

# THE GRYPHON

#### The official newspaper of Leeds University

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#### UCU Strikes To Hit Campus

14 days worth of strikes, held over a month, will start on 22nd February. Page 5



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an exceptional student experience. The GPA system and the Honours Degree Classification system measure and demonstrate different things and together give a rounded and detailed picture of a student's achievements at university, but students will have the choice about whether they refer to it or not. In addition, one of the main drivers for the University looking into GPA is to prevent our graduates being disadvantaged if graduate recruiters start asking for it, as they do in the US. Students continue to be involved in discussions."

# University Poised To Introduce GPA System

Under this system, first year marks would count towards a final grade

Reece Parker Editor-in-Chief

Following participation in a successful Higher Education Academy pilot scheme, The University of Leeds is considering the possibility of introducing a grade point average system.

The GPA system would run concurrently with the traditional degree classification system, but where the latter does not consider first year grades in its final marks, the GPA system does. Whilst possible timings for the introduction of the system are still being discussed, it has been confirmed that no students currently at the university will be impacted. Despite this, there are fears that if it is introduced for the 2018–19 academic year, many of those affected will have already applied.

The University of Leeds have made an active choice to begin planning for the introduction of this system, with many UK Universities yet to signal any intent to do so. The GPA system is attractive in that it is a recognised system internationally, and therefore affords students greater opportunities overseas. Moreover, with approximately 75% of UK students graduating with either a first class or upper second class honours in the last academic year, there is a need for greater specificity of grades.

A university spokesperson said:

"At Leeds, we are committed to developing independent, critical thinkers through our innovative programme of research-based education, our strong emphasis on extracurricular activities and by providing



#### **Editor of the Week**

#### Ian White

Gave possibly the most rousing speech *The Gryphon* has ever seen at an editor's social in Akmals. Iconic.

Quote of the Week

"They said 8000 people were gonna see my head knocked out on the canvas"

KSI

#### Dear Readers,

**Editor's Letter:** 

In the fortnight since we last published, numerous world shaking events have occurred. The Philadelphia Eagles won the Superbowl despite being rank outsiders, Kylie Jenner had a baby, and KSI defeated Joe Weller via TKO in the third round of a youtube-streamed

boxing match. In hindsight, it was probably better that we didn't publish last week, because we would have had to stop the press more times than your man crush Monday's favourite injunction-busting tabloid.

Elsewhere, I did something of equivalent magnitude in my own private life. Following a last minute drop out, I was afforded the opportunity to attend a male mental health retreat, something I welcomed with opened arms. Granted, I was tempted by the offer of a three-day stay at Weetwood Hall Estate, a chance to meet professional rugby league player Stevie Ward, and the possibility finally having something substantial to talk about in my editor's letter. But I left the weekend with so much more.

The retreat began with all members being invited to talk about how they felt towards the retreat, and how they felt generally in their life. To enter a room with twelve strangers and bare yourself to them is a peculiar experience. In a world where we constantly put up barriers and refuse to openly speak, be this instinctively or otherwise unintentionally, to express our emotions can be frightening. I think that sense of fear was felt by everyone in the room, but it was drowned out by a need to talk – a need which we had refused ourselves far too long.

I've always been vocal about the power of talking, but often, ironically, I've spoken about it rather than executed it. For men especially, there is a tendency to withdraw and alienate yourself from what scares and troubles you, feeling that you have a duty of care to those around you which means that their self-expression should be prioritised, and subsequently that yours should be shelved. It is from here that I feel that a lot of the issues which trouble modern society are rooted, from the anger which manifests as domestic and sexual violence, to the feeling of alienation which leads towards depression and suicide. It is the power of honest, non-judgemental expression which is the first step towards dismantling these structures and processes both within ourselves and the society around us.

It is with this in mind that I, alongside fellow University of Leeds students Andrew Marks and Joe Davidson, are looking to start our own Mantality Society at Leeds University Union this semester. With the rising mental health crisis for men, talking has never been so necessary.

Yours Sincerely,

Reece Parker, Editor-in-Chief editor@thegryphon.co.uk

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# **Exec Columns:**



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If you're reading this on Friday 9th, there is STILL TIME to run for any of our six roles in the Leadership Race! Just come along to the Candidate Briefing tonight in Function at 5:30pm to hear more about the campaign. You can decide at the briefing and then you've got all of the following week to work on your manifesto before we announce who is running on the 19th of February. All you other students

It's been a busy week as the proposed 10 days of Action for Asylum Seekers Campaign gets closer. Working quite closely with Tash and Jack as well STAR and Amnesty Society, we're finalising arrangements for the campaign and getting to grips with the logistics. We want to demonstrate the very best of the student community; we should be viewed as microcosm for the very best of

Big Community News: a bike share scheme is coming to Leeds! This is something that generations of Community Officer have pushed for, and it's finally been approved. From Spring, you will be able to get around Leeds on two wheels, without the need to buy your own bike.

Next week it's #TamponTakeover for The Leeds Community Project. They

'Geordie Jess does' is back for Semester 2 and I am having the best time visiting societies and trying out new activities. On Monday I went bell ringing which was so interesting and something new to tick off my bucket list. I have loads of exciting activities planned so watch out for the videos on the LUU facebook page.

As always I would encourage you all to try something new and give one of

February means that it is LGBTQ+ History month and this year we are focusing on trans with a range of events for both allies and trans people to engage with. We will be inviting NUS' first ever full time trans officer Jess Bradley to talk about transmisogyny on 19th February at 3pm in Room 4, as well as an event on Trans-Exclusionary Radical Feminism on 26th February in Room 2 – so come down.

February is the BEST month because it's LGBT+ History Month! Get your badge on, your rainbow flag out and your reading glasses ready. This year we're focusing on trans awareness and I'm excited to see what I will learn. Make sure you take some time this February to learn about those who aren't always represented in the LGBT+ community. Also, once a week myself and the LGBT+ society will be in the who aren't going to run this year but are interested in the elections, we'll be announcing the candidates on Monday 19th and we'll be hosting events for you to get to know them (like Candidate Speed Dating on Wednesday 21st!)

With meeting candidates and going to meetings preparing for this election, the Leadership Race has been a big focus recently, but I've been involved in a lot of governance stuff too. We have

society as opposed to a group of young people who are in Leeds on a short term basis only. It'll hopefully be the sort of campaign that's remembered for years to come.

Earlier this week, I also had the chance to present to new inducted student education staff at the university. Along with Tom Ward the DVC, we spoke about the uniqueness of Leeds and the

will be down in Union Square running a collection point for tampons and pads that will be donated to local women's, homeless and refugee charities. Donate your own or buy tampons from the team who will donate them on your behalf. Together, we students of Leeds can give back to those in our community.

Attending the University's Student Sustainability Conference, a prominent

our 340 societies a go! We have 226 Give it a Go's in term 2 which are well and truly underway. Please check the website or pick up a red booklet from LUU to find out more.

I just want to say a massive thank you to all the committee members who are doing a great job and have made this possible. I also want to tell you about our World Unite Festival that is coming up at LUU, running from Monday 12th

I am working hard to gather feedback and consult with students who attended the incredibly successful Inspire, Learn, Lead Conference. It is crucial that the feedback from this event be compiled and presented to senior University groups putting pressure on them to better support our diverse student body.

I have now got my eyes on my next achievement, as I am working to develop better support for 'estranged'

Foyer raising awareness around issues such as domestic violence, racism and erasure – so pop by and pick up some resources or have a chat.

Recently I have been helping shape the University's wellbeing and mental health strategy, which they are hopeful will have an influence across the whole University. The Wellbeing Reps have helped me to gather loads of amazing ideas and feedback to make sure this recruited a new Student Trustee for the LUU board and had our Appointments & Governance Subcommittee while I chaired our Finance Subcommittee. Members of the Exec and I also got to meet up with committee members from STAR and Amnesty Societies to further plan for our campaign raising awareness for Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

outstanding education on offer. It was a brilliant example of the partnership in action, and the outcome of having newly inducted staff being fully aware of how the student union operates is invaluable. There's lots going on with leadership plans and the deadline to run is later today, so if you've not made up your mind to run for exec then now's your chance!

theme was the sustainability of our global food systems (spoilers: there isn't any). It was thought-provoking to see how the way we produce and consume meat is ruining our planet. As a meat eater myself, I can't preach. But we can all help reduce our environmental impact. Purchase ethically sourced and free range animal products, and think about giving Meat-Free Mondays a go.

February – Sunday 18th February. Working in collaboration with the International Student Office, the festival aims to celebrate the diversity of our campus with several events and activities led by our amazing clubs and societies. Tip of the day: check out my Bassett's Buttie in Terrace during the leadership race, I promise you won't regret it!

students (those who study without the support of their parents.) Although not one of my initial priorities, this is an issue very close to my heart, and the University is already making great changes with promises to sign an official pledge with clear outlined commitments being released next semester.

strategy is exactly what students need. I'm also really happy that my Better Leeds idea passed and that LUU will be campaigning for well funded & student friendly mental health services in the city for the next 3 years.

Exciting update: me and Tash will be getting you some free tampons and pads, coming soon to LUU.



University of West England Jacob Rees Mogg talk marred by violence

On the 2nd February, police were called to the University of West England (UWE) in Bristol after a fight broke out between attendees of a Jacob Rees-Mogg talk and anti-fascist protesters.

A video of the masked protesters, who have since been identified as members of a local 'Anti-Fascist' group, began circling social media sites, showing them chanting slurs including "tory scum" and "racist".

Rees–Mogg attempted to confront the hecklers but members of the audience became involved and the fracas subsequently became aggressive.

Mr Rees-Mogg is a controversial and divisive political figure due to his hard right beliefs on topics such as gay marriage, abortion and Euroscepticism.

The university have stated that the protestors were not UWE students and had broken into the lecture theatre without tickets.

The protest was criticised by many, despite differences in politics, based on a general consensus that free speech is a fundamental right.

Jo Swinson, the deputy leader of the Liberal Democrats, stated that it was "deeply worrying to see violent tactics by political opponents."

Despite no arrests, the police are actively investigating the event.

#### University of Edinburgh £410,000 welcome package for new principal

Peter Mathieson, the new principal of Edinburgh University, has agreed a welcome package worth £410,000, becoming the highest paid figure in Scottish higher education.

Moving from Hong Kong University, he will earn a basic salary of £342,000, which is £85,000 more than his predecessor.

Moreover, in lieu of pension contributions, he will receive £42,000 and £26,000 of relocation costs. Finally, he will live in a five-bedroom graceand-favour home in central Edinburgh.

Speaking to *The Times*, Professor Mathieson said that "It's a big organisation, a big responsibility. I fully understand it will cause some attention. In terms of percentage of turnover, I'm actually the lowest paid in Scotland, so you can spin numbers whichever way you want."

Regarding this controversy, Sally Hunt, general secretary of the University and College Union, declared: "There is a real crisis of leadership in our universities at the moment. [...] Politicians can talk all they like about tougher sanctions to deal with the problem, but it looks like universities will continue to ignore them."

**Clément Morlhon** 

# **Campus Watch**

#### **Queen Mary University London** Lecturers threatened with investigation over marking

Lecturers at Queen Mary University (QMUL) have been told that they may face investigation if the average grade of students taking their modules falls below 60, reflecting wider fears of grade inflation at British universities.

Members of QMUL's School of Business and Management were told to "bear the 60:60:60 principle in mind" when assessing students' work.

The memo reminds module organisers who "return marks for any element of assessment where the average mark is below 60" that they will be asked to explain why this is the case."

It comes amid growing concern about degree inflation at universities. Last year, the then universities minister, Jo Johnson, urged vice-Chancellors to tackle grade inflation which he said is "ripping" through universities.

> University of Liverpool Labour Students criticised for "tongue-in-cheek" call for execution of monarch

The University of Liverpool Labour Students have been condemned for a tweet which appeared to insinuate a desire to execute Queen Elizabeth II.

Referring to the 369th anniversary of the execution of King Charles I, UoLLS tweeted "Happy #RegicideDay comrades! We did it once, we can do it once again."

King Charles I reigned from 1625 until his execution in 1649 after his defeat in the Second English Civil War to Parliamentary forces.

The account has since removed the original tweet and apologised for any offence caused, claiming it to be "tongue-in-cheek".

Numerous commentators on Twitter have called out the "deeply unpleasant" tweet as an "incitement to murder or high treason", and some claim to have made formal complaints to Merseyside Police.

A spokesperson for Liverpool Guild of Students, said: "One of our societies recently issued a tweet which attracted negative attention. While it was intended as a tongue-incheek comment, the society promptly removed the tweet and apologised for any offence caused."

Jonny Chard

More than 104,000 students – or one in four – graduated with a top degree classification last year, a fivefold increase on the number graduating with a First in 1999.

A spokesperson from QMUL said: "We attract highly capable students and we have a responsibility to ensure they reach their full potential.

"All of these considerations are subject to oversight and approval by the Degree Examination Board and external examiners."

Ian White

#### **University of Lucerne, Switzerland** Swiss university unveils yodelling degree

Starting in September, Lucerne University in Switzerland will be offering undergraduate and masters degrees in yodelling. This is the first such degree of its kind.

Yodelling is a form of singing which involves wobbling the voice up and down in a rapid change of pitch.

It was traditionally used by Swiss herdsmen to communicate in the mountains, but later adopted by musicians for its entertainment potential.

The course will be led by Nadja Räss, a prize-winning Swiss yodeller with her own academy in Zurich.

Michael Kaufmann, who heads the university's music department, said he was delighted with the appointment.

Speaking to the Swiss press, he said: "We have long dreamed of offering yodelling at the university and with Nadja Räss we got the number one. It is an absolute stroke of luck for us."

Applications will open on 28th February, and three or four students are expected to be chosen.

Yodelling is enjoying something of a resurgence in Switzerland, featuring on several successful chart albums last year.

Ian White

## Fall in UCAS **Applications**

UCAS, the body which manages the application process to UK universities, has issued a reported a 0.9% drop in university applications for the 2018/19 academic year. This is despite a rise in applications among certain groups such as EU and international students.

According to UCAS' figures, fewer people are applying to university in the UK than in previous years. UCAS claims that this is due to a 2.5% drop in the number of eighteen-year-olds in the current UK population.

Even so, CEO Clare Marchant admitted that this does not account for the decreasing number of mature students applying to university. Marchant stated that UCAS would be researching the causes of this drop in the future.

Despite an overall decline, disparity can be seen at a regional level. Applications in England have risen by 66% since 2011, partly due to a rise in applications in wealthier regions such as the East Midlands and the South East.

In contrast, Yorkshire and the Humber, the North East and the East of England have seen a fall in the number of people applying to university by January 2018.

#### **Pippa Humphreys**

Another interesting finding is that the number of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds has increased. Among eighteen-year-olds from the UK's most disadvantaged areas, applications have risen from 12.2% in 2006 to 22.6% in 2018.

However, at 52%, the proportion of eighteen-year-olds from the most advantaged backgrounds is almost double that of the application rates from the most disadvantaged backgrounds.

The UCAS report also highlights how UK universities value academic qualifications over vocational qualifications.

Applications from students studying BTECs have dropped. The fact that less BTEC students are applying to university implies that many young people feel universities offer exclusively academic skills whereas they would prefer to gain practical ones.

In an interview about the findings of the UCAS report. Marchand commented that degree apprenticeships are likely to become increasingly popular in the future.

### **Slow Growth of State School Students** Lily Mead

**Attract Low Turnout** 

The government has recently urged UK universities to consider recruiting greater numbers of students from state schools and disadvantaged backgrounds. Despite this, the number of state school students advancing to higher education grew by only 0.1% last year.

The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission claims the currently disproportionate number of privatelyeducated students with access to higher education to be "unacceptable", stating that this "must change." Considering that only 7% of UK students are privately educated, the fact that these students constitute 10% of 2016/17 university undergraduate entrants exhibits a great imbalance in the higher education system.

This disparity, as one might expect, is at its most prevalent within the UK's top universities. Recent research from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) revealed that, at the University of Leeds, 80.4% of all UK domiciled full-time undergraduate entrants (2016/17) attended state school. This is 9.6% less than the national average. However, the University of Leeds was

one of just 15 of the 24 Russell Group universities which showed an increase in undergraduate state school entrants from 2015/16 to 2016/17.

Some fear that the rising cost of tuition fees will only serve to widen the inequality gap, furthering the struggle of those from lower-income families to attain academic goals reached easily by the wealthy elite. Although numbers of state school university entrants are rising (albeit slowly), The Sutton Trust reports that the cost of university is a great repellent for those from less advantaged backgrounds.

According to their 2017 research, 64% (up from 57% in 2013) of young people "unlikely" to attend university claimed that this was due to the financial risks that it poses. As well as increased support for state school students during application processes, The Sutton Trust claims that decreasing the fees paid by those from less advantaged backgrounds may be the best way to "tackle fairness and widen access to higher education".

### What's in Store For Union Referendums Universities in 2018?

A study commissioned by the Guardian and HSBC has found that a small proportion of universities feel they are at "breaking point". Most, however, find they are prepared to withstand future changes.

A series of anonymised interviews and an online survey allowed university leaders to give their opinions on various issues currently in higher education, such as tuition fees, government policies and the pension issues that have the UCU embroiled in a dispute.

63% of respondents said they felt less optimistic compared to a year ago. Vice-Chancellors also seem to be fearful of the financial future of universities.

The government is also planning a review of higher education funding in the UK, which would allow variable fees based on graduate income.

Four out of five people surveyed disagreed with the policy. The VC of the University of Nottingham said the fall in income from students would be "catastrophic" for some universities.

Another issue was the competitiveness of the sector, which many university leaders commented on. Elite **Rabeeah Moeen News Editor** 

universities are lowering boundaries to attract a wider variety of students. Therefore, those who may have previously gone to former polytechnics are now not applying to them.

Brexit is also obviously a factor, as higher education institutions overwhelmingly backed Remain. The impact of this is being felt in the way that they are struggling to recruit EU academics. In addition, the govern-ment has still not confirmed the fee status of EU students in 2019.

One comment from university leaders was that the rapid changes in government policies created a feeling of being overwhelmed, especially in regards to the number of assessment exercises, such as TEF and the National Student Survey.

A combination of financial pressures, government policy and Britain's departure from the EU means that British universities face an uncertain future. While our higher education sector is still among the best in the world, some universities are warning that they are "a single policy change away from disaster.

Three referendums held by LUU last Autumn failed to pass because turnout fell far below the required 1,500 votes.

Three questions were asked: Should we allow snacks in the library; should LUU campaign for a transition to zero emission buses in Leeds; should LUU lobby student accommodation providers in Leeds to offer laundry credits included in rent?

Although all the motions were approved by significant margins, none received nearly enough votes to pass. The vote on snacks in the library received only 89 votes, 1411 short of the 1500 required to pass, with 65 for and 23 against with 1 abstention.

Out of 81 votes cast in response to the question regarding zero emission buses, 65 were in favour. 59 out of 80 voters were in favour of LUU lobbying accommodation providers to include laundry credits in rent.

This means that the referendums attracted less than 6% of the votes they required to pass, and all attracted less than a 0.003% of enrolled students. Turnout was significantly down on last spring, when 562 students participated in a ballot asking whether Leeds Uni-

Ian White **News Editor** 

versity should limit participation with companies which breach international law.

Union Affairs Officer Jack Palmer

said: "I'm glad this issue is getting more attention. It's a real challenge getting the required number of votes if ideas are not particularly controversial (though I was really in favour for snacks in the library!). We offer lots of support to students who want to run the 'for' and 'against' campaigns, but if those students do not come forward, there is only so much we can do to provoke a lively debate.

"We're looking now at our referendum cycle to try and maximise turnout, assessing the sorts of ideas that end up at referendum and discussing what's the best method to determine an outcome. For those students reading this who believe that members of LUU should be more engaged with its democracy, I'd encourage you to get involved as a Rep or think about running in this year's Leadership Race."

# oncerns Raised Over GPA System

#### (Story continued from front page)

The conclusions made from the HEA pilot advocated a "dual running" of the systems, but also suggested that using GPA had more benefits "in the longer term".

Despite this, The University of Leeds has made clear they have no plan to move away from the currently used system, merely to run both concurrently. Within the student body, opposition to the introduction of GPA has been strong. At the LUU Better University Forum on the 30th January, the student panel voted against the system being applicable to first year grades. Following this, it is now union policy to be against the inclusion of first year marks in the new system. The university argue

can be comparable to that used in nations like the United States

In the lively debate, many valid reasons were raised against the introduction of the system. The potential increase of stress for first year students was argued to lead to a spike in mental health issues, which could also disproportionately affect mature students, low-income students and international students who often require a 'bedding-in' period in their first year of study. Moreover, it was argued that the increase of pressure in first year would lead to less exploration and holistic learning in students, both in discovery modules and extra-curricular activities. Finally, school specific styles of marking

that this is actually imperative so that the system - namely whether they adopt a style which sees you marked at the same level across all three years, or specific to your current degree level - means that GPA could potentially impact different subjects in a variety of ways.

> LUU Education Officer, Zaki Kaf Al-Ghazal added: "I was happy to see that policy mandating LUU to lobby the university on first year grades being discounted from the proposed GPA. A student's first year should not count as part of their overall mark for their degree; first year is a tough period where settling in and adjusting to a very different style of study can be challenging. It should remain a transition period and it's not healthy for students to be worrying about grades from the moment they arrive."

#### Students St Kent Ian White

**News Editor** 

More than 17,000 students living in university accommodation fell behind on their housing payments last year, according to recent figures. A small but growing number of students are facing eviction. Last year, 97 students had their tenancies cancelled after being unable to pay their rent, up from 40 the previous year.

The data was based on 90 universities throughout the UK. Out of these 90 universities, Leeds - along with Brunel, Leister, York and Warwick - has the highest proportion of students in rent arrears.

Alistair Jarvis, chief executive of HE lobby group Universities UK, said there was now a need to reintroduce maintenance grants for those who were struggling.

"It is very important that a student's lack of access to funds at the start of their course does not present a barrier to entering higher education, and that students can meet their costs of living," he said.

The University of Leeds insists that it is doing enough to support students in financial difficulty. A University spokesperson said: "We have never evicted anyone for rent arrears and late payment of rents is not usually due to students being in

financial difficulty: change of banking details are common causes, for example. If students are struggling, we offer means-tested help through Leeds Financial Support, which includes assistance with accommodation fees, and LUU offers extensive budgetary advice through dedicated webpages and the advice centre.

"The University of Leeds offers significantly more accommodation than other universities and considers the rents it sets very carefully, meeting regularly with LUU to discuss them. Different universities may have different thresholds for calculating rent arrears, and therefore comparisons can be problematic."

The issue of rent arrears in Leeds is one small part of a far larger debate over the financial support offered to students in the UK. Izzy Lenga, vice-president of the National Union of Students, suggested the figures came as no surprise, stating:

"Given our broken system of student financial support – which doesn't even begin to cover the ever-increasing cost of basic accommodation. This leaves students in the precarious situation where they're uncertain how they'll even pay their next month's rent. Rather than falling into the easy temptation to label these as cases of rent avoidance, we instead need to urge the government and the higher education sector to wake up to the reality that students are being priced out of housing and their education."



## **Leeds Teaching Staff To Strike**

#### **Rabeeah Moeen**

The University and Colleges Union (UCU) has announced 14 days of strikes to commence on Thursday 22nd February. The strikes will take place over a month, beginning and ending with a five-day walkout.

The University of Leeds is amongst 61 universities who will be taking part in the strikes, with the dispute centred around pensions. Seven universities failed to receive the 50% turnout requirement to take action, so will be voting again.

The proposed changes, from Universities UK (UUK) will change the pensions scheme from a defined benefit scheme to a defined contribution scheme. This is a change from a pension that gives a guaranteed retirement income, to one where income will be subject to changes in the stock market. If the economic situation in general improves, the scheme will revert to a defined benefit scheme or a hybrid of a defined benefit and a defined contribution scheme.

One independent report from First Actuarial that was commissioned by the UCU, shows that newer employees at universities would see a 40% decrease in their pensions.

Last week, 88% of UCU members backed strike actions following a breakdown in negotiations. A similar number was reflected in the votes of Leeds University members.

The strike dates have been announced and it is assumed all 61 universities will be taking part. The first two days of strikes will be the 22nd and 23rd of February, continuing on Monday 26th to Wednesday 28th.

Thereafter, strike action days will resume from Monday 5th March until Thursday the 8th. The following week will see strike action on all five days, from Monday 12th to Friday 16th March.

A UCU spokesperson said:

"It's worth noting many Vice Chancellors and very senior managers of universities have separate arrangements for their pensions, in cash, so they will be unaffected by the changes to the USS scheme. We have to make them listen, to respect the staff, and to come back to the negotiating table. We must defend our profession, especially for the next generation."

The UCU also say that their pensions are now worth less than those of school teachers, following two previous rounds of cuts.

The UCU also went on strike last term on a dispute over changes to the employability contract. They were arguing against an addition that would allow employees to be sacked for 'some other substantial reason,' dubbed the 'Sacker's Charter.' The strikes at that time lasted for three days.

Information on the UCU website claims strike action is only taken when every other avenue has already been explored. Members who strike are asked both not to attend work and not to reschedule their classes, as "the point is to cause disruption in order to persuade the employers to return to negotiations."

A spokesperson from the University said:

"Our priority is to minimise any disruption to students and we are working to ensure that alternatives to any teaching events are provided as soon as possible, and, where sequencing is an issue, in the planned order. We will be offering guidance and information on a dedicated page of www.students.leeds.ac.uk, to be found within the 'Academic Life' section."

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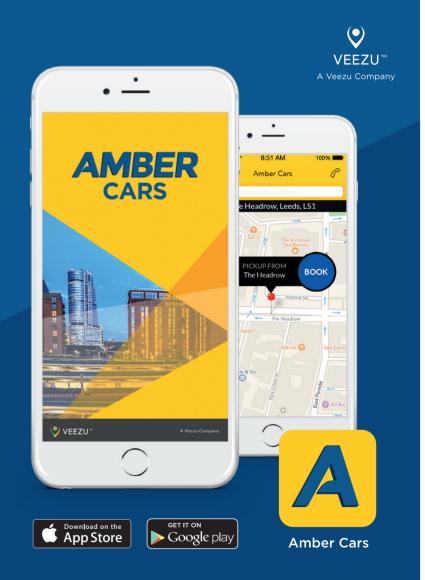
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## **Trump Versus Morgan: Battle of the Egos**



The Gryphon discusses the Morgan-Trump interview and whether it really gave any insight into the mind of America's President.

#### Tara Lee

On the evening of Sunday 28th January, three million viewers tuned into ITV to watch Piers Morgan interview President Donald Trump, covering topics from Trump's views on Brexit to his sentimental feelings towards Scotland and the rest of the UK due to his late mother. The interview attracted many headlines and a lot of social media attention, yet failed to beat the BBC News at 10 (which boasted an audience of 3.9 million). The question at hand must be whether this personal interview between two old friends – the pair met while filming the 2008 series of *The Apprentice* – broke through Trump's usual inflammatory language and hot head responses, or whether it barely skimmed the surface. Crucially, Was the interview worth a watch?

Piers Morgan, an esteemed journalist of 30 years and a friend of Trump, was chosen to deliver the interview. Starting off casually to re-establish their friendship, Morgan began by reasoning with Trump, saying how he doesn't mind criticism as long as it wasn't hysterically 'fake news'. Trump's successes were quickly highlighted and then discussed often throughout the interview. Stating that he felt secure in his victory months before winning the election due to the larger size of the crowds which gathered to hear him speak in comparison to Hilary Clinton, Trump pointed out that America's economy – an economy which "had to be shaken" – is now at a record stock market high. Making sure to allude to Apple's 350 billion dollar investment to the US economy, the interview acted as a showcase for a surprisingly positive outlook on Trump's presidency.

But Morgan's interviewing techniques were subsequently questioned on *The Andrew Marr Show*, where it was suggested that he may have given Trump an easy time due to their pre-existing relationship. Morgan refuted this, arguing that Trump willingly reveals more when in a relaxed environment, and that he felt he pressed Trump on significant issues. Although objectivity is the key to a good interview, it could reasonably be argued that Morgan allowed Trump to provide vague answers to every timid question. For instance, Trump's suggestion that he would have apologised for re-tweeting a racially charged *Britain First* tweet if he had known what the organisation stood for, is not the same as admitting a mistake and sincerely apologising to the British people, especially considering that the tweets were kept up for weeks after. Instead, Trump's excuse, that the President of the United States still fails to fully understand what *Britain First* stands for as a movement, seems strikingly similar to the hysterical 'fake news' he earlier claimed to detest.

This coincides with the popular question of whether or not Trump should have the public platform that he has so easily acquired. On the one hand, simply the notion of freedom of speech means that it would be principally undemocratic to campaign against him having a platform. As an elected President, it is perhaps even more important not to restrict his right to free speech. One cannot stop the 'Leader of the Free World' having

interviews on news channels across the world. However, many feel it's on social media platforms where Trump should not be allowed free reign, even going as far as to say he is 'unprofessional.' His platform on Twitter could be seen as legitimising far-right individuals and groups such as *Britain First*, in turn giving them a self-justified and amplified voice. Clearly his approach to using Twitter is unprofessional and hasty, as seen from the apparent lack of knowledge Trump still has of *Britain First*, which definitely gives weight to the arguments advocating a restriction of Trump's access to social media.

Trump's controversial social media presence was questioned during the interview. Preferring the term 'social media' over tweeting, Trump called it his "modern day form of communication", and a way to discredit false news. His habits were also revealed, saying he would tweet whenever he could: from bed, as well as during breakfast, lunch and dinner. Sometimes, if he didn't have time, he would dictate a tweet then leave it to his team or a lawyer. Again, lit-tle was uncovered about why he feels it is professional and respectful for the President of the USA to post rash and offensive tweets, or how these 280-character snippets of hostility can be considered an effective means of public address. The emergence of these social media habits – which many of us could logically assume without his confirmation – didn't make a particularly riveting revelation, nor interesting television.

The controversial and somewhat complex relationship Trump has with Britain was touched upon, after successfully establishing Trump's intention to solidify a good trade deal with Britain at the front of the queue following Brexit. The issue of the state visit inevitably surfaced. Trump himself feels himself to be very popular in Britain, having a good relationship with Theresa May and approving of the Brexit deal, though he would take a harder stance himself. He even went so far as to openly criticise the EU and the poor, "unfair" deals they have with America regarding trade regulations. Speaking on *The Andrew Marr Show*, Morgan stated that he "found Trump very relaxed and [that he] made some very forceful points about Britain." Morgan also raised the issue that Britain had previously welcomed the likes of Vladmir Putin for state visits, suggesting that Sadiq Khan and Jeremy Corbyn's protests lack historical awareness. On a personal level, Trump has always had an attachment to the UK due to his mother being Scottish – a fact he was keen to point out.

Overall, the interview did achieve a unique insight into Trump's electorate campaign, as well America's economy and the possibility of future trade deals with Britain. There was definitely a relaxed atmosphere that helped Trump open up on contentious issues such as his belief in respect for women and their progress in society while refusing to identify as a feminist. But was it worth the watch? Despite the lack of serious digging in the interview, it certainly opened up controversial topics for further discussion. Perhaps the next interview will raise more hairs than eyebrows, and leave more answers than questions.

# Brits Behaving Badly: 'Pornographic Dancing' Arrests in Cambodia



*The Gryphon* looks into the future of South East Asian traveller hotspots in light of recent allegations against British tourists in Cambodia.

#### Kira Norris

Last week saw the arrest of ten tourists, including five Britons, for allegedly producing and displaying "pornographic pictures", according to a statement published on the National Police website after a police raid in the city of Siem Reap, Cambodia.

In spite of the kingdom's conservative culture, Cambodia, like many of its ASEAN counterparts, has seen the rise of Western tourism come at odds with its long-standing traditional heritage. As Duong Thavry, chief of the Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Department in Siem Reap, told the AFP, "we cracked down on them because they committed activities that are against our culture." According to the National Police report, seventyseven tourists were detained and "educated" in proper Cambodian decorum before being released without charge. However, the ten accused organisers are awaiting trial in a court where charges of producing sexually explicit images - equated to making pornography by police and prosecutors alike - carry a sentence of up to one-year imprisonment.

In a short video clip posted of the ten arrested, all with shaved heads, Briton Daniel Jones makes a grovelling apology to his audience, stating that he "respect[s] the culture" and that it was only "one mistake." With the other members of the accused group simultaneously bowing and apologising in English and Khmer, the final scene painted a very different picture to the lewd images that got them there in the first place.

#### "The government should implement regulations on local noise pollution and drinking instead of mass arrests like this, before future tourists get put off from coming entirely"

Although geographically considered the gateway to the ancient temples of Angkor Wat, Siem Reap's proximity to one of country's most visited locations has led to its popularity as an important backpacker hotspot, creating a boom that has seen a high number of lively bars and clubs springing up in its wake. With flashing neon lights advertising cheap booze and a good time, the city's 'Pub Street', officially Street 8, sits at its centre. With a pint of beer on offer from only 50¢ and cocktails a mere \$1.50, there are budgetfriendly options for even the thriftiest of travellers.

Worth a total of \$5.5billion (28% of GDP) in 2016 and rising, a country that relies so heavily on tourist visits may worry that these arrests will prove to act as a deterrent against potential visitors. Speaking to a University of Leeds student who has travelled to Cambodia, she worried about the future of Siem Reap's rambunctious backpacking-scene if events like this became the norm: "You come to Siem Reap to see Angkor Wat, but end up staying in the city longer because of its great atmosphere. I know that sometimes tourists can push it too far, but there has to be a less extreme approach. The government should implement regulations on local noise pollution and drinking instead of mass arrests like this, before future tourists get put off from coming entirely."

#### "With a pint of beer on offer from only 50¢ and cocktails a mere \$1.50, there are budgetfriendly options for even the thriftiest of travellers"

Siem Reap, like much of Cambodia, depends on tourists who only visit in the few months of high season. With concern over the already slowing growth of Angkor Archaeological Park ticket sales coupled with the near doubling of a one-day entry ticket (from \$20 to \$37 from 1st February), these fears may not be entirely without merit.

Striking the balance between respecting local culture whilst still having fun is not something only British people find challenging. In 2015, two American sisters (20 and 22) were arrested on charges of taking naked photos inside the sacred temple complex. Only a week earlier, three French men were deported after they pled guilty to the same charge, receiving a suspended six-month sentence and banned from reentering Cambodia for four years.

However, the future is not all doom and gloom for high-spirited UK tourists. According to the 2015/2016 British Foreign and Commonwealth Office Travel Aware Report, there has been a 10% decrease in the number of foreign arrests and detentions over the last five years. Let's just hope future tourists are more aware of what is culturally appropriate; what they can and will go to prison for.



# Society Spotlight: Muay Thai



Mary Lumley Society Editor

As well as editing the Society section of *The Gryphon*, Mary Lumley acts as the President of the Leeds University Union Muay Thai Society. Here she discusses exactly what makes the society and the sport "better than boxing", and what it can do for you.

For those less well-versed in the martial arts scene. Muay Thai (or Thai Boxing) is a combat sport from South-East Asia. It originated in Thailand in the 18th Century as a practical fighting technique used in warfare before developing into a sport. It differs from Western kickboxing as practitioners can use knee and elbow strikes as well as kicks and punches; this has led to the sport's nickname 'The Art of Eight Limbs.' There is a heavy focus on body conditioning as fighters must be extremely fit and tough to compete in the ring. Thus, training regimens will typically include running, shadowboxing, skipping, abdominal exercises and shin conditioning. The sport's popularity has grown rapidly over the last ten years and it has now gained recognition from the IOC (International Olympic Committee) meaning you'll likely be seeing it at a future Olympics.

It's precisely this popularity that the Muay Thai society has capitalised upon in recent years, but it's difficult to single out any single factor as to what makes it so great. Although the ability to learn, practice, and eventually master a new form of selfdefence is obviously one of our biggest selling points, it must be said that all the Thai food we get to eat is a real bonus. It's all a part of the communal spirit we encourage as soon as you set foot in the gym. Although we fight individually, everyone trains together, sharing knowledge and techniques as well as helping each other work on their individual weaknesses. Whilst you have to be extremely disciplined, it's an incredibly caring, fun and rewarding environment that really lets you develop your technique to the best of your ability. We also have some incredible opportunities. For the last two years, a group of us have trained in Thailand for three weeks. This year, we're going to watch Yokkao in March - so it's never too late to get involved and get yourself ring-side.

The society has been growing in strength for some time now. Last semester we doubled our membership figures, and we have since succeeded in getting our first ever sponsor: Zaap Thai. If kicking your friends isn't your cup of tea, just come

along for the delicious, authentic Thai street food.

While we strive to make the society as fun as possible, the hardest thing you have to be aware of is the sacrifices. I've seen more teammates producing a 'sickie in the binnie' after Strength and Conditioning than I care to remember. Missing out on social occasions can be really hard, and it can also be incredibly mentally and physically draining trying to stay on top of university work whilst dieting and training for a fight. The society understands that, and that's why we encourage a balanced commitment that works for you. We want you to be able to perform as well as you can, but not at the cost of your studies.

As mentioned, the ability to strike your opponent with eight points of contact distinguishes Muay Thai from other martial arts. It sounds pretty brutal, but that doesn't mean it isn't enjoyable. Although training can be frustrating and tiring, it's incredibly rewarding when you finally get the hang of a certain technique or notice general improvements over time. A friend of mine once said she didn't mind starting at the bottom of the class because it's amazing when you realise you've reached the top. It's the perfect way to let off steam after a stressful day and nothing compares to that winning feeling when all the hard work pays off. Plus, once you've reached this pinnacle, you can continue the cycle by starting to help the new beginners on their own journeys.

If you're somebody that has difficulty with discipline, then this is the society for you. That word is at the heart of everything the society believes in, meaning that when you get knocked down in a fight you get straight back up to show the judges you're not tired. It sounds cheesy, but this is a great principle to carry over into everyday life.

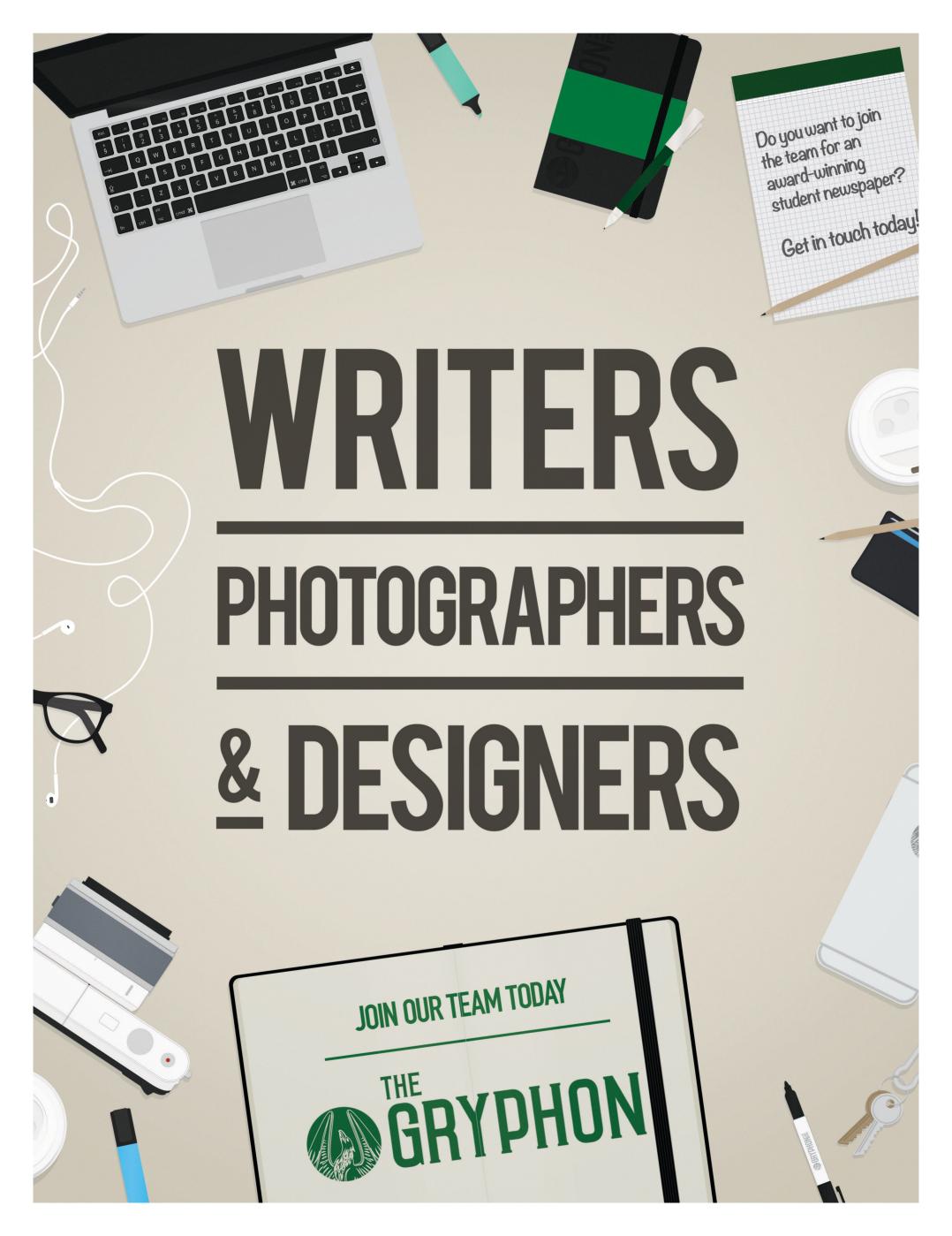
You don't even have to competitively fight. Muay Thai burns an incredible number of calories so it's great for just keeping fit or losing weight. If you do want to compete, we regularly take our fighters to interclub competitions across the country. Leeds also boasts two of the best Muay Thai gyms in the country (Kiatphontip and Bad Company) where multiple world champions train and coach. It's definitely worth making the most of their expertise whilst living in the city.

The sport is only going to keep growing. A few years ago, no one could even pronounce 'Muay Thai'; now there's a film coming out this year called 'A Prayer Before Dawn.' It stars Peaky Blinder's Joe Cole and was filmed on location at Nakhon Pathom Prison in Thailand. Check out the trailer – I'm mega hyped for it.











# GryphOn Air

### Every Monday at 11am on Leeds Student Radio



# In the Middle

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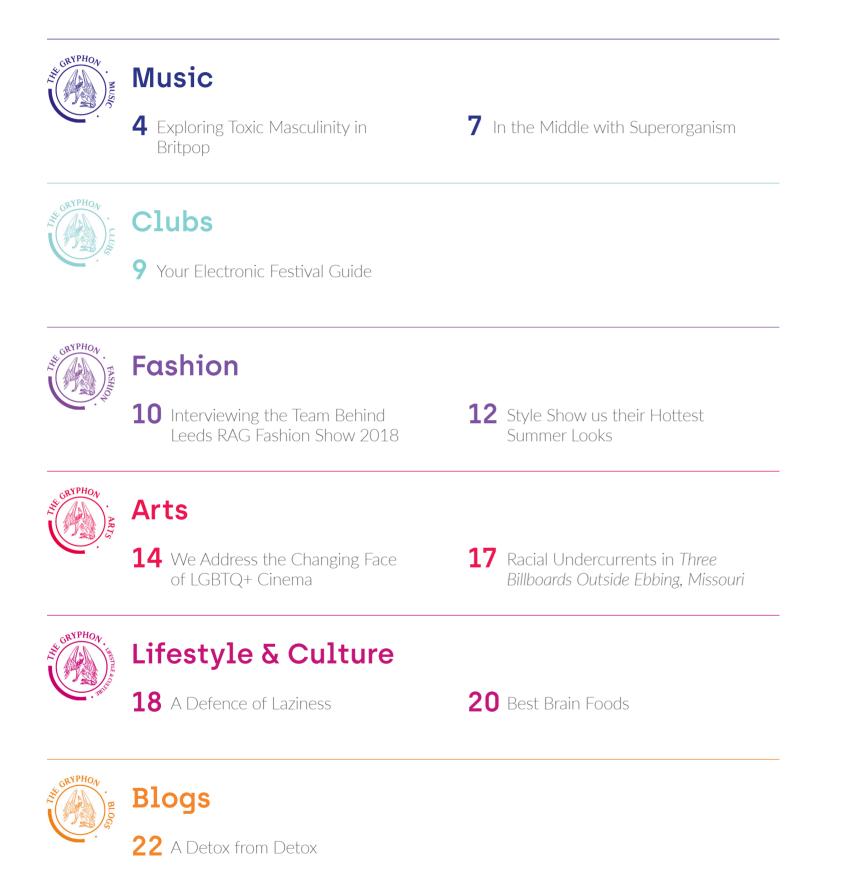
### **Front Cover**

Provided by Leeds RAG Fashion Show



Photography by Izzy Kynoch

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# Your Face it Has No Place: Where are Women Meant to Stand in a Scene Like Britpop?

Are women welcome in the masculine sphere of Britpop? Digital Associate, Juliette Rowsell, discusses her experience at a Liam Gallagher concert that turned into a display of lad culture at its grittiest.

When you think of Liam Gallagher, what do you think of? Cigarettes and alcohol? The epitome of the 90's rock n' roll star? Excessive swearing? Avid football fan? Something that underpins these ideas, is the image of excessive lad culture.

As a Christmas present, my mum bought us tickets to see Liam Gallagher at the Barclaycard Arena in Birmingham. Oasis were the band that got me into music, and my inner fangirl was reignited.

However, from the outset of the gig, I had an inkling that something wasn't right. But, if I were to have talked about the issues at the time, I would have been deemed to be over-reacting. For a woman to speak out about male behaviour in such environments is to risk being dubbed a 'feminazi' and overly 'P.C.'. Yet, this in and of itself is internalised sexism: as women, we are taught to accept and internalise blame. It must be us that there is an issue with, rather than the behaviour of men that makes us feel uncomfortable.

Britpop revolved around the superior

image of the god-like rock star and their adorning fans. This was a gendered division, and an A-List model girlfriend became the indicator of a successful career and cemented the rock star image. The working-class lad in adidas trainers turned coke-snorting, above the law rebel was the hero of Britpop. With this came a sense of rock n' roll arrogance and inflated sense of self belief. Britpop was as much an attitude of male rebelliousness against middle class sensibilities as it was about music.

Thus, when support band Rat Boy, a four piece "white-boy" indie band meandered on stage, guitars and beers

#### "Britpop was as much an attitude of male rebelliousness against middle class sensibilities as it was about music."

in hand, battered vans on, floppy hair perfectly in place, they conformed to every trope associated with this image. But this isn't 1997. In 2018, when four white men walk on stage with mediocre throw away indie that feels eight years too late to the party, this arrogance no longer sits well. While many indie bands that first emerged in the early 2010s have moved on to include subtle elements of pop, funk and even RnB to push the genre beyond its tired formula, Rat Boy are stuck in this throw away guitar ridden indie that has lost its punch. So what is it that has carried them through that has allowed them to support Liam Gallagher? Part of what seems to have propelled them forward is their embodiment of this rock n' roll star, 'lad of the town' image - an image and arrogance that does not carry female bands of the same ilk through.

What followed was a scene that is familiar to all gig goers: it was the break between the support and main act, music was blaring out of the speakers, and the crowd was getting lairy. As indie classic after indie classic came on, the crowd became increasingly intoxicated with this legacy of music. But when we



talk about 'indie classics' we have to question what this means.

Throughout the interval, not a single song by a female artist played over the tannoy. Think about all the bands we idolised as indie kids growing up in the early 2010s: The Smiths. The Cure. Jov Division, Oasis, Blur, The Libertines, Arctic Monkeys. What do they all have in common? They're all white men. When the final song came on - 'I am the Resurrection' by The Stone Roses - an almost exclusively male mosh pit emerged in the crowd: almost all of them were shirtless, beer was thrown like confetti, four condoms were flying over their heads. Do I spend money on a gig just to be forced up against a guy's sweaty back? Surprisingly, I do not. As they screamed 'your face it has no place' and 'I am the resurrection' along with Ian Brown, what was being celebrated was a cannon of music that prides itself on its belief in its own selfimportance. Suddenly, this song was transformed from indie banger to a song that represented the euphoric freedom



of being a 'lad'. And this seems to be a surprisingly common theme of many Britpop songs: this sense of invincibility.

My mum and I were sat in the seated area. As Liam came on, the two men sat in front of me instantly stood up, arms wide. In a moment of self-awareness, one of them turned around and asked us and the two women by us if we could see when he stood up. We all said no. He put his hands together and begged us to stand up. When we said no again, he shrugged his shoulders, and carried on.

In this came the assumption that he could do what he wanted despite the complaints of others. It came with the assumption that his incredibly extroverted and bodily way of gigging was the 'correct' way of enjoying music, and that other ways of gigging (i.e., sitting in the seated area) are invalid forms of musical enjoyment, and that his superior way of gigging was allowed to take precedent over how we decided to enjoy ourselves. In begging us to stand and us choosing not to, he also placed the blame of our issues on us by insinuating that it was our fault for not conforming to his way of enjoyment. Needless to say, we got no apology.

Throughout the night, there was one female musician on stage: the cellist. But, in having this token female, it seemed to reinforce the idea that rock is for men; women can partake in 'gentle' and 'unexciting' forms of music, but the almighty and superior rock n' roll, is for men. Sorry girls, didn't you know that women can't play guitar?

Masculinity within Britpop/indie culture is so normalised that it has a sense of untouchability. It is rarely questioned that its history is highly problematic and exclusionary. Yet, it's not necessarily Liam Gallagher himself who is at blame here. It's what he represents to the thousands of men who adore him that is the issue.

Liam Gallagher represents 'the dream': the dream of rock n' roll success, this attitude of pure invincibility laid on a solid foundation of sex, drugs and rock n' roll. He represents the image of ultimate ladhood that is under threat in 2018 from P.C. politics and liberal attitudes.

So, where do I stand as a 5"3 female who does not conform to these masculine expectations in a genre like Britpop? Answer: I don't. There's something quite feminist about being a woman and screaming 'Rock n' Roll Star' into your hairbrush in your bedroom. But as soon as this is taken outside of the private sphere and you're in a room of lairy men who have every aspect of their masculine entitlement validated by a cannon of music, lyrics and heroes, it no longer feels empowering.

I left a night I was so excited for feeling deflated and othered; this was not a gig for all, but one for the boys. As The Stone Roses sang, here in this gig that validated every male ego in the room, I realised, my female face, it had no place in a gig which was a celebration of male privilege.

Juliette Rowsell

"How, as a feminist, am I meant to feel comfortable when "I am the **Resurrection**" comes on, four condoms are being thrown around the crowd, and guys are taking their shirts off then swinging them around as beer is being thrown like confetti?

Especially when every man in the room feels validated in a joint sense of lad culture by a cannon of music, culture and heroes that celebrate such behaviour?"

# **Album Round-Up**

### Wild Beasts - Last Night All My Dreams Came True

Wild Beasts are coming to an end, and I'm going to miss them terribly. Announcing their split in September last year, they've most kindly given us some parting treats: a final album and a bunch of live shows this February. *Last Night All My Dreams Came True*, recorded over two days in London's RAK studios, truly encapsulates their going out with a bang. It features re-recordings of well-loved tracks spanning over their 16-year career and five albums, including *Limbo, Panto* and *Two Dancers*.

Wild Beasts thoroughly live up to their name with thundering drums and the animalistic growling of Ben Little's vocals in 'All The King's Men'; when hitting the high notes, Little seems to be almost laughing like a hyena. In an interview with Clash magazine, bassist Tom Fleming describes the album as "us giving the fewest fucks we've ever given." And he's right. They've given themselves full reigns over their musicality. You can literally hear them joking around in the studio at the end of 'He The Colossus' with the lyric, "stick that in your pie hole" (which I think should've ended the album, personally).

I was excited to see my all time bopper 'Hooting and Howling' on the track list. The live recording gives a ghostly quality to Hayden Thorpe's slinky voice, but nonetheless that steady bass prevails as usual. I can see my nine year-old self, bouncing around to the original build up in *Two Dancers*, waiting for that crashing explosion. But, in the RAK recording, it's replaced by a smooth electric guitar. I can't say I wasn't a little disappointed but alas, as they said, they don't give a fuck. You can see over their 16-year career that Wild Beasts have matured massively, as well as becoming both beastlier and wilder.



### Nils Frahm - All Melody

Nils Frahm has finally returned from his unendurable hiatus with a new album, *All Melody*. Having rescinded from the stage in favour of an extended and, no doubt intense, period inside his laboratory, one can imagine him pulling his hair out over the musings which have unfurled in his latest work.

The brief but warming breezes of Shards choir open the album before giving way to the synths, panflutes and bass marimba of 'Sunson' and 'A Place', which swirl and pulse their way out of darkness into the most colourised sparkles of vibration. 'My Friend the Forest' and 'Forever Changeless', however, shift the tone of the album into the delicate vulnerability of the piano – the caressing creaks of wood invite us into the intimacy of Frahm's honest unfoldings. It is here that the added value of Berlin's Funkhaus studios become most apparent; these pieces speak volumes not in any grand gestures of orchestrations, but in the most subtle and endearing uses of space.

All Melody, however, is certainly a slow-mover; the snailing melodies of the trumpet and melding swells of texture on 'Human Range' contort around single points of fixation, whilst fragments of percussion and electronics shoot across the stereo spectrum – akin to the scraping of a hair comb – on 'All Melody' and 'Kaleidoscope'. the album requires unperturbed patience in letting Frahm expand the sounds in his true build-until-it-bursts fashion.

Kieran Blyth

# A Month of Music: February Gigs Guide

#### Dark Arts: HMLTD plus special guests

16/2/18, Belgrave Music Hall, £11 Gloriously untamed and relentlessly savage, HMLTD's performance at Belgrave is simply unmissable. It's hard to describe this individualist artpop collective without doing them justice, so experience the madness with your own eyes at Belgrave.

#### Puma Blue

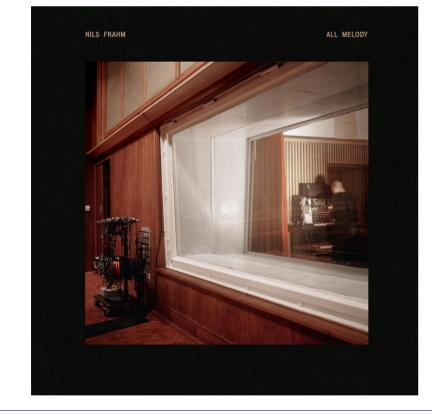
20/2/18, Headrow House, £7.70 East London soloist Puma Blue tranquillises his audiences with his jazz influenced lo-fi guitar hooks and ethereal falsetto.

#### Alvvays

21/2/18, Church, £16.50 Refusing to conform to genre boundaries and oozing refreshing originality, this Toronto four-piece will soundtrack your adolescence.

#### Fizzy Blood

24/2/18, Headrow House, £8.80 Local Leeds Lads Fizzy Blood shed all generic indie-rock clichés with their own embrace of pure retro inspired rock. On the rise and already attracting festival slots, this gig is one to brag about to your friends when Fizzy Blood are selling out venues across the UK.





# In the Middle with Superorganism

Superorganism are a band that overwhelm your senses and make you question everything you thought you knew to be true. Songwriter and producer, Harry, spoke to In the Middle to let us know what we can expect from their self-titled debut album and beyond.

more expansive."

"We're kind of like a DIY budget version of The Velvet Underground. A pound shop Andy Warhol," says Harry, one eighth of pop hive mind, Superorganism. It's a big statement to make, comparing yourself to one of America's most iconic bands, but when you've turned as many heads as Superorganism have with their kaleidoscopic orb of music, it's not hard to envision them taking over the world by bringing you upside-down into their surrealism. And they haven't even released an album vet.

Hailing from all corners of the globe, Superorganism are children of the internet: "some of us found each other through music forums and started chatting after school on MSN, just sharing music and memes which then blossomed into friendships and eventually collaborations". However, their collective wasn't complete until a risky tour promoter and YouTube's algorithm harmoniously aligned to bring them to meet a, now infamous, 17-yearold schoolgirl named Orono: "Some of us were in an old indie-rock band and were playing in Japan because some guy booked us over the internet. We showed up not knowing whether or not it was a real tour or we were being catfished. Coincidentally, Orono was home from school for the summer and had found us through YouTube's recommendations so she came down to the show, introduced herself and we all hit it off. Fast forward to 2016, we had the idea for Something For Your M.I.N.D. and everything from

there just exploded"

Now all living together in what can only be imagined as an anarchic hitmaking factory (otherwise known as a four-bed flat in East London), it's good to know that their creative process hasn't been altered by living on top of each other: "We build our songs and our art by laying bricks on top of the other ones we've already laid down. I might start a song idea in my room and send it to someone else who will lay their ideas on top of it and this just goes on until all eight people have got their paws on

it, including Robert who comes up with the music videos and visuals which is integral to what we do".

Living in the same

space as they create their world it's no wonder these self-proclaimed pop culture junkies are poised and ready to release their self-titled debut album next month: "We're really excited, it's got all these different genres that we explore, all these different sounds, styles and moods to it". But according to Harry this will just be the start of a long passage into the realms of the psychedelic beast that is Superorganism, "It's kind of like a foundation, like when a movie has an opening shot. We're trying to build a world out of this band that's both reflective of the world we live in and an escape from it, so this is the first step on the road for that. We want to make this world more immersive, more expansive, we want to cross various mediums and create this weird long-term art piece that becomes bigger and bigger". It's clear that this band are always looking ahead to their next plan of attack, but as you peruse the tracklist for their debut it's impossible to not be a little bit intrigued by one song in particular, 'The Prawn Song', which was simply, when asked, described as, "a surreal comment on human society through the eyes of a prawn".

However, the potentially more radiofriendly offerings from Superorganism "We want to make this are still a force to world more immersive, be reckoned with. Their first single,

'Something For Your

M.I.N.D.' created worldwide hysteria last year over who the mysterious collective behind it may be, whilst their latest single 'Everybody Wants To Be Famous' has already amassed over two million streams less than a month after being released. But the meaning behind this newest offering isn't necessarily as facetious as it sounds: "The concept of fame and the desire to be validated and be notorious or wellknown for something is so integral to the modern experience, even if that's within your own friendship group or within your family, everyone wants to be known and admired for something. It doesn't mean that everybody wants to be full-on Kardashian, it might just be that you want some validation from the people around you".

Listening to Superorganism, it's hard to believe that they only played their first live show in September of last year, but don't let their perceived inexperience fool you into thinking that their worldwide tour is going to be anything less than an incredible ride when it stops in Leeds in March: "It's an immersive experience, from Robert's visuals to B, Ruby and Seoul who have created this amazing choreography for the live show. It's absolutely fucking mental. If you stand in the centre of the crowd, right in the middle of the stage, you're just going to be overwhelmed with the overall interactive experience of Superorganism and become part of Superorganism". Ultimately, Superorganism are like if 2007 internet culture met a fresher at Beaverworks, you don't quite know what's happening but there's a lot of hypnotic visuals, loud music and impressive shapes being thrown, resulting in a time you don't quite remember but definitely don't regret.

If the internet was a lifeform then Superorganism would be its tangible resemblance, with sprawling limbs from across the globe and unrivalled access to every creative outlet possible. This 8-piece band are creating an immersive world you don't want to miss out on.

# Brotherhood Sound System: Jayda G & Anu



Since their 2012 inception, Brotherhood Sound System has become a staple in the calendar of dance music enthusiasts citywide. For their first event of 2018, Brotherhood brought Jayda G & Anu to Wire.

The anticipation for this showcase was undeniable; with the online scramble for tickets a testament for what was to come and also praise to Brotherhood's proactive approach towards ticket scamming, in outing the suspected perpetrators over their Facebook event.

It was the sheer hedonistic energy of the crowded dancefloor that immediately stood out. Partly due to the stellar Brotherhood residents Tami and George, and also the excitement to witness two DJ's known for their eclectic choice of grooves.

Jayda G was quick to display the selections and style that has garnered her so much attention. Beginning her set with the timeless 'Mr. Groove' by One Way, the crowd were more than eager to embrace this low-tempo funk laden sound that's reasonably unfamiliar to the basement of Wire.

Unfazed by the pretentiousness that can exhibit itself on nights of such expectation, Jayda G confidently switched between tempos and genres; laying down familiar disco classics such Photo: Brotherhood

as Gino Soccio's 'Dancer' and Gwen McCrae's 'Keep The Fire Burning', with the tail end of her set consisting of African inspired cuts such as Professor's 'Imoto'. Of which, all were met by an authentically joyful crowd that has come to characterise her DJ sets.

Jayda's mixing wasn't flawless, yet this is to be expected with a DJ so frivolous in music taste and mixing style. Rather, it seems Jayda G bases her selection on the quality of track and the enjoyment it brings to the dancefloor, instead of its perceived rarity or obscurity.

Anu immediately made her presence

known with Schwefelgelb's 'Bis Zum Nächsten Tag (Phase Fatale Remix)', a brooding piece of German techno that revitalized the 3am dancefloor. Offkilter techno formed the basis of her set, maintained by Neil Landstrumm's 'Sahara', a glitchy throwback to classic bleep techno that captivated the crowd with its unpredictability. And as the night came to its end, B12's 'Hall of Mirrors' echoed through Wire - a soulful techno track that sounds as fresh today as it did in 1992.

Rhys Ellis

# Love Muscle, Encouraging Safer Spaces



Love Muscle is an alternative LGBTQ+ club night that aims to save the community from "sonic evil", by providing high quality nights filled with funk, soul, techno and disco. The self-proclaimed "pumping gay dance party" fills out Wharf Chambers, and creates a huge buzz across Leeds.

Love Muscle and Wharf Chambers have recently had to post on their Facebook page about the behaviour of some partygoers which has resulted in members of the trans community to feel uncomfortable at Love Muscle events. One Facebook user commented that at a recent event he was 'pestered' by someone over his decision to use a cubicle over a toilet urinal, an invasive and problematic scenario, especially for someone who is member of the trans community. The fact that these issues have occurred has been met with sadness and support from the Love Muscle family, as the event rightfully wants to achieve the best atmosphere possible for their parties.

As a result, Love Muscle and Wharf Chambers are attempting to educate and encourage using gender-neutral terms, calling for revellers to respect what the event is aiming to do and the space it is attempting to create. Using the reference point of an Indv100 article entitled 'how cis people can be better allies to the transgender community in 2018', Wharf Chambers and Love Muscle have encouraged the cisgender community to recognise the prevalence of transphobia in today's world. The article includes points by trans activists on the importance of not misgendering, using your voice to support trans people and standing up in the face of transphobic comments and behaviour.

Steps like this are crucial to maintaining Wharf Chambers as a safe space for the diverse groups that frequent the venue. Love Muscle will party on.

#### Amelia Whyman



# Your Electronic Festival Guide: 2018

"It's not surprise that

February weather has us

dreaming of watching the

best possible DJ's in the

sunshine."

It may only be February, but the buzz about summer festivals is slowly building as tickets go on sale and strong line-ups are being released across the board. It's no surprise that February weather has us dreaming of watching the best possible DJ's in the sunshine. But which electronic festivals have the artists and the extras to convince you to part with your money and commit to buying a ticket? We compiled a quick guide to the best looking electronic line-ups this summer, to try and help you navigate your way through the noise.

#### Houghton

This music and arts festival in the Norfolk countryside is growing in popularity at an impressively rapid pace. Set up by tech house DJ Craig Richards, the event aims to present high quality artists, DJ's and musicians alike with 'equality and meritocracy.' Leeds very own Midland and Ben UFO (Hessle Audio) are amongst the returning DJ's, as well as the likes of the ever-popular Roman Flügel. Whether you're looking for some underground disco from Horse Meat Disco, some impeccable techno from Objekt, or the alternative sounds of Mr Scruff, you'll find it at Houghton. The only catch is it recently sold out. So if you were lucky enough to secure a ticket: well done. If not: there's always next vear.

#### Gottwood

At the end of term with dissertations in, exams done and a uni year over, what better way to celebrate than a trip to Wales for an electronic festival with a well-curated line-up. Standout acts included the varied sounds of Hunee (an essential DJ to see live), as well as house and disco from the likes of Move D, who takes on Wire later this month. Other artists include Jackmaster, Avalon Emerson and Palms Trax, making the line-up an electronic music must. Tickets

will set you back around £175 plus a jolly coach trip to Wales. Celebrate the end of the term in style.

#### Farr Festival

Taking place in an uninhabited wood in Hertfordshire, Farr Festival is a music and arts festival with a diverse line-up and a stylish selection of acts. Headliners include the chilled out Maribou State and Tom Misch, but you will also find the likes of Young Marco and DJ Stingray set to take the stage, both of which are, once again, at Wire this weekend. Acts that you would be silly to miss include the upbeat sounds of Canadian dance DJ Jacques Greene, as well as the arguably underrated Or:la. Cadenza would also be a must see, the West London producer who has collaborated with Jorja Smith and Loyle Carner and remixed the likes of Mabel.

#### Lost Village

Set in an abandoned woodland village, Lost Village is an alternative, artsy festival with a stellar line up. Amongst the saunas, hot tubs, and global street food restaurants, sets from The Black Madonna, Giles Peterson and Denis Sulta are guaranteed to impress. Giants Four Tet are also headlining, as well

as Australian Mall Grab, who recently took on Headrow House and at Wire, both of which will be acts you cannot miss. With the likes

of Honey Dijon and Peggy Gou also booked, as well as the promise of the 'lake of tranquillity', you will truly be spoilt for choice. If you're after a festival with theatre, music and great food, Lost Village is for you.

#### The Garden Party

Although the odd one out on this list due to the fact that it's day festival, The Garden Party is a Leeds cult classic, and keeps getting bigger and better every year. This two-part event takes place at Canal Mills under the (hopefully) May sun, and is a sell-out year after year. Part One line-up impresses with the likes of Patrick Topping and Jeremy Underground, as well as supporting Leeds based event DJ's from Limit, Patchwork and Rubik. Part One tickets are already on fourth release, and Part Two line-up is yet to be announced, so negotiate your essays and don't miss out.

#### Soundwave Croatia

If you're feeling planning a holiday and splashing out on some Croatian sun, Soundwave could be for you. Located in the idvllic Tisno. this year will be the tenth and final year of the event, so it's your last chance to get a dose of Dalmatian coast sunshine to the tune of Soundwave's wide-ranging line-up. Artists and DJ's from across reggae, afro, soul, funk and drum and bass make up the event, and Loyle Carner is set to beautifully headline. Highlights will include DJ Marky's lauded drum and bass, Rinse Fm's Josey Rebelle and the liquid sounds of Calibre. Romare will also be arriving in Tisno with a full live band, so if you're fancying seeing an eclectic selection of artists and topping up your tan, Soundwave is for you.

#### Amelia Whyman

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# **LRFS 2017 - A Retrospective**

### Fashion Editor, Ellie Tattam, reflects on last year's 'Samsara' themed fashion show in all it's glory.

for TIME.LESS. "

As we near the latest instalment of the Leeds Rag Fashion Show, it only makes sense to take a look back on the success of the previous year's show, Samsara, to get us all itching to see what 2018 has in store.

Samsara was themed around the idea of Sustainability, choosing to support the two charities: Cruelty Free International Trust, which is an organisation who aid the stopping of animal testing with focus surrounding the cosmetic industry, and Labour Behind the Label, a charity working to motivate company transparency and improve labour conditions within the industry which still remain devastating in some cases. These charities were very appropriately selected and the idea of opting to use a fashion show event to draw attention to such pressing matters in the fashion industry was a well thought out concept. Sponsoring the show was Deliveroo and No Curfew Events, whilst Marks and Spencer also made a significant donation to the selected charities ensuring the success of the RAG event in making a difference to these causes.

The show itself was perfectly executed and will prove difficult to top. The team were driven, hard-working and incredibly motivated, which shone through in the final product.

The show was split into six sections, growing from the roots of the earth through to the eventual Samsara finale, Samsara meaning world and referring to the cyclic changes it encompasses including the idea of rebirth. The first section got down to the earthly roots where everything begins, reflected on the catwalk with environmental looks and the concept of sustainability. There

"We will be gripping the the emphasised by the to see what will be in store professionally. muted tones of the clothes and their

cuts and shapes referring to leaf-like shapes.

Progressing into the next scene, this focused on reflection on the elements, with reference to coal, oil, water and diamonds. The composition of elements and glorious use of body art and jewels was hard to draw your eye from, particularly after the minimal looks of the previous section. The light was composed to reflect and emphasise the shimmer of the outfit constructions and the daring use of mesh and paint drew on some great Free the Nipple vibes.

Back to basics, the third section reintroduced minimal styles, which strived to represent the benefits of the slow fashion industry and demonstrate the lack of necessity for the pace of fast fashion that surrounds us today. The outfits were beautifully composed. presenting the idea that beauty can be easily achieved and patience is a key component in attaining this. Out of all of the pieces, model Lydia Evans definitely topped it all off with her incredible

spiral silhouette monopolising the garments, edge of our seats waiting catwalk, all executed Section four then reverted to a more

vibrant motif in advocating the glory of reworked denim. This scene was by far one of the most enjoyable of them all, the choreography and vibrant attitudes of the models making everyone want to get up and join in. There was a vintage attitude to the collection and the use of popping colours, textures and tones effectively complemented the denim dynamics, not to forget the fishnets!

The final two scenes were equally thrilling. The fifth contained plenty of reworked denim, suggesting an idea of revival. All of the pieces were high end

vintage which demonstrated the idea that vintage can be as trendy as you like it to be and the recycling of garments doesn't mean that it has to lose its appeal, if anything it can enhance it. Everyone was dolled up to the max and looked incredible, particularly the statement lace ball gown which although covered very little, left a mighty impression of elegance and glamour. And of course, the finale. Samsara. It left the show hanging with a dark, twisted outlook as to what the outcome would be if sustainability wasn't something we developed compassion for. An end to make an impact, the garments were striking and featured a heavy constitution of PVC and remarkable make up that sent the show out with an explosion of applause.

All in all, Samsara was a great success and the composition, styling and outcome of the show was amazing. Now we've had a refreshment of what we were blown away with in 2017, we will be gripping the edge of our seats waiting to see what will be in store for TIME.LESS. And I have a feeling we will not be disappointed.

#### Ellie Tattam

# **TIME.LESS: The Show of the Year**

Leeds Rag Fashion Show is commonly known as the hottest event in the fashion conscious student's calendar. With this year's RAG Fashion show fast approaching we decided to find out from the team what's in store with this exclusive interview.

### What is LRFS 2018's theme and what is the reasoning behind it?

This year's theme is called TIME.LESS and explores the infinite story of timefrom birth to war, and peace until death. We wanted this year to really stand out as the 10th anniversary show and this theme is so universal that everyone can relate to it. In a world that is constantly at war, fragmenting and dividing us, we wanted to make the show a celebration of the shared experiences of life.

### Which charities are being supported and why?

Leeds Mind and Dementia UK. They both do incredible work, and we don't feel that mental health charities are supported enough. These two charities address mental health on all fronts, looking after young and old alike. This also links to our theme as we wanted to show that all experiences in life, both good and bad, should be faced head on and not repressed as mental health issues often are.

### Which designers should we watch out for?

We're really excited to be working with John Lewis Leeds' styling team, as well as big brands such as Boohoo Man. But there's also a lot of local designers that have absolutely made the show. We've really strived to use the show to showcase up and coming talent. You'll have to see it to believe it.

### What trends can we expect to see?

Because of the nature of the theme, this show really does encapsulate a lot of trends. We don't want to give too much away, but expect to see high fashion, street wear, festival-worthy gear and beyond.

### What should we expect when attending LRFS18?

Expect more than a fashion show. We want everyone to leave with a renewed sense of hope in humanity, a renewed idea of our shared future and an unrivalled energy to implement change.

#### How can we get involved?

Come and watch the show! Bring your friends, your parents, your lovers, everyone you know. If you can't make it, we've also set up a JustGiving page so you can donate and help us reach our target of £18,000. All profits go direct to Leeds Mind and Dementia UK.

### How much preparation goes into the show?

A lot. The committee have been meeting every week since the end of October, but the Directors and RAG Events team have been working on the show for 10 months now. We hope you'll be able to see our hard work and determination reflected in the show.

### How much are tickets/ when are they on sale?

Tickets are on sale now! They're £12 for standard, £18 for premium and £32 for VIP. You can get them through DICE, a ticketing app, or we're selling paper tickets every Monday, Wednesday and Friday lunchtime in the Union.

### How many tickets are you expecting to sell?

We're going to sell out. It's a show not to be missed.

#### The after party...

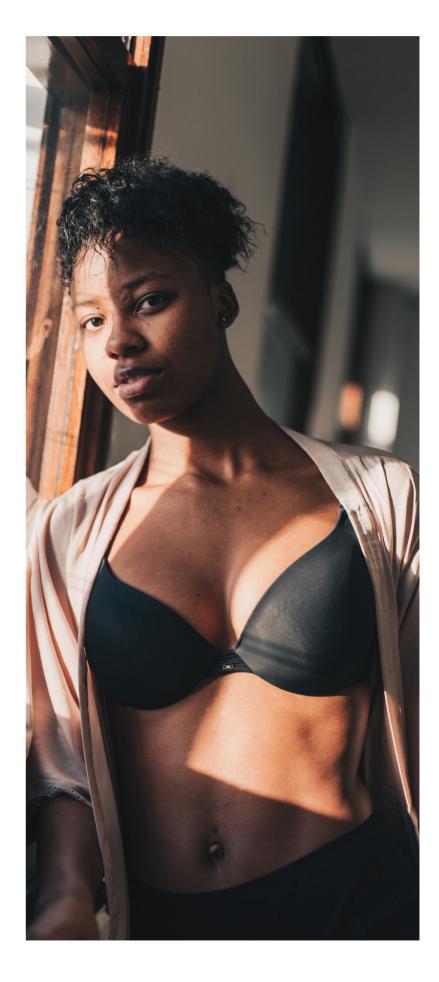
### What can we expect from the after party?

We've teamed up with Youth Club Sounds to host the biggest after party yet at an amazing venue called Duke Studios in the city centre. Expect to see unique visuals, special appearances and to hear some truly progressive music to celebrate the show.

### How can we get on that guest list?

If you've got a VIP ticket to the show, you're already on it. If not, grab a ticket on Dice. Youth Club Sounds alone are known to pack out venues so act quickly – early bird has sold out already. See you at the front.

Lydia Varney



# **Sharp Styles For The Summer**

With the month of January finally over, the change of seasons is fast approaching. With the change of season in mind, Style editors Stephanie Waring and Sara AlHumiri run us through their best outfits for the summer.

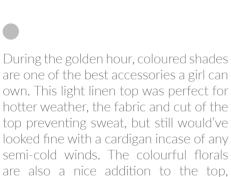




Words and photographs by Sara AlHumiri & **Stepanie Waring** 







are one of the best accessories a girl can own. This light linen top was perfect for hotter weather, the fabric and cut of the top preventing sweat, but still would've looked fine with a cardigan incase of any semi-cold winds. The colourful florals are also a nice addition to the top, giving it a bolder and brighter look. The sunnies from this photo are definitely a favorite of mine and can also be sported in Leeds on brighter mornings.



As a general rule, a black-on-black outfit is not always the best thing to wear during warm weather. But for comfort reasons, it can work. This outfit is a more casual summer ensemble that consists of sweats and a crop top, for those 'I don't have anything to wear' days. The Topshop sweats are an old time favourite; the black-red-white mixture being easy to style and wear day to day. The pearl studded sandles complete the summery look.

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Last but not least, another off-theshoulder look with sandals is a classic outfit choice in hotter weather. This summer outfit is a favourite of mine as the linen white blouse with artwork on the front (H&M) gives the outfit some sophistication. The flowy black harem pants (Topshop) also give the outfit comfort and would be well suited to wear to lectures or on a day to day basis. The slippers of this summer outfit lean more towards the summer-side and can be seen as a statement piece with the blue fur. This pop of colour is also a nice touch to the rest of the monochrome outfit.



Inspired by Missguided's new tabaddition 'jeans & a nice top', this summer outfit can be worn both in sunnier climates and in Leeds (with a puffer). The flesh-coloured off the shoulder Missguided bodysuit can be found online and is perfect if you want to wear a thin long-sleeve top in hotter climates without the hassle. Jeans are also a staple anywhere in whatever weather, and always pair well with bodysuits.

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This summer outfit is another version of the third outfit, with a similar jeans/ bodysuit combo. Either outfit can be worn in the summer or winter and can be easily dressed up or down. The off-theshoulder element of both bodysuits and nude colours give the outfit its spring/ summer-vibes, and the staple black jeans would be great to wear in Leeds to keep you warm. As for the nude Adidas NMD's, they're additionally both winter & summer-friendly; but would obviously have to be kept clean in rainy conditions.











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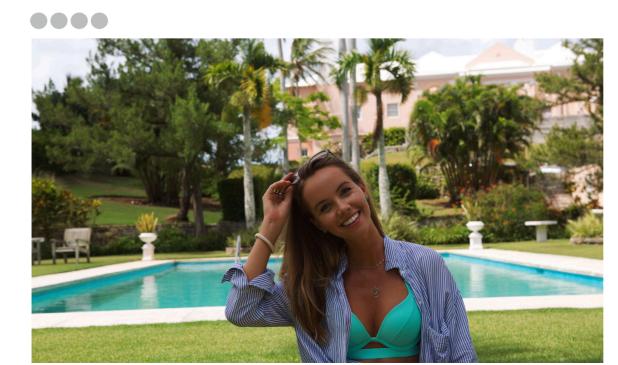
Here I'm wearing a dress from Accessorize and sunglasses from Ray Ban; usually I wear this dress as beach or pool cover up as its slightly see through, but if worn with a skin colored slip underneath, the dress also doubles up as a good option for a casual summer dinner by the beach. Ray bans are my favorite sunglasses brand and I usually go for the aviator style. The tanted blue of the glasses also helps coordinate the outfit. To make any outfit more exciting, colored sunglasses are definitely the way to go and with so many different styles and ranges on the market, what's not to love?



I love to wear nautical styled outfits and the thing stripe print on this Zara dress is a perfect example. Caps are also essential in my wardrobe when the sun is out; not only do they help block the sun but are also a simple yet effective accessory. The dress comes with a detachable belt so can be made more sophisticated or casual, depending on the occassion: from the beach to work or to dinner, it's so versatile and comfortable. The slits in the front of the dress add interest to the dress and also help keep cool in the hotter weather.

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This paisley maxi dress is actually from a second hand charity shop in Bermuda that my mum spotted. I love the combination of the flowy romantic material with the rose pink paisley pattern. Maxi dresses are also a useful addition to the wardrobe because they can be worn out during the day with flip flops or sandals, but also double up as a dinner outfit, paired with a nice pair of heels.

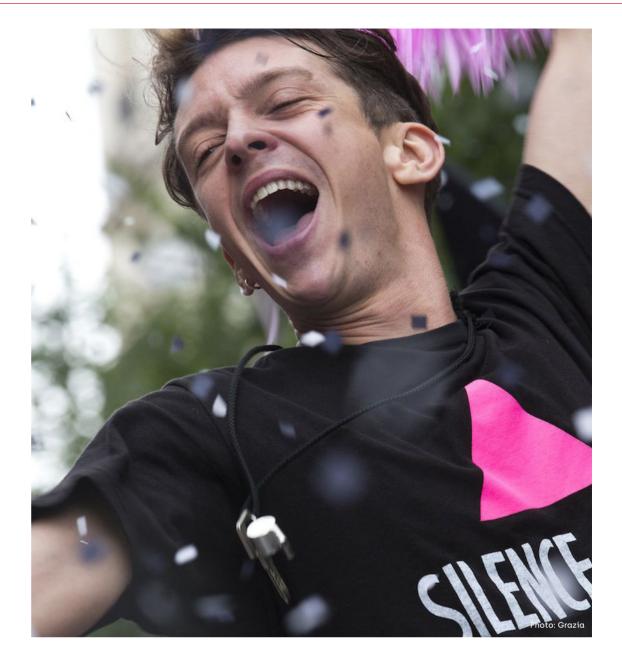


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Although this isn't a full outfit, I decided to include this photo in our summer edit because who doesn't love a good bikini? This bikini is from Victoria's Secret and the button down cover up I'm wearing is from H&M. Stripes definitely reoccur throughout my summer wardrobe and this button down cover-up is both comfy and chic. I like to wear it tied at the waist in a knot if I'm out and about or loose and unbuttoned when at the beach or pool.

# The State of LGBTQ+ Cinema

The past decade has seen huge victories for LGBTQ+ representation on-screen, but how much progress has really been made?



A whole new wave of independent cinema seems to have taken an interest in tackling more complex and diverse characters. An article from The Independent reported that 2017 has been a massively important year for the LGBTQ+ community and its representation on the big screen. Calling it a game-changer, this past year has seen an increase in LGBTQ+ characters portrayed on screen. Indie festivals are packed with auteur directors trying to present more diverse characters dealing with inside struggles and coming to terms with their sexuality. From Lance Black's Milk (2008), to the Allen Ginsberg's biopic, to French director Campillo's last project, 120 battements par minute



(2017), contemporary cinema has found new daring filmmakers willing to prove their commitment to the cause and to give voice to the long-overlooked and underrepresented LGBTQ+ community. One of the latest is the fresh Oscar nominee *Call Me By Your Name* by Italian director Luca Guadagnino. The movie sparked quite the controversy for its raw images and sex scenes—such as the infamous peach scene. The love between teenage boy Elio (Timothée Chalamet) and graduate student Oliver (Armie Hammer) has been the talk of almost every film festival and cinemagoers for the past year, confirming both the need and audience demand for more compelling and diverse characters.

However, the question of fair representation within the LGBTQ+ community itself has also been raised. Up until today we have witnessed limited representation of mostly gay white male characters. But what about all the other groups that are part of the LGBTQ+ community—like African American lesbians, transgender people, or bisexuals?

Despite few successful attempts to feature a lesbian character as lead—such as *Blue is the Warmest Colour*, winner of the Palm d'Or at Cannes in 2013—and the most recent *Carol* by Todd Haynes, parts of the LGBTQ+ community have not had the same public exposure except in small, critically-acclaimed indie movies, where the chance of success often falls exclusively to word of mouth.

A clear example of this is Dee Rees' astonishing debut movie *Pariah*. The extremely talented writer and director, who premiered her movie at Sundance



in 2011, presents a fresh look into the life of a young African American girl coming to terms with her sexuality. Praised by critics and filmmakers alike, Rees's movie is one of the few films, including last year's Oscar winner Moonlight, to have challenged the stigma around the African American LGBTQ+ community and to have brought an authentic story to life on the big screen. This has certainly paved the way to explore new narratives within the LGBTQ+ community. Diversity is slowly being embraced, but there is still a lot that needs to be done, if we want to justly represent every member of our society. Transgender characters are still underrepresented, for example, and when movies do feature them, the plot usually revolves around their journey rather than asserting them simply as individuals. The Danish Girl is an example of this; the touching and brave story of artist Lili Elbe and her transition to a female body is ground-breaking, yet it

is still anchored in the 50s, highlighting the difficulty in finding a well-done, diverse character who reflects our time. Despite this, it seems that the small screen is teaching some well-deserved lessons to its bigger brother in terms of portraying diversity on screen. TV series on different networks, from Netflix to Shonda Rhimes' very own productions, have made big leaps and contribute massively to the LGBTQ+ community. It's more common to find casual representation on the small screen than on the big screen.

If the road to heaven is paved with good intentions, we are in a good position. The discussion has been sparked, and new narratives involving LGBTQ+ characters have been pitched and suggested to be more accurately explored in the past few years. However, a great deal must still be done if we want to portray the multifaceted spectrum of the LGBTQ+ community.

#### Camilla Marotta

# King and Collector: Resplendent Traitor

### Arts Editor, Stephanie Bennett, reviews the exhibition at the Royal Academy, London.

At the Royal Academy, London, there is currently an exhibit showcasing the art collection of King Charles I. For the first time in over four centuries, his assortment of masterpieces are on display for the public. Executed in 1649, with one well-positioned axe blow, the fervent accumulation of Charles' paintings were either commissioned. bought or received by famous names such as Rembrandt, Raphael, Leonardo and Titian. Dispersed all over Europe to the grasping fingers of European ambassadors, they have now been reunited in Charles I: King and Collector. The display will be in London until April 15th, but it is perhaps particularly striking that the exhibit will remain stationary in London alone amongst the other well-funded and highly recognised art scene of theatres and galleries.

Understandably, to gather so many extraordinary paintings from across the world, it would be arduous and potentially hazardous to risk the transport around the country. However, it seems ludicrously characteristic of the art world to fuel so much money and time into the exhibit to only showcase it in the capital; to not even attempt to provide such historical and artistic works to the rest of the country, clearly demonstrates the unfair North/South divide. If the exhibit is as stunning and wondrous as critics and admirers have suggested, and if as much money as can be assumed has been thrown at the exhibit, then why hasn't there been more initiative to fund the visitation of a wider audience?

Surely the advent of technology has had one of the largest influences on art. The widespread availability and easy access to images from the collection are significant in its impressive capacity to capture the brilliance and majesty of the paintings. If London is so keen to retain the brilliance and status that such a collection is bound to reap, is its rank undermined and denigrated by the availability of some of its most prestigious pieces? Or does the wider convenience for all of those that cannot visit London enrichen the wealth that the collection has? For those who cannot afford a trip down to London, the technological reach the internet

"If the exhibit is as stunning and wondrous as critics and admirers have suggested, and if as much money as can be assumed has been thrown at the exhibit, then why hasn't there been more initiative to fund the visitation of a wider audience?" allows art to make still enables a shared appreciation and admiration from afar.

Critics and admirers have rejoiced the exhibition's opening since January, one noting "This is a landmark exhibition. You will not see the likes again. Don't miss your chance." Surely, this is somewhat



hypocritical when such a chance is a rare occurrence for most of the population. Such a 'landmark exhibition' that will not be seen again is perhaps an oxymoron of the highest proportion. If it's such a jewel of English heritage then surely more should be done to maximise the audience, not just in number but in a variety of class and background. "Don't miss your chance" – that might be, but for how many thousands that visit the collection, many hundreds more will not. Therefore, surely more should be done to not only make this particular collection accessible but all of the ongoing projects and galleries that deserve to be visited and admired.

On a more positive note, the art world should rejoice in the accumulation of art that hasn't been seen together since Charles' execution in 1649. Without the Internet however, there would be no way for the wider world to view and admire such a prestigious and priceless collection. What is the purpose of art if not to be venerated? Surely to restrict such astronomical beauty is a crime. Charles I was convicted of high treason by Cromwell and such limitations placed upon art will create not only an antipathy akin to this but also act as a similarly treasonous assault.

Stephanie Bennett



# 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri' – The Film That Doesn't Commit

### Arts writer, Ananya Sriram, discusses the racial problems in 'Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri'

It seems that issues of race and its portraval in film have become an integral part of the discussion surrounding the Oscars every year. Increasing focus is given not only to diversity in films, exemplified by campaigns such as #OscarsSoWhite, but also to the way in which the films treat and dissect race. Nowhere is this more prevalent than in Martin McDonagh's Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri, which is perhaps one of the most controversial and polarising contenders for Best Picture so far. Following the story of grieving mother Mildred Haynes (Frances McDormand) as she strives to bring her daughter's rapist and murderer to justice, Three Billboards has received widespread criticism for its treatment of Sam Rockwell's character, Jason Dixon, a racist and belligerent cop who undergoes a moral transformation and is seemingly redeemed for his previous racial violence

Critics have come at the film from all angles, some lambasting it for its assumption that a character who systematically abuses his power as a cop to enact racial violence can simply be 'redeemed' through his commitment to solving Mildred's case. Others have argued that the film does not actually redeem Dixon or condone his actions in any way, but instead explores a softer, more empathetic side to him, and acts as a call for society to let go of its anger. It cannot be denied that the film is somewhat lazy and disjointed in its handling of race. Dixon's racism is very much treated as a subplot, never engaged with head-on; we only learn about his alleged torturing of a black person in custody through offhand comments, never seeing the victim onscreen. Similarly, the black characters in this film are very much relegated to the background, only used as props with which to manipulate the white

leads. This is the case with Denise, a black friend and co-worker of Mildred's who is unfairly arrested by the police department in an attempt to get Mildred to take down the billboards. The disposability with which black characters are treated in this film is a testament to its misdirected efforts to preach tolerance. This is most evident in the fact that Dixon's 'redemption' is not in any way an atonement for his racism, but simply a softening of his character, involving a renewed attempt to solve the case of Mildred's daughter's murder. This also begs the question of whether Dixon is actually redeemed in the first place, or if he just learns to let go of his anger and aggression. But at the end of the day, Dixon remains a racist cop, and the fact that the narrative never directly challenges this racism is one of its greatest faults.

The problem with *Three Billboards* is that it is a film which tries to do too much.

Taking on such a broad range of themes results in a half-hearted, directionless attempt to resolve the story, which leaves viewers far from satisfied. In the age of 'Black Lives Matter' the last thing we need is a Best Picture winner which subscribes to the woolly, non-committal idea that racism is a moral fault which can be absolved, and not an institutional system of oppression. It is 2018, and we can do better.

Ananya Siriam

### Going Postal for The Post Arts Editor Steph Bennett reviews recent biopic 'The Post'

A recently-released film detailing the huge and enduring coverup of The Vietnam War, *The Post* was a stunning arrangement that boasts not only a star-studded cast, but the incredible true story that journalists still struggle with today: freedom of the press. Meryl Streep was simply stunning in her portrayal of Katherine Graham, the first female publisher of American newspaper, The Washington Post. Set in the early seventies, it details not only the biography of the conspiracy, but also the blatant sexism that underpinned the workplace that Graham had to face.

When The Times faces court action after printing secret governmental documents about the impossibility of winning the war despite the extreme surplus of men and money sent over, The Washington Post faces the decision of whether to continue publishing, which promises to jeopardise the paper. It was astounding to watch, from the private moments of Graham and Bradlee's lives to their devotion to making the paper a success, the film stood out on all fronts. Tom Hanks starred alongside Streep, and his portrayal of determined editor Ben



Bradlee was impressive. Together, their partnership both as actors and characters was remarkable; and their commitment to the truth and their readers, heartwarming in its determination.

There has, however, been some criticism surrounding this emphasis on sexism, along with condemnation of Streep's passive characterisation of Graham because of its juxtaposition with Streep's talent. But it seems only natural that, as a biography, and to accentuate the risk of publishing such scandalous documents because of all Graham had to lose, that Streep's character would be more submissive than some may have expected.

While Streep's retaliation against those who doubted her because of her sex was satisfying, it was, admittedly, a little succinct. Yet, it must be remembered that while the paper stays true to the truth, the script remains true to the period.

Perhaps the most striking moment was the stress on writing for the governed and not the governing, on publishing the truth despite the risk because it is right to do so. This is a philosophy that we can all adopt at *The Gryphon* in our ceaseless task of protecting the best interests of the student body.

## **Heartless Heartthrobs**

Arts Editor, Rose Crees, discusses whether Zac Efron portraying Ted Bundy is problematic



2017 was a year of unprecedented bizarreness. Its twelve months included events such as: Kendall Jenner attempting to initiate world peace through the sheer power of Pepsi, the Babadook's much celebrated coming out (thank you Netflix) and whatever 'covfefe' is, there was hope that 2018 would become a year of relative normality. Yet when January came around so too did the news that Zac Efron has been cast to play Ted Bundy in *Wicked, Shockingly Evil and Vile*, a biopic about the serial killer's life, once again seeing the expected completely and utterly subverted in mass media.

The role requires Efron to embody the serial killer, kidnapper, rapist, burglar and necrophile whose victims were countless young women and girls. Operating mainly in the 1970s, Bundy confessed to 30 murders across seven states, yet it is widely assumed that his victim count was much higher. While a far cry from the actor's usual roles playing facets of Zac Efron as Troy Bolton (High School Musical), Mike O'Donnell (17 Again) and Phillip Carlyle (The Greatest Showman), Efron's striking image and charisma may prove handy for the role. Bundy was known for luring his victims with his charm, looks and fake plaster casts of fictional injuries for which he would request their help but it is still difficult to imagine the Disney Channel protégée who grew up alongside many of his viewers sinking to the psychopathic yet magnetic level of Bundy.

A similar casting choice was made in 2017 when younger Disney Channel star Ross Lynch was cast as Jeffrey Dahmer, the 'Milwaukee Cannibal' known for the serial murders, rape, dismemberment, necrophilia and cannibalism of 17 men and boys from the late 1970s to early 1990s, in *My Friend Dahmer* (2017). Both Efron and Lynch share a handsome allure and the adoration of a fan base with whom they have grown bestowing them both with a constant limelight which may actually be the point to casting them. Stephen Michaud, one of Bundy's biographers, described the killer's methods as being able to '[lure] females the way a lifeless silk flower can dupe a honey bee' so it seems thematically effective to emulate this effect on viewers by casting Efron and other attractive actors. But the true question about this casting choice is: what are the problems that may arise as a result?

It would be short-sighted to suggest that because both Efron and Lynch have young and potentially impressionable fan-bases that their casting would have a negative effect because younger viewers would romanticise the actions of the serial killers portrayed by the heartthrobs. The idea that young, predominantly female, viewers are unable to distinguish right and wrong simply because an attractive actor is performing them is both problematic and insulting. The issue resides around the aesthetic of violence produced by these films.

#### "The role requires Efron to embody the serial killer, kidnapper, rapist, burglar and necrophile."

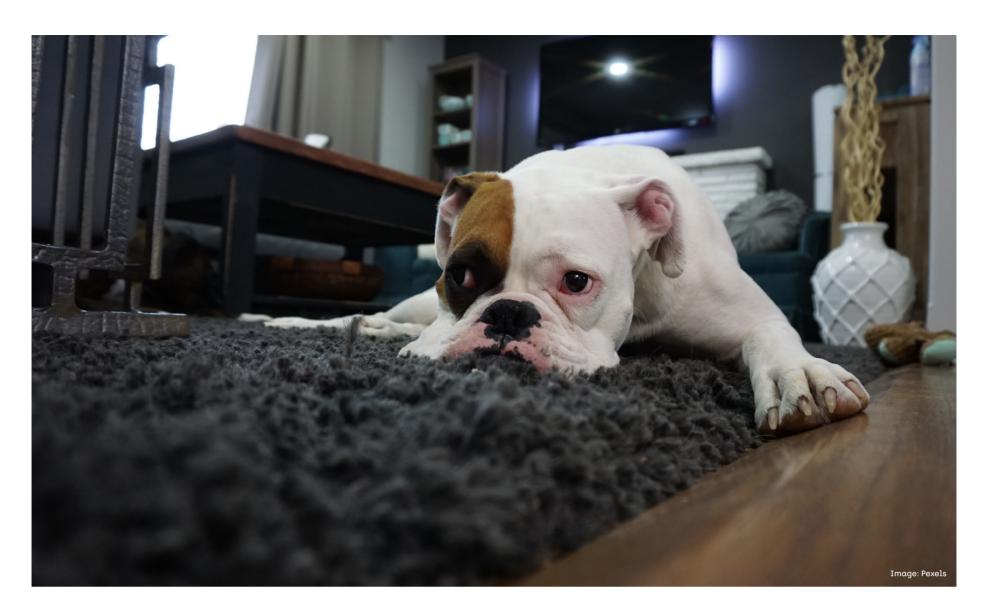
Wicked, Shockingly Evil and Vile is written from the perspective of Bundy's long-term girlfriend Elizabeth Kloepfer who was unaware of his crimes, which automatically shifts the gaze from one of heinous psychopathy to one of deceived adoration. The culture of violence entwined with its opposite, love and comfort, creates a juxtaposing dynamic exacerbated by the use of actors who symbolise things from childhood nostalgia to overt sexuality. Any violent act is warped by its association with these symbols that does not necessarily call right and wrong into question but distorts the perception of violence as something which isn't necessarily completely abhorrent.

Such twisted perceptions towards criminal acts have been visible recently in the mass media as the public discuss the discrepancy between Mark Salling's characters and his actions after his suicide this week. In 2017 Salling pleaded guilty to the possession of 50,000 images of child pornography, yet many Twitter users paid tribute to his Glee character, Noah 'Puck' Puckerman, who appeared as a high school heartthrob and bad-boy-turned-good by the power of singing. The aesthetic of Salling and his previous characters obstructed the reality that he was a child sex offender and a predator of the most vulnerable in society.

Yet this concept is not new – Quentin Tarantino is renowned for his aestheticisation of violence so it is no surprise that he is in the process of directing a Charles Manson biopic. The act of perverting violence into something recognisably beautiful assimilates violence with an art form and creates a culture of pleasure and recreation around acts such as serial killing. By enrolling mass viewers into a culture of violence by entangling it with the beautiful it can be suggested that a fear factor is substituted for one of awe, desire and apathy towards the acts performed.

Perhaps this is the point? By aestheticizing the crimes of Bundy, Dahmer and Manson through casting and direction the films produced become a testament to the capacities of the killers themselves. By normalising and, at times, romanticising the violence viewers could be seen to become members of the cults of personality surrounding the films' subjects. Yet the films themselves are not warnings of the impressionability to viewers which both undermines the intellect of the viewer and pedestalises the power of aestheticized violence which simply exhibit, with ease, the strange and delicate line that separates violence and its opposites.

**Rose Crees** 



# The Importance of Being Idle – In Defence of 'Laziness'

Laziness, not unlike patience, is a virtue. Unfortunately, it is a virtue few can afford to possess as they progress through their time at university. The guilt that comes with the thought of not working hard enough, getting out of bed too late, or missing too many lectures is enough to stress even the most placid of people. Despite its bad press, it is important to realise that 'laziness' is somewhat essential to maintain a healthy way of life at university.

Browsing the catalogues of all your modules at the start of the semester and seeing how many hours of work are required for each module is a sure way to reduce you to a whimpering mound of stress. As you total up the hours of private study that are expected for each module, the revision, the countless hours of reading, the hours of research, you're suddenly hauled out of the comfort of your house and thrust into the middle of an ocean of stress with no sight of land. Planning your laziness, as odd as it may seem, is a helpful way to stay afloat in the seemingly never-ending ocean. Setting aside some time to plan out your semester is a sure way to ensure that vour stress levels are somewhat reduced when it comes down to it. Setting out a timetable for assignment deadlines will ensure that you know when you can be lazy and neglect your work, and that you don't get an unexpected email telling you that there's an assignment due next week that you hadn't even heard of; this example hits a bit too close to home for a certain writer who shall remain nameless.

The stigma surrounding laziness at university is damaging, as it is a misleading term that gives the wrong impression. Taking a well-deserved break, whatever form said break may take, can be misconstrued, with people taking it to mean that you're not working as hard as you should be. Starting an essay a bit later than would be advised, missing a lecture or two during a rather hectic week, or even just taking the day off to recuperate are all forms of 'laziness' that are in fact beneficial. Anything that is not too detrimental in the long run and that helps you get through the week is not something that should leave you guiltridden.

Taking personal days to recuperate can be the most beneficial form of 'laziness'. The difficulty to get out of bed and face the day, let alone leave the house or get work done, can be monumental. The pressures of university can sometimes seem like far too much to handle, and it is far too easy to let that affect you. Data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency, released 9th March 2017, revealed that the number of students under 21 dropping out of university rose to 6.2% in the 2014/15 academic year. The agency also revealed that 1180 students who experienced mental health problems left university in 2014/15, a 210% rise since 2009. This isn't to say that taking a day off will miraculously improve anyone's mental wellbeing, but it is important to take personal days to gather yourself and ensure that it doesn't get too much. When it comes down to it, that's more important than any lecture or essay.

Of course, this isn't to say that laziness for the sake of laziness is something that should be looked down on. Waking up and deciding that you're just not going to go in today is an elating experience, deciding that you're better off not going in and would rather spend the rest of the day doing as you please. It is advised that you don't take liberties with these day-off-forthe-sake-of-it days, however, as it may lead to coming to exam season and coming to the sudden realisation that you've enjoyed the tranquil life a bit too much.

# Nuzzle into Netflix this Valentines

### Valentines Day has arrived and you're without a date? Stick Netflix on.

How are you going to get through that annual slog of a day, the one consisting of vomit-inducing Facebook posts, happiness and love whilst you're alone on your sofa? Well it costs £5.99 a month and it's called Netflix, get your binge on today... we'll allow it.

What better way to throw relationships in the bin at uni than by watching *Fresh Meat*? At first you might think that it's counterintuitive. However for these Manchester students it's all basically love lost. Giving you the opportunity to feel better about yourself in the knowledge that being single might just be better, as it ends badly pretty much all the time for them, those brief moments of happiness are ripped out from underneath them. Plus it's just a brilliant show that perfectly encapsulates the monotony of student life.

Keeping on this theme of laughing in the face of the word 'relationship' comes the recommendation to watch *Peep Show*. Do you really want to date someone who you



lie to your family about during Christmas Dinner? Or someone you grow a goatee for that you hate? No... you don't. The major benefit to *Peep Show* having so many episodes that you can just pick and choose the highlights, inevitably those where relationships go poorly. So most of them. I personally recommend the Christmas episode for the infamous Jez and the Turkey incident.

You might just want to be so fully engrossed in something or questioning

your very existence and the fact that humanity is at its peak on Valentines so you watch *Black Mirror*. Pretty much everyone has seen it, but if you're missing any of the episodes I can't recommend them more. As when it's done you won't sit there alone being upset because you don't have a partner, it'll be because there will be a dreading fear that any piece of tech in your room could kill you at any moment.

I suppose in the end, those on dates,

couples or just people who aren't really entirely sure where they are at with a person need things to watch together too, to break the ice and 'chill'. Well honestly you guys can just binge watch *Friends, Love Actually* and *Gavin and Stacey*, whilst the rest of us spend the day with the person we truly love... ourselves.

Will Nelson

# Four Valentines Feasting Spots

The day of love is nearly upon us and whether you love it or hate it, here are seven of Leeds' coolest restaurants and bars to bring your other half or just hang out with friends on that special occasion.

#### Water Lane Boathouse, Canal Wharf, Water Lane, LS11 5PS

Brought to you by the creators of Belgrave Music Hall and Headrow House, Waterlane Boathouse only opened its doors in May last year. Serving up sourdough pizza in a hand-crafted pizza oven imported from Naples, this waterfront bar is the perfect place to start your chilled evening. Originally an 1800s shipping warehouse, this Scandi-inspired venue boasts a menu of the finest pizzas, burgers, sandwiches and ales that Leeds has to offer.

#### **Issho,** Victoria Gate, LS2 7AU

Amongst all the glamour of Victoria Gate, Issho ('together' in Japanese) will have you fighting over the last piece of sushi. With a specially created Valentine's menu and an independent vegan offering, there are dishes to suit every taste. And with a terrace overlooking the city centre, it can be the perfect setting to have a cocktail with friends

#### Redondo Beach,

Headrow House, The Headrow, LS1 6PU

For an aperitif to whet your appetite head to the top floor of Headrow House and find Redondo Beach. This tropicalstyle cocktail bar with an expansive roof terrace is an ideal location to soak up the chilled atmosphere and get your night started, and with every second Gin & Tonic at £1 it would be rude to miss out.

#### Distrikt,

7 Duncan Street, LS1 6DQ

Tucked away, this underground and intimate bar in Leeds city centre serving craft beers, cocktails, and an extensive wine list, Distrikt has it all. This venue has a history of playing host to world famous DJs and some of Leeds' best club nights. Don't be fooled, this hidden gem has the best seasonal tapas menu you can find in town, I'd recommend the roasted butternut squash arancini. Created by award-winning chefs, you can find a bargain with half-price tapas on Wednesdays, a delectable menu to suit any student's budget.

# Food for Thought

Lifestyle and Culture writer, Emma Prentice, shines a light on some of the foods we should be trying to eat to boost healthy living and power our brains for revision.







Now that semester two is well and truly underway, you may find that your work is starting to pile on and that suddenly your to-do list is becoming overwhelmingly long.

Something which is particularly hard at this time is keeping focused. You may find yourself scrolling so far down in Kim Kardashian's Instagram that you're looking at pictures pre-Kanye, or taking a BuzzFeed quiz that claims to inform you on how you're going to die based on your Taylor Swift song preferences. Either way, when your concentration starts to lapse, you need a solution.

Every student knows that studying can have a big impact on eating habits. At the end of a long day in the library when all you want is pizza, should you really deprive yourself? You may be the kind of student who eats a mountain of pasta every day, sneaks an extra Digestive, or maybe even forgets to eat. So, we can acknowledge that studying clearly has an effect on what we eat, but what if what we eat has an effect on our studying?

Many experts claim that vitamin supplements are the answer, but a student budget doesn't make this the most appealing idea. The good thing? There is another way. Various research projects claim to have found certain foods that are supposed to enhance concentration and brain function.

So, what are these miracle foods?

Emma Prentice

"Every student knows that studying can have a big impact on eating habits. At the end of a long day in the library when all you want is pizza, should you really deprive yourself?"

I'm sure you're jumping up and down at this suggestion. When mum said to eat your greens, she wasn't kidding. Broccoli can improve your memory, with its high levels of vitamin K and choline.

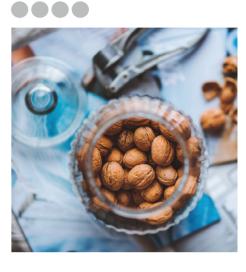
If you're not a huge fan of broccoli on its own, there are countless recipes which incorporate this nutritious vegetable so give one a go!

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Naturally, fruit is a healthy option. However, it appears that blueberries in particular have some hidden powers when it comes to brain function. Not only do they aid cognitive function and improve memory, but a study carried out in California claims that they also help reduce risks of dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

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Never fear, not all brain food has to be boring! Dark chocolate is one of the best sources of antioxidants you can find. And the best bit? Dark chocolate is known to increase blood flow to the brain, which stimulates brain function. The only thing to be wary of: dark chocolate contains stimulant substances like caffeine and theobromine, so improved brain function may only be short-term.





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There has been a lot of research on the health benefits of nuts, with results finding that eating nuts can help reduce issues such as heart disease and diabetes. Moreoer, research has revealed that eating nuts can improve serotonin levels, the chemical which makes you happy. And a happy student = happy studying!

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Fish is rich in omega-3 fatty acids and vitamins. In particular, oily fish is stated to give the most health benefits, such as lowering the risk of dementia and cardiovascular diseases. So, when you're rushing to meet an assignment deadline, why not whip up a salmon dish? Your brain will be swimming in good ideas in no time!

# Wake Up Feeling Fresh

We all hate getting out of bed in the morning. Take a look at these top tips to getting out of bed with ease feeling fresh.



As we slowly inch into second semester, those 9am starts aren't getting any easier. As the days go past, being able to get out of bed in the morning with ease is something I've yet to properly achieve.

It's no secret that waking up feeling fresh begins the night before. So let's start with the obvious. Diet, exercise and hydration are vital to being able to have a good night's sleep and being able get up more easily.

Secondly, try to muster every grain of self-control within you, and put the phone down before bed. An hour pre-bedtime technology-free is ideal, but every little helps. Poring over your phone screen at 2am wondering why you can't sleep, you're probably staring straight at the problem.

Whilst a good night's sleep is undoubtedly made easier by moving away from technology, when technology offers us a helping hand, we might as well take it. The free app 'Sleep Cycle' tracks your sleeping pattern, using the iPhone's microphone or accelerometer accordingly to measure your breathing. It will set off your alarm within a pre-set 30 minute period, waking you at the point most likely to leave you feeling like you've had a solid 8 hours.

Sometimes, however, you might simply have to resort to brute force. Put your alarm far enough away that you can't reach it from the comfort of your warm duvet cocoon, but close enough to ensure the sound gets you up and out of bed. And absolutely, categorically, no snooze buttons.

Once your eyes are fully open, and staying open, music. Listen to your favourite chilled album to ease you gently into the day, or if you're too groggy to DJ, Spotify's 'Wake Up Happy' playlist might just do the trick. You'll be dancing your way out of the shower before you know it.

Also, make a quick to-do list before you go to bed so you're not dreading the morning. You'll be able to get your bearings more quickly and know exactly what you're aiming to achieve that day. And if you fancy it, a spot of pre-bedtime tidying is never a bad thing. After all, a tidy room is a tidy mind, and a healthy mind is a healthy body. There's nothing worse than waking up and having to sift through a sea of clothes to find that last clean sock.

Consistency is also key. Arguably a near impossible task with a hectic student lifestyle, this is something we can make a long-term goal. Your body will thank you if you can nail that routine, rather than throwing it left, right and centre and having your mornings become afternoons.

Having said all this, the best tip for getting out of bed in the morning feeling good is to have something to get out of bed for. Establish your motive. Whether it's to see your friend later, conquer the world, or even just to wear that new t-shirt you bought, get up with a purpose, and start as you mean to go on.

## Bundobust: Better than Ever

Lifestyle and Culture Editor, Bella Davis, headed down to Bundobust to take a look at the new menu and see what all the fuss is about.



Mill Street in Leeds City Centre is home to an unassuming restaurant that is sure to blow your mind, boasting intense flavours, reasonable pricing, craft beer and sustainable dishes. For veggies, vegans and meat eaters alike, Bundobust offers some of the best indian street food Leeds has to offer. The unique thing about Bundobust is the small dish sizes that encourage a tapas-style feast perfect for sharing and trying as much on the menu as possible.

If great beer and a casual atmosphere weren't enough then the delicious food served in guilt-free biodegradable containers is bound to make the experience even better. To top it off the straws and cutlery are all made from plant starch making for a sustainable and authentic street food vibe.

With an abundance of communal seating, unisex toilets and enthusiastic staff, who are very knowledgeable about their dishes, it is easy to see why Bundobust is a friendly and popular restaurant. This was my first visit to Bundobust and most definitely will not be my last! It seems Bundobust has everything down to a tee, with a tried and tested menu that draws in a constant flow of customers.

Here is my verdict on some of the new dishes:

*Dhal and Rice*: I have always been a fan of dhal and rice and this aromatic and perfectly spiced concoction is the perfect sharing pot or can be enjoyed by oneself. Also available on the lunch deals menu.

Chole Sag: A delicious chickpea and spinach curry served with puree.

*Raghda Pethis*: An interesting fusion of India-meets-the-North-of-England with mushy peas and potato cake, topped with turmeric noodles, tomato and onion tamarind chutney.

*Bhel Puri*: A 'must try' on the menu is this street food classic commonly found in India. I'm not usually a fan of cold dishes at dinner but this was a welcome surprise. The crunchy samosa pastry and puffed rice compliments the peas, red onion and tomato tossed in tamarind chutney.

*Masala Dosa:* This was amazing. I would highly recommend these thin rice pancakes filled with potato and cauliflower to dip in the lentil, aubergine and bottle gourd soup.

Although not new on the menu, the Paneer and Mushroom Tikka and Okra fries deserve honourable mentions as two of the favourite dishes on the menu. Bundobust is a great option for authentic Indian street food where you really won't miss the meat.

#### Bella Davis

## Take a Detox from Detox

Blogs editor, Emily Merrill, discusses detox and diet culture, arguing that for our well-being, and the well-being of those around us, we need to replace New Year weight-loss goals with self-love resolutions.



Men think about sex every seven seconds. If you eat the crusts of your toast your hair will become curly. Cleanse your body with juice and nothing else, and you can flush away all the calories and toxins. What do these three things have in common? They're all myths.

Detoxing. At this time of year, its hard to walk into the supermarket, scroll through Facebook, or even check your emails without being bombarded with the expression. But let's be honest: if a glass of water with a lemon stuck in it or a box of expensive tea bags were the only ways to rid your body of toxins, it would be a pretty dire situation. Not only is that what your kidneys are for, it's also objectively unhealthy to follow a New Year's fad that instructs you to drive yourself to starvation. Both for you, and for those around you.

If there's one thing I've learnt in recovery, it's that the capitalist-consumer relationship breeds two things. Profit, and a hell-bent attitude to make a profit at the expense of everything else. Just days ago, a health food company was slammed for naming one of its meals 'Thigh Gap'. Brands know that by labelling something as 'detox', or by intrusively dropping onto your screens and promoting a six-week meal plan that consists of nothing but slimming milkshakes to 'cleanse' your system, they will draw in a crowd. When the modern young adult audience is surrounded by diet culture and the everpresent pressure to fit the mould of an 'ideal' body type, who could be surprised. This is only intensified in January, the time of New Year's resolutions.

Dieting and detoxing have become such normalised aspects of our culture that they are almost expected, bringing with them unhealthy triggers and patterns of disordered eating that can develop into potentially life-threatening illnesses. Not only can the spike in dieting at this time of year set off dangerous thought behaviours in those recovering, it can sow a brand-new seed of doubt in someone else. Recovery is not a straight line, and eating disorders that relapse from a New Year's echo are not uncommon. The promotion of an improved version of the self at the start of a fresh year can spiral out of control, and it's vital to remember to be aware of the repercussions.

The glamorisation of the dieting industry has taught us that we should not take up space. Just months away from the next period of enforced guilt, the 'bikini body' season, we must take back what has been stolen from us. The ability to be proud of our bodies, whatever shape or size that they are. The ability to ignore campaigns that tell us about the next weight-loss pill, because we know it will not work and we don't have to want it to.

Most importantly, we must situate our voices outside of the diet mentality present at this time of year and during all seasons of the year. We must do this to be mindful of our own mental and physical health, and those of our friends, family members, and strangers who might overhear us.

We are bigger than the dieting industry. Their tea bags are way too expensive for us anyway.

**Emily Merrill** 

"If a glass of water with a lemon stuck in it or a box of expensive tea bags were the only ways to rid your body of toxins, it would be a pretty dire situation."

### How a Bilingual Thinks Sanna Hussain shares her experience as a bilingual individual, giving insight into how her mind works.

I was born in Leeds and have lived in the same area of Leeds all my life. The first language I was spoken to by my parents was Urdu, which was my mother's second language and my father's first. I didn't know any others until I went to Nursery.

At Nursery, I remember the staff talking to me in English. The tongue seemed so alien, but I slowly picked up a few words and made a habit of only speaking in English there. I thought speaking English was similar to the concept of wearing a school uniform; only done at school.

Gradually, however, I started speaking English at home. Initially, only to my siblings, until I heard them talking to my parents in English. I interpreted that as the go-ahead to use English at home which had huge consequences for me; I forgot the importance of speaking Urdu.

I remember taking GCSE Urdu at school. Although some may argue that it is an 'easy' GCSE level, it most certainly wasn't for me. I felt like I was learning to recognise an old friend again; a friend I had lost contact with after misjudging their value. It was a challenge, especially as the Urdu I had grown up speaking was colloquial and different from the Modern Standard Urdu I was taught in school. Whenever my parents speak to me in Urdu, I, as well as my siblings, most often reply in English. That is the magic of the bilingual mind; its ability to switch seamlessly between two languages. My brain, like every multilingual brain, can immediately recognise words from one tongue and reply with words from another without hesitation.

I am now learning a third language at Uni, Arabic. Although it shares a similar script to Urdu and some of the words are the same, it is still a challenge to master, as the Arabic pronunciation and grammar are very different. To make matters even more complicated, I am dyslexic. I have a bilingual dyslexic mind. Differently from what some people expect, it has its advantages. The way I learn most effectively is aurally, which is how languages are best learned. So never underestimate the brain. Whether it is bilingual or dyslexic or both, it is capable of incredible things.

#### Sanna Hussain

## The Silent 'No'

Blogs writer, Rosie Plummer, offers a sensitive analysis of our society's continued struggle with gender roles and the issue of non-verbal consent.

In light of the recent accusation against Aziz Ansari, I felt intrigued to explore the conflicts of living in a liberal, but patriarchal society, in which men are expected to make the first move, but have to be aware of the potential pitfalls of doing so. Clearly, men and women need to understand both the vocabulary and body language which indicate discomfort in sexual situations, and learn to respect their partner's right to say 'no'. But how easy is it to read the subtler indications of discomfort? Especially if your partner doesn't vocalise that unease. What the backlash to the accusations against Ansari reveal is that many in society don't understand the difficulty that women have in asserting their voice in the face of male pressure.

Recently Babe.net published an account of a 23-year-old woman, under the pseudonym Grace, who spent a night with Aziz Ansari. The account caused controversy online when many began to ask why 'Grace' did not leave the situation, with many claiming that her experience was a 'normal' one in the dating world.

Questioning why 'Grace' did not leave is entirely unhelpful, and undermines the shock and trauma that this woman clearly faced. The idea that a woman should 'just leave' when uncomfortable also overlooks the intimidation and power dynamics which come into play in so many cases of sexual assault.

The claims that 'Grace's' experience was not assault, but rather an outcome 'to be expected', raise a related set of concerns. Particularly when the claims are taken together with Ansari's response to the account, in which he stated that he thought the situation was consensual. Though you could argue that Ansari's statement was merely a defence in order to avoid responsibility for his actions, it does raise questions about how we understand non-verbal consent. In today's society, gender roles are still enforced upon us from a very young age, and we ourselves often uphold them in adulthood. Most women I know still wait for a man to make the first move. Indeed, most won't even ask for a guy's number, preferring to wait for him to ask for theirs. The expectation for men to take initiative often continues into the bedroom. Obviously, anyone initiating sexual contact needs to check that their partner is comfortable with their actions. However, too often women do not feel strong enough to say 'no', especially in a situation where they feel intimidated – as demonstrated in 'Grace's' account.

#### "Men as well as women need to understand both the vocabulary and the body language which indicate discomfort in sexual situations."

The issue with cases such as the one concerning Aziz Ansari is that a lot of the communication of the 'no' was via body language, because the victim didn't feel able to outright refuse Ansari's advances for a second time. So yes, people should be able to read body language to some extent, especially people such as Ansari who claim to be so in touch with feminism and issues of harassment. Clearly, if a woman is pushing you away, then you need to stop. However, sometimes body language is not obvious; but should that make it any less valid?

The accusation against Ansari aside, we must explore the outcome of someone going along with something they aren't entirely comfortable with, without expressing it; and interrogate who is responsible for 'consent' in that scenario? Whoever is initiating the contact should be checking whether the other person is comfortable with the situation, but if one person states that they are fine, can the other really be expected to know otherwise? The best solution to this 'grey' area is to ensure that both men and women feel empowered enough to say 'no'.

If accounts like Grace's are 'too common' to count as sexual assault, then we need to change the narrative around consent, and make people (especially women) feel strong enough to verbally express their discomfort. Campaigns such as #metoo and #timesup have revealed themselves to be incredibly enabling in this respect and we should continue to use them positively – as platforms dedicated to empowering the voices of women.

Yes, it is vital that our society properly educates men about consent and yes, it is crucial that those such as Weinstein are held fully responsible for their actions. However, the best thing that can come out of movements like #metoo is sexual empowerment, which can ensure that both men and women feel confident enough to create a more accurate and open dialogue about consent.

The online backlash to 'Grace's' account proved that as a society we still blame women for not saying 'no', rather than recognising that they are often too afraid to do so. The real challenge is not only educating men, but also enabling women to express themselves without fear of their partner's response.

**Rosie Plummer** 



"I've always wanted to make the most out of uni, but I'm quite shy and never joined many societies. Now it's second semester and I regret not being more involved, but it feels a bit late to make a change. Should I join a society halfway or wait until next year to start fresh with everyone else?" It can feel so contradictory being shy, but also keen to try something new and get out of your comfort zone. University – particularly in your first year – can definitely feel like a daunting place when you are less a part of it, or do not spend time there except for studying.

It is good to stand back and question what has been holding you back from joining a society. If your primary concern is joining at an unusual time in the semester, then you will be pleased to hear that joining a society later in the year is never an issue. Groups are usually eager for more people to join, be it the first or last week of the year. If the society interests you, then drop them an email and see if you are good to go.

If it is more a case of your shyness holding you back, then be comforted by the fact that not every student will be as confident or self-assured as you may think. In my first year, I found the transition from home to University tricky, and as a result became shy in most social interactions outside of my flat. I tended to just go home straight after a lecture rather than talk to people, and my confidence lessened as a result. When I thought about joining The Gryphon, I worried that I would not have enough confidence. It is easy to fall into the trap of thinking that to join a society or try a new experience you must banish all shyness, or become super confident. Life does not work that way – confidence and reassurance is something that comes with time and experience. Even if you are nervous, I would encourage you to challenge yourself and go for it – attending that first Blogs meeting was the best decision that I made in first year.

If you are eager to live University life to the fullest, then societies are definitely the way to go. I honestly cannot preach the benefits of societies enough. Being part of the newspaper built up my confidence so much; all the lovely people that you meet and the socials that you attend (long live Akmals) make your time at Leeds all the better. If you are still nervous about joining, you could always ask a friend to join a group with you, or you could ask the society leader over email for more details. But overall I would encourage you to challenge yourself, send those emails, and join as many societies as you can!

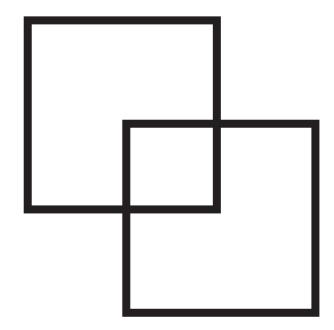
Charlie Collett

# In the Middle



To be successful – well no, to be happy. But I guess that happiness and success are interlinked. I'd say that it is my long term ambition to be happy, ultimately. But to get there I suppose I want a successful career, a career where I'm mentally stimulated, somewhere where I'm developing and learning.

Success is very subjective – each person will say something a bit different. I think... I think it'd be very hard to be happy if you didn't feel like you were successful. Because with success comes a sense of achievement, comes a sense of joy; and I think that sense of joy and achievement are quite important if you want to feel happy. So yeah, I feel it would be hard to be happy if you didn't feel like you were successful. And yes, you definitely can be successful and not be happy – successful as in great career, nice house, nice car, lots of money, but despite having that you can still be really unhappy. So I think that's a lot more clear cut than if you turn the question round.





## Mental Health Counselling? Join the Eight-Week Queue

#### **Anonymous Contributions**

Last year, The Guardian's Annual Student Survey revealed that 87% of first-year students find it difficult to cope with social or academic aspects of university life. More generally across universities, NUS national research has indicated that up to eight out of ten students may experience mental health issues in a year. Most worryingly, a majority of the students surveyed reported that they did not seek support. The reason for this is unclear. It could be due to a lack of awareness about university support services on offer, linked to the statistic that 56% of young people believe that anyone their age diagnosed with a mental illness 'would be treated differently.' However, perhaps the knowledge that to reach out to the university counselling service could mean a wait of over eight weeks for an initial appointment is the most prominent factor. Whilst mental health awareness and acceptance is vital, it's rendered almost pointless if adequate help and support is not available when an individual does choose to reach out.

Following a trauma in the summer which I found affecting my mood, sleep, and ability to remain focused on my studies when I returned to Leeds in September, I reached out to the university counselling service. In late November, nearly eight weeks after filling out an online request form, I finally got to sit down and talk to someone. I have nothing but praise for the appointments themselves – being offered a confidential space absent of judgement, to talk through whatever was affecting me has allowed me a different perspective and prompted me to be kinder to myself. But a lot is left to be desired with regard to waiting times and actually getting through that door in the first place. All too often with mental health, due to a lack of funding, opportunities to step in and help are left until crisis point. This guarantees less engagement with the service and less effective treatment,

especially with conditions such as eating disorders which can spiral rapidly if left unmonitored. Whilst the university no doubt has measures in place to prioritise the most severe symptoms and cases, I received little to no communication beyond 'the waiting list is longer than we initially anticipated', forcing me to seek out help in the form of my GP, medication, and a lot of time back at home because it was where I felt 'safe'.

These are, of course, all perfectly valid options and solutions; but they weren't 'options' or choices for me, rather methods to get through the first semester as best I could. Waiting an additional seven weeks for the second appointment also raises concerns in that such long gaps between therapy appointments can make it difficult to make active day-to-day progress. Despite rising student fees and an increasing student population, Leeds is failing to reflect this in their investment in student support, such as the counselling service. It's disheartening to see that other universities are able to recognise and make this change for the benefit of their students, whilst Leeds sees its investments placed elsewhere instead. In a society where one in four are affected by mental health, failing to increase the funding and number of counsellors available to the counselling service represents total ignorance of the growing issue on the university's part.

For more support, please visit:

- IAPT NHS (www.leedscommunityhealthcare.nhs.uk/iapt/home)
- Big White Wall (www.bigwhitewall.com)
- Your Personal Tutor
- Your GP (www.nhs.uk/service-search)

As an 18 year old, the last thing you expect to experience during your first year at university is the unexpected death of your father.

On returning to Leeds just a month later, I turned to the student bereavement services for help adjusting back into university life after living back at home with all my family around me. Back in Leeds, alone, I was absolutely terrified about coping with my work and being able to finish the year.

I'm not criticising the student services, because for those that get an appointment they probably do them the world of good, but I was told I'd have to wait at least eight weeks for an appointment. By this time, I'd already cried myself to sleep a dozen times, panicked in my lectures and dashed out struggling to breathe because I felt so far behind, and gone home feeling defeated.

This article is to try and get the waiting time for student health appointments drastically reduced, because it's needed. I'd have given anything for an appointment where I could sit and be reassured by someone other than a family member – someone you expect support from – and know that this former stranger actually cared. Instead, I was left to just get on with it alone, which made my adjustment back into university life longer and harder. We leave the safe comfort of our secondary schools for the impersonal nature of the modern university. After registering, we try to make friends in the depressing surroundings of some nightclub with loud, generic chart music. We learn in large lecture halls or fortnightly seminars. We drink excessively. We miss lectures. We get lonely. The culture of university, especially at Leeds, can be alienating.

Drinking excessively is portrayed as the hallmark of our university social lives. For an activity that is meant to be the centre of my social life as a student, I don't remember a single person at a nightclub that has become a friend. We spend all of freshers discovering the crap clubs of Leeds to find one that matches our music tastes. When we find that club, we stick to it as a place of pilgrimage with groups of friends for the rest of our university years. Like most places of pilgrimage, it's not one of magic but of distraction. We forget that the venue doesn't matter, it is the people. There are so many events at Leeds it is easy to forget that the real fun of university is meeting new people and building friendships.

The university can feel like a nightclub too. For a highentry price you get glittering expensive surroundings with as many people packed in as possible; the university has adopted the nightclub business model. The lecturer is as likely to know your name as a DJ at Canal Mills. The "we-care-about-you-so-much" pastoral care of a British secondary school is nowhere to be experienced at a British university. Induction to university feels like a bureaucratic exercise with no support from a single member of staff who knows your name. Personal mentors often don't know who they are mentoring and not many students arrange meetings. Lectures seem to be a box-ticking exercise with lecturers who wish to focus on research. Attendance is "monitored" but never followed up on, leaving many vulnerable to falling through the cracks. This impersonal nature of education leads many to become disillusioned, feeling unimportant, a number, a cow in a herd.

When one in every four people experience mental illness in any given year, strong relationships are one of the most important ways to ensure people have the resilience to overcome it. The loneliness at university can exacerbate mental illness or be a factor in its cause as people only have systems rather than friends to rely on. Friends can listen and help you before issues become worse. It's much easier to seek help and support with friends and a friendly member of staff. Filling in forms and waiting in a long queue can only worsen feelings of unimportance.

It doesn't have to be like this. Universities across the UK are investing in mental health resources like more counsellors. The culture at university needs to change. We need to acknowledge that our focus in Leeds on nightlife can be detrimental on our ability to form strong friendships. The university needs to change by reforming personal mentors, changing the nature of how we are taught and creating an induction system that doesn't leave students grasping for any crappy club to find friends.

A spokesperson from the University of Leeds said:

<sup>&</sup>quot;Mental health and wellbeing is an incredibly important issue which the University takes very seriously. While the number of students accessing counselling services at Leeds is in line with the national trend, we are working hard to improve the scope of support available, offering a range of services that are regularly reviewed."

### **Banksy And His Latest Canvas**

#### **Michael Turnbull**

During the last few weeks, an exciting buzz has been generated on social media regarding Banksy's latest work on the unused Scott Street bridge in Hull's city centre. The newest confirmed piece – verified by the elusive street artist via his Instagram account – depicts a boy with his mouth open, raising a makeshift sword, wearing a cape and with an upturned colander on his head. Painted in black and white, the drawing is accompanied by the words 'Draw the Raised Bridge!' in white capital letters.



The majority of locals seem to be very pleased with the new addition to the bridge, which many of them see as an homage to Hull's maritime heritage; the Scott Street bridge was once used to allow ships to pass through along the River Hull, but has remained raised since 1994. Hull City Council has even taken action to preserve the work on the bridge, after it was vandalised last Sunday evening. There's still room for some vigilantism, however, as window cleaner Jason Fanthorpe removed the graffiti – has efforts subsequently earning him local hero status.

As well as the boy on the bridge, another suspected Banksy piece was spotted on Wednesday after appearing overnight. This even newer work depicts a young girl next to a dead bird, which several eagleeyed Banksy fans have noticed holds a striking resemblance to a famous work by the artist in Bristol – the imaginatively named 'The Girl with the Blue Bird'.

In spite of all the positive comments surrounding Banksy's work, as well as receiving backing from the city council in order to preserve the pieces, some members of the Hull community have unfortunately been complaining, stating that these paintings are 'simply graffiti' and that 'he should invest in a canvas'. Clearly, these people are unaware that what they are saying is incredibly ignorant, as the clue is in the name of the concept: 'street art' – the canvas *is* the street.

But then again, why should I be surprised? In my experience, any kind of creativity or modern innovation is rarely praised by critics, especially in the realms of street art. More to the point, why do these people care anyway? It is not as if the artwork is offensive or distasteful, which makes their argument of classing the work as vandalism completely irrelevant. Also, I fail to see how an infamous artist's work on a useless slab of concrete makes it any more of an eyesore – if anything, it makes it more of an attraction surely?

In short, Banksy is a living legend who we should be celebrating, not criticising. We are almost 20 years in to the 21st Century, so people need to stop poking holes in things which – let's be honest – make their mundane lives worth living, and just appreciate work like Banksy's for what it is: art.



### **Greening's Apparent Concern For Poorer Students is a Paltry Attempt to Save Face**

#### **Benjamin Hawkins**

Dubbed a "high-profile casualty" of No. 10's new year reshuffle, Justine Greening sought to slam the exit-door behind her. She spared no expense in taking to the airwaves, censuring the government she'd so recently been a part of. Quite rightly, she took the opportunity to point out that poorer students would benefit more from the reintroduction of maintenance grants – amusing when you consider her seemingly unquestioning rejection of an amendment to do just that.

I use the term amusing, but what I mean is that Greening's attempt to redeem herself in the eyes of disillusioned students and education staff (as well as anyone who can see the flaw in forcing students into even worse debt) is laughable, and very much unsurprising. Slippery politicians weaving their way into powerful positions and rediscovering their lost morals upon leaving is hardly unheard of. That being said, it's no less of a kick in the teeth to students saddled with debt they'll likely hold onto well into their middle-ages.

George Osborne's notorious July 2015 budget statement announced the current system of maintenance loans on the grounds of the previous grant system's lack of affordability. While corporation tax continued to fall, making life ever easier for the super-rich, catastrophically misguided austerity policies would shift responsibility for the Conservatives' obsessive "balancing the books" goal towards the lower ends of the class scale. A report by the IFS found that students from low-income backgrounds, who go on to receive high earnings, would indeed benefit from the reintroduction of non-repayable grants. It also indicated that the long-term costs of doing so would be relatively low, not least given that a large proportion of the loans that would be replaced by grants will never have their value repaid (similarly true for the current level of tuition fees).

This is telling – despite this evidence that the loan system is a largely unnecessary (perhaps even unsuccessful) feat, the Conservatives nonetheless decided that the rhetoric of "cutbacks" and needing to save every penny in the treasury is more important than creating an accessible education system; a system that doesn't plunge its students further into debt as a result of their efforts to gain the skills necessary to enter employment and perform vital roles; a system that doesn't exclude potential working-class students left nauseous by the thought of a massive education-tax as soon as they scratch the surface of decent, liveable earnings.

It's this reality that exposes a real darkness to Greening's ignorance. Having reaped the benefits of a front-line ministerial position and managing to maintain a relatively neutral image in the shadow of the infamous Gove, Greening can publicly criticise her government, free from worries of a decimated career. She has another lucrative entry for her CV and can skip merrily back to Putney. Voting against restoring grants (as well as EMA and nurses' bursaries) may not sit easily on her "progressive" political compass, but it's evidently all tea and cake if she can job-hop her way to a wealthy, comfortable victory.



### The Ultimate Aim of Russia's War on Women



**Edward Barnes** 

Last year in February the Russian government decriminalised most forms of domestic violence – all cases except when severe physical injury is caused but with no mention of mental and emotional abuse. The terms are: if you beat your wife up but they don't need to be hospitalised and it is your first offence that year, you only have to pay a small fine or spend 15 days in prison. Oh, and you only have to pay the fine if your partner presses charges.

Under the USSR, it was the mission of the new

Communist party to elevate women as part of its ideological system of equality between every citizen. Women were seen by Lenin as an untapped labour force and pushes to get women to work meant they got benefits they didn't previously receive such as welfare and education. In 1920 and 1917 respectively it was one of the first countries to legalise abortion and female suffrage. They even did extensive research into how to give women better orgasms as it was believed to result in more productive workers.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, things didn't improve. In 1994, there were 300,000 cases of crimes against women and 13,000 rapes. While in 1996, the state Duma did draft a law against domestic violence, there are still 36,000 girls are abused every single day and it is estimated that one woman is killed every 40 minutes from domestic abuse.

The 2017 domestic violence law was passed in defence of family values pushed by the Russian Orthodox Church arguing that "the reasonable and loving use of physical punishment [is] an essential part of the rights given to parents by God himself". As a saying goes in Russia, "if he beats you, it means he loves you." These attitudes extend all the way to Russia's top leadership. Putin has been known to make sexist remarks and is rumoured to have abused his own wife repeatedly. He also has antagonistic relationships with prominent female

### "As a saying goes in Russia, 'if he beats you, it means he loves you.' These attitudes extend all the way to Russia's top leadership"

leaders where he seeks to intimidate and dominate them. For example: when he let his Labrador into a meeting with Angela Merkel knowing full well she is afraid of dogs.

In the election this year Putin has allowed a lineup of women to challenge him; Ksenia Sobchak, Yekaterina Gordon and Anai Gamzatova. The first two women are both campaigning on feminist issues and Gamzatova is Muslim. None of these women have any chance of winning the Presidency with Putin certainly having a lock on a fourth term. No, the fact that three women are attempting to run against Putin in a period where Russia is embracing traditionalism suggests this seems to be serving a larger narrative - Sobchak is even suspected to have been picked by the Kremlin given her close ties to Putin. These women with their silly feminist issues will inevitably lose to Putin, who with his shirtless bear-hunting photos, views himself as the pinnacle of Russian masculinity. It will send a message to Russian women: know your place.

### **Do You Control Your [Online] Privacy?**

#### Hamzah Bharwani

A German court recently ruled that Facebook has been illegally sharing your data; five of the application's default settings did not meet the proper boundaries of informed consent when it came to sharing information. Outraged? Probably not. Over the past few years, social media platforms have been slowly unravelling our lives, pushing the boundaries of consent one small update at a time. Multiple allegations from privacy rights advocacy groups have been launched, attacking many different platforms to no avail. The simplest explanation for this is, out of the millions that use these apps, not enough care that their privacy is being violated. Edward Snowden's actions five years ago sparked mass uproar amongst Americans against government surveillance. And though that reaction was ephemeral, why has the ongoing assault on our everyday privacy by the likes of Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram received virtually no backlash?

The best way to understand this phenomenon, is

"Likes and comments have become more important than the right to privacy - a feature of the modern day that many refuse to accept." to highlight the dichotomy between the role these two identities play in our lives. Government will always be looked at as powerful, authoritative and more importantly, something to rebel against. On the other hand, it's a lot harder to find someone who isn't obsessed with their presence on social media. Whether to keep in touch with friends, further our careers or attract attention, people who use social media do so because they like being connected. And it's that feeling which translates to the interactions that make us feel this way, almost as if we trust the faceless giants.

Privacy is, and always will be important, but consent isn't the issue here. When you carelessly skip over the terms and conditions before downloading the app or creating an account, you are giving your consent, which includes consenting to the default version of the application you are using. This consent also includes the right to turn off data sharing if you please. But the fact of the matter is, users are far too keen to get on to their profiles and post to give a fraction of a thought as to where their data goes. Likes and comments have become more important than the right to privacy – a feature of the modern day that many refuse to accept.

The case of Facebook and all other social media platforms that allegedly violate our privacy is a cry of revolt by a few members of older generations who want to impose on younger generations how they should feel as opposed to caring about how they really feel, creating an issue when there isn't one. As university students in 2018, we've grown up and accustomed to social media being a big part of our lives to the extent it's considered normal to have your life on display, and information out there from a young age. That's why we don't kick up a fuss when we learn that people, mainly our friends, are able to locate us physically via an app on their smartphone. And those of us who do are technologically aware enough to disable the features that they don't want to use. The truth is, our privacy is in our control but most of us don't really care about it anymore.





### New Year, Same Trump

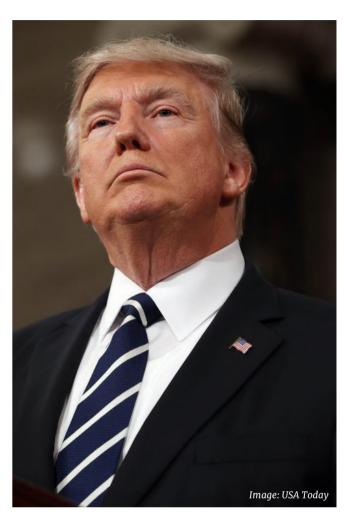
Business writer, Grace Ennis, investigates the growing tensions between the EU and the enigmatic US President

**Grace Ennis** 

Brexit is not the only issue plaguing officials in Brussels at the moment, as Donald Trump called out the EU over unfair treatment over US exporters just last week. In a characteristically vague style, the US president told ITV in a recent broadcast that the problems he refers to could easily "morph into something very big", alluding to the possibility of further tariffs and restrictions to be placed on European imports. His comments follow the onset of a Washington investigation into the extent to which US national security concerns are upheld by existing international economic relationships.

Unsurprisingly, this is not the first issue Trump has raised with the EU during his presidency. He has been an open supporter of the UK's decision to leave the EU, even telling Piers Morgan that he would take a "tougher stand" on withdrawing if he were at the helm. What's more, he has cited his own previous experiences as a businessman as a key example which tainted his relationship with the trading bloc, recalling the difficulties he encountered during his attempts to set up golf resorts in Ireland whilst on a recent presidential visit to Belgium. He has thus brought this sceptical attitude into his dealings with the EU from a new position of power, leading campaigns to withdraw the US from the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the North American Free Trade Agreement. The problem at hand is that, according to the President, the US "cannot get our product in" due to the high taxes imposed on their exports. Conversely, Trump suggested that he'd been dealt the short hand because of the low taxes North America has been used to placing on imports from the EU, speculating that there is "very little" at all to be gained from this relationship.

Naturally, officials from the EU haven't backed away from these accusations. Budget Commissioner Günther Oettinger responded to Trump's comments in a statement where he envisioned a "two-way street" between the two trading entities, suggesting that any sanctions he might place on the EU would have to work both ways. This brewing opposition appears to be somewhat connected to recent trade disputes over US government sanctions on aerospace giant Bombardier Inc. which threatened thousands of jobs in its Belfast construction hub. A 292% tariff loomed over the company's airliners which are sold in America, and despite the proposal being overruled by the US International Trade Commission, this move was indicative of the possibility of conflicting interests developing between the US and EU in coming years. In turn, this could have favourable outcomes for an independent UK seeking to strengthen its special relationship with its ally across the pond, with the possibility of the UK import tariffs paling in comparison to Trump's envisioned sanctions on the Union in question.



## Easyjet Boss Takes Pay Cut – But Will This Fix Their Gender Pay Gap?

### India Daniel

It was recently announced that the chief executive of easyJet has taken a pay cut in order to make his salary match that of his predecessor. Johan Lundgren took over as the chief executive last December on a basic salary of £740,000; his predecessor, Carolyn McCall, was on a salary of £706,000. Other elements of Lundgren's remuneration package are identical to McCall's.

In a statement released following news of his pay cut Lundgren said he wanted to "show his personal commitment" to equal pay whilst also commenting that "At easyJet we are absolutely committed to giving equal pay and equal opportunity for women and men." However, the company currently has a large gender pay gap of 51.7% owing to the fact that 94% of its pilots are male. The issue arises here as being a pilot commands a far higher salary than the majority of other roles. EasyJet fares better than the industry standard where 96% of pilots are male.

Whilst this may be seen as a PR move by some it is also symptomatic of the new legislation which

requires companies with more than 250 employees to have to report their gender pay gap by April 4. This is an insightful move by the government that has many companies quaking in their boots, fearful of reputational damage.

The BBC was the first company to come under fire for the gender pay gap, after revealing the salaries of its top earning presenters (the majority of whom were male) in July this year. Following the demonstration of discrepancy between men and women, six of its top male presenters decided to take pay cuts to match their equivalent female colleagues. However, we are left questioning how sustainable cutting men's pay is, and whether it could just become and excuse for employers to squeeze wages.

Cutting men's pay also has no impact on increasing the number of women in senior positions, and this is what matters. EasyJet has set itself a target of increasing the number of female pilots recruited to 20% of its total new recruits by 2020. Opportunity and visibility are the only way we can increase the number of women in senior positions and truly decrease the gender pay gap. Cutting wages is a gimmicky move, which will not help to improve pay inequality long term. Initiatives to improve the number of women in senior positions and well-paid fields such as STEM and finance, which are traditionally male dominated, is the only way to truly reduce the gender pay gap.



### **Spotify Public Offering: Unnecessary Risk or Wise Move?**

Charlie Harrocks Business Editor

Continuing with its plan to go public, Spotify, the world's most popular music streaming service, has filed paperwork to list its shares on the New York Stock Exchange.

The Swedish company, often lauded with helping reverse the huge losses in music revenue caused by piracy, currently boasts 140 million active users, with half of those paying a monthly subscription fee of £10. That's leagues ahead of its nearest competitor Apple Music, who have 30 million subscribers. The company is an example of a 'unicorn', a private startup company valued at over \$1billion. Uber and Snap Inc. are recent examples of such companies. Whilst it isn't uncommon for these types of companies to go public, there is a part of Spotify's situation that is intriguingly rare.

Usually, a company will go public via an initial public offering (IPO), where shares are sold via a roadshow to institutional investors at a premium price, before being traded at a market price to the public. A traditional IPO will feature an investment bank as an 'underwriter', who, for a fee, handle the process of selling the shares to investors.

What makes Spotify so peculiar is that there will be no IPO at all. Instead, they will just appear on the stock market via a direct listing. There will be no roadshow to investors, and although Morgan Stanley and Goldman & Sachs have been consulted for advice on the process, no underwriter. Their shares will just appear on the market one day to trade, like any

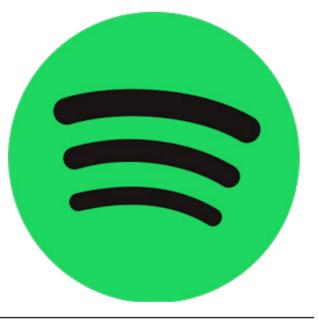
other stock. It will be the first to do so on the NYSE in history.

An IPO is usually a way of raising capital. However, Spotify as a company does not feel it needs to raise money, and so a direct listing is a more attractive option. By listing in this manner, Spotify will pay just \$30 million in fees to investment banks, compared to the \$100 million Snap Inc. paid in underwriting fees for their IPO. Spotify's employees and early backers will also be able to sell their shares at a market price, thereby making a profit.

However, despite its unicorn status and its popularity amongst users, Spotify may not make for such a sound investment. The company is notoriously unprofitable, despite being a music streaming giant. They have also faced criticism from multiple artists, including Taylor Swift and Radiohead's Thom Yorke, for their system of royalty payments. Unconventionally, Spotify doesn't pay its artists per play or download like most music platforms, such as iTunes or physical sales. Instead, artists are paid proportionally to their share of Spotify's total song streams. Spotify pays around 70% of its total revenue to rights holders, who then pay artists based on their individual agreements. With so much of its revenues going to labels and rights holders, it is difficult to see how the company could quickly become profitable.

The streaming company has also faced criticism for its free service, which allows users to listen to music free of charge, with advertisements between songs. Taylor Swift opposed this side of the company in particular, expressing her distaste towards "the perception that music has no value and should be free". In response, Spotify reached an agreement with the major record label Universal Music Group to allow Universal artists to limit their new album releases only to Premium subscribers for up to two weeks. Both Swift and Yorke later made their music available on streaming services, including Spotify.

In short, Spotify's upcoming direct listing is definitely one to watch. Given the unique situation, nobody really knows for sure what is going to happen. Shares could plunge, soar, or may not even trade at all if buyers and sellers can't agree on a market price. If the listing is successful, Spotify could pave the way for new unicorns to go public and avoid paying huge fees to bankers. However, should it go down in flames, everyone's favourite streaming service could well be in trouble.



### Should Facebook Be Regulated?

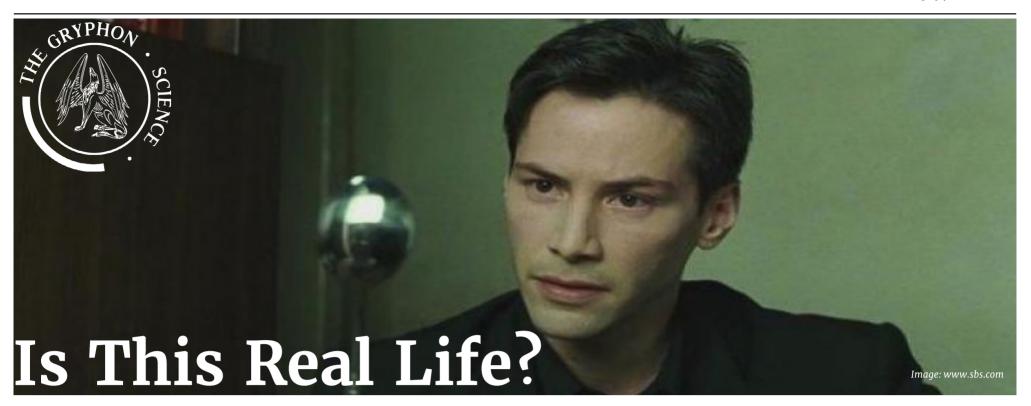
#### **Matthew Brown**

Facebook should be regulated like a cigarette company, because of the addictive and harmful properties of social media. These were the paraphrased words of Salesforce chief executive Marc Benioff two weeks ago at the World Economic Forum in Davos. At first, the active comparison between a cigarette company and a social media platform such as Facebook seems rather ludicrous. However, when you dig beneath the surface there are some unnerving similarities between both industries.

The history of what we would call 'addictive industries' doesn't do any favour in heightening the argument that Facebook ought to be regulated in a sensible manner. You'd have to cast your mind back a very long way to the days when cigarette advertising was last on television screens. But, more recently we've seen some blank packaging on cigarettes and point of sale purchasing changed. Moreover, the advertising of alcohol on sports shirts in the UK has been gradually faded out. All of these industries, of which their goods possess addictive properties, have undergone some form of regulation. Making the active comparison between Facebook, cigarettes, and alcohol on the grounds of physical damage isn't that easy to envisage. The latter two, after much empirical research, have been found to cause physical damage to our health. But the calls from business leaders such as Benioff and a string of Silicon Valley heads that social media is addictive, lies more so in the emotional and psychological damage that Facebook can cause to our health. The psychological link between Facebook, cigarettes, and alcohol, are that when you indulge in all of these activities they release a drug in the brain called dopamine. In essence, this makes you feel good. An extra like on your profile picture? That's a 'dopamine kick'. The work of Simon Sinek on the

"The psychological link between Facebook, cigarettes, and alcohol, are that when you indulge in all of these activities they release a drug in the brain called dopamine." millennial generation has furthered heightened the argument that we as a generation are becoming wired to such dopamine kicks, and the easiest way to indulge in these are through social media. Of course, many people don't see Facebook as addictive, and are able to constrain their daily usage. But whilst some people can successfully stay clear of the algorithmic infested platform, there are those that simply can't live without it. In an age where cases of youth anxiety are becoming ever more apparent, it may not seem so naïve to conclude that social platforms such as Facebook may have some role to play in exacerbating any anxieties that we have.

To people such as Benioff, the cigarette of the old has been replaced by the social media of the new. The conclusion that increased regulation of Facebook is the only answer may seem farfetched. But with the growing concerns of business leaders, and of those that run these tech giants themselves about the addictive and harmful properties of social media platforms, it may not be too far into the future when regulation of Facebook becomes a serious policy.



### **Science Editor**

What if this life is just a simulation? It's a common sci-fi trope. The first memory I have of this idea is one of the seemingly infinite number of episodes of Star Trek: The Next Generation involving the 'holodeck', a sort of virtual reality leisure facility used by the crew for recreation. In one episode, a character from Sherlock Holmes, Professor Moriarty, gains sentience and demands his freedom. He tries to fool some of the crew by creating his own simulation of the starship Enterprise before Patrick Stewart and co.. figure out his ruse and turn the tables on him. Believing to have won his liberty, Moriarty flies a space ship off to explore the galaxy. Little does he realise he is in fact still contained in an electronic reality, exploring a complex, but very non-real simulation. This concept is the basis behind a lot of science-fiction, popularised most famously by The Matrix and still popping up in films like Inception and even the last series of Doctor Who. The reason the plot point appeared in Doctor Who is probably because in 2016 Elon Musk, CEO of Tesla and SpaceX, suggested there is only a "one in billions" chance we are not living in a simulation.

Like most people my first thought was something along the lines of "don't be daft", but on further examination the idea is hard to ignore. If we were

Leo Kindred living in a simulation we wouldn't know it, and we presumably couldn't test for it. So, could it possibly be true? The argument runs something like this: If human consciousness is a thing that happens as a natural result of processing power from that squishy pink thing between your ears, it follows that if you accumulated enough of the stuff brains do, you could wire it up and simulate human experience and reality as we know it.

> Swedish philosopher Professor Nick Bostrom put forward in his 2003 work Are you living in a computer simulation? a three-pronged hypothesis. He suggested that either there are no hyper-advanced human civilisations, or there are, but they have no interest in simulating anything. The third proposition though, is that if they did simulate realities, they would do so on such a vast scale with such supreme computing power that statistically the number of simulations would easily outnumber the amount of real people who exist. In other words, making it in fact a very high statistical probability that you're not real.

> But is this a too simplistic idea? Anil Seth, professor of Cognitive and Computational Neuroscience at the University of Sussex questions this approach. In 2017, on the BBC's Infinite Monkey Cage programme, he pointed out in a discussion with Bostrom that we don't know what consciousness is, and even if we did, it does not follow that it can be simulated.

He explains, "If we simulate a hurricane or a big storm inside a computer in the Met Office, it doesn't get wet or windy inside the computer. Maybe consciousness is more like digestion. You can simulate digestion, but if you put food into a computer it's not going to work very well". The idea of reproducing consciousness with a machine implies that the mind is almost separate from the brain, something where only the processing software to produce the signal matters, ignoring the hardware.

So maybe you are special enough to not be replicated and the human experience is too tricky to generate even with high processing power. But if a society was able to build electrical replicas of our brains and nervous systems and set them going, would we know the difference? The missing piece in this puzzle is consciousness. We don't have it quantified and understood in the way we do other parts of our bodies, and it's simultaneously sacred and fundamental to all of us. Maybe that shows us why we think about this the way we do. Are we too pious about our consciousness to accept that we could be easily recreated by binary coding, or perhaps it is too easy to assume our consciousness must be just brains doing computational work? Until we can answer this fundamental question this is still, weirdly, something we can't disprove.

### 20,000 Lipids Under The Street

#### **James Deed**

Have you ever been told to not put the leftover fat and oil from frying bacon down the drain? Always wondered why people say this and does it even cause anything as a result? It is because these small acts are amounting to catastrophic consequences. Cities around the world are experiencing a phenomenon known as "fatbergs" - giant accumulations of fats, oils and greases (FOGs) in sewers and drainage systems. These act in the same way that a blood clot does to an artery, restricting the channel cross-sectional area, causing backflow and flooding. These blobs of fat also attract other debris such as condoms, nappies and whatever else is flushed down toilets, further clogging the system. Furthermore, in the sewers of many student-dense cities such as Leeds, the fatbergs supposedly exhibit a slight sparkle to them, with the term "glitterberg" being coined by professionals – caused by the sheer volume of glitter being flushed down drains after a night out!

Although you may only pour a few tablespoons full of fat or oil down the drain each week, in an area where several million people live, this can begin to add up to a huge volume.

These fatbergs exacerbate the stress that is already exerted on drainage networks in urbanised areas; water is quickly directed to the sewers due to the abundance of impermeable surfaces in cities and therefore can quickly lead to the pooling and flooding of areas which host such abnormalities. During particularly intense periods of precipitation, such as during hurricane events, fatbergs partially owe to the flooding of entire cities, with residents being forced to use boats as a method of travel downtown several years ago in Malabon, Manila. There is also an ecological element to this argument, blockages can also cause a release of raw sewage into river channels, exposing aquatic organisms to severely-high levels of pollution and chemicals.

This problem is particularly prominent in London, whose dated 19th century sewers are really feeling the impact of two centuries worth of FOGs and rubbish polluting the system. In a recent interview with the Guardian. Thames Water waste utilities describes how workers had finally broke apart and removed a monster fatberg which weighed 130 tons and measured 250 metres in length! This colossal fatty mass was dealt with by London sewer workers over nine weeks, using high-pressure hoses and shovels to create smaller lumps of fat which could then be dealt with accordingly. This is just one example of fatbergs in London alone. There is a smaller one in Chinatown



3dinsider.com

## **Drones – Delivering to Your Door?**

To most, the word drone conjures an image of an autonomous aerial weapon capable of delivering death in one part of the world whilst its operator is sat in another. Or possibly, it brings to mind small remotely piloted toys, used for little more than recreation. However, in recent years the market for civilian drones has exploded, with global sales estimated at around 10 million units in 2017. This figure encompasses all drone sales and includes a number purchased for a variety of commercial applications that may surprise.

Agriculture and farming have taken to commercial drones quickly, allowing farmers to monitor crop production, growth, and infestations from the skies using advanced sensors. Wildlife rangers have begun using drones to hunt for poachers using infrared cameras. Regional police in the UK have trialled the use of drones to monitor crime scenes and traffic accidents. However, as the technology behind autonomous flight develops, so does the possibilities for other commercial drone applications, and the potential for their misuse. 2016 saw a drone used to smuggle drugs and mobile phones into a prison in London. Similarly, 2017 saw a near-miss between a drone and an Airbus A319 approaching London Gatwick, putting

Thomas Padgett at risk the lives of all 130 on board. It's obvious that while drone technology has developed rapidly in recent years, UK regulations and policing has not. The government's response to these events is currently to begin developing "geo-fencing" technology, which creates virtual boundaries around vulnerable locations such as prisons, airports, and military bases using GPS technology.

> Perhaps the most interesting and impactful commercial application of drones comes from the likes of Amazon Prime Air and Google Wing, currently investing in delivery drones. Both are developing inhouse drones geared towards solving the problem of so-called "last mile" deliveries. Amazon have demonstrated the capability of delivering packages of up to 2 kg (which equates to 90% of packages) within 30 minutes of purchasing, completely autonomously. Some estimates even suggest this method could eventually cut delivery costs incurred by Amazon to just 88 cents per delivery. Additionally, Dominoes recently joined forces with drone delivery company Flirtey to deliver pizza in rural New Zealand via quadcopter.

> However, these projects aren't without their challenges. Determining the precise delivery location, ensuring public safety, and preventing theft of the drone and its payload are the most prominent hurdles faced.

Amazon overcomes the first issue by creating special landing zones that can be identified by the drone as a safe space to land, while Google's drone does away with landing altogether, instead opting to lower its parcel to the recipient from a height.

Arguably the largest challenge to drone delivery is regulation. In the UK, drones are subject to altitude limits of 400 ft. and must only be operated within line of sight of the pilot. This makes the prospect of truly autonomous drone delivery look quite bleak. Still, the UK has been quite welcoming towards innovations in drone delivery compared to the US. All these companies need to get the green light from the UK Civil Aviation Authority is to prove that there's no risk to people or property. This had lead a number of companies, such as Amazon, to base their testing centres in rural areas of the UK.

The long term regulation of commercial, autonomous drones is still very much in the air. The Futurama-esque idea of lines of drones navigating through the skies over cities may seem a thought confined to science fiction, but the technology is very much available. It's only regulation limiting the thought. At least for now.

weighing 6 tons which still needs to be removed, with a further 10 being carefully monitored for growth. In a recent survey 92% of restaurants and takeaways in London were found to be feeding these fatbergs alongside the 8.7 million residents.

So, what can be done to prevent this from happening to other cities like Leeds? The requirement for installation of grease traps in catering outlets could significantly reduce the amount that is flushed into out sewers, this requirement is compulsory in numerous US cities and even in Malaysia! However, this lack of fat traps in London owes to the legal obstruction that Thames Water is privately-owned and has no right to inspect the premises of hotels and restaurants. More regular drainage network inspections and the installation of sensors could further identify areas which are most at risk from future fatberg accumulation. Somewhere a bit closer to home, at Sheffield University, a group of students have invented a "fatberglar" – a device fitted underneath the kitchen sink which breaks down FOGs using specific bacteria.

An external company is attempting to build upon this idea by developing a tablet which can be flushed down sinks and be added to drains, naturally breaking down any fat accumulations.

What can we do to these fatbergs once they have been removed from the sewers? Cities like San Francisco and Atlanta are converting them into biodiesel to help run cars or power generators. London is thankfully starting to adopt similar strategies, the monster fatberg which was addressed earlier was subsequently converted into 2,600 gallons of biodiesel. Beckton Sewage Works is now Europe's largest treatment works, processing the effluent and FOG accumulations from London's sewers. After this the residue is transported next door to the world's first industrialscale power plant run on FOGs. More than 30% of its electricity is sourced from the combustion of urban fats, and will therefore partially compensate the £1 million monthly cost to maintain London's sewers. Unfortunately, in Asia the presence of "gutter oil" is an ever-occurring concern, a cheap alternative to cooking oil which is made from the processing of fatbergs. The BBC reports how 100 tonnes of the reprocessed oil were seized from Chinese provinces over a 4-month period in 2011. Although it may seem like a clever way of making resources last longer by recycling waste products, the sanitation and unknown health implications associated with consuming the gutter oil proves a risk too hazardous to take. Furthermore, there is the stipulation of some Chinese pharmaceutical companies being unknowingly supplied with such sub-standard oils when processing antibiotics.

# Rhinos Win First PDRL Game

Last Leg star Alex Brooker joined Leeds Rhinos for the UK's first Physical Disablities Rugby League game

#### George Bains Rugby League

This week the Leeds Rhinos made rugby league history by facing off against the Warrington Wolves in what was a landmark competitive disability game. The Rhinos became only the second club after the Wolves to establish and fund a physical disability team.

1,500 people watched the teams lock horns at Warrington's Victoria Park stadium on Sunday 4th February, and the line-ups were not short of high profile figures. Stars from the Channel 4 show 'The Last Leg' featured for both sides, with comedian and Rhinos fan Alex Booker becoming the latest player to join the Rhinos foundation, whilst co-star Adam Hills represented Warrington. One week from its initial formation, the Leeds team ran out winners by a 22-10 score line and cemented their place in history.

Physical Disability Rugby League, or PDRL, combines full-contact and touch rugby with teams consisting of 9 players, 7 of which having a physical disability. The two clubs are at the forefront of bringing this all-inclusive game to the UK, and PDRL has had significant success in Australia over recent years. The game is in its sixth year down under, and Aussieborn Adam Hills must be commended for his efforts in kick-starting PDRL in England. After finding



out about the game developing in Australia, Hills contacted Sydney-based teams who set him up with the Warrington Wolves Foundation and not long later Chris Godfrey established the Leeds Rhinos outfit.

This match carries remarkable significance and is a fantastic step to making one of our most loved games accessible to more people. The scope of the appeal can already be seen in the various backgrounds of the Leeds players. Rhinos captain Chris Hall was once in the Wakefield Academy but had to give up his rugby dream after suffering a head injury. And while Hall has cherished the opportunity to get back onto the field after 6 years, for comedian Alex Brooker it was his first taste of the sport.

The fixture added another memorable moment to the sporting history of Leeds, and with a return fixture in Leeds already being arranged, we hope the development of PDRL in England continues along with Leeds's success in the sport.

## Football's VAR: The Story So Far

The use of the new replay technology in UK football has divided fans, players and pundits alike



#### James Breese Football

On the 8th January, Brighton's FA cup tie with Crystal Palace marked the first use of a Video Assistant Referee (VAR) within UK competitive football. Already introduced into high calibre leagues including the Bundesliga and Serie A, it is believed that with the addition of an off-field official, the accuracy of key decisions could be improved.

The lack of consistency in officiating is an issue yet to be addressed, partly due to the subjective nature of refereeing. Since a considerable amount of matchaltering wrong decisions are made, access to detailed replays makes sense, but early concerns suggest VAR will heavily decelerate a sport becoming exponentially pacier. The notion of waiting almost two minutes for a decision seems absurd, frustrating players and subduing crowds.

In theory, VAR is implicated for ambiguous decisions regarding goals, red cards, penalties, and also cases of mistaken identity (Andre Marriner on Gibbs/Oxlade-Chamberlain). The International Football Association Board (IFAB) states that a 100% success rate for onfield decisions is not the aim, but to ensure that key decisions for match events are correct.

Perhaps the most notable instance of use thus far was Liverpool's FA cup third round loss to West Brom. VAR was embroiled at the heart of the game, with the Baggies' disallowed goal, Liverpool's penalty, and WBA's third goal all requiring VAR. It almost appeared as though referee Mike Whalley developed a dependency on the technology to clarify his decision making. Nonetheless, unhappy scousers flocked to Twitter, confused whether to scapegoat the referee or VAR for their loss.

However, a week later, Liverpool supporters sharply switched pro-VAR after their chaotic encounter with Spurs, in which a number of unforgivably poor refereeing decisions were made. Harry Kane's late penalty secured a draw for Pochettino's men, despite a somewhat dubious foul by Van Dijk, whilst an earlier Spurs penalty had an offside call in the process. These decisions would have almost certainly been reviewed if VAR was in operation.

Whilst VAR's introduction has split fan opinion, the general consensus between players is predominantly negative. Veteran shot-stopper Gigi Buffon made comparisons with water-polo, slating the timewasting involved. Germany international Sami Khedira recently labelled it a 'catastrophe', whilst Luka Modric was slightly less brash, simply saying 'I don't like it'.

Despite player protests, governing body FIFA are clear VAR advocates, suggesting is an integral part of the game's natural development, insisting that it will have a major role in this year's world cup. For domestic use, the IFAB have stated that VAR will continue its 'trial' period until the end of the 2017/18 season. If deemed successful, we can expect VAR in the 2018/19 Premier League campaign, VAR in European competitions, and a very unhappy Gianluigi Buffon.

## The Benefits of a Year Abroad

Should more British players opt to play their football abroad?



James Felton Football

12 months ago, I wrote in the Gryphon about Carli Lloyd's signing for Manchester City, and how, with more foreign stars coming into teams like Manchester City, coupled with the English quality they already had at their disposal (Toni Duggan, Lucy Bronze, Steph Houghton), it augured well for the Women's Super League, which was revamped in 2014. What I didn't expect, however, was the opposite to happen. For a British superstar to try pastures new in Europe. It is deeply encouraging.

British footballers, generally, don't go abroad. Toni Duggan, however, after spells with Everton and most recently Manchester City, swapped the north of England for the city of Barcelona in the summer, following a line of few English players, most notably of course Gary Lineker, in playing for the Spanish giants. Lucy Bronze, as aforementioned, has also left Manchester City to play for Lyon.

I went on Saturday afternoon to watch her play against Real Sociedad, and whilst the game finished o-o, it had plenty of quality and was entertaining enough. Duggan made many good runs and movements, including a spectacular skill move and, on another day, she would have scored a few. It was just one of those frustrating afternoons that all football teams get from time to time. The ball just would not go into the net.

This season, though, overall, has been a good one for Duggan, scoring nine goals, making her the fourth highest scorer throughout the division. Barcelona are also top of the league, level on points with Atletico Madrid. The Catalan side will play against Lyon in the Champions League quarter-finals, which means that Duggan will be taking on her compatriot and former teammate Lucy Bronze. Their former club, Manchester City, as well as Chelsea, have also reached this stage of the competition. Lyon have won the last two Champions League trophies, whilst Arsenal, in 2007, during their period of dominance with stars

such as Kelly Smith and Alex Scott, are the only English club to have done so.

Where English footballers have gone abroad, it has mainly been to the United States, or Australia, with current internationals Rachel Daly, Jodie Taylor and Laura Bassett there currently. Alex Scott, Karen Carney and Kelly Smith have all also spent part of their careers playing in the US. However, the obvious advantage is that there are not language barriers and less cultural differences. Indeed, Duggan is also making a conscious decision to try and adapt to her new surroundings. Taking Spanish classes, despite speaking English, a language many in the team would be able to converse in, is a clear example of this. Indeed, when I asked her for a photo after the match, she instinctively replied saying si, rather than yes. David Beckham was criticised in some quarters for not adapting in this way. Mauricio Pochettino, indeed, was heavily criticised for using a translator for interviews when he started at Southampton.

Not many British footballers go abroad. Given the qualities of the Premier League and the Women's Super League, this is hardly surprising. It is however, encouraging, especially for the national teams, that British players go abroad, even if it is only for a season or two. Going abroad helps you develop as a person, helps you try new things, and, in a footballing sense, can bring many benefits, such as a new style of football and new training methods. Duggan, no doubt, will be learning from fellow superstar Lieke Martens, just like she will be learning from her.

If a few more English players go abroad, the national team would perhaps improve, though the last World Cup performance, a semi-final, can hardly be bettered. Phil Neville has a tough task ahead of him if he is to improve on Mark Sampson's impressive record (on the pitch, anyway). With more players taking the brave decision that Duggan took, as well as constant improvement in the Women's Super League, women's football is, each year, in a better place. Let's hope it can continue this upwards trend.



### **BUCS Fixtures 14th February**

Basketball Womens 1st vs Keele 1st 5.15pm, The Edge

Hockey Mens 2nd vs Newcastle 2nd 2.30pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Hockey Womens 6th vs Sheffield 4th 1pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Lacrosse Mens 1st vs Keele 1st 4pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Lacrosse Womens 2nd vs Durham 3rd 2.15pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Netball Womens 1st vs Nottingham 1st 3.30pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

Netball Womens 6th vs Bradford 1st 1.30pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

> Rugby Union Womens 1st vs Edge Hill 1st 2pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Rugby Union Mens 5th vs York 3rd 1.45pm, Brownlee Centre

Squash Womens 2nd vs Durham 3rd 1.30pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

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

> Waterpolo Womens 1st vs Edinburgh 2nd 2.15pm, The Edge

Waterpolo Mens 1st vs Stirling 1st 3.30pm, The Edge

Full Fixtures and Results at bucs.org.uk

## **Eagles Finally Flying High**

### The Eagles won their maiden Super Bowl against the reigning champions, the New England Patriots

#### Elliot van Barthold American Football

There was a high level of confidence in the New England Patriots' camp coming in to last Sunday. This was set to be their third Super Bowl in four years – winning their last two – and they would be going in to the game as favourites against the Philadelphia Eagles, who were without their franchise quarterback, Carson Wentz. Tom Brady, at the tender age of 40, was in good form, dispatching the Jaguars team in the AFC Championship two weeks before. He and Bill Belichick are one of the most successful quarterback and head coach combinations the NFL has ever seen. It was no wonder that they were being pegged for another Super Bowl win. However, Messrs Foles, Blount and Jeffrey had other ideas.

The game started slowly, with all eyes on Wentz' replacement, Nick Foles. The quarterback, who almost retired from the sport a few years ago, stayed calm despite the watching millions and started superbly. His downfield throw from inside his own 40 found wide receiver Alshon Jeffrey who impressively held on to the ball after leaping high to get it. This was to set the precedent of a breathless game of offence vs offence to come.

Brady was by no means on bad form in Minneapolis but, ultimately, his battle versus Foles would come down to two trick plays. Brady went first, offloading the ball to HB James White and then running wide to receive a pass. However, he couldn't catch the ball when it was thrown to him. One Patriots touchdown later – thanks to a battling run from White – Nick Foles, fourth and goal, had 40 seconds till the end of the half. Instead of kicking, as most teams would, Doug Pedersen called an almost identical trick play which saw Foles run right, unfollowed, into the touchdown zone. A perfect throw from tight end Trey Burton found Nick Foles who did what Brady couldn't and held the catch. It was to be a pivotal moment in the match, giving the Eagles, a ten-point advantage going into the second half.

However, the Patriots, known for their fightbacks, did not give up. They continued to pile on the pressure and, briefly, took the lead in the fourth quarter. But it was a controversial touchdown from Zach Ertz, reviewed by the referees for what seemed an eternity, that gave the Eagles the lead with just three minutes left on the clock. NFL fans will know though that three minutes is plenty of time for Tom Brady to find some points for his team. It was going to take some special defensive performances to ensure he couldn't and that is exactly what we saw.

The game had, up to that point, no sacks. With two minutes left, Brandon Graham changed that. Piling in from the left, Graham knocked the ball out of Brady's hand causing it to spill out and into the arms of Derek Barnett. This meant the Eagles drove forward into field goal territory, where rookie Jake Elliott kicked over another three points to extend the Eagles' lead to eight with a minute left. Philly fans must have had their hearts in their mouths when Brady threw a 55 yard attempted hail mary into the endzone, but Gronkowski could not secure the ball. It would finish 41–33 and give the underdogs an historic win.



## The Battle of Catalan Independence

James Felton Football

Until you experience things, you never quite believe what they are going to be like. Imagination is a wonderful thing, and we as human beings would be lost without it. But imaging what something is going to be like is never the same as being there in the flesh. The Catalan derby, between Espanyol and Barcelona, is indeed one of those said experiences. On Sunday, I went to the newly named RCDE stadium to witness one of Europe's fiercest rivalries; with the context of Catalan nationalism and independence firmly rooted in the region, this only made the match more flavoursome. Added to this was also the fact that the two sides had recently met each-other in the quarterfinals of the Copa Del Rey, with Barcelona narrowly winning 2-1 over the two legs in encounters that were filled with controversy.

Gerard Pique, amid some of his recent comments, added even more, if it were possible, spark to the flames. Getting booed every time he touched the ball on Sunday afternoon, the home fans made no secret of their hatred towards him, using certain phrases to display their strong dislike of him – phrases I wouldn't dare write/translate here. It was indeed to be a tasty affair.

Historically, Catalan independence is not a new phenomenon; from 19th century revolts, 20th century political parties and anger at Franco's fascist dictatorship (including his banning of teaching Catalan in school), did much to damage relations between Madrid and Barcelona. Catalans, throughout history

(though by no means the majority), have always felt themselves different from the rest of Spain. Much of the discourse around Catalan independence is similar to the Scottish version, though, naturally, with many differences, as the distinctive traditions, histories and experiences of the UK and Spain show. However, with the recent events since the summer, the referendum in October and regional elections in December, this match was always going to be more than a simple game of football: it had political undertones to it.

Traditionally, Espanyol has been more likely to have anti-Catalan independence fans, whereas Barcelona is home to the independentistas. This is, of course, generalising. Many Barcelona fans are anti-independence and many Espanyol fans are not unionists. Families and friends have been split down the middle on this controversial topic. Roughly speaking, similar to Scottish independence, the peoples in Cataluña are divided by a 50/50 split. There were, though, Spanish flags aplenty in the stadium, with many Espanyol fans demonstrating their clear belief that Cataluña should remain in Spain.

The game itself was much what you expect from a derby match: fouls, yellow cards, controversial refereeing decisions, crunching tackles, passionate footballers. Ironically, after all the booing and his comments, Pique was the Barcelona goalscorer, provoking more anger to the home fans after his celebration. This was, as they say, always going to happen. The fact that it finished 1–1 did not seem to matter. Barcelona have almost won the league, and didn't lose to their rivals. That's all that seemed to matter to Ernesto Valverde, ahead of Barcelona's crucial cup semi-final vs Valencia followed by the Champions League double-header against a struggling Chelsea. The derby, in this sense, has always mattered more to Espanyol, given their lack of success compared to the dominance that Barcelona have achieved in the world of football.

What will happen in the future for Cataluña, nobody knows. Nobody knows what will happen tomorrow, let alone the long-term future of this rich, beautiful region. What is sure is that Espanyol vs Barcelona will always be a symbol of the rivalries between the independentistas y unionistas. Football transcends politics, but it also helps to shape political debate. It can be a vehicle of not only social change, but also protests. Whilst the Catalan question is up for debate – and it shows no signs of abating – this derby will play a pivotal role in the emotional political discourse. Therefore it is much more than a football match.



### Leeds Utd Part With Christensen

The Leeds boss sees his tenure end after eight months at the helm and is replaced by Paul Heckingbottom

### Thomas Lambton Football

Leeds United have parted company with Danish manager Thomas Christiansen and duly appointed Paul Heckingbottom, formerly of Barnsley, as his replacement.

The decision comes as a reaction to a seven game winless run, which included the embarrassing FA cup defeat away at Newport and last Saturdays 4–1 mauling at the hands of Cardiff.

Once again, the Leeds hierarchy are placed in the spotlight after the widespread criticism that followed the unveiling of their new club crest. This decision, however, is unlikely to prompt such strong feelings. The club's promotion chances were fading rapidly and their most recent performance was suggestive of a manager who had lost the dressing room. Furthermore, given the past track record of the Leeds ownership, there is little sense of surprise.

Initially, it all started so well for the relatively unknown Christiansen, whose previous managerial experience at AEK Larnaca and APOEL provided limited cause for excitement. Five wins from his first seven matches in charge catapulted Leeds to top of the Championship table and once again expectations were raised. A mixed run of form followed, but one only has to return to Boxing day to find a Leeds side on a four match winning streak, just five points off the automatic promotion spots.

Christiansen's eight months at Leeds will hardly go down in club folklore, but for a considerable time he undoubtedly managed effectively. Yet such is the cut and thrust nature of the Championship and the desire from a Leeds perspective, both on the part of owners and fans, to return to the promised land, that Christiansen can hardly feel unfairly treated.

His replacement, Paul Heckingbottom, represents an unexpected, yet perhaps shrewd appointment. Whilst his former side currently lie 21st in the Championship table, there is no doubting that he has operated with considerable success at Leeds' Yorkshire rivals, securing both promotion to the Championship via the playoffs and the Football League trophy. Last season he gained considerable plaudits for guiding Barnsley to 14th position despite operating on a relatively limited budget. The Leeds board also managed to secure his services just three days after he signed a new 12 month rolling contract.

For Heckingbottom and Leeds, the goal will and always should be, promotion. It is the ultimate testament to the club's stature that it has not been significantly diminished by its 15 year absence from England's premier division. This is demonstrated by the fact that week in, week out Elland Road still witnesses almost capacity crowds.

Whilst the recent managerial changes suggest otherwise, current chairman Andrea Radrizzani has undoubtedly provided greater stability to the club, particularly in comparison to his controversial predecessor Massimo Cellino. Promotion is a somewhat distant objective this season, but Leeds still represents a football club heading in the right direction.



## **Six Nations Opening Weekend**

The first round of the Six Nations saw some surprising scorelines as well some of the usual suspects

#### Ryan Wan Rugby Union

#### Italy vs England (15 - 46)

England looked very comfortable against Italy, which most people expected. Anthony Watson was Man of the Match, scoring two tries, but the biggest performance for England was replacement No.8 Sam Simmonds. Since Billy Vunipola and Nathan Hughes were out with injuries, this gave him a rare opportunity to start and he made the most of this, with his explosive pace at the back of the scrum giving him two tries. However, fans should not get too carried away yet and remember that this was against Italy, a side that most view as being the weakest in the tournament.

France vs Ireland (13 - 15)

Ireland overcame a defensively solid French side to seal a tight and valuable away win. Ireland were lacklustre in attack, with all their points coming from the boot of Jonny Sexton, including his magnificent 45m, game winning drop goal in the 83rd minute. France on the other hand must have felt incredibly hard done by to lose, having scored the only try of the game, a terrific 50m run by winger Teddy Thomas, which put them in the lead with only eight minutes to go. Ireland will need to be more creative in attack to break down defences, which they should have plenty of opportunities to do so against Italy. Wales vs Scotland (37 -7)

Scotland suffered a defeat in Cardiff by a shocking margin of 37–7. Most were expecting this to be a close game, with plenty of attacking rugby. Wales have been trying to transition to a more open game and Scotland have already proven their attacking prowess against the best sides, with a convincing victory over Australia in the autumn. However, there was only ever one team in the game, with Wales amassing 34 unanswered points, Halfpenny contributing to 24 of them, before Scotland managed a consolation try in the dying moments of the game. Scotland will be looking to bounce back at home against a tough French side, whilst Wales will be looking to capitalise on this momentum against the reigning champions at Twickenham.



### Leeds University Women's Football



## **1s Crowned League Champions After Northumbria Win**

#### Nancy Gillen Football

The women's football 1s have won their league in emphatic fashion, beating Northumbria 2s 5-0 to secure their status as champions of the BUCS Northern 1A for the third year in a row. This is despite having two games of the season left to play. But with the team currently unbeaten, it is easy to see how they achieved league victory.

The game was played out on Weetwood's 3G, under a blue sky but in freezing conditions. It started out evenly, with both teams enjoying spells of possession and the occasional chance. There were moments when Leeds attacker Fiona Worts was released through on goal, but the Northumbria keeper appeared proficient at timing one-on-one situations and managed to parry the ball away. Central defensive midfielder Liv DaCosta also had a couple of long-range efforts from outside the box, but her attempts passed just over the crossbar. At the other end, Northumbria's closest chance was an excellent free-kick, but Leeds keeper Beth Davies was ready and pulled off a brilliant save to deny the side from Newcastle an opener. The deadlock was finally ended 10 minutes before the break, when Fiona Worts broke the keeper's resolve and buried the ball into the back of the net. This proved to be the only goal of the first half, but set Leeds up to push on in the second.

This is exactly what they did, when soon after the game resumed Liv DaCosta was finally rewarded for her long-range efforts. Her powerful shot from 20 yards out curled past the Northumbria keeper and nestled into the top corner of the goal. This stunning goal, alongside a dominant individual performance, meant that she was named player of the match. From that point on Leeds were flying, and Fiona Worts got her second soon after DaCosta's goal. Even though the team were 3-0 up with only 25 minutes left, they continued to attack and eventually Worts had her well-deserved hat-trick. With the match and the league essentially in the bag, captain Vicky Palin had the opportunity to bring on some fresh legs. The benefits of this were immediately obvious when

substitute Emma Murray scored the fifth goal of the game five minutes from full-time.

As the final whistle went, the Leeds players began celebrating not only an excellent team performance, but retaining their title of league champions. Captain Vicky Palin had this to say after the game: 'I am so proud of all the girls who have played a part in this team! To be unbeaten and win the league this early is unbelievable. We have performed well throughout the season and hopefully we can continue this form in the cup.'

The 1s do indeed have much more to play for, including trying to continue their unbeaten run and most importantly, win the cup and do the double. The 2s are also in an excellent position to win their league, which would spell an extremely successful season for Leeds' women's football club. Club Captain Lil Stanton stated: 'It's a really great achievement for us as a team, winning the league for the third consecutive season. Hopefully the 1s can push on for a cup win as well, and the 2s can also win their respective league.'