



# THE GRYPHON

The official newspaper of Leeds University



## University of Leeds Accused of Investing in Companies with Alleged Links to Human Rights Abuses

*The University reportedly invested over £2,000,000 in companies that are accused of being linked to the implementation of human rights abuses against Palestinians.*

**Robbie Cairns**  
Editor-in-Chief

An Open Letter from LUU Palestine Solidarity Group (PSG) to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Leeds has criticised the University, accusing it of investing a significant sum, which may include funds derived from students' tuition fees, on "business activity which enables Israel's violations of Palestinian human rights."

The letter, which has received 469 signatures as of 19:01pm Thursday 1st November, makes the claim that its findings contradict the University of Leeds' Ethical Investment Policy, which acknowledges that the University and its investment managers "have a commitment to ensuring that companies in which it invests adopt high ethical standards and responsible attitudes."

The letter identifies that, as of its valuation on the 31st July 2018, the University invested £1,299,369 in HSBC, £194,883 in Airbus, £735,012 in United Technologies Corporation, and £123,299 in Keyence Corporation. PSG believe, and allege in the open letter, that all these companies can be linked to actions committed by the State of Israel which are accused of "breaking international law and breaching the UN Declaration of Human Rights."

The letter suggests that these companies "are directly linked in the implementation of [...] human rights abuses" and that, therefore, "the University of Leeds knowingly enables this activity by investing in these companies."

In response to the Open Letter, a University spokesperson said:

"The University of Leeds' endowment portfolio is managed by Sarasin &

Partners who, as part of their normal investment research and analysis process, take account of social, environmental and ethical considerations in the selection of investments.

"We have recently adopted a climate active strategy, the purpose of which is to drive behavioural change supporting decarbonisation via a combination of divestments and engagement and as a result have divested of our holdings in Airbus, United Technologies and Keyence Corporation which were all held indirectly in a Global Equities Fund."

News of the University's divestments has come since the publishing of their recent Investment Portfolio on the 31st July 2018. This information was not known by PSG when the Open Letter was originally published.

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02/11/18

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Matthew Plant reflects on the success of the recent 'People's Vote' March in London.

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Sport keep you up to date with the Lion's latest fixture in the National League North.

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Editor of the Week

Bella Davis

Bella woke up at the crack of dawn every day in October to update the Gryphon and In The Middle's Instagram story on Black History Month. If you ever need a quote from James Baldwin or Rosa Parks, then Bella's the person you should call - just don't ask about the construction workers...

Quote of the Week

"I pledge, I will never work for Facebook - no more broken promises!"

Nick Clegg, shortly after raising student tuition fees.

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- Head of Photography ~ Giulia Bardelli

Editor's Letter:



Dear readers,  
This week, I'm going to divert from my usual tactic of chatting absolute nonsense to address a rather more serious issue. Apologies to any fans awaiting a sly dig at my predecessor, Reece Parker, but I feel like stooping to the level of hyperbolic name-calling would undermine the tone I'm hoping to convey in this letter in particular. Tune in next week where I will continue to drag Reece's name through the dirt with the sort of shameless frivolity that only being best friends can afford.

If you're reading this, then you probably noticed the front-page news that an Open Letter to the Vice Chancellor has accused the University of Leeds of investing £2,352,563 in companies which have alleged links to the implementation of human rights abuses against Palestinians. It is an unsettling thought that the university you chose to study at may have played a part, however large or small, in funding the death of another human being. It is an even more troubling thought that a percentage of those investments may have come from the £27,000+ worth of tuition fees you may or may not have so liberally chucked at this university, and which you may or may not be intending to pay back your loans for.

What makes this situation so utterly complex and messy is that it is all very indirect and shrouded in the quicksand-esque political context that allegations which involve the State of Israel inevitably bring. Although the University of Leeds invests in HSBC, Airbus, United Technologies Corporation and Keyence Corporation - four companies that can be linked to the implementation of human rights abuses against Palestinians - we must remember that who and what a company chooses to fund with the profits from the investments it receives is not the decision of the University of Leeds. However, it is the responsibility of this University to take into account exactly where their investments eventually end up, and to review whether or not they believe it ethical to potentially finance the death of another human being. Claiming ignorance or a passive role in this situation isn't really good enough.

The precarious issue which the Open Letter balances upon, that of the 'Israeli-Palestinian Conflict', is a difficult one, to say the very, very least - I am aware of the problematic nature of referring to the issue as a 'conflict', but since this is how it is recognised by the mainstream media, that is how I will refer to it. It's a complex world of clandestine foreign policy that requires an incredible level of nuance and awareness to discuss with even the smallest slither of success. And, being remarkably less versed in the issue than I should be by now, I am far from the one to provide any sort of prophetic comment or salvific solution. That being said, whatever your view on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict and where any notion of blame or resolution lies, I think we can all agree that our University should not fund companies which have any allegeable involvement in armed conflicts, whether in Gaza, Myanmar, Iraq,

Darfur, Afghanistan, Syria or any other part of the world. With that in mind, the University should use this opportunity raised by LUU Palestine Solidarity Group to also task itself with reassessing the ethical considerations of ALL of its investments.

While the University of Leeds has a responsibility to consider the ethical ramifications of its investments and I, as Editor-in-Chief of the student newspaper, have a responsibility for holding those investments to account, I also have a responsibility for ensuring that the Gryphon represents and speaks on behalf of its entire student body. I am aware that criticisms of the actions of the State of Israel are inextricably intertwined with issues of antisemitism. The horrific murder of eleven Jewish people at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh on Saturday 27th October is a harrowing reminder that antisemitism remains a real threat and a curse on society, as it always has been. This is without mentioning the fact that antisemitic incidents in the UK reached an all-time high last year. There is no place for antisemitism in today's age; there is no place for any expression of hate or prejudice in any of its many forms, and we have to be careful that the news stories we circulate do not result in any student feeling uncomfortable or unwelcome at the University of Leeds. I can acknowledge that many students may understandably take issue with particular elements of PSG's Open Letter, but I hope that whatever happens as a consequence of its publication is a productive and open discussion that does not descend into the partisan politics that these things so often do.

I have signed the letter on behalf of myself as an individual, but I have not signed it on behalf of the Gryphon, as other LUU societies have done. As a society which is made up of from a wide range of students, each with their own political, ethical and moral viewpoints, I would not feel comfortable in unquestionably assuming their agreement with my line of argument. Furthermore, by signing the letter, I am not aligning myself with any pre-determined stance on the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict. I am signing because I believe that the investments uncovered in the Open Letter are inconsistent with the University's policy of taking into account "social, environmental and ethical considerations in the selection, retention and realisation of investments", and because I believe that the University should therefore either review its investments, or review its 'Policy on Socially Responsible Investment' altogether.

"Our university should not enable military occupation. Our tuition fees should not fund killing. Our education should not be at the expense of a person's life." Those are the powerful words with which PSG conclude their letter. Irregardless of our own political beliefs, and at the risk of depoliticizing perhaps the most pressing international issue of the modern era, if we view these words objectively and not through the blinkered lens of their context, then it is hard to argue to the contrary. I would encourage anyone reading this to read the Open Letter in full. Whether you agree or disagree with its contents, by reading the letter you are engaging in the dialogue and opening yourself up to a productive discussion.

The University of Leeds prides itself on being a space which represents and addresses the concerns of all of its student population - now is the time for it to prove it.

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

Yours sincerely,

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# Exec Columns:



**Union Affairs Officer**  
**Chris Morris**

C.A.Morris@leeds.ac.uk



**Education Officer**  
**Serene Esuruoso**

A.S.Esuruso@leeds.ac.uk



**Community Officer**  
**Tom Oladipo**

J.O.Oladipo@leeds.ac.uk



**Activities Officer**  
**Lauren Huxley**

L.R.Huxley@leeds.ac.uk



**Equality & Diversity Officer**  
**Tamsin Scott**

T.E.Scott@leeds.ac.uk



**Welfare Officer**  
**Matt Port**

M.Port@leeds.ac.uk

It's been a busy two weeks, with a big mix of different things going on. We've had the last events for Black History Month, with Phoenix Dance visiting to perform their captivating dance show telling the stories from Windrush, Movement of the People. It was a great event, involving members of the community visiting campus to watch the show following on from Tom's Cooking event in Chapeltown earlier this month.

Hello everyone! The bad news is that it's been two weeks since we last spoke – the good news is that that means I've got plenty to talk to you about!

While the rest of the exec went off to sunny Sheffield, I had my hands full with meetings and doing lots of work discussing the post-graduate experience. I've also been helping to train our course and school reps, so that

After volunteering with Hubbub earlier this month, I'm still working to get #LeedsByExample more closely involved with LUU. I'm hoping to get a pop-up stall in the Union some time soon; students will be able to ride around on a bicycle, carrying a recycling bin directly to students. You'll be getting fit, and you'll be saving the planet!

While at Sheffield last week with

So the Tell Me More campaign has officially launched (woooo).

I know I keep banging on about it but it is so incredibly important that every student at Leeds has the opportunity to get involved with our amazing clubs and societies.

We held our first event last Monday which was an opportunity for committee members to come and have a chat

Blimey, these last couple of weeks have been hectic! It's been the last week of Black History Month, and so we've had our final few events – my personal favourite was the QTIPOC voguing workshop hosted by House of Ghetto. Although I didn't get involved, Lauren was absolutely loving it as I sat back and watched with my Skips.

Over the course of last week, I met up with the LibCos to discuss our shared

This week began on an unfortunately somber note, with a vigil for the victims of the Pittsburgh shootings. Despite its devastating context, it was uplifting to attend the vigil, and see so many come together in solidarity and respect.

Later in the week, I spoke at an event on LUU's Content Notes policy, passed at forum last year. We had a really eye-opening conversation between university staff and students, that

As an Exec, we visited Sheffield Students' Union to share ideas with their officers on aspects of work we could collaborate on and find out what each of our teams are doing. One of our goals for the year is looking at how we can engage with the community more and as part of that I visited Leeds City College to chat about what we could do to bring the unions across the city to work on some common goals.

Last weekend, students from Leeds

they can make the most appropriate changes for you.

The Better Forums are also coming up soon, so a lot of my time has been spent preparing for those. These forums are an opportunity for you guys to voice your opinion and create change within the Union, the University, and the city. Please come along and have your say.

A long time ago, I did some modelling

the rest of the exec, I met with Mel, Sheffield's SU Development Officer for some TOP SECRET (not really) discussions. We met again this week in Manchester at NUS' Sustainability Summit. Mayor Andy Burnham was there to provide some words of wisdom. Did you know you can use chewed up gum to make shoe soles, and other useful materials? Well, I do now. Gum

with staff and our brilliant Liberation Coordinators about the barriers that might exist in our clubs and societies.

We had some really in depth discussions about what we mean when we're talking about accessibility and inclusion and then how we can go about translating that into positive changes.

We don't expect anyone to have all the answers so please come and ask us

goals for the year and what kind of campaigns they're wanting to run. It's super important that we acknowledge Liberation groups throughout the year, rather than just celebrating within history months – I'm really excited for what the LibCos have in store!

My birthday was on Saturday so I partied the night away in Pyramid where I was surprised with an absolutely beautiful vegan cake which

showed just how important content notes can be to those who benefit from them. I can't wait to see this go further, and continue to push the University in supporting its students as best as possible.

We've got confirmation now that there will be free sanitary product dispensers in most of our toilets really soon – work towards pursuing this with the University is well under

travelled to London to march for a People's Vote on the final Brexit deal and following on from that we plan on writing to as many of your MPs as possible to demand they work on making it happen. If that's something you'd like to get involved with, look out for some info on that soon!

Finally, we are having an Exec drop in next Friday between 2-4pm, so pop along and have a chat to us about anything.

which has suddenly resurfaced all over the Union on the digital advertising boards, in promotion of the RAG Fashion Show's casting. This means I'm now having to walk through the Union with my eyes closed to avoid looking at my awkward smile, but apparently yellow is my colour!

is not recyclable, so Manchester has gum bins which they use to create new things out of the gum which is usually thrown on the street. It would be great if we could do something similar in Leeds.

Other than that it's just meetings – and if you want me to bore you with those, the exec office is always open and I've got lots of popcorn to give away!

about anything you're unsure of. LUU is always here to help!

I'm still making my way through now (it's vegan so it doesn't go off, right?). This week I've been away from work, but I'm really excited for what next week will bring, and to put into practice some of the stuff I've learned recently.

Hope you all are well and taking care of yourselves in the cold weather – wrap up warm and get yourself a hot chocolate from Common Ground!

way. If you have the time, there's a consultation out at the moment (you can find it on our Medium blog) to ask your experiences and opinions on this topic and it would be really helpful if you could fill it out! And finally, as it's now officially MO-vember, I have shaved my beardy face and am raising money for the Movember foundation with a rather disconcerting 'tache.



# Campus Watch



## 1 University of the West of England, Bristol Only candidate for 'Men's Officer' steps down

Student James Knight, the only candidate to run for Bristol UWE Men's Officer, has quit the election following significant online harassment.

Knight revealed that online 'trolls' had branded him a sexist and "woman hater", leading to him stepping down from the role. The student said that he had run for office because he wished to bring up awareness for men's mental health, something he himself has suffered from in the past.

The National Union of Students commented, telling BBC News that although men's mental health has come under focus in the past few years, women and transgender people are still affected most by gender-based oppression.

The Facebook campaign 'InRon-WeTrust' claims that the role was

created undemocratically and it was already voted down by the student's union the former year. Knight agreed that there were also 'valid' criticisms against the description of the role, such as making the remit the same as the women and trans officer positions.

The university said it will be investigating the harassment, and had confirmed that Mr. Knight is no longer running for the office.

Laus D. Jørgensen

## 2 Clemson University, South Carolina The bass drops at South Carolina frat party, and so do the students

Thirty people were recently injured at a South Carolina frat party, after the floor suddenly gave way amidst the students' dancing.

Clemson University's Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity were leasing The Clubhouse for their annual homecoming weekend party.

The house was reportedly packed, and the guests were dancing, when suddenly the centre part of the dance floor fell into the basement below, taking many partygoers down with it. Student Leroy Pearson said that, when he went to help, he saw that many of those who were injured appeared to have broken their arms or legs.

Larissa Stone, a sophomore at Clemson, recalled the scene: "So everyone was jumping. The beat was about to drop, and literally the whole floor collapsed. It happened so quickly."

The police and ambulance arrived quickly on the scene and transported those injured to local hospitals. Although the property manager refused to comment on whether the party had exceeded the limit of people allowed in The Clubhouse, he did assure that none of the injuries sustained were life-threatening.

Nikita Zychowicz

## 3 University of Oxford A Lidl bit goes a long way for German students

German supermarket chain Lidl has announced that they will fund one graduate wishing to undertake a Masters in Modern Languages with German as their principle language at Oxford University every year.

This aims to provide financial support to those who demonstrate exceptional academic merit but, due to financial circumstances, might be prevented from studying the language.

They have also agreed to sponsor competitions where undergraduates can win up to £500 as of next year.

The sponsorship was created after education experts stated that the number of students learning German are dwindling. Just over 3,000 students took German A-Level this year, which is almost half as many as in 2010. The subject performed significantly poorly in comparison to Spanish, which saw 7,600 entries for A-Level - more than double the numbers of students who took German.

Lidl's UK CEO said: "We saw this opportunity as a great fit and are incredibly proud to be working with Oxford, to support both undergrad and graduate students of German".

Charly Loughin

## 4 National University of Juridical Sciences in Kolkat Harry Potter and the Indian social class

A top University in the Eastern state of West Bengal, India, has introduced a course based around the magical wizarding world of Harry Potter.

Designed by Professor Shouvik Kumar Guha, the course is part of an experiment to "encourage creative thinking" at the University.

Forming part of a law degree, where students are usually expected to simply follow the 'black letter' of the law, the course is called "An Interface Between Fantasy Fiction Literature and Law: Special Focus on Rowling's Potterverse" and will include around 45 hours of discussion-based teaching.

Professor Guha told the BBC that some of the topics covered show how social and class rights in India can be equated to "the enslavement of house elves and marginalisation of werewolves."

Others, he told, focus on the innocence of Sirius Black and the persecution of Tom Riddle.

The aim of the course is to encourage students to consider how pre-existing cases can be related to a beloved series that many grew up reading and loving, encouraging them to engage with cases they might not otherwise be interested in.

Yasmin Filali

## 5 University of Aberdeen Wii will rock you - disruptive students kicked out of halls

In what might be the strangest university noise complaint ever featured in *Campus Watch*, a group of Aberdeen students were recently kicked out of their halls of residence by a university porter, after singing along to Nintendo Wii's Mii Channel music at 1am.

By the time the porter arrived, the singing had reportedly gone on for 10 minutes; it was disruptive enough that the porter had to ask the twelve students to leave.

The well-known Mii Channel music has seen a boom in popularity during the past year, and has since been the background music for many viral videos.

Fresher Liam Daniel, who had been kept awake by the 'musical performance', expressed his disappointment in his fellow Grant Court residents' level of culture:

"I'm ashamed at the social standard of the place. They could have played some classic bangers like Wonderwall or at least something by ABBA, but naw."

Laus D. Jørgensen



# Burglaries up by 52% in Hyde Park and Headingley Since 2015

Megan Cummings  
News Editor

As first year comes to an end in Leeds, and former-freshers are thrust from the comforts of University accommodation, most flock to Hyde Park to seek refuge.

Hyde Park has, simultaneously, both a great and an awful reputation. It's close to the University. It's lively. It's brimming with good takeaways, and all of your friends live mere minutes away. It's also a hotbed of burglary, theft and anti-social behaviour.

Mention burglary in Leeds, and you'll likely be answered with a chorus of 'That happened to me once!' or 'My friend got burgled last week'.

Burglary has become so common in Leeds' student areas that it's almost seen as a normal part of the University experience. But are these crimes on the increase, or has it always been this bad?

Freedom of Information requests sent to West Yorkshire Police have suggested that the levels of both burglary and personal theft have been steadily rising in Headingley and Hyde Park.

Between October 2015 and September 2016, there were 403 reported burglaries in Headingley and Hyde Park. Last year, between October 2017 and September 2018, there were 613 reported burglaries.

This is a 52% increase in residential burglaries in

the area, in just a two-year timespan.

There was a similar increase in reports of robbery of personal property in the area. Between October 2015 and September 2016, there were 45 reports of personal theft.

Two years later, between October 2017 and September 2018, the number of personal theft incidents reported had risen to 62 – an increase of 38%.

For those who have just moved out of student accommodation, Freshers Week is often their first week living in Hyde Park. Perhaps because people aren't as safety-cautious when they first move to student housing, or perhaps because they often return from a Summer at home with new, expensive valuables, Freshers Week seems to be one of the most dangerous periods for crime against students.

During Freshers Week in 2016, there were 7 burglaries reported in Headingley and Hyde Park. The average number of burglaries per week during this time period was 7.75, suggesting that 2016's Freshers Week didn't show unusually high burglary levels.

Statistics for the Freshers' period in 2017 and 2018 appear to tell a different story. 2017's Freshers Week saw 27 burglaries, 160% higher than the year's average of 10.3 reported burglaries per week. This year, 24 burglaries were reported during the Freshers period, 104% higher than the year's weekly average of 11.8 burglaries.

The overall trend shows that, since 2015, reports of both burglaries and personal theft have increased greatly in the Headingley and Hyde Park areas.

A 2011 report by the Audit Commission noted that poorer quality private housing than the national average, high levels of houses with multiple independent tenants, and transient populations (such as students, who normally only live in Hyde Park for a maximum of two years) all contribute to the problem of rising burglaries in Leeds' student-heavy areas.

This report also highlighted another problem: not all crimes are reported. The statistics received from the West Yorkshire Police don't tell the whole story; it's impossible to know how many crimes go unreported. The report suggests that under-reporting is more likely in poorer, more transient areas, such as Leeds' student areas.

It's easy to see why not all crimes are reported; a recent Freedom of Information request revealed that 47% of crimes in West Yorkshire aren't fully investigated, including 61% of burglaries in 2017.

Although it's unlikely that offenders will be caught, it's important that burglaries and personal theft are reported. More accurate statistics will put increased pressure on the police and on Leeds City Council to combat the ever-growing issue of crime against students in Leeds.

# Leeds Students Take to London's Streets to Campaign for a People's Vote

Matthew Plant

On the 20th of October, Leeds students boarded coaches at 6am to head down to London. A sea of people greeted us as we exited the coaches at Hyde Park tube station, the point from which the March would soon depart. Amidst this sea, EU flags, banners, homemade signs and people littered London's streets as far as the eye could see.

As the March began, London Mayor Sadiq Khan joined the student contingent, being led by campaign groups FFS and OFOC to lead the students off. The march progressed from Hyde Park, past Nelson's column, to Parliament, where celebrities and politicians were giving various talks on the movement.

100,000 people turned up to the last People's march in June. Similar numbers were expected this time, but the turnout vastly exceeded expectations; around 700,000 people joined the march. For this reason, the 'March' ended up as more of a shuffle, with the hoards of marchers struggling to fit in.

It was hard to tell the immensity of the turnout from the ground, but aerial photographs show just how many were there – the road to Parliament from Trafalgar square was entirely blocked by the sheer masses. Political speakers at the march included: Green Party MP Caroline Lucas, SNP Leader Nicola

Sturgeon, Conservative MPs Anna Soubry and Dr Sarah Wollaston, as well as Liberal Democrat leader Vince Cable, Labour MP Chuka Umunna and the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan. Many public figures with less of a political background also gave talks: Delia Smith, Deborah Meaden, NUS President Shakira Martin and NUS Vice-President Amatey Doku were among those who spoke at the event.

But, crucially, did the march have any tangible impact, or was it just an excuse for remainers to have some self-gratification?

The Independent's 'Final Say' petition now has over 1 Million signatures, and with more MPs beginning to support the campaign, it is entirely possible that the march may affect domestic opinion and politics. Since September 2017, YouGov opinion polls have consistently shown that a majority of people believe it is wrong to leave the European Union, so perhaps there will be enough support for a People's Vote.

But of course, no march is complete without protest signs, and the People's March delivered on this front. Signs reading "Pulling Out Never Works" were commonplace. *Humans* actress Gemma Chan carried a banner which read "Even Baldrick Had A Fucking Plan", and the Remainiacs podcast made their mark with signs that were both plentiful and amusing.

However, the parliamentary arithmetic hasn't

changed; an Act of Parliament must initiate another referendum and this seems unlikely. Instead, perhaps the People's March shows something more important – momentum and belief. The remain side clearly has the wind in its sails. When contrasting this with the pro-Brexit 'Leave Means Leave' rally on the same day, attended by 1,200 people, it really does seem that the Remain side is more engaged and more motivated, and this could be crucial.



Image: Matthew Plant



# Budget 2018: What Does it Mean for Students?

Zahra Iqbal  
News Editor

This week has seen the beginning of sub-zero temperatures, ice-covered streets and Arctic winds battering Leeds students. If that wasn't chilly enough, the government have revealed their budget for the year, mapping out how they plan to spend the nation's money.

Chancellor Philip Hammond delivered his 3rd budget as Chancellor and stood in parliament for almost 72 minutes explaining the Conservative party's plans. He claims that the "era of austerity is finally coming to an end." 72 minutes of financial jargon isn't everyone's cup of tea, so here's the most relevant plans for students:

**Railcards** – the government plan to introduce a new Railcard for 26–30 year-olds, offering them a one-third discount on UK rail travel (essentially, an extension to the current 16–25 Railcard).

**Alcohol, Tobacco and Fuel** – the important stuff. Duties on beer, cider and spirits will be frozen, so prices on pints won't be increasing any time soon. Cracking open a cold one won't leave you any more out of pocket than usual (until the next budget, at least). However, it's bad news for wine drinkers, as wine prices are set to rise by 8p per bottle.

The cost for 20 cigarettes will also go up by 33p; good luck convincing someone to give you a free one

in the smoking area now. Increasing tobacco tax is an easy way for the government to make money, but many have said it will hit the poorest students the hardest.

Despite all these extra charges, the fuel duty will be frozen for the 9th year in a row, so VAT prices on petrol shouldn't increase too much.

**National Living Wage** – the Tories have increased the National Living Wage for over 25s from £7.83/hour to £8.21/hour. For everyone aged 21–24 there's a 32p increase from £7.38/hour to £7.70/hour, and for 18–20 year olds the new minimum wage will be £6.15/hour. A lot more than what you were paid before, but still not much to live off.

**Mental Health** – Hammond has announced plans for a new 24-hour mental health hotline, and that £2bn will be spent towards mental health services in the UK. Jeremy Corbyn spoke against this, saying that the increased budget isn't enough, and that it will not cover the UK's rising demand for mental health services.

**Housing** – although many of us don't want to think about leaving the wonderful streets of Hyde Park, soon we'll have to consider getting a house of our own. The government has proposed that there are to be 13,000 new houses to be built. First time buyers will also be exempt from stamp duty (extra fees) if they are purchasing shared equity homes of up to £500,000. Basically, more help for first-time

buyers – a bit less debt to add to that ever-growing university mountain.

**Brexit** – finally, The Chancellor announced that he's holding £500 million back just in case Brexit backfires. So he's got roughly £4 billion locked away to pay for the EU 'divorce fee' and any other problems we may encounter on our emotional exit from the EU.



# University Urged to Divest in Companies With Alleged Links to Human Rights Abuses

*Story continued from front page.*

To support their accusations against the University of Leeds, PSG's letter refers to the Summer of 2014, where over 2,000 Palestinians were killed as a result of conflict during Operation Protective Edge. The letter alleges that:

- elements of the artillery used to carry out the destruction of 17 hospitals and 89,000 homes were provided by Elbit Systems, one of the many aerospace companies which HSBC holds shares in.
- the fighter jets employed by the IDF were maintained by United Technologies Corporation.
- the helicopters which patrolled Gaza's sea border were supplied by Airbus.

Further military activity, unspecified in the letter, is alleged to have been aided by equipment provided by Keyence Corporation.

The Open Letter, and its comments concerning the State of Israel, are not without controversy. Ipsos Mori polling found that 93% of British Jews say that Israel is a strong part of their identity and, with over 1000 Jewish students studying in Leeds, many have approached the Jewish society with their concerns over the Open Letter.

In spite of this, the letter asks the Vice Chancellor to

"immediately divest from the above four companies" and to "adopt a stronger screening policy which excludes investment in any company involved in the human rights abuses of Palestinians."

With the University having divested their holdings in Airbus, United Technologies and Keyence Corporation, a spokesperson further commented: "There are no direct investment in armament companies but our investment managers continue to monitor the HSBC position and are in dialogue to understand investments in this area."

21 members of the University's Staff have signed the letter, as well as 381 current students and 49 Leeds alumni. The letter has also been signed by a number of LUU societies, including LUU Amnesty International and LUU Student Action for Refugees. However, it is unclear whether all society members were democratically consulted before their societies signed the letter, an issue which LUU are investigating further.

LUU Palestine Group have stated that the Open Letter will be presented to the Vice Chancellor at the end of November.

The Vice-Chancellor will respond to the letter once it has been received.

If you would like to read the Open Letter in full,

visit *The Gryphon's* website, and click on the link in the article.

If you have been affected any of the content in this article, and would like voice your own opinion, then please email any responses to [editor@thegryphon.co.uk](mailto:editor@thegryphon.co.uk).

There will be a space in next week's issue of *The Gryphon* for an open and safe dialogue.





# Family of Student who Died at Initiation Event Hit Out at Uni Drinking Culture

Joseph Bellamy

On the 13th December 2016, a 'drink-fuelled initiation' into the Agriculture Society at the University of Newcastle ended tragically with the death of 1st year economics student, Ed Farmer.

Now, almost two years on, an inquest has made clear the series of events which led to Ed's death, and has put the University and its Union under fire from the student's parents, Jeremy and Helen Farmer.

The events of the night, as reported by fellow students at the bar crawl, involved a variety of "bizarre initiation rites." Among other things, students had their heads shaved and spray painted, were forced to bob for apples in a mixture of urine and alcohol, and to drink vodka from a pig's head.

It was reported that, in one bar, 100 triple vodkas were ordered for the new members to share, and that Ed personally consumed around 27 shots of vodka in three hours. The effect this had on Ed was evidently severe; recently released footage has shown that he collapsed in a metro station and had to be carried to Society President James Carr's house by other students.

It was here that Ed collapsed on the floor, likely suffering a cardiac arrest which led to severe brain damage. Other students claimed to have been "falsely

reassured" by his snoring, believing that he was sleeping off his drunkenness.

James Carr recalls being woken at 4.30am that morning by commotion in the house; it was then that Ed was taken to hospital, after fellow students found that he wasn't breathing. By the time Ed reached the hospital, the damage to his brain was too severe for recovery; he died in the early hours of the morning with his parents by his side.

Ed's father told that he was "utterly underwhelmed and frustrated by the apparent inactivity of Newcastle University and its Student Union" in rooting out the problem.

Such initiations have reportedly been going on for 30 to 40 years at the University, despite the fact that the University had banned them on the grounds of being 'dangerous'. Second year student Guy Baker said that such events "put a lot of pressure on people" to drink large quantities.

Ed's father addressed the issue as a wider problem, and not just an isolated incident: "Ed's is not the first utterly needless and wasteful death to come about through this potentially fatal practice."

In response to Ed's death, the University took action against the society, placing sanctions on appropriate individuals and making previously optional induction talks on the dangers of binge-drinking compulsory

for new students.

Registrar Lesley Braiden voiced what she believed to be the unfortunate reality of the situation: "it is practically an impossible task" for Universities to prevent such events, due to them taking place off campus.

Going forward, both Ed's parents and the University wish to continue raising awareness among students. Dr Hogan, Newcastle University registrar, commented that they must persevere in educating students "about the risks of alcohol, and how they can keep themselves and their fellow students safe," in order to prevent such a tragedy occurring again.

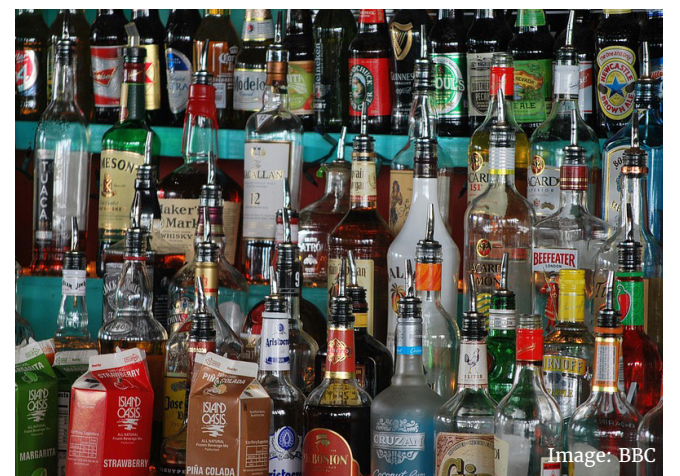


Image: BBC

# UK Academics Voice Concerns over EU Funding as Brexit Looms

Nikita Zychowicz

Since 2014, the UK has received €4.6bn from the EU's Horizon 2020 science programme. A large portion of this money has come from research programmes exclusive to EU member states, including the European Research Council (€1.29bn), Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions (€700m), and SME Instrument Grants (€140m). Since 2007, the UK was awarded 22% of allocated funds and nearly 1,400 of over 5,000 grants offered by the European Research Council. However, Brexit threatens this flow of funding.

A report by the Royal Society has shown that UK institutions rely heavily on EU funding for subjects in the arts, humanities, social sciences, IT, and STEM subjects. A particular field that relies on EU funding is archaeology, with 38% of funding for UK archaeological research coming from the EU. Other fields that rely on EU funding are cancer and other health research.

Dr Mike Galsworthy, from the campaign group Scientists for EU, explained that a no-deal Brexit "would mean losing over half a billion a year in high value grants. No deal would wreck nearly half the funding we're eligible for - it would be absolutely devastating."

In anticipation to a no-deal Brexit, some universities, including Cardiff and Imperial London, have offered or

are considering offering joint contracts to researchers in EU institutions, in an attempt to ensure continued eligibility for EU funding.

The UK Government has said that it hopes to secure a deal with the EU to ensure at least the partial continuation of science funding. A spokesperson for the UK's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) stated: "The government's priority is to conclude and finalise the Withdrawal Agreement. This would ensure that the UK's participation in Horizon 2020 would be unaffected when we leave the EU."

Regarding the possibility of a no-deal Brexit, the government has promised to guarantee the payment of EU funding up to 2020. The BEIS spokesperson said: "The UK has announced support for third-country participation in a no-deal scenario via the extension to the underwrite guarantee. We are considering what other measures may be necessary to support UK research and innovation in the unlikely event of no-deal."

However, Oxford professor Simon Marginson has cautioned "in my judgment, we are likely to have a hard Brexit, or at best an unresolved research funding picture. In terms of people in research and higher education, the fallout will be massive." Marginson continued: "In research funding, other countries naturally give priority to their own citizens or

residents. That is why the EU research programmes are so valuable. They make decisions on merit across a large number of countries, dramatically widening the potential pool of talent and ideas, and they encourage collaboration."

There exists the possibility that Europe's next science programme, Horizon Europe, will be more open to countries outside the EU, but at the moment nothing is certain. The UK may also be able to negotiate an associate member status for Horizon Europe, but the costs and limitations of such a membership are also currently unclear.



Image: Getty Images



# Masculinity in Crisis?

Image: Uplift

**The Gryphon discusses the need to open up the conversation and challenge current ideas of manliness.**

**Tristan Griffith**

In this current social climate where the '#Me Too' movement is finally helping to expose thousands of harrowing cases of sexual assault and sexual harassment, it would be consoling to assume that great changes are occurring in the way that people, especially men, behave in society. Sadly, conversations with friends at university reveal that there is still much to be done. For some, the excitement of Freshers' Week and the beginning of a new year of independence at university has been tarnished by distressing experiences. Incidences of cars honking their horns and passengers catcalling at women out on a run are so commonplace that some have been forced to abandon the healthy hobby altogether. It is also difficult to find anyone who hasn't experienced or witnessed some form of inappropriate physical contact in a club, bar or pub in the last few weeks.

It is easy to understand why victims can feel intimidated, humiliated and have their self-confidence lastingly knocked. This hostile culture fits into a broader context of an epidemic increasingly called 'toxic masculinity'. In universities, at home, or in the world of politics, the abuse of power by men is one of the fundamental issues of our time. It is vitally important to understand what is going wrong and what needs to be changed.

Played out on an international stage, these characteristics can be seen in some of the world's leaders. In his foreign policy, Donald Trump adopts a quintessentially 'macho' stance. He treats international laws and customs with contempt, deriding the process of modest deliberation in diplomacy. More recently, the supreme court hearing over Brett Kavanaugh's promotion to that body brought similar themes to the fore. His furious and emotional rebuttal of those who questioned his eligibility, following serious sexual assault allegations, was seen by some as the actions of an entitled and arrogant man unaccustomed to having his authority and dignity questioned.

So why is this damaging form of masculinity so prevalent? Some blame social changes relating to shifts in gender roles. As old restraints on women's careers and lifestyles are being broken down, men are left floundering, apparently lacking the structure

and discipline of traditional paternalistic roles. Another argument blames the pressures of fiscal uncertainty. In Britain, following the 2008 financial crisis, a decade of austerity has meant a relatively meagre lifestyle for millions on low incomes.

The effects of hardship on male behaviour have precedents in history. Many historians agree that masses from the industrial class in the nineteenth century went through a 'crisis of masculinity' as the quality of life declined. Unhappiness, created by poor living and working conditions, led to widespread disgruntlement and deterioration in the stable family structure.

So, are we going through a similar situation now? In the UK, three times more men commit suicide than women, though rates are dropping due to the work of suicide-prevention agencies. Scientists believe that this disparity between genders is related to men's lower tendency to confront their own emotions and confide in others. Pressures associated with growing up as a boy compound

**“Author Howard Jacobson criticises the current trend in male behaviour saying, ‘this is not a good time to be a man’”**

the problem. Ideals of how a boy should dress and behave still pervade society. Students have spoken about fearing to stray too far from fashion norms in case of being labelled “gay.” Furthermore, opinions expressed in *The Guardian* talk of a lack of diversity in clothing items for boys in high street stores; apparently options are predominantly “sludge-green, grey and... navy blue.”

Being in touch with one's emotions and talking openly about negative feelings is still looked down upon in certain circles. Even if men don't feel an explicit requirement to act in a certain way there is often an implicit preference for guys who behave in an unemotional and neutral manner. On the TV and in the cinema, male heroes are still often 'peak-masculine' figures: heterosexual, muscular, war-battered and tough. Kit Harrington, the actor behind *Game of Thrones*' Jon Snow says he is tired

of the cut-throat world of medieval violence. When asked in an interview for last week's *Sunday Times* if the wrong messages were being sent on TV, and on the street, to impressionable young boys, he replied, “something has gone wrong for men.”

'Boys will be boys' is a phrase that often creeps into discussions surrounding this topic. Such an expression holds the rather dismal implication that our society is resigned to view this form of male behaviour as not just acceptable, but natural and inevitable. However, there are efforts to make a difference. In an attempt to combat old-fashioned tropes of male behaviour in the advertising industry, brand campaigns such as Lynx's #itsokforguys are attempting to get men and boys to question the meaning of 'manliness' and challenge societal expectations to 'bottle up' negative feelings. Elsewhere the toy-manufacturing company Mattel portrays dads playing with their children in its adverts in an effort to counter the outdated stereotype of a withdrawn father figure who only attends to practical tasks.

Many believe that in order to create a more equal relationship between men and women in society, we need more cooperation and to open up the conversation before vilifying certain groups. Ideas put forward in the Good Men Project offer men constructive support to help them break out of the tumultuous phase of 'adolescence' – apparently the stage in which men are yet to understand their own feelings and desires in life. Negative labels such as 'the patriarchy', 'straight white male' and now 'toxic masculinity' certainly derive from real and serious concepts but, it is often held, can be overused and unhelpfully divisive. This discourse can make some innocent men feel like culprits, stretching the divide between genders and alienating people from the process of real improvement.

In a recent broadcast of Radio 4's *Point of View*, the author Howard Jacobson, despairing of the current trend in male behaviour, declared: “this is not a good time to be a man.” His pessimism is not unfounded, but, post-Weinstein and '#Me Too', the opportunities to make things better are surely greater than ever before. We now know to a fuller extent what men have done wrong, and we're starting to understand why. The next step is to do something about it.



# Bringing the Statue Debate to Britain



Image: Training

**The debate around statues stems from the problematic pasts of celebrated individuals, often linked with the slave trade or colonialism. Do these statues continue to celebrate the figures, or actually serve as an important reminder of the past?**

**Evie Sargent**

Recently, Nelson's Column and Winston Churchill's statue have come under scrutiny. Many people have begun to look past their achievements and to question whether men with a colonial or racist history should be celebrated in modern society.

The practice of whitewashing statues has been debated for a long time. Ancient Greek statues are primarily remembered for their white marble look. However, before the paint disappeared, many of them depicted different races. So, when we walk around museums, why do we mostly see the white versions of Ancient Greek statues? The Victoria and Albert Museum has a fantastic collection of historical artefacts, however, their main hall is overwhelmingly full of white, marble statues. One reason for this is that they were collected and placed in the museum in a period when this image was idealised, especially by those who had the money to financially support museums.

There is a huge inequality in representation in statues across the country. This year, Millicent Fawcett's statue was put up in Parliament square where she stands alone as the sole female statue amongst many men. *The Telegraph* reported that approximately 2.7% of British statues are women, a startling figure considering women make up 50.7% of the population in Britain. Furthermore, almost half of the statues are of fictional women and an even smaller percentage are statues of women of colour.

So, why is the debate surrounding the disproportionate representation of women and people of colour through statues still happening and why does it matter?

Donald Trump wrote on Twitter that it is "sad to see the history and culture of our great country being ripped apart with the removal of our beautiful statues and monuments. You can't change history." This is just one element of a rhetoric used by the people fighting for statues to stay up, which celebrates a guilt-laden history. In contrast to Trump, others think this debate is about educating a new generation on a more comprehensive history of their country and its values. Statues celebrate the values and actions of people in our society. Therefore, when statues are removed, and often placed in museums, history is not changed. Their removal allows a different perspective to be shown, as in a museum there is the chance to display various historical narratives through displaying information around the statue and other artefacts for comparison.

Trump's tweet also brings up the issue of patriotism and nationalism within each country. If the statues today symbolise a "great country," then the great country is one where women and people of colour are side-lined and not celebrated or immortalised as much as others. Therefore, the specific version of history that these statues epitomise does not always resonate with people today. Why should people spend money to keep statues in good condition when the money could be used to replace statues with new figures, figures who have helped society with issues that impact us today and will continue to do so in the future.

Climate change, gender equality and poverty reduction are issues that people are desperately trying to resolve. David Attenborough and Maya Angelou are some well known figures fighting these causes and would be recognisable if you walked past a statue of them in the streets. Furthermore, they would make people that share the same passion for the environment and for stopping violence against women feel empowered and would bring these issues to the forefront of people's minds by marking a more constant presence within our society.

Alternatively, more information could be put next to the statue of a problematic figure to explain their successes and prejudices. However, most people would rush to their destination and regardless, the figure would still hold pride and place without a second thought. Nelson's Column is an example of this. People often gaze up at the man who is immortalised and placed high above ordinary people. However, they hardly notice the black man engraved on the side, thought to be the figure of George Ryan, who worked as part of Nelson's crew and might have been a slave. Without the efforts of men like him, Nelson would not have been as successful in his victory at Trafalgar, and yet it is Nelson who is placed above George, and Nelson who is celebrated independently and introduced to younger generations as a hero.

There is no doubt that in 2018 this issue has started to change, in part because of the publicity it has in the media. However, for many, the change has not gone far enough. For example, the Cecil Rhodes statue (a man who stood for imperialism and institutionalised racism) still stands in Oxford University despite months of protests, and the stone figure will not erode anytime soon unless it is taken down.

Whether people take down the statues that do not represent them or add a statue of someone who does, this change is a huge opportunity to educate and inspire younger generations, as well as give those who were marginalised throughout history a greater voice.





# The Fashion Industry's Dirty Laundry

Image: Getty

**The Gryphon explores the implications of the fashion industry using its power to exploit people from underprivileged backgrounds to produce 'affordable' clothing, as well as its detrimental impact on the environment.**

**Annabel White**

The message that we are all destroying the planet through overconsumption has never rung louder than it does today. On the surface, it feels like change is in the air. Wetherspoons uses paper straws, almost every other person these days seems to be a vegetarian and more of us are finally separating our paper from our plastics. For some reason, these attitudes are not yet reflected in our approach to fashion.

The fashion industry has been growing relentlessly for decades and shows no signs of slowing down just yet. Previously, there were two fashion seasons per year. Now, there are over 52, with certain retailers releasing multiple new collections each week. Our wardrobes are bursting with cheap clothes, half of which we have no intention of wearing more than once or twice. We view our clothes as disposable without thinking twice about the damage done to the planet, communities around the world, or the people working long days in hazardous factories for barely any money.

Every single one of us needs to look through our wardrobes and face up to where our favourite brands are sourcing their clothes. If your wardrobes are anything like mine, the shameful reality is that our clothes all contain the same labels: Made in Bangladesh, Made in Indonesia, Made in Vietnam, Made in Honduras. Considering the cost of cheap clothes for those who produce them, it is incomprehensible that we can buy clothes on the high street for less than £10 and call it 'guilt-free shopping'.

The root of the problem is the price of clothes. Western brands are increasingly selling clothes as cheaply as possible to keep up with the competitive market. The overseas factories know that if they are not able to supply their clothes at the lowest price then companies will buy elsewhere.

As a result of this, in attempts to not lose any business, sweatshops force their employees to work

for the lowest possible wage. It is shocking and embarrassing that a sales assistant on the shop floor in Primark, H&M or Topshop makes in less than 3 hours the monthly wages of the person who actually makes the clothes. There is clearly no other reason for the outsourcing of clothes to developing countries other than the cheap labour and lack of regulation – surely we know this? It seems quite convenient that we choose to dissociate our clothes with the dark side of the fashion industry, but on a daily basis, we are supporting an industry that strips people of their basic human rights and we are seemingly indifferent to it.

**“It is incomprehensible that we can buy clothes on the high street for less than £10 and call it ‘guilt-free shopping’”**

The disgracefully low wages are not even the half of it. Time and time again, the factories that make our clothes set on fire, collapse and kill thousands of individuals. In 2012, a 7-storey factory fire in Bangladesh killed 112 people. One survivor spoke at a Washington conference urging that it was only a matter of time before the next tragedy struck. Two weeks later, Rana Plaza collapsed.

The Rana Plaza collapse of 2013 killed over 1100 of its employees. Blame for the collapse of the eight-storey building fell on the 38 people who were charged with murder in association with the collapse.

However, even *The Economist* argued that the Bangladeshi government was at fault due to its failure to enforce health and safety laws. The Rana Plaza factory, which has been known to supply brands

such as Primark and Mango, took safety shortcuts because they knew that western retailers would move production elsewhere if they were late on delivery or missed a day of production. Retailers know this and exploit it.

Another culprit that is responsible for the horrendously unsafe working conditions is the brands, due to the amount of pressure they put on factories in the first place. Less than a month after the Rana Plaza collapse, a floor piled with material collapsed in a garment factory in Cambodia, further adding to the fashion industry's death toll. These are not isolated incidents. They are inevitable. Clearly, our addictive consumer behaviour is not just ripping people off, it is killing them.

At the moment, very little is being done to try and resolve this massive issue. Any attempts by sweatshop employees to form trade unions are being shut down by the factories, most frequently through violence. Governments are dismissive of the problem and the brands themselves inexcusably refuse to comment. A number of companies have begun to implement ethical lines of clothing, such as H&M's 'Conscious' range. In general, these programmes lack transparency, are not credible and so far, are having little effect.

Legislation is not being passed to solve this problem and so the only way to effect change is if it comes from us, the consumer. It is time to look at which companies will accept blood on their labels and call them out for it. Our attitudes need to change. We must vote with our feet and stop supporting these brands so that they feel pressured to change the way they are producing clothes. From an environmental viewpoint, the fast fashion industry has devastating effects on the planet that are impossible to sustain.

Without a doubt, we are going to see big changes in the way we consume clothes over the next decade, but whether this will be in time or not is a completely different question. Either way, a change in our attitudes cannot come soon enough.



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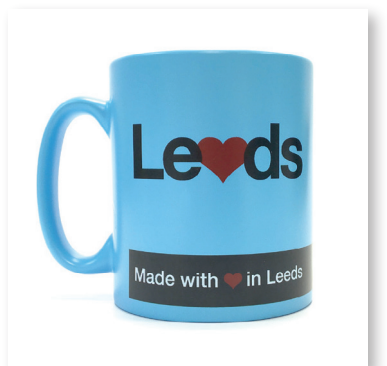
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# Tell Me More: Helping Societies Do More



**Speaking with LUU's Activities Officer, Lauren Huxley, Susy Goldstone discusses the Union's programme for making inclusive societies a reality.**

**Susy Goldstone**

Inclusivity. Accessibility. We all like to think that we implement these words within our societies, but do LUU societies actually go far enough in ensuring that everyone, regardless of their individual needs, is included?

LUU Activities Officer, Lauren, believes that we could all be doing more. Her new campaign, 'Tell Me More', is designed to get people talking about inclusivity and what we could all be doing to improve.

But why is inclusivity so important?

Lauren said: "It's important, firstly, because it's one of our core values at LUU. Secondly, I think everyone should have the same opportunities. It's not fair that we advertise all of these brilliant clubs and societies – all 340 of them – but then somebody might come and face a barrier to taking part in them. Some people get to have a brilliant experience at university because of our societies – I've been here for so long because of societies and because I've loved it so much. There's no chance I would have done a Master's degree if I didn't love everything I did at the Union so much! But I know, and I've seen, that not everybody gets to have the same amount of fun, and we all need fun in order to do a degree, because it's really difficult!"

With this in mind, Lauren is now promoting her Tell Me More campaign in order to help committees reach out to those who may have otherwise felt that societies wouldn't have anything for them. First, it's about opening up conversations between the committees and the Liberation Coordinators.

She told me: "I had an idea ages ago when I was Dance Rep – why don't we as Reps or committee members ever meet the Liberation Coordinators? It wasn't until I went to a forum that I knew they existed and I thought that was such a shame because they've got a wealth of knowledge and experience that can help inform people, and I thought it was a massive shame that there was nothing that introduced those people to each other."

Therefore, Tell Me More's first event on Monday

22nd October was about doing just that – introducing society committees to their Liberation Coordinators and encouraging that initial conversation.

At the event, everyone sat in a circle in the Riley Smith, well-stocked with teas, coffees, and excellent brownies. After a few introductory activities (introducing ourselves, setting some ground rules), Lauren gave us all post-it notes and asked us to write our answer to the question, 'What does accessibility mean?' before sticking all the post-its on a large sheet of paper in the middle.

One by one, Lauren read out the post-it notes and encouraged us to discuss what we thought about it. It was an incredibly informative activity for the committee members, as it covered topics such as: the language used in branding and how it can be misinterpreted, making sure that we don't assume anything about people, and talking to the people you want to make the event accessible for so that they can tell you how to best cater for them.

Committee members Indeera (Treasurer of Leeds Amateur Medics Musical and Performance Society and Academic Rep) and Sarah (President of Irish Dancing Society) told me their reasons for attending the event.

Indeera: "As Academic Rep, I represent eighty societies, so accessibility is incredibly important so that people can attend these societies. Academic societies enable people to gain knowledge and resources about their course from each other. Therefore, I want everyone to be able to be involved."

Sarah: "Irish Dancing is a growing society and attracting international students especially, but we don't really have many people with visible disabilities. I was interested to learn about how other societies included more people and how we can make little changes to do that as well."

When I spoke to Lauren after the event, she told me that she was pleased that it had had such a positive turn-out:

"I think it was fifteen people that came in the end. Let's say that's about eight societies we've covered – that's going to make a difference to a lot of people.

Fingers crossed they go and tell some more people and spread the word. But I think there were some really nice conversations that came out of it, especially conversations that people had just never thought about before, which is absolutely fine. It's fine that people don't always know all the answers."

Indeera and Sarah told me that they had definitely learned a lot from the event, and that they're looking forward to getting more societies involved.

Indeera: "I've learned about the importance of the Liberation Coordinators and getting the right advice from them, as every situation is different. One of them mentioned today that their job is there for a reason because committees aren't expected to know all the answers to these questions as long as we're open to learn. It was really good to have an open discussion and I think it is a topic that needs discussing with other people and to have an open space to share ideas. I'm looking forward to more events with even more societies."

Sarah: "I agree with Indeera. If there's another similar event in the future, I'll bring along more of the Irish Dancing committee as well as some other societies. Importantly, I've learned about the Accessibility Fund. It's nice to know that help is there and that we can just speak to Lauren about accessing the funding that can enable more people to attend trips, classes, and competitions. It's also encouraged me to reach out to shyer people who might be struggling and making sure that I check everyone is OK."

The society committees who attended the event seemed extremely positive about the initiative and, fortunately for them, Lauren's campaign has only just started.

She explained: "I want to set up a hashtag, #TellMeMore, where myself and lots of other people can answer societies' questions on either Facebook or people come to us and we share our answers. I think it's all about shouting about it more, because there are some societies who are doing brilliant things! But if they don't shout about it then we don't know what people are doing to solve these problems. So, I want to encourage that more and hopefully hold more events that are similar to the one we've just had so that we can encourage conversations and set up and facilitate a space for that."

The main point that Lauren made, both at the event and in her interview with me, was that committees should always ask LUU if there's something accessibility-related (or otherwise) that they aren't sure on.

She concluded: "Always come and speak to LUU if you don't know about something. I think that people sometimes come to us once it's too late – in any circumstances, this isn't just with accessibility. I see people coming to me once a problem's happened, but let's be proactive and try to foresee things like this and come to us so we can help before things start to go wrong."

Keep an eye out for more #TellMeMore events and updates, and remember you can always speak either to Lauren in the Exec Office, the Liberation Coordinators, or any of the Student Activities team in the Activities Office.

In the words of the event's tagline: No judgements. No daft questions.



# In the Middle



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

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# Issue 4



# Credits

## Editor-in-Chief

Robbie Cairns  
editor@thegryphon.co.uk

## In the Middle Associate

Meg Firth  
inthemiddle@thegryphon.co.uk

## Art Director

Nat Baker



## Music

music@thegryphon.co.uk

Kieran Blyth  
Mikhail Hanafi  
Ellie Montgomery  
Jenny Pudney



## Clubs

clubs@thegryphon.co.uk

James Dewar  
Caris Dollard



## Fashion

gryphon.fashion.leedsstudent@gmail.com

Christy Bucklow  
Victoria Copeland  
Izzie Ghaffari-Parker  
Elicka Ghahramani  
Meg Painter



## Arts

arts@thegryphon.co.uk

Stephanie Bennett  
Katherine Corcoran  
Rhiannon Skye-Boden  
Hannah Stokes



## Lifestyle & Culture

lifestyle.leedsstudent@gmail.com

Charlie Green  
Caitlin Tilley  
Jade Verbick  
Mary Yeh



## Blogs

blogs@thegryphon.co.uk

Emily Merrill  
Rosie Plummer

## Brushwork

Megan Chown

## Design

Nat Baker

## Front Cover

Photograph by Claude  
Hendrickson

## Back Cover

Illustration by Niall Unger,  
@niall\_unger\_illustration



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# Black Music in Leeds: The Rise of Sound Systems and the Advent of 'Pirate' Radio



**Claude 'Hopper' Hendrickson, now a Project Manager working on Racial Justice campaigns such as the 'Race Card Project' at Leeds West Indian Centre, has been involved in Leeds' Sound Systems since the age of fourteen. He speaks to Ellie Montgomery about his experiences of identity, community and music within the city of Leeds and beyond.**

It's undeniable that, since the 1980s, the reception and appreciation of Sound Systems in the UK has been greatly transformed. In Leeds alone, events like Sub Dub and Brotherhood are now immensely popular, selling out every time. Hendrickson remarks upon this changing landscape, noting that "thirty to thirty-five years ago, compared to the way Sub Dub is now, the young black children of those days were criminalised for playing loud music and gathering young people together. We as the black young people of that generation really suffered negatively from bad press and extra policing - nobody wanted us to use community centres. Sometimes, I'm amazed at how far the Sound System has come in thirty years."

Hendrickson acknowledges that, at the early stages of Sound Systems, he and his friends took inspiration from their life at home: "not with the flashing lights and all of that but [we were] leaning towards what people in our community were

doing, what our parents used to have. They used to have weekend parties where a guy would come in and DJ. So we were taking our lead from those kinds of people." The music took inspiration and precedent from "the men who came from the Caribbean with bags of records", he adds. "Being in that first generation of young black kids growing up in the UK, because my mother came in here in 1958 and I was born in 1960, I suppose music became the first thing of giving me a sense of identity."

**"Music became the first thing of giving me a sense of identity"**

This first generation of young black people and their drive towards creating and showcasing their own music is wryly noted by Hendrickson as a result of "going to places like The Mecca on a Monday night for the disco and realising

that ninety percent of the music [we] didn't like anymore. It was just a small percentage of DJs playing that [we] liked, so we went about developing our own 'discotheques' which are now known as Sound Systems."

It is vital to note, however, that there was also a far bleaker element behind the need to create music which deviated from mainstream culture: "if I'm openly honest, the [already established] discotheques were not a safe place for us because we were outnumbered. We'd go to discos to have a good time, but we ended up being in fights. White boys would want to attack us and going out to clubs in town became dangerous. We could go and have a great time, but when we were coming home... We needed to do something for ourselves, we couldn't keep doing this, going to town and fighting. Sound Systems, initially, was a way of getting us out of that zone where we were being racially attacked; to let us have stuff in our own communities

where we didn't have to worry about that anymore; to give ourselves our own space to play the music we wanted to play for one hundred percent of the night."

These spaces of new musical creativity soon advanced until there were more than twenty-five various Sound Systems in Leeds. In turn, the popularity of the genres and music being played also grew. Hendrickson considers that this recognition of black artists has had an intrinsic impact on the cultural discourses in Leeds: "music has grown like society has grown, like multiculturalism has grown. I think, if you take a step back, Britain is a bedrock of massive cultures. Reggae has helped the black community establish itself in the big cities and some of the small cities like Bradford and Huddersfield."

As Hendrickson acknowledges Sound Systems' contribution to both cultural identity and the identity of cities across





they'd be set back up. 2018, 32 years later, there's still a couple of community radios."

Hendrickson touches further on this community resilience: "I know guys that have been battling the system for the last 25 to 30 years. They're still being bashed, they're still being raided, they're still having their equipment taken. On what basis? On the basis that they are illegally transmitted. They've been doing it for a quarter of a century. It's kind of heart-breaking actually to watch those guys involved in radio because they can't go out and get advertising because they're

**"For the Windrush generation, music has been a linchpin of our survival."**

not a legal station, or they're not deemed as legal. So they're running it out of their pockets to try and give the community a service."

With stations like BBC Radio 1Xtra, it can be noted that licensed Radio in 2018 is often attempting to assimilate the tone and content of community radio. Hendrickson, however, observes that "when it's on mainstream, it has a mainstream feel; a mainstream structure and a mainstream message. Whereas

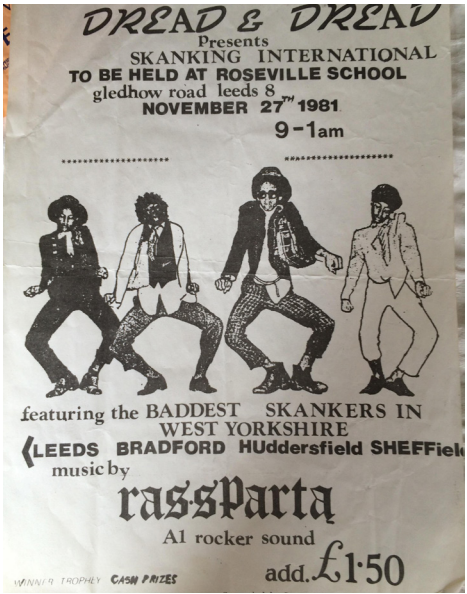
people want localised structure, a localised message." Chapeltown's community radio "allowed a window into us. It allowed people to listen to some of the music that we'd been playing. And the evidence of it having a positive impact is all over the place."

Ironically, the tension between the local authorities and community radio is often inconsistent as, according to Hendrickson, "there have been certain things in the past where the police have gone around the back door and said: 'can you announce this?'" It seems that a level of hypocrisy is at play in terms of official, national governmental procedure and the actual practice within local community.

After a thoughtful and reflective interview, Hendrickson's final words of frustration are bittersweet. "I'm so disappointed that, even after 30 goddamn years, we're still classed as 'pirates'. They've not appreciated the value that we add culturally because a lot of the music we play, a lot of black music, is conscious. Why do people like Bob Marley's music? It's not because he's black, it's because of the message his music holds. For the Windrush generation, music has been a linchpin of our survival. We wouldn't have survived as black people in this country had we not had music - I totally believe that."

Ellie Montgomery

the UK, he also reflects on the multiplicity of black music: "it's not just Reggae, it's not just Soca, it's not just Gospel, it's not just RnB or the new dance wave. There's so many facets of it. Music is universal. Bob Marley said music isn't owned by any group or any race or any individual - music is owned by the people."



This brings us onto Hendrickson's next musical venture after Sound Systems: the desire to return music to 'the people'.

In the late 1980s, an individual from London approached Hendrickson and others about the possibility of starting a 'pirate' radio station in Leeds. With some previous experience doing occasional slots on Leeds' *Radio Aire*, Hendrickson was keen to become involved in creating a more permanent platform for alternative music: "with Sound Systems, you could only really get to the people who had come to your event. Radio gave us the next step because it could get to the people who didn't come to the dance as they could listen to you from home. On mainstream radio, we were not hearing the tunes that we now knew were out there."

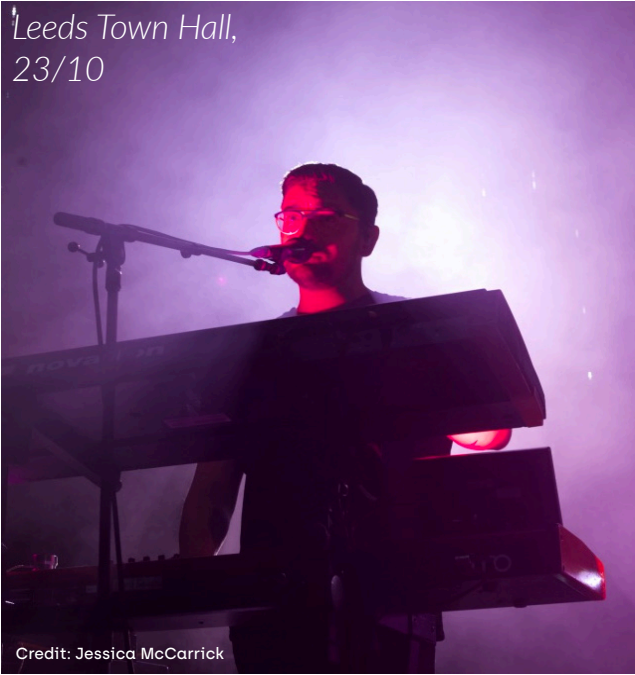
At this point, Hendrickson wants to make it clear that he wishes to "move away from the word 'pirate', as 'pirate station' gives a negative connotation. We see them as community stations: serving a community that is not being served." On the contrary, "we don't see it in the community as 'pirate' - we see it as delivering a service to people who are not serviced by mainstream radio. But they called it 'pirate' radio and the war went on. They shut radios down, they'd be set up again, they'd shut them down,





# Gig Round-Up

## Leeds alumni, alt-J, return to where it all began



No strangers to the city, University of Leeds Alumni and trio, alt-J, performed amidst the beautiful backdrop of the Town Hall last week. Opening the set with a mysterious darkness and the intense snare drum which accompanies the intro to 'Something Good', the erratic lights mesmerised the crowd until Joe Newman, Gus Unger-Hamilton and Thom Green dramatically appeared. This song, from their debut album *An Awesome Wave*, made it clear we were in for more than just something good.

The exquisite harmonies of 'Every Other Freckle' and 'Dissolve Me' left keyboardist Gus shouting "it's great to be home." The crowd bobbed and sang along beautifully, as the free-standing light rig moved in time to the music, creating magical visuals that we were left feeling amazed by. Highlights of the night were the chilled sounds of '3WW' and 'Taro', with the set containing a full mixture of tracks from all alt-J's albums. Having recently released their fourth album, *Reduxer*, a remix album reinterpreting songs from *Relaxer*, it was intriguing to hear the hip hop vibes of 'Deadcrush' and 'Adeline', of which they dedicated to the support act AK Patterson. The crowd made triangles with their fingers in the air to 'Tessellate', which is the origin behind alt-J's name – if you hold down alt and j on your Mac it makes a triangle. Δ

The band exclaimed that they are ambassadors for the remarkable Leeds MAP (Music and Arts Production) charity, which offers qualifications for young people in music and arts at risk of exclusion from the mainstream school system. The trio have even jumped on the bandwagon with their own signature brew, 'Absolutely No Worries', which was available at all their shows - you can even purchase it in Leeds at the Chemic Tavern and Tapped Bar.

The all-anticipated encore left everyone whispering 'Left Hand Free', for which alt-j returned to loud cheers and a crowd which had both hands free for all the clapping in unison. The diverse audience saw just how far this Mercury Prize-winning band have come since their university days with this very special, intimate gig.

## Mahalia

*The Wardrobe*  
15/10

As Mahalia strutted out on stage in her light pink jumpsuit and black high top converse, you knew you were in for a treat; she appeared so cool and calm that you could not help but admire her. Then she burst into her popular track 'No Pressure' to warm up the crowd as they echoed the lyrics in unison, proving all my thoughts and surpassing my expectations - Mahalia is as talented as she is cool.

After changing the mood to her more soulful track of 'One Night Only', Mahalia introduced herself and offered the first insight into her extremely likeable and down-to-earth personality. She explained how the gospel layered tune 'Proud Of Me' is really dedicated to her family and her fans when she acknowledged that this was her first headlining show here in Leeds, an admission which was greeted with an eruption of cheers from the sold-out crowd.

Not only did Mahalia's mesmerising vocals capture the audience in awe, but as she delved into diary-like entries in between songs, casually chatting about her experiences with body image, social media and ex-boyfriends - just as one would do with their best friends - the crowd was completely still. She opened up about the reality of it all and how she wants to use her platform to reassure girls and boys that if you believe you have a beautiful heart then you are "so peng."

She gracefully sung a few more hits including '17', 'Surprise Me' and 'Good Reason', with her sultry and effortless vocals. One moment which stood out was her spoken verse and accompanying melodies in the song 'Back Up Plan', which she performed so eloquently, captivating the audience with her impressive song-writing ability.

Chatting to the crowd with her final story about a boy she had a crush on when she was twelve and the journey they went on together; the way Mahalia opened up and made everyone laugh along just made you fall in love with her raw personality. She broke into 'I Wish I Missed My Ex' which caused everyone to scream and dance along to the upbeat and relatable tune. The breakout hit, 'Sober', finished off her set perfectly, leaving you wanting more.

Despite it being an intimate, small gig, Mahalia is a raw talent who confidently performed and who acted like a friend you had known for years.

## Melvins + Jon Spencer

*Stylus*,  
26/10

It's a punctual 7.30 start for Jon Spencer whose hot, sweaty, garage noise blasting out around Stylus presents a welcome respite from the Baltic winds ravaging the streets outside. Stripped of Judah Bauer and Russell Simins' driving Blues Explosion backing, one might expect tonight to be more of a subdued affair. Spencer, however, can't help himself and the audience is treated to a clattering garage blues assault - made all the more "clattering" by the fact that Spencer's percussionist and former Pussy Galore cohort, Bob Bert, is playing some scrap metal and a dustbin with hammers.

Spencer and 'The Hitmakers' blast through tracks from his upcoming solo album, *Spencer Plays The Hits*. We get "Time 2 Be Bad", the stop/start trash-punk of 'I Got The Hits' and the fuzzy march of 'Overload'. Keyboardist Sam Coomes' low-squall provides 'Beetle Boots' and 'Ghost' with an anchoring pulse. Jon even throws in a few JSBX deep cuts for the fans in the form of 'Dang' and 'Shirt Jac'. The set draws to a close with Spencer, in full faux-gospel orator mode, pleading "People! Let me tell you ladies and gentlemen! I begin to feel like a fool! It ain't right! Putting children in cages!" Just in case we weren't sure as to what or whom he was alluding, Spencer punctuates his sermon with a howled "Fuck Trump!" - a sentiment which, like all of tonight's set, is emphatically cheered.

From no bass to all of the bass. Melvins, now sporting a second bassist in the form of one-time Butthole Surfer, Jeff Pinkus, loom into view to the tectonic-shifting riffage of 'Sesame Street Meat'. Dale, Buzz, Steven and Jeff proceed to plough through a 30-year repertoire of pummeling doom rock and assorted oddities. Early tracks like 'At A Crawl', 'Eye Flies' and 'Anaconda' are wedged next to more modern monoliths such as 'Onions Make The Milk Taste Bad' and 'Don't Forget To Breathe'. This, of course, wouldn't be a Melvins' set without a bunch of obtuse covers, so Bowie's 'Saviour Machine', The Rolling Stones' 'Sway' and The James Gang's 'Stop' are thrashed into submission. Melvins conclude with a birthday sing-a-long for Pinkus who is "Fifty One-derful", fading into Dale Crover's crooned rendition of 'So Long, Farewell' from The Sound of Music. As inimitably bizarre and wonderful as always.



Bo Ningen  
Brudenell Social Club,  
14/10

Having seen them once before over three years ago and again last week, I'm still certain that Bo Ningen are a band that has to be seen live to be really appreciated - they have really blown me away both times. On the record, you can appreciate the skill of the musicians and still feel the chaotic elements. But seeing them live is truly more of a performance than anything.

The image of Bo Ningen never detracts from the power of the sound; it makes it feel fully realised. The vastly different outfits, with one guitarist in a tight red number and the frontman in a fishnet shirt and long skirt, along with the erratic dancing and the longest hair in shoegaze, all somehow manage to avoid appearing corny despite its excess.

The songs widely range from ambient to guitar-heavy, some funkier songs with syncopated drums. Not really a band that seem to be able to be categorised or confined to one type of music, Bo Ningen maintain their unique sound throughout the changes in style. The singer's voice is screechy but still dances across the music like another instrument. Seeing them live means you can really appreciate how in sync Bo Ningen are as players; the lead (and bassist's) erratic movements are mesmerising as if conducting the sound with flailing limbs, but only in a way that enhances the music. The energy and togetherness of the group is what makes Bo Ningen one of the most exciting live acts, and I look forward to the chance to see them again - hopefully in as intimate a setting as the Brudenell.

Christine Thomas

Bugzy Malone  
O2 Academy Leeds,  
25/10

Truly claiming his title, 'King of the North', Bugzy Malone dominated at the O2 Academy, delivering a performance that only solidified his place within grime royalty. An expert in crowd control, he was able to unite sweaty complexions across the floor space as he rolled out hit after hit from his ever-growing repertoire. A true rock star without instruments, wholly in his element as he demanded the attention of all in attendance for the beginning of his Be Inspired tour - and how inspired we were.

Getting into the set came recognizable song 'Die By The Gun', which triggered explosive booms from the crowd as his performance escalated. A whirlpool of people churning around gave the space a fluidity that seemed to move to whatever beat Malone conducted. In many ways, the gig became paradoxical as Malone fed off the crowd's enjoyment, but without his influence we would have been silent.

At first listen, the songs seemed harsh; with the strobing lights controlling your vision it was easy to be swept away into the raw sound. But upon closer inspection, it was a release of emotion - emotion being channelled through a gritty genre often mistaken for aggression. I passed people with blurred faces, knowing that they were lost in the intensity of honest lyricism that we all appreciated in the short hour we had to escape in this sound.

Malone's genuine cries of happiness, explaining that he could not "believe everyone turned up tonight", told a tale of purity that his songs only mirrored. He beamed with contentment and, in many moments, he seemed in a world beyond gratitude, as his artistry had touched everyone in the room.

There was no encore. Instead, he finished with his new single, 'Warning'; with words that told of never giving up; with a mantra that he clearly followed.

Jessica McCarrick

# New Releases

## Bill Ryder-Jones - Yawn



Bill Ryder-Jones returns with his best album to date. *Yawn* is the culmination of a seven-year solo career and a pained existence, moving his beautifully depressing guitar music into a much deeper dimension.

Together these ten songs represent a meditative reflection of Ryder-Jones' self and relationships. The goose bump inducing 'Don't Be Scared I Love You' is a ballad for himself as much as anyone else listening. It comes as no surprise that Ryder-Jones isn't exactly upbeat; his own mental health has always been paramount to his lyricism, *West Kirby Primary's* 'Daniel' gave the most heart wrenching

musical expression of grief that I have ever heard. Yet, something about *Yawn* is musically darker. Ryder-Jones' hushed voice, held in perfect balance with a dark textural and instrumental landscape, is truly stunning.

Each song seems to form a body. The repetitive guitar melody ebbs and flows like air from the lungs, a counter guitar melody forms the blood in the veins, and twinkling drums and sustained cello drones work in harmony with the slow bass heartbeat. Most of the time, Ryder-Jones lets this body stay relaxed. Yet, sometimes, it is released to the wind to run. 'Mither', an ode to Ryder-

Jones' mother, bounces between the two culminating in a Pixie-esque soundscape which leaves you almost feeling the windburn on your cheeks.

If I'm going to be honest, this album may not be for everyone. It's a perfectly produced guitar album, but it demands attention. To get the most out of this work you need a cup of strong tea and ears willing to listen to the crafted words which swell deep from Bill Ryder-Jones' soul. It's clearly therapy for Ryder-Jones to make music, and I'd happily be overwhelmed by his emotions any day of the week.

Jenny Pudney

## NAO - Saturn



NAO's sophomore studio album, *Saturn*, released under her own label, Little Tokyo Recordings, was released unto us last Friday. Her phenomenal debut album, *For All We Know*, hurtled her into the spotlight back in July 2016, dripping in soul and R&B with electronic and consistently funky dance production.

The album marks a return from a two-year hiatus, which saw very little music released except the 2017 buzz single, 'Nostalgia', and features on globally renowned artists such as Mura Masa ('Complicated') and disco funk legends, CHIC. Now, the Brit award nominee neo-soul goddess is back once again, flourishing her astounding vocal range and ability to transport the listener into her mind.

NAO lifts the album off to an atmospheric start with 'Another Lifetime', fully instating NAO as the queen of dramatic pauses in songs, as seen heavily on her first album with songs like 'Girlfriend'. Wading through the topic of time and space, both in terms of outer space and NAO's own personal experience throughout the album, she is able to contrast her uplifting production with weariness lyrically.

Saturn - the gas giant with a radius 9-times that of Earth - takes roughly 29 years to completely orbit the Sun, which also happens to be the age of NAO. Her concept being that, at this point in life, "something big happens", rethinking and replanning your life occurs in a way that NAO

describes as "a complete shedding of skin and it can be painful."

A range of R&B talent from all over the industry, including 6LACK, Kwabs and SiR, supplement her high-pitched vocals with luscious warm, deep vocals. Most notable is Kwabs' distinctive texture woven into the minimalistic track 'Saturn', creating a Daniel Caesar-esque sounding classic soul track.

NAO's ability to produce records all the way from the retro soul to her pioneering neo-soul futuristic electro-funk sound, as is so clearly visible on this project, leaves her reigning champion and provides a perfect follow up to her debut.

Tom Weatherilt

# Discwoman: Amplifying Each Other

**Discwoman is an all-female DJ collective and artist agency, focused on promoting equality and representing female talent in the electronic music scene. Before their night at Wire last week, Clubs editor James Dewar briefly caught up with them...**

**It seems like an obvious question but, first of all, what led you to start Discwoman?**

It was more of a response to our community; we saw so many talented women, and them not being celebrated, so decided to organize a celebration.

**How deeply embedded do you think sexism is within the electronic music scene?**

I mean like anything in the world, patriarchy has been the crux of society for centuries and we're really just trying to work to do undo that.

**What do you think of the response to what you're doing, in terms representation of women on line ups?**

It's been mostly positive I'd say. I think some people think its tokenistic... as much as this can be true I also think it's necessary to shed light on underrepresented acts.

**Do you feel as if you've created a better climate for female DJs? It definitely feels as though there's been a real shift in the last couple of years.**

I definitely think we play a part in it, there feels like a growing consciousness which is super exciting.

**What do you see as the high point since you guys started Discwoman? Obviously, last year you made the Forbes 30 under 30 list. But, for me at least, the Umfang/Volvox B2B set for Boilerroom at Dekmantel was something really special.**

God, way too many. But from this year I'd say our party at De School and the one at Saule (Berghain) from the summer.

**What's next for Discwoman?**

Were just focused on working to grow our artist agency.

**Finally, what advice do you have for young female DJs trying to break onto the scene?**

Don't listen to people. Just listen to whether you want to do it or not and listen to music haha.

James Dewar



**...Laura McDermott then went to experience their talent for herself and reviewed the night.**

New-York based collective Discwoman are pioneering figures in bringing gender equality to the electronic music scene. Created in 2014 from a two-day festival at Bossa Nova Civic Club, Discwoman now boast over 250 DJs; all of whom are cis women, trans women, non-binary and trans people.

On Saturday 20th October, following a workshop with Leeds' very own non-cis male collective, Equaliser, Discwoman took to the decks at Wire, to show us how they like to party in NYC.

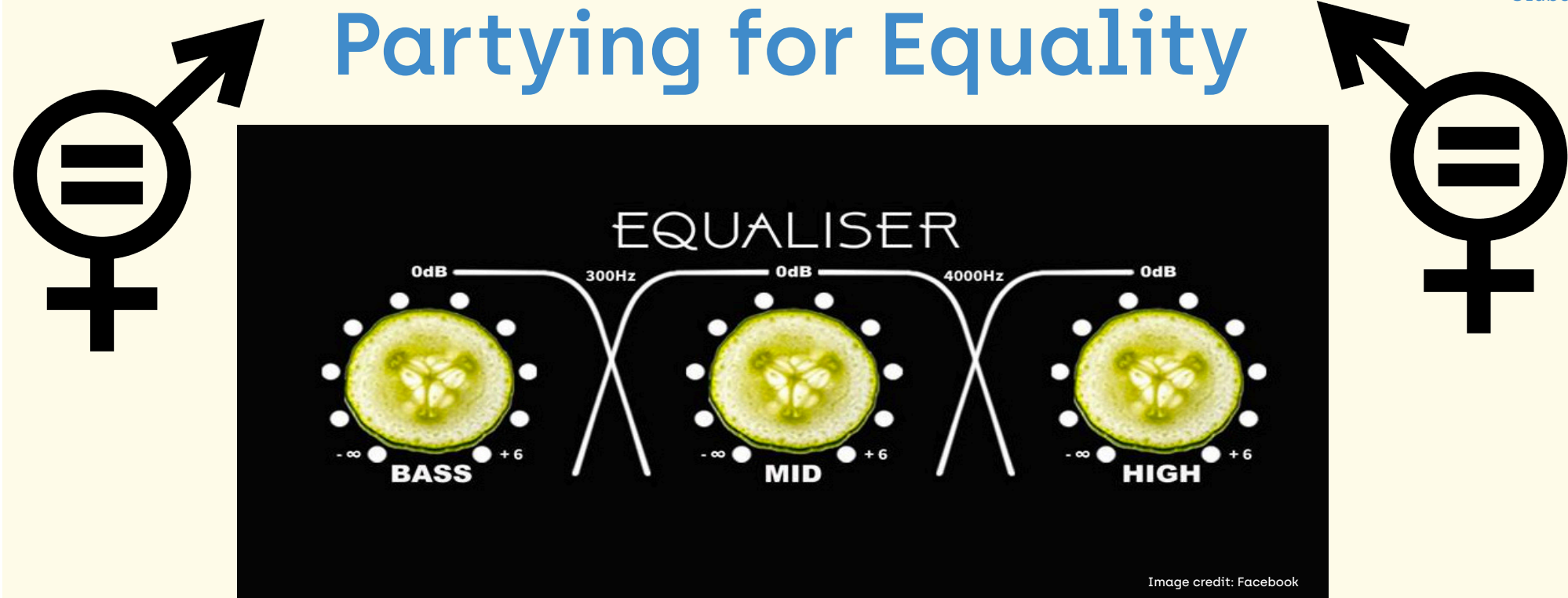
With three fierce selectors, Volvox, Ciel and Shyboi, Discwoman truly showed us why they have had the worldwide success that they do, bringing their absolute top quality and flare to Leeds. With each of the DJs bringing their own unique sound to the basement, Wire truly was the perfect venue to encapsulate the intimacy and care that the three DJs have for their craft. They created an atmosphere in which any aspiring non-cis-male DJ would see that you really can just go for it. The importance of having such events is key in showing that DJing does not just have to be a male dominated industry - women can take over the decks too.

The event was partnered with the Good Night Out Campaign, which is a movement aiming to end sexual harassments and assaults on nights out across the globe. Wire is a venue that supports the campaign and it seems like a perfect partnership with all that Discwoman stands for.

Laura McDermott







## In The Middle had the pleasure of chatting with Ranyue Zhang, the founder of Equaliser: the DJ party collective which promotes non-cis male DJs and diversifying the decks.

On a crisp October day, I had the pleasure of meeting up with Equaliser founder and Brudenell Groove resident, Ranyue Zhang. Equaliser is a Leeds-based DJ collective that aims to nurture and promote the talent of cis-women, trans women, non-binary and trans people. With the mission statement **'party for equality, party for everyone'**, Equaliser is one of many non-cis male collectives making a huge impact on bringing about gender equality in the electronic music scene. After their first birthday in September, Ranyue and I had a discussion about Equaliser's year, what's in store for the future, and whether or not tokenism is always a bad thing.

Over the past year, Equaliser has gathered a huge following on social media, representing the wider acknowledgement that there is a need for a movement such as this one. The members of Equaliser pass on their valuable knowledge and experience by providing monthly workshops that all non-cis males can attend, and which help amateur DJs to get the confidence they need to just go for it.

"Equaliser is important," Ranyue explains, "you can develop and learn from each other."

I asked Ranyue at what point she felt that a collective like Equaliser was needed in the Leeds scene. As a member of Brudenell Groove, although she is constantly surrounded by talented DJs, they are almost exclusively cis-males. She strongly feels that there are many female DJs who are just as talented but simply don't have the chance to show it, and so wants to give all women that opportunity.

After a year throwing parties that are renowned for their success across Leeds, Equaliser's most recent workshop featured New York-based, all-female DJ collective, Discwoman. Discwoman are pioneers when it comes to collectives promoting gender equality in electronic music. When we meet, Ranyue tells me how she hopes the two collectives will be able to learn each other's tricks of the trade; a future goal for Equaliser is to maybe one day mirror the success of Discwoman, whether it takes two, five or ten years.

In a well-deserved interview with *DJ Mag* (a pretty big deal), Equaliser members discussed the impact that 'tokenism' can have. Tokenism is the act of pretending to give advantage to minority groups in society who are treated unfairly, in order to give the appearance of

fairness. With event organisers realising that there is a push for non-cis men to be represented within the music scene, there is a danger that DJs from such collectives may only be hired to provide an element of diversity, as opposed to for their talent. Ranyue gives me her take on this: "on one hand tokenism is obviously bad, people will use us to try and make more money. But someone needs to take the opportunity," she explains, "you might as well take that opportunity and make it something right". By using that platform and grasping at every opportunity, maybe one day event organisers will come to see that non-cis men are great DJs too, rather than just a token piece; "token feature will become the main feature," Ranyue says.

Ranyue's approach to tokenism applies to the broader issue of gender inequality within the music industry: "You can't get anywhere by pointing your finger at someone and saying 'You are wrong!' The music industry has an imbalanced history that has already happened. What can you do? You cannot change the past. So, you may as well do something for the future." This really encapsulates what the Equaliser crew are striving to achieve. It is their 'something for the future' approach that really matters in promoting equal representation in dance music.

This representation on such platforms is extremely important in allowing non-cis males to realise that they can in fact take to the decks and transform the dancefloor. If you've never identified with someone in a certain position, such as non-cis males currently in the DJ scene, then it is harder to picture yourself in that coveted

spot. Ranyue's advice to those who do not feel like they are being represented is to be creative and to tell yourself "I can do this. I want to do this." Being in an industry that is cis-male dominated means that non-cis males are often afraid and intimidated to grab chances, but the first step in the journey is often the hardest part. Ranyue emphasises the importance of following your gut instinct and listening to your heart.

Looking to the future, Ranyue tells me that the collective aim is to start putting on a more diverse range of workshops, including some on music production. "The best result would be a sick party and a sick workshop and loads of sick DJ's and it all comes from Equaliser." As opposed to being known as a sick female collective, Ranyue just wants the DJs at Equaliser to be acknowledged as being great at what they do, with gender out of the equation: "people will talk about it as a really sick party, rather than just a party for women."

We also discussed Equaliser's plans to venture to Ranyue's home country, China, next year. China's conservative nature has resulted in a lack of female representation in its music scene. Ranyue believes that creating a safe space for non-cis male artists would have a hugely positive influence within Chinese society. It would be nice to give people in China who are similar minded to Equaliser a space to do what they want. Ranyue's long-term goal is 'The University of Equaliser' - a University that I would definitely want to sign up for.

Equaliser are throwing their next party on the 8th of December and this is one you definitely won't want to miss. The night will feature Siren DJs, Jay and Sybil, as well as the Equaliser team taking to the decks. With an exciting future ahead, it seems that Equaliser are going to keep providing some of the best parties in Leeds, whilst doing it all in the name of equality.

Laura McDermott





# "Boobs Are Back" But Where Did They Go?

**Iona Tompkins explains why we need to stop treating women's bodies as commercial trends.**



Photographed by Corinne Day

When the *New York Post* published their controversial article 'Boobs are back in a big way', it can only be assumed they were hoping for some idle clickbait, rather than the wave of (completely justifiable) backlash they received instead.

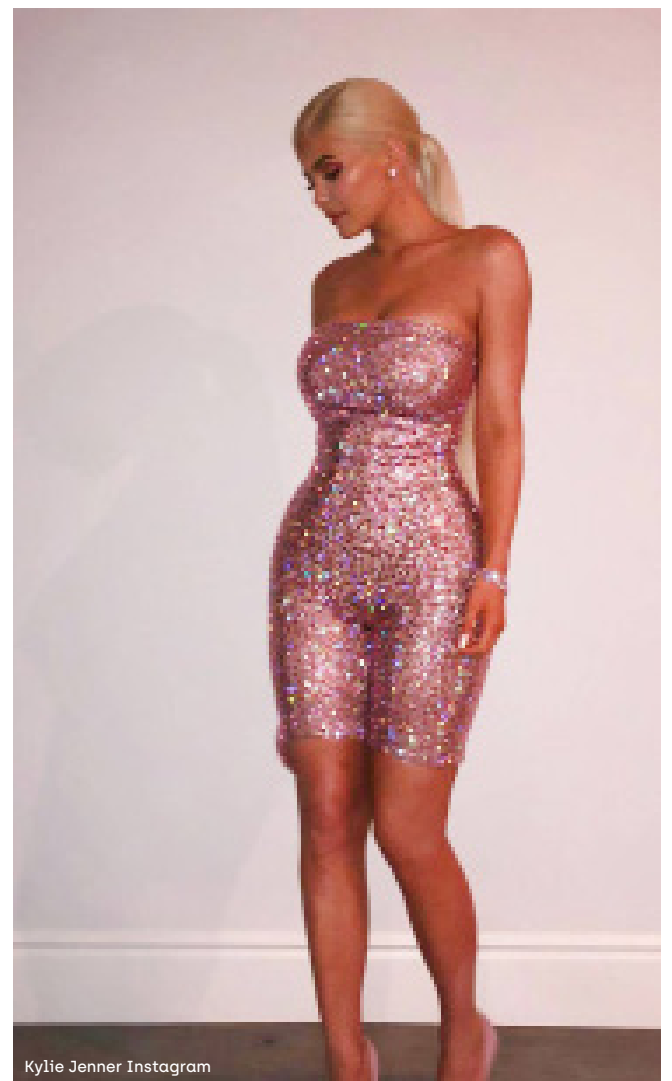
Whilst there was some targeted backlash against this article, there is a danger in seeing cases such as these as isolated incidents, thereby limiting the discussion to the narrow confines of each immediate controversy. However, when seen within a historical context these incidents display a curious trend. Put simply, the desired, idealised, fetishised and objectified female body has consistently been the very antithesis of what is achievable for most women during any given period. Whilst this phenomenon was arguably more explicit in the past, it remains a persistent problem to this day, with its tenacity partly explained by the refusal to acknowledge the damage articles such as the aforementioned *New York Post* feature can inflict, no matter how ill-conceived and poorly written they may be.

If one takes a cursory glance through art history, there seems to be little to no consistency between what was considered the epitome of beauty for any given period. *Buzzfeed's* viral 2015 video aimed to encapsulate within eleven women the drastic shifts which have occurred, highlighting the disparity at first glance between the heroin chic of the 1990s and the curves of the Italian



renaissance. The only consistency in the desired standards is that they are always the body type women in each period are least likely to have.

In the Victorian era, when many poorer women struggled to afford enough to eat, a curvaceous but corseted figure was favoured. Due to its expensive whale bone construction and the restrictive movements it allowed the wearer, the epitome of beauty was only a feasible option for those who were rich enough to afford both a plentiful supply of food and a complete aversion to any form of work. Fast forward to the 1980s and 90s, where the advent of fast food, synthetic additives and increasingly office-based jobs for many has meant the beginning of what would soon become a burgeoning obesity crisis in much of the western world. Cue the supermodel era and the desire for lean athletic figures, which for many can only be achieved through a costly gym membership and the time, energy and knowledge needed to cook healthily. This presents yet another barrier to this idealised beauty, as it remains far out of reach for all but the richest percentiles of society.



Kylie Jenner Instagram

With the increasing prevalence of plastic and cosmetic surgery today, there is the potential for the body politics to create and reinforce socio-political divides even further. Surely by 2018 we should be able to finally break this cycle of commercializing an unattainable female form, and instead focus on expanding our horizons on what we considered to be beautiful. Boobs never left, and nor did the women who have them. Stereotypes of beauty should no longer be an elitist obsession. There has undoubtedly been some positive shifts in terms of increasing diversity and acceptance, but too much of this has remained at an ephemeral level and has not addressed the complex and deep rooted relationship between wealth, exclusivity and each generation's current standards of beauty.



# The Rise of Influencer Fashion

**Saffron Clark invites us to give a second thought over why we feel the compulsion to update our wardrobes weekly.**

In a world where fashion and clothing are so accessible and easy to obtain, we seem to be buying it all, with no limits. As someone who loves to shop, I will hold my hand up and say I've already purchased four coats this autumn season, and all of them have been from cheap and fast fashion brands that push their name and clothing through Instagram. These include places like Missguided, Pretty Little Thing, Fashion Nova and Boohoo, all of which are brands that push their content through the likes of influencers and bloggers.

We all know that Instagram is changing how the fashion industry works; if a brand doesn't have a strong Instagram presence, there is no chance of success with the younger generation. The influencer is a key element to having a significant sale and bringing consumers to the brand. This has caused a new wave of "Instagram brands" that use the platform as the primary launch pad for business as they know younger generations, like Millennials and Gen Z, are more likely to respond to real

people influencers than celebrities.

Pretty Little Thing, for example, has been gradually growing as a business since its opening in 2012 but didn't really achieve success until they realised what they could accomplish through utilising Instagram. They had a 663% rise in business and sales when they got the likes of Kylie Jenner and Sofia Richie to step in and promote their clothing. With the extra exposure the brand had, the bigger the budget to pay influencers as brand ambassadors, both in the UK and overseas, meaning they curated a broader range of customers generated mainly through Instagram and affiliate links.

Fast fashion is the main cause of our serious consumption issue when it comes to clothes. Fast fashion is fashion that moves quickly to capture trends, with turnover of 2-3 weeks. Fast fashion is usually implemented by the cheaper high street stores, whereas slow fashion is the traditional way of debuting Spring/Summer and Autumn/Winter collections which don't

get added to over the season and is more common in the designer and high-end brands. The main difference is that the fast fashion of Pretty Little Thing and Missguided is aimed at the younger generation, who enjoy being able to buy new things every week without (seemingly) spending too much.

But why do we consume so much and why is Instagram making it worse? Is it the bloggers and self-proclaimed influencers that are making us feel the need to buy more? The constant gifting of clothes that they are then paid to push onto us? They know exactly how to hit us with the goods and make us think we NEED that new borg cream jumper from Pretty Little Thing – we can't possibly go on without it, and it's only £15... It's easy to influence people that already like the brand and want to stay trendy without breaking the bank.

Maybe think about that next purchase, whether you really need it or whether you're just being influenced by Instagram?

**Saffron Clark**



7,520 likes

tiffanyc\_watson Tonight's forecast: 99% chance of wine 🍷 Wearing @missyempire



## Suit-ably Dressed Women

**The powersuit first made its comeback back on the AW17 runways, proving that it means business and is here to stay.**

From the elegant Meghan Markle to the outrageous Lady Gaga, suits worn by women have never been more on trend. Suits have been a symbol of female power since the Chanel skirt suit was introduced in the 1920s, giving women the freedom to dress for comfort as well as formality, instead of being restricted to a corset.

The real revolution came in the 1980s when Armani created pantsuits, which helped women to be taken seriously in their careers. Recently there has been a dramatic change in the definitions of menswear

and womenswear, but power suits still signify the very earliest move towards blurring the lines of gender constraints.

Many celebrities are opting for power suits over traditional gowns at red carpet events. After the 'Me Too' campaign gained momentum following Hollywood revelations of the behaviour of Harvey Weinstein and the atrocities which came to light in Rochdale, empowering women has never been so important.

Last week, Lady Gaga once again hit the headlines for wearing an oversized grey Marc

Jacobs blazer and trousers to Elle's Annual Women in Hollywood Celebration event. The suit was visibly different from her usual outfits - she has a history of controversial dresses, including the famous dress made of meat and an inflatable star dress.

For Lady Gaga, this suit seemed understated and casual compared to her previous looks and she explained that she chose to wear a suit because it made her feel more like herself. She continued with a touching and thought provoking acceptance speech covering mental health, feminism, eq-

uality and being the survivor of a sexual assault. She described wearing a suit as a way for her to "take the power back," continuing to explain that women in Hollywood "are not just objects to entertain the world" but they "are voices" who "have the power to speak and be heard and fight back when we are silenced."

Lady Gaga's message is not just applicable to Hollywood celebrities, but anyone who wants to use their voice to promote goodness and positive change in society. There is more to feminism than wearing a suit, but resisting the

need to prove your femininity through dress and using your clothing as a symbol of power is a start. Rita Ora is another celebrity to recently appear at a high profile function in a power suit, attending the Rimmel anti-cyberbullying event in an oversized pink and blue Marc Jacobs suit.

The fashion industry is clearly set to lead the way for a more gender-fluid future, and hopefully Lady Gaga can inspire us all, regardless of gender, to be a helping hand to those in need, to do something different, to be strong and reclaim our voice.

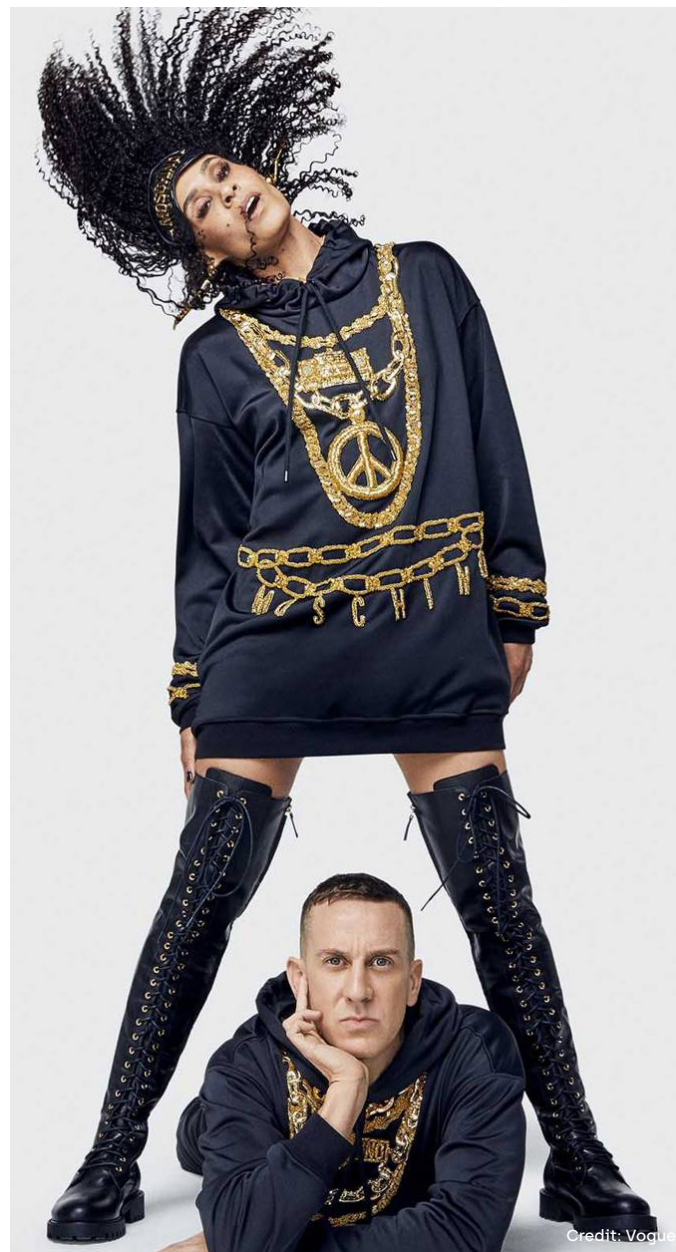
**Gemma Lavers**





# Moschino x H&M: Making High Fashion More Affordable?

Sara Nazir reviews Jeremy Scott's upcoming collaboration with the high street brand.



From Versace to Balmain and Stella McCartney to Roberto Cavalli, the list of designers that H&M have collaborated with is impressive to say the least. Earlier this year, the fast-fashion retailer announced that they would be collaborating with Moschino, the Italian high fashion brand known for their playful detailing and eccentric designs. With Jeremy Scott as creative director, the brand has become renowned for its unconventional contributions to fashion.

The collection consists of clothing and accessories ranging from £25 to £300, and even includes petwear, such as a padded dog coat and gold collar. Any fashion enthusiast would be quick to recognise the vivid prints, gold chains and bold colours from the collection as emblematic of

Scott's signature, over-the-top aesthetic. The 50s-salon inspired campaign for the collection was shot by legendary fashion photographer Steven Meisel and features top models such as Imaan Hammam, Vittoria Ceretti and the Hadid Sisters. The

**"I started with the thought of how to make it the most Jeremy Scott for Moschino collection ever."**

campaign was successful in showcasing the mini leather dresses, gold disco pants and the sequined jackets in the most ostentatious way. Scott also put on a

glitzy show on Wednesday to showcase the highly anticipated collection. With the likes of Naomi Campbell and Candice Swanepoel walking the runway, the event had everyone talking.

"This is for my fans" he told Vogue.com. "I started with the thought of how to make it the most Jeremy Scott for Moschino collection ever."

Past collaborations with H&M have proved to be extremely successful; from customers queuing outside flagship stores in the early hours, to the entire collection selling out online within hours. However, for some fashion lovers, Moschino isn't as highly regarded as the likes of Versace or Stella McCartney. With the creation of its sister brand, Love Moschino, and the

availability of pieces in outlets, Moschino is already relatively accessible and affordable in the world of luxury fashion. However, this doesn't seem to concern Scott, who has been vocal on his dislike of exclusivity. For him, the purpose of this collaboration was to make his designs accessible to the mass market.

If we go by past trends, there is no doubt that this collection will sell out instantly. However, the type of consumer will definitely change. Whereas previous collections were purchased by customers who couldn't afford luxury pieces, H&M x Moschino is much more likely to appeal to a niche market of fashion enthusiasts who simply appreciate Scott's creativity. The collection will be available online and in selected stores on November 8th.



# Icons Only: The Most Memorable Styles on Stage

Move over Ed Sheeran, jeans just don't cut it. Lydia Flack looks at some of the most iconic styles ever to grace the big stage.



No this is not a look from the 2018 MET Gala, Beyoncé just does this. Emphasising her pregnancy glow with enough gold and jewels to outfit a pharaoh's tomb, Beyoncé didn't need a crown to show us she was queen. But she did it anyway. Icon.



Looking better than we could ever hope to look as we step out of a bubble bath, Lady Gaga has style to spare and enough iconic outfits to keep me up writing all week. This bubble outfit really blew our minds, get it?



I am able to confirm that it has been scientifically proven that only one woman in the universe can pull off a bedazzled white cowgirl suit and boots. That woman is Dolly Parton. Jolene never stood a chance.

Lydia Flack

## You Should Be Following...

@thesartorialist



Scott Schuman, more commonly known as The Sartorialist, is a New York based blogger and photographer, whose aim is to create a "two-way dialogue about the world of fashion and its relationship to daily life."

Scott Schuman is the ultimate fashion voyeur. He captures street style like no other, travelling all over the world in search of chic outfits to snap. What I love most about The Sartorialist is that he does not focus on what we are most used to seeing on Instagram; young, beautiful women in their 20s certainly feature on his page, but his work is not limited to this narrow demographic. Men and women of all ages are praised for their style in his (always beautifully composed) photographs, from the tailoring of their clothing right down to which button is deliberately left undone. He has a keen eye for fashion etiquette and effortless elegance, and while most of his subjects don designer garments, he remains one of my favourite bloggers due to his knowledge and appreciation of all kinds of fashion, on all kinds of people.

Christy Bucklow





# The FUAM Graduate Art Prize Exhibition 2018

The FUAM Graduate Art Prize rewards the artistic excellence of graduating students from BA Art and Design and Fine Art at the University of Leeds. Now in its sixth year, the annual exhibition showcases the work of this year's four finalists, Hannah Marsh, Katie Clark, Beth Windmill, and Tayisiya Shovgelia. The works exhibited include performative and audio installations, digital video and animation, photography and artist photo books.

With current discourse concerning Britain's exit from the EU, and conversations about discrimination towards minority groups that have been rife since the vote to leave in 2016, the work of this year's prizewinner - Hannah Marsh - is pertinent in its exploration of the spaces that black people occupy within institutions and their experiences of isolation and alienation. Marsh's work presented in the exhibition is an extensive installation piece, *For Eya, Susie and I* (2018), that is comprised of a large performative ink drawing on the gallery wall, created using cleaning tools. There is a cleaner's cupboard that contains a sound work featuring the voices of Marsh, her grandmother, and a cleaner that is based in the School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies (FAHACS) at the University and smaller photography and mixed media works.

The installation draws upon the narrative of Marsh's grandmother Eya Couloute and her experience as a black migrant from Santa Lucia, intertwined with the experiences of Susie the Fine Art School cleaner, who is a black migrant from Ghana. The ink drawing alludes to the gestural movements of a cleaner; the marks show signs of wiping and rubbing with mops and cloths,

capturing the hidden motions of the cleaner that goes unnoticed in her work, almost invisible, or just ignored. The audio piece and cupboard setting immerses the viewer in these stories; an artificial scene that highlights the reality of this marginal role; a chance for the silent workers to recount their experiences. Marsh says that through her work she seeks to "make commentary on the lack of movement socially, concerning opportunities for black people in Britain."

Katie Clark's work draws inspiration from her own experiences and frustrations as a young woman. Clark's animated digital video *The Grey Area* (2018), presents a narrative in a traditional hand-drawn style that looks to expand the limitations within which consent and assault are understood and addressed. Clark takes an intersectional feminist eye to the behaviours of society and produces work that looks to challenge patriarchal structures and empower the voices of those who are currently unheard. Clark's work is similarly relevant to current discussions, particularly surrounding the controversial Trump presidency and the difficult stories of women that continue to stay silent in a society that "minimalise and normalise" them.

Moving away from the politically charged works of the FAHACS graduates, the photographic works of BA Art and Design student Beth Windmill are concerned with themes of identity, mapping on a personal level, and memory - or, more accurately, holes within memory. The colourful shots and blurred moments take form in a wall-mounted montage and artist photo book that intend to bring together separate memories or multiple parts of one memory, and layer them together in an

incoherent manner. The specific colour scheme and layout of the images are purposeful, reflecting the idea of memory as an experience not in its true state but something that has been altered or is unclear, revealing gaps in the memory of the storyteller. Whilst the viewer can relate to these explorations of memory, the work is also very personal to Windmill, incorporating images and text from her own experiences.

Also working with photography, the works of Tayisiya Shovgelia began as an exploration of a body as form, which then evolved to focus on the beauty and eroticism of flowers as an analogy of the female body. The large-scale photographs of dying flowers allude to the notion of memento mori and the focus on still life flowers and objects that reflect the theme of death. Shovgelia's practice is informed by fashion photography and this results in an interesting crossover between the tropes of such a loaded photography style and the imagery of flowers and death, rather than fashion models and clothing. Like Windmill, Shovgelia also creates artist photo books and the series exhibited play with the relationship between art and advertising, with flowers as a continuing motif.

The FUAM Graduate Art Prize is a great opportunity to see work by fellow University of Leeds students that are at the start of their artistic careers and it will be interesting to see what they will do in the next part of their journey. The exhibition is on until Saturday the 3rd of November at the Stanley & Audrey Burton Gallery in the Parkinson Building. Catch the show while you can.

**D'arcy Darilmaz**



# Fantastic Beasts and Johnny Depp's Fall from Fame

There is a disturbingly long, and ever-growing, list of sexual assault allegations made against some of the most reputable men in Hollywood. The media frenzy around the #MeToo movement has been wide, and criticism about Johnny Depp and his casting in the *Fantastic Beasts* franchise is no exception. The public has taken to Twitter to condemn JK Rowling's decision to support Depp's role in the movies, however, on a larger scale, the allegations don't appear to have the power to affect movie ratings. With the next film, *The Crimes of Grindelwald*, set to be released next month, what impact will Depp's controversial character have on the film's reception?

One of Depp's most memorable characters, the intoxicated and chaotic Jack Sparrow, seems to be trickling into his reality at a disturbing pace. More and more allegations are surfacing from the ocean of reports made against him including broken contracts and outstanding wages. Depp has always been dubbed quirky and a bit rogue but in 2016 the mirage around the movie star darkened. His wife, Amber Heard, filed for divorce and acquired a temporary restraining order against Depp, claiming that she had suffered domestic abuse at the hands of the Hollywood star for the duration of their four-year relationship. Less than a year later he was to be recast as Grindelwald in the *Fantastic Beasts* series, but the Harry Potter fans were not happy. Depp's character has been a key face in the marketing of the film, obviously an attempt to appeal to the masses despite the cloud surrounding his name.

But, what if this marketing strategy backfires and people refuse to support a man alleged to have physically abused his wife? JK Rowling doesn't seem to think it will, saying she was "genuinely happy to have Johnny Depp in the

*Fantastic Beasts* sequel." For someone who has repeatedly spoken out for women's rights, it seems surprising that she could endorse a man with such substantial evidence stacking up against him. Removing Depp from the movie would have been far more effort, and cost far more money, than allowing him to continue an apparent reign of abuse and exploitation. It's disappointing that a woman who preaches for women's rights has failed to see the implications her casting will have. She is putting forth the notion that some allegations just aren't as serious as others, and that names like Depp's are above removal and replacement.

Unfortunately for Johnny Depp, times have changed, and people are beginning to recognise and understand dysfunctional and harmful behaviour. Yet, it still seems that this takes a backseat in Hollywood. There is no doubt that the box offices will go crazy about this film, mainly because the majority of people recognise and worship Depp as an incredibly talented actor, and not as a domestic abuser.

Sian Smith





# The Comedy About a Bank Robbery at Leeds Grand Theatre

**Arts editor Katherine Corcoran reviews Mischief Theatre's latest hilarious show.**

Much is to be discussed in our taxi ride home from the opening night showing of *The Comedy About a Bank Robbery*. I leave the performance in what might best be described as a 'comedy coma': a state of cathartic astonishment as I lounge awe-struck in the back of the car, wondering just how I'm going to write a cohesive review of a show that's had me in fits of laughter for a solid two hours.

After *The Play That Goes Wrong* won Mischief Theatre the Olivier Award for Best New Comedy in 2015, it was clear that big things were in store for the London-based company of LAMDA alumni. With a sense of humour rooted in crafty word-play and neatly choreographed slapstick, Mischief have established an intelligent style that has granted them a respectable place within London's West End (when *The Play That Goes Wrong* closes next April, it will have been showing at the Duchess Theatre for a five year run).

*The Comedy About a Bank Robbery* applies Mischief's inventive flair to a 1950s setting, where an escapee convict sets out to rob a Minneapolis bank of their priceless diamond. The realisation of this crime is of course intensely problematic, and as the plan comes to life the various layers of who's duping who become fantastically intertwined, creating a sense of chaos at the centre of the comedy.

What's astounding from the out-set is the sheer amount of thought that's gone into the play's speedy gags. Mischief founders Henry Lewis, Jonathan Sayer and Henry Shields have crafted a script rammed with quick off the mark puns that set a demanding pace for the audience to get used to – find yourself chuckling for too long at one play on 'Robin Threeboys' (the bank manager played by Damian Lynch, and also the crook's plan for the day) and you'll miss the next joke.

When opening scenes are this smart it's hard to imagine how *The Comedy About a Bank Robbery* might maintain its momentum, but it keeps getting better and better. Choreographed by Tour Director Kirsty Patrick Ward, the cast's gymnastic energy adds visual excitement to the script-based humour; there's a hilarious scene in the apartment of Caprice Freeboys (the hustler daughter of Robin Freeboys, played by Julia Firth) where Dave Hearn (Sam Monaghan) clammers around a malfunctioning fold-out bed, hiding high and low from Mitch (Liam Jeavons) as he tries to get it on with Caprice. It's nostalgic, 'he's behind you' humour vamped up to LAMDA level.

David Farley's first-class sets show off the profits that have been raked in by Mischief since the success of their debut show. There's a striking moment where the crooks squeeze through a vent in the ceiling of the bank, and as they're sliding through a tunnel downstage the entire back wall reveals a birds' eye view of the office scene below, with Threeboys and his simpleminded 67-year-old intern Warren (Jon Trenchard) sat on a wall at right angles to the stage. It's a phenomenal exploitation of all the possibilities for a proscenium arch space. The potential for comedy genius is naturally taken advantage of in this remarkable scene, with coffee spillages and paper dropping to the floor making a self-referential nudge at the staging.

*The Comedy About a Bank Robbery* is apolitical humour done incredibly smartly. The play has finished its run in Leeds, but the show is touring the UK until June.

Katherine Corcoran





# The Republican Club

**Ever wondered what kind of art is appreciated by Donald Trump? Arts writer Aimee Churchouse investigates what The Republican Club says about the President's self-idolising taste.**



This is *The Republican Club*, a painting by Andy Thomas gifted to the President by US Representative Darrell Issa, which currently hangs in the White House. Viewers first spotted the painting, which depicts Donald Trump and eight former Republican Presidents candidly enjoying a round of drinks, on *60 Minutes* in an interview with Trump two weeks ago. What I really struggle to get on board with is *Time's* headline that the painting has a, 'subtle feminist message.'

The article refers to the blurred out female figure that appears to boldly approach the boys' table, mentioning that this is supposedly a precursor to a future female leader having the confidence to take on male candidates, head on.

Talking to *Time*, Thomas explained, "That will be the first Republican female president and the first Democratic female president. That's the kind of woman that will be our first woman president; she'll walk right up to that table."

Well, somebody did walk up to that table. As the historic style of the painting denotes, Hillary Clinton did not

gain her seat at the table and has been phased out of the political scene, much like many women have been before her. Other women walking up to that table, such as Dr Christine Ford, have also been side-lined, following her attempt to protect the Supreme Court from a man accused of sexual misconduct. I wonder how many other women in the background of that room have tried to approach that table and been turned away? Probably more than the artist thinks.

It is unsurprising that Donald Trump liked this painting, he even rang the artist to thank him personally. The composition of the painting, which shows a skinny Trump as the focal point in a gleaming white shirt and crimson tie, shows a scary similarity to historic paintings such as Da Vinci's *The Last Supper*, posing a biblical sense of idolism on the current leader of the free world.

The painting flags up other messages, too. This casual meeting which appears to be among 'friends,' with Trump appearing to be the one that has made a joke as the rest of them laugh, genuinely, at his jesting, suggests that despite Trump's unconventional politics, his acceptance

of a Senator that went on trial for sexual assault, and the numerous criminal charges made against him whilst in office, Republican Presidents gone by would still consider him a great guy for the party. By being 'one of the boys,' Trump equates his own flaws with those of past leaders; we're not all perfect.

All members around the table appear to have different drinks, which in turn could say something different about their history and character. Nixon apparently had a taste for expensive wine which he turned to as his presidency collapsed, whilst Trump drinks a Coke, emphasising the fact that he doesn't drink, which he has often made a point of. This attention to detail truly brings alive a painting that is heavily charged with masculinity and republican history, dwarfing any feminist message intended.

What are they all talking about? Nobody knows. But I'm sure the blurred woman won't phase them much when she does reach that table.

**Aimee Churchouse**

# Phoenix at Home

Phoenix Dance Theatre is a key company for contemporary dance in the North, a Leeds-founded organisation that I truly believe more students should know about and enjoy. I got the pleasure of seeing their home showcase at the Stanley and Audrey Burton theatre, an annual event that brings together their favourite pieces, works-in-progress, and some promising emerging talent. After watching all three pieces I had no doubt that the ability of this dance company is immense.

The night consisted of three dance pieces; *Kirke* by Sandrine Monin, *Spam* by Michael Marquez and *Troy Game* by Robert North. The highlight of the night was the world-renowned *Troy Game*, a colourful and comedic piece exploring the roots of masculinity. The choreography is wonderfully satirical of machismo, with slapstick routines and caricature-esque personalities bringing a delightful wit to the performance. The satire is heightened by its recent reworking of the piece to include female dancers equally in the choreography, creating an effortless statement of gender-fluidity within the piece. The piece was a roaring success to showcase as a finale and leave the audience on an inevitable high.

*Kirke* is a new piece of choreography by Sandrine Monin, who has been given the opportunity to choreograph after being employed within their permanent company as a dancer. The work is centred around *Kirke* of ancient Greek legend, a sorceress of dark enchantments who transforms men to animals for sport. The choreography had an ominous tone, with the fluidity and haunting beauty of the movement leaving a viewer on the edge of their seat. The dancers taking on the role of *Kirke* wore a headpiece with a long cascading plait, which often faltered by moving out of place or being clumsily manoeuvred. This prop only hindered the performance which would have been just as effective (if not more) without it. Nevertheless, Monin's choreography is full of originality and promise, and special commendation must go to the dancer Vanesse Vince-Pang whose grace and energy was captivating as *Kirke*.



Phoenix Youth Academy also showed their potential in a new work by Michael Marques entitled *Spam*. Although slightly frantic at times due to the pace of the choreography and the amount of dancers on stage, there was no arguing that the emerging dancers are skilful and hard-working. The piece was modernistic, centring on our rapidly growing culture of technology and communication which struck me as a particularly relevant topic to choreograph for these teens and young adults.

Phoenix Dance Theatre is undoubtedly worthy of their reputation as a forerunner in the contemporary dance scene, and the home showcase was an event of pride and joy as their committed following witnessed the triumph of the company. I do believe students should strive to see their work, especially with much of their content being simultaneously so skilful and so relevant to modern life.

**Ella Carter**



# Celebrating Diwali Far From Home

Srika Nambiar tells us about her experience celebrating Diwali in Leeds as an international student.



Being an international student is quite possibly one of the most daunting experiences I've ever faced. In addition to facing culture shock, it also takes quite some time to get used to the foreign land and its mannerisms; most importantly, it takes ages for it to feel like home. I came to Leeds last year and, in all honesty, it took me far too long to finally feel like I belonged here. Looking back, there were definitely times when I felt happy and finally settled, when I had found a group of friends who understood me and took care of me. But the time I missed home the most was during any kind of special occasion or cultural festival. For me, it was Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights.

Diwali is a festival celebrated by Hindus. In fact, it is one of the most popular Hindu festivals celebrated every year, around Autumn. The festival signifies and celebrates the win of good over evil, knowledge over ignorance, and light over darkness. One significant tradition is the lighting of earthen lamps outside one's home, as a way to welcome success, wealth, and prosperity. Honestly, I don't really consider myself to be a religious person, but Diwali is one such festival that inevitably makes me feel terribly

homesick and wishing I was back home with my family. Last year was my first Diwali away from home, and whilst it wasn't that great, I did try my best to make myself feel like I was actually back home. A few days before Diwali, I began thoroughly cleaning my room, as my mother would do back home, and stocked up on Indian sweets in my house. With the help of my flatmates, I also decorated my living room with fairy lights and placed electric candles along the corridors and threshold of my home. I, for one, don't really visit the temple, but homesickness got to me so much that I visited the Hindu Temple. Somehow, the ambience was so comforting that I genuinely felt like I was back home. My parents were surprised, but pleased to say the least. I also, of course, called my family back home, in an attempt to be a part of the celebrations!

Over the year, one thing I've come to realize is that it is always worth spending some time around people who remind you of home because that really helps reduce homesickness. Coming to university has helped me a lot in terms of broadening my horizon, helping me mingle, and getting to know people from cultures different to

mine. However, at the same time, my small group of friends from back home are a constant reminder for me to stay true to my roots. I did this by joining cultural societies amongst the several in the union, such as the Indian Student Association. While you're under no compulsion to join cultural societies, I have noticed that during times of extreme homesickness, it always helps to be around people that remind you of home.

Whilst Diwali in Leeds hasn't exactly been the same as it is back home, it did teach me a lot about how important it is to stay in touch with your roots, even if you're by yourself. Trust yourself to find happiness, sometimes just in your own company. With that being said, if you're an international student who's celebrating your first Diwali away from home, then don't shy away from joining a cultural society or celebrating this special occasion because almost all international students are in the same boat, and there's honestly nothing better than celebrating your culture and sharing it with others!

**Srika Nambiar**



# Actress Selma Blair Reveals MS Diagnosis

Actress Selma Blair, 46, known for her roles in *Hellboy* and *Cruel Intentions*, has been diagnosed with the neurological condition multiple sclerosis, which she revealed in an emotional Instagram.



does not yet have a cure, but treatments such as physical therapy and medication can help to slow the progression of the disease.

It is also very commonly misdiagnosed, as Blair believes hers was. According to a 2017 Health Union survey of over 5,000 Americans living with MS, 42% of the participants said they were initially diagnosed with other conditions including migraines, fibromyalgia and depression. Blair wrote that she had received her official diagnosis in August this year, although she believes she has battled with the disease for much longer and was “never taken seriously” by medical professionals.

Blair is currently filming a new Netflix series, *Another Life*, a sci-fi about astronauts on a mission to explore the genesis of an alien artefact. She said that she felt empowered to talk openly about her diagnosis because of the help she has received from *Another Life*'s costume designer, Allisa Swanson: “she carefully gets my legs in my pants, pulls my top over my head, buttons my coats, and offers her shoulder to steady myself.” Blair's ability to speak openly and positively about MS is not only hopefully inspiring others to open up about their condition, but also encouraging people to lend a hand to those who need it.

But, what does it mean when these celebrities come forward with their conditions? Blair's announcement, among those made by many other influential stars, shows

**“I have probably had this incurable disease for 15 years at least. And I am relieved to at least know. And share.”**

positivity and strength and helps to shed light on this condition, as well as other disabilities which remain a taboo topic in wider society. It also shows how these conditions can happen to anyone, regardless of status. Ultimately, it's another key step in working towards eliminating a stigma around illnesses and disabilities, showing that despite these symptoms, your illness does not define you.

As Blair herself stated, despite the fact she is struggling, “I will do my best,” inspiring others to see the positives of their situation; helping them come forward without feeling embarrassed or judged, to talk to people, to ask for help, to share their story, as she has.

It is especially great for young children, who are heavily influenced by these stars, to see them come forward with such a condition. It shows them that the media is not always about unrealistic beauty standards, and that these celebrities are real people, giving a platform for disabled children, especially, to relate to.

Amy Daniels

## How to Get Over a Cold

Jessica Famer writes about the best ways to rid yourself of the flu.

As a fresher, I have already contracted numerous colds since arriving at university. Thus, below are some top tips for dealing with a cold.

One essential tip to help deal with a cold is to get lots of rest. Whilst this isn't easy as a student, trying to get a good night of sleep or taking out a few hours to just sit and read can really help your immune system in fighting off the horrific flu.

The second tip would be to stay hydrated! Again, this is difficult as a student, particularly if you're a fresher and have been consuming a tad too much alcohol over the past few weeks. Nevertheless, keeping a water bottle at hand and drinking hot drinks regularly can really help deal with a cold more effectively.

The next tip would be to make sure you're eating healthily. Your body needs more fruit and vegetables in order to fight off the cold. A good option to go for is always soup. This is both warming and often packed with vegetables which are really great for fighting off a cold.

Whilst there are no medicines to cure a cold, you can purchase certain items to help relieve the symptoms. This includes: Strepsils for a sore throat, cough medicines, and cold and flu relief tablets. Drinking hot water with honey and lemon is also recommended in order to repair your body and fight off the irritating and uncomfortable cold.

Finally, it's important to know how to avoid getting a cold or to stop one from spreading. Make sure to wash your hands regularly and keep your home, particularly the kitchen, as clean as possible because colds are extremely contagious. Additionally, if you leave your heating on overnight or for too long, it can cause bacteria to grow and spread - ultimately causing an increase in the spread of colds.

Colds are incredibly irritating and contracting one is almost inevitable as a student. Hopefully these tips will help to make the process of dealing with a cold less frustrating for you in the future!

Jessica Farmer



Image: Pexels



# Netflix and Marvel: The Rift Between the Dynamic Duo

In August of 2017, Disney announced plans to launch two separate streaming services - one for ESPN focusing entirely on sports, and one for its Disney and Pixar live-action and animated films and shows. The entertainment giant also stated that it would be ending its current partnership with Netflix in 2019. The announcement came as a shock to most, with the move putting Disney in direct competition with the streaming titan Netflix - who currently own the rights to some of Disney's most beloved and successful works. At the time, sites such as Thrillist and Forbes reported that, although Disney would start incrementally removing its content from Netflix once each contract expired, there would be a continuation in all of the series belonging to the Marvel universe - namely *Daredevil*, *Jessica Jones*, *Luke Cage*, and *Iron Fist*.

However, with the recent news from Netflix and Marvel Television that they are pulling the plug on both *Iron Fist* and *Luke Cage*, the future now looks uncertain for *Daredevil* and *Jessica Jones*, as well as the popular spin-off *The Punisher*. Most uncertain of all is the miniseries *The Defenders*, which incorporated the four heroes together into a team akin to the Avengers or the Justice League. The cancellation of *Iron Fist* was not surprising to most, as the show failed to make a positive impact among viewers from the very start. Accusations of cultural appropriation abounded, and there were also issues over the casting of Finn Jones as the titular character. Although, in the comics, Iron Fist is white, many viewers felt that it would have been a better choice to cast an East Asian actor instead. Novelist Marjorie Liu tweeted her anger at the time about the "orientalist-white-man-yellow-fever narrative" present in the show (and the comics), and another person tweeted: "I'm just tired of Asian actors playing bit parts as their culture is co-opted and monetised." Although season two was an improvement, it seems nobody was too sad to see the show end. Interestingly, the cancellation of *Luke*



*Cage* did come as a shock, however. The first season debuted to wide critical acclaim, with a 94% rating on Rotten Tomatoes and glowing press reviews. The second season had problems with pacing but was nevertheless very highly regarded. The appeal of *Luke Cage* ultimately lay in the idea of a bulletproof black man, especially in the current political climate in America where black men are disproportionately affected by police brutality and violence. Combining this idea with slick and stunning visuals, strong male and female characters and a solid plot meant that *Luke Cage* was a big hit with viewers.

So why the cancellation? There has been speculation that Netflix and Marvel Television had creative differences for the third season, with both parties unable to reach a conclusion on how to move forward. As for the rest of the Marvel shows on Netflix, their future is now unclear. *Daredevil* Season Three was released on Friday 19th October, again to wide acclaim from viewers and critics

alike, but has not yet been picked up for season four. *Jessica Jones* and *The Punisher* are still on track for the release of their third and second seasons, respectively. As for *The Defenders*, Netflix VP of original content Cindy Holland confirmed earlier this month that there was never an intention for a second season, due to the organisational challenges of trying to combine four different characters. Although this may be a confirmation that *The Defenders* will not return in the future, there is hope for the other four shows to continue. The popularity of most of the Marvel characters is still extremely strong, so one option could be that a different streaming site (such as Hulu) would continue where Netflix left off. Another option would be Disney's own streaming service itself. Netflix and Disney/Marvel Television may be parting ways, but that doesn't necessarily mean we are seeing the end of our favourite television superheroes.

Yasmin Bye

## PS4's Spider-Man: With Great Game Comes a Great Experience

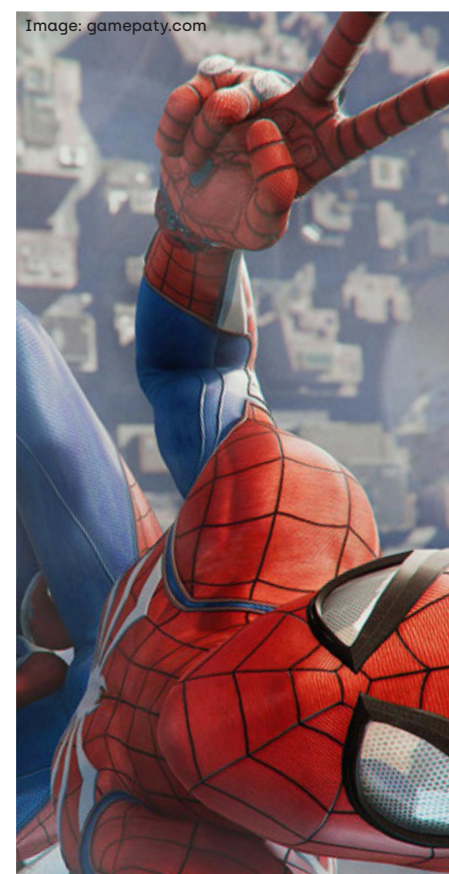
In the weeks after Spider-Man for PS4 was released, there is one thing that can be said about the game: it definitely makes you feel like a superhero. The smoothness of the gameplay and the fighting, as well as the storyline and the cinematic qualities of Spider-Man, make it possibly the best single-player game released since the Elder Scrolls: Skyrim.

The gameplay is unbelievably smooth; whether you are swinging through the streets of New York or in a fight with a group of robbers, the game maintains its simple but effective controls to create a seamless integration between the player and the game. The mechanics for fighting in Spider-Man are particularly commendable - they are easy to get to grips with but require more skill and finesse than the random button spamming that a lot of action-based games produce. Throughout these fights, the graphics remain clear and smooth, and even when fighting off massive groups of enemies the game stays coherent by blending fighting action with short, cinematic cutscenes for 'finishing moves'.

The storyline leaves nothing to be desired; it plays on the familiarity of the 'Friendly-Neighbourhood' Spider-Man through its side-quests and random encounters, whilst also digging into some deeper themes and wider Marvel references in the main plot. As far as the references to the

Marvel Universe go, they are recognisable and immersive for a Marvel fan, but also not essential to the plot. This means there is no pre-requisite for a certain amount of knowledge about the Marvel world needed to play Spider-Man, making it a fantastic stand-alone game that is still situated in the broader world that Marvel creates.

The game's focus on its cinematic graphics really takes players to a new level of immersion, because although the fantastic characters and plot are enough to get anyone hooked, there is plenty of entertainment to be had in simply swinging around New York, taking in the breathtaking graphics. The cinematic focus of the game is something that really adds to its re-play value because, much like games such as *The Witcher* and *Red Dead Redemption*, the combination of beautiful visuals, engaging plot and open world exploration makes you never want to stop playing.



Beth Griffiths



# Fantastic Tweets: The Crimes of J.K. Rowling



jean

@davidperrons

Follow



## Harry Potter and the Representation I Didn't Actually Bother to Write But Still Want Credit For

Image: Twitter, davidperrons

JK Rowling has recently come under fire for the casting of South Korean Claudia Kim as the character of Nagini in the upcoming *Fantastic Beasts: Crimes of Grindelwald*. In a new plot twist, Rowling has revealed that Nagini was once human - a secret she has claimed to have kept for 20 years. Critics say that as one of the only women of colour in the franchise, the character of Nagini is nothing more than the racist trope of the submissive subservient Asian woman.

Rowling's recent revelation has been labelled by some as a move to diversify the series last-minute, and gain 'internet woke points.' However the possibility that Rowling has known all along that Nagini

would be human is more troubling. That means she deliberately reduced one of the only ethnically diverse characters with a remotely relevant storyline to be Voldemort's wet nurse. *Independent's* Biba Kang writes "when there are only a couple of non-white characters to choose from, a racially stereotypical portrayal is unlikely to be a coincidence." When this is just the latest in a long line of Rowling's problematic stereotypes, it's even less likely to be a coincidence.

The world has changed a lot since 1997, the year *The Philosopher's Stone* was published. The 2010s brought us #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter. They also brought the phrase 'liberal snowflake.' Now is the

time of social media justice, twitter callouts, and what you have probably heard referred to as 'POLITICAL CORRECTNESS GONE MAD.' (No, Graham, no one is coming for your right to use the words 'boy' or 'girl').

In 2018, we are better equipped to understand how damaging the woefully two-dimensional characters of Cho Chang and Parvati and Padma Patil were for the HP fanbase. Don't get me started on the pathetic story arc that was given to *The Cursed Child's* Panju. **\*\*SPOILER AHEAD\*\*** Panju, Wikipedia tells me, is an island north of Mumbai. Ron Weasley and Padma Patil would no less call their son 'Panju,' than you might call yours 'Shetland Mainland.' Not to mention that 'Cho' and 'Chang' are two Korean surnames. 20 years ago this sprinkling of ethnically ambiguous names might have been enough to give Rowling the woke points she so desperately craves, but it won't today.

This isn't the first time Rowling has retroactively inserted a bit of diversity. In 2015, when Rowling tweeted her support for the casting of Noma Dumezweni as Hermione in the theatre adaptation of *The*

*Cursed Child*, she seemed to be hinting that she has always intended the character of Hermione to be black: "brown eyes, frizzy hair and very clever. White skin was never specified. Rowling loves black Hermione." (Minus points for talking about yourself in 3rd person). When Hermione has been described time and time again to be 'pale,' and other peripheral characters like Lee Jordan were specifically labelled 'black,' it seems unfair that Rowling tried to take any credit for the casting decision.

And now Rowling is pulling the same trick with Nagini. *Buzzfeed's* Krupa Gohil sums it up perfectly when she says "as the real world became more inclusive ... she claimed that hers always had been."

It's OK to love problematic things. Nobody is more obsessed with Harry Potter than I am. But for the Wizarding World franchise to stand the test of time, Rowling needs to own up to her mistakes, apologise and create more diverse characters - not just as an afterthought. As Dumbledore would say, "people find it far easier to forgive others for being wrong than being right."

Helen Woodhouse

## The Best Multiplayer Games to Play with your Flatmates

### Mario Kart – Nintendo Wii

There's nothing better for bonding with new people than the tried and tested mix of nostalgia and intense competition. *Mario Kart* delivers on both fronts. There's nothing more satisfying than smacking your new flatmate with a red shell – then laughing about it afterwards. Although you can go for the new *Mario Kart 8* for the Nintendo Switch, the classic *Mario Kart Wii* comes in at nearly half the price and certainly stands up to the test of time.

### Quiplash – PS4

This hilarious game is the perfect icebreaker, following a *Cards Against Humanity* style format in which up to eight players are asked random questions. The players then answer anonymously, and the rest of the group votes on the funniest answers. This game will truly reveal the dark sides of your new flatmates and, at only £8.99, you get so much entertainment for your money. You can also have up to eight players, as well as having two audience members who still get to vote on the funniest answers, making this a perfect game for pre-drinks or getting to know big groups.



### Super Mario Party – Nintendo switch

Although this is one of the pricier games on the list at around £42.99, *Super Mario Party* provides hours of entertainment. The board-game layout of the game is supplemented by loads of mini-games, which you can play in pairs or groups, making this perfect for tournaments with your flat. The board-game sessions on this *Super Mario Party* can last up to two hours, so make sure you have plenty of snacks and drinks for a fun night in.

### Evil Apples – Mobile

Not everyone can afford a PS4, and with *Cards Against Humanity* coming in at around £30, *Evil Apples* is a great alternative. This mobile game is 100% free and follows an almost identical structure to games like *Cards Against Humanity*. This is a great one for pre-drinks with your flat, as anyone can download it and join in! Also, because this game is online, you don't even have to be in the same room to play – so if you're missing out on the flat fun because of an intense library session, you can always join in wherever you are.

Beth Griffiths



# Leeds Library Survival Guide

Carys gives blogs the low down on how to survive the library system here at the University of Leeds.



Libraries, they are a place of tranquility, of solitude, of calm ... aren't they? No. No they are not.

Stereotyped as a place for nerds and try hards to work efficiently, the libraries of Leeds are anything but.

**Edward Boyle: The cool kid of the library world**

Let us start with Edward Boyle, known more commonly as 'Eddy B'. This is the cool kid of the library world. Everyone wants to get a seat here, but in order to do so you have to be committed. It'll be a 7AM start at the latest and even then you will most likely be faced

with a queue that would have you thinking Beyoncé was making an appearance inside. Exam season is hard enough as it is without having to hustle and bustle your way through the masses of students who are all equally determined to claim a seat in this academic hot spot.

**Brotherton: Ahh Brotherton...**

If you are lucky enough to bank yourself a space at Eddy B then congratulations my friend - be warned though, if you go to the toilet or for a lunch break people will show no mercy in stealing your sought out space. Thankfully, the high demand for working spaces means that Leeds has no shortage of libraries.

Let me introduce you to Brotherton. Being located in the Parkinson building, it is hardly difficult to find. The one drawback is it is a more old fashioned library of sorts.

Dark and gloomy surroundings can leave you feeling unmotivated and, if you are a night owl, Brotherton may prove an issue as it is only open until 10:30pm. That said, it is still a fairly good option.

**Laidlaw: Another library you will have to fight for**

Now let's look at Laidlaw, mostly recognised as the library with Cafe Nero. You'll no doubt end up having copious amounts of caffeine to get you through your work in this

neat little spot. It is mainly for undergraduates, and has bookable booths if you are organised enough to plan ahead and go with a group. The main drawback is space. There are only 900 available spaces which, compared to the 2,000 seats in Eddy B, makes it another library you will have to fight for.

**Health Sciences Library: A hidden gem**

Ok, so far I've stressed how Eddy B and Laidlaw are often packed and the less appealing environment of Brotherton shuts early. So what is my solution?

Well, many students are unaware that there is another library, more of a hidden gem actually, located in the Worsley building. I'm referring to the Health Sciences Library, which is largely unknown and therefore nearly always quiet. It has fab facilities and a cafe so you can stock up on snacks if you feel yourself lagging. Whilst Eddy B is wonderful, if its popularity is causing you to search for hours in vain, then definitely pop down to Health Sciences.

So there you have it, a quick survival guide to help you negotiate the libraries of Leeds this year.

Carys Reid-Davies

## Agony Aunt

**"I've been asked on a first date by a guy on my course. I've never been on a date before. Any advice?"**

First dates are always intimidating, no matter how many you've been on.

Before my first ever date, I felt like I was going to be sick. I was so sure we would have nothing to talk about, or that he would go to the toilet and never come back.

Thankfully, I was not as socially awkward as I thought I was going to be, and he didn't plan an escape route out of the

bar. But don't let this deceive you - not all dates go well, and these tips will help you survive the best and worst of them. **Prep for the date with your possible future husband.**

**1. Choosing where to go is a crucial factor in the success of your date.**

If you have similar interests you've talked about previously then choose a location based on that. For example, if you have similar music tastes you could go to a gig at Belgrave Music Hall, or if you both have a competitive streak then you could try Junkyard Golf. Going for drinks is always a safe bet if you haven't found common interests yet.



**2. Dress to Impress.**

Don't go all out if you're just going for a few drinks; for most first dates, jeans and 'a nice top' is a good way to play it casual. Missguided has a section devoted to the phrase 'jeans and a nice top', so refer to that if needed.

**3. Give them a social media stalk before the date.**

Look at their most recent posts to see if you two have anything in common you can talk about during the date (their holiday to Mexico in 2013 won't be relevant unless you want to scare them away).



**During the date with the possible love of your life.**

Remember that Instagram stalk? **SUBTLY mention things you saw** that they were interested in on their social media. If they went to a recent football match, talk about football, and if they went to a festival over the summer, ask them about it.



# It's Time to End Period Stigma

**Yasmine discusses the ever-important topic of period stigma, and why normalisation is necessary.**



"Do you have a tampon?"

This is a question often uttered in whispers. What follows is a swift but discreet exchange before the tampon is quickly shoved into a bag or pocket and rushed to the bathroom.

We have been taught from an early age that periods are embarrassing and should not be openly talked about. But this begs the question: why? If it is such a natural part of reproduction, why are periods taboo?

Historians and scholars alike have debated about this issue, but there is still no definitive answer. Some scholars have theorised that period stigma is rooted in our natural fear of blood or the centuries-old view that

period blood is highly toxic and can even erode other materials on its own.

It also comes from various religious and cultural views that paint women on their periods as dirty and impure. They are often forbidden to enter places of worship, banned from partaking in a number of activities and even isolated. In Nepal, a ritual called Chhaupadi requires menstruating women to separate themselves from their own home and live in a separate hut for three nights. While Chhaupadi has been legally banned, it is still practiced in several areas.

But not all backgrounds share the same attitudes towards menstruation. People of Assam, India, worship a goddess named Kamakhya, who bleeds or menstruates every June. During this period, the temple located on the Nilachal Hill will be temporarily closed and rituals are carried out to celebrate the symbolical reproductive power of women.

Unfortunately, the stigmatisation of menstruation is more universal than these sacred, positive accounts of this natural reproductive process. It is often rooted in patriarchal beliefs, to portray women as inferior. This sadly continues to prevail in the present day.

Lack of education surrounding periods is detrimental in a multitude of ways. Many boys, even when they have grown into men, have deeply concerning misconceptions of how menstruation can be controlled, scheduled and

how period cramps, despite being scientifically proven to have the potential of being as painful as a heart attack, are exaggerated.

This paints women as weak and in the workplace, could be used as an accusation that periods are merely excuses to miss work. Here, the lack of education has turned into ignorance and ignorance has turned into discrimination. Eventually, discrimination has also turned into a public health issue.

Period taboo cause dangers to millions of lives all over the world. In India, 70% of women are infected because they were not properly taught about hygiene maintenance during menstruation. In the UK itself, women are made to feel embarrassment at buying necessary products, and the stigma is so deeply ingrained in our society that sanitary products are considered a luxury. All of this has caused the term 'period poverty' to be coined.

Now, a lot of organisations such as Days for Girls and The Homeless Period have run campaigns to fight period stigma by providing education to young people and making menstrual products affordable and accessible.

Despite this, to rid society of the deep-seated stigma, we need the cooperation of many. Schools should talk about periods during sex education for all genders. And we, as family and friends, should start normalising it too.

**Yasmine Zahra**

**"First dates are always intimidating no matter how many you've been on."**



2. **DO NOT talk about your ex** or how your date looks exactly like them. If you're still thinking about your ex then you shouldn't be looking for love elsewhere yet.

3. When discussing your interests, **ask open questions** so that your date responds with more than one word, and so that you learn enough about them to know if they have potential. Take notice if they do the same, it'll mean they want to know more about you and will likely want a second date...boo-yah.

4. **DO NOT go on your phone** during the date. If you are on your phone 24/7 this will make them think you're not interested in them. But if your date is making you feel uncomfortable, know that your phone is there to help you out and contact a friend.

**How to end the date, depending on if he's Mr Right or Mr Wrong**

If he's just SO not your type on paper, be prepared with your excuse to leave:

- An early lecture in the morning.
- You're really hungover from the night before and need to go to bed.
- Tell them they look like your ex.

If they seem super creepy, most bars have a system to help. If you ask for an 'Angela', they will help you out discreetly and call you a taxi (Terrace Bar in the Leeds University Union does this).

If you really aren't feeling it, you could tell them the truth, but honesty sometimes isn't the best policy.

If the vibes aren't flowing between you and your date then don't say "see you soon". If you never want to see them again then you don't want to lead them on.

Alternatively, if they haven't suggested a second date but you're keen to see them again then put yourself out there (if you're daring enough).

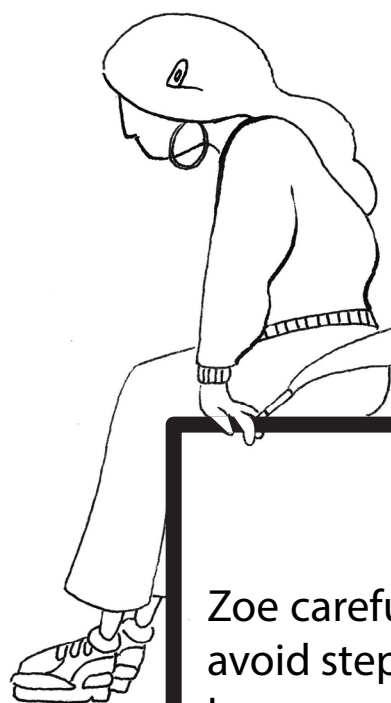
Don't feel pressured to continue the date back at theirs if you're not comfortable, it's perfectly fine to leave a little mystery.

Use these tips and hopefully you'll meet Mr Right! Good luck on your first date...

**Lucie Phipps & Tilly Judges**



# In the Middle

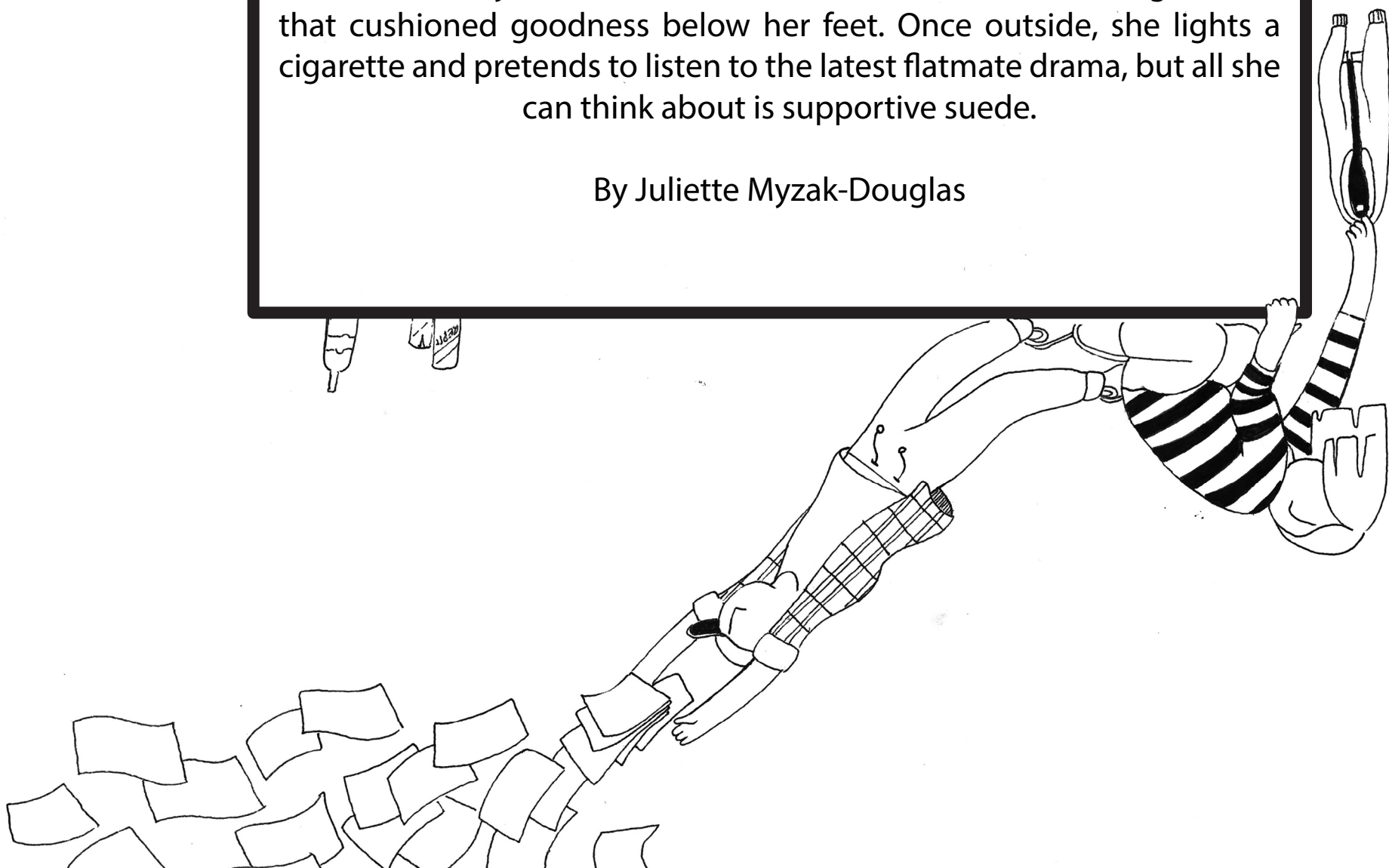


## Campus Encounters: Fila Trainers

Zoe carefully walks around campus in her new white trainers trying to avoid stepping in any vomit left over from Fruity last night. Her parents have vocalised a change in her appearance since she left home for university, her dad often chuckles to her mum that he used to wear flares too back in the day. She adjusts her hoops and pulls down her vintage crop top before heading into the Union.

As she struts across the sticky floor her new shoes squeak, the cheap faux leather is giving her blisters but she dares not tell the others. In her head, she can hear her mother sighing at the unsightly red ankle marks below. Scanning the Terrace, she spies a student in the corner wearing a black leather jacket and buckled suede boots. How she longs to feel that cushioned goodness below her feet. Once outside, she lights a cigarette and pretends to listen to the latest flatmate drama, but all she can think about is supportive suede.

By Juliette Myzak-Douglas







# Does Netflix Have a Problem With Diversity?

Adina Rees

Following Black History Month in October, the conversation surrounding the lack of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) representation in film has been raised once again.

The podcaster Stacia Brown recently took to Twitter to ask her black followers whether they had noticed that Netflix algorithms seemed to generate deceptive

**“Viewers found that the feature shot for the film insinuated two black characters were the main protagonists of the film when they were only minor characters”**

promotional posters about the leading cast of a film. This was shown on a poster for the Netflix original ‘Like Father’, for which some viewers found that the feature shot for the film insinuated two black characters were the main protagonists of the film when they were only minor characters. One viewer reportedly calculated that the two black characters shown in the promotional picture had a combined screen time of approximately ten minutes.

Another example of this is a shot for ‘Love Actually’ of Chiwetel Ejofor and Keira Knightley, which implied they were main characters when again, Chiwetel

Ejiofor’s character in the film is a minor one.

Some people have argued that this is a fundamental flaw in the Netflix algorithm that aims to mislead black viewers as a way of compelling them to watch, while others believe it to be nothing more than a harmless marketing trick.

Last year, Netflix revealed it was launching artwork personalisation but has denied altering the promotional posters depending on the viewer’s race. A representative for the site has stated that the only information used is the member’s viewing activity and no demographics are considered when altering the promotional shots.

This brings about another issue: should Netflix ensure TV shows and films with BME actors are accessible and sufficiently promoted?

In 2017, Netflix launched a campaign named ‘#FirstTimeISawMe’ which aimed to bring attention to the need for representation in the film industry. The campaign featured intersectional stories to spark an important conversation about the lack of diversity in the media.

Despite Netflix increasing the number of shows with BME leads, such as ‘Nappily Ever After’ and ‘The Get Down’, there is a noticeable difference in the level of promotion given to these shows.

When comparing the hype around shows like ‘Stranger Things’ and the controversial series ‘13 Reasons Why’ to BME-lead shows like ‘Dear White

People’ and ‘She’s Gotta Have It’, there is an obvious difference in the level of media attention.

Although Netflix has firmly stated that the misleading promotional shots are unintentional, it is crucial that the streaming-site caters to the demand for BME-lead shows to encourage the normalisation of diverse casting. As there is an LGBTQ+ category on the Netflix website, it would be positive to see a category created for the programmes and films with a BME-centred cast.

The importance of representation is undeniable, and Netflix owes its diverse customer-base the opportunity to see themselves represented in mainstream movies.



# Phillip Morris’ U-Turn: Big Cigarette Manufacturer Urges Smokers to Quit

Amy Khan

With a packet of 20 Marlboro Gold in the UK setting you back at around £11, it may seem surprising that Philip Morris has plans to stop selling here. The parent company of Marlboro, Philip Morris, has taken a controversial stance on smoking in the UK. Marlboro is known for its famous advertising campaigns in the 1950s, which took them from accounting for less than 1% of the market to becoming one of the four main brands. The company has now taken a different direction in advertising, and recently launched a ‘Hold My Fire’ advert campaign, which urges smokers to switch to less harmful products such as vapes and e-cigarettes. With the declining smoking population in Britain, Philip Morris is likely making a sensible move.

Succeeding a company that sells its consumers a gradual decline in their own health must take a lot of strategy so it is unlikely that this decision was made without a lot of thought. Cigarette advertising has been illegal since 1965 and even branding has been removed in the last two years, so the marketing team – if one still exists – must have had a field day. The rebranding sees Philip Morris make a complete u-turn into a company that will save you from smoking related ailments, now selling the alternative products, which, as the advert admits, still cause harm.

Many consumers may choose alternatives as a cheaper method of smoking. The cheaper cost of these products however, is unlikely to harm Philip Morris’ profits. On an £11 packet of cigarettes, £9.46 is taxed by the government. The declining population of smokers and the increasing population of vapers makes it likely to be a profitable choice. Not only can Philip Morris now advertise its products, but can do so under the premise of having its consumers’ wellbeing at heart. Philip Morris is not deploying this tactic in any other countries. Eastern Europe dominates the cigarette consumption of Europe, yet Philip Morris is turning a blind eye to the wellbeing of their consumers there. Belarus has the highest population of smokers in Europe, which is not surprising when a packet of cigarettes averages at 99p.

Philip Morris will not be helping these consumers, arguably the ones that need it the most, to stop smoking. Other than tax laws, there is nothing in place to stop members of the UK purchasing these cigarettes abroad and bringing them back home.

It’s hardly surprising that Cancer Research UK have attacked Philip Morris’ new advertising campaign. The charity has stressed that if Philip Morris wanted to prevent people from smoking, the company would stop manufacturing cigarettes altogether. Whilst a seemingly straightforward move, if Philip Morris was to stop trading, would it stop people smoking

or would they simply pick up a new brand? Even with brand loyalty being incredibly strong amongst cigarette smokers, the physical addiction to nicotine may overpower these ties. After all, I doubt those people asking for cigarettes in a nightclub smoking area will decline your Camel for preference of a Lucky Strike.

Overall, it seems Philip Morris is only looking to gain out of this decision. The amount of people smoking has declined, and the company are going to turn this into an opportunity to profit off alternatives. But, if less people smoke and we see a decline in smoking related illnesses, even partially due to their decision, then at least they’re taking a step in the right direction.





# Is Traditional News Media Obsolete?

*“There is no one thing called ‘journalism’; no single entity called ‘news’; no single recognisable entity for a ‘journalist’.”*  
– Alan Rusbridger, former Editor-in-Chief of The Guardian

Andrew Morris

Journalists were once gatekeepers of information, defining what constituted ‘news’. A select group of people, with privileged access to this information, decided what was in the ‘public interest.’ This form of vertical news delivery – with consumers as passive recipients – appears wholly outdated. News is now delivered in a way where everyone has a voice and can contribute, share, vent and comment. For the first time in history, a truly democratic system of news exists.

The success of the democratisation of the news is exemplified by the work of independent investigative website Bellingcat. This native news site utilises publicly available sources like social media to break its stories. Its creator, a self-styled hobbyist, heads up a team of “arm-chair investigators” who, through the use of open source techniques, identified the would-be Russian assassins that unleashed the chemical nerve agent Novichok upon Salisbury earlier this year.

This begs the question: if everyone has the means to be a journalist, the platform to report news, and the ability to speak truth to power, then what is the role of traditional news organisations?

Observers have been decrying the death of the traditional news industry since the early 2000s. Sales of newspapers have declined year-on-year

and advertising revenues have dried up. Yet, if these organisations are on their death bed, they do not appear to realise it. Earlier this year, Carole Cadwalladr’s dogged investigative journalism for the *Observer* shed light on Facebook’s role in the earth-shattering political events of 2016. Working in collaboration with fellow traditional media organisations, *Channel 4* and *The New York Times*, she was able to uncover how Facebook allowed user data to be harvested by clandestine consulting agency, *Cambridge Analytica*.

The British group then weaponised this information, using it for targeted advertising campaigns in both the American presidential election and the British referendum on its EU membership. Cadwalladr’s exemplarily work led to a very public apology from Facebook’s dear leader, Mark Zuckerberg and forced him to appear before America’s Congress.

Traditional media still has the power to force societal change. Now a year since #MeToo began, one should not forget, its genesis was a front-page story published in *The New York Times*. Journalists Meghan Twohey and Jodi Kantor went about their work in the time-honoured tradition of investigative journalism, persuading their source, Ashley Judd to go on the record with her allegations against film producer Harvey Weinstein. For their work on this paradigm shifting story they were awarded the most coveted accolade in journalism:



The Pulitzer Prize. #MeToo has shown just how complementary the vertical news system can be. What started its life as a breaking story in a traditional news organisation, migrated to Twitter where it spurned a mass movement and forced what will – hopefully – be lasting change.

The role of gatekeeper is truly dead, and good riddance. A privileged few should not be able to decide what information is in the interest of the many. Yet traditional news organisations, far from going gently into that good night, have sustained their relevancy in this democratised landscape. The two most important stories of the past twelve months have come not from cutting-edge native news sites, but from traditional media. While the future remains uncertain – a successful economic model remains elusive – their role as trusted purveyors of information remains secure.

## Clegg Goes Through the Revolving Door



Charley Weldrick

Nick Clegg accepting a position at Facebook shouldn’t be viewed as an isolated anomaly, or even particularly noteworthy in its own right. It’s the coming together of two long-term trends in British politics: the unhealthy relationship between the media and state, and the so-called ‘revolving door’ between the parliament and the commanding heights of the economy. That and, of course, another manifestation of Clegg’s comically tin ear for politics.

The unhealthy relationship between the media and the state has always existed in one form or another, and presumably always will. It’s a function

of parliamentary democracy that much of modern journalism can be reduced to boozy lunches in London and intra-party intrigue, otherwise known as gossip. For as long as our political system is predicated on a relatively small number of big personalities, we’ll have to deal with political journalists who chat, rather than investigate and analyse.

This became much worse under Blair, where it deeply permeated the culture at the Labour press offices. Both Blair and Brown expended a lot of political capital to keep Murdoch and the newspapers on their side, going so far as to regularly meet with the de facto representative of British tabloid journalism. The implicit agreement between New Labour and Murdoch is documented, and even Conservative MPs have publicly discussed the deals between David Cameron and Murdoch from 2010 onwards.

This same poisonous relationship can be seen today with the pandering of the Conservative Party to the kinds of unrealistic jingoism so prevalent in Britain’s most popular newspapers. Much like the now heavily criticised slide into dangerous rhetoric about ‘multiculturalism’ seen towards the latter half of New Labour. There has long since been a Faustian pact between politicians and the press, so Nick Clegg moving into a high powered role in arguably the most powerful media organisation in the world is just another bridge between politics and press.

The second long-term trend that Clegg’s new job demonstrates is that of the revolving door. This mechanism is effortlessly moving the British ruling class from centre stage in the most popular farce in history to the commanding heights of the British, and sometimes global, economy.

The major problem, particularly in this case, is that inexperienced individuals are promoted to positions for which they are wholly unqualified. This is the natural consequence when jobs are given out based on profile or favours, rather than ability alone. Considering the mammoth task facing the head of Facebook’s global communications, this is particularly significant.

Clegg’s appointment is certainly evidence of his tin ear for politics. He should have tried to leave after losing his seat, not when his pet cause is finally seeing its day with 700,000 people marching in London. It is not unusual though – just a sad continuation of a long-term trend in British politics.

Clegg’s new job certainly spells the end of his career in British politics. Even the Lib Dems wouldn’t take him back now that he is tainted by Facebook. On the other hand, he clearly has an astute eye for what’s best for Clegg. Britain is floundering; Europe is engulfed by crises. In the US, living in sunny California with a hefty salary and a senior position in one of the world’s most influential companies, the world could be his oyster.



# Doctor Who Tackles Racism Head-On in Rosa Parks Episode

Susanna Goldstone

The latest series of *Doctor Who* has gotten everybody talking. First, a new showrunner in the form of Chris Chibnall. Then, a female Doctor played by Jodie Whittaker. And now, an episode that features racism as the main focus of the episode.

Within five minutes of landing in 1955, Ryan (one of the Doctor's companions who happens to be Afro-British) is slapped across the face for trying to return a dropped glove to a white woman, and is given a rather unexpectedly graphic description of lynching. This, I think, is written very purposefully by writers Chris Chibnall and Malorie Blackman. The tone is very clearly set – there will be no skirting around the issue of racism in this episode.

Whilst *Doctor Who* has included some references to social issues such as racism and homophobia before, it had never been the main focus of an entire episode until now. Yes, Bill (the Doctor's companion in the last series) was both a woman of colour and a lesbian, which was mentioned several times throughout the

“Just because someone is a person of colour or identifies as LGBTQ+, that doesn't mean that their entire contribution to a piece of media has to be focused around their identity”

series. However, they never used it as an opportunity to explore the topics within a historical context.

This is a good thing. After all, just because someone is a person of colour or identifies as LGBTQ+, that doesn't mean that their entire contribution to a piece of media has to be focused around their identity. Yet, I do think that it's appropriate to have one episode that does look at how they would have been treated by society in various historical contexts. Yes, *Doctor Who* is a sci-fi show, but it's also about time travel. I think the time travel element should be used in order to educate children about the ugly past of our own society, and how there are still issues today, as shown in the Rosa Parks episode by Ryan and Yaz talking about the racist attitudes they continue to face in the present day.

I think we forget that the millions of children watching *Doctor Who* are incredibly impressionable, made clear by the tweets that flooded in following the episode from parents saying that their kids were engaged by the episode, and asked questions about it afterwards. In a tweet the next day, Malorie Blackman said: “My fav comments are those which say the episode opened a conversation with their children.”

As a History student myself, who is aiming to go into teaching after my degree, I know how lacking the school curriculum is in terms of teaching children about the uglier aspects of Britain's past. The horrors of the British Empire are ignored, and the racist attitudes pre-abolition removed from the syllabus.



*Doctor Who* is not just talking about racism for the sake of it. In my opinion, it is attempting to fill a tremendous gap left by our education system.

With this in mind, I would very much like to see *Doctor Who* continue this theme of exploring uncomfortable history, but in a British setting. Whilst educating children about Rosa Parks and the American civil rights movement is incredibly important and I commend *Doctor Who* for doing so, I think that showing its young audience how British people have treated people of colour and who are LGBTQ+ in the past can only be a good thing.

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# Make International Stress Awareness Week Count

Daisy Woodford

Next week marks the 20th anniversary of International Stress Awareness Week and there is no denying that many find work one of the most stressful elements of their lives. Over 11 million days are lost at work a year due to stress and it accounts for nearly 40% of work-related illness.

This is why employers have a legal duty to protect employees from stress at work. Under the 1999 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations Act, employers are obligated to prevent excessive levels of stress which can be damaging to workers' mental health. Left unaddressed, stress induced-illness could result in the employer being liable for a claim in County Court for negligence.

The Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) definition of stress is the "reaction people have to excessive demands or pressures, arising when people try to cope with tasks, responsibilities or other types of pressure connected with their job, but find difficulty, strain or worry in doing so." But for both employers and employees it can be difficult to decipher what level of stress is considered normal and when employers should intervene. Based on this definition, so long as you think you have the ability and resources to cope



Image: Getty

with the demands placed on you, you are only subject to pressure. This pressure can build to stress when we do not have enough internal strategies and external support to prevent it.

To provide this support, every company should conduct a risk assessment in the workplace to review pressure placed on staff, but many do not consider stress as a potential hazard and therefore appropriate control measures are not always introduced. According to the International Stress Management Association (ISMA), this applies to a business if they have five or more employees and you must take effective action

to manage and prevent it where possible. Factors to be considered include hours worked, job security, job satisfaction, pay, isolation or problems with the working environment. These are areas Herzberg claims are "Hygiene factors" in his two-factor theory of motivation as without these in place a member of staff cannot feel motivated and supported at work, which leads to a lower output. The fact that Herzberg's theory was published in the 1960s shows that over half a century later, work stress is still an important area of discussion. So why is it not talked about?

A recent ISMA Stress Survey found that 94% of people experience work-related stress but only 32% feel that they can speak to their manager about it. Similarly, as students we face a daily struggle with the external pressures of balancing lectures and independent study with part-time jobs and an active social life. Whilst many believe that university is the best time of your life, the stressful aspect of student life can often be overlooked. Although businesses are being encouraged to take a more active approach dealing with stress in the workplace due to legislation, we should also be actively discussing the role that stress plays in our lives and use International Stress Awareness week to combat the stigma often associated with stress-related illness.

## Nick Clegg's Facebook Friend Request

Will Southall

Whether you're disappointed with Nick Clegg for going to work for Facebook, or disappointed with Facebook for hiring Nick Clegg, most of us would agree that the move was unexpected. He has been hired to head Facebook's global affairs and communications team. At a time when Facebook has been under scrutiny for the site's over-involvement in politics, it's certainly a bold decision to take on a politician with outspoken views and clear political goals.

However, some would argue that it makes sense for a man of his experience to join one of America's tech giants. With the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) coming into force earlier this year, companies such as Facebook are in desperate need of lobbyists who understand European legislation – an area in which Nick Clegg is confident, having been a Member of the European Parliament in 2004.

Since leaving office back in 2015, Clegg has spent a large part of his time working on his not-for-profit, Open Reason. The company aims to support liberal causes through discussion and debate, with one of its key focus areas being the AI/tech revolution. This goes some way in starting to make a little more sense of what seems at first sight, a drastic career change.

Perhaps more relevant though, is his recent work campaigning for a 'soft' Brexit or indeed no Brexit at all, with Clegg appearing at the People's Vote march

in London only a couple of weeks ago. Many fellow remainers believe that this is the worst possible time for him to leave politics.

And maybe they are right. You might expect that the author of 'How to Stop Brexit' would be sticking around for the final, crucial months of negotiations, or would perhaps be seeking a role in the House of Lords where he could claw back some of the political influence he once held. But Clegg is adamant that the power of deciding the UK's future is no longer in the hands of the 'political past' which he considers himself to belong to.

In an interview with the BBC, Clegg stated that he was "struck by their recognition that the company now carries wider responsibilities, not just to the users of their apps and products but also to society as a whole." Here, he is referring to conversations he had with Facebook's founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg, and Sheryl Sandberg, the company's chief operating officer, both of whom were said to be personally involved with his appointment.

However, there are fears that despite his best efforts, Nick Clegg may be unable to reverse the ever-deteriorating public opinion of Facebook. It's no longer surprising, but assumed, that companies such as Facebook aren't paying their fair share of tax. This is a situation Nick Clegg may hope to rectify if he has any hope of regaining his popularity.

Only time will tell whether Nick Clegg will make a

real impact from his shiny new office in Silicon Valley, but one thing is for certain – now likely earning a few million dollars per year, he won't be coming back to British politics any time soon.



Image: Getty



# Crispy's on the Gravy Train to Success

Annabel White

It's 6pm on a cold Monday evening and, as students trudge home from uni, the deep fat fryer is beginning to sizzle in everyone's favourite drunk food destination, ready for a busy weeknight.

We are sat tucking into our complementary cheesy chips and chocolate cake with Baz, the owner of Crispy Fish & Chips, his 18-year-old nephew Hevar, and his best friend Hawre to find out more about their tricks of the trade. Of Kurdish descent, Baz left his life and previous takeaway restaurant behind him in Devon and moved up to Leeds four years ago to take over Crispy. Although Crispy was up and running before Baz made his mark on it, the delicious food, customer service and swanky interior were all changes that he implemented on arrival.

As the owner, Baz describes himself as the most popular man in Crispy. His regular customers love him so much that some will even bring their parents to meet the man who has clearly made such an impact on them. Baz describes his local celebrity status as "nice, but hard sometimes", particularly when socialising outside of work or when he is taking a break at the back and his presence is requested by his ever-growing fan base.

There is no doubt that Crispy Fish & Chips boasts the title of the best place to get cheesy chips after a night out. Baz himself attributes this to the excellent customer service, the music and the inexpensive

yet delicious food. Crispy is not only known around Leeds for its great personalities behind the counter, but also its after-hours disco. For this we can thank his teenage nephew, Hevar, who Baz refers to as "the DJ man." His personal playlist includes many Daddy Yankee hits and we were lucky enough to pause the interview and have a slightly awkward solo boogie to the Spanish song "Dura", a favourite of Hevar's. Baz tells us that, whilst the addition of the disco and music has been very successful, he doesn't have any plans to implement any new initiatives to date, with his success resulting from his charisma with customers and the atmosphere he promotes in Crispy.

When quizzing Baz on the best thing on the menu, he tells us it is the fish and chips or the meat feast pizza. Hawre, on the other hand, claims it is the renowned cheesy chips and gravy. For anyone wanting to replicate the gravy at home, Baz informs us that their recipe consists of just water and vegetarian gravy powder - simple, but effective. Whilst not hugely concerned by the environmental impact of their plastic forks and polystyrene cartons, Crispy more than makes up for their corporate social responsibility through its treatment of the homeless. It is refreshing to know that Baz will always serve any customer who appears in need of a meal free of charge, filling the appetites of around three or four homeless people per day. Whilst Crispy encounters a lot of student customers asking for an extra portion of cheesy chips on the house, Baz tends to only grant

them to the one hungry-looking person in the group who didn't put in an order.

So, what does the future hold for Baz and Crispy Fish & Chips? Whilst Baz does have plans to move to a big house in Spain and settle down one day, at the moment he is happy serving his loving customers and working side-by-side with his family and best friends. For now, at least, it doesn't look like Crispy will be going anywhere.



Image: Annabel White

# Reporting on the Gender Pay Gap: More to the Story Than Meets the Eye

Josephine Shannon

The gender pay gap has long been an issue for organisations across all industries. Thanks to recent legislation, all employers in Great Britain with more than 250 members of staff are obliged to report on four types of figures annually. These four figures include reporting the mean and medians of both genders pay gap and gender bonus gap, reporting the proportion of men to women receiving bonuses, as well as the proportion of men to women in each quartile of the organisation's pay structure. Apple, Bux Avenue and Ryanair are just some of the companies who have been under fire after their reports were released. Now that these figures are out in the open, companies are being forced to act.

This is an excellent step towards holding companies accountable for gender pay disparity and forcing them to be more transparent. However, there is little compulsory reporting surrounding other areas of inequality. Disability and ethnicity related figures are hardly ever reported within firms, but these are just as important as gender inequalities.

Under the 2010 Equality Act, there are nine areas in which employers must ensure an equal and fair work place practice, consistent with the law. Acas, the

Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, breaks down discrimination in the workplace into four types; direct, indirect, harassment and victimisation.

Moreover, under their 'Obligations for Employers' document, all employers must make reasonable judgements and ensure policies and practices are put in place to prevent disability discrimination. However, how many employers are abiding by these principles? According to the UK Government, in 2008, only 13% of non-disabled people experienced mistreatment in their workplace compared to 18% of disabled people.

In 2012, there was still a 29.1% employment rate gap between disabled and non-disabled adults aged between 16 to 59. Despite the best intentions of this act to set a precedent for companies to follow, if accurate reporting does not improve, nothing will change.

Current statistics show that disability and racism in organisations is just as bad, if not worse than the gender pay gap issue. The big four accountancy firms voluntarily decided to report on ethnic pay gaps in 2017, which was reportedly between 8% and 13%. These figures are not that different to the gender pay gap statistics (9.4% in 2016).

To understand the full story and properly grasp the issue of workplace discrimination, the socio-

economic backgrounds of employees must be taken into account. The cultural contexts as well as internal and external factors which impact pay must all be considered to achieve a holistic view of the gender issue in practice. Furthermore, gender pay gap reporting isolates one specific issue or statistic, however there are so many other key components that impact this ongoing workplace pay disparity. Regulators must hold business leaders accountable for showing the public the bigger picture.



Image: C&IT





Olivia Maskill  
Science Writer

How do you go about detecting a molecule millions of miles away, in an entirely different solar system? That's exactly what Dr. Catherine Walsh, University Academic Fellow in Astrochemistry, gets up to on her daily grind. Astrochemistry is the study of molecules in outer space, a field that according to Dr. Walsh "essentially operates at the interface between astronomy and physical chemistry." Rock and roll.

"What I'm particularly interested in is how molecules are formed and destroyed in space, and in other astrophysical environments, like the material around young stars that will go into forming a planetary system. Some people aren't really aware that a lot of chemistry happens in space, but we know that it is a very chemically rich environment."

But why should we care about a load of molecules floating around space? Well, it may give us an insight into the formation of our own solar system, and even the Earth itself.

"We have these large molecular clouds that exist in interstellar space. The space between the stars isn't empty, it's full of these clouds of dust and gas that are full of molecules. These are very important environments, as the material that ends up coming into the star and forming the star itself originates in those molecular clouds. Some of that material will make its way into a circumstellar disc that orbits around the young star. This disc is very important, as it helps feed material on to the star that's forming, but also any leftover material goes into forming a planetary system."

density of molecules in other solar systems from the comfort of their office.

"These objects are very tiny so we use a unit called arc-seconds in astronomy. If you imagine the entire sky is 360 degrees, just like a circle, then you can break that down into minutes and seconds, just like we do with time. This is the way that we map the sky. The discs around these stars are only a few arc-seconds, so really tiny. That means if we want to look for molecules in those discs that will go into forming planets, we need very high spatial resolution and observation. We are now able to map the composition of these discs that we know planets are forming within, so it gives us a view into the history of the solar system because our solar system will have formed from such a disc around the young sun."

*"Some people aren't really aware that a lot of chemistry happens in space"*

You may be wondering how it is possible to view such tiny molecules so ludicrously far away. Telescopes. Big ones. And lots of them. Dr. Walsh and her colleagues make use of a relatively new technology called the Atacama Large Millimeter/Submillimeter Array, or ALMA for short, which uses the collective view of multiple powerful telescopes.

"It's a huge instrument. The way that we do this is instead of just one telescope, which has a particular field of view, we make an array, so many, many telescopes. ALMA is such an array and its

# In Conversation with Dr Catherine Walsh

**The Gryphon meets with one of Leeds' resident astrochemists to discuss her eminent research, emerging technologies in astronomy, and the challenges facing women working in physics.**

got 66 of these different telescopes. You add up all of the collecting area that each telescope has and then the resolution is set by the maximum distance between two antenna. The reason you can see with the resolution you can is because of the size of your pupil. So radio telescopes operate in the same way, but they have many eyes, which gives you a lot more information. So the maximum baseline of ALMA (the maximum distance between radio antenna) gives us very high spatial resolution. Enough that we can see molecules in discs around nearby young stars at about the same resolution as the distance between the planets in the solar system."

Leeds is lucky to have such fantastic female representation in the Physics department. However, many women pursuing careers in physics feel like a fish out of water, males dominating the majority of classrooms. As a successful researcher, Dr. Walsh offers her advice to other women interested in joining the field: "When I have a lot of young people come and see us, I always ask them about the gender balance in their physics class and not a lot has changed unfortunately. So very often I hear the answer, 'I'm the only girl in my A-Level Physics class', and that was me 20 years ago. I think the best advice that I could give to young women who want to come into this field is don't be put off. Once you get past the undergraduate degree and come into postgraduate study, the gender balance just shifts so much more. If you look in our PGR office, I think we're close to 50% women, which is really nice to see. It takes a while to filter into lecturers and professorships, but hopefully that trajectory will stay. So don't be put off because it's a very rewarding career and I would love to see more young women joining us in the astrophysics community."

## Girls in Laboratories: A New Zine all About Women in STEM

Anna Davison  
Science Writer

'Girls in Laboratories' is a new zine focusing on women in STEM positions, written and edited by The Gryphon's very own Olivia Maskill.

Speaking about her inspirations for the name, she said it came from an article she read about proposed gender segregation in laboratories as females are apparently too 'emotional and distracting' for male staff. STEM subjects are generally male dominated and the sexism that comes with this association can prevent brilliant women from having their praises sung. The zine hopes to spread the word about fantastic women and their achievements in science and engineering,

while providing practical advice and support for those looking to get involved in STEM, with the first issue focusing on work placements. Although there are a huge number of impressive and inclusive male researchers and professors at the University of Leeds, Olivia hopes to link females in the field and provide a platform for them to share their achievements.

The zine is still in its infancy and welcomes input from anyone interested in contributing. Writers and (potentially) a co-editor will help boost the reach of the zine and spread the message of inclusivity in science. Even if you don't study a science subject, you are still welcome to write so please get in touch on Facebook 'Girls in Laboratories' or email: bs1502m@leeds.ac.uk.





**Freya Harrison**  
Science Writer

Human brains are plastic (no, not the kind you get your Crispy's takeout in!). Neuroplasticity refers to the brain's astonishing ability to change and adapt over time. This could involve the reorganisation of tasks, the development of new neuronal connections, or a change in the division of labour among brain regions. However, as humans age, neuroplasticity decreases, resulting in a more rigid distribution of cognitive function (i.e. the ways we pay attention, learn, solve problems, process information, remember, and even forget) across brain regions.

Meanwhile, many fish species exhibit brain plasticity throughout adulthood, as they continue to undergo neural stem cell generation. This results in adaptive advantages for survival under different conditions. For example, enlargement of the olfactory bulb (controlling the ability to smell) in a predator-dense environment leads to increased vigilance

behaviours in 9-spined sticklebacks. What if, like these fish, humans could retain brain plasticity into adulthood?

A recent study published on 18 October 2018 in *Neuron* saw researchers from the Salk Institute investigate the use of astrocytes (specialised neural cells) in the promotion of brain plasticity. Specifically, they studied CHRD1, a protein secreted by astrocytes that is involved in maturation and stabilisation of nerve cell connections within the brain – it converts permeable AMPA glutamate receptors (which mediate synaptic transmission in the central nervous system) to impermeable ones.

Interestingly, when the gene coding for CHRD1 was de-activated in mice models, inhibiting the production of this protein and thus maintaining the permeability of AMPARs, the animals exhibited a much higher level of brain plasticity than normal. In fact, adults showed a similar level of plasticity to that of infant mice, whose brains were still in their developmental stages.

Encouragingly, this research could suggest ways of restoring lost neuronal connections in cases of trauma, or age-related cognitive decline. As life expectancy increases, age-related disorders, such as dementia, pose a greater threat to global health. Hence, the implications of this research may be significant and widespread.

There are a number of arguments regarding the causes of age-related cognitive decline, including stroke, atrophy (wastage), and neuronal changes in the frontal and temporal lobes. All of these may result in a loss of function in a range cognitive abilities, namely memory and information processing speed. Now, imagine if our brains had the capability to 're-wire' themselves, and one area of the brain could take on the function lost from another. Through the inhibition of CHRD1, we could induce an increase in brain plasticity, and subsequent 'rewiring' among cognitive functions – thus providing a potential 'cure' for currently incurable diseases.



**Laura Krusin**  
Science Writer

Try to recall your first sex ed lesson. As long ago as it was for most of us, what did they teach you about how babies were made? A male and a female, right? Or so you thought. Researchers in China, led by Wei Li, have now altered the age-old tale by producing healthy, fertile offspring from two proud mouse parents of the same sex.

Whilst missing out the middle man, quite literally, is fairly common in nature, it is unheard of in mammals until now. Parthenogenesis is the ability of a female to produce offspring without a father and can be seen in a number of species from the small (like nematodes, aphids, and bees) to much larger species (such as hammerhead sharks and Komodo dragons). Parthenogenesis literally means 'virgin birth' in Greek and it allows females to produce healthy offspring if no males are present. This does mean, however, that the offspring are all genetically identical to the mother and each other, making the population less stable if environmental conditions change, hence why these species still need some males.

## The Birds, the Bees and the...Mice?

**For the first time, mouse pups have been produced solely using genetic material from two male parents. *The Gryphon* takes a closer look.**

Whilst the phenomena of reproducing on your own is highly successful in many groups, it has never been seen in mammals in the wild, and laboratory studies had proved unsuccessful with offspring either dying or being infertile. Some studies have managed to produce offspring from two females before, but the offspring have been unhealthy with severe abnormalities, and never has it been shown to occur from two male mice – not even mother nature herself has conducted that experiment with males from any species. The research, whilst based on parthenogenesis, is a lot different to the natural process, with a lot more splicing and dicing of the genome.

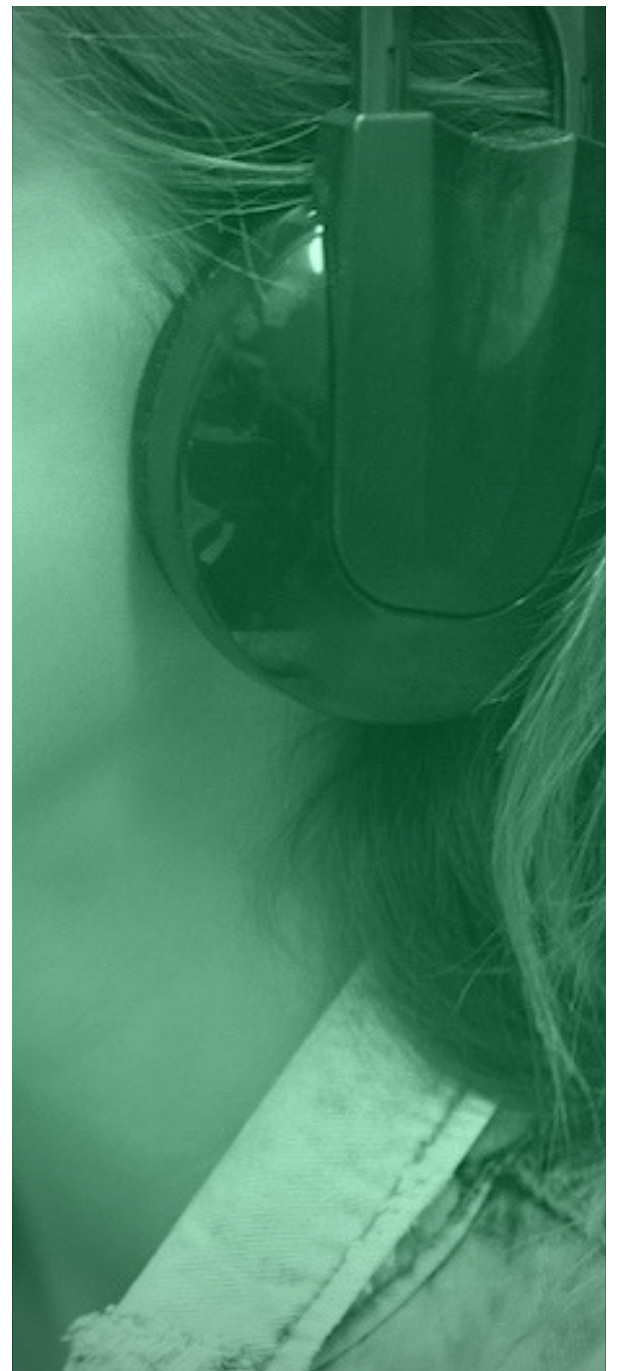
Producing offspring from two mothers is simpler than producing offspring from two males. Wei Li and his team did both. They produced the mouse pups from the two mums by taking an egg cell from one and a stem cell from another, merging them together, and then deleting a whole bunch of DNA. The bi-maternal offspring were healthy, and some went on to produce their own offspring. Producing babies from two males was, to put it lightly, much harder, as I'm sure you can comprehend. To become parents the two dads had to donate sperm and stem cells, like the mums, but an egg was also required. This egg had been enucleated

– all of its genetic material was removed – so just the structure is left. After all that, seven genes still had to be deleted, which is more than double of what the bi-maternal experiment required. The experiment had mixed success as, whilst pups were produced from the two dads, they all died within a few days. Not an ideal success rate if you're a mouse.

This is important as there is the potential for this technology to be used in humans. Admittedly, it wouldn't be possible for a while, but the potential is there and it would allow same sex couples to have a child with genetic information from both parents. However, there are sceptics as to whether this could ever be applied to humans. Many critics of the study point out that most embryos did not develop normally and pointed to the fact that the success rate of the mouse pups was only 14% with two female parents and just 2.5% with the two males.

But who knows, we also didn't think we would be able to clone animals and just look at Dolly the sheep. The researchers themselves take a positive view, and state that whilst applications for humans is not possible in the close future, the results show us what could be achievable in the long run.





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# 5th World Title Win for Hamilton

His latest victory makes him the most successful British driver to ever compete in Formula 1.



Image: AFP

**Millie Warrilow**  
Formula 1

Lewis Hamilton won his fifth Formula One World Championship at the Mexico Grand Prix, making him the second most successful driver of all time, on a par with Argentina's Juan Manuel Fangio. Red Bull's Max Verstappen won the race on the day but for Hamilton, his fourth place finish was enough to secure the title.

The Mercedes driver would have liked to have assured the title with a win and with a promising start, Hamilton looked to be in a convincing position. However, Verstappen had an absolutely incredible race, taking the lead in the first turn and managing to stay in control throughout. Hamilton once again experienced a difficult race and could not keep up with

the Red Bull driver after experiencing tyre problems early on. The Mercedes driver was forced to take a pit stop on lap 12 due to a worn down front tyre on the left hand side, where he then switched his tyres to super-soft.

Hamilton said: "It was a horrible race. I had a great start and was working my way up and I really don't know what happened," he added "I just tried to bring the car home."

However, a seventh place finish in Mexico was all Hamilton needed in order to beat rival Sebastian Vettel who was also racing for his fifth championship title. Vettel went into the race on Sunday already 70 points behind Hamilton, meaning that his second place finish on the day was too little too late.

Hamilton dedicated his win to his grandfather, who

sadly passed away just four days before claiming the title on Sunday. Winning the title reminded Hamilton of the sacrifices which his grandfather made in order for him to be where he is today.

Hamilton said, "I'll never forget the things he did for me to be here." Despite Hamilton's difficult year, his achievement on Sunday will be one that both himself and his family will be extremely proud of.

The season has been extremely close with Ferrari creeping up on the dominant Mercedes. Before the Grand Prix went to Germany, Vettel's win at Silverstone meant that he was leading Hamilton by eight points. However, wet weather in Germany saw the Ferrari driver take a turn for the worst and his crash meant that Hamilton was able to go on and win the race leaving the Hockenheimring course with a 17 point lead. From then on Hamilton won five of the next seven races, which meant victory was in sight.

Hamilton knew what had to be done and although he may not have made the podium on the day; his fourth place finish in Mexico was enough to take the championship title with Vettel finishing second. The 33 year-old believes that the position he is in now gives him a great chance of being able to to match Michael Schumacher's seven titles.

With just two races to go, the competition is still heated leaving only 20 points between third and fifth place. Finnish racers Raikkonen and Bottas and Belgium's Verstappen are guaranteed to be seen fighting for a place on the podium in two weeks time. Hamilton has never won another race after winning the title, can he break his hoodoo in Brazil in a week's time?

# Please Sir, I Want Some More...

Fans will be eager to see more of debutant Oliver Gildart after his amazing performance against the Kiwis.

**Jonathan Burnett**  
Rugby League

A brilliant individual try by debutant Oliver Gildart saw England kick-off their three-match Test Series against New Zealand with a gripping 18-16 victory in Hull on Saturday.

After facing the Kiwis' ever-intimidating Haka, England raced out of the blocks like a team possessed. Tommy Makinson, replacing England's top-scorer Ryan Hall, plucked George Williams' first kick of the afternoon out of Jordan Rapana's hands, with the string of resulting offloads finding Sam Tomkins who slid over to open the scoring a mere three minutes in.

This early score did not rattle the Kiwis however, who grew more and more into the game as the half progressed. Centre Esan Marsters finished off a wonderful set-play by the New Zealand spine to level the scores on twelve minutes, before a rare mistake from England's Jermaine McGillvary saw newly-appointed captain Dallin Watene-Zelezniak finish in the left-hand corner from the resultant scrum play.

England however, finished the half on the front foot, albeit controversially. A fantastic cross-field run from NRL-bound John Bateman set up an overlap that Williams exploited. He found Hull's very own Jake Connor, who slid over the line and appeared to ground the ball, despite the efforts of three Kiwis.

Upon a long and tedious review, Video Referee Ben Thaler ruled that Watene-Zelezniak led with his knees to prevent Connor from grounding the ball, striking the England centre in the face, so a penalty try was awarded. Connor converted from in front of the sticks, levelling the two teams, 12-all at half-time.

The second half saw a far slower flurry of points. Despite being excellent throughout in game, New Zealand half-backs Kodi Nikorima and Shaun Johnson couldn't muster up any significant try scoring opportunities for the Kiwis in the second half, with the excellent Johnson's two penalty goals putting his side into a 16-14 lead.

The game-defining moment, however, came with fourteen minutes to go. Following a fantastic offload from the bustling Bateman, who drew in three Kiwi defenders, centre Oliver Gildart broke free down the right-hand side. Faced one-on-one with Watene-Zelezniak, the 2018 Super League Young Player of the Year stepped inside, then outside, to round the New Zealand skipper as if he wasn't there and dot down for a momentous debut try.

Following this game-breaker from Gildart, England reverted to pragmatism, and held out against everything New Zealand threw at them. Jesse Bromwich and Johnson again went close, however England held on for a well-earned victory to go one-up in this Test Series.



Image: SWpix



# Adiós Julen! Madrid Manager Axed

After a 5-1 thrashing at El Clásico, Madrid put Lopetegui out of his misery following a tortuous 139 day tenure.



Image: Javier Soriano/AFP

**James Carroll**  
Football

"We have a great team and we are trying to carve out our own path, trying to evolve and grow the style of play we already had. What happened then happened, but we need to focus on what we can do in Russia without looking eight years back."

It will be impossible for Julen Lopetegui to avoid looking back now. Those words – spoken just five months ago as the unburdened and relaxed orchestrator of an exciting, youthful 'Tiki-Taka 2.0' Spanish national side – must surely now echo through the memories of the traumatic events that followed them.

Of course, Madrid President Florentino Perez is rarely forgiving, and just five months after representing a beacon of progression in Spanish football, Lopetegui finds himself amongst the distinguished company that occupies Real Madrid's managerial graveyard.

After 10 games, Real Madrid sit in 9th place with just 14 points. Even before Barcelona humiliated them on Saturday, it was their worst start to a season in 17 years. In the apocalyptic rubble of that game, Lopetegui said he still had the 'strength' to carry on. Not the words of a confident leader, but of a defeated man whose ordeal has not relented since June 13th.

Whether or not Cristiano Ronaldo was used sparingly by Zidane until the latter stages of last season, Lopetegui still took control of a side that

had just lost a player who produced 44 goals in all competitions last season. A good (perhaps very good) working relationship with Isco for the national team has not proven enough to plug such a considerable hole.

On top of this, Gareth Bale's contribution of just three goals in the league, and Karim Benzema having provided just one assist in 732 minutes of football since the Champions League final, have further compounded the stodginess of Madrid's attacking play. Before their consolation goal in the El Clásico drubbing, Real had failed to score in over eight hours of league football.

It would be churlish to speculate whether these poor individual performances can be placed at Lopetegui's door. The exit of Cristiano Ronaldo was always going to be nothing short of tumultuous at the Bernabéu, and Perez badly needed serenity if his club were to make the transition seamlessly. What followed was anything but, and one gets the impression that Lopetegui and Real never recovered from the shock of such a stormy management transition. Combine that with the loss of a player who has – sometimes single-handedly – won everything over a nine year period, and it seems this outcome was miserably inevitable.

For Julen Lopetegui, there will be inevitable regret, but he can take solace from the knowledge that failing in Madrid rarely means the end of a manager's career. But for now, he and the club he departs must exorcise the past months and begin to rebuild.

# Red Sox Clinch 9th World Series

The Boston Red Sox beat the Los Angeles Dodgers, 4-1, to lift baseball's greatest prize.



Image: AP Photo

**Cian Fox**  
Baseball

The Major League Baseball season came to an end this week, as the Los Angeles Dodgers lost their second successive World Series, this time to Boston.

It was a comfortable victory in the end for the Red Sox, who won the best-of-seven series 4-1 overall after a 5-1 win in Los Angeles on Sunday night. It is

the second straight loss for the Dodgers in the World Series, who were forced to watch the opposition celebrate on their home field once again – after the Houston Astros won in LA last year.

For the Red Sox, it is their fourth World Series in 15 years, with owner John Henry declaring this year's team, "the best Red Sox team in history" as they bring the Commissioner's Trophy back to Fenway Park once again.

The game itself was always in Red Sox hands, who proved too strong for the Dodgers, particularly pitcher David Price, who was in stellar form after initially surrendering a home run on his first pitch. From that moment on, he retired 14 consecutive batters and limited the Dodgers to just 1 run in seven innings, effectively winning Boston the World Series.

It had been a grueling series for the Dodgers, whose only win in the series came after the longest ever World Series game in history in game three at Dodger Stadium, where LA emerged victorious after an 18 inning marathon, which stretched across two days, totaling 7 hours of baseball.

The collapse that followed in game four, where LA blew a 4-0 lead to go down 9-6, would no doubt have added to the physical fatigue felt heading into game five on Sunday night.

For Boston, the World Series capped off a fantastic season for one of baseball's biggest franchises, who recorded 108 wins in the regular season, and dispatched their biggest rival, some would argue the biggest rivalry in sports, the New York Yankees in the American League division series. As a result, it will be a season that is etched in an already storied franchise's history.

It is now 31 years since the Dodgers won the World Series, and Los Angeles sports fans will now have to turn their attention away from baseball and towards LeBron James and the Lakers and the undefeated Rams in the NFL.



# Blyth End Guiseley's Unbeaten Streak

Guiseley's five-game undefeated streak came to an unexpected end at the hands of the travelling Spartans.



Image: Dom Johnson

**Dom Johnson**  
Football

On a cold Tuesday night in West Yorkshire, cheered on by six hundred and thirteen fans, Guiseley fell to a 3-1 defeat to Blyth Spartans, bringing to an end their five-game unbeaten run. It was a lively game of few chances, but the travelling side took a valuable three points that moved them away from the relegation zone.

The game's standout player was Blyth's Daniel Maguire, whose two goals were the difference in a professional performance from the away side.

Right from kick off, the game didn't go to plan for Guiseley as Blyth got off to the perfect start – a goal coming from the first corner of the match. Right-back Aaron Cunningham responded well to the second ball from the clearance and slid the ball home at the far post to make it Guiseley 0 Blyth Spartans 1.

However, the away side would not to be in front for long. Guiseley grew into the game and responded well, despite conceding, and their pressure paid off when Kingsley James scored the equaliser from the penalty spot after Kieran Green dragged down Lions' midfielder Will Hatfield.

The hosts seemed to be pressing on after the equaliser as captain Purver and goal scorer James began to dictate the pace in the centre of the park, yet the next goal was to come from the away team. After a flick on from Blyth captain Dale bounced past

Guiseley centre back Will Thornton, striker Daniel Maguire outmuscled Thornton and latched on well to the loose ball and finished past Guiseley's Joe Green.

The Lions almost immediately responded through a strike from Kingsley James that the linesman ruled out for offside. Nevertheless, the rest of the first half created few clear-cut chances, with Guiseley going in at the break a goal down.

A quiet start to the second half was followed by a sloppier period where neither team created many chances, with a flurry of bookings being the talking point in the first period of the second half. Guiseley winger Morrison saw his shot saved well by the Blyth keeper after sixty-eight minutes.

Maguire and Blyth finished the game in the eighty-second minute after some great work on the right-hand side, with the striker cutting inside of Thornton and emphatically curling home his second of the game and the visitors' third.

In the final minutes, long balls up to substitute Scott Smith had little success for the home team, but the striker had an effort saved by Jameson in the final minutes.

A disappointing result for the home team, but yet another strong turnout from the fans after Guiseley's fifth straight home game in a row.

*The Gryphon's Guiseley Man of the Match – Curtis Morrisson.*



## BUCS Fixtures 7th November

Full Fixtures and Results at  
[bucs.org.uk](http://bucs.org.uk)

Badminton Womens 1st vs Durham 2nd  
2pm, The Edge

Badminton Mens 1s vs Sheffield 1st  
2pm, The Edge

Basketball Mens 1st vs Sheffield Hallam  
2nd 7pm, The Edge

Fencing Womens 1st vs York 1st  
2pm, The Edge

Football Womens 2nd vs Huddersfield 1st  
1.30pm, Bodington Playing Fields

Football Mens 1st vs Manchester 2nd  
2pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Hockey Womens 1st vs Newcastle 1st  
5.30pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Hockey Mens 4th vs Durham 3rd  
2.30pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Lacrosse Womens 1st vs Durham 3rd  
1pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Lacrosse Mens 1st vs Leeds Beckett 2nd  
3pm, STP 3G, Headingley Campus

Netball Womens 3rd vs Newcastle 2nd  
3pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

Rugby League Mens 1st vs Beckett 1st  
2pm, Kirkstall Training Ground

Rugby Union Womens 1st vs Leeds Beckett  
1st 2pm, Rugby Pitch 2, Headingley Campus

Rugby Union Mens 1st vs Newcastle 1st  
1pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Squash Womens 1st vs Durham 1st  
1pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

Table Tennis Mens 1st vs Liverpool 2nd  
2pm, Cromer Terrace

Tennis Mens 1st vs York 2nd  
12pm, David Lloyd Leeds

Volleyball Womens 1st vs Liverpool 1st  
5pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

Volleyball Mens 1st vs Liverpool 1st  
7.30pm, Gryphon Sports Centre



# Rowing Society Push the Boat Out



Image: University of Leeds Boating Club

**Ahead of their upcoming season, *The Gryphon* sat down with the University of Leeds Boat Club Captain Lydia Evans and Secretary Alfie Milnes Dobbs to discuss all things rowing.**

Cian Fox  
Rowing

The University of Leeds Boat Club is the largest mixed gender sports society on campus, with a combined total of over 200 members. Despite all the early starts, cold mornings and gym sessions, the club remains one of the largest and most successful at the university, with UOLBC competing in a variety of BUCS and British Rowing affiliated competitions throughout the year, ranging from smaller Head of River races in Durham and York to the pinnacle of the rowing season, Henley Royal.

The rowing calendar is broken down into the winter and summer seasons, with the Head of River season during the winter months until Regatta season gets underway during the summer. The club's preparations are well under way, with the men's and women's performance squads training approximately "five times a week on the water" and "on average, 12 sessions a week, with land training", according to Club Secretary Alfie Milnes Dobbs.

Of course, the club also participated in Varsity earlier this month as well, with the indoor rowing events ending in an overall draw between Leeds and Leeds Beckett. However, races on the water are where the club's goals are focused, with Head of River season starting in late November at Wallingford.

One of the biggest aims for the club in 2018/19 is to qualify for Henley Royal, the most prestigious event in Regatta season and the highlight of the summer sporting calendar. Naturally, it is very competitive, but Leeds are aiming to get two boats from the men's and women's squads into the race, which is held annually on the River Thames.

While the club is clearly committed to achieving strong results for the performance squads, Club Captain Lydia Evans presents the club's vision as "aiming to cover all bases participation wise, from novices to performance squads. We run the club with an ethos of rowing for all, allowing anyone who wants to row, the ability to".

This inclusive approach is not a typical one for university boat clubs, where often performance

trumps participation, contributing to the view of rowing as an elite and inaccessible sport.

For Leeds, however, the long-term goals are ambitiously inclusive; starting this season, they are aiming to "build simultaneous participation and performance streams," to make those grueling early starts worthwhile for all members, from novices to elite rowers.

In terms of participation, the club already takes in one of the largest cohorts of freshers out of all university sports teams on campus, as around "100-150 people taught to row each year, with many starting from scratch in September and racing for the university by December".

This year promises to be an exciting one for the club, who are always open to new recruits, no matter the experience level or ability.

If you would like to learn more about the club and potentially get involved, you can find them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/leedsuniboatclub/> or on their website: <https://uolbc.co.uk/>