My personal favourite, however, is the last track on the album, 'Love language'. Built around a riff that carries throughout and utilising vocal samples, it is simple but effective.

Whilst this album has the potential to chart well, it lacks differentiating factors in sound and lyrical concepts from the rest of pop today - a risk which pays off for Kehlani. If you are after some enjoyable and easily digestible pop, then this album delivers in bucket loads.

Jennifer Hyman



In The Middle with Kornél Kovács

Ahead of his set at Headrow House on Friday 22nd March, we caught up with left-field house producer and DJ Kornél Kovács to chat all about his upcoming album and the prospect of taking up dance classes.

You released your sensational EP 'Metropolis' in 2018; in one sentence could you sum up how the year was for you?

Thank you for calling my EP sensational - as for the year 2018, I'd rather not talk about it. In one sentence: Time to move on already!

So, coming from Stockholm and having Hungarian parents, what got you into music? Have you got a particular musical childhood?

Yeah, I would say so - I grew up with my Mum and she would play everything from Kraftwerk and Velvet Underground to jazz and old Hungarian folk stuff in the house. I played the piano and the drums and was part of a children's opera troupe for years, eventually scoring the lead role in Benjamin Britten's *The Little Sweep*. I also went to special music schools for elementary and high school. So yeah, musical childhood for sure!

2019 has just started, have you got any new tracks being released soon?

Yes, an album. Eight new tracks. Released in April.

You were once known as "Stockholm's youngest former jungle DJ" by the age of 14. What influenced you to pick up your headphones again after your early retirement?

My first go at djing was before I could actually get into clubs myself. I didn't really have many friends so I kind of lived in this dream world of music and raves, all experienced through the comfort of my own room. It was a pretty normal childhood - but with a stack of British

music magazines on my nightstand instead of like comics or that sort of thing. I'd memorise Metalheadz catalogue numbers instead of football scores or whatever. Anyway, around the age of 14 I started getting more friends and stuff and my childhood obsession kind of faded away for a bit, but a few years later I was able to sneak into clubs using fake IDs and then the whole djing thing was suddenly connected to my actual life again, which made it a lot more exciting of course.

What inspired you set up the Studio Barnhus? Do you have any future plans for the label?

In 2009, myself, Axel Boman and Pedrodollar contracted a medium-sized market analysis firm here in Stockholm to assess the possibility of successfully launching a new Swedish dance label. Their findings concurred with our hypothesis of there being unexploited market shares in this business and we quickly acted to fill the gap. In the future we plan to further develop our business, satisfying shareholders and customers alike.

You've played at a few festivals, including Lost Village; you fit perfectly with the summery house vibe. Do you prefer festivals or smaller sets like our venue Headrow House here in Leeds?

Honestly, I love doing both. I'm happy when I get to play music for people, doesn't really matter too much if it's 20 or 2000 of them. As experiences, both can be equally fun, relaxed, hard, nerve-racking, cathartic, repetitive - the size of the crowd or stage or whatever is probably not even in the top 10 list of things that affect what a gig feels like.

How have you seen this music industry change and evolve over the years?

Wow, big question. Looking at these past 10 years - if we're talking industry, not art, things have actually changed less than I'd expected them to 10 years ago? Streaming was the next big thing back then and, well, it still is, I guess? Vinyl is still around as a niche thing. Maybe the death of the download has been the biggest change in terms of the "music industry." Mp3s are so retro now!

Your album 'The Bells' was recorded with the assistance from Matt Karmil in 2016. How do you choose who to remix or produce with?

I believe in working with the people closest to you, be it in geographic or spiritual terms. There should be a connection beyond the music.

Have you got any other plans for 2019?

Apart from releasing my album and touring the world, I'd love to become an even better dancer this year. Might start taking some classes.

I wish you all the success with that. So finally, what is your ultimate goal? Where do you want to be in 5 years?

I'd like to have a full set of gold teeth in my piehole and at least one more album under my belt. Would be good to marry a wife and make some children. I don't know, just normal human stuff please!!

Caris Dollard

End of an Era: Maribou State at Mint Club



From Britain's involvement in the European Union to Freddo bars only costing 10p... all good things eventually come to an end.



Image credit: Jimmy Mould

Clichés aside, the same can be said for Mint Club. Following the first ever show in 1998 - when Back To Basics welcomed house music legend Derrick Carter - Mint has been at the forefront of Leeds' electric dance music scene. However, after two successful decades, the award-winning small club is switching-off the lights and shutting down the decks for one last time, much to the disappointment of students past and present.

Therefore, in celebration of the club's influence over the years, Mint are showcasing an ensemble of events entitled 'End of an Era', building up to one final blowout bonanza. Prior to this, on Friday 1st February, former Leeds University students Maribou State were joined by Prospa and Foz to coincide with their most recent album *Kingdoms In Colour*. Equipped with their full live band, the Maribou State pair (Chris Davids and Liam Ivory) are also heading on tour, playing at Manchester's Albert Hall on Saturday 9th March.

As opposed to previous sell-out 'End Of An Era' events - which constricted the ability to move within a confined

area - tickets for Maribou State did not sell out. Yet, with fewer tickets sold, comes extra space to dance. The capacity to enjoy oneself without worrying about spilt drinks or dirty looks permitted a continuous groove throughout the entirety of the night, as demonstrated by the energetically joyous crowd seen flaunting shapes under the infamous illuminatory ceiling. Mint resident, Foz, opened proceedings and immediately set the scene by dropping Crazy P's Disco classic 'Like A Fool'. Mint has recently become synonymous with hosting house and techno events, so it was refreshing to get down to some Nu-Disco Funk and chilled Electronica.

The down-tempo beats brought a light-hearted ambience to the club, compared with big room tech nights where the main focus is on the DJ booth, and crowd cohesion is minimised. This environment was perfect for Maribou State to seamlessly infuse their fluid instrumentals and infectious vocals into a predominantly electronic set. While early releases by the duo inherited a deep House sound, their influence has matured as time has progressed, turning their attention away from monotonous baselines to songs that invoke true emotion.

Their most recent single, 'Kingdom', is a perfect resemblance of this as their tracks now establish meaning and purpose. For example, during their interview with In The Middle, Maribou State described the video for 'Kingdom' as "about travel, not just through our world, but a whole universe." This understanding and awareness of music bringing about something greater and more meaningful than just generic deep House rhythms has been central to Maribou State's development.

As if paying homage to the talent on show, the rise of mobile phones indicated the crowd wanting to capture, and subsequently share, the moment when 'Kingdom'

was dropped. While clubs in Germany have banned the use of phones, lauded as being a great decision by numerous dance music critics, it also exemplified the appreciation for Maribou State. In my opinion, 'Kingdom' was the best song of the night, and it provoked the most raucous reaction.

Leeds natives, Prospa, closed the event. But unfortunately, towards the final moments, the crowd became rather depleted. However, this did not disrupt the energy, which was supplemented by the faster beats dropped by Prospa. Unlike the 10:30am finish experienced the following night thanks to Eats Everything and Green Velvet, most students had departed for after-parties and the like by around 4am, leaving the dance floor somewhat deserted for the remainder of Prospa's set.

Regardless, Maribou State's event certainly marked Mint Club's 'End of an Era' in style.

James Bate



Image credit: Joel Hirst Photography

Happy 13th Birthday Wire. Love, Midland and Leeds



Saturday 16th February saw Leeds' favourite basement club celebrating its 13th birthday. Since opening in 2006, Wire has hosted various nights in collaboration with the world's best DJs, including Craig Richards, Four Tet, DJ Bone, Job Orbison and Ben UFO. Projecting the Electro music scene through an impressive Funktion One Soundsystem, Wire is, undoubtedly, one of Britain's top underground music venues. Its intimate 300 capacity space allows music lovers to come together and indulge in the best music around in the heart of Leeds city centre.

And what better way to celebrate than by inviting one of the best, Midland, to perform in an all night long set. Named after Midland Road in Hyde Park, Harry Agius is a former University of Leeds student who carved a name for himself after collaborating with the Hesse Audio crew. Many recognise him through the hit track 'Final Credits', which helped shoot Agius into the limelight after the track was framed as Mixmag's track of the year in 2016. No other DJ was more fitting to celebrate Wire's birthday with, especially as Agius used to work behind the bar in the club itself.

As expected, Wire was at full capacity and buzzing with students, all seeking warmth after a wait in the cold queue outside. The night was a mixture of techno, Electro and House, with flickers of Dubstep littered between the punchy beats. Known for his eclectic mixes ranging through Disco to Techno, Agius certainly performed to suit everyone's tastes and artfully demonstrated the enormity of his talent at seamlessly mixing through the genres. The night was awash with heavy beats and constant anthems that sent the crowd roaring, fulfilling the night with top quality music.

One particular crowd favourite was a garage hit from Roy Davis Jr, remixed by Large joints, entitled 'Gabriel'; a progressive tune, remixed on the classic, featuring a powerful trumpet riff that created a mellow groove, keeping the dance floor buzzing with head bobs and two steps. The crowd never faded through the swathes of glitchy noise and throbbing bass, and an overall mixture of songs you couldn't help but move to.

Molly Langley

In Review: The ACS Fashion Show

Tasha Johnson brings us a spectacular round-up of the ACS Fashion Show, which took place just over a fortnight ago in order to fundraise for Leeds Mind charity.

What is the ACS?

The ACS stands for the African and Caribbean Society, under the umbrella of Leeds University Union. The society aims to educate members socially and professionally, so that they are more aware of themselves, and to empower and celebrate black culture. Members don't have to be from African or Caribbean backgrounds, and the society is a safe place for people to develop themselves and friendships with others, as well as partake in fun cultural events.

What was the fundraiser for?

The event was intended to raise money for the charity Leeds Mind, which is an organisation centred around helping people achieve positive mental health. Harrison Pepple, the society's welfare officer, said: "The main purpose of the show is to start a conversation on mental health, as it's not spoken about much in the African-Caribbean Society. It's important to let people know that they have a place to go if they need it, and that free counselling is available." The show also aimed to showcase local designers of colour, and to support black businesses and anyone trying to get their name out there.



Photo: Violet Osarollior



Photo: Violet Osarollior

The Show

The theme of the show was 'Phase', looking toward different phases in fashion. For example, the Just Harry Designs' collection represented the new movement toward more sustainable fashion with the use of recycled denim. The street wear collection, all of which was handmade, featured items such as a patchwork denim jacket, a patchwork denim skirt, and a series of t-shirts with flirty denim shapes on the nipple. Also, the collection from Mel Fox/The G in Me perfectly embodied the streetwear trend, with unique and interesting garments. Particularly memorable was the prison inspired jumpsuit, and the khaki jumpsuit.

Overall, the event had a great atmosphere throughout, with everyone in attendance having a genuinely great time. I would very much recommend joining the ACS and becoming a part of their inspiring creative movement, or at the very least attending one of their wonderful events.

Sheri Cuffe

The show kicked off with the first walk by designer Sheri Cuffe, featuring beautiful handmade two-piece designs, with a subverted kimono creation in periwinkle, lime, yellow and cream. Sheri Cuffe's collection was inspired by the arrival of the Windrush generation in 1948 (a large group of people from the Caribbean immigrating to Britain). Each of the four pieces was beautifully embroidered with intricate patterns on the back representing different Caribbean islands. Fans and handbaskets were used as accessories to convey the idea of the women stepping off the boat and starting their new lives.



Accent Clothing and Tnisha Ranae

A range of suave and elegant men's suits were displayed courtesy of Accent Clothing, while BA Fashion student Tnisha Ranae showcased a collection of women's wear and swimsuits. Her collection paid tribute to her cousin, who died after being fatally stabbed in the chest outside a bar in Leeds city centre. According to Tnisha, "the swimwear was just really about embracing natural body shapes and sizes and having diverse models in race, shape, weight, height and size." But, for the other collection, "it is dedicated to Marlon. He died from a single stab wound to the heart, so I looked at the heart and what protects it, the rib cage and muscles, and that informed my designs."

Clyde Sherrife

Clyde Sherrife's collection centred around a particular print, which was navy with a pop of colour. The dresses all shared this print, but varied in style and cut, and beautifully complemented both lighter and darker skin tones.

Tasha Johnson



Audaciously Feminine: Charlotte Knowles AW/19 Collection



Credit: Chris Yates



Credit: Chris Yates



Credit: Chris Yates

Charlotte Knowles creates more than just clothes, she forms intricate sculptures of fabric which are best displayed on the body. For her latest ready-to-wear collection, critics hailed Knowles as pragmatic while still managing to exert the artistic rigour that brought her earlier, more fantastical work into the spotlight.

This shift is undoubtedly due to this being the designer's final collection under the protective wing of the fashion incubator London East, thus inevitably meaning greater pressure on future collections being commercial as well as critical successes. Knowles continued to refine her eponymous brand's visual lexicon, subverting traditional garments inextricably linked with female intimacy and oppression and reworking them into sensual garments of empowerment.

Bra shapes, suspender straps and other

traditionally intimate and whimsical objects are radicalised when fashioned out of puffer and tweed to become protective outerwear, an unashamedly sensual armour. This tension felt almost like a debate on female sexuality being landscaped on the body itself. The complexity of fabric manipulation was impressive, yet the designs remained humble enough to allow such craftsmanship to appear effortless and organic, hiding the precision and technical skill it undoubtedly required.

Whilst these more explicit reworkings mean Knowles' artistry is evidenced from the first glance, it is in the subtler details that the designer shines and stands apart from the rest. Pockets are plentiful, both discrete and overtly zippered and external. Whilst Knowles' aesthetic is undoubtedly personal, her functionality seems unabashedly focused on the needs of her clients. Toggles allow

for garments to be cinched and adjusted to each woman's body. Indeed, the use of both toggles and athletic-style crotch seams on many trousers allows subtle levels of athleisure to diffuse into the collection. When counterpointed with the aforementioned sexual feminine elements, Knowles succeeds completely in capturing her self-proclaimed aesthetic of "Assertive. Future. Feminine."

The designer has previously said that being part of Fashion East was intended to enable designers to "grow and walk on their own", however, this seems to be somewhat of an understatement in Knowles' case. If she can continue to successfully diffuse her unique sensuality into garments whilst keeping them functional enough for a ready to wear audience, she is sure to fly.

Iona Tompkins

Lagerfeld: Genius, or Problem?

Following his recent passing, Georgia Prichard explains why we must not separate Karl Lagerfeld's art from his damaging opinions.

After his recent passing, Karl Lagerfeld has been remembered for his 'genius' and creativity by the House of Chanel and famous models such as Cara Delevingne, Adwoa Aboah and Victoria Beckham. He was remembered as a friend and family member by those close to him, and rightly so. People were in mourning for someone who had impacted and changed their lives or made their career. However, the term 'genius', which has been bestowed upon Lagerfeld, has come under attack, particularly by women. It seemed that his highly-esteemed position in the fashion industry made him untouchable, even when his ideas of unattainable beauty went against the very basis of fashion - to liberate and express.

There are many reasons as to why Lagerfeld is crowned a 'genius', the most obvious being that he is a man. The term 'genius' is tainted with a misogynistic undertone, given to men such as Van Gogh, Michael

Jackson, Freddie Mercury, Stan Lee or Mac Miller who all have two things in common; their creativity in the arts and that they have died. There is no biological or scientific reasoning that these men are deemed a 'genius', it is purely based on sex. Now, I am not denying their talent - I love Mac Miller's music - but I can't help but point out that there are plenty of women who have passed away and their talent has gone unnoticed.

For Lagerfeld, however, it goes deeper than this. His approach and treatment of women, and his abusive discourse towards women he deemed too fat or too old, is everything that is wrong with the fashion industry. He was shamed only the day after his death by feminist Jameela Jamil, who tweeted that Lagerfeld was "a ruthless, fat-phobic, misogynist." All true, but certainly there is a time and a place for this comment, and a day after someone's passing is neither of these.

There was certainly an out-pouring of grief for Lagerfeld by those who worked closely with him, mostly by women, and yet Jamil stood strong and called out women such as Cara Delevingne who claimed Lagerfeld was a "human-being" who made "mistakes." I ask, how much longer can we wipe someone's slate clean? How much longer will this excuse last?

The argument that we should let Lagerfeld pass on with a reputation which ignores his racist and misogynist nature cannot be excusable just because he is no longer here to defend himself, because I am sure, he would not. Just because he has gone, and there are many other people in the world who are hurting and attacking people's lives, does not mean that Lagerfeld should be excluded from the long list of powerful individuals who thrive on hierarchy, money and hate.

Throughout his career, there was out-cry

over his hateful comments, so why should we celebrate his achievements? Well, surely the argument goes both ways? If we remember Lagerfeld for his callous actions during his career, we must also recognise that Lagerfeld did not only make himself a huge success, but brands we acknowledge now as utterly desirable - Chanel, of course!

In any case, when women have to fight everyday to claim a right to their own bodies, to the way they want to dress, look and feel, I believe that Lagerfeld's reputation will forever be tainted by his hateful words, and this is something we cannot blame on age or generation. Even as the fashion industry progressed into something - slightly - more inclusive, Lagerfeld, still a member of the House of Chanel, continued to attack the modern woman on her size, colour, and age - perhaps in fear of her growing power.

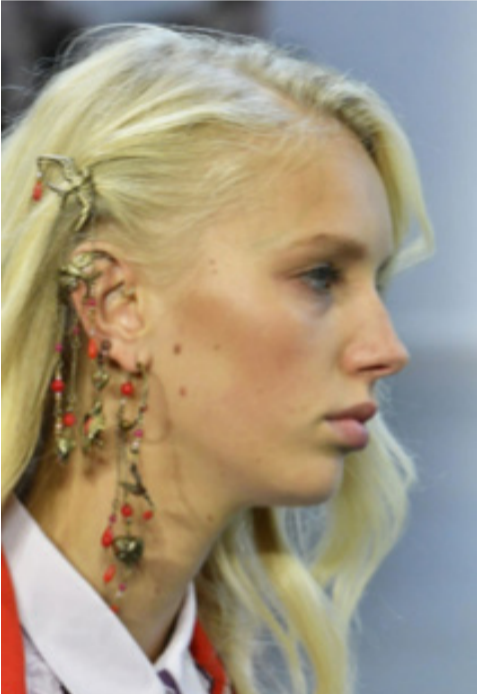
Georgia Prichard

Hair We Go: London Fashion Week Worthy Hair Accessories

After London Fashion Week AW/19 saw a focus on dressing up the hair to outdress the body, Lydia Flack brings you a nifty guide to shopping the looks without paying the price.

Off the Cuff

Zimmerman served us Amazonian princess looks with an amazing collection of hair pins which doubled up as ear cuffs.



ASOS currently stocks a surprisingly worthy substitute to the Zimmerman pin-ergo-cuff, but without the hit to the old bank account.

It's All Gucci



One of the stars of LFW was the decadent Gucci crystal hair slide, painfully on the steep side at £315. For most of us, we need an affordable alternative that we can flex while holding onto our student loans.

While it's too early to find replicas of the diamante slide (which doesn't mean you can't get creative with a glue gun, some gem stones and a barrette), as always, we can rely on Etsy to offer some gorgeous and on brand alternatives.

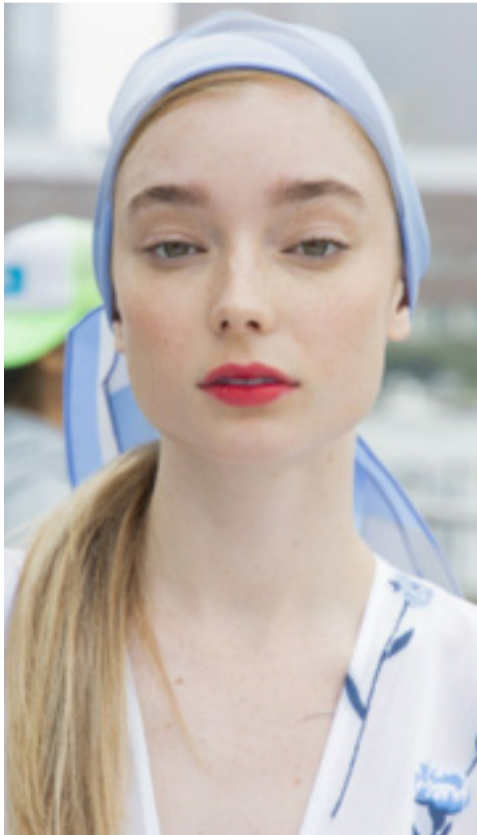
Silky Secrets

Emilia Wickstead's collection of simplistic hair bows rejuvenated an ode to the childhood aesthetic that we loved.



Forever21 are currently stocking some equally gorgeous velvet alternatives, where the bow comes ready formed on a hairband for hassle free accessorising.. But an even cheaper way to go about it is having a dive into the scrap box of your local fabric shop, where you'll be able to purchase a whole bunch of coloured ribbons for mere pennies. Besides, I think we prefer the adorable skewdness of a self-tied bow, reminsent of Belle from *Beauty & the Beast*.

Almost Hepburn



Lola Rose exuded powerful Audrey Hepburn vibes with these sleek head scarves (unfortunately the convertible and oversized sunglasses don't come included).

ASOS offers a huge range of head scarves at cheap prices, from the simple imitation of Lola Rose's elegant collection through to funkier prints fit for the Leeds crowd.

Lydia Flack

Film, Theatre and Art in Leeds



God's Own Country at the Hyde Park Picture House

In honour of Valentine's Day, Hyde Park Picture House put on a special viewing of Francis Lee's *God's Own Country*. The film is noticeable for being set in our very own Yorkshire Moors, where the earth is scoured raw by the elements and perennial fog that seems to permanently isolate this sombre canvas from the rest of the world.

Johnny (Josh O'Connor) is a disaffected youth burdened with the responsibility of running the farm under the ever-watchful eyes of his sick father and hard-mouthed grandmother. Johnny anaesthetises his anger and frustration with heavy drinking and aggressive sex with strange men. What is clear from the beginning is that Johnny's self-loathing does not stem from his homosexuality, as is often the case in LGBTQ+ films. This film is unconventional in the sense that Johnny is already aware and accepting of his homosexuality. The cause of his anguish is rather the prospect of his life spent indefinitely trapped on the farm, under the strict rule of his overbearing father.

God's Own Country exhibits both Francis Lee's exquisite direction and DOP Joshua James Richard's incredible eye for cinematography: some of the most beautiful shots include a single light from the farmhouse glaring steadfastly into the morning, and large panning shots of the grey landscape. The naturalist imagery further

emphasises the bitterness of life on the farm.

The arrival of Gheorghe (Alec Secareanu), a mild mannered and fiercely handsome Romanian worker, unsettles Johnny and the film's tone begins to soften. Initially Johnny is hostile towards Gheorghe, but a few stolen glances indicate a budding attraction. Their first sexual encounter is a dirty, hurried and explicit romp in the muck. But as Gheorghe caringly nurses the lambs, he also begins to gently alleviate Johnny's agonising loneliness and the two quickly form a close relationship. What the film lacks in explanatory dialogue, it possesses instead in beautifully captured silent exchanges between Johnny and Gheorghe, suggesting that sometimes the physicality of love surpasses the need for its articulation. The two men are far from alike; a theme more pressing than ever within the constant context of Brexit. Yet, isolated together on the bleak moor, their relationship is allowed to develop with surprising mutual tenderness.

This film is unique in the sense that its uneven story arc progresses from miserable to hopeful; Johnny and Gheorghe eventually reunite and return to the farm together. More high profile LGBTQ+ films than this low-budget Sundance number do not follow such a happy narrative: *Brokeback Mountain* (2005), for instance, ends with Ennis' devastating discovery that his former lover Jack is

dead. *Blue Is The Warmest Colour* (2013) begins with love, but ends with the relationship between Adèle and Emma slowly falling apart due to jealousy and individual insecurities. Even the much deified *Call Me By Your Name* (2017) ends with a scene more emotional than Jack finally letting go of Rose. It appears that there is a trend within LGBTQ+ films to deny our lovers their much deserved happy ending. Whilst LGBTQ+ stories are being given more screen time than ever before, they are too often candid portrayals of the heart-breaking nature of real life love. Similarly, whilst LGBTQ+ cinema often highlights the agonising side of love, heterosexual romantic narratives typically end with a euphoric kiss in the rain. What is so refreshing about *God's Own Country* is that it is by no means a glossy and unrealistic portrayal of human emotions similar to classic Hollywood romances. It is filled with both bestial and human bodily fluids; this film is riddled with heart-breaking moments only then to be punctured by happiness and love.

Why must the failsafe queer narrative include heartbreak? Emotions, whether they are happy or sad, do not discriminate by sexuality. Why must we then discriminate for them? *God's Own Country* entertains the idea that an LGBT film can end happily. Hopefully, this sets precedence for future queer narratives.

Hattie Graham

Every Brilliant Thing at Stage@Leeds

Every Brilliant Thing was, well, brilliant.

As the playwright, Duncan Macmillan, said himself: the play "is not a philosophy for living; it's not a solution for depression; it's just a way of talking about it." Director Ella Kennedy, producer Maya Wilson and solo actor Tom Mitchell cleverly stitched together a piece which responds to the contemporary anxieties surrounding mental health and the effects it can have on those witnessing someone experience it. The text is a challenging piece to transcend authentically onto stage, but the production team successfully confronted stigmas around the theme by immersing the audience into a quick, humorous and provocatively thoughtful performance.

Every Brilliant Thing tells the simple story of a seven-year-old boy attempting to comprehend his mother's debilitating depression and multiple suicide attempts. Kennedy made sure to take the audience on an intimate and genuine exploration of the effects mental health can have on a child as he navigates life without a maternal presence.

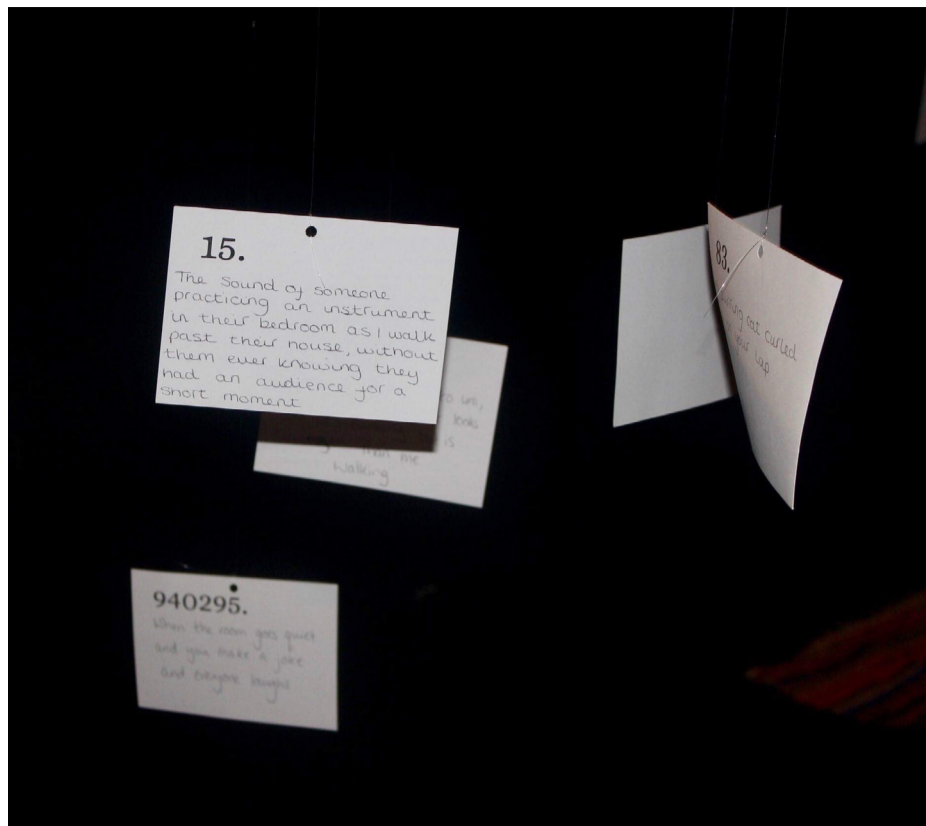
From the moment you walk through the Stage@Leeds doors you are invited to be a part of the action of the play. Notes with non-chronological numbers are suspended from the ceiling, lit up with a dull light from antique lamps. "Roller-coasters", "Ice cream", "Films better than the books they were adapted from" and "Old people holding hands" are cited as examples of some of the brilliant things that make life worth living. The audience are then encouraged to contribute their own brilliant things, which really encapsulates the immersive style of the performance. [cont]

Tom Mitchell skillfully commands the stage for just under an hour, making the whole experience come and go in a flash. His quick-witted humour and subtle improvisations bring to life an honest and immediately likeable character. Mitchell's interaction with audiences begins before even taking our seats, as he explains to us that we will be instructed to call out whatever is on the piece of paper handed to us as we entered. This breaking of the fourth wall works particularly well to set the empathetic tone and style of the performance.

The audience are sat around the perimeter of the stage, giving plenty of room for Mitchell to prance, dance and run around the space. The intimacy of Macmillan's text is felt at every moment. A one man show of this skill level is a remarkable feat for any actor, and one Mitchell handles with sensitivity and a genuine laugh-out-loud humour. It's hard not to laugh when an unsuspecting audience member is made to take off their shoe and sock to make a sock-hand puppet.

The most poignant and well delivered moment of the play carries itself in the form of one simple line: "suicide is contagious." Mitchell lets the words hang in the room just long enough to pack the punch, before he sets off on another one of his ramblings: this time it's "Hoisin duck pancakes" and "The smell of old books" that are our brilliant things. Kennedy's direction handles the difficult themes of the play with sensitivity and responsibility, turning moments of crippling frankness into quick, responsive wit. If you don't leave the theatre feeling connected to a room full of strangers, then you're doing theatre wrong.

Sian Smith



Michael Morpurgo: A Lifetime of Stories at Leeds City Museum

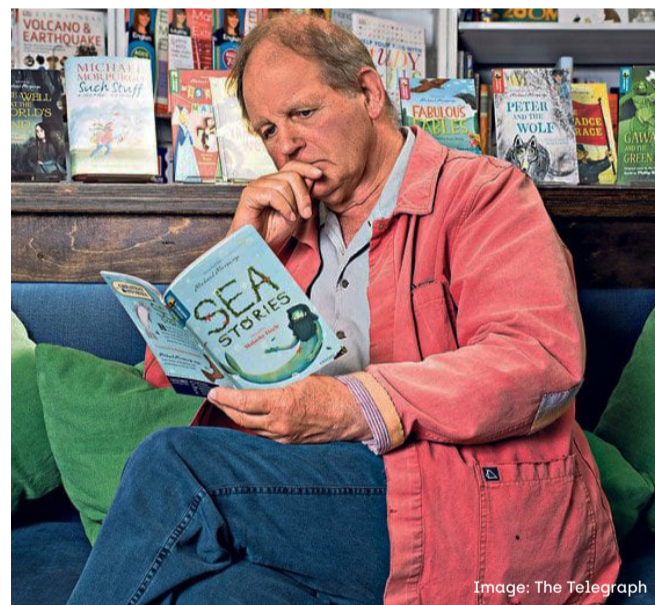
For decades, Michael Morpurgo's stories have captivated and inspired generations of children. In over a hundred books he has championed education, environmental awareness and peace as ways to protect and empower children all over the world. To celebrate his achievements and to inspire people of all ages, The National Centre for Children's Books is hosting an exhibition at Leeds City Museum this spring.

Tucked away on the top floor of the museum, *A Lifetime of Stories* opens up to an array of art displaying scenes from Morpurgo's stories under soft, calming light. Michael Foreman's cover art for *Kensuke's Kingdom* stands as bold as ever; the entire landscape painting making the protagonist's ship seem small and frail against the deep blue of the powerful sea and pale red of an overbearing sky. More art backdrops a selection of short biographical pieces about Morpurgo's early life, which are in turn interspersed with manuscripts and letters written by the author himself.

The overall effect is a seamless integration of information, artwork and written artefacts that paint a beautiful picture of Morpurgo's life leading up to his career as a storyteller. The centre of this first room is kept clear. With nothing but a wooden bench and two small boxes of Morpurgo's work taking up space, the room has an almost homely feel to it.

As I first entered, I was encouraged to find a small group of children quietly reading a collection of books, entranced by the artwork and atmosphere around them. When making an exhibition targeted partially at children, The National Centre for Children's Books did not fail to remember what makes a museum interesting to a child. Far too often, exhibitions tailored for younger audiences present their information in ways that can lose the interest of their target demographic. It's easy to make jokes about children being loud and annoying in museums; but in the time I was there, the kids were just as hooked on what the exhibition had to offer as the adults. Further into the museum, original drafts of stories are displayed next to information about the inspiration behind Morpurgo's beloved books. Quotes from stories fill the empty spaces on the walls and add a sense of drama to the proceedings.

"They will be shooting one of their own and it feels to them like murder" stands poignantly beside a display about *Private Peaceful* and the "futile loss of life" that inspired the story. The large section of the room dedicated to *War Horse* is coupled with energetic and frightening accounts of "shells" and "machine gun fire" that perfectly set the scene for the story. This attention to detail immerses the audience in Morpurgo's stories, bringing them to life one by one as people make their way around the exhibition.



This immersion is heightened with the creative use of props from the theatre production and the movie adaptation of *War Horse* as well as a map of the island from *Kensuke's Kingdom* stretched out on the floor. The exhibition also has a small boat from *The Wreck of the Zanzibar* to take pictures in and artwork created by children and adults inspired by Morpurgo's stories.

If you're a Michael Morpurgo fan, then *A Lifetime in Stories* ticks all the boxes. The exhibition captures the spirit of Morpurgo's work in the very first room and then further immerses the audience in the elegant storytelling and life of one of Britain's most beloved children's authors. With no entry fee and full accessibility, the exhibition comes as a strong recommendation to fans of all ages.

Matthew Jeffrey

Papier-mâché Heads, Clay Armour and how to Really Love Yourself: Letters of Love (II) at Hyde Park Book Club

Whether you're showering your significant other with roses or buying your mates an aptly pink cocktail at Spoons, Valentine's Day is geared towards showing people you love them. I found myself equally surrounded by symbols of love; but not just any old pink paper heart bunting.

Context Collaborative, a collective of artists founded by Fine Art students at the University of Leeds, transformed the basement of Hyde Park Book Club into a feast for all the senses; hand-drawn bunting made from envelopes - with mottos such as "make his life hell" - poetry-filled collages of cityscapes, riso prints and zines for sale and, in the background, a photomontage visual by Ruby Sherrington where Greek sculptures mingled with flowers and garlic bulbs.

Context Collaborative are known for their immersive spoken word nights, but at Letters of Love (II) they also presented a number of short films made by participants, each with an alternating take on relationships. Emma Bird's captivating short *Terry* was particularly moving: a story of loss, parental bonds and sharing the experience of life. All these thoughts were evoked through the innovative medium of papier-mâché, which made up Terry's disproportionately large head and sad bulging eyes.

Roisin Kerslake-Sim from Leeds Arts University worked in ceramics to create the performance piece *Respire* - where sculpted segments of clay were placed on the body of an actor to construct a seemingly organic armour.



Image by Carmen Walker-Vazquez



Image by Carmen Walker-Vazquez



Image by Carmen Walker-Vazquez



Image by Carmen Walker-Vazquez

The meditative pace and minimalist soundtrack accentuated the significance of each of the performer's motions to the point of intensity. Kei Matsunaga rounded off the film screenings with her ode to family strength, *Bye Bye Daddy*, in Japanese with English subtitles. With the feel of a home camcorder, Kei's film was both intimate and humorous, exploring the poignancy of grief.

Video monitors placed around the room screened a series of documentaries relating to themes of family and heritage. Sarah Danaher's piece was composed of family footage, and Daniel Geraci created a montage about the relationship between her grandma and herself, connecting with her Italian heritage through the cathartic experience of kneading dough.

The spoken word contributions were equally thought-provoking, exploring themes as varied as the bond between sisters, feelings evoked by Nina Simone on a long-haul flight, and a café in Bilbao which has seen both red lipstick and heartbreak. The night came to a close with performances by the duo Cecilia, and a solo set by Graeme Miller, both performing their own songs.

All proceeds at the event went towards supporting the Fine Art Degree Show titled *Cut the Mustard* which will begin in June. Context Collaborative created another wonderfully cosy event that perfectly captured the essence of Valentine's Day - togetherness - through sharing their work.

Carmen Walker-Vazquez

Human Aquarium Exhibit – Mermaids in St John's

Open Theatre's *The Flick*

Directed by Abby Barker and adapted from Annie Barker's 2013 play, Open Theatre's production of *The Flick* follows three cinema employees who are stuck with the mundane job of cleaning popcorn and projecting films in a fading movie theatre in Worcester County, Massachusetts. When the new employee, Avery, arrives, tension starts to arise, and secrets unfold. This adaptation successfully delivered a powerful blend of awkwardly funny moments and strong scenes of thought-provoking emotion.

Walking into the Alec Clegg Studio, I felt strangely disorientated as I saw audience members sat in rows on the stage. I quickly realised that the stage was in fact made up on the conventional audience seating, as it perfectly resembled a segment of a cinema auditorium. Accompanied by a black back panel with a small hole for the projector, this set design was simple yet immersive; the floor littered with rubbish helped to make it feel like the audience was observing a very real situation.

The Flick is an entirely dialogue driven piece, relying completely on the stamina and strength of its actors; this adaptation had exactly the acting strength it needed. Lewis Fraser (Sam), Ejiro Imiruaye (Avery) and Franky Lynn (Rose) all did a fantastic job in keeping the audience engaged with their impressive performances, all-the-while maintaining a North-Eastern American accent (mostly). It has to be said though that the star of the show was Imiruaye, whose singular moments of dialogue were incredibly moving and a joy to watch. As a group, their quick rapport was funny when it wanted to be and touching when it was needed.

Yet, there were several moments where the pauses in between lines did seem awkwardly long. This could be down to the sometimes slow lighting transitions, or simply a directorial choice for dramatic effect. These pauses were still few and far between. Of course, the utilisation of the skill of the actors was brought about by director Abby Barker, who made great use of the set's layout and of the ability of her cast. The choices Barker made in blocking throughout the play kept the play and its characters convincing from start to finish, and really helped maintain the monotonous tone of the setting.

Overall, Open Theatre's adaptation of *The Flick* captivated the struggles of wanting more out of life than you can grasp, as well as letting go of the old for the new. It was an unexpectedly moving piece that left me with lots to think about after, achieved by the great strengths of all involved.

Rory Yeates Riddoch



A watery underworld has popped up in St John's shopping centre for two weeks this February. *Human Aquarium* is a free pop up exhibition all about waste, recycling and the effect humans have on the ocean. Throughout the weeks, they are holding family-friendly arts and crafts workshops as well as film workshops and talks with sustainable companies. The exhibit aims to draw your attention to plastic waste and the damage we are causing to the ocean, with the centrepiece being a giant octopus made from just one person's plastic waste over six months.

The photo series asks what life in captivity is really like and what effect our recycling choices have. Tom Martin's photos replace marine life with merpeople, trapped in nets and washed up on the beach; it's a clever concept prompting visitors to think about how we treat animals, and whether you would want to live your life in a tank too. The photo is captioned: "Merfolk are transported from across the world to be trained in the UK." With the recent increased focus on sustainability and movements around the university campus and the country towards being a zero-waste society, the exhibit is extremely topical. The organisers behind the pop-up say that this is only the beginning of their plan and that they aim to hold more events later on in 2019/20.

The space itself is designed to take you on a trip under the sea, decorated with blue and green nets, satin seaweed draped from the ceiling and plastic jellyfish which perennially bob about. The design is fun and creative and would be a hit with smaller children; the exhibition is small and will only take 15 minutes to browse at the most, but it is an inventive idea and a fun way to break up your day, something to do on your lunch break with interactive opportunities for children and adults. Pop along if you're looking for something a bit different; you will leave knowing a bit more about sustainability and, if nothing else, it's a great place to take some funky pictures.

Georgie Burgess

TV Reviews

Our weekly roundup of the shows you should be watching and the ones to avoid.

Dating Around



Dating Around is Netflix's new high production, low stakes dating show. One person is subjected to five consecutive dates which are quilted into a single serving.

If you can get through the first episode, in which sentient stock image Luke needs a five second laughing break after one of his dates says "I hope you're not a serial killer," you will be rewarded. After this bland hazing, daters like jewellery buyer Gurki, private investigator Leonard and sales associate Mila seem revelatory.

Of course, every date begins with a compulsory establishment of New York singleton credentials: "How long have you lived here?" "When was your last relationship?" "How dead do you feel inside?" But they quickly move on to more profound topics like tattoos, astrology and their cocktails of choice.

In general, the show doesn't so much fall short of romance as order an Uber and walk straight past it. Yes, the signs are all there: flattering low lighting, sweeping shots of New York and attractive women in midi skirts – but the money poured into the show can't hide that this is dating in the app age.

In episode three, costume designer Lex epitomises the show's slick brand of insincerity. A doe-eyed hunk tells him, "I work in real-estate development" and Lex enthusiastically replies, "Oh shit, that's fun." However, his mask satisfyingly slips when song-writer-come-dog-walker Hanna reads his lyrics aloud. "I'm ready to blow my load... I see the Versace jeans across my wet dreams" he announces to blank-faced Lex, before asking earnestly, "What do you think?" Mercifully, Lex can only utter a loaded "umm" before the show cuts away.

Say what you like about Netflix, it knows what its audiences want (thank you, cookies). The show is markedly less straight and white than most. However, they also know us for the hateful, binge-watching trolls we are. In this kind of fast-fix entertainment, there needs to be more heartbreak than hope. In this aspect, they are faithful to real life: women bear the brunt of the dating fall out. Gurki is screamed at by an estate agent who takes her divorce personally, Sarah draws a date to an end after a shower of innuendo from a man who introduces himself as "Mister John" and countless others are clumsily rejected in taxis home.

Despite its stylised intimacy, *Dating Around* cannot deny that this is casual dating for the casual viewer.

Phoebe Thompson

The Umbrella Academy



It's big, it's exciting, it's funny and it's definitely different.

The Umbrella Academy is a Netflix television series, surrounding a dysfunctional family of 'superheroes'. The show is based on the original American comic book series created by Gerard Way, frontman of My Chemical Romance. The first limited series of six issues was released by Dark Horse Comics between September 2007 and February 2008, and won the 2008 Eisner Award for Best Finite Series / Limited Series. A second and third series followed, with a proposed fourth series in development. The television adaptation was announced in 2015, and has finally been released on Netflix.

The first scene takes us back to 1989 where, across the world, 43 super-powered infants are inexplicably born to random, unconnected women who were not pregnant the day before. The Academy, led by The Monocle (aka billionaire Sir Reginald Hargreeves), only manages to purchase seven of the babies. These make up Spaceboy (Luther Hargreeves), The Kraken (Diego Hargreeves), The Rumor (Allison Hargreeves), The Séance (Klaus Hargreeves), The Boy (Number Five), The Horror (Ben Hargreeves) and The White Violin (Vanya Hargreeves).

The Monocle takes them to the Academy, raising them to be crime fighting child superheroes. However, the team break up and go their separate ways in life, only to be reunited nine years later by the death of their adopted father. The estranged family, all with their own unique powers (and personalities), must put aside their differences and work together in order to face an even bigger threat: the apocalypse.

With a killer cast, great hallmarks of modern superhero stories - including ultraviolence and offbeat humour - and a large helping of family drama, *The Umbrella Academy* shines in its weirdest moments. Already, the series has kicked up quite the positive attraction, with critics praising its refreshingly new storytelling, top class acting, relatable characters and epic visuals.

Think *Deadpool*, *Kickass* and a hint of *La La Land* all rolled into one. Yet again, Netflix has delivered us another binge-worthy series.

Sadie Fox

The Weird and Wonderful World of



Lifestyle & Culture Editor, Caitlin Tilley, delves into the immensely popular internet phenomenon.

Autonomous Sensory Meridian Response (ASMR) is an experience characterised by a static-like or tingling sensation on the skin, typically beginning on the scalp and moving down the back of the neck and upper spine. It is a relaxing, often sedative experience, during which you may slip into a trance-like focus and your eyes will become heavy.

ASMR triggers are, on the whole, very strange. Soft voices, repetitive sounds, and eating particular foods can all work. Common examples of ASMR include eating honeycomb, uninterpretable whispering and hair-brushing. Neurologists have ventured that it's comparable to frisson, which is the term for the chills and euphoria we can get from listening to music. Yet, whilst there is research explaining the psychological response to ASMR, there is still very little understanding as to why this phenomenon occurs, and why some people are affected and not others. For those who want to feel ASMR but don't, unfortunately there's no way you ever will – if the physiological response isn't being triggered, there's no way you can train your brain to make it happen.

Online, ASMR content has been around in its current form since 2010, when the term was coined on a Facebook group dedicated to discussing the sensation. YouTube searches for ASMR grew over 200% in 2015 and are consistently growing. On its own, a top ASMR video can garner over 16 million views. The videos mostly feature a performer, sometimes called an ASMRtist (usually a woman), talking in a steady, hushed voice while using visual stimuli, like hair-brushing, to evoke comfort. There are also videos of anonymous hands carving bars of soap or rolling marbles across a table that are just as popular.

Despite the inclusion of whispering women, often in full make-up and gazing at the screen, ASMR isn't sexual. Youtuber and full-time ASMRtist Emma Smith (better known online as Whispers Red) acknowledges some people may see her work that way, but dismisses the idea: "when you see a woman wearing lots of make-up, coming right up to the camera and maintaining eye contact, it's usually in a sexual context," she says. "But it can be nurturing and kind, too."

It's no surprise that many brands have been quick to hop on the trend. Last month, a Super Bowl beer advert, broadcast to 98 million people, featured Zoë Kravitz tapping her fingers on a glass beer bottle. Paramore's Hayley Williams recently used ASMR to promote her hair dye brand Good Dye Young, and Samsung is making a phone case designed to enhance sound recording, specifically to help make ASMR videos.

As ASMR grows in popularity, so too has the research around it. Last summer, Dr Giulia Peoria of Sheffield University conducted the first study into its physiological effects. She invited participants, half of whom reported experiencing ASMR and half of whom didn't, to watch a mix of ASMR and non-ASMR videos. The study revealed that the heartbeats of those who experienced ASMR decreased by an average of 3.14 beats per minute while watching the videos: "even those who didn't had some level of reduction in heart rate," says Peoria, "which is consistent with the idea that it relaxes the body in a comparable way to music-induced stress reduction and mindfulness techniques."

Whatever the appeal, what was once an internet subculture has now become mainstream, and the craze continues to grow.

Caitlin Tilley

Mattel's Disabled Barbie Doll: Progressive? Or Late and Short-Sighted?



Image: Diane Bondareff

Mattel has finally introduced a new disabled Barbie doll. Mattel's first disabled Barbie - 'Share-a-smile Becky' - came out in 1997, but was quickly removed from shelves once buyers realised that the doll and wheelchair were not compatible with Barbie's earlier accessories - such as the Dreamhouse, which, inconveniently, was not wheelchair accessible.

Now, Mattel is back to redeem itself with a new line of dolls with disabilities. This includes a Barbie in a wheelchair and one with a prosthetic leg, along with a ramp to make the Dreamhouse accessible. But is this new attempt at diversifying their dolls really going to make a difference?

The multi-million-dollar company should have taken accessibility issues into account when they first released Becky. When they didn't do so, and rushed the product out with little thought, they risked making any disabled child feel as though they were like that doll - someone that was excluded from spaces that aren't designed for them. But now, these new dolls are designed to a much higher standard and represent more accurately what disability can look like.

There is a distinct lack of representation in children's toys when it comes to disabilities. For a young child to be able to see these dolls, whether disabled or not, is something positive as it means those with a disability now have a Barbie they can relate to. Furthermore, the normalisation of these disabilities will be vital for encouraging those

without disabilities to have a great understanding and awareness of what disability can look like. A positive conversation is being opened up and, crucially, it's involving young children.

There are still some issues, as there always seems to be. The dolls are still skinny, conventionally pretty and well made up. There is still a lack of diversity in that sense. It suggests that, yes, you can be disabled, but you still should be skinny and wear makeup. Speaking with a woman who has been disabled since being young girl about this release, she said, "I would have loved one because it's normal. Everyone had a Barbie doll and it was just another thing that everyone had. To have one like me would have been great." The new Barbie dolls no longer sought to tell just one story of one type of person.

Ultimately, Mattel's latest venture is a good step in the right direction, but it is one which altogether seems to have been undertaken by a group of people who aren't really clear on the realities of disability.

Isabella Kemp

Flipping Good Ways to Celebrate Pancake Day

With Shrove Tuesday just around the corner, we will soon be wildly whisking the eggs, pouring in the flour and milk, turning up the heat and famously flipping pancakes to our heart's content. But what will everyone else be getting up to? Here is a look at some of the ways in which others from around the globe will be celebrating this yummy day.

Denmark

In Denmark, Fastelavn is commemorated on the last Sunday before lent in which tons of Danish-style buns are gobbled up. These buns have their middle removed so that whipped cream and jam can be generously squeezed inside instead. Whether they are cats, dogs, monsters or princesses, Danish children get dressed up into a variety of costumes and play games throughout the day. The most common one involves taking a bat and bashing a sweet-filled barrel in order to reach the sugary goodies that lie within. Those who manage to collect the most sweets will be crowned Cat King and Cat Queen.



Canada

Although situated on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, the people of Canada celebrate Shrove Tuesday in a very similar way to us. However, their pancake toppings vary slightly from our own, including marvellously sweet maple syrup, jelly-like jam and even sizzling sausages. Items may also be placed in the batter mix in order to tell the future fortunes of family members. Finding a coin in your pancake symbolises good luck, whereas spotting an item for a certain trade means that you are likely to enter into that trade.



Poland

Known as Sledziowka in Polish, this is Poland's version of Shrove Tuesday. In complete contrast to what us Brits are used to, this day sees the consumption of great quantities of herring cooked in a variety of ways. If that wasn't enough, Fat Tuesday is also celebrated in Poland – a day which leaves celebrators utterly stuffed, motionless and incapable of digesting another morsel of cake. Yes, this is a day in which thousands of doughnuts and other sweet treats are relentlessly consumed before the arrival of Lent. This is without doubt one of the busiest times of the year for Polish bakeries, often opening in the early hours of the morning just to keep up with demand throughout the day.



Spain

Spaniards celebrate Jueves Lardero, which falls on the Thursday before Ash Wednesday. Although this has many different variations depending on the Spanish region, what they all seem to have in common is the tradition of clearing the pantry of any meat and bread. This food will then be used to prepare a large meal (typically an omelette) which will be shared with and eaten by the whole community. It is not uncommon for school children to be let out of school early on this day. They will then go knocking on their neighbours' doors asking for eggs and chorizo. This food is gathered together and contributed towards the large meal which is usually consumed in the local town plaza.



France

Now, let's drool over the deliciously famous crêpes of our French neighbours. The main pancake-eating day in France takes place on 2nd February every year and is called La Chandeleur. A lot of superstition surrounds this day and it is thought that preparing pancakes will guarantee the arrival of good crops and wealth for the coming year. In fact, legend has it that, if you flip a pancake in one hand at the same time as holding a golden coin in the other, you will be rewarded financially.



South America

Pancake-day celebrations come in many forms in Latin America, but Rio de Janeiro's carnival must be the most famous of them all. Likewise, smaller events also take place in countries such as Mexico and Argentina. Throughout South America, Fat Tuesday usually involves the consumption of King Cake; a sweet brioche-like pastry drizzled in icing.



Why Working in Hospitality Sucks



Do you work long hours at a thankless job? Do you get minimum wage even though you face so many problems per hour you're not far off suffering an aneurysm? Do members of the public mistreat you even though you're offering them a basic service they absolutely rely on? If yes, this one's for you – if no, then welcome to the gruesome world of hospitality.

77% of students have a part time job at university and, for a lot of students, that job will be in the hospitality sector – 29% of all workers in hospitality are aged 21 or younger. If “hospitality” is a phrase shrouded in mystery for you, let me illuminate it: think waiters and bartenders, porters, receptionists and shop assistants. Hospitality

covers a few general areas – tourism, accommodation, restaurants and bars – but what they all hinge on is customer service. Interactions with the paying general public are the bedrock of hospitality and are what make jobs in the industry so demanding and demeaning.

Customers come in all shapes and sizes. Some are kind, patient, and invariably friendly; ergo, to express the grievances of student workers in hospitality first requires recognition of the pleasure serving customers can be when things don't go wrong. Customer service can be deeply fulfilling. Even on the days where things do go wrong, an understanding customer can transform your outlook on the spirit of customer service. I once welled up at my former workplace when a kind customer explained how she completely understood that mistakes happened and didn't blame us, the waitresses, for the kitchen botching her order, but instead commended us for creating such a pleasant customer experience. This is the power of a kind customer.

This power goes the other way, too: negative experiences carve a deeper impression on your perception of your job than positive ones, their mark indelible and culpable for the bad rep hospitality jobs get. Just like the kind customer who made me cry because of her kind words, another customer once made me weep in the middle of the tearoom. His soy milk hadn't come fast enough.

It's customers like this that make jobs in hospitality a minefield. Because you're the face of the service being

provided, when things go wrong – no matter how out of your control or pay range they are – it's your fault. Kitchen failed to prepare the correct gluten-free dairy-free non-GMO vegan meal? Your fault. Customer disagrees with the ethics of the company's board of directors? The ethically-dubious practices of the company are your fault. The polar ice caps are melting and sea levels are rising because of climate change? You did that – single-handedly! Not only do you have to bear the brunt of every injustice the customer has ever faced starting with the time Santa didn't get them what they wanted aged six, you have to take it all with a smile. No matter how disrespectful they are, no matter how much they forget you're a human when they complain to you – you can't fight back, because then you're the bad guy, and you can kiss your job and job place reputability goodbye.

Not all customers are hell spawn like the guy who made me cry over soy milk (he also charged into the kitchen to fetch the soy milk himself, by the way. Such was his passion for soy milk I guess) but a lot of them don't have enough patience for customer service workers who have to handle more than they're paid for. This isn't an attack on the hospitality industry's treatment of its youngest workers (here's to Lis, Andrea and Gaynor for looking after me after Mr. Soy Milk made me cry) – but it is an honest account of why working in hospitality, most of the time, sucks.

Georgie Wardall

Bloggers, Bookshelves and Blackcurrant Jam

Georgie writes about the book industry, and whether there's any shelf space left for originality.



There is a lot to be said for the art of writing and the enjoyment of reading: but has popular culture and the growth of influencers diluted the oldest craft and, in turn, the oldest leisure activity?

It seems that, especially in the last decade, reading as a hobby has fallen in interest drastically, almost a direct correlation between the invention of the smart phone in 2007 and our collective best friend Netflix. But there may be more to the issue. Has the quality of the writing fallen, or is it the mass production of texts from any genre that means we are spoilt for choice?

'Influencers'. What are they, who are they and who gives a shit? It certainly seems that anyone with a laptop can churn out a novel or biopic and it be a national success. Personally, I am someone who believes in the spoken and written word as a near religious experience (or as close to God as my sinner self will ever get) with the ability to transport myself around the globe or up into the stars with a mere description. Do the likes of Zoella and Caspar Lee and their seemingly hundreds of book releases count under this umbrella of fantastic writers and craftsmen, or is the seemingly shallow nature of the 'Influencer' destroying the image of great writing?

A cursory glance around your local Waterstones or other branded bookshop shows hundreds of versions of novels, biographies, cook books, home economic directories and life guides, but note that none of them ever seem to appear under the staff recommended sections. Now this does not mean to say that these books are not interesting in their own way; I am a keen lover of personal journeys and tales of lives gone by. I have to ask though: does the continuous recital of the human nature really need a narrative and a hard-back cover?

Books and reading are a wonderful thing to have at our finger tips, however I feel that the consistent onslaught of seemingly pointless texts is potentially, and in some cases literally, hiding texts with social/political importance - note Reni Eddo-Lodge's *Why I'm No Longer Talking To White People About Race* and Matt Haig's *Reasons to Stay Alive* being pushed to the back of shelves in favour of *Tanya Bakes* by Tanya Burr. I'm not saying that these books are not good writing, as that would be unfair to the poor ghost writers of whom get no credit, but is the star-studded title of someone with a make-up channel really worth the shelf space and waste of trees in comparison to someone with something important to say?

I want my book shelves to be filled with great novels and tales of lives I will never know and places I will never see and still feel that I spent the majority of my days falling down the rabbit hole knowing every facet of these existences as if they were my own, rather than some pretentious internet celebrity telling me how to make a Victoria sponge with black current jam rather than strawberry.

Georgie Fuhri

Post-Grad Fear: Life Beyond a Piece of Paper

Blogs editor Emily talks life after Leeds, and the pressure to have a spotless CV as soon as you leave campus.



"Yeah, but a year out isn't going to look very good on your CV is it?"

Do you know how many times someone has looked at my CV and asked me about my silver D of E expedition? I doubt I need to answer that. Three days of backache and squashed naan breads in the bottom of my rucksack wasn't as helpful as they said it would be, as it turns out.

It's March, and the reality of graduation is beginning to creep up on me (as is the dissertation deadline, but we won't talk about that).

As much as people like to joke about human geography and crayons, my degree has actually been an incredibly eye-opening three years. If you think I'll end my time at Leeds – the last year of which has involved modules that cover in detail the fragility of life – thinking about what looks professional on a piece of paper, you're going to be disappointed. And yes, that might sound irresponsible; an army of baby boomers might come after me with their "this generation is so careless" rhetoric. And, if they do, they'll be kindly met with the middle finger.

We're living in an age where Donald Trump, one of the most powerful people on our planet, rejects the very concept that threatens its existence, and an age where people from all corners of the world are struggling every day to leave the location that threatens their own. I don't claim to know everything – in fact, I'm first in line to admit that I know very little – but if there's one thing I've learnt during my degree, and my three years at Leeds,

it's that life is precious. And I don't intend on wasting any of it.

So yes, taking a year out to find out what it's like to be a proper adult, to pause and think about my future, and to spend three hundred and sixty five days giving a writing career a fair shot seems a little bit unlike what my parents, and my grandparents, chose to do.

But times have changed, and the world is a different place to how it used to be. Okay, now I *do* sound like my Grandparents. I've been to hell and back with my mental health, screamed in protest for the things that I think should matter a lot more than some say they do (here's looking at you, Trump), and learnt how to cook something other than pesto pasta.

We're a badass generation, and no matter what the baby boomers say, I've met so many people at university who are going to change the world. Whether that begins with a suit or an apron, moving home or moving on, post-grad life certainly isn't going to revolve around a piece of paper. Silver D of E taught me that nothing is worth that.

Emily Merrill

Rhabdomyolysis: The Danger of Going to the Gym that No-one Tells You About



Everyone thinks that going to the gym is always good for your health, but working out should be done in moderation.

I learnt this recently as I began to work out my arms more at the gym. I thought I was strong and essentially 'a gym lad'. But evidently, I was getting too big for my boots.

One Friday, I went particularly hard at the gym. I felt fine afterwards, my arms felt that gym 'swoll' that I had come to enjoy. But as the weekend went on, I could feel something was not right. My arms began swelling beyond the normal, and I frantically searched the internet for a self-diagnosis.

The overwhelming majority of websites suggested that I had Rhabdomyolysis, or Rhabdo for short; a rare medical condition caused by multiple things. The cause of mine was extreme muscle strain and had been worsened by drinking alcohol during the course of the weekend.

My overexertion at the gym had caused the muscle cells in my arms to burst and release a toxic chemical, creatine kinase, into my bloodstream. When I self-diagnosed myself on Saturday morning, I was still hopeful that I was overreacting. I did not have all of the symptoms so surely my puffy arms would deflate eventually. They did not, and I most certainly did not help myself by going out that weekend: drinking alcohol makes you more dehydrated, when I actually needed the opposite. I needed fluids to flush out the toxic chemical in my blood.

By Sunday morning my arms had become un-recognisable - I had sausages for arms - this was NOT normal. My name was no longer just Lucie, I was Lucie Large Arms. Soon I would be Violet Beauregarde's arm double.

To put an end to the jokes at the expense of my arms, I decided it would be best to see the doctor on Monday. My suspicions could have been incorrect because I did not have all the symptoms, but I did not want to wait any longer as I could be potentially causing long term damage to my kidneys. If I had not gone to the doctors,

I could have developed kidney failure.

When I went to the doctor, they referred me to the Leeds General Infirmary. I told the doctors of my suspicions that it was Rhabdo, and low and behold after blood tests, the doctors were shocked to inform me that I was right; my creatine kinase (CK) levels were 6000 u/l.

Reality had hit. I was not as invincible as I had previously thought. I was put on an IV drip in hospital for three days, and released from the hospital only on the condition that I would drink 2-3 litres per day for the next few days. The following days after my release from the hospital, my arms returned to their normal size and after going back for blood tests, my creatine kinase levels returned to a normal level of 80, and thankfully no long term damage was inflicted on my kidneys.

This is an example of how Rhabdo can happen to anyone. I'm a healthy 20-year-old, and I exercise a fair amount - but if you are pushing yourself too far at the gym, then you could be putting your kidneys and in extreme cases, your life, at risk.

This is by no means a scaremongering article telling you to not go to the gym. Rather, it is a cautionary tale telling you to give yourself a break now and again. Don't push yourself beyond your limits, and always stay hydrated.

Lucie Phipps

In the Middle



Tnisha Ranae's Swimwear Collection

Modelled at the LUU African and Caribbean Society fashion show,
10th February

Photographed by Photo: Hibshy Samsadin

The Shamima Begum Debate: Welcome Back or Leave Stateless?

Leave Stateless

Julien Bovill

There is nothing quite like Britain engulfing itself in a polarising, national debate. The Shamima Begum dispute, having separated itself into the “she should come home” camp and the “she shouldn’t”, is no different. It seems everyone has an opinion. It has led to Danny Dyer being viewed by some as a voice of reason after his appearance on Good Morning Britain. The former-hard man turned-political commentator asserted “Who’s there to guide her, talk to her, why is she so lost within her soul?” A convincing and valid argument certainly, but one that, in my opinion, is misplaced. The inquest into the social failings of consecutive governments to engage individuals such as Begum is a separate debate.

The discussions heated up when the Home Secretary, Sajid Javid, took the relatively unprecedented step to withdraw her citizenship. Generally, the Home Office doesn’t release such information to the general public. This was a bold move by a man whose day is still largely taken up by clearing up the Windrush mess, the last citizenship scandal to grab the attention of the nation. This debate however, is different, as the victims of Windrush were visibly wronged. Begum has not been wronged.

Begum has shown little to no remorse for her actions, epitomised by her quip to Sky News reporter John Sparks. Asked whether she was aware of the debate that was devouring her country of birth, she replied yes, and in her still thick London accent, continued to argue that people should have sympathy for her. The arrogance of Begum to even think such a thing pours scorn on the victims, and their families, of the three ISIS-inspired terrorist attacks on these very shores in the last four years. Children were mercilessly killed as they enjoyed an Ariana Grande concert and London revellers were murdered in cold blood on the city’s oldest bridge as they enjoyed a summer night out. Begum, as a mentally and physically stable 15-year-old, chose to join this group voluntarily. The argument that Begum was simply groomed on the internet and thus should claim little responsibility for her actions is but a by-word for a girl that was, and remains, a genuine threat to this country.

In the days of Brexit, security has been talked about consistently. Alongside the NHS, it is perhaps the only facet of the wider debate that has been talked about throughout the lead up to the referendum and the aftermath. Shamima Begum



threatens this security. If she is to come back, and I imagine she will end up doing just so, there is no individual at MI5 or otherwise who can sincerely tell the British public that she poses no threat. Her answer to ITV about whether she considers herself a danger summed up both her belligerence and idiocy: “What have I done? Apart from join ISIS.” Her conditions of upbringing might have been below average, and there are certainly social questions to be answered here. However, most, if not all, fifteen-year-olds are aware that packing your bags and jetting to Syria to join a terrorist organisation that actively beheads people is not an OK thing to do. Her nonchalant statement that she was “alright” with the beheadings suggests to me, and fortunately the Home Office too, that she does not belong here.

Of course, there are sympathies to be had, not least with her child. If this government has not learnt the lesson from successive governments since Tony Blair and Iraq that areas that have been ravaged by war require investment and attention in the years following or you breed extremism, then another group will be just round the corner. However, those that require our time, and potentially asylum, are not ISIS fighters and their complicit spouses but instead locals and innocent individuals. Her child is that, and he deserves his right to live peacefully in the United Kingdom, should he so wish. Unfortunately for his mother, she appears to have ruined her chance.

Welcome Back

Charley Weldrick

It’s vitally important to our national interest that we bring Shamima Begum back, and do it as soon as possible. Failing to do so would be an enormous missed opportunity, and she’s no doubt in danger where she is right now.

There are two different approaches to this argument, one of which rests on her status as a vulnerable British citizen and victim. She was under the age of consent when she was groomed into leaving Britain to be married. The second, more interesting argument is based on Begum’s enormously understated usefulness as an asset in the ongoing conflict against IS and its recruitment drives.

Ultimately, we will never be able to stamp out homegrown terrorism through foreign interventions, surveillance programs like PREVENT, or by any variation of our excessively punitive approach. Moreover, without an Orwellian state, we’ll never be able to anticipate every individual who wants to leave Britain and even less so anticipate every homegrown terrorist. As satisfying as it is for some, usually on the right, to yell that we need to ‘lock them up’ or that they ‘made their bed!’, it’s not an effective policy solution to the problem with which we’re faced.

We need to understand the complex triggers and conditions that lead to these situations, and we need to counter ISIS propaganda effectively if we want this to stop. Begum is invaluable in helping us achieve both of these goals.

Her usefulness when it comes to the first is relatively self-explanatory. Begum is one of very few people who have undergone a particular ideological journey and as such she is one of the best suited people to articulate it to us. She may initially be unwilling or even hostile, but she’s also still very young, and has undergone serious trauma. It would be pessimistic to the point of absurdity to believe that there is no chance of salvaging any use from her and her experiences.

When it comes to countering ISIS narratives, one of the most significant issues is the complete lack of credibility on the part of western powers. For all of the declarations we’ve signed that support human rights and the rule of law, we quite regularly and egregiously flout both. Any attempts to mount a convincing counter-narrative to that put forward by ISIS will be met with incredulity at best, and will actively reinforce existing beliefs at worst – in psychology, this is known as the ‘backfire effect’.

Begum is free from this taint. She has at least one vital attribute which the current primary actors in this information war lack, which is credibility. This makes her a not only useful but in fact necessary tool in the battle against radicalisation. If she comes back, she would be living proof that the British state is not a cold, unfeeling leviathan but instead a fair and reasonable actor. That she went abroad and returned would be clear evidence that, contrary to their claims, life with ISIS is far from rosy.

ISIS will be aware of this. By giving in to the innate urge to abandon Begum, you’re not only risking the loss of an asset but you’re playing right into the hands of ISIS, by substantiating their claims about the British.

By treating Begum more harshly than we would any other 15 year old (at time of abduction) who was lured from her home by a vicious gang and then married before having reached the age of consent, we punish Begum for the character and sins of those who mistreated her. I do not claim that she should be treated with impunity, but I do claim she should be treated fairly. This means returning to her country and facing a trial.

This, of course, is aside from the myriad additional reasons pertaining to her status as a British citizen. She’s the responsibility of the British state, not only to protect but to prosecute.

Imagine the response of our right wing if other countries started abandoning their criminals in Britain, leaving it to the British taxpayer to prosecute them. If nothing else, that should persuade those so vehemently baying for her blood.



Blue Is The Colour, Centrist Is The Name

Alex Passingham

The defection of three 'Remain' backing Conservative MPs to the new 'Independent Group' has further heightened speculation that a new centrist force may be on the way in British politics. This group already has numerical parity with the Liberal Democrats in terms of Parliamentary representation, meaning any further defections could make them the fourth largest grouping in Parliament. Our First Past the Post electoral system will always make it difficult for such a party to achieve electoral success, but their defections nonetheless are demonstrative of the splits in the Conservative Party and the country as a whole.

Few in the Tory base will lament the defection of these three MPs, whose liberal and pro-European views do not sit well with the bulk of the Party's supporters. This is a trend that intensified at the 2017 General election, where the Conservatives picked up many older, working-class former UKIP and Labour voters at the expense of younger, middle-class voters in cities who swung heavily to Labour. In this sense, the relationship between social class and voting that underpinned 20th century British politics has almost completely disappeared, with the parties now divided more by age, culture and identity. In this context, it is unsurprising that these three MPs no longer feel represented by the modern Conservative Party.

Their reasons for leaving however demonstrate the limitations that this 'Independent Group' may



have to overcome if it wants to worry the two main parties. Anna Soubry stated her pride at the work of the coalition government from 2010-15, a government of which she was part. This is hardly likely to sit well with the eight Labour defectors who worked desperately to oust that government. Even her fellow Conservative defector Heidi Allen seemed to attack the Party's record in office since 2010, notwithstanding the three general elections she fought and won on manifestos endorsing its policies. Thus, while being against Brexit unites this new grouping, it is harder to see what policies they could agree on being in favour of. The ex-Labour members seem on the whole committed to a centre-left 'Blairite' agenda, for want of a better phrase, which may not sit well with Soubry

who, on economics at least, sits on the centre-right.

No party should relish defections. The desire for greater homogeneity may be superficially appealing, but parties must be broad churches if they want to win elections, and thus shedding MPs on either flank of the party is undesirable. I wonder also what Soubry, Allen and Sarah Woolaston feel can be achieved in this new grouping that could not have been achieved by fighting their corner from within the party. Finally, one has to note the irony that all three desire a second referendum on leaving the European Union but will not give their constituents a second vote on their MP given they no longer represent the party that got them elected and that their constituents voted for.

The Mental Health Crisis In Teaching

Matthew Jeffrey

Across the UK, teachers have started to leave the profession faster than their replacements are being trained. The resultant drain of qualified and capable teachers from our education system has left those who remain overworked, under-funded, and under-supported.

As things stand, our education system is 30,000 teachers understaffed and struggling to fill the hole that has been left in our nation's ability to teach its children. With pressure mounting and teacher wellbeing falling, fewer than half of new teachers say they are planning on staying in the classroom long term.

But what has caused this? Last year, the Teacher Wellbeing Index was published, seeking to highlight the conditions in which our teachers work. The picture it painted of our educators and the way we treat them is a bleak one.

74% of our teachers claim the stress from work is preventing them from switching off at home and finding a healthy work/life balance; with almost a third of teachers working over 50 hours a week. Meanwhile, 74% of teachers claim to not have enough guidance or support to do with mental health in the workplace and 65% of education professionals would not feel confident in talking to their employer about work-related mental health issues.

In the last two years alone, insomnia and diagnosed

anxiety amongst teachers have jumped by almost 10%. Alcohol consumption and workplace bullying have also increased while the average amount of exercise our teachers are getting has dropped worryingly.

The numbers don't lie. With teacher suicide rates on the rise and educational professionals turning to destructive behaviours like alcoholism to cope, we have to face an uncomfortable truth. We are killing our teachers. The men and women who not only helped prepare us for the world but who we also trust with the education and wellbeing of our children have now found themselves undervalued by a society they are instrumental in shaping.

The Teacher Wellbeing Index offers a comprehensive account of the problems our teachers face across almost 50 pages of data and analysis. However, when it comes to solving the problem, no one seems to be looking further than funnelling money at the issue coupled with mental health awareness in schools. Whilst these are both steps forward to help alleviate some of our teachers' burdens; these fixes only focus on the symptoms of the problem, ignoring the underlying causes behind them.

If we are to truly help our teachers, financing and supporting them properly would be of great benefit to their wellbeing, but first we must address the underlying problems. The largest of these is a problem with the way we perceive and treat our education professionals as a society.

The phrase "Those who can, do. Those who can't,

teach" may have been coined by an anti-Semite and a strong opposer of vaccinations but for some reason that hasn't stopped us from taking it seriously. The prevailing opinion in society is that teaching is a 'safe option'. Days that seem to end at 3 and longer holidays are the cause of envy for many office workers across the country, but the reality is that, after lesson planning, marking, and other teaching duties have been attended to, many teachers find themselves worked to the bone on any given week for little reward.

If we're going to improve our education system, it's important we not only address these issues but also look to examples of strong education systems to build upon. Finland has one such system that we could stand to learn from.

Funding, not putting emphasis on standardised tests, and a belief in holistic education are often championed as the reason Finland stands so high on global education rankings. But above all, a culture whereby teachers are highly qualified, highly paid, and highly respected takes the stress and pressure of their teaching staff whilst helping them feel much more satisfied with their work.

And when their work is shaping the minds of the future generation, teachers deserve to feel like the vital members of society they are.

Squirrel Lasagne, Anyone?

Michael Turnbull

Ivan Tisdall-Downes, a chef in London, has recently started serving squirrel lasagne at his Borough restaurant, Native. The dish has been met with a lot of intrigue and excitement, as people dining at the restaurant now have access to what is considered a very unorthodox meat. More importantly though, it's garnering very positive reviews from those who have tried it – but that's not all. Innovative culinary ideas like this bring in to focus a much larger debate surrounding meat consumption: why does our society perceive some types of meats as normal food and others – like squirrel – strange?

From my point of view, this dish is a positive breakthrough for a number of reasons. The chef himself points out that serving squirrel helps educate people on how to cook with more unusual produce in a way that they feel comfortable eating. His ethical approach to cooking squirrel also highlights the importance of eating food when it's ready to be eaten and not when the customer wants it. In other words, if there are no squirrels available, then there will be none on the menu.

Currently, the grey squirrel population in the UK is estimated at 2.5million according to the Game and Wildlife Conservation Trust. Therefore, squirrel meat provides a sustainable alternative to factory-farmed meat because they are a waste product of game keeping; gamekeepers cull them and throw them in landfill because they are seen as a nuisance animal,

so this dish is actually making use of a waste product.

Moreover, Tisdall-Downes points out that by providing gamekeepers with income by selling the squirrels it will encourage them to cull the animals more ethically, whilst also helping the UK's endangered red squirrel population.

As someone who eats meat, I think that introducing more sustainable types to our diet than our current mass-produced – and quite frankly, for the most part, extremely unethical – sources can only have a positive impact. We as a global population need to find better, more environmentally-friendly solutions to our meat consumption. Current research shows that the livestock sector alone is responsible for approximately 15% of all greenhouse gas emissions globally, and this is only predicted to increase as the worldwide meat demand continues to grow.

Now, of course, there is the very valid argument that people should eat less meat to reduce their own carbon footprint and consume it responsibly – which I myself like to think I try to do – or simply just cut meat out altogether and opt for a plant-based diet. However, trying to convince the vast majority of the global population to reduce their meat consumption is no easy task, in spite of its growing environmental and ethical issues.

Hence why I can appreciate the idea of chefs like Tisdall-Downes wanting to explore using 'strange' types of meat in cooking, as it satisfies meat-eaters'

"craving" to eat an animal, whilst relieving the pressure on mass-produced types like beef – albeit on a small scale.

So, why haven't different types of meat like squirrel been eaten on a wider scale before? I personally am open to eating any kind of meat, apart from exceptions like humans, dogs, or cats, and to be honest I believe most other meat-eaters probably would be too.

Everyone has their role to play as a consumer in terms of educating ourselves and making informed decisions about the food we eat. Therefore, broadening our diets and introducing different types of meat into it – and thus reducing our consumption of the "Big Four" (poultry, beef, sheep and pork) – can be no bad thing.





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Panic on the Streets of London: Britain's High Street Crisis

Dmitry Fedoseev

The 'death of the high street' is a phrase that has dominated the public consciousness of late. News pundits, politicians, and steadfast taxpayer Mike Ashley have all expressed alarm at the grim future facing Britain's crashing retail sector. And rightfully so, because on the face of it, the internet is killing stores. Or, more specifically, Amazon is. Having just enjoyed a record (if undisclosed) number of items sold last Christmas, as well as millions of brand new Amazon Prime subscribers, it is hard to imagine how the likes of HMV could have ever hoped to compete with the online-only colossus.

Indeed, HMV's inevitable lapse into administration last month echoes (or should that be 'Amazon Echoes'?) the recent decline of such high street pillars as House of Fraser, Poundworld, and Debenhams, which strongly denies being on the verge of insolvency. Tesco, the de facto market leader amongst the 'Big Four' supermarkets is looking decidedly less healthy than in years past, making swathes of job cuts in order to save £1.5bn on operating costs.

But is this entirely a bad thing? Labour certainly seems to think so, promising free Wi-Fi in city centres in order to encourage shoppers to stick around for longer, as well as scrapping ATM charges

to ensure they get every opportunity to spend more cash. After all, reviving the high street means curbing unemployment, which is always a sore spot for voters. Naturally, the party places blame squarely at the foot of Conservative-led austerity, which has massively reduced government spending – and investment – over the past decade.

It is therefore worth noting that both parties' plans to restore the retail sector potentially involve more austerity. Phillip Hammond, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has "strongly considered" implementing an 'Amazon tax' on online retailers, in a decidedly



Image: offthegridnews.com

un-Conservative move that has garnered support from Tesco's CEO. This is in response to Amazon's longstanding history of exploiting financial loopholes to avoid paying most or all of its corporate tax. However, it isn't terribly clear how exactly this is going to save retail stores, or whether it's just another stream of government revenue.

Operating out of warehouses rather than physical shops is a large part of Amazon's 'disruptive' business model, which has allowed it to undercut its competition and amass market superiority at minimal cost. Its greatest sin, then, may be innovation, leaving traditional retailers with no one to blame but themselves. Certainly, any additional tax on them is likely to be passed onto the consumer, as Amazon increases their prices to compensate. Is a bailout even deserved, when stores have been unable to face up to modern challenges like rising business rates, low-cost German competitors, and the ever-present uncertainty of Brexit?

Regardless of where the blame lies, the consumer has already made their choice: online shopping is the way forward. High street retailers will be forced to shake up decades-old business practices, or succumb to the inexorable tide of online vouchers and free next-day delivery.

Unless they're John Lewis, that is.

CLUBS7 Conference: Seven Minute Masterclass

Dorina Abazi

Last year, some brave and creative students from Leeds University Business School came up with a powerful idea: a conference with seven speakers, each speaking for seven minutes. The aim of the project was for business students to encourage their fellow classmates to speak up, participate in current debates and inspire one another in the process.

CLUBS7 draws inspiration from the well-known and world-renowned TedTalk presentations; the decision of giving each speaker only seven minutes was based on the idea that a powerful message can be conveyed concisely within this time frame, packing enough of a punch for the audience to take away a key message.

"Everyone is welcome to join the event and listen to the inspirational speeches given by their colleagues"

Although CLUBS7 was originally created as a student-led leadership event for the marketing division, the project is centred around conversation and community. Therefore, everyone is welcome to join the event and listen to the inspirational speeches given by their colleagues. The idea was initially so successful that it was supported by the teaching body, in particular by Mrs. Caterina Presi, the Programme Director of Corporate Communications, Marketing and

Public Relations, who selected the CLUBS7 committee for this year's event, the theme of which focuses on Being Brave.

We usually tend to associate bravery with heroic acts but, at CLUBS7, we believe that bravery comes in many forms. This is what our speakers will be talking about during the event on March 20th as we explore how their bravest moments have shaped their lives and can inspire us.



Image: Dorina Abazi

Video applications for the talks have been flooding in since December and we have already received a lot of interest and support through a number of really strong and engaging applications, making the selection process fiercely difficult. Our speakers are going to cover a wide variety of topics, from heartbreak to recovering from the loss of loved ones, but space will also be given to uplifting stories

involving conquering fear and saying yes to embrace opportunity.

This year's keynote speaker is Spencer Taylor, Director of Education at Leeds United Football Club, who is delivering a speech about his idea of bravery in relation to working with the LUFC team. This second CLUBS7 conference will be held in the Maurice Keyworth Building on Wednesday 20th March with a food and drinks reception. This event provides an opportunity for you to network with members of the business faculty, as well as guests from Leeds United Football Club. So, if you fancy hearing some incredible and inspirational stories told by your fellow course mates, #BeBrave and get your tickets now!

For more details visit: <http://bit.ly/BeBraveLUBS> or the CLUBS7 Facebook page: /clubs7



Communicating Across Cultures

Georgie Wardall

Interconnectedness dominates the global marketplace and the meteoric rise of continually advancing technology has seen international relations grow faster and closer than ever before. An estimated 58% of small businesses deal with international clients thanks to interconnectedness, which has seen businesspeople from vastly different cultural backgrounds communicating more and more often. Despite the fact that the internationalisation of business demands more effective and succinct communication, the cultural boundaries that separate us still remain. It's clear that cross-cultural communication is more important to business success than ever before.

At its heart, it's the communication between individuals of different cultures that acknowledges and negates how core cultural values cause difference in communication norms; it's how people from different backgrounds interact effectively. It requires reconciliation of the intrinsic assumptions made when conversing because of upbringing in terms of expected behaviour, body language, and phraseology.

The cultures in which we are raised and live shape everything we do. From the word choices we make in conversation to the way we present ourselves, our environment dictates what we consider to be socially acceptable and appropriate. When immersed in our own culture, it is easy to forget that these norms can vary wildly between different groups of people. Our home culture presents obstacles in global business; communicating with someone of a different culture

requires remarkably different skills than when conversing with a compatriot.

Practically, this means that to understand someone's self-expression when they're from a different background, we need to understand standard practice in social and professional interactions in their culture; what is socially acceptable and what is rude. Because these standards vary across the globe, one party may act in a way they consider acceptable, which the other party does not. This can lead to disagreements, offense and misunderstanding.

Effective interaction between diverse parties is impossible without knowledge of cross-cultural communication. Without this, the meaning of physical gestures becomes redundant and even opposite of that intended (nodding one's head means 'yes' in some cultures and 'no' in others); words are misinterpreted because there is no shared understanding of the meaning with which cultures have loaded them; communication is hindered and unfruitful thanks to anxiety stemming from a lack of exposure to varying customs and traditions.

Speaking the same language is only the first barrier in cross-cultural communication. Effective conversation requires skills far beyond those that can be objectively taught in a classroom environment. First and foremost, it requires astute sensitivity to the intricacies of the identities and values behind the language: history and events shape traditions and mind-sets, thus it is necessary to understand how language has evolved in light of history to gauge the subtext of a conversation. It requires knowledge of the standard practices when meeting an individual

or sharing information digitally; what greeting and which register of language are appropriate, what to wear and what setting to choose. More than that, it requires real experience of how all these variables can interact and present themselves.

Cross-cultural communication may be difficult, but its effective use has the ability to open doors for businesses which trade on both a national and international level and allows for deeper understanding and better cooperation between businesses, employees and their clients.



Image: online.seu.edu

Psychometric Testing: Reliable Tool or Easy Fix?

Will Southall

As many of us know all too well, when applying for a graduate job these days, it's not quite so simple as sending over a CV and hoping for an interview. More and more companies are using psychometric tests in order to try and gauge a candidate's behavioural style and whether or not they have the desired characteristics for the job. But is it fair to discount somebody based on their computer assessed personality traits?

Many companies who use these psychometric tools on a large-scale claim that they help objectify the hiring process. They argue that by letting a computer decide an individual's fit for a job based on a set of pre-defined responses, any bias based on gender, race, ethnicity or otherwise, is eliminated. However, if all candidates are given a candidate number for

a name and personal details aren't made aware to employers, then reading CVs, cover letters and written applications isn't biased either.

So perhaps the most obvious reason for the increasing popularity of psychometric testing is simply because it's fast and cheap. Nobody can deny that the tests act as an effective means of filtering out candidates who aren't bothered enough to spend the time taking the tests and as such aren't suitable for the job. The problems start to arise however, when there becomes an over-reliance on these tests and companies use too much filtering, so that many 'ideal' candidates may fall through the gaps. In the words of Richard MacKinnon, an occupational psychologist at the Future Work Centre, "they should never be used to make a decision, only to inform decision-making. But in less skilled hands, that's what happens."

Some companies, in an attempt to speed up and lower the costs of recruitment even further, have started using games to judge a candidate's aptitude for a job. One former Leeds University student tells me how in an online assessment for a graduate scheme at Unilever, she was asked to continuously press spacebar as many times as possible in a minute.

If companies are ruling candidates out by their ability to perform such meaningless tasks then it seems to me like there's a problem.

But even if the testing software is based on situational and decision-making questions, rather than irrelevant games, there is a strong argument that a large part

of the results are not genuine. This is because many candidates try to answer such 'personality tests' by emphasising certain characteristics which they think the computer programme is looking for, rather than showing their true responses.

"Perhaps the most obvious reason for the increasing popularity of psychometric testing is simply because it's fast and cheap"

So, it's clear psychometric testing has drawbacks, but is it still the best way of filtering thousands of applications? I'd argue that, although it is a useful tool, it shouldn't be used as a first line of defence against unsuitable applicants and I'd rather see it be used to inform, but not dictate, hiring decisions later on in the process. Online video interviews with pre-recorded questions seem like an equally cheap and quick way of screening candidates, so perhaps these are a better alternative for the future of recruitment.

Although psychometric testing can eliminate bias and screen a large number of candidates when used correctly, it can't be 100% effective in finding the perfect candidate for a job.



Image: talent4assure.com

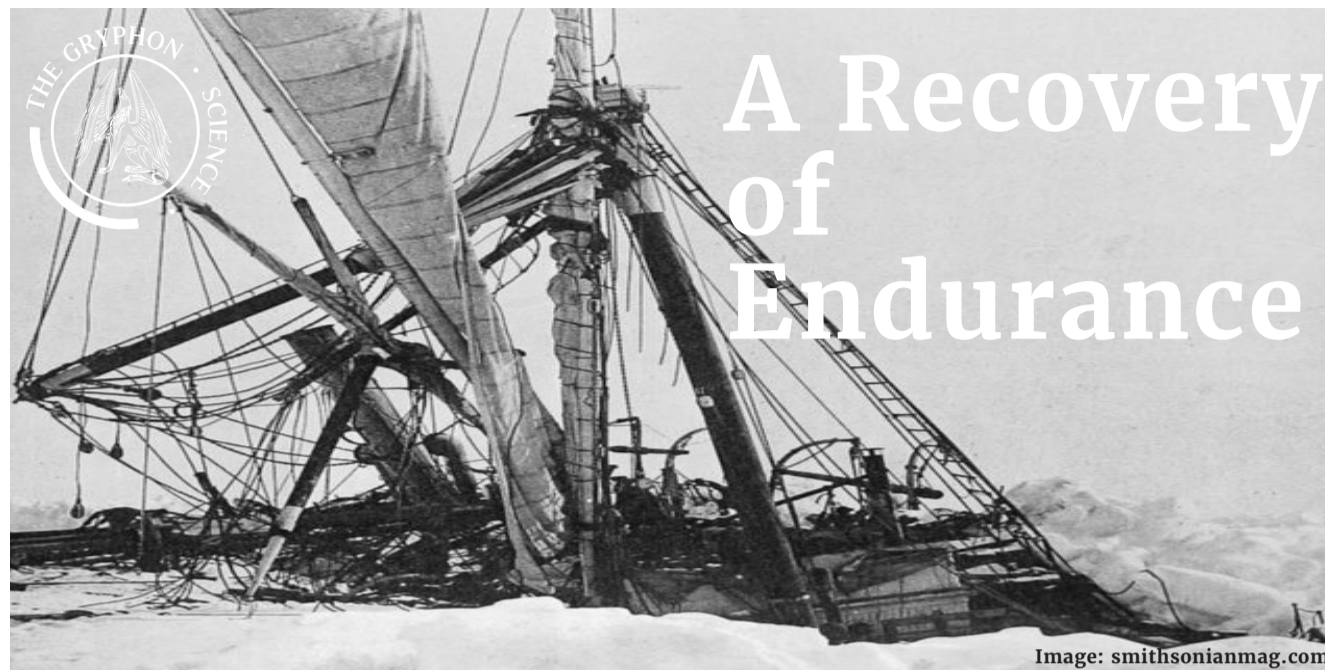


Image: smithsonianmag.com

Olivia Maskill
Science Writer

On the 5th December 1914, a man and his crew set sail to conquer the last frontier of wilderness. Unfortunately, history's premier trans-antarctic exhibition, conducted by legendary explorer Ernest Shackleton, was doomed to fail. Just 351 days after its departure from Buenos Aires, the ship 'Endurance' ironically slipped below the icy depths of the Weddell Sea never to be seen by human eyes again. But for how much longer?

Shackleton and his crew miraculously escaped the wreck of the ship, which was slowly crushed by sea ice after becoming frozen within ice sheets. The team

camped atop solid ice floes for months, hoping to float towards their cached stores on Paulet Island 250 miles away.

The men reinforced their only seaworthy vessels, three vulnerable lifeboats, and ate seals, penguins, and even their sled dogs to survive. When the ice began to break up around their tents, their last podium of safety was decimated and they were forced to take to the sea. Upon the James Caird, the largest of the lifeboats, Shackleton, five of his best men, and four weeks of rations set sail towards South Georgia 1500km northeast, leaving the rest of their men behind.

The crew faced 17 stormy days at the mercy of the sea and a 40km hike over frozen and rugged wilderness. Upon the arrival of the weather-beaten and exhausted

men, the on-duty manager of the Stromness whaling station couldn't recognise those he had seen depart 18 months before.

On the 30th August, when sketching his abominable and encompassing surroundings, artist George Marston spotted their ship of salvation amid mist and ice. All 21 men were taken back to the safety of thawed land, leaving their camp and the wreckage of Endurance behind to be swallowed by the icy jaws of the Antarctic.

104 years after the sinking of the Endurance, the S. A. Agulhas II has set sail to uncover the wreckage of Shackleton's ship, as well as to study the diverse and little-examined marine life in the western Weddell Sea. The vessel is one of the largest and most modern research ships anywhere in the world, able to break through metre thick ice at five knots. She is fitted with a wide range of science laboratories and facilities on board, providing a powerful and effective platform for multi-disciplinary research.

Aerial drones and satellite remote sensing technology will be used to assist the captain of S. A. Agulhas II in finding the easiest channel through the ice and to save it from a similar fate to the Endurance.

The team are also using an autonomous underwater vehicle (AUV) to map the seafloor for anomalies, and the possible wreck of the Endurance. Although, there will be no attempt to retrieve any artefacts from the wreckage, the aim of the expedition is to take images and produce a 3D model of the wreck site.

What secrets will this expedition uncover from one of the most memorable escapes of all time? But more importantly, what can it teach us about the extraordinary array of marine life around the Antarctic region?



Anna Davison
Science Writer

Usually, it's considered vain to pose in front of the mirror. But in the world of animal psychology, such posturing provides an insight into the mind. Self-awareness is often thought to be limited to the upper echelons of the animal kingdom: humans and some great apes. However, this (frankly self-absorbed) idea of only life most similar to us being intelligent has potentially been overturned by a study demonstrating that cleaner wrasse, a type of fish, demonstrate self-recognition in the mirror test – potentially suggesting self-awareness as well.

To be self-aware is to acknowledge your mental state and to understand how your body interacts with its environment while self-recognition is simply

Nemo the Narcissist

The vain fish changing how we think about animal intelligence.

the latter. Human babies take anywhere from 18 – 24 months to be able to recognise themselves in a mirror and this learning process was observed in the wrasse, which initially tried to fight their reflection and then switched to a series of strange behaviours. The wrasse were observed racing up to the mirror and stopping abruptly as well as swimming upside down. As a behaviour, many researchers had never seen before, this was considered a demonstration that the fish were learning to manipulate their reflection.

The mirror test is often used to try and demonstrate self-awareness through the individual observing itself in a mirror and scientists seeing how they react to marks administered to their skin. In the case of the wrasse, this involved a harmless coloured injection which turned the skin brown. When marked, they angled themselves with the mark facing the mirror and subsequently scratched the marked area, assuming it was a parasite, and then returning to the mirror to see whether it was removed.

Although this behaviour seems to fairly clearly demonstrate self-recognition at least, Gordon G. Gallup, the inventor of the mirror test, is not convinced by their findings. He posits that these behaviours arise from the fact that the wrasse clean other fish and their actions can be interpreted as attempted communication with their reflection as though it were another fish. However, many other researchers in the field are satisfied with the results and this isn't the first time that Gallup has shown great doubt at a positive mirror test result. The first fish which

tested positive was the manta ray, known by divers to have a highly inquisitive disposition, akin to that of dolphins. Dolphins themselves have tested positive as well as magpies and elephants but Gallup still asserts that only humans, chimpanzees and orangutans have truly tested positively.

This could be influenced by the widely held belief that most non-human animals are dumb beasts. However, many animals are intelligent in a way we are only just beginning to understand. Prairie dogs have a complex language which describes potential attackers to their group using a wide range of adjectives; mice feel empathy and will stop pressing a button which delivers a treat if they can see their actions causing an electric shock to another mouse; and there is some evidence that honeybees can suffer from depression. With all this in mind, is it truly surprising that some animals could learn to recognise themselves in a mirror? We often underestimate what our fellow creatures are capable of, but this shouldn't prevent their potential from being realised.

As far as self-awareness goes, it is difficult to say whether a positive result of the mirror test could ever truly demonstrate self-awareness. Recognising your body in the mirror does not necessarily suggest that you recognise your own existence and we can't just ask the animals about their experience. Although this research is far from conclusive, the public should be prepared to open their minds to the distinct possibility of the self-awareness club becoming much less exclusive in the future.

A Load of Bloody Rubbish?

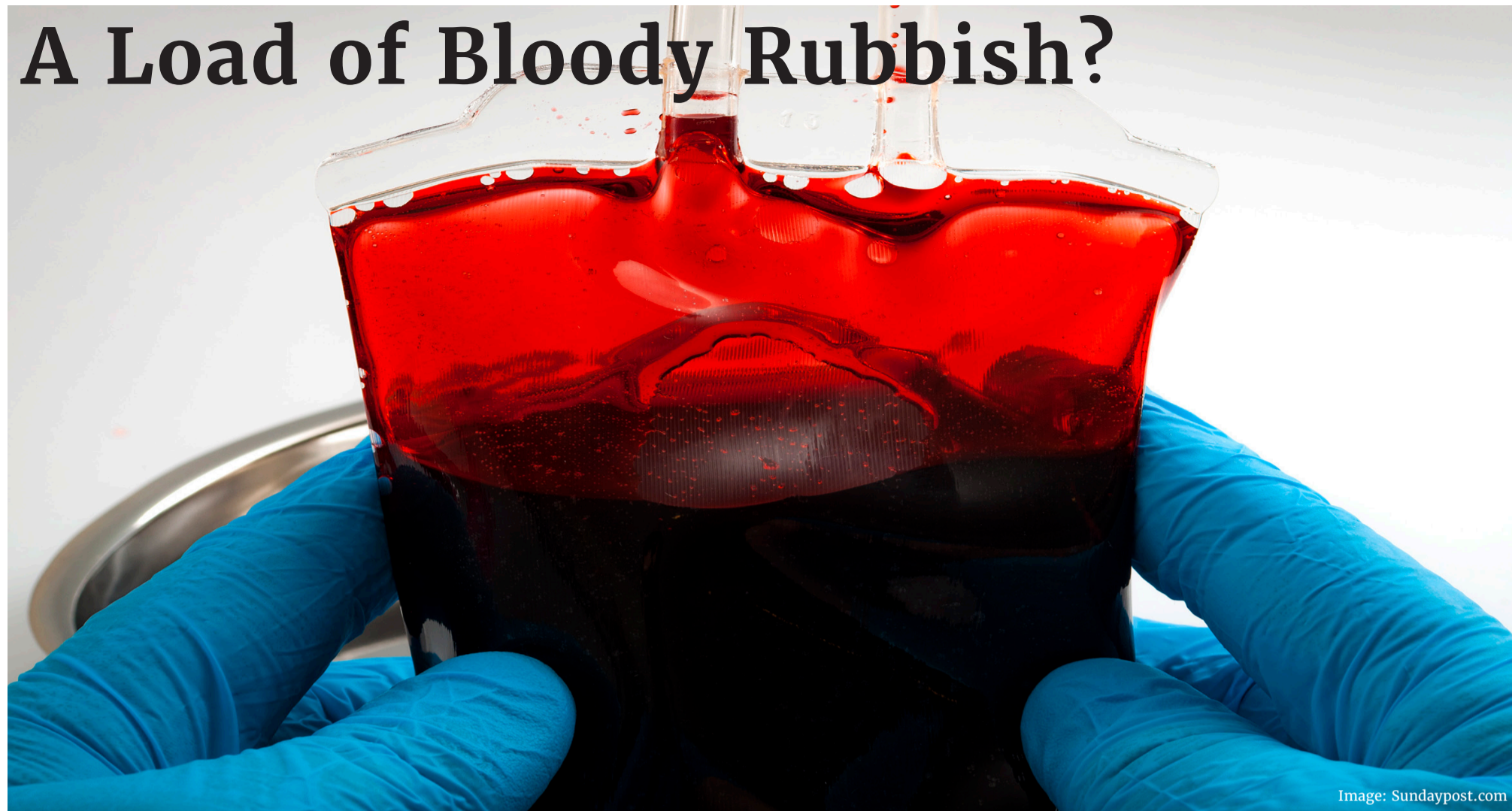


Image: Sundaypost.com

Investigating the vampiric nature of California's latest costly health fad.

Leo Kim
Science Writer

The key to a longer and healthier life may be closer than we thought. The location? Our blood; more specifically, the blood of the young.

Earlier this year, Ambrosia - a medical start-up in the US - launched a service where the blood plasma of 16 to 25-year-olds is intravenously injected into a client's circulatory system to reverse the aging process. Just one session "dramatically improves people's appearance, their memory and their strength," claimed Jesse Karmazin, Stanford medical graduate and founder of Ambrosia. However, the results of their self-funded clinical trial are yet to be released, and with a starting price of \$8,000 for a single litre of blood plasma, the company has been heavily criticised.

Karmazin first considered young blood transfusions after reading into anti-aging parabiosis studies. Parabiosis is where the skin and vasculature of two living animals - usually mice - are cut and sewn together, leading to a conjoined circulatory system. In anti-aging studies, old and young mice are surgically attached, exposing the old partner to factors in the blood of the young.

"It's like plastic surgery from the inside out"

The first age-related parabiosis study in 1972, conducted by researchers at the University of California, reported that older partners lived an average of 4.5 months longer than controls. This is equivalent to 22 human years.

In the decades since, the rejuvenating effects of young blood parabiosis in older mice were explored in the heart, brain and other tissues. The results showed

evidence of increased cell regeneration in almost all examined organs, enhancing the older mice's cognition, and making them healthier and stronger.

"There's just no clinical evidence, and you're basically abusing people's trust and the public excitement around this"

In a 2011 study published in *Nature*, there was a 20 to 50 per cent increase in the neuroplasticity network of older mice. "There is an increased activity of the synapses, the connections between neurons, and there are more genes expressed that are known to be involved in the formation of new memories," says Tony Wyss-Coray, lead researcher of the study and co-director of the Alzheimer's research centre at Stanford University Medical School. Intriguingly, their conjoined younger partners had a decrease in synaptic plasticity, which correlated with a reduction in their spatial learning and memory. Alongside young blood factors that combat aging, "there are old blood factors that can accelerate aging," he says. Motivated by his results, Coray co-founded Alkahest in September 2014, a biotech start-up aiming to treat Alzheimer's with young blood plasma.

Karmazin was inspired by these anti-aging parabiosis studies, which led to the conception of Ambrosia. Between June 2016 and January 2018, they completed the US' first clinical trial to observe the effects of young blood plasma transfusions in 104 people over the age of 35. "It's like plastic surgery from the inside out," says Karmazin. However, the trial was highly criticised as participants had to pay \$8,000 to join, and there were no control variables. "There's just no clinical evidence [that the treatment will be beneficial], and you're basically abusing people's trust and the public excitement around this,"

said Coray, suggesting that this could tarnish future blood transfusion research.

Out of the 104 participants, only one man spoke to the press about his experience. He was one of the first patients to receive the treatment, and suggested that he received "more blood plasma than anyone else in the world," adding that he wanted to "just get 10 more healthy years of living." Karmazin told the media that he was the "most excited person about this treatment."

In February 2018, the man died after going into cardiac arrest at the age of 65.

Karmazin stated that there were no deaths during, or after the trial related to the blood transfusion treatment. It has been over a year since the trial concluded, however, the results are still unreleased. Unsurprisingly, in late February 2019, Ambrosia were forced to put their operations on hold by the FDA due to a lack of clinical evidence to support their claims.

"People want to believe that young blood restores youth, even though we don't have evidence that it works in humans and we don't understand the mechanism of how mice look younger," says Coray.

"People want to believe that young blood restores youth, even though we don't have evidence that it works in humans"

It is early days, but young blood could still have the potential to aid in future treatments of diseases associated with old age, such as Alzheimer's. Thus, more rigorous research is needed before young blood is hailed as the next fad diet in our potentially dystopian future.



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Rooting for Gay Rights

England's Test Team Captain has been praised for his bold reaction to homophobic comments.



Image: ARYSports.tv

Millie Frain
Cricket

In recent years, sports stars have only been revealing their homosexuality after they have retired. Perhaps the most famous example is John Amaechi, the first NBA star to publicly reveal that he was gay, four years after he retired. Yet many may question why sportsmen and women are so apprehensive to come out whilst in the limelight.

The fact that homosexuality is still illegal in 72 countries may be the answer to this ongoing problem. Although, on the public domain of a sports field, one would hope homophobic comments were non-existent, this is sadly not the case, as was seen in the cricketing world.

With the England cricket team under immense pressure in their third and final test in Saint Lucia, all eyes were on captain Joe Root to step up and bring his team to victory. However, what Root showed us was that he is not only a leader to his teammates, but also to younger generations, as he reminded the public that sportsmen and women have morals too.

Root had come to bat when he had a heated altercation with West Indies fast bowler, Shannon Gabriel. The discussion ultimately led to the England captain saying "don't use it as an insult. There's nothing wrong with being gay."

While the microphones had not picked up Gabriel's initial remarks, many are hailing Root for his calm and firm response, demonstrating what an ambassador he is for our country. Many of the LGBTQ+ community

and sports stars have praised the young England captain, as other players in a similar position may have ignored the comment and simply kept their head down.

Root himself claimed "I just did what I thought was right." The West Indies bowler accepted the charge relating to "personal abuse of a player", and was fined 75% of his match fee and suspended for four ODIs, but the latter came from receiving three demerit points, which triggered a suspension due to previous marks.

Compare this ban to the hefty punishment of being found to be homosexual in Saint Lucia, a charge which can result in between five to ten years behind bars. Perhaps some could claim that Gabriel didn't know any better, being a product of his environment. But such arguments do not excuse the ongoing issue of homophobic comments in sport.

So we must question how we, as a public, can tackle this problem. The inclusion of Tyson Fury in the shortlist for the 2015 BBC Sports Personality of the Year, following his well-publicised homophobic remarks, simply exemplifies the fact that homophobia is not taken seriously enough in sport; almost suggesting that morals do not matter when considering talent.

Yet, as Joe Root identified on the pitch, everyone is human and no one should have to face such derogatory comments on or off the field. Therefore, bigger steps must be taken to encourage the LGBTQ+ community to get involved within sport, without the fear that their sexuality will jeopardise their career in any way.

Boycott Threatens Cricket World Cup

Amy Kate Daniels
Cricket

India's cricket team could boycott their match with Pakistan at the Cricket World Cup in England and Wales this summer.

Doubts around whether the game will be played have emerged following a suicide attack in India-administered Kashmir, allegedly carried out by Pakistan-based militants.

The two countries are scheduled to meet on the 16th June in England. India have won six consecutive matches against Pakistan at previous World Cups.

At least 46 Indian paramilitary police were killed in an attack which has sparked great anger and protests across India, although the Pakistan government has denied any involvement, despite India's claims that they have "incontrovertible evidence" that the Pakistani Authorities knew the terror attack was going to happen.

The Indian team have said they will stand by the government's and the BCCI's (Board of Control for Cricket in India) decision over whether to boycott the game.

India's Captain, Virat Kohli, has spoken out to say that the team are "really sad with what happened" and they will "stick by what the nation wants to do



Image: The National

and what the BCCI decides to do."

Sachin Tendulkar has also spoken out on Twitter to say that he wanted to "beat them once again" but will back "whatever my country decides."

The BCCI has refused to take a stand on the matter and has said that it is up to the central government to make the final decision.

However, the BCCI has told the ICC (International Cricket Council) that it fears for the safety of players during the World Cup and has urged them to "sever

ties with countries from which terrorism emanates."

Also, following the attack, the International Olympic Committee has suspended applications from India to host future events and urged other international sports federations not to stage competitions in India, until the government has provided "clear written guarantees" to ensure access for all athletes, after two Pakistani athletes were denied visas to compete in New Delhi at a World Cup event.

DeGale End His Career 25-3

DeGale announced his retirement after losing to Chris Eubank Jr. at the O2.

Image: Premier Boxing Champions



Millie Warrilow
Boxing

Chris Eubank Jr. bagged the biggest win of his seven year career so far on Saturday evening after a unanimous points decision made DeGale leave his career at London's O2 Arena.

The fairly one-sided fight saw the 29-year old knock his opponent down twice in what was talked about as their 'retirement fight'. The three judges on the day scored the fight 117-109, 115-112, 114-112, meaning the overall decision was unanimous.

Eubank was seen to knock DeGale down in the second round with what was a left hook followed by a strong right hand.

Following on from this, Eubank then continued to

dominate virtually every round knocking DeGale down again in the 10th.

Saturday night's win for Eubank takes his record to 28-2, with 21 of these wins being via knockout. For Eubank, this puts his name back into the forefront of the super middleweight division discussion.

In terms of what may come next for the winner, he may be expected to fight unbeaten Liverpoolian, Callum Smith, who holds the more respected WBA title. However, nothing is ever easy in the politics which surround boxing, meaning that we may see him end up fighting one of a number of good American boxers.

Former IBF World Champion DeGale from West London followed through on his pre-fight pledge to "walk away if he lost and consider retirement."

He announced his retirement on Thursday following

his fight, saying "it's hard to admit that I'm not the fighter I once was. I'm human and, along the way, my injuries have taken a toll - both on mind and body."

Despite the hype surrounding Anthony Joshua and Tyson Fury dominating the recent headlines in the heavyweight division, with the possibility of Joshua becoming an undisputed champion and the first to hold all four titles, DeGale leaves the sport as one of the most successful British boxers.

The transition from amateur to professional is not an easy one and his feat of being the first Brit to capture Gold at the Olympics and hold a professional world title is lauded to this day. Others have followed, including Joshua and Leeds' very own Nicola Adams, but it is undeniable that DeGale was a trailblazer in British boxing.

Tackling Transphobia in Sport

Martina Navratilova has recently come under fire for article she wrote in *The Times* about trans athletes.

Nathan Olsen
Tennis

In recent weeks, tennis legend and former Wimbledon champion, Martina Navratilova, has come under fire for strongly condemning the presence of trans athletes in competitive sport.

Navratilova has been considered an advocate of LGBTQ+ rights for a long time now, but her recent comments put across a conservative and transphobic view of trans competitors.

Back in December, Navratilova tweeted "you can't just proclaim yourself a female and be able to compete against women...it's insane and it's cheating." The tennis star added that she was "happy to address a transgender woman in whatever form she prefers" but that she would "not be happy to compete against her." Navratilova's comments are both offensive to the trans community and factually inaccurate.

The gist of Navratilova's argument is that trans women are men who transition to become women, thus holding the same physical advantage over women that men do. This is allegedly because trans women have a greater amount of testosterone in their bodies than other women do. Yet, if Navratilova is using this as an argument, she is fundamentally mistaken.

Trans athletes are subject to the same regulation regarding testosterone levels as other women are (as

set by the International Olympic Committee). So, trans women do not have a physical advantage over other women in competitive sport. If regulation prevents trans athletes having an unfair advantage over female athletes, then why shouldn't they compete in the same competitions as each other?

The comments made by Navratilova demonstrate an essentialist understanding of gender and a wilful ignorance of the available science. The former world No. 1 has consequently been removed as an ambassador for Athlete Ally, a US-based non-profit organisation which campaigns for greater inclusion of trans people in sport.

Martina Navratilova prefaced her comments with an insistence that she had done her own research before espousing an unapologetically transphobic point of view. Yet, Navratilova knew what she was doing. She decided to voice these comments in a column for *The Times*, a publication sufficiently transphobic enough to have inspired a Twitter account called *The Transphobic Times* (the account highlights articles in which *The Times* uses transphobic language, which is a lot of articles). I'm sure Navratilova will be championed by those who supposedly rail against political correctness, but what Navratilova is arguing against is empirically-based science, and she is both morally and factually wrong to do so.



Kepa Me on Boss

Chelsea’s dramatic goalkeeping fiasco in the dying moments of the Carabao Cup was the major talking point of a tense final.



Image: Eurosport

Kelan Sarson
Football

Manchester City’s victory in this year’s Carabao Cup was overshadowed by Kepa’s refusal to be substituted before the penalty shootout.

In truth, the final wasn’t the most entertaining affair, as neither side could really find that killer ball to win the game, in either regular or extra time. However, after Guardiola’s 6-0 demolition job against Chelsea weeks before, Sarri’s team will be glad that they did not have to relive that humiliation.

Unusually, Man City did not possess their typical cutting edge as the final ball went missing. Even when they did exploit the likes of David Luiz, other defenders were strong and unphased by Aguero and Sterling. In a half of very few chances, the best opportunity came when Aguero latched onto a pass before uncharacteristically blasting the ball above the goal.

Chelsea came into the contest in the second half, spearheaded by the pace and trickery of Eden Hazard who was drawing fouls for Sarri’s outfit. However, if it wasn’t for the intervention of VAR, ruling Aguero’s strike as offside, Man City could have had the lead at the 56th minute mark.

After blocking a City attack, Kante nearly scored down the opposite end, with the Frenchman failing to finish Hazard’s excellent break. The momentum was now with Chelsea and the demons from the 6-0 result could have been exorcised had Pedro scored with 15 minutes left – instead, he decided to pull it back, only for a City man to intervene. Therefore, although Chelsea were the better side in the second half, extra time loomed.

Apart from a crucial block on Aguero by Azpilicueta, extra time did not provide many highlights. But, with a minute remaining, Kepa became the main talking point when he seemingly pulled up with cramp. With an injury before a suspected penalty shootout, Sarri was ready to make the change with back up keeper Caballero set to come on. Kepa, however, had other ideas – signalling multiple times he wasn’t coming off. Sarri, unsurprisingly, expressed his discontent by nearly storming out of Wembley altogether. With a minute left, Kepa might have wanted to stay on and be a hero for Chelsea in this Cup Final.

But, not even he could save Chelsea in the penalty shootout as both Jorginho and David Luiz missed. In fact, Kepa looked sheepish as he fumbled Aguero’s tame penalty over the line, a shame considering Azpilicueta’s thunderous penalty, alongside Hazard’s audacious panenka. Man City’s penalties were dispatched coolly and confidently, epitomised in Sterling’s decisive strike, clinching Man City’s third Carabao Cup in the last four years.

Although Sarri tried to initially downplay the incident as miscommunication saying “it was a big misunderstanding,” Kepa was dropped in Wednesday’s 2-0 win against Spurs. In the post match interview, the Chelsea boss changed his tune, stating “it is a message for my group,” adding “we are a group, not 25 players.”

Despite this attempt to reinstate his authority, the Kepa situation has provided a dramatic insight into the player/power dynamic at Chelsea and how Sarri is neither respected nor considered an authority figure. Conversely, Guardiola has instilled a winning mentality which could see his team win an unfathomable quadruple this season.



BUCS Schedule 6th March

Full Fixtures and Results at
bucs.org.uk

Badminton Mens 3rd vs Sunderland 1st
2.30pm, The Edge

Fencing Mens 1st vs Durham 3rd
2pm, The Edge

Golf Mixed 1st vs York 1st
11am, Leeds Golf Centre

Hockey Womens 3rd vs Sheffield 2nd
4pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Hockey Mens 4th vs York 1st
1pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Hockey Mens 6th vs Sheffield 4th
2.30pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Lacrosse Womens 1st vs Manchester Metropolitan 1st
1pm, Bodington Playing Fields

Lacrosse Mens 1st vs Hull 1st
3pm, Bodington Playing Fields

Netball Womens 3rd vs York 1st
5.30pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

Netball Womens 6th vs Sunderland 1st
5.30pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

Rugby League Mens 2nd vs York 1st
TBC, Buslingthorpe Vale Rugby Ground

Rugby Union Womens 1st vs Manchester 1st
2pm, Bodington Playing Fields

Rugby Union Mens 4th vs Doncaster College and University Centre 1st
2pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Tennis Mens 3rd vs Sheffield Hallam 2nd
12pm, John Charles Sports Centre

Volleyball Mens 1st vs Manchester Metropolitan 1st
7.30pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

University of Leeds Futsal



Image: UoL Futsal

The University of Leeds Futsal team won the Northern 2A League, remaining undefeated.

Cian Fox
Futsal

Leeds Futsal were crowned league champions, clinching promotion after the final set of BUCS fixtures came to a close last Sunday. The University of Leeds defeated Leeds Beckett 7-1 and the University of Chester 6-2 to end the season unbeaten, with 9 wins and 1 draw, and a goal difference of +52.

The season got off to a great start in September with Varsity, as Leeds ended Beckett's back-to-back dominance in the fixture with a historic 8-5 victory. The result also showed early signs of the group's potential heading into the league campaign.

Building on Varsity success, Leeds hit the ground running in the league in October. Sizeable victories over Manchester Metropolitan and Edge Hill, 7-0 and 11-3 respectively, owed much to the team's training and preparation.

Throughout the season, Leeds would often come up against a diamond formation, with a pivot at the top of the diamond; in order to counter this, the team would adopt a high press and alternate between a 2-2

and 4-0 formation, creating space through constant movement and rotation, forcing the opposition to rush their play and forfeit possession quickly. This game-plan bred success and Leeds would go on to defeat every team in the league.

Back in the league, a 2-2 draw against Bangor in November was followed by a 17-4 thrashing of Chester Warrington, as Leeds maintained their table topping pace despite a disappointing cup exit.

The only blemish on the season came at the hands of Sunderland in the Conference Cup, as Sunderland beat Leeds 5-4 in a tightly-contested last 16 match-up, with their winning goal coming in the last few moments of the game.

One of the best performances of the season came in Manchester in early February, where Leeds beat a resolute Edge Hill side 7-0, who were one of the challengers for the league, managing to finish the season in second place.

The season culminated last Sunday at Leeds Beckett, where Leeds were crowned champions after their first game, a 7-1 defeat of Leeds Beckett, improving on the 8-5 victory earlier in the season.

Club President James Storey praised the squad after a fantastic season. "Overall, we are delighted to win the league, especially in the style that we have, with several dominant displays. It shows the hard and invaluable work the coach continues to put in every session. And on a personal level, it is great to progress the club and secure promotion for next year's squad. Hopefully with support from the university we can use this as an opportunity to continue to build futsal at the University of Leeds".

He also took the opportunity to thank the league officials, clubs and players involved, who "all demonstrated a great level of respect towards each other throughout the campaign."

While the season is over, the club have a number of exciting things planned, including an Easter trip to Barcelona to soak up some rays and some futsal knowledge in one of Europe's premier locations for the sport.

To find out more about the club and the sport, and to potentially get involved, follow them on Twitter: @LeedsUniFutsal