



THE GRYPHON

The official newspaper of Leeds University

University Refuses to Waive Fees Following Funding Scandal



Image: Telegraph

Students allegedly told they will not receive degree classifications, despite completing their degree courses

Jonny Chard
News Editor

Some of Nigeria's brightest undergraduate students in the United Kingdom have had their funding withdrawn by the Nigerian government without their knowledge, leaving many facing deportation.

The Nigerian High Commission confirmed that 152 students had been affected by the scandal, and stated that the bursary scheme had folded as a result of a slump in national oil revenues.

A number of students, including those at Leeds, Sussex and Essex, have allegedly been told that they will

not receive their degree certification, even though many have completed their courses in the last academic year. Some have also been told that they may face deportation.

The universities of Sunderland and Swansea have allowed affected students to graduate, leading to accusations from Conservative MP Robert Halfon that some institutions are attempting to use the debt like a "ransom".

Halfon has called for the government to consider new safeguards for students, such as the introduction of compulsory insurance agreements, and has stated that the government should intervene to help those with no

financial support.

"Whilst some universities have done the right thing, it appears outrageous and unacceptable from those who won't help these students in complete distress, and are holding a loan over the heads like a ransom," said Halfon.

"Universities should be using their bursaries and other funds to support these students, and I hope that the government will be able to step in to find a solution," he added.

One University of Leeds student who has been affected is Ogbonnaya Samuel Ogbonna, a BSc Medical Sciences undergraduate, who was due to begin his third year, this year.

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Leeds Launches Bid for Capital of Culture

The city is hoping to win the title for 2023.

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We look at the chaotic situation in Catalan, and talk to some of those affected.

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Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

With the issue prominent in the news at the moment, Business take a look at sexual harassment in the workplace.

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Sport speak to Englishman Ryan Williams about his career in Canada with Ottawa Fury.

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Editors of the Week

Bella Davis

Bella jokily entered The Gryphon team into a competition to win free tea from Teapigs, and we won! What an absolute star.

Quote of the Week

The only way these things can continue is if there's no attention being paid to it, if it's getting forgotten.

Anthony Rapp

Credits

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Editor's Letter:



Dear Readers,

Last weekend, Anthony Joshua, British boxing's brightest new spark, eased passed Carlos Takam in their much hyped world heavyweight title bout. The fight proved to tell a different story than the walkover many pundits predicted, with Takam's perseverance carrying him to the 10th round before he eventually succumbed to the might of 'AJ'. Many criticised the ref for what was perceived to be an early stoppage, but with Joshua clearly in the ascendancy, and both fighter's wellbeing remaining paramount, it was a clear decision. Joshua's difficulty in turning over Takam has been attributed to many reasons since the fight's conclusion. One was that Takam landing an accidental head-butt on Joshua in the opening rounds disrupted Joshua's vision thereafter, the second was that the late change of opponent from Kubrat Pulev to Takam led Joshua to have to prepare for a different opponent in terms of style, size and stance at short notice, and the third was that Takam's 'never-say-die' attitude was grossly underrated. Whatever the reason for the delay, Joshua did what every champion does, he succeeded by any means necessary.

For those of this generation, Anthony Joshua is developing into a genuine sporting hero who embodies the image of the British underdog spirit. Born in Watford to a Nigerian mother and a father of Nigerian and Irish descent, and then subsequently raised on a council estate in Hertfordshire, Joshua had the odds of the world stacked against him from a young age. Couple this with the fact that he only began boxing at the age of 18, and managed to beat the reigning Olympic champion at London 2012 only five years later, Joshua embodies the idea of the rags-to-riches tale which we as a culture so dearly value.

In the politically turbulent age in which we currently live, with the far-right hijacking much of the Brexit referendum debate, and nationalist groups bastardising national images such as that of the poppy for their own political gain, those such as Anthony Joshua are currently invaluable in the cultural sphere. For a boy to come from little, to develop into a man who is both a world champion, but still lives with his mother, it shows the value of the man himself. Anthony Joshua embodies what we as a society should all strive to be, driven, successful and proud, yet also humble, respectful and kind.

Reece Parker,
Editor-in-Chief
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Exec Columns:



**Jack Palmer –
Union Affairs Officer**

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Last week, School Reps and the Exec met with Sir Michael Barber, the new chair for the government's Office for Students. We debated how students will be represented on issues like Brexit and funding and discussed the Teaching Excellence Framework and freedom of expression. I also went to London to contribute to an NUS group looking into governance in Students' Unions. This week, the Exec went on a trip to parliament! We met our local Leeds MPs, Hillary Benn and Alex Sobel, for a tour and spoke about equal access to Higher Education for forced migrants, the cost of living and student mental health, which was a great experience.

This November, we begin our massive 'Express Yourself' survey, which is going to ask students at Leeds what they want LUU's priorities to be for the next four years! As part of this, we're doing an event called the 'Express Yourself Forum' at 5:30 on Tuesday 7th of November. We're getting in the Vice Chancellor, an NUS Officer and a leader of the city council to speak about the future for students in our University, Union and Leeds, there'll be a Q&A with the audience, then we went you to tell us your ideas for where LUU is going to go over the next four years! Check out our website for more info.



**Zaki
Kaf Al-Ghazal –
Education Officer**

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So we've just had our first Education Assembly and it was awesome! The turn-out was brilliant with just about all eligible Reps attending and the meet up itself was a great opportunity for the Reps who haven't met each other to do so. Tom Ward, the Deputy Vice Chancellor for Student Education attended as a guest, and gave a short speech on his objectives and floor was then open for a general Q&A session. The Reps broke up into faculties and discussed issues of interest but the particular topic I wanted feedback was... the 24 hour Laidlaw Library! As you know, one of my main manifesto promises is to lobby the university hard on implementing making Laidlaw Library 24 hours all year around. I am taking this to the university in the form of a pilot in which it will then be reviewed, but I'll need YOUR help so watch this space for updates soon! I'll be forming a working group with School Reps on this so progress will be made and you'll be kept in the loop!

We also had the chance to go down to London on Monday! We visited parliament and met with our two Leeds constituency MPs Hilary Benn and Alex Sobel. Issues discussed included the asylum seeker scholarships, TEF and mental health pressures at university so it was a productive trip!



**George Bissett –
Community Officer**

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I'm meeting with Leeds City Council this week to discuss how they can support the Leeds Community Project and I with our big glass recycling campaign coming later this term. The issue stems from the fact that the council don't currently offer glass kerbside collection.

There are three things students generally do with their glass. Firstly, they take their glass to a bottle bank. There are lots scattered around Hyde Park, and you can use the Leeds Bins App to find your closest one. It would be amazing if everyone did this, but it's easy to forget, can be pretty long and it just isn't accessible for some. Second is putting glass in the green bin, WHICH IS WRONG! Students come to Leeds from all over the country: places where the different colour bins do different jobs. In Leeds, the green bin is for paper and card, metal and plastic. The third option is to simply put it in the black bin, which is then sent to be incinerated.

Clearly two of the three options are pretty damaging to the environment, but the first one seems like a unnecessary labour. So find your nearest bottle bank and we'll be in Hyde Park near the end of term to help you sort out your glass.



**Jess Bassett –
Activities Officer**

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This week we all had a trip to London to visit the houses of Parliament and King's College London. One thing that got me really excited was looking around the Student's Union at Kings. I absolutely loved the fact that they had FREE printing for students in the union. This is something that is a high priority for me and is something that I hope to implement in Leeds.

One of the highlights of my week was approving 4 new societies to form as official LUU societies. Mixed Martial Arts, Third Culture Kid, Friends of Irise and Cocktail society. All four societies ran great formation events with lots of positive feedback and I wish you all the best of luck for your first year at LUU.

On Wednesday 8th of November we have the Pyramid launch party for the 'Talking Tackles It' male mental health campaign, which will provide drinks, a raffle, and a player pledge auction to help raise money for two amazing causes, the James Burke Foundation and CALM. Please check out the website for more information about different ways you can get involved in November. #itsOKnottoBeOK



**Natasha
Mutch-Vidal –
Equality and
Diversity Officer**

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This week has been quite busy for me; full of meetings and a business trip to Parliament! I used my meeting on Tuesday with the University Facilities Directorate to raise the issue of the recent fire alarms that have gone off over campus these last few weeks. There have been many concerns over the effectiveness of safety procedures particularly for students with physical impairments when fire alarms do go off. The University team are keen to hear specific incidents and will look into reviewing the procedures put in place.

Aside from this, the University recently created a framework for inclusive teaching and learning available to teaching staff. To improve awareness of this framework, I worked with the Liberation Coordinators to outline the best ways to raise awareness of a resource that would drastically improve the learning experience of every student. Finally, the University's Equality and Inclusion committee met this week and I questioned them on the effectiveness of their proposed strategy of hiring BME lecturers and how they intend to improve the progression, representation and success of BME individuals at the university.



**Chloë Sparks –
Welfare Officer**

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On Monday, the Exec took a little field trip down to Parliament, where we were shown around by Hilary Benn and later met with Alex Sobel. I raised the mental health crisis with them both and had some interesting conversations about how it's impacting students. With Alex I started to discuss how broader student issues connect, such as housing, mental health and cost of living. It was a really good day and we got a lot from talking with some of our Leeds MPs. Recently I also met with Leeds City Council to help bring together our campaigns against domestic abuse, which you'll hear a lot more about in a couple of weeks...

I'm really lucky to be given such a big platform to talk about the pressures students face and influence positive change, whether that's inside LUU or across Leeds. I think it's so amazing that other students here at Leeds are also constantly campaigning on welfare issues, I find it to be really empowering and I know many other students do as well. As November kicks off, keep an eye out for Rugby League and American Football's 'Talking Tackles It' campaign, – I'm really proud of all the work they've put in.



Campus Watch

1 University of Sussex UKIP politician's speech postponed over 'safe space' fears

A speech by UKIP MEP Bill Etheridge at Sussex university has been postponed by the student union.

The event was set to be the first hosted by the newly established Sussex University Free Speech Society, but Etheridge was deemed to be a "medium-high risk speaker" and was asked to submit a copy of the speech to make sure it complied with the University's safe space policy.

A union spokeswoman said: "We've been working hard with the student

group to help ensure the event can go ahead." She added: "In this case, the panel did not have any information about the topic of the proposed speech when considering the risk of the event."

Etheridge responded to the decision in a defiant tone, claiming the event would "take place even if I have to stand outside with a loud speaker."

Ian White
News Editor

2 University of Sheffield Christian student thrown out of university for homophobic remarks

Felix Ngole was removed from his Social Work course at Sheffield University last year in February, due to the offensive comments he put on Facebook about gay and bisexual people.

The 39-year-old MA student wrote during a debate on the social media site that "the Bible and God identify homosexuality as a sin." He continued to say that: "same-sex marriage is a sin whether we like it or not. It is God's words and man's sentiments would not change his words."

Ngole defended his words saying he was expressing his traditional Christian view and the choice the University made was unfair by not allowing him to continue with his postgraduate studies.

He appealed the decision and the trial took place this month. High Court Judge Rowena Collins Rice ruled against him, leaving the university's decision to stand.

Aysha Zaheer

3 University of Oxford Staff member suspended after suspected links to terrorism

A worker at Oxford University has been suspended after material found online allegedly showed he had links to Islamic terrorism.

The employee, who has not been named, was sacked after University bosses learnt he had been arrested for terrorism offences 5 years ago.

He was arrested and detained for allegedly spreading extremist material, something he denies.

The Italian authorities reported he sent emails with links on how to carry out terror 'attacks and guerrilla techniques'. His arrest was in relation to an investigation about Jihadi extremism.

An internal investigation has been ordered by the University, which will be headed by Former Assistant Commissioner for the Metropolitan Police Helen King.

The man is currently not under investigation by the police.

William Marriott

4 Leeds Beckett Psychological testing introduced to prevent students dropping out

Leeds Beckett University holds one of the highest dropout rates in the United Kingdom, with 11.2 per cent of students dropping out in the first year of University. This is almost twice the average of other universities.

The University is using an analytics company Thomas International, which has designed a test containing 24 questions to identify students who are most likely to give up or drop out.

The test has been given to all First-Year students. It is able to spot personality traits associated with dropping out. The results have identified that making friends has a huge impact on student's wellbeing whilst they are at University

Claire Aydogan, Head of Student Futures at Leeds Beckett, said in its first year the test had prevented at least half a dozen students from dropping out.

Aysha Zaheer

5 University of Ohio Students beat world record by dressing up as penguins

972 students from the University of Ohio have broken the Guinness world record for having the most people dressed as penguins gathered in one place.

The record was previously held by a children's hospice in England, where 624 people dressed up as penguins back in 2015.

The Youngstown State University students gathered on Saturday on the campus to celebrate the University's 50th anniversary.

Half of the participants that took part were school alumni yet the event failed to achieve the personal aim set by the University of 1000 participants.

Rebecca Potkanowicz, student at the University, told the Vindicator: "This is one of the best things I've ever done and, to top it off, it's the end of my senior year".

"I just can't believe so many members of the community came out".

William Marriott

Leeds Launches Bid for Capital of Culture

Rabeeah Moeen
News Editor

Leeds city council submitted its bid to become Culture Capital of 2023, last Friday.

The Big Send-Off was held in the Quarry Hill area of Leeds, close to the West Yorkshire Playhouse, which held a number of shows and workshops throughout the day. Other institutions, including Northern Ballet and Pheonix Dance, were also holding performances in the day, in addition to live music held on the two stages.

A large variety of food and drink was on offer, with catering from local restaurants and cafes including Wardrobe, Kendell's Bistro and Aagrah. The selection of food and drink – from North Brewing Co. – was curated by the Leeds Indie Food Festival.

Outdoor activities were made inclusive for all, including workshops for children and families. The city hosted several groups who performed throughout the day, including the Punjabi Roots Academy – who performed a drum procession – and Leodian Circus – who performed circus and magic tricks on the streets around the area. There was also an outside exhibition from These Northern Types, exploring Northern identity, and exhibitions hosted at Colours May Vary and Munro House.

Sharon Watson, chair of the 2023 Steering Group,

said: “we’re delighted to be officially submitting our bid, and now it’s time to celebrate.”

Other cities in the UK submitting their bid in 2023 include Milton Keynes, Nottingham, Dundee and Belfast.

However, there is some ambiguity about how the event will be hosted in 2023, as Britain will have left the European Union. Currently, Britain is allowed to participate due to its EU member status, however the progress of the event may be dependent on Brexit negotiations.

Michel Magnier, director for culture and creativity, suggested it could be a problem, saying: “We have to prepare for the long period...and it’s very difficult to see how that will work given that we have complete legal and political uncertainty.”

However, the government have said it is “ready and fully committed for the UK to host the European capital of culture in 2023.”

The previous UK winner was Liverpool in 2008, and estimates suggest this honour saw a return of £750m into the economy.

Leeds city council leader, Judith Blake, said the city’s bid was based on a central theme of ‘Weaving Us Together,’ saying the bid in Leeds was set apart

in its ambition to “embrace equality.” The council also wants to increase arts attendance in its five most disadvantaged areas.

The council have also encouraged people to get involved with the bid, with #makeleeds2023.



‘Brave Spaces’: the Solution to Free Speech?

Ian White
News Editor

Universities should provide special ‘brave spaces’ on Campus, where students and outside speakers are free to voice unpopular or controversial views.

John Palfrey, a former professor and vice-dean at Harvard Law School, made the proposal in his recent book ‘safe space, brave spaces’. He argues that every campus should have a designated space where nothing is off limits.

He claims that ‘brave spaces’ would satisfy demands for greater diversity of opinion at Universities while simultaneously ensuring the wellbeing of students by confining controversial topics to designated spaces.

Palfrey told The Times: “People sit in one or other camp but it’s unproductive for our children and for democracy. Both diversity and freedom of speech are important.”

He added: “Diversity and free expression ought to co-exist. And yet, in recent years, a false choice has been served up: you are either for diversity, equity, and inclusion in our communities, or you are for free expression”

The proposals were welcomed by some university leaders. Sir Anthony Seldon, vice-chancellor of Buckingham University, said: “Brave spaces could be the solution that brings together sensible people of goodwill from both sides.

“The whole debate has become very polarised and damaging to the perception of higher education. This is a clear way forward that should detoxify and take the steam out of the situation.”

Government Refuses to Disclose Brexit Impact on Universities

Ian White
News Editor

The Department for Exiting the EU are under pressure to release a report assessing the impact Brexit will have on different sectors of British economy, including Higher Education.

In response to a freedom of information request by Labour MP Seema Malhotra, the Brexit department stated “there is a strong public interest in policy-making associated with our exit from the EU being of the highest quality and conducted in a safe space to allow for design and deliberation to be done in private.”

Brexit poses several threats to British Universities, including a reduction in the number of overseas students, and the disruption of international academic cooperation.

The lack of transparency over the possible impacts of leaving the EU is essential to the British negotiating position, according to the government. However, the decision to withhold information that may allow universities to better plan for Brexit has been criticised by figures from opposition parties, such as Malhotra.

“The government’s reference to needing to conduct Brexit policy-making in a ‘safe place to allow for design and deliberation to be done in private’ seems to be more about keeping parliament and the public in the dark,” she said.

“Parliament is not here to give the government a blank cheque on Brexit, but to assist in achieving the best deal for our economy and society.”

Coming in the wake of the Universities Minister Jo Johnson’s demands for greater freedom of speech on campus and the curbing of ‘safe spaces’, the government’s insistence on a ‘safe space’ for the Brexit negotiations will no doubt be viewed as hypocritical.

Student Left Fearing Possibility of Deportation

Jonny Chard
News Editor

After his funding was withdrawn by the Rivers State Government of Nigeria in 2016, Ogbonnaya has been left owing over £32,000 – a figure the university refuse to waive.

His case was taken to the highest level in the Faculty of Medicine and Health, but the Head of School ruled him unable to continue into his third year, although offered the concession of allowing him to return in September 2018 or September 2019 to complete his degree.

This would be on the conditions that the debt, which covers fees, accommodation and exam registration, be settled, and that he can prove he has the financial means to cover the costs of his final year.

Now classed as being on ‘temporary leave’, Ogbonnaya is concerned about the potential threat of deportation, given his visa revolved around his registration on a higher education course in the UK.

“If I was to get deported or go home now, I wouldn’t be able to return for twelve months, but this would then mean I would miss the registration period for next year,” he said.

Ogbonnaya, whose single mother cannot afford to support him, has managed to find a part-time job, but as an international student he has limited permission when it comes to how many hours he can work.

“This continues to make it very difficult for me to gather enough money to clear my outstanding charges and financially plan for my final year,” he added.

A spokesperson from the University of Leeds said:

“We sympathise with students who lose their funding in such instances, although in this case, Ogbonnaya’s sponsor advised him to return home and offered full state sponsorship to continue with his studies.

“We understand this has been very upsetting and stressful for Ogbonnaya and the University and the Union has offered him extensive advice and support. Although

details of what was discussed and any potential resolutions are necessarily confidential, we have set up meetings with specialist advisors and we have also liaised with key organisations on his behalf, including UK Visas and Immigration (UKVI).

“We seek to provide as much time as possible to resolve funding problems and, in some cases, such as where students are affected by natural disasters or conflict in their home country, arrange crisis funding, although we are not able to underwrite all sponsored students’ fees. The reasons for funding problems are many and varied, and each case requires individual consideration. As such, one policy does not fit all and any support varies according to circumstances.”

Ogbonnaya is keen to continue his studies at Leeds, rather than returning home, so has set up a GoFundMe page to raise the money that he owes the university which can be viewed at <https://www.gofundme.com/helpsamuel2017>.



Image: Telegraph

Leeds Dad’s Halloween Horror After he Tucks Into the Biscuit From Hell

Ian White
News Editor

A dad from Leeds was left with a bad taste in the mouth after his daughters were given biscuits while trick or treating, only to find out the biscuits were 19 years out of date.

Adrian Johnson’s daughters, seven-year-old Poppy and five-year-old Eidy, were given the McVitie’s milk chocolate digestives while they were doing the rounds of their neighbours’ houses yesterday evening.

But when Mr Johnson decided to try one of the biscuits after his daughters went to bed, he was given a nasty shock.

“I can’t really describe the taste. Just an awful, gone-off, long-lingering bad taste. He explained. “But my first mouthful, which I did swallow, I just thought, ‘bloody hell, that’s weird’.

“Second bite I knew there was definitely something wrong with them, so I sniffed them, looked at the biscuit side, which was quite white

rather than the usual brown-ish colour, and then I checked the sell-by date.

“That second bite ended up in the sink and I had to rinse my mouth and brush my teeth.”

“It was late on when I realised what had happened, so I didn’t go back to the couple. But I might pop round tonight when I get back home – more for their sake, than to complain, as who knows what else they’re keeping in their cupboards,” said Adrian, who has reported no lasting ill-effects from his snack.



“Disgusting” Halloween Attacks Condemned by Fire Chief

Ian White
News Editor

Fireworks were thrown at firefighters on Halloween night as they attended reports of a fire in Hyde Park.

Fireworks and rocks pelted fire engines leaving scrapes and burn marks. Thankfully nobody was hurt. Around 30 people were involved in the violence. Attacks also took place in Killingbeck and Calderdale, with five attacks on firefighters taking place in just one night.

West Yorkshire Fire deputy chief Dave Walton said: “Yesterday was an incredibly busy day for the fire service with over 600 calls coming into our control room and of those over 125 incidents were attended.

“Whilst our firefighters were trying to carry out a job and protect the community, they also came under attack, which in our eyes is disgusting. The fact that it was Halloween does not excuse dangerous behaviour which could ultimately result in serious injury.

“We are now in the run up to Bonfire Night, and we urge communities to spread our message that this must stop now.”



luu.org.uk





Society Spotlight: Leeds Nightline

Although the university experience can be fun, fulfilling, and rewarding, sometimes it falls well short of expectations, and you may find yourself in need of guidance. Eleanor Smith investigates how the wise owls over at Nightline continue to provide help and support to struggling students.

Eleanor Smith

With the halfway point of term now passed, winter settling in, and deadlines looming, Leeds Nightline are an important society to be aware of should you need any kind of support during your time as a Leeds student. They operate from 8pm to 8am every night in term time, offering a place to express any kind of worries or issues you may have.

The service is a volunteer organisation for students in Leeds, offering listening and information services through telephone, email and instant-messaging, no matter how big or small the concern. The service is similar to the charities Samaritans and Childline, offering a safe place to talk, exclusively for Leeds students.



Their listening services provide an anonymous, confidential and impartial space for expressing any problem you may have. Their information services are invaluable for navigating the city of Leeds as a student, whether you need information on how to access your university's counselling service or simply the number for a taxi.

Leeds Nightline is an incredibly important service and is an indispensable resource to be aware of during your time at Leeds. The listening services are particularly important as issues of mental health among students are on the rise. Students today are under an increasing amount of pressure, much more

than previous generations due to the increasing cost of higher education.

The Guardian Student Experience survey found that 87% of first year students experience some difficulty with aspects of university life. Incidences of students dropping out for mental health problems were also prevalent. 1,180 students left university early in 2014-15 for mental health problems, an increase of 210% from the 380 students in 2009-10, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency. These figures show the great need for the services Nightline offer.

“Students today are under an increasing amount of pressure, much more than previous generations, due to the increasing cost of higher education”

The organisation is a society based at Leeds University Union, however their affiliation with other Leeds higher education institutions, such as Leeds Trinity, Leeds Beckett, and Leeds College of Music, means the service is available to all Leeds students. The society is run by students, for students, with a committee comprised of twenty volunteers. The volunteers are extensively trained in communication skills so you know that whoever picks up the phone is prepared to listen and respond to your call with the utmost respect and consideration. As it is a student run service, you can be sure the receiver of your call understands your situation.

The service was established in 1973, giving it decades of experience in providing confidential information, advice, or simply just an ear. Over the years, the society's successes have been recognised by the Nightline Association, receiving recognition as 'Most Improved Nightline' in 2012, 'Nightline of the Year' in 2013, and a nomination for 'Best Volunteer Welfare' in 2015, which Leeds Nightline credit as a “testament to the fantastic efforts of our Nightliners”.



Image: Nightline

Contacting Leeds Nightline is easy. Their phone numbers are **0113 380 1380** for their information service and **0113 380 1381** for their listening service.

You can also make use of their instant messaging service, or make contact through the Facebook page, LUU Nightline.

The phone numbers are also printed on your student card, so you can be sure that a friendly voice is never too far away.

Why Ring Nightline?

Many different students contact Nightline for a wide variety of reasons such as

- **How to access your university's counselling services.**
- **You need help finding a lost student card.**
- **If you're feeling down and need a friendly voice to chat to.**
- **You need advice on how to help a friend you are worried about.**
- **The pressures of university are building and you want to offload on someone.**

This list is by no means exhaustive. Nightline are happy to help with whatever issues you may be facing.

What kind of student rings Nightline?

Nightline has 'no typical caller'. Any student can access their services, whether you are...

...A fresher struggling to adjust to the jump between A Levels and university.

...A final year student feeling the pressure of job applications or dissertation.

...A mature student feeling like they don't fit in with their coursemates.

...A concerned housemate worried about a friend.



Image: Nightline

Wine Soc’s £10 Sparkling Wine Picks

Party season is almost within reach, so let Wine Soc guide you through your bubbly purchases

Coralie Strong

Last Christmas everyone was talking about this bottle of fizz, and rightly so. At only £10.99, this brilliant *Aldi* Champagne beat the likes of Lanson, Veuve Clicquot and Laurent-Perrier in the ‘Which Best Buys for Christmas 2016’. The Leeds University Wine Society agreed to put it in top place, beating 8 other sparkling wines.

The bottle is from the Champagne region in France. Only sparkling wines made from this designated area and produced under specific legislations are entitled to use this world famous term.

Aldi’s Veuve Monsigny Champagne Brut has all the typical flavours associated with how the sparkling wine is made. There is a freshness, reminiscent of lemon-zest, from the grapes primary fruit flavours. The fizz also has lovely aromas of bread, biscuits, brioche and almonds due to the time it spent on its lees (dead yeasts) after the second fermentation- if you don’t know what this means then don’t worry, just pop along to the Wine Society’s weekly meetings (every Tuesday at 7.30pm in the Union) to find out more!

This South African Sparkling wine is made in the same way as Champagne, but obviously falls outside the small designated French area and therefore cannot be called ‘Champagne’. This wine is made from a traditional pairing of the white grape variety, Chardonnay and the black grape variety, Pinot Noir. These two grapes make up over two-thirds of all Champagne plantings, where only three varieties are permitted.

Even though the Pinot Noir doesn’t contribute colour to the wine, it is used to balance the Chardonnay and harmonise the wine. The aromas consist of fresh citrus and green fruits such as lemons and apples which add a crisp, freshness to the sparkling wine. There are also creamy notes that add richness and complexity to the final product.

The Graham Beck estate is located in the Breede River Valley region, a few hours outside of Cape Town. Although the company doesn’t have as an extensive history as many of the big Champagne houses, they have created a big name for themselves in both South Africa and the international market.

Graham Beck Brut is truly a delight to drink and one we would all recommend. Pick up a bottle from *Waitrose* or *Majestic*.

For those of you who are familiar with the large Champagne houses, the name Chandon might ring a bell. This pioneering company has undergone huge expansion from the traditional realms of Champagne, and now has wineries in six other countries, covering four continents. These include China, India, Brazil and Argentina- where this particular bottle is from.

The Argentinean winery is located at the foot of the Andes in Mendoza. These perfect conditions allow the grapes to retain the high acidity levels required for the perfect sparkling wine, as well as a depth of flavour. The wine is a traditional blend of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, with 10 grams of residual sugar per litre contributing to its title of ‘Brut’ or ‘dry’.

The aromas are fresh, with elegant citrus and green apple notes. The typical brioche flavours experienced in Champagne are also present from the second bottle fermentation. Many believe the company’s expansion is well planned. With increasing risks of poor harvests from changing weather conditions in the Champagne region, having a plethora of options can’t be a bad thing.



LUU Self-Awareness Courses

It is of utmost importance that students feel safe and secure both on and off campus. To assist with this, LUU is launching Self-Awareness Educational seminars in collaboration with the Martial Arts societies. Society Editor, Mary Lumley, urges you to come and get involved.

Mary Lumley

LUU is partnering with a number of the Martial Arts societies to provide ‘self-awareness seminars’ which will run throughout November. The numerous seminars will teach basic self-awareness and self-defense skills to help students become more street wise and feel safer at night around Leeds.

They will be led by Gina Kousopoulou, who is highly proficient in multiple martial arts including Taekwondo, Urban Krav Maga and Kickboxing. Gina currently teaches boxercise at the Edge, is a psychology lecturer, and coaches for LUU Kickboxing & Krav Maga. She will be assisted by Martial Arts representative Xenia Mutter, as well as committee members from the Muay Thai, Kickboxing & Krav Maga and Wing Chun societies.

Overall, participants should leave with a heightened awareness and confidence of how to act appropriately

in a variety of possible street attack situations such as nightclubs, at home, in isolated locations and attacks from behind (for instance, at ATM machines.)

There will be a stress drill at the end of the session, making use of all the techniques covered in that particular session, in which pupils should aim to react appropriately in as little time as possible. Each participant will be presented with a certificate at the end of the session.

Each session has 300 places, will be held at Stylus (the nightclub in the union) from 5-7pm, and cost £2 on the door. There are three repeat sessions to choose from on the 6th, 8th or 15th November.

You can find more information on the martial arts societies by visiting the LUU website and, if you have any queries, please contact Xenia Mutter by emailing her at sd15xmm@leeds.ac.uk. We hope to see you there!



Left to Right: Muay Thai Vice President Mary Lumley, KBKM Co-President Molly Cherry, and Martial Arts Representative Xenia Mutter



The Crisis of Catalan

With interviews from those Spaniards affected by the recent referendum on independence, *The Gryphon* delves deep into the chaos in Catalan.



Chloe Lovatt

Images by *Sílvia Blanco Tejerina*

It's impossible to escape the words "Catalonia" and "independence" recently in the UK news. As you can imagine, it is dominating the airwaves here in Spain. The Spanish region has been in the news because it promised its citizens an independence referendum on 1st October 2017 – a referendum that had been suspended a month earlier, after the Constitutional Court ruled that it was a breach of the Spanish Constitution. The referendum was declared illegal by the Spanish government, but went ahead nonetheless. The "yes" vote won with an outstanding 90%, but with a voter turnout of 42.3%. Reports say that as many as 844 people were hurt in struggles with the police as voters tried to get to polling stations. In the weeks preceding the vote, ballot papers were seized and Catalan politicians arrested. It's not hard to see why comparisons to the Franco era are being thrown around so liberally. Whatever your political leaning, the referendum seems to be another sign of the climate of polarisation in modern day politics. The Spanish are not afraid to hide their opinions, and heated debates have been taking place in classrooms, coffee shops and on street-corners. I'm situated in Murcia, at the other end of the country, but am intrigued by the arguments I'm hearing 300 miles away from Catalonia. It is also interesting to hear the difference in opinion across the generations, so I decided to sound out a small sample of the youth in my area, to hear their views.

Jose

"I'm not an expert on the political or the economic reasons why Catalonia should, or should not become independent, but what I can say from experience is that a climate of tension and hypocrisy has arisen"

"Many times I've thought, what it meant to me to be a Spaniard. It is true that recently many nations have felt the need to proclaim their independence, for economic or political reasons. In the case of Catalonia, besides the existence of a co-official language, there's really not much reason for it to want independence and I feel this is something that has been going on for way too long now.

"I'm not an expert on the political or the economic reasons why Catalonia should, or should not become independent, but what I can say from experience is that a climate of tension and hypocrisy has arisen.

"Before these past few months, you would rarely see a Spanish flag hanging off a window or balcony unless it was during the World Cup. But now it seems like everybody has their own flag outside their window, saying 'Hey look how united we are!'. Meanwhile half of the country is burning and more than thirty people have died due to forest fires in Spain and Portugal. I personally haven't heard anybody talk about that yet, or do anything about it."

Rachel

"Does Catalonia have a problem with Spain, the country itself, its traditions, cuisine, opinions and lifestyle? Or does it have a problem with Spain's leaders? Let's hope that the situation the country finds itself in can allow us to concentrate on the true problem Spain currently faces"

"I understand the Catalanian population, I understand their pride and, with the situation the Spanish Government has created over the last few years, I can also understand the Catalans wanting to pack their bags and leave, even though it would break my heart.

"I don't know whether the referendum was a good or a bad idea, wrong or right. But what I do know is that when people are silenced and forbidden to speak when they have asked for change, a dictatorship is imposed. I believe that it is shameful to use violence as a first resort. I also know that the Spanish Government's favourite pastime is stealing, stealing and then stealing again. This is another key perspective on the situation, which has been shared on social media in many different parts of the country.

"Does Catalonia have a problem with Spain, the country itself, its traditions, cuisine, opinions and lifestyle? Or does it have a problem with Spain's leaders? Let's hope that the situation the country finds itself in can allow us to concentrate on the true problem Spain currently faces."



Marta

“I believe that the debate on Catalanian independence is revealing the worst of Spanish politics. The central government has shown its clear lack of resources, authority and coherence when trying to control the independence controversy. Meanwhile, the minority parties and the opposition demonstrate their lack of stability.

“On the other hand, Catalan independence campaigners have carried out a ridiculous initiative that has become a reaffirmation of ego rather than a matter of political interests. No one agrees with what their representatives do. Worse still, the events make Spain the laughing stock of Europe.”



The opinions on the Catalan situation are as varied as the answer to the question: “So, how is the UK actually going to leave the EU?”. One thing that most people seem to agree on in Spain is how abhorrent the central government’s response to the referendum has been. Throwing politicians in jail and allowing police to use violence at polling stations has glaring echoes of a dictatorship. The right to vote is fundamental to a democracy – whether the Catalan referendum becomes law is an entirely different matter. Comparisons have been made between this referendum and Brexit. Some have made the vote seem like a war between nationalism and globalism, progressivism and conservatism. But it strikes me as having much more in common with the Scottish Independence referendum in 2014, when a more socialist leaning government tapped into some of the public’s distaste for conservative and austerity politics. I see both referenda as being more about protests against central government policies, rather than prioritizing the yearning of many Catalan and Scottish citizens for an independent nation. The key difference is that the Scottish people voted to stay in the UK. In Spain, however, with low voter turnout in the referendum and strong resistance to amending the constitution from the central government, it seems unlikely that we will see an independent Catalonia any time soon.



- Movie Reviews - More Harm than Good?



The Gryphon looks at movie reviews and whether they are helpful for audiences or serve to damage the film industry

Rachel Berry

Before I decide to see any movie in the cinema, I always look at the reviews. A film review can tell me whether a movie is a waste of time or not, and makes my cinema-attendance much cheaper. I find comfort knowing that the next two hours of my life will tick off all of the boxes that I require for a movie. Critics can spot meaning and beauty in a film that may be unnoticeable to the untrained eye, allowing for a greater appreciation of the art. Leader-boards are generated, ranking the reception of movies to establish the must-sees and the life-changers. It's a bit of a cycle; the movies shape the reviews, the reviews shape the public's interest, and the public's interest shapes the movies. But are they as important as they seem?

Movie reviews don't always matter to the general public. For instance, certain Marvel movies, like *Thor: The Dark World* (2013), persuaded moviegoers to spend their money despite amassing numerous negative reviews from unimpressed critics. With a huge fan base and an established appeal from the comics, audiences apparently did not care about the repeated plot structure of superhero movies. On the contrary, that's what they seemed to like.

"Critics must be sick of films that are nothing but temporary aesthetic fulfilment, and therefore produce bad reviews of films that the general public may still enjoy"

But why is it that the Avengers can get away with unoriginal concepts, while DC superheroes can't? While the Marvel Cinematic Universe's first film, *Iron Man* (2008), received rave reviews for giving new energy into comic book movies, the DC Cinematic Universe's first film, *Man of Steel* (2013) was critically

underwhelming. These first reviews set a precedent for the rest of the franchise, with DC's current total box office revenue being, on average, significantly less to Marvel's. Clearly then, reviews make a difference to the public. But when DC's *Wonder Women* (2017) was received well by critics, it still had a smaller box office compared to both of the Marvel movies released that same year- *Spider-Man: Homecoming* and *Guardians of the Galaxy Vol. 2*. All three gained plaudits from critics and fans alike, but what caused the glaring box-office difference between them?

There seems to be a current trend of 'okay' movies which are no longer satisfactory enough for critics, with big blockbusters like *Passengers* (2016) being hugely panned. *Passengers* was held to be unremarkable and formulaic, with any intensity in the pivotal scenes being diminished by the predictability of the ending.

"People relate to movies differently due to their own experiences and personalities; being told how to think by someone who is going in to a movie with a completely different set of expectations and requirements for contentment than you would be an absurd notion"

Critics must be sick of films that are nothing but temporary aesthetic fulfilment, and therefore produce bad reviews of films that the general public may still enjoy. Meanwhile, movies like *Get Out* (2017) received huge acclaim for being clever, topical, and for inciting self-examination- something rare in horror movies. However, if horror movies commonly reflected society rather than relying on jump scares to fuel your adrenaline, how long would it take for this to become predictable for viewers?

Poor or average reviews create a preconceived notion

of what you will get out of a movie when, in reality, it is a completely subjective experience. People relate to movies differently due to their own experiences and personalities, and so being told how to think by someone who is going in to a movie with a completely different set of expectations and requirements for contentment than you would be an absurd notion.

"The success of the film-maker is in the hands of the critic, as they can manipulate the public's thoughts about a film, and therefore their likelihood to watch it"

When *Suicide Squad* (2016) received poor critical reviews, fans called for the boycott of review website *Rotten Tomatoes*, due to the bad reviews leading to many people choosing to stay at home rather than going to see Margot Robbie take down an Amazonian goddess with a baseball bat. Although the film didn't win over many fans from the public, it is nevertheless important to note that the barrage of criticism *Suicide Squad* received online contributed a great deal to people giving it a miss while it was in cinemas. Although, on the other hand, the wealth of negative reviews may have actually worked in DC's favour; you couldn't escape references to *Suicide Squad* online, on the TV, or in magazines in the months leading up to and after its release date. There's no such things as bad publicity I guess!

The success of the film-maker is in the hands of the critic, as they can manipulate the public's thoughts about a film, and therefore their likelihood to watch it and generate income for the movie-industry. Reviews are helpful for those who do not find 'okay' movies satisfactory, but for the majority of the general public who watch movies as a distraction and entertainment, reviews can be a hindrance to the film industry.

In The Middle

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

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#MeToo: Sexual Harassment and the Music Industry

Following the sexual abuse allegations against Harvey Weinstein, the #metoo campaign spread across social media in a movement to highlight sexual assault and harassment. Since then, millions have bravely come forward with their stories. Rachael Dickinson discusses sexual harassment within the music industry.



Image: Women Stand Together

Sexual harassment of any sort is condemned by society, however the topic is also widely stigmatised and often kept quiet. Following the overwhelming response on social media to the 'Me Too' campaign, it's important to consider the extent to which sexual harassment has plagued our society. This in particular is considered something of a grey area within the music industry with the notion that 'sex sells'.

Quite a famous example of sexual harassment allegations in the music industry is the recent case between the producer Dr Luke and singer Kesha. The singer was denied the rights to be freed from her contract, as the court seemingly sided with her alleged abuser. The ongoing case brought obvious distress to Kesha, yet Dr. Luke appeared to be given the benefit of the doubt by court ruling. This establishes fear for women (not just for females across the music industry), as this implements the message that women should not speak up about the abuse they are facing. This is very dangerous as, if women are not listened to and taken seriously when it comes to reporting the harassment they have received, then what's in place to stop some men from continuing this sexual behaviour.

Singer-songwriter Lady Gaga, who actively speaks out against sexual harassment, has come under the criticism of the likes of Piers Morgan (who accuses the musician of lying). With male members of society actively trying to dispute any claims of sexual abuse out there, it's difficult for women to speak out without receiving criticism. The sad truth is that for some women, it's a safer option to keep quiet and suffer alone than to try and get justice for the crimes against them. It's

“The sad truth is that for some women, it's a safer option to keep quiet and suffer alone than to try and get justice for the crimes against them.”

important to note that sexual harassment can come in any form, and is not exclusive to physical assault. Any kind of sexual behaviour, such as unwanted flirtatious comments or inappropriate suggestions are all classed as sexual harassment.

With the idea that women somehow bring this upon themselves, the fight against sexual harassment is far from over – this is just the

surface of the ongoing misogyny women face throughout their daily lives.

Yet, whilst women are often the victims of sexual harassment, men can also be exposed to this kind of behaviour, and it's important to speak out for all of those who have been affected. In a recent interview with Tom Jones, the singer opened up about a previous encounter with sexual harassment: 'What's tried on women is tried on men as well'. Whilst females are more commonly targeted, men can also be victims of this sexual harassment. Men face the pressure of not wanting to speak out as they fear being seen as weak, with others being unable to comprehend the idea that sexual attention from women might not be wanted as men are told that they should be 'grateful' for the attention. Regardless of gender, sexual harassment can affect anyone at any age. Whether you know the person or not, if their sexual behaviour is making you uncomfortable it is important to make them aware of this and to speak to others for help.

If you've experienced anything similar to what is mentioned in this article, support is available from supportafterrapeleeds.org.uk

Rachael Dickinson



Image: Fiesta

The Underrated Beauty of Going to Gigs Alone

So you've found yourself at a gig alone. Your favourite band that none of your friends listen to have come to town and no one wanted to come with you. You stand self-consciously amongst couples and groups of friends, eager for someone to text you just so you can prove to these strangers that you're not completely socially inept. Maybe you buy yourself a drink just so you have something to do other than scroll through old tweets since you have no data and the Wi-Fi won't connect. But then the band come on, and all your inhibitions melt away; the whole crowd comes together, unified by mutual appreciation for the music, and you realise you're not really alone.

It's ok to go to gigs by yourself. If anything, it's cool. In a recent survey by Dice, they found that out of 500 18 to 24-year-olds, 65% have been to a gig alone, with 98% of them saying they wouldn't mind doing it again. 32% say going solo to gigs was a way they could feel spontaneous, and a huge 84% say they felt the music sounds better alone. Of all the gigs I've been to, the one's where I've gone by myself have been some of the most transcendental and moving, and anyway, moshing with strangers is always more thrilling when you don't have to worry about losing your mates.

You'll kick self-consciousness against the barrier; there's something empowering about being comfortable alone, especially within a social space where it's stigmatised to be by yourself. As a social species, we're inherently inclined to be around people and forge relationships, so it's only natural for us to want to share our experiences with others or shy away from venturing alone into the crowd. Yet, a gig provides that perfect dichotomy of being alone with your thoughts without being

physically alone, as everyone in that room is there for one main reason: to see a band you all love. And who knows? You may even meet your next best friend or future bae in the middle of that mosh with strangers.

Being by yourself lets you think deeper about the experience, and you'll notice subtleties within the performance and atmosphere that you probably wouldn't have appreciated if you were distracted chatting shit with your friends. You can turn up when you want to turn up, leave when you want to leave, and easily manoeuvre yourself to the front without annoying anyone with your snakey human-chain of six; just a few polite shoulder taps and sorrys and you'll find yourself within eye-line of your favourite artists' shoelaces (you sneaky bastard).

“It's ok to go to gigs by yourself. If anything, it's cool.”

It turns out literally no one cares if you're there alone. You'll upload your obligatory Instagram afterwards just like everyone else, and will be cooler for it; You disregarded social stigma and personal insecurities to see a band you love play to a room of people who all have at least that one thing in common with you. You're an empowered solo gig-goer. You're a good person, and your lack of company is never a reflection of your shining personality or your superior music taste. And, most importantly, you can still get that post-gig Crispy's on the way home.

Meg Firth

Making Music Herstory Vol II: Bonzai

Bonzai is part of the new generation of women making music herstory today. She takes the lessons learned by her foremothers and crafts them into her weird and wonderful music, creating tracks that are so individually stamped that you'll have a hard time putting her into any box.

Bonzai, a.k.a Cassia O'Reilly, grew up in the small village of Wicklow just outside of Dublin. At just 21 years old, Bonzai is already making waves. Having performed backing vocals for NAO, opened for Flume on his world tour and caught the eye of Mura Masa, she shows little sign of slowing down any time soon.

Demonstrating early promise, she graduated from college a year early at the age of 17 to study music in London. Having cut her teeth on the Dublin club scene using a fake ID at the age of 14, she was well-equipped with enough street smarts and independence to make it in the Big Smoke.

Citing Mumdance, Sega Bodega, MIA and Chemical Brothers as just some of the inspirations behind her sound, Bonzai combines industrial beats and quirky production to create a sound that is undeniably her own. What most notably shines through is her fierce sense of self, a challenge for anyone who tries to pin her down. As she declares in 'I Did' on her 2016 EP, *Lunacy*, murmuring casually

through the metallic beats: 'I did what you did/Succeeded by any means.' The development of Bonzai's sound from her first releases to recent singles is exciting to trace. Swirling sonic landscapes mark her EP *Sleepy Hungry*, entwining recordings of real life into her tracks, and bringing her listener into her reality. Only a hop, skip and a jump away lies recent single 'I Feel Alright', which sees Bonzai exhibit her stunning voice, declaring herself loud and proud for the world to hear.

Get locked into Bonzai before she blows up, which surely can't be long if she continues in the same vein.

Tracklist: - 'I Feel Alright', 'Where Are U Now', 'What If I Go?' by Mura Masa feat. Bonzai, 'No Rest' - 'I Did'

Jemima Skala

Gig Round-Up



Image: Olivia Williams

Fickle Friends @ The Wardrobe . 17/10

It may be cold and dreary outside, but Fickle Friends are already pre-empting next summer with their breezy melodies and palm tree decorated set. The Wardrobe is the perfectly charming venue for an irresistibly charming band.

Despite not having released a debut album yet, Fickle Friends draw an enthusiastic crowd. Fans are already yelling requests from their compact collection of EPs and singles, and it seems everyone in the pit has been practising their lines as not a word goes unechoed. Although she confesses to having a 'bit of chesty cough', front-woman Natti gives a charismatic performance, her vocals are strong as they are heartfelt. Chorus in full swing, 'Say No More', is the perfect example of what Fickle Friends do best: playing feel good songs to groove and sing away your troubles to.

It's a poppy set-list, with aptly named songs like 'Sugar' and 'Vanilla' showcasing their most synth heavy songs to which the audience respond with unwavering energy. At times, these moves can be a little too saccharine, especially compared with their earlier, jangly guitar songs, which didn't get much attention. However, you have to give it to them; it's near impossible to not move during their set. If you're looking to keep up your step count for the night, then this is the place to be.

In the last half of their set, Natti introduces their new beat-driven single with the explanation, 'we wrote this song for anyone who has ever felt it hard to be themselves. The band have succeeded in making an inclusive escape from whatever their fans may be dreading or worrying about the next morning. It may be raining outside, but the future is looking bright for Fickle Friends.

Natasha Lyons

The Horrors @ Leeds Beckett Union, 21/10

"Are we holograms? Are we visions?" certainly rang true in the visual presentation of The Horrors' headline gig. Amidst the smoky atmosphere and holographic lights, the band were only really visible as silhouettes and shadows, retreating in and out of the darkness. The most identifiable feature of frontman Farris Badwan was his Robert Smith-esque hair, floating in the iridescent arena.

The band had the audience in a trance-like state, hypnotized by their sedative rhythm and '70s psychedelic-esque sound. What they convey through sound and vision is something not far from astronauts floating around in space, detached from the rush of reality and guided by their own measured beats. At times Badwan broke our trance, with electrifying, animated movements that didn't seem quite humanly possible. Perhaps they picked up an alien on their space tour? That wouldn't be far off their '80s agenda. The Horrors' '80s influences are hard to miss, think Echo & the Bunnymen reeled back a notch, with slower and more sustained melancholy with a psychedelic aura.

Badwan's voice blends with the loud atmospheric music, beckoning the audience to take a step closer and figure them out amongst the shadows. Some of their new numbers, like 'Point of no Reply', have brought The Horrors closer to pop – melancholy '80s pop that is – with these influences unmistakable in their fitting final song, 'Something To Remember Me By'. Despite its initial enigmatic and aesthetic appeal, their shadowy presence left me wanting a little more to remember them by.

Fiona Hope McDowall

Coasts @ The Chapel, 23/10

There's an unrivalled electricity and intimacy in the tiny Chapel; the 'them and us' barrier crumbles and the sense that you're all just in it for a good time is in the air. And, what a good time it was. Although the church venue may have lost its religious roots, Coasts certainly turned it into a heaven.

The electric set by the Bristolian indie-pop-rock band was mesmerising throughout. Lead vocalist Chris Caines' energy was infectious, transforming Chapel into a haven of happiness with that 'summer night at a festival' feeling. It was easy to forget that, outside, it was yet another pissing wet Leeds night.

The 14-song set of anthemic tracks was the gift that kept on giving; combining better-known songs from the band's self-titled debut album, with songs from their recently released second album *This Life*. As the crowd responded with delight when the first few chords of 'A Rush of Blood' echoed through the venue, it was easy to see why Zane Lowe dubbed the track "absolutely huge" back in 2014.

Finding a band that sound the same, if not better, live than they do on their records is like discovering an extra chicken nugget in the box; rare and wonderful. Caines' voice is undeniably excellent, and beautifully distinctive. With their second album just released, the band are about to have completed an epic 38-date UK tour. Yet the fresh passion and energy they demonstrated on stage tonight made it feel like their opening gig.

With catchy tunes, wonderful vocals and some Jagger-esque moves from front-man Caines, one thing's for sure; there's only blue skies and a bright future on the horizon for Coasts.

Cally Collier



Image: Ian Laidlaw



Image: Glass Butter



Image: Scott Shriner

Weezer @ O2 Academy, 23/10

On Monday night, against the backdrop of a 7ft illuminated ‘W’, a cape, sceptre and crown clad River Cuomo approached the mic to perform ‘King of the World’. All I could think was, “Jesus, these guys are lame.” It has been, and evidently still is, this all-embracing nerdiness that make Weezer so endearing and loveable. The crowd, albeit mainly white, male, middle-aged and slightly obnoxious, went crazy for it.

Weezer are an inherently funny band, ready to take the piss out of themselves at any moment. One only has to listen to ‘Troublemaker’ from *The Red Album* to really get a taste of their humour. Their sell out show at the O2 was steeped in this humour. A little too much for my liking.

Promoting their new album, *Pacific Daydream*, and new single, ‘Feels Like Summer’, meant the set list was filled with new stuff. Weezer for me will always be about the Blue, Green and Red album (and a little bit of Pinkerton). Their more recent music, especially the new 2017 stuff, is in contrast uninteresting. However this wasn’t the issue. Over the course of the evening Weezer covered both ‘Hey Ya’ by Outkast and ‘I Took A Pill In Ibiza’. Drawing attention to their own white, dorkiness was quite cute but musically, not great. The Posner cover on the other hand, crossed the line and I watched Cuomo turn into some weird Comedy Musician before my eyes.

‘El Scorcho’, ‘Island in the Sun’, ‘Buddy Holly’ and ‘Say It Ain’t So’ all played to a high level, but my beloved Weezer, relic of the 90’s, monarchy to the high school nerd. You’ve changed, man.

Leah Dolan

Declan McKenna @ Stylus, 25/10

Deep in the caverns of Leeds University Union on a gloomy Tuesday evening, a magical moment was happening. There was something incredibly moving about the sea of glitter-clad, bright-eyed young faces hanging on every word of Declan McKenna, particularly during powerful hit ‘Paracetamol.’ This newcomer has gained a vast and loyal following with his thoughtful lyrics and reputation for a raucous live show.

Dressed in a white lab coat, McKenna was met with a thundering reaction. With a talented, full live band to bring his intelligent debut album *What Do You Think About the Car?* to life, every song – from the acoustic ‘Make Me Your Queen’ to the anthemic ‘Brazil’ – had the crowd bouncing. McKenna and band maintained an admirably high energy, coming into their own during the second half of the set with highlight hit ‘Humungous’, a bittersweet track with sparkly synths and sombre vocals. Clambering over the stage, McKenna looked every inch the seasoned performer with his charismatic stage presence and endearingly awkward interactions with the crowd.

It was sweaty, it was raw and there was a lot of glitter – this was to be expected from Declan McKenna, who delivered on his reputation for a high-energy, rough-around-the-edges indie-pop. His set was concise, showcasing a range of material from his debut in just an hour before concluding with a triumphant dive into the crowd, which seems to have become his signature move. Both McKenna and the young crowd, dancing incessantly throughout the set, left me feeling satisfyingly exhausted.

Lucy Milburn

Clean Cut Kid @ Brudenell Social Club, 25/10

It took all of 40 seconds to walk from my front door to Brudenell, and the evening ahead was indeed an undeserved break from the copious amount of reading and essays haunting me.

Callum Beattie began the night, debuting a variety of unreleased songs and accumulating some new fans with his strong, Scottish, raspy tones. Leeds band Marsicians, followed, who, having played this staple venue before, were happy to be in front of a home crowd once again.

With enough time for the sold-out crowd to grab a drink and hit the loos, Clean Cut Kid ascended the stage and went right into ‘Runaway’, creating a contagious energy that didn’t waver for the next hour. Although lead man Mike Halls made it clear from the get-go that they’d play the album and that was it, the variety of tracks from *Felt* and his scouse humour didn’t disappoint. Following on with the crowd pleaser ‘Stay’, Mike then introduced Evelyn, band member and wife, and proceeded to make her incredibly uncomfortable as he encouraged the crowd to serenade her with ‘Evelyn’.

Calming things down with their “emo section about heartbreak”, ‘Brother of Mine’ and ‘Time to Let You Go’ had their moment in the sun. As expected, the iconic guitar riff burst through the speakers and the set was closed with their most popular riff record ‘Vitamin C’. As Evelyn and Mike’s voices melted into each other, they were joined by the entire venue, and with people on shoulders and hands in the air it was one of the best Wednesdays I’ve had in a good while.

Andrea Loftus



Image: Meg Firth



Image: Getintothis

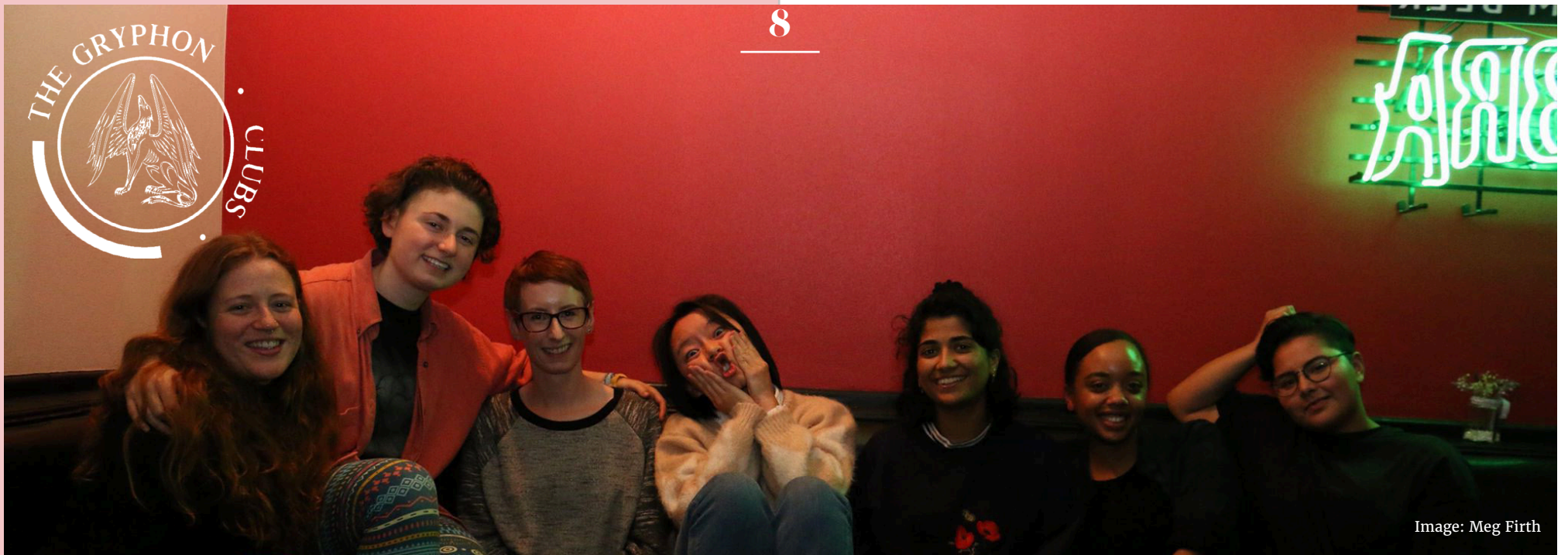


Image: Meg Firth

Partying Towards a More Equal World

Equaliser is a collective creating a more inclusive space for aspiring female, trans and non-binary DJs. Music Editor Meg Firth sits down with some of the girls behind the movement to talk about tackling the inequalities within the DJ sphere, diversifying the decks, and partying towards a safer and more welcoming clubbing scene.

Sheltering from a rainy Thursday night in *The New Moorside Social Club*, the *Equaliser* girls and I huddle around a table. From the very beginning, the conversation is empowering; each woman at the table passionately talks about the DJ scene with inspiring insight and knowledge that I just wanted to absorb, encapsulating how DJing isn't reserved only for cis white boys.

To prove there's no shortage of women and queer people who have the potential to master the decks, *Equaliser* supply monthly DJ workshops, transferring their vast knowledge and experience through working with projects such as *Brotherhood*, *Love Muscle*, *Speed Queen*, *KMAH Radio* and *Brudenell Groove*. "It's clear that a lot of the barriers in the way of females and trans people in the amateur DJ scene is to do with confidence," says *Brotherhood* DJ Tami Pein, "So what *Equaliser* does is promote confidence essential for change." *Equaliser* manager, Lucy Scarisbrick, adds, "We're creating a free knowledge transfer from women to women, so hopefully in the future there will be cohorts of women who know how to DJ and can pass that on to other women in the same way that men already have that privilege."

"It's not like 'men should be quiet it's women's time for music', it's just about equality and respect," clarifies *Brudenell Groove* resident, Ranyue Zhang. "We're just sick and tired of boys hovering around a girl while they DJ as if it's the most difficult thing in the world when it's not," Katrina laughs. "Anyone can learn how to DJ! No one has claim over the decks." We've all seen that protective sphere of boys around the decks at a party. Having the confidence to insert yourself within that seemingly unbreakable ring seems impossible, especially when convention stereotypes DJing exclusively as a 'male' activity. "*Equaliser* is about that inclusiveness that you don't always find in other places," expresses Raeanne Lawrence. "You don't have to have this huge record collection or know how to mix, you can just enjoy going to a good night."

Equaliser is a spark amongst many, with numerous DIY movements all over the UK and world showcasing and celebrating female, POC and LGBTQ+ DJs. Collectives such as London party crew *SIREN*, NYC's *Discwoman*, *SISTER Worldwide* and Copenhagen's *Apeiron Crew*, to name a few, all grew from female drive and passion for inclusivity, and Leeds seems as good a place as any to add another spark to the fire. "The thing about Leeds is that I wouldn't feel confident doing this anywhere else," *KMAH* frequent, Charlotte Bozley, tells me. "There's much more of a network; you see the same people at the same nights all the time so if you're interested in something someone else is doing and you've been to their party you can just go and talk to them and get involved." Everyone at *Equaliser* is involved in other projects across Leeds, "we sort of take all the best bits and most comfortable bits of those experiences and we try to curate it together," says DJ Zoya Ahmed. "One of the best parts about the first *Equaliser* party was just looking around the room and seeing the different pieces of everyone in it and realising how it was such a collaborative thing. It's our individual messages from our individual things but they're united as one and it's way more powerful."

Equaliser, however, isn't just a contained spark. Despite being early days, the potential influence it has across Leeds nightlife feels revolutionary, as it sparks conversation on how to make spaces feel more inclusive, safe and welcoming. "*Brudenell Groove* at *Wire* is another thing most of us are involved with [the *Equaliser* party] spurred us on to talk to *Wire* about making the club better for women and marginalised people," mentions Charlotte. "It would be nice to get to a point where we didn't need to have the conversation anymore. There's always the feeling in the back of your mind like 'do they really like my music or are they just trying to get a woman on the lineup to check it off?'"

It's clear that *Equaliser* is more than just a party and workshop. The ethos behind it is essential in stirring new thoughts and trying to pioneer new ways of thinking about inclusivity, bringing to the surface what it means to share a space and making people feel truly part of it. "We want to make people feel like they belong in a space," says Zoya. "The girls from our first workshop were saying how they wanted to set up a group together, and they'd never even met before. You could see in their eyes how excited they were about it too. Two of the girls were saying how they'd never even touched a record before and felt intimidated by it, but then they had so much fun just having a play! It's just about playing."

"There's a lot of work to do around breaking the rhetoric that DJing is this mystical magical thing that's only reserved for those who have an excellent record collection and 100% technical proficiency, which is absolutely not the case," reassures Lucy, in response to heightened expectations and pressure placed on a woman when they step up to the decks; "If you make a mistake as a woman there's a bit of internalised misogyny going on as well because you can think 'oh my god I'm living up to the cliché that women can't DJ' just after one mistake."

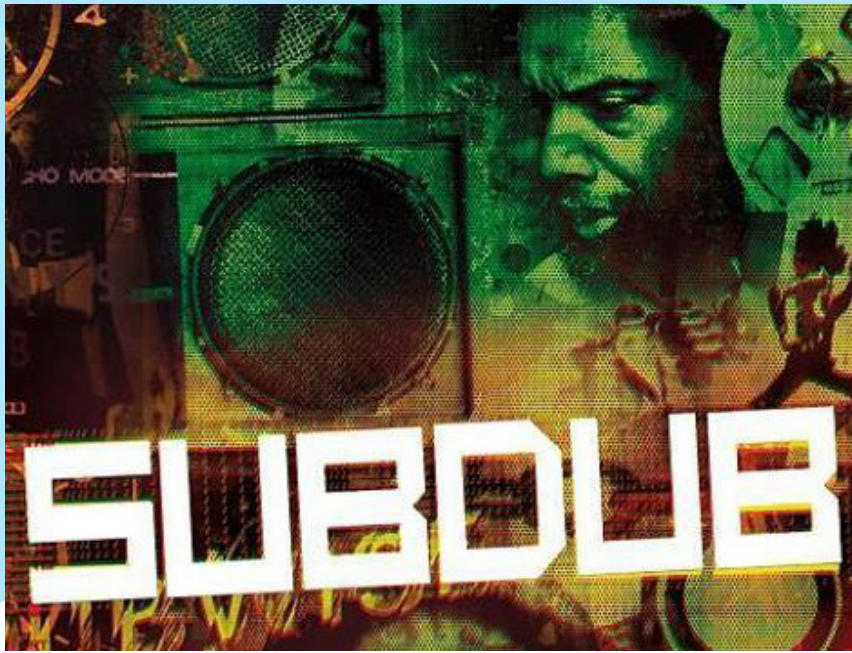
So what are *Equaliser*'s ultimate aspirations? "We want to have an even ratio of people from all walks of life, to the point that it represents British society and who all of us are. We're all from different cultures and backgrounds but it just isn't represented within the club scene," passionately states Rae. "At the heart of it, there's reassurance and empowerment; 'We're here, and there's more of us.'" Katrina assures me. "We want to give people a voice through our platform just so they know that you can be a vulnerable person and be scared but there's so many more people like you out there."

In an industry where there are people who don't encourage - and even actively discourage - women pursuing DJing for a living, exclusive female-identifying projects such as *Equaliser* carry massive significance. As Tami eloquently puts, "*Equaliser* is definitely creative social activism at its finest."

Meg Firth

"Equaliser is definitely creative social activism at its finest."

Yet Another Subdub Success



The thought of Subdub coming up at the end of the week, had gotten me through a tedious week of lectures, seminars, seemingly endless deadlines and dragging shifts at work. The boredom I had to suffer through would all be worth it, I promised myself, if I could just commit to being a productive adult for a week, ready to lose all inhibitions and go crazy at the weekend. *Subdub* is the perfect event to let off some of this pent-up steam. It provides a healthy dose of hedonism like no other event in Leeds; well-established, respected and with one of the best sound systems in the city, *Subdub*'s irresistible blend of dub, d'n'b, dancehall and reggae always results in the most fun (albeit messy) of nights.

Subdub's relocation from Leeds West Indian Centre to Beaver Works worried me originally, having always been a fan of the atmospheric, intimate former venue. But *Beaverworks*' spin on the night definitely showed why the event space is the Mecca of clubbing for the majority of Leeds' students. Large enough to host the variety of acts on offer, yet never losing its air of cool, the series of dilapidated warehouses provides the perfect home for *Subdub*'s musical offerings. Loefah's set stood out as a highlight, the pounding dub and bass reverberating around the cavernous 'Exodus' room until everyone in attendance was jumping on their heels and yelling along. Room 4's 'Dancehall Science' provided a welcome break from the insanely urgent dub and bass beats, lending the opportunity for not-so-much a more relaxed dance, but a grinding one.

Couples were springing up left, right and centre, huddled together for a reason that definitely wasn't warmth. Event headliner Iration Steppas Sound System understandably drew the biggest crowd of the night, a halo of sweat appearing above the crowd as everyone two-stepped and skanked to the fantastic beats on display.

A sure-fire success, Subdub are as strong as ever, their new home changing nothing about the integrity of the event but merely opening it up to a bigger audience. With music as good as this on offer on a regular basis, it's no wonder Leeds is hailed as such a golden clubbing city. Please don't make me leave anytime soon.

Poppie Platt

Songs for Sharing on Your Nokia



Image: T2

Work may be mounting and the weather is only getting colder. But, to be honest, there's still reason to be cheery. Cast your mind back to the early 2000s and reminisce these old school garage and bassline bangers with Clubs Editor Milly Whyman.

Do You Mind – Crazy Cousinz Remix

The melodic vocals of Kyla as sampled in Drake's 'One Dance', remixed by the pioneers of 'funky house' Crazy Cousinz. A dance-y garage sound for the girls (and boys to be honest), guaranteed to get you moving and reminiscing.

Sambuca (The Return) – Jamie Duggan Meets Da Booda Remix – Wideboys, Dennis G.

Your mum and auntie can sing along to this one, and it's just about as cheesy as garage can get. A 2001 classic that will inspire you to smoothly buy someone you fancy a Sambuca in the pub. This may not go down well; it's a horrible drink.

Girls Like Us – B15 Project

B15 Project encompasses the classic garage sound; kick drums, synth and beat skipping to get your head bobbing. Girls Like Us chops and changes the beat, creating a sound that begs for the repeat.

Little Man – Exemen Rework

An iconic intro sets off this remix of Sia circa 2003. Vocals to sing along to and a building baseline set off with snares to get your shoulders wiggling. Is Sia herself a fan of garage? Does she like the remix? We may never know. The fact remains that if you whack this on around 4am it can only go down well.

Babycakes – 3 of a Kind

Do I need to explain myself? I think not.

Heartbroken – T2

The song that pioneered bassline, got shared around the playground, and went off at school discos. A classic 4x4 style, and wobbly bassline, the tune remains relevant, and loved years later. Fun fact: Leona Lewis beat Heartbroken to the number one spot back in 2007, a travesty we can all still struggle to forgive.

Amelia Whyman



Outfit Of The Week

Name: Sophie

Leather Jacket: Topshop

Printed Trousers: Topshop

Shoes: Vans

There's no better way to brighten up campus than with a pair of printed trousers! This season, the $\frac{3}{4}$ length crop is all the rage, featured in lightweight, floaty material or pleated metallics for a night out. Ideal for transitional weather, these comfy trousers are only too easy to wear; here, Sophie shows us how it's done. If you're big on prints, team together with a plain leather or denim jacket to create a sophisticated, neat look, whilst allowing you to layer up and create a range of different outfits. For shoes, as is typical Leeds style, a pair of Vans is seen... just goes to show, trainers really are all you need for uni!

Want to be featured? Email fashion@thegryphon.co.uk with your #OOTW and details of where you sourced your clothes for a chance to star as our weekly top pick!



Image: Sophie Labat

Is High Street Fashion a Bore?



Image: Clayton Whites Hotel

It seems you can't walk into any High Street store at the moment without having déjà vu - you can walk into Topshop and see nearly an exact array of items a bit later in Zara, and then again in Primark. In recent years, High Street stores have less been competing to see who can produce and deliver originality within their clothing and more racing to see who can get the same clothes into their shop window first. Every shop seems to repeat the others and it brings us to ask, is High Street fashion a bore?

Most high street retailers, all promote the idea of fast fashion. This is the term used by retailers to express how they take inspiration from the catwalk and use this as a base to quickly create affordable clothing inspired by the latest trends from designers. Yes, in some ways this is a great way of being able to get a lookalike of a top that was seen on the catwalk and would have cost you a substantial amount of money for a fraction of the price but if every high street retailer does this, then of course we are going to see the same thing in high street shops over and over and over again - and it really is boring.

Fashion should be a way of being able to express ourselves through what we wear, but how are we supposed to do that if affordable High Street shops all latch onto the same trends and produce nearly identical pieces of clothing? It's almost as if High Street fashion takes us back to school, where we all had to wear the same

uniform - no originality or uniqueness. If a particular print, fabric, shape, whatever it may be, is seen on the catwalk, retailers will replicate it and subsequently we as consumers, will buy and wear it. Then, before we know it, we're all dressed identically in the same pattern, shape and style, because that's all that high street fashion has been able to offer us; it's a domino effect.

“Before we know it, we're all dressed identically in the same pattern, shape and style, because that's all that high street fashion has been able to offer us”

With all this being said it brings us to ask, where are all the original ideas? Well, it would seem that in order to buy anything unique you've got to go straight to the source - designer, and let's face it, most of us can't afford clothes that cost more than our monthly food shops per item. Perhaps this lack of originality within High Street fashion explains why so many of us now turn to websites and apps like eBay, Depop, Etsy and Asos marketplace for our inspiration. On sites like these, you are able to purchase something new, or preloved goods from independent brands or people wanting to find a new home for their unused items. On top of that, charity shops and vintage shops are becoming increasingly popular. Not only does shopping this way mean we are supporting smaller brands/individuals and charities, but we aren't buying into the High Street world of fast fashion and are able to find individual and unique clothes that don't cost an arm and a leg.

Kemer Aydin

Is the High Street Dying Out?

As a generation of self-confessed technophiles, the internet is fast becoming the preferred destination for shopaholics and last-minute buyers alike. The high street may be crumbling before us as we become members of the anti-social social club, choosing to order clothes from the comfort of our own home. Is this the end for retailers? Or will we be forever drawn back to the charm of traditional brick and mortar in search of something other than the vacant glow of a computer screen? Christy Bucklow discusses....



Image: GC Prive

It is becoming more and more difficult with each passing year for the High Street to thrive. With online shops like ASOS providing a service that allows the consumer quick and easy access to numerous brands in one place, the idea of floating between shops in hope of finding something to wear has become unappealing. Why spend hours shopping on foot when you can compare hundreds of styles at the click of a button? Online sales across the entire retail sector, excluding food, have been outpacing in-store growth for some time now. Are we witnessing the death of the high street before our very eyes?

While some traditional stores have branched out into putting their products online, it is now costing them twice as much to serve customers as they struggle to find a balance between their investments into online presence and in-store revamps, while exclusively online shops such as ASOS and Boohoo avoid this particular issue entirely. Retail Futures 2018 has predicted that by next year, total store numbers will fall by 22%, from 281,930 today to 220,000 in 2018, as well as the share of online retail sales forecast to rise from 12.7% (2012) to 21.5% by 2018 or the end of the decade. There will be over 150 companies going into administration, involving the loss of 22,600 stores and 140,000 employees. Many of these companies will survive, but at the cost of closing more than half their stores. Links from *Facebook*, *Instagram* and the like are readily available with the rise of blogging as a profession, and with stores such as Topshop having introduced the 'trending product' feature online, it's easier than ever to see what styles are current.

Despite all of this, I will always prefer the high street. It may have its downfalls, but even with all of its crowds, hassle and disorganisation, retail therapy will never fail to cheer me up. It's a huge part of socialising – lunch and shopping with family or friends has always been a way to get to know someone better, whether that's finding out more about their style, or gossiping over clothes rails. While leisurely scrolling through Zara's A/W collection from the safety of the sofa is certainly comfortable, nothing beats ambling down the High Street and being greeted by the welcoming warmth of a cute little vintage shop that you never really noticed was there before. The atmosphere surrounding going out and actually shopping (especially at Christmas; two words: fairy lights!) is enough to bring us back again and again.

We might moan the whole day as we traipse around endless shops about how much our feet hurt, how we wished we had just looked online. But there's no satisfaction like coming home and finally collapsing onto the sofa, where you promise yourself to remain for the rest of the evening before getting coerced into doing that little fashion show for your mum of all the clothes you bought.

Aside from the social benefits of shopping on the High Street, as paying customers, we like to be able to see the quality of the clothes that we're going to buy. We've all seen those 'online order fails' posts on twitter, where the product received in the post is entirely different to the product ordered. Sure, there is an abundance of choice online, but when you put it into perspective there are only a handful of shops that we know and trust to order from. We have recently extended this trust to Depop: an app that allows people to sell their hand-me-downs to their followers. Admittedly, apps like these are in favour of online shopping; the major advantage of Depop is that it makes the process of getting rid of clothes that you no longer wear more accessible for both buyers and sellers.

But does the convenience of Depop match the charm of searching for gems in a tucked-away vintage shop? While online and in-store shopping each have their pros and cons, high street shopping gives the benefit of venturing out and taking a break from our daily ritual of poring over our phones and laptops. Adhering to our own sense of style by going shopping and picking out pieces, rather than paying attention to the 'trending products', is what shapes the individuality of our wardrobe. While online shopping barely involves lifting a finger, nothing will ever compare to the thrill of squeezing on another shopping bag to an arm so weighed-down that you're starting to resemble the *Leaning Tower of Pisa*. In the wise words of Regina George: get in loser, we're going shopping.

Christy Bucklow

The High Street's Top Trios

Our experience of the high street is ultimately the one thing that keeps drawing us back. It has become a weekly ritual to throw away our hard-earned cash in exchange for the clothes of our dreams (or the nearest alternative that won't bankrupt us). So, to reflect on the stores that have defined many of our wardrobes since the day we opened our first issues of Teen Vogue, it's time to consider what shops really stand out and what they actually stand out for.

Style

In terms of the most stylish stores to grace our high streets, the top three must be Zara, Topshop and Urban Outfitters.

Zara is like a form of fashion insurance, no matter what you need and which fashion trend you're lusting after, this store's rapid turnover always has a guaranteed, near perfect replica of that killer runway collection. Their window displays are known for drawing every fashion focused adolescent/young adult/grandma through their doors, and the affordable price tag helps a bit too.

Topshop has always been known as the go-to store for those wanting to show off their cutting-edge style, despite its price-point. The front of the store never fails to demonstrate some intriguing and quite daring looks, piecing together statement pieces which are guaranteed to capture one's eye upon first entrance.

Finally, Urban Outfitters, the queen of edgy. This store will never fail to guarantee every customer with a high fashion piece that will most likely be seen on the next 25 girls walking past us on the high-street. Nevertheless, this just goes to show how stylish the store really is, whilst the lightning speeds at which the top picks sell out reinforces this even more.

2

Price

Perhaps the biggest influencer of student high-street spending habits, the price of products is our final trio of trios. Both H&M and Zara return to the podium, but they are effortlessly pipped to the post by Primark.

No-one can disagree on the ultimate winner in terms of best high street pricing, the award easily landing in the laps of our beloved Primark. This store has just about everything you could possibly think of, all priced at ridiculously affordable costs. Now moving on to try and compete with the higher fashion stores, Primark has begun to replicate some of the biggest trends we see trickling down from the runways as an affordable alternative for those of us with a tighter budget and, in turn, trying to keep up with the world of fast paced fashion.

Moreover, it is safe to say H&M come in a close second with their affordability. As a more stylish store, they are commendable in the amount of selection and product standard they offer for a relatively affordable price. This can largely be said in comparison to stores such as Topshop and Urban Outfitters that regularly clear us out of our savings with their statement pieces coming in at costs higher than our weekly food budgets.

Lastly, Zara again wins a title with its relatively affordable pieces, some of course coming in a little more expensive than we may have hoped but, but for the majority of the time, not breaking the bank whilst still presenting a large range of must have pieces.

1

Ethics

Although many stores advocate their efforts in sustainability, many of them are really a little slack in taking responsibility ethically. However, there is a growing number of high street stores that are really focusing their investment and time into really developing their sustainability. The top three of our high-street stores are H&M, M&S and Mango.

H&M was the first high street store to sign the *Bangladesh Safety Accord*, the legally binding agreement following the horrific Rana Plaza disaster in 2013 which killed over 1,100 people. This led the path for other retailers, thus evidencing its sustainability efforts, and this, along with their willingness to be more transparent in their processes, shows a brand setting the way for others to follow.

M&S is like an old family friend, warmly waiting with a cuppa when you pop over for a visit, their efforts in sustainability well known because of their stable, long term relationship with suppliers. It is a commendable store in its ethical practice as one of the only stores to ensure its suppliers are paying workers a living wage in the least developed countries.

Lastly, Mango, Spanish powerhouse of fast fashion is one of those stores in the process of improving its efforts. Despite placing orders with the Rana Plaza factory, it has taken responsibility and has now signed the accord - hopefully proving it is only onwards to improvement from this point.

3

Window Shopping: Treat or Torture?



Image: BWD

There are two types of people in this world: those that shop for fun, and those that shop for necessity. If you're the first, you may well be inclined to argue that window shopping is a joy; a leisurely activity that requires no expenditure, provides all the inspiration you need for a new wardrobe, and undoubtedly earns you the right to an excessively long coffee break. Sure, sounds pretty appealing. But in reality, it's easier said than done.

Let's be honest, how many of us genuinely return from a 'window shopping spree' empty handed? I, for one, have yet to master this skill. Setting off in a relaxed manner, I'm far more likely to spend twice what's left of my student loan, merrily purchasing funky new pieces I certainly didn't need. A simple solution, or so I thought, was to go without my credit card. But, fate's twisted hand would come in to play, and I'd stumble across a once-in-a-lifetime

garment at an astonishingly low price. Which, naturally, I couldn't buy. If you ask me, this just goes to show how ridiculous it is to suggest that going shopping with no intention of making a purchase really is.

Let's get this straight, once and for all. Window shopping is torture. It's like going to a restaurant and watching everyone else get served, all the while sat with a rumbling stomach safe in the knowledge that no food is coming your way. I'm all for shopping with no agenda, and stumbling across little bargains here and there. But window shopping, in its true sense, is clearly a sick hobby for people with large amounts of self-restraint, and too much time to kill.

Lydia Varney

The V&A's Ballad to Balenciaga

The *Victoria & Albert Museum* has been known to hold and present unique and significant exhibitions throughout its time, and this fashion exhibition showcasing one of high street's best designer brands is no different. The exhibition in question holds one of the UK's biggest collections of old *Balenciaga* garments across its 98-year old product life cycle. This exhibition includes over 100 pieces crafted by 'the master' as he was classed; Cristobal Balenciaga was respected by many, especially other designers. His work was seen as innovative, minimalistic, at-times feminine and was even coined as 'artistry'. His lasting and profound impact on the fashion industry, especially that of the 60s, is what inspired the curators of the V&A to choose his brand and culminate his works 18 months prior to the exhibition opening.

As a visitor of the exhibition myself, I can say first hand that it was one of the most intriguing and successful experiences in all the exhibitions and museums I've visited. The display itself was not just clothes on mannequins and the usual museum walk-through. Its innovation empowered the audience, making them communicate with the pieces, reading the descriptions, watching the videos – and really immersing into the *Balenciaga* history & culture walk through. Design is also one of the most important aspects of this exhibition with sketches, toiles and fabrics being presented. The construction of the dresses and animations as to how they were made allows the audiences to interact and fully understand the pieces. The X-ray technique used on a garment to reveal its underlying framework especially shows this. The structure and technicality is also what makes *Balenciaga* as a brand and this showcase so unique, separating their garments from the usual. One of the most influential quotes displayed at the exhibition to also prove *Balenciaga's* profoundness is: 'Haute couture is like an orchestra whose conductor is *Balenciaga*. We other couturiers are the musicians and we follow the direction he gives.' – Christian Dior.

All in all, I highly recommend attending this exhibition whether you're a fashion-lover or not. Its pieces will give you insight to fashion history, design, and will feel like the most fashionable blast from the past. In short – if you're in London, it's a must.

Top Picks



This *Commes des Garçons* piece by Rei Kawakubo, made out of polyurethane leather is a favourite because of its eccentricity. The baby pink colour paired with the cut shapes and structure juxtapose each other yet still make for an impactful garment.

This Oscar De La Renta SS15 dress is one of my favourites because of the pops of colour splattered around it. The patterns and embroidery of the flowers across the long white chiffon give a feminine feel to it, which is not as structured as a usual *Balenciaga* couture piece.



Sara AlHumiri

The Straight Face of LGBT+ Cinema



Image: Transmission Films YouTube

Arts Editor, Mikhail Hanafi, explores the politics of LGBT+ representation in film.

Which films are going to be cemented in LGBT+ film canon? If you ask the general public, you'd likely get answers like *Brokeback Mountain*, *Carol*, *The Danish Girl* or even *Blue is the Warmest Colour*. The more movie-inclined might even mention *Milk*, the biopic based on the life of prolific gay activist Harvey Milk, or Tom Ford's *A Single Man*, which featured Colin Firth and Julianne Moore in leading roles. These are (mostly) very good films and many of them enjoyed immense critical praise when they were released. Yet, something doesn't quite feel right about them being remembered as cornerstones of LGBT+ film.

That's because the majority of the LGBT characters in these films, especially those in leading roles, are played by straight actors and actresses. Heath Ledger and Jake Gyllenhaal? Straight, playing gay cowboys. Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara? Straight, playing two lesbians. Eddie Redmayne? Cisgender man playing Lili Elbe, a trans woman who was one of the earliest documented people to undergo gender reassignment surgery.

The recently-released *Call Me By Your Name*, starring Timothée Chalamet and Armie Hammer, also two straight men, was received with critical acclaim. Telling the story of a 17 year-old Italian boy who grapples with his sexuality as he falls for an American exchange student, it currently boasts an impressive 97% rating on *Rotten Tomatoes*.

It's something that has been happening for a long time in the film industry; straight actors are regularly (and much more often) cast in LGBT+ roles, because they tend to be the safer, more popular choice. Films like Andrew Haigh's excellent *Weekend* and Sean Baker's micro-budget *Tangerine* cast actual LGBT+ actors, but their indie budgets mean that films like these rarely manage to break into the mainstream.

This problem—what *Slate.com* called 'gayface' back in 2013—is a controversial one, and there are solid arguments for why the sexuality of an actor shouldn't matter. After all, isn't the whole point of acting to be able to portray someone other than yourself? A good actor can, through preparation and research, be able to put themselves in the shoes of another, regardless of how different their lived experiences are. In an ideal world, this wouldn't be an issue; straight actors could play LGBT+ characters, LGBT+ actors could play straight characters and none of this would be controversial.

Unfortunately, as LGBT+ people know, we do not live in an ideal world. In 2010, actor Richard Chamberlain, star of the 1983 miniseries *The Thorn Birds*, advised 'young, leading man-type' actors not to come out due to the possibility of them losing roles they may have been offered otherwise. Though he made the statement in 2010, it seems as though the industry still has issues with casting gay actors in straight roles; in 2016, Ellen Page lamented, after she had come out two years earlier, 'Now I'm gay, I can't play a straight person?' Chamberlain and Page are both pointing out a structural issue in Hollywood; sure, straight actors may be more well known and may bring in more money, but how are LGBT+ actors supposed to climb their way to the top if they're typecast solely into LGBT+ roles?

With trans representation, the issue becomes even trickier. Though public opinion of the gay, lesbian and bisexual communities have improved significantly over the past few decades, trans people still have a way to go. According to a 2017 study by UK charity Stonewall, nearly half of all trans pupils in the UK have attempted suicide, and UK police recorded a tripling of the rates of transphobic hate crime between 2011 and 2016. The unfortunate truth is that a large portion of society is still ignorant, wilfully or not, about what being trans means. Seeing a cisgender male actor playing a trans woman on screen reinforces the woefully ignorant idea that trans women are simply men wearing dresses. When trans stories are separated from real trans people, trans visibility becomes non-existent.

Despite what some people might say, films are never 'just films'. They're part of the larger tapestry of society because they're a massive part of modern culture; they're products of the society they're made in and carry our stories, norms and values. I suppose that's why the straight faces of LGBT+ cinema don't feel quite right—these films are meant to tell the story of what it's like to be LGBT+ in the 21st century. Maybe one day we'll get to the point where it won't matter what an actor's sexuality is, but when we look back at these films in the future as representations of the LGBT+ experience, how will we feel when we see that most of these stories weren't told by those to whom they belong to?

Mikhail Hanafi



Image: MetaCritic

What Happened to Horror?

Horror used to fill a unique space in the film landscape. Lauren Bennett takes a look at the genre and asks: has horror lost its way?

It's common knowledge nowadays that horror movies have earned themselves a bit of a reputation for being – for lack of a better word – terrible. But a lot of the issues people have with the modern horror movies we see churned out year after year aren't exclusive to the horror genre. 'Too many remakes, reboots and sequels' and 'predictable plots and reusing the same old tricks' are common complaints people have after seeing any big-budget release. With Hollywood perpetually terrified of taking risks, the current state of horror movies is just a symptom of a more widespread disease.

Horror movies can be so cheap to make and are almost guaranteed to make a profit; *Saw* (Dir. James Wan, 2004) cost \$1.5 million to make and profited \$102.8 million and with its success came an explosion of movies in the 'torture porn genre'. Then there was *Paranormal Activity* (Dir. Oren Peli, 2007) made for \$15,000 and it grossed \$193 million worldwide, and more recently *The Conjuring* (Dir. James Wan, 2013) which cost \$20 million to make but took in \$318 million at the box office. When a horror movie strikes on such a winning formula, Hollywood can't help but milk it for all its worth. But, in doing so, it robs these movies of what made them scary to begin with; the element of surprise. What may have been spine-chillingly frightening on first viewing won't pack the same punch once you've seen it 100 times. The overuse of the horror tropes has led the majority of modern horror movies to become more and more like jump-scares, a shallow momentary thrill that scares you for a second, which is forgotten immediately once it is over.

The constant need to up the ante has led to films that border on the absurd with how grotesque they are, *The Human Centipede Trilogy* (Dir. Tom Six) for example, instead of being scary they end up trying to test the viewer's grossness endurance levels. The overexposure to violence and gore means audiences quickly become desensitised and are left feeling bored to death.

So, that leads us to question: what actually makes a horror movie good? Like comedy, horror is incredibly subjective since not everyone finds the same things funny or scary. Making a truly brilliant horror movie is almost impossible, but there are certain elements we see time and time again, that make up a classic. Firstly, a focus on the atmosphere is often key to making a movie a genuine fright-fest. Movies like Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*

(1960) which master the art of creating tension and focus on the psychological elements, do a much better job of getting under the audience's skin. A more recent example, *The Descent* (Neil Marshall, 2005) brilliantly crafts a tense atmosphere of claustrophobia and dread that leaves you on edge of your seat.

On the more surreal end of the spectrum you have directors like David Lynch who in movies like *Eraserhead* (1977) creates such a disturbing and eerie tone through his use of unsettling industrial imagery and dream-like (or rather 'nightmare-like') logic, that the experience of the movie haunts you long after it has ended.

Another aspect that sets great horror movies apart is characters you really care about. If you aren't invested in the people you're watching there's no tension when you see them fight for survival. When we as the audience are presented with an ensemble cast of two dimensional characters, all we can see is a bunch of potential victims waiting to be disposed of in a series of hackneyed death scenes. Movies like *Rosemary's Baby* (Dir. Roman Polanski, 1968) or *Alien* (Dir. Ridley Scott, 1979) work well because of their strong central performances and 3D characters. *Alien* also benefits from having some amazing practical effects, as do films like *The Thing* (Dir. John Carpenter, 1982) and David Cronenberg's classics like *Videodrome* (1983) or *The Fly* (1986).

In my experience, the horror movies which really leave an impression are the ones that stimulate the darkest parts of the imagination, their scares rely on what they don't show just as much as what they do.

With audiences being so genre savvy, newer horror movies need to do a bit more heavy lifting to keep us engaged. The recent horror movies that really grab our attention are the ones that push the boundaries of the genre in unexpected ways. *Get Out* (Dir. Jordan Peele, 2017) is an excellent example of a modern horror movie that feels so fresh because of how it blends horror and dark comedy to create a razor-sharp social satire, or *Raw* (Dir. Julia Ducournau, 2017) which explores coming-of-age anxieties and adolescent sexuality through horror and gore.

Lauren Bennett

“When a horror movie strikes on such a winning formula, Hollywood can't help but milk it for all its worth and in doing so it robs these movies of made them scary to begin with; the element of surprise.”

Geostorm Isn't Full of Awe; It's Awful

Geostorm could have been mindless fun, but it fails to reach even those standards.

With Gerard Butler at the helm of this fantasy science fiction, it was set to be just as exciting and impassioned as previous Butler-starring films, such as *300*. Any predictions, however, would have been hopelessly dashed considering that the most exciting part of the film was finally leaving after it had dragged on for almost two hours. Certainly, with a contrived title like *Geostorm*, it wasn't anticipated to be the most intellectual film of the decade, but it did inspire a certain promise that the CGI of an almost supernatural storm would be awe-inspiring (it wasn't – it was awful). Rather, it couldn't detract from the banal and frankly boring plotline. With a budget of 120 million dollars, it seems strange that the entire film was a washout of incredible proportions.

Butler's performance is perhaps best described as 'moist' – not only uncomfortable to hear and even look at, but limp and saturated with tediousness. Any fleeting interest in the potential annihilation of the world dimmed in between the dullness of everything else. The only thing that could possibly make the film

of the audience would likely have preferred earth to just be destroyed if it meant that they could escape the theatre half an hour sooner.

The plot is also deceptively simple: after natural disasters threaten the planet a satellite system is developed to control climate change. Shockingly, this master plan goes awry and begins to attack earth instead. An aspect that should have perhaps drawn attention to the issue of global warming, was drowned out in favour of a ridiculous script and more screen time dedicated to an absurd romantic subplot featuring the protagonist Jake's brother.

All in all, the world would be better off destroyed by tsunamis, blizzards and volcanic eruptions than experience regular cinema releases like this monstrosity.

Stephanie Bennett



Image: The Independent

any worse would have been if it had been longer. Most

'Constellations' Looks For Love in an Infinite Universe

Not so much a typical tale of romance, Nick Payne's *Constellations* is a boy-meets-girl two-hander that explores the infinite outcomes of a relationship. A meeting, an intimate night, a betrayal, a reunion, a parting. The audience is constantly challenged to imagine every potential result of the situations presented while the battling forces of free will and destiny are called into question.

The audience starts off where the couple does; a chance meeting at a barbecue filled with awkward tension and joyous delight in equal parts. Marianne (Bella Hornby), a giddy Cambridge astrophysicist, uses a range of methods in each multiverse to approach heart-on-sleeve-wearing beekeeper Roland (Louis Dunbavin), resulting in varying degrees of success. Throughout the rest of the play, we experience the pendulum of extreme highs and lows within the couple's relationship; the significance of choice, fate and chance are put into question as the audience are driven into an exhilaratingly topsy-turvy 70 minutes of ballroom dancing, bee colonies and alternate realities.

A change in wording, tone or gesture can signal a change in universe for seemingly identical scenes which challenged the actors skills of subtlety. However, Hornby and Dunbavin avoided the pitfall of monotony when repeating scenes, by switching masterfully between moments of deep solemnity and warm humour. The blending

of severity and affinity are balanced well throughout, particularly by Hornby when her character finds out she has a terminal brain tumour. What's more, the impact of the scene seems to intensify when impressively re-run in sign language. Although physics forms the core of the play, it is the chemistry between Hornby and Dunbavin that truly shines.

Director Sophie Drake also ensures that the focus of her production is not stifled by the complexity of multiverse theory but is propelled by the raw vigour of human emotion. The stage's bare-bones set – solely consisting of a backdrop of astral lights and a floor of minimalistic LED honeycomb hexagons, marrying the couple's professions, sets the focus of the audience on the action. Furthermore, the use of elements of physical theatre, although occasionally overstated, offer smooth transitions between the parallel timelines while still working well as a symbol of the couple's nuanced emotional state.

It is entirely possible that, in another universe, the non-linear narrative of the play could be too difficult for LUU Theatre Group to pull off, potentially resulting in a very confused audience. But, at this point in space and time, it looks like the stars have aligned.

Alex Gibbon



Image: Hollywood Reporter



Image: i-D Magazine

Kehinde Wiley and Amy Sherald: The Artists Painting the Obamas' Official Portrait

Obama's choice for his and Michelle Obama's official portraits are a break from tradition, as he opts for two artists whose styles explore an underrepresented part of American life.

The *Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery* announced last Friday that Barack and Michelle Obama have chosen artists Kehinde Wiley and Amy Sherald to paint their official portraits; this will be the first time a pair of black artists have been commissioned by the gallery to paint the portraits of a Presidential couple after the completion of their term of office.

The *Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery* in Washington D.C first began commissioning portraits of the President and first lady after their tenure in the 1990s (beginning with George H.W Bush), with the exhibition being the only other collection of official presidential portraits outside of the one in the White House. The new portraits are set to be displayed within the gallery in 2018.

The artist chosen to paint Barack Obama's portrait, Kehinde Wiley is an African-American artist well known for his naturalistic, vibrant portraits of people of colour, placing his sitters against backgrounds covered in intricate patterns taken from French, Islamic and West African art. Whilst not as well known as Wiley, Michelle Obama's choice, Amy Sherald, paints equally vibrant portraits depicting black subjects from all walks of life, positioning them in front of block colour backgrounds.

But why do the Obamas' choices matter for art? The election of Barack Obama in 2009 finally fulfilled the need for people of colour within political roles in American politics and the world; and the choice of two black artists for the presidential portraits also allows the Obamas to facilitate the celebration of the role of black artists within art history. Both Wiley and Sherald are exciting choices not only in their styles of painting, which go against the overtly formal, occasionally stiff renderings of past presidential portraits, but also in the way that they celebrate black culture

in their respective works. For example, in his pieces Wiley reimagines past works of the great 'masters' (such as Titian or David), substituting the original (white, usually male) figures with people of colour in an effort to stress the significant presence of black people within history that is often ignored in the Western art tradition. As a gay man, Wiley also depicts homosexual black couples (such as in his 2008 work *Dogon Couple*), another subject which is highly underrepresented throughout art history. Sherald likewise celebrates black culture, but in a broader sense, depicting a diverse range of real people she encounters in everyday life. Like Wiley, Sherald only paints subjects of colour because, as she says, 'There's not enough images of us'.

'Like Wiley, Sherald only paints subjects of colour because, as she says. "There's not enough images of us"'

The website of the *Smithsonian National Portrait Gallery* describes its exhibition of presidential portraits as one that 'lies at the heart of the Portrait Gallery's mission to tell the American story through the individuals who have shaped it'. However, as with many representations of the 'American Story' throughout time, all of the individuals represented in this particular exhibition have, up until now, been white. Thus,

the choice of the Obamas helps to underscore the important role black people have played in shaping 'the American story', a choice that appears aptly timed, coming at the close of Black History Month. Even then, whilst Black History Month is something to be embraced and participated in, the work of Wiley and Sherald alone urges us to remember that the celebration of black history and black culture more generally should not be confined to one month out of the year, but should be integrated into our teaching of art and history everyday.

Hannah Stokes



Your House Hunting Worries, Debunked

House hunting can be stressful, especially if it's your first time. Rumours are already starting to spread which might be making you anxious about looking for somewhere to live. As someone that has house hunted in Leeds three years running, LUU Community Officer, George Bissett, can offer an insight into what it's really like. Time to shatter some myths.

There's a housing shortage in Leeds

Simply not true. There is a surplus of quality student accommodation in Leeds. Because of this, there are hundreds of empty student beds in Leeds every year. Therefore, letting agents use aggressive sales tactics so they aren't the one left with unlet properties. Don't let anyone convince you that good houses will run out. Speaking of aggressive sales tactics...

"If I don't sign for this today, someone else will"

When you're being shown around houses, many letting agents will tell you that they've had six other groups look around the exact same houses you've seen, and if you want it, you better sign quickly. *Isn't it a coincidence that every house you look at has been viewed by loads of other groups that same day?* **No: it's absolute rubbish.** They just want you to sign ASAP. But when it comes to where to live, take your time when making the decision: it's a big one.

The best houses go first

Absurd. Often, people that sign early in the academic year are signing for properties that have been left over from last year. Also, there are 16,000 good quality student beds that don't go live on Unipol's website until **20th January 2018**. That's when Unipol's official house hunting season begins.

But wait, isn't Unipol just a landlord?

A common misconception. Unipol is in fact a charity dedicated to helping students find the best housing. As well as renting over 3,000 of their own student beds, they provide free advice and support to students looking for housing in the private sector and run accreditation schemes such as the Unipol Code. Everything from checking over your housing contract to helping you know who the best landlords in Leeds are, they should be the first port of call when looking for a place to live!

Everyone pays signing fees

Absolutely not. Signing fees are little more than a scam; you're paying the letting agent to click print on your contract. But there are plenty of landlords and letting agents that do not charge any upfront fees. How do you find them? The LUU Housing Fair in January will only include agencies that have no signing fees.

"Everyone lives in Hyde Park"

It's edgy, it's the home of Ice Scoop, but it **certainly isn't the be all and end all**. Many students refuse to look for houses anywhere else because, "everyone lives in Hyde Park," meaning they miss out on some class houses in other areas. Headingley, Woodhouse and Burley are all populated by students, and you'll have more of a choice if you broaden your scope from just Hyde Park.

I know these people I met five weeks ago well enough to sign for a house with them

You don't. Don't get me wrong; your Freshers squad might be sound. But from personal experience, it's not uncommon for groups who sign before Christmas that think they know each other really well end up falling out before they move in, making the next twelve months really awkward.

In summary, here are my main takeaways for house hunting advice:



Don't worry about house hunting until after Christmas. Good houses come to those who wait.



Don't let any agent pressure you into signing a contract. You have more time (and control) than they say you do.



Unipol is your friend. Get your contract checked, look out for 'Unipol Code' landlords and use their website to find great houses.

A Gin-Credible Experience

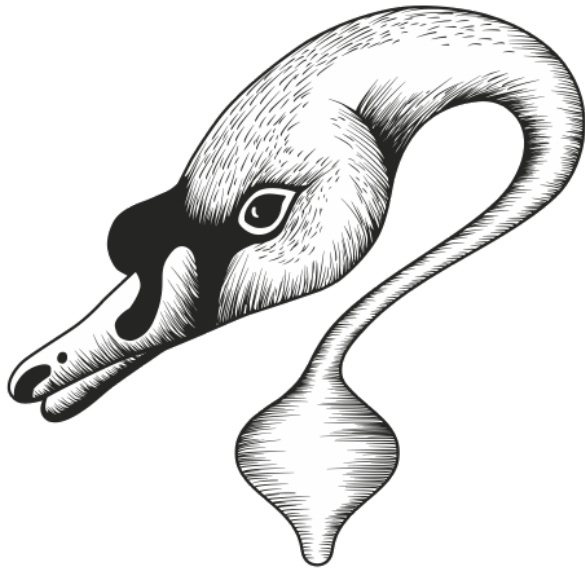
Lifestyle and Culture Editor, Jade Verbick, recounts her classy night at a cafe-turned-gin bar hosted by Sipsmith ambassadors.

It's not every day that one gets invited to a gin tasting and masterclass with all the 20-something social media influencers of Leeds, but that's how I found myself on the first floor of LS6 Café with an excellent gin and tonic in hand.

The night started out with a gathering downstairs of all the most well-dressed Instagram models and food bloggers in West Yorkshire, where we were greeted by *Sipsmith* brand ambassadors with beautiful drink menus in hand. We were then ushered upstairs to a private room with small café tables covered in a white tablecloth, adorned with glasses and table cards with our names written in gold. My gin-loving housemate and I were very impressed by how classy the whole setup was and were, not for the first time that evening, feeling a bit out of place.

As we sat down at our private table, we were handed a gin and tonic which utilised a version of the spirit which was typically outside the student budget. As we sat sipping on our G&Ts and nibbling on the olives and fancy crisps placed at our table, the ambassadors started recounting the history of gin and *Sipsmith* itself.

After their introduction, they showed us how to make a Bramble using one of the many *Sipsmith* gins and homemade crème de mure. They gave everyone a sample



in one of the three glasses place on the table. This was by far the best of the three drinks given to us.

The second drink sampled was a Martini. Made by one of the ambassadors with a few digs at James Bond for preferring his Martini shaken, we were handed a beverage that tasted like pure alcohol. In all honesty, I had never had a Martini before and now I know why. Definitely not my drink of choice. We were able to try the gin used in the drink neat, which lived up to the description of feeling like 'running through a pine forest naked.'

The third drink was a Sloe Gin Fizz. An amazing concoction made with Sloe Gin and Prosecco that really finished the night off sweet and bubbly. It was only after this drink that I started feeling the effects of the gin tasting.

Some highlights of the night included watching a bunch of social media influencers taking boomerangs of themselves shaking *Sipsmith* cocktail shakers and using the torches on their phones to take the perfect selfie with their drinks.

Overall the night was a great introduction to the *Sipsmith* brand and an excellent way to consume free booze. After this classy and delicious night, I think I've become an even bigger Gin lover. Who knew that was even possible?

Jade Verbick

The End of The Boozy Student?

Annabelle Toon discusses whether or not we are witnessing the end of British student drinking culture as we know it.

University is stereotyped by many as the place where it's acceptable to be drunk for four days in a row and nobody is concerned for your health. The playground where we can meet up for a cheeky pint at one in the afternoon and then continue with work and seminars. The hub where we are pretty much constantly assumed to be beating off a hangover. In fact, I would go as far as to say, if we aren't drinking, it's assumed there is something wrong, and will quite commonly be called a 'p***y' until we do drink.

However, recently, some students (myself included) have decided to turn against the poison. Therefore, after a discussion in the newsroom concerning whether the boozy student is no more, I have been conducting interviews across different year groups to find out what's really going on.

The first thing I have come across is that it appears drinking habits have a huge correlation with the year you are in at university. With freshers (unsurprisingly) being the most likely to have weeks when they drink more than four days in a row, and have the most 'messy nights' – drinking to absolute excess.

A fourth year student put the change in drinking down to having proper friends, stating: "I'm more comfortable with the people I go out with, and more confident in myself", resulting in drinking less on a night out. It seems then, that the people we go out with are a major factor in how much we drink. This is supported by the statement of a fresher who described "feeling nervous" and "out of place" when not drinking, stating "people would often try to pressure drinks on me, obviously unintentionally, just as a bit of fun". She went on to explain that having confidence from knowing the people around you and being confident in herself enabled her to partake in the sober night out.

However, whilst said fresher considered herself to be less of a drinker than the average student, she went on to state: "I probably drink like a bottle of wine or something when I go out but not a regular occurrence if I'm not." This is still exceedingly high, with a 750ml bottle of red, white or rosé wine (ABV 13.5%) containing around ten units – four units short of the weekly average. All in the space of one pre-drinks.

Interestingly though, whilst freshers binge the most, it seems that many older students have taken the approach of 'less vodka, more wine'. With the students in fourth year or post-graduate describing an increase in casual drinking when just around the house, with the freshers being the group to casual drink the least when they aren't out.

So, why the turn to casual drinking?

Both Masters students I have interviewed described the change being due to having more work to do and less time for nights out. However, this switch doesn't necessarily mean drinking less, claiming that they spend around three to four nights a week casual drinking. Two glasses of wine on each of these occasions would total somewhere between 15–20 units a week – up to 33% over the national recommended average per week! That doesn't include the damage done over the weekend, as most older students still go out at least once a week.

Whilst people may be cutting down on binge drinking at university, we are a long way off from losing the 'boozy student'. Whilst students drinking habits may be changing, the volume of alcohol they consume is far from diminishing.

Annabelle Toon

The Paperback vs. The E-Book

With the advancing digital age, the popularity of the ‘e-book’ has risen constantly. Is it time therefore that we swap the novel gathering dust in the corner for a portable tablet? Or will the sensory experience of reading a traditional paperback always outdo that of the e-book.

The battle of electronic vs. paper is influenced by factors such as form and weight. For example: does the kindle fair slightly better in the reading of a longer novel? We must accept that it’s not entirely practical to haul around a copy of *War and Peace* when a kindle fits nicely into the smallest of handbags, and makes bed-reading easier on the arms. It is also great when you want to enjoy a cheesy quick read on the train, without letting the whole carriage ogle the rosy pink cover of your romance novel. This is where an e-reader may come in handy: a tool for secretive reading in which nosy people can’t pass judgement on your choice of literature, as they smugly read *Pride and Prejudice* for the 50th time. While a kindle is transportable and private, there is still something missing. The satisfying feel of an old-fashioned book or reading a copy of *Wuthering Heights* that your mum has kept for 40 years, can’t quite be substituted by the electronic version.

There is nothing like the sense of triumph when you read a classic paperback and can hold the finished product in your hand; flicking back to your favourite sections and highlighting a memorable quote. Yet, at the end of an e-book the only accomplishment comes from a small 100% symbol in the left-hand corner, a definite anti-climax. Reading a paperback is certainly a more sensory experience and engages the reader in ways that the e-book fails to. Turning the pages, reaching the end of a chapter: it is a process, a welcome break from electronic screens. A Guardian survey further supports the popularity of the paperback, ‘Sales of printed books rose 7% in 2016 while e-book sales fell by 4%’. The e-reader can also house over 500 books; though these often end up being forgotten or overlooked. Whereas, a paperback will sit there proudly and demand to be read. Ultimately, there is something different about actively buying a new book. You see the cover, pick it up and read the blurb; an entirely different experience from lying in bed and lazily purchasing one from Amazon.

As an owner of an e-reader I sometimes feel as if I am cheating on the printed book. However, we cannot ignore the practical benefits. These include: downloading multiple books on one device, an element that could encourage reading as there is no need to coax yourself out of bed to visit the library or a bookshop. The clever Kindle will also provide suggestions for your next book based on previous favourites and you can buy an abundance of novels on a budget as e-books are often cheaper. When going on holiday I like to have a stock of books to read, however 7 or 8 thrillers are unlikely to fit in my suitcase amongst my clothes and therefore a portable kindle is often the easier option. Further to this, I learnt the hard way that the paperback is easily susceptible to damage when taken in extreme heat. I borrowed a novel from a friend, one which she explicitly stated must be returned in the same condition. However, I decided to read it on the beach and following the combination of sand and sun, the glue began to melt, and the pages fell out. Ultimately, she received a messy pile of misaligned pages and I was instructed to buy a new one, a painful £8.50 that perhaps could have been spared if I had owned an e-reader.

Overall, if you are a devoted reader who remains on the fence in this debate, it would be wise to consider which is of higher value to you: authenticity or practicality. Ultimately, it seems clear to me that the e-book is practical, but impersonal. The era of libraries and printed novels may have declined, but will certainly not disappear as those looking to immerse themselves in a novel continue to fill bookshops across the country. However, many argue that if you want to read, you should read in any way you want. So perhaps these arguments are merely background noise; if reading itself is not dying out then the form in which a book is read should not matter.

Yelena Zylko

Breaking Down Bonfire Night

Remember, remember, the 5th of November, gunpowder, treason and plot. I know of no reason, why the gunpowder treason, should ever be forgot...

One of my favourite nights of the year has to be Bonfire Night! I love the bonfire, I love the firework displays, and I love the warm atmosphere as everybody gathers on a cold November night to celebrate something that happened over 400 years ago. But the question you may ask is, why is this night so special? The law was only changed in 1959, so that it was no longer illegal to not celebrate this night. The 5th of November holds huge significance, culturally and politically...

On the 5th November, 1605, what seemed like a very normal night turned into one of the most memorable nights in British History. In a plot to kill King James I, Guy Fawkes, assisted in the storing of 36 barrels of gunpowder underneath the House of Lords, ready for the right moment to ignite them. However, some of the other conspirators realised the unjustness of their actions and sent an anonymous letter to a Lord to warn him of the plot. When the guards came to investigate, Guy Fawkes was found with the barrels, and was promptly arrested. He was tortured to provide names of the other conspirators, and then killed. Across the country, people lit bonfires to celebrate the safety of their King, and from this night on, Bonfire Night as we know it was born.

Today, bonfires are lit and people enjoy firework displays, small fairs, and burning effigies of Guy Fawkes. The Gunpowder Plot has had impact on Britain in other ways, for example, the Palaces of Westminster are still traditionally checked before

the monarch arrives. It is also custom for the monarch to only enter Parliament once a year for the ‘state opening of parliament.’

To say that Guy Fawkes was the main man of the operation would be wrong, for it is thought the Plot was led by Robert Catesby, a man often overlooked, as he was not found with the explosives. It is perhaps ironic then, that we burn effigies of Guy Fawkes. Fawkes has held significant recognition in other ways too, for instance the film *V for Vendetta* is based loosely around his character, with the famous mask depicting Guy Fawkes.

Not everybody celebrates bonfire night in quite the same way. St Peter’s School in York will not burn an effigy of Guy Fawkes, because he attended school there as a child and so, out of respect, they just have a bonfire. Bonfires don’t just exist for the burning of Fawkes. Prior to the Gunpowder Plot, people would burn other effigies, in a bid to ward off evil spirits, and it is only after this event that the tradition of Guy Fawkes became more prominent.

So arguably Guy Fawkes night, or Bonfire Night, is more than just a celebration of fireworks, but holds a deeper patriotic meaning to the people of Britain.

Sasha Williams



Image: Jade Verbick

Stranger Things 2: The World Turned Upside Down



Image: Business Insider

To quote a rather appropriate 1980s supernatural horror sequel, they're back! Last week saw us welcomed back to the town of Hawkins, Indiana, where things are indeed stranger...

It's 1984, and, while it has been almost a year since the events of *Stranger Things* Season One, the consequences of the events which occurred are still present. After being rescued from the upside down, Will Byers (Noah Schnapp) still suffers episodes where the world around him seems to turn into the upside down. If you thought the Demogorgon, the 'big bad' of Season One was bad, that is merely a drop in the ocean of bad compared to the big bad of Season Two. Will's episodes are haunted by a colossal shadow being that wants to destroy humanity and turn the world into the upside down. Same old, same old.

A new year sees some new additions to an already phenomenal cast. '80s star Sean Astin joins as Joyce Byers' (Winona Ryder) new boyfriend and all-round stand-up guy, Bob. Joining the kids cast is Sadie Sink as Max, the new addition to the main group of boys.

Something that sticks out about this second instalment is the air of maturity that comes with it. A year has passed, and the kids are growing up both in real life and on the show. There is a clear improvement in the quality of acting from the younger cast as they grow older. The cast's ability to act out the emotional fluctuation that comes with puberty is commendable; who'd have thought that a bunch of pubescent 13-year olds could portray stropky pubescent 13-year olds so well? Finn Wolfhard's acting ability has vastly improved portraying Mike; he spends a lot of the season lamenting over the loss of Millie Bobby Brown's Eleven, pining for his lost love with a face sour enough to curdle milk. A surprising breakthrough is the performance of Schnapp as Will. Having had the least amount of screen time and dialogue last season, Schnapp truly comes into his own this season. The season is very Will-centric; the vast majority of the action centres

on Will, and Schnapp makes sure that he stands out. Schnapp has the standout performance of the season, his emotional range is something to be applauded. As expected, Brown's performance as Eleven is yet again phenomenal. Winona Ryder steals the gaze once more as Joyce; her performance being even more heart-wrenching and powerful than last season.

You can't talk about *Stranger Things* without mentioning the soundtrack in the same breath. The synth-heavy rhythms of Kyle Dixon and Michael Stein welcome you back to Hawkins with a shudder-inducing familiarity. The suspense felt in the season is aided substantially by the soundtrack. The moments where your quickening heartbeat keeps pace with the thumping bass adds to the nerve-wracking intensity of the situations.

Once again, the format of storytelling is second-to-none. The maturity stretches into the tone of the story, with it becoming even darker and more twisted than last season. The pacing of the story keeps the viewer hooked for all 9 episodes; when there is a lull in the action, the emotional intensity of the scenes keeps your drawn in.

It felt fantastic to be welcomed back to Hawkins. *Stranger Things 2* lived up to and smashed through the expectations preceding its release. If there's anything to be taken away from it, it's that *Stranger Things* is a ground-breaking piece of television that only gets better, and that the majority of life's problems can be solved with analogies to Dungeons & Dragons.

Charlie Green

My Week as a Muslim

Tyler Denyer reviews the new and controversial documentary on Channel 4 that has had the whole country talking.



Image: Channel Four

With halloween passing and cultural appropriation becoming a strong controversial topic again, Channel 4 have put themselves in the spotlight with their new documentary *My week as a Muslim*.

Katie, a white woman from a predominantly white town, transformed her appearance to look like a Muslim woman of Pakistani descent. Many would describe this as 'brownface', especially as not just the color of Kate's skin was changed but also prosthetics were used to make her look more 'authentic'. Channel 4 simply could have implemented a Muslim woman with a hidden body cam to convey the persecution Muslims in Britain face. It seems this show was put in place to reinforce white privilege and in some ways British ignorance. It is sad that a white British woman has more of an impact and seems more valid in society to carry out this documentary as opposed to a woman of a Muslim background. This issue has been brought to people's attention, but has failed to make an impact and change on how female Muslims are treated in the UK.

The most interesting part of the show for me, was when Kate went back to her home town of Winsford, allowing the audience to see she was not the only ignorant misguided individual in the area. Her mum broke down into tears explaining that she did not like it.

The documentary is eye-opening but not for the reasons you think. One would think that the main reason for the documentary was to highlight how muslims are treated but I think it is really to show the narrow mindedness of some people in Britain. It is important to acknowledge the fact that the show did not explore Muslim women who choose not to wear traditional clothing but we can't have everything.

Tyler Denyer

In The Middle With @Booksandquills

Blogs Editor, Mariana Avelino, interviews YouTuber, Sanne Vliegenthart, and asks the burning questions aspiring bloggers and vloggers have always wanted answers to.



The rise of digital media, particularly social media, has transformed how we communicate. With technological advances and the near ubiquity of the Internet, mass communication has arguably become decentralised and more democratic. Anyone with a smartphone nowadays has the potential to reach an audience numbering in the thousands, if not millions, and with that a new profession has emerged: blogging.

This summer, In the Middle caught up with YouTuber Sanne Vliegenthart of *Booksandquills* to find out what it takes and what it means to be a blogger/ vlogger.

Originally from the Netherlands, Sanne moved to London in 2012, where she made a name for herself as a YouTuber. Her immensely popular channel, *Booksandquills*, has over 167k followers, and discusses topics ranging from books to travel. As of 2016, she has been producing content for *Penguin Platform*, a media branch of the publisher *Penguin Random House* that targets young adult audiences.

In our interview, Sanne shared that she started vlogging in 2008 during her first year of University. Initially, only a spectator, she soon found herself creating videos on all sorts of topics. In her own words, "I wanted to be a part of the [YouTube] community."

Over the years, Sanne has come to specialise in book vlogs. When asked about the importance of finding a niche, she reflected on the advantages and disadvantages of establishing oneself in an area as a blogger/ vlogger. On the one hand, "you develop a focus and it becomes clear to people what they can expect from you." She emphasised her pleasure at engaging

with likeminded followers who are enthusiastic about the same things she is. On the other hand, she recognised that having a niche can feel restricting.

She was quick to point out, however, that bloggers/ vloggers can, and occasionally do, create content on different topics, or change their niche altogether. "As you develop as a vlogger, you'll find that some followers leave, but new ones come in. The important thing is to just do what you enjoy, so you keep doing it!"

The importance of motivation was highlighted during the conversation, particularly when Sanne revealed that being a blogger/ vlogger is not always very profitable. According to her, blogging/ vlogging is an ideal Saturday job. Having a popular social media channel is a great way to make extra money, especially through affiliate schemes, but it can be quite a handful to do full-time.

In Sanne's experience, "it's especially tricky to do books because publishers are not used to working with YouTube." Since book vlogs are relatively new to YouTube, in comparison to beauty and fashion ones, 'BookTubers' often must convince publishers of their value.

Sanne, for one, appears to have succeeded in finding a happy middle ground. Her job managing *Penguin Platform* allows her to make a living from discussing books and producing videos. When asked whether she felt *Penguin Platform* complemented *Booksandquills*, she elaborated on the different experience that is running the former and the latter. She explained that, on the one hand, the knowledge she has gained from

having her own channel helps her run *Penguin Platform* effectively. On the other hand, working for a brand enables her to treat *Booksandquills* as a profitable brand.

While recognising the value of shaping one's personal channel into a brand, she cautioned about walking the fine line between making a living and selling out. "If you promote something out of character, your followers will dislike it." Sanne shared that when companies approach her about promoting their products, she, as a test, always asks herself whether she would do it for free. Such decisions are not always easy, however, especially for full-time bloggers/ vloggers.

When asked, on behalf of aspiring vloggers, what skills are necessary to start a YouTube channel, Sanne confessed that she kicked off with "zero skills" and very low tech. Reminiscing about the early days, she recalled that she had a digital camera with a tiny screen that could only record 30 seconds of footage at a time! In her eyes, budding vloggers today have an advantage because technology is so advanced and accessible. According to Sanne, all that is needed is a smartphone, because even editing software can be downloaded for free. In fact, fellow BookTuber Jean from *Bookish Thoughts* used to shoot all her videos using her iPhone instead of a professional camera and no one could tell the difference.

An advocate of learning on your feet, Sanne believes that "you can teach yourself all the skills if you have an experimental nature." She recommends simply starting to make videos if you are a beginner, even if you have no intention of putting the content online. She also suggests chatting with people on YouTube whose community you want to be a part of. Not only will that motivate you to create your own videos, you'll make friends with other new vloggers and grow together.

In a closing message to those who are unsure of what they have to contribute to the blogosphere, Sanne said, "I believe that everyone has something which makes them special and engaging: their knowledge, their personality, what they study. For instance, I have my Dutch identity and my love of books [...] Just be yourself and make videos you would want to see."

Mariana Avelino

Check out *Booksandquills* at youtube.com/booksandquills, or [@booksandquills](https://twitter.com/booksandquills)



Image: Youtube

Marriage in the 21st Century



Nathan discusses how our understanding of marriage has changed over time, and whether it is meaningless or of increasing importance in secular society.

It goes without saying that marriage means different things to different people. Is marriage a fundamentally religious vow between two people or is it a secular concept now? Are marriages based on unbreakable, permanent promises or are they are a recipe for temporary happiness and long-term anger?

There is no universal motivation for tying the knot. It can be for whatever reason you want it to be: religious, secular, eternal or temporary.

As a very liberal Christian, I hold the view that marriage should be an option for anyone of any sexuality, but that marriage should not lose its value as a religious ceremony. In short, that marriage is for everyone, but it should be taken seriously as a commitment. Though this may sound obvious, marriage is too often just the given answer to the ever-present question of 'what next?'

In Britain, we have a broadly secular society but also an official established faith which is represented by the Church of England. This inevitably leads to a clash of opinions when it comes to issues such as marriage, as well as even more complicated issues like abortion. Many people of faith view marriage as a ceremony witnessed by one or many gods, not just an opportunity for friends and family to gather together and celebrate the love of two people for each other.

All successful partnerships should be celebrated, of course, but for those of faith, marriage is something more. Consequently, marriage between 'believers' often lasts longer than between people of no faith – this is not necessarily a good thing, because

it can sometimes lead to being trapped in a dysfunctional relationship rather than participating in a fulfilling, long-term one.

There is no right answer as to whether marriage should be a religious sacrament or a secular celebration. What's most important for me is that marriage remains a cherished thing, and that doesn't depend on one's faith.

Overall, the portion of the population getting married is decreasing, perhaps because marriage is more of a choice now than in the past, when it was simply 'the done thing'. Furthermore, people are, on average, waiting longer to get married than in previous decades, which could suggest that much more thought is going into marriage nowadays. I believe that as a result of this element of choice, when people today get married, they do so after careful consideration and for the right reasons, rather than just to comply with societal norms.

Marriage, then, is increasingly relevant and important to some people, and not so much to others. Those who don't want to get married shouldn't feel any pressure to, and those who do – whoever they are – should now be able to value the concept even more than past generations. It's a great irony of secular society that what was such a religious affair originally has taken on greater importance because of secularism.

Marriage, statistically speaking, may be in decline. Yet symbolically, it's more important than ever.

Nathan Olsen

Agony Aunt



"How do I know I'm in a toxic relationship, and what should I do if I am?"

A toxic relationship is one in which a partner behaves in ways that are emotionally damaging to their significant other. To know if your relationship is toxic, consider whether it is characterised by any of the following behaviours:

1) Belittling

This occurs when an individual disparages their partners' ideas or what they say, and sometimes tries to cover it up with phrases such as "I'm just joking. Can't you take a joke?"

2) Bad temper and guilt-inducing behaviour

A symptom of this is you actively avoiding disagreements with your partner because of their anger, or them blaming their outbursts on you. Commonly, the toxic partner will have control in the relationship by making you feel guilty. They will often make use of third parties to enforce that guilt, and then have the power to temporarily remove such a feeling if you comply with them.

3) Dependency

This can present itself in one of two ways. If your partner is over-dependent, you're likely to be making most of the decisions, meaning that problems are 'your fault'. If you make a 'wrong decision', your partner will show their displeasure through passive aggressive behaviour. The result is you experiencing constant anxiety as you chronically worry about the repercussions of your decisions.

Alternatively, your partner can be extremely independent. Independence is negative when one individual can control their partner by keeping up uncertainty, which can be highly distressing and make you feel insecure in the relationship.

4) Possessiveness and paranoia

Your partner may have started off being jealous over small matters,

but over time they will have become increasingly suspicious. For example, they check the 'Find Friends' app if they think you have gone somewhere without telling them. This kind of relationship can prevent you from living your own life, and normally occurs if your partner has been lied to in the past.

It's important to clarify that just because you have experienced some of these scenarios before, it doesn't definitively mean that your relationship is toxic. Most of us manipulate or control every so often; no one is perfect. What distinguishes a toxic relationship is the severity and frequency of oppressive behaviours.

Why do people behave in toxic ways? Poor self-esteem rooted in underlying insecurity is one reason. Toxic individuals don't believe others will love them and willingly deal with their needs.

So, what do you do if you're in a toxic relationship? You cannot change the actions of your partner, but you can change yourself and not succumb to toxicity. The ideal approach would be calmly confronting the toxic partner by pointing out their behaviour(s) which you feel are inappropriate, and suggesting alternatives. You have to believe that you deserve to be treated with more respect in the relationship.

The only way to turn a toxic relationship into a healthy one is by being willing to leave the relationship if nothing changes. If you're unwilling to leave, you will have limited power because your partner will know, ultimately, that regardless of what they do, you won't go. In order to confront your toxic partner, you need to have enough self-confidence to know that you will be all right if your relationship ends. If they refuse to make the necessary changes, then ending the relationship is your only escape from their toxic behaviour.

Taylor Sands



“In the scientific sense, we are flying right now, we just happen to be pulled into the earth's gravity. But that's the thing about science. It's only definable by human principles. We have nothing really to compare it to. What we observe through human eyes - and human eyes are basically just cameras - we can't see beyond that. The way we perceive it, rationalise it, it's limited by our brains. It can only be. We can't conceive things in any other way.”

Photography Showcase

Here at The Gryphon we are always keen to showcase the work of our student body. Below is a selection of the best photography we have been submitted this past week. If you would like to be featured, search for us on facebook!

Adriana de las Cuevas
Head of Photography



Anonymous



Calum Carson



Robyn Yates



Sílvia Blanco Tejerina



Calum Carson



#BloodNormal: A Step Forward in Ending the Period Taboo

Sadie Scheuer

If you haven't seen Bodyform's new #BloodNormal campaign yet, it is a must watch. For the first time ever, a sanitary towel company has chosen to use realistic blood in its advert over the mysterious blue liquid usually chosen to represent menstrual fluids. The video starts with a pipette of red 'period blood' being squeezed onto a sanitary towel, followed by a number of other clips including a man buying a packet of pads and blood running down a woman's leg as she stands in the shower.

However, whilst you may think the only words that could possibly describe such a campaign could be 'empowering', 'inspirational' and 'soooo progressive', a simple Twitter search for #BloodNormal reveals otherwise. Comments were, for the most part, positive, but I was shocked to see that not everyone had reacted in the same way as I had (immediately sharing the link with my Mum accompanied by the word "Success!").

Many viewers disagreed with the advert on the terms of it being 'unnecessary' and 'disgusting' to show this blood-like liquid on national television, with one woman saying "there's a reason it was blue" and arguing that this blue colour didn't make periods "seem shameful". This sounded a lot like the words of someone who isn't ashamed of their periods, which is

great for her, but doesn't help the thousands of other women who are.

One Twitter user even posed the question: "Are we going to show poo soon too?". Last time I checked, human faeces weren't a taboo that needed addressing in order for females around the world to feel more comfortable with their periods. And it seems funny to hear people labelling the advert as "grim", when the use of blue liquid over 'real' blood is exactly what has worsened this idea of disgust surrounding periods, making many of us feel as though they are dirty and something to be ashamed of.

I also couldn't help but find something super empowering about the women featured in the video. Whether they were lounging on lilos, showering, or standing in big pants, they all had a distinctly confident feel about them. This added to the advert's important message that we should not only be unashamed of periods but should be able to feel confident when we're on them. Granted, some of us physically don't feel our best around that time of the month, but no way should this be as a result of ignorant stigmas.

Not only this, but we can't ignore the clip showing a man picking up pads for a woman in his life, as periods are very much something that men shouldn't be ashamed of their girlfriends, wives, sisters, or



Image: The Independent

mothers having. There go Bodyform waving goodbye to another taboo!

Overall, in the midst of today's society, the problem seems to be that many people simply aren't accepting that we still haven't tackled taboos surrounding periods. Lots of you may believe that they aren't something to be celebrated, and you might be right, but they certainly aren't something to be ashamed of. And if it takes a few people being put off their dinner to give women confidence to accept their own feminine bodily functions, then I can't see Bodyform's campaign as anything but positive.

My Week As A Muslim: Ignorant or Groundbreaking?

Freya Hillyer

The new Channel 4 one-off special 'My Week as a Muslim' wasn't all I'd imagined and hoped it would be. It fell short of its potential. The dislike I had for the woman the documentary focused on, Katie, was immediate. Her ignorance for society around her and her lack of tolerance for anyone she deemed to be 'different' and 'not English' was hard to watch. Although she seemed to have turned it around by the end of the show, seemingly learning the valuable lesson of acceptance, should this have really been the way to convince her?

I have no doubt that the makers of the show had nothing but the best intentions to educate and enlighten the masses, on the premise of the show being potentially ground breaking in the nature of everyday racism and prejudice present in British society. However, the main question I'd like to ask is: should a white woman's experience of hatred and intolerance as a Muslim be the thing that changes some peoples prejudice? Shouldn't it really be the people that suffer through this racism every single day and have no escape?

As was mentioned in the programme, Katie can go back home to her family and live as a white woman without the constant fear of how people will react to you in the streets weighing on her mind. At the risk of sounding too cynical about a show which, in all fairness, obviously aimed to help in the fight against racism, I don't see why we needed a white woman to open our eyes to the prejudice and horrific racism that goes on in our country. Would it not have been more powerful to have a frank and compelling conversation with those directly affected by this racism such as the host family (Saima and her children).

The moments in which I was most drawn to the programme was when Saima learnt of the Manchester bombings, which happened during filming, and the viewer could genuinely see the fear and distress in her eyes. The fear for her children getting on public transport; the fear for her friends being mistreated and abused in the street for being who they are; and the fear, not just of terrorism, but of the backlash of hatred directed at innocent Muslims by their white equals.

I thought the inclusion of the Muslim run charity handing out soups and drinks to policemen who had been working around the clock in order to maintain the peace after the atrocity should be celebrated however, could this not have been the story? Could the producers of the show have scrapped the whole farcical body swap and just focused on the genuine people?

So, although I felt the programme fell short of what the adverts promised it would be, it enlightened me to the ongoing everyday racism perpetuated by families such as Katie's - as well as the fact that the very show produced with the purpose of curbing racism and prejudice demonstrated this same ignorance, by utilising a white woman to help the public understand the struggles faced by Muslims on an everyday basis.



Image: Digital Spy

Northern Ireland: Abortion Is A Medical Issue, Not A Criminal One?

Megan Cummings

When you think of Northern Ireland, what comes to mind? Is it beautiful scenery, the Titanic, maybe *Game of Thrones*? Or do you think of archaic, out-dated abortion laws?

For England, Scotland, and Wales, Friday marked the fiftieth anniversary of the passing of the 1967 Abortion Act, legalising abortion until the 24th week of pregnancy. However, just across the Irish Sea, many still fight for these same rights. There, women are only entitled to abortion if the pregnancy puts their life in danger; women who have conceived through rape, or with fatal foetal abnormalities, are forced to carry to full term. Those caught terminating a pregnancy will at best get a criminal record – at worst they face life imprisonment.

This week, an appeal was brought to the UK Supreme Court by the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC), arguing that NI's laws breached the human rights of its population. Three women, all of whom had been refused abortions in Northern Ireland – despite being told that their unborn babies would die before, during or shortly after birth – spoke alongside an NIHRC barrister in support of the appeal.

One such speaker, Ashleigh Topley, was told at 20 weeks that her baby's limbs had stopped growing, and would die as soon as she was born. Doctors told her that there was nothing she could do – because her own life was not endangered, she had to carry the baby to full term. Describing the experience as

'torture', Ashleigh recalled how strangers would see the bump and ask about her baby: "When are you due? Do you know if it's a boy or a girl? Are you excited?". Can you imagine being constantly reminded of your pregnancy, knowing it was destined to end in the death of your baby? When Ashleigh gave birth 15 weeks later, her daughter's heart fatally stopped.

"Can you imagine being constantly reminded of your pregnancy, knowing it was destined to end in the death of your baby?"

Liam Gibson, from the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, called the hearing "an attack on the life of unborn children, particularly the disabled". Alongside this society, many Northern Irish Catholic bishops, and other pro-life groups, spoke against the reform of abortion laws at the Supreme Court. But when a baby is destined for a life of suffering, or no life at all, surely denying the mother an abortion is the most cruel and inhumane option when she has to live with the fact that she'll never get to love and nurture her child like the majority of other mothers?

On the 29th June of this year, the British government announced that Northern Irish women would be entitled to free NHS abortions in England, after a Labour-led campaign – prior to this, they would have to pay around £900, on top of flights

and accommodation. While this is a step in the right direction, it just isn't good enough. In a country where over two thirds of the population believe abortion laws are too strict (according to a poll by Amnesty International NI), we shouldn't have to travel across the sea, and pay for travel and accommodation, to terminate a pregnancy.

It isn't criminal to want an abortion, and laws suggesting this is the case are humiliating and degrading. My country is a beautiful place, with a rich history and a plethora of amazing landmarks, but it's hard to be proud of my heritage when we're still stuck in the political dark ages. With the Supreme Court's ruling due to arrive early 2018, all we can hope for is a much-needed revision of our abortion laws, and soon.



Criminalising Free Thought, or the Actions it Produces?

Lyle Broom

The home secretary, Amber Rudd, has proposed an increase in jail term for those who repeatedly view terrorist propaganda online. This comes in reaction to increased attacks on Europe from jihadists. Rudd's proposal has received a significant response from the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, Max Hill QC. His main concern is that this is a legislation of thought crime, where no crime has actually been committed; instead we would be punishing people merely for "political desire" rather than necessity. He goes on to imply that, if this was a European researching European terrorism, their punishment for constantly viewing their propaganda would be entirely different because the impact will be felt outside the bubble of Europe.

So far this year, there have been 14 attacks in Europe which have been classed as Islamic terrorism by European authorities. Three of these attacks have happened in the UK and the largest attack in Europe, in terms of those injured and killed, was in Manchester. 2017 has been an awful year for the United Kingdom in terms of counter-terrorism efficiency as even only one terrorist attack, no matter how small, would be a failure in the national security of a nation. I see Amber Rudd's proposal as an honest attempt to thwart terrorism in this country before it even takes root, however, her approach is flawed. Access

to a myriad of perspectives is one of the internet's greatest strengths and should not be threatened.

The internet is a hub for free speech and expression throughout most parts of the world. It is open to every and any kind of opinion, no matter how benevolent or abhorrent. Such freedoms are becoming more and more scarce on other platforms as people are becoming increasingly worried about the consequences to the opinions they hold or consume. It is absolutely necessary for the internet to remain as free as possible and that the government have as little amount of influence over it as possible.

However, this is not to say that there should be no consequence for those who spread hate and destruction; this is an abuse of freedom of speech. Inciting hate invites a volatile society, spreading yet more hate, more violence and more suppression of freedom of speech. With enough hate riled up within a person, they won't want to hear any other opinions. Instead, they are much more likely to react in a violent or suppressive manner. Therefore, the idea that a member of the public should be punished for viewing propaganda, or an opinion, which opposes a different perspective is simply a step closer to Orwellian prophesy. Moreover, those who create, spread and indoctrinate through terrorism-related media should be punished.

The line between a thought-crime and an actual, physical crime is crossed when freedom of speech is being used to suppress freedom of thought. If we allow terrorism to spread in our own country through obsolete legislation, we will be allowing the exact same thing we seek to prevent; suppression of our human rights.



Image: The Independent



Saudi Arabia To Sell Prized Oil Company?

Oliver Brown

Saudi Aramco, the national oil company of Saudi Arabia, are reportedly considering a private sale, having previously planned to pull off the world's largest ever initial public offering.

In a bid to start diversifying the country's economy away from oil, Saudi Arabia had been planning on selling 5% of its national oil company to investors in an IPO. "If 1% of Aramco is offered to the market, it will be the biggest IPO on earth," stated Deputy Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The Saudis had expected a valuation of over 2 trillion US dollars for the full 5%, although this figure is significantly higher than that estimated by independent analysts.

A lot is at stake for the Saudis as they are rapidly running through their financial reserves as a result of ventures including investment into Softbank's vision fund, which has pumped billions across Uber, Slack and other high-profile tech businesses. Furthermore, a lot is at stake for the new Deputy Crown Prince himself as there has been rows over succession since his inheritance of the crown from his predecessor Mohammed bin Nayef. A failure for the IPO to go through and be profitable could reopen this debate. Now, reports suggest the Saudis are instead

considering a private sale of the company to the Chinese government and/or other investors.

China has reportedly offered to buy the whole 5% stake of Saudi Aramco on offer. China is one of the world's largest importers of oil and is set to be the largest single user in less than a decade. As stated by the Financial Times, the level of China's imports has been pushed up by the decline in domestic production from the long-established fields in Daqing and Shengli and by the difficulty of developing other resources, including the unconventional tight oil in the Ordos basin. This move would help the Chinese secure access to energy for the foreseeable future. Meanwhile, a direct sale to China means that, among other things, Saudi Arabia could avoid the regulatory demands and market uncertainty that come with an IPO.

New York and London have been considered as likely cities for a potential listing if an IPO were to occur, but each brings its own issues. An American law dealing with lawsuits around the 9/11 attacks, which would allow lawsuits seeking damages for victims to proceed against the Saudi government, was specifically mentioned by Saudi Aramco's lawyers

as a legal risk, especially as the Saudi government would still own roughly 95% of Saudi Aramco post-IPO. London isn't straightforward either, with the financial regulator facing criticism for considering relaxing its minimum threshold of 25% of a company to be sold in an IPO.



Image: Twitter.com

'Bedblocking' Causing Hospital Overflow

Rachael Dillon

An NHS pilot scheme called CareRooms is planning on discharging patients to 'Airbnb-style' accommodation. The scheme, which is taking place in Essex, would see patients recuperating in the spare rooms of local "hosts" before they are ready to return home. It hopes that this could be the first step in tackling the issue of bed shortages in the NHS.

Undoubtedly, the NHS is struggling under the weight of patient care. 'Bedblocking' (when patients are fit to leave hospital but cannot be discharged) has risen by 40% in the past year. This is thought to result in up to 8,000 deaths per year. Last winter the shortage in beds caused what the Red Cross called "a humanitarian crisis" due to the numbers of patients left waiting for beds, and there are fears that this winter will see a repeat performance.

In addition, prolonged stays in hospitals can have an adverse effect on health, increasing the chance of picking up infection. Dr Harry Thirkettle, co-founder of CareRooms, argues that the intention of the scheme is partly to prevent the effects of long-term hospitalisation, which makes patients "lose muscle strength and mass" and also "impairs their cognition".

However, the scheme has drawn widespread criticism, with concerns over the abuse and neglect of vulnerable patients at the forefront. Moreover, with hosts able to earn up to £50 a night, there are growing apprehensions about whether those who offer houses would prioritise money-making over patient care. While members of the public taking part in the scheme would have to undergo security checks, no training or former caring experience is needed to rent out your room.

The Department of Health has distanced itself from the scheme, emphasising that it's a "locally sourced scheme" and not "national policy". Still, it defends accusations of CareRooms being a "cheap substitution for social care" saying that such claims are false and that "any schemes such as these are subject to the strictest quality controls and regulations".

Yet it's undeniable that the pressure faced by the NHS is mounting in the face of government cuts that expect £22 billion in savings from the service by 2020. As resources continue to be squeezed, it seems that these alternatives are being presented in response to the need to save money rather than prioritising care.

Although this scheme is just a pilot with no plans

for further development at the moment, it could nonetheless be indicative of the direction in which the NHS is heading. The public must remain cautious, because it's clear that under this government the lives of the vulnerable are very much in danger of being overlooked.



Image: lgsem.com

Is Sexual Harrassment in the Workplace a Growing Problem?

India Daniel

New research suggests that male bosses, fearful of being accused of sexual harassment, are avoiding spending time with female employees. This means that women are missing out on crucial opportunities which would allow them to rise to the top.

Experts say that recent high-profile exposés of sexual predators such as Harvey Weinstein and Bill Cosby are damaging relations in other working environments, as male bosses become more afraid to interact with female employees. Some men also said that they were afraid to talk to women in case their friendliness was misinterpreted and avoided spending time with their female colleagues one on one.

Traditional networking events such as Friday drinks and golf socials are seen as the preserve of men, with it being implicit that women do not enter this space. A male member of staff having casual conversation with a senior male member of staff is networking and may help to further his career. However, if it was a woman it is often considered flirting and her motives are speculated upon, or male senior staff feel that they do not have anything in common so would not engage in this casual conversation. Women are therefore less likely to and raise their profile with senior staff in this way.

Often senior, powerful men 'have their pick' of the young, ambitious female employees; and

many of these women struggle to voice concerns about inappropriate language or jokes because it is accepted behaviour and they don't want to be the one to stand out, or because they (as has been the case of the Harvey Weinstein allegations) fear the repercussions of rejecting advances on their careers. This undermines the credibility of women, as they and their peers question whether the opportunities they are given are because of their talents or because their boss finds them attractive.

It seems shocking in 2017 that women are judged on their physical appearance far more than men, and that their worth is not only valued by their intellect, talent and ability to do the job.

Despite programmes to encourage more women into leadership, sponsorship and mentoring by senior stakeholders remains crucial to ensure that women are given credibility and the opportunities to allow them to achieve leadership positions. However, if men (who predominantly hold leadership positions) are afraid to spend time with women for fear of sexual harassment claims women are going to be held back further from senior positions, and gender equality will fall further behind.

In response to this dilemma, HR professionals are calling for training for staff on the basic etiquette of interacting with the opposite sex in the workplace.

The key to ensuring that women are protected from unwanted advances and that men are protected from any false sexual harassment claims lies in the culture of a company. Companies need to ensure that their senior staff do not perpetuate a 'laddish' culture and treat all employees equally. Jokes at a woman's expense, comments about appearance or people's sex lives should all be off limits and senior management should make this clear.

Staff in senior positions must ensure that they treat both male and female employees the same, do not view any employees as sexual objects, and give employees of both sexes the same opportunities based on their skills. If inappropriate language and interactions are not present in the workplace then gossip and opportunities for sexual harassment are reduced, providing employees with a more comfortable working environment.

By treating employees equally and ensuring that a workplace's culture sets the right tone, women will be able to continue to shatter the glass ceiling and businesses will be better equipped to make the most of all their employees and thrive in the 21st century.

UK Inflation Hits 5 Year High: Are Interest Rates the Answer?

Chloe Sainsbury & Eleanor King

This September, the UK's inflation rate reached a high of 3%, a height not seen since 2012.

This has been attributed to a number of factors; primarily the fall in the value of sterling as a result of the EU referendum last year, as well as the recent increase in UK transport and food prices. The fall in the pound has resulted in goods becoming more expensive to import into the country, which for an import-heavy economy like the UK, has resulted in the overall price level of the economy rising. Likewise, as transport and food costs increase the overall price level rises from these increased prices and the subsequent higher costs to firms.

The target inflation rate for the Bank of England is 2%, which is considered to be the optimal rate to keep the economy working effectively. The inflation rate is monitored throughout the year and when the rate reaches a position 1% either side of the target, the Governor of the Bank of England (Mark Carney) is required to write a letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer explaining why this has happened and his proposed solution. Hence, the current inflation rate reaching 3%, has led Mark Carney to have to suggest

the possible ways he can reduce inflation to reach the 2% target again.

The inflation rate has often been manipulated by changing the interest rates; it is more than likely this will be the tool Carney chooses again to try and reign in inflation on this occasion. The UK currently has a very low base interest rate at 0.25%, the lowest rate the interest rate has ever been at in the UK. Carney is likely to raise this rate to 0.5% in order to stimulate more saving in the economy and reduce the spending pressures on the inflation rate.

A base interest rate of 0.5% is still very low and it is up for debate how much a small increase of 0.25% will affect the saving and consumer patterns in the economy. However, Carney will be hoping that this incremental change has the required effect on inflation. Ultimately, it is a relatively unpopular move to increase the interest rate at a time when many consider the economy to not be growing as strongly as desired, and he will not be keen to increase it much more in order to get inflation on target again.





Image: Laura Santos

A Fossil Free Campus?

Laura Santos

On Monday 9th October, a group of students from *People & Planet*, a society at the University that protests against the use of fossil fuels, campaigned outside the University Union. The society campaigns for a number of issues including the abolishment of fossil fuels, the use of which is leading us towards a global climate crisis. In line with their vision, *People & Planet* are determined to remove Shell from campus, despite the multinational oil and gas company providing funding for researchers at the university.

The society believes that “if it’s wrong to wreck the climate, then it’s wrong to profit from that wreckage”. They state that “our university invests nearly £7 million in fossil fuel companies and £400,000 in Shell alone, meaning the university is directly profiting from climate change.”

A statement from the society’s president expressed that “The 2015 referendum shows 83% of students want the University to divest from fossil fuels. However, the University is continuing to ignore the student voice and lag behind the tide of Universities distancing themselves from this destructive industry. We now feel that taking direct action is our only option to ensure that student voices are heard”.

Amidst the controversy, we interviewed a PhD Petroleum Engineering student at the University, who was funded by a company part-owned by Shell, in order to gain insight on the opposing end of the spectrum:

What area within the petroleum industry are you researching?

My work focuses on reducing fouling across the petroleum industry, but in particular, downstream processing.

As someone working in the petroleum field, will your work have caused any harm to the environment?

In theory, it would enable more oil reserves to be extracted and used but in reality, it would simply make processing cheaper and less energy intensive (consuming less energy than current) which would be good for both the economy and emissions. Whether or not it would be used to extract heavier oil would depend on

how long it takes for renewable energy to be a serious contender for petroleum on a global scale.

What is your view on the campaign to “get Shell off our campus”? Do you think it would be possible to achieve this goal of turning to renewable resources?

In a university that is interested in research, and that research needs funding, it is difficult to lock out fossil fuel companies when they’re such a huge part of the economy. As they are the bulk suppliers of energy to the UK, isn’t it in our best interests to improve the efficiency of the industry? And although on paper, investments in an oil company like Shell looks like an investment in fossil fuels, it’s important to remember that Shell themselves already invest heavily in renewables and are looking to increase this to \$1 billion by the end of the decade. This money will, no doubt, make a significant contribution to the ultimate aim of green, renewable energy as we are currently not able to rely on these technologies for all of our energy.

The society’s counter-argument was that “Although Shell, and other companies, have invested some money in renewable energy, this amount is tiny compared to the rest of their company and not good enough. This year Shell pledged to spend 0.04% of their annual spending by the end of this decade. Although we would love for fossil fuel companies to turn around and say they were now going to only invest in renewables, this seems very unlikely from the green washing we are currently seeing”.

The University itself released a statement last year on their decision on fossil fuel divestment. In short, whilst they claimed that it is important to invest in renewable energy, it is not that simple. If the university relies on fossil fuels for its day-to-day activities, it would be unethical to simply divest from these companies which are providing its energy. They could not therefore divest from the use of fossil fuels.

Having said that, the University has acknowledged the fact that it is important to take action, and they continue to put pressure on fossil fuel companies to steer us towards a low-carbon future. According to *People & Planet*, although there are some issues with the renewable industry currently, investment in them rather than their competition will help spur innovation.

Endangered Tongues: How Leeds is Saving Languages Facing Extinction

Emily Jacklin

Alongside the loss of animals and plant species across Earth, another epidemic is happening at an alarming rate: the mass extinction of endangered languages. An endangered language has very few speakers remaining and language death occurs when the last remaining speaker dies. In the past, there have been instances where whole communities and their languages have been wiped out due to colonial education systems, natural disasters or, in the case of many Native American languages, massacres.

However, the problem we face today is more a case of a gradual language shift. This is a three-generation long process whereby people learn a more dominant language such as English, Spanish, Arabic or Mandarin due to its accessibility and for more job opportunities. The language becomes moribund, meaning they teach their children this dominant language at the expense of their lesser-known mother tongue. This in turn leads a language to become endangered and eventually die – a calamity that National Geographic claims happens every 14 days on average.

This loss can impede on the scientific world. David Harrison, a linguist and leader of the Enduring Voices Project, said: “Each indigenous language contains millennia of human experience, wisdom and practical knowledge about the natural environment”. Not only this, but language is core to our identity. Notable linguist, Claude Hagège, has commented on how language is a living organism in which we express our relationship with the world, and is a testimony of human communities.

The University of Leeds has been involved in a three-year community-based project from January 2013 to December 2016, led by Professor Janet Watson, aiming to document Modern Southern Arabian languages spoken in Oman that have no written form. During this time, *The Gryphon* was lucky to speak to Faisal, who is taking part in the project. He is a native speaker of Shehret and Mehri, which has approximately 50,000 and 180,000 speakers, respectively.

Are you happy that there's funding for projects to save Shehret and Mehri?

Yes, I'm so happy because here, you write Shehret and you make Shehret words, that means we will protect the language. That's why I feel happy.

Why do you think it is important to save Shehret and Mehri?

I think it's important because it's our duty to save our language, but nobody will do that. I think this time it's important because this language will die. If nobody saves them, and nobody writes them, and nobody makes words for Mehri and Shehret, they will die.

Are people proud of their language?

Yes, so much. The people are proud to speak Shehret and Mehri. Our life is like a tribe, the tribe is proud to speak the language and this is private for us and our language. When I speak Mehri I also feel proud and something private to our family and surname. I enjoy it when I speak good Shehret. I shout at my brothers and sisters when they speak wrong Shehret. I say “No! That's wrong!”, they mix it with Arabic and say the words with the wrong accent.

Which languages do your children speak? And do you feel a duty to pass on the language?

My children speak Shehret in my house and in my town. But when they go to their schools, they learn Arabic. Both languages are important to me because Arabic is the language of the Quran and the religion of Islam. Some families only teach their children Arabic, but I think that's wrong. You have to protect this language and teach it to our children. Shehret, Mehri and Arabic, three languages.

“If nobody saves them, and nobody writes them, and nobody makes words for Mehri and Shehret, they will die”

Are there some words that elderly speakers use, that you don't know?

That is right. There are many words in Shehret that I can't understand, many old words. There is one old guy and I can't understand some of his words. He wants to protect his language and write a bit. You need to go to the old people and collect the words, because even I can't collect all the words in Shehret. There are words they use when they go fishing, build houses, or milk animals that I can't understand. A lot of knowledge is already lost.

During the project, enough written Mehri was created for the first Mehri e-book for children to be produced. Thousands more Shehret and Mehri words were also recorded which are now being curated at the Endangered Languages Archive based at SOAS University, London.

Some of Faisal's responses were edited for length and clarity.

The Rhythm of the Night

Rob Hayman

Sitting through another increasingly dull lecture leads many students to plan a beautiful, peaceful nap as soon as they get home – and with good reason. Sleep is a crucial part of the human body's functionality, despite seeming totally illogical from an evolutionary standpoint. For an animal to switch itself into an unconscious state for hours opens up many dangers from predators, yet almost every organism has some form of body clock controlling their daily life.

This body clock, also known as a circadian rhythm, is made up of multiple biochemical processes which control everything from temperature regulation to hormone release. It is, however, sleep that is the most important function of the circadian rhythm. Allowing the body to shut down for a few hours every night lets the brain process the day's events and has been shown to boost wound healing and the immune system.

Often, an organism's internal rhythm is linked to the day-night cycle, based largely on the amount of light being received by the eyes. A cluster of nerves known as the suprachiasmatic nucleus receives information from the optic nerve about the quantity of light being received and in turn instructs the brain on how much of the sleep-causing hormone melatonin to release. This is the major reason why staring at screens for an excessive amount of time before sleep

isn't a brilliant idea. While it may be important to check your social media for the billionth time, exposing yourself to large amounts of blue LED light suppresses the amount of melatonin produced, which in turn interrupts your circadian rhythm. All of this leads to a poorer night's sleep, hence why tech companies such as Apple and Google have now introduced a “night” mode into their products, lowering the amount of blue light produced by devices during the later hours.

Disrupting the internal clock may have further medical consequences. A 2012 Danish study showed that female military personnel working on night shifts had a 40% increased risk of developing breast cancer and in 2014, scientists at Surrey University simulated night shifts or severe jet lag on subjects and noted disruptive effects on hundreds of genes related to repairing and maintaining the body. The European Space Agency has also conducted research into how long-term spaceflight affected the circadian rhythms of astronauts on the International Space Station.

It is, therefore, no wonder that this system is still at the forefront of scientific research. The 2017 Nobel Prize for Physiology and Medicine was won by a trio of American scientists for their research into a specific protein, known as PER. PER levels fluctuate throughout a 24 hour cycle and we now know that this is due to interactions with another protein called TIM, which work to shut down a gene known as the

“period” gene.

What is still unclear, however, is what led to the development of an internal timekeeper across the vast majority of the natural world. One common theory is that the clock was developed by the earliest cellular organisms in order to protect DNA from ultraviolet radiation from the Sun. However, photosynthetic cyanobacteria do precisely the opposite – replicating their DNA during the daytime. Other suggestions include the protection of the body from harmful oxygen containing chemical species which are largely produced during daylight hours.

Circadian rhythms are clearly an integral part of who we are and could well provide a link to the smallest and most ancient organisms that ever inhabited this Earth. But for now, I think it's time for a nap.



Image: Valley Sleep Centre

Le Rosbif: British Footballers Abroad

For Englishmen trying to carve themselves a career in football, plying their trade abroad is a near alien concept. Sports writer, Will Pickworth, had the opportunity to ask Ryan Williams about his experiences of playing for Canada's Ottawa Fury, exploring why there aren't more British players overseas.



Image: Ottawa Fury

Ryan Williams Pictured Centre

Will Pickworth
Football

When picturing those from our tiny island travelling internationally, the image conjured is often that of "Brits Abroad". This image may often be associated with a sun-kissed beach, drinking a cocktail or beer and most likely, sunburnt skin. Something that one would not often think of upon hearing those words is British footballers plying their trade abroad, particularly Englishmen.

Ottawa Fury FC, who compete in the United Soccer League's (USL) Eastern Conference (after leaving the North American Soccer League (NASL) at the end of 2016) have just finished their campaign, unfortunately narrowly missing out on the end of season playoffs by 6 points, finishing 10th in a 15 team league. Ending with a record of 8 wins, 10 defeats and 14 ties (or draws as us 'Brits' like to call them), the team set a USL record for the number of ties in one season.

Ottawa have four Englishmen among their camp; Onua Obasi, a left-sided defender, Jonathan Barden, a right-sided defender or midfielder, Serge Manesio (formerly of both Tottenham and West Brom's youth teams), a defensive midfielder/centre-back and Ryan Williams, a creative midfielder and the only one of them to have played professionally in the UK. Tampa Bay Rowdies also feature in the USL Eastern Conference where former England international Joe Cole now plays.

I sat down with Williams, the Fans Player of the Year in 2016, having struck four goals in the 2016 Fall Season, yards from Ottawa's home, Lansdowne Park (TD Place Stadium). We discussed all things football, life in Canada and how his footballing journey ended up across the pond in Canada's capital city.

Williams, aged 26, made 16 appearances this season providing 3 goals and 2 assists for the team and his

footballing career is a fascinating journey. Starting in the youth ranks at Chester City, he managed to make the match day squad on several occasions before torn ankle ligaments scuppered his chances of earning a professional deal at the club. He dropped into part-time football with Colwyn Bay before joining Welsh Clubs Llandudno and Rhyl, where he scored 16 times in 35 games during the 2011-12 season, which grabbed the attention of English side Morecambe. Williams enjoyed a successful time at Morecambe for over two and a half years, which included a trial with Stoke City. A spell at Brentford followed, which yielded only one appearance before signing for Inverness Caledonian Thistle for the second half of the 2015-16 season. He has also represented England at Fustal and featured in the 2010 Four Nations Tournament alongside Ottawa teammate Obasi. In the summer of 2016 he received a call from Paul Dalglish, son of Kenny, the then manager of Ottawa Fury, about a potential opportunity abroad.

"It was a crazy experience really", Williams recalls; "I was meant to sign for a team in Portugal, but the move fell through in the first week in July. At this point teams are going back for pre-season and I had never been in this situation before. Strangely enough, I'm at Vauxhall watching my friend play and I get a phone call and it's a scouser; 'Ryan, its Paul Dalglish, I've heard you're available, would you be interested in coming out to Ottawa?'" Not easily persuaded by just a phone call and worrying that it could be his friends playing a prank on him, he tells the 'scouser' on the other end to FaceTime him. Funnily enough five minutes later Williams receives a FaceTime from the same number and its Dalglish on the other end of the phone. "I think you'd be perfect for the way we play and the system we are trying to play, do you fancy it?" Williams jumped at the opportunity and a week later he was out training in Canada. He describes to me how it was a step into the unknown

not really knowing anything about Ottawa, but he took Dalglish's word for it and saw straight away what a beautiful city it was.

His former England Futsal teammate Obasi was already at Ottawa when he arrived and Williams was excited to meet his old friend in the locker room. However, there were a variety of other English and well-known players already at the club: "It was a great locker room to walk in to. I met some other guys from England like James Bailey, who played for Derby and is now the captain of Yeovil. There were some real good guys in the team such as Julian De Guzman, who was the Canadian captain at the time and Romauld Peiser, who had played in the Portuguese league". Asking if his previous relationship with Obasi made it easier adapting to the club, "Absolutely, but football is a universal language. Whenever you walk into a locker room, whether you know someone or not, it takes a week or so to get settled, then they're pretty much your family from then on."

The 11 different nationalities in the current squad suggests a cultured side and it is something that Williams revels in and has provided opportunities that he never thought he would get. "It is fascinating how a sport like soccer can bring everyone together. Last year there were three or four Brazilians in the team and I've never played with Brazilians before. They were brilliant; a completely different approach to anything I've ever come across, being so relaxed and having fun all the time, but when it came to a Saturday they delivered. That is ultimately the most important thing and it was a really good experience to play with them."

"Absolutely fantastic!" is how Williams describes his Canadian journey so far and winning the Fans Player of the year (despite only being at the club for four months last season) is not his only highlight. He also made the league team of the week four times, but this year they even managed to beat the MLS side Toronto in the Canadian Championship, who have former Italy

international Sebastian Giovinco, reportedly on \$7 million a year, amongst their ranks. Williams scored a penalty in the victory also.

“Football is a universal language, Whenever you walk into a locker room...it takes a week or so to get settled, then they’re your family from then on”

The round before against Edmonton is something that he fondly remembers, however; *“I scored a 90th minute winner and my mum was here and when I was running off celebrating I could see her in the stands. She hadn’t seen me play in two years so that was a pretty special moment”*. Family is something that Williams naturally misses being away but it seems he has immersed himself in the different lifestyle in Ottawa. *“For me, I love travelling and seeing the world through different perspectives. Ottawa is such a beautiful, nice and safe place. When you walk through the street and see someone on a skateboard or ice-skating down the canal in the winter; that’s something that you wouldn’t see in England, so it is nice to experience this. There is always something going on and the summers are beautiful and the people are so friendly, so the lifestyle is something I really enjoy.”*

After a step into the unknown upon joining Ottawa, Williams was instantly impressed with the standard and didn’t expect it to be anywhere near as good as it was. Despite noticing a drop in quality during Ottawa’s switch from the NASL to the USL, he has high praise for football in North America. *“I was speaking to Gerardo Bruna (ex-Blackpool and Accrington player and now fellow teammate at Ottawa) about this and he was saying that he would compare the NASL to a high League One. Every team had a couple of internationals and you were going to some teams and they would have a couple of athletes, some experienced lads and some players who had been at the top level. We had De Guzman for example, Gerardo Tordado (the most capped ever Mexican) was playing for Indy Eleven and Amauri for Fort Lauderdale, having played for Juventus a couple of years back. I thought it was a good league personally”*. Throughout my interview with Williams, it starts to resonate that there is some extremely good quality in North American football and that there are perhaps more Brits plying their trade abroad than one may realise.

In my few games of watching the Fury, I have been impressed with the quality of some players and among mentioning a few, one that Williams gives high praise to is Onua Obasi. Describing him as *“big and strong”*, he also pays tribute to his technical ability, which included a fantastic goal from outside the area in the 4-0 victory over FC Cincinnati. Having completed his college studies out here and now being married to an American wife with two kids, his story is not your usual one of a promising English defender. Williams adds, *“It’s funny as he’s probably developed away from the limelight out here. If he were to go back home everyone would question as to where he’s been”*.

In terms of the season gone by, I ask if the amount of draws during the season is something that the team sees as a missed opportunity. *“Absolutely a missed opportunity”*, Williams responds, *“If we were being totally honest we have to look back on this year as a failure. Ultimately, with some of the talent we had in the locker room we should have been at the very least been looking at the top four let alone making the playoffs. It would have been unthinkable at the start of the year to not have made the playoffs”*, he adds. Williams looks at the situation with a determined attitude nevertheless, which exemplifies the player that he is; *“We have to*

take those lessons and use to our advantage next time. Through every triumph and despair in sport you learn and I think that the locker room, coaching staff and organisation will be better for what we went thorough this year and it is important that we learn from that.”

Two separate managers couldn’t change the fortunes for Ottawa during the season. Unfortunately, Dalglish left the club for personal reasons with 12 games to go and was replaced by De Guzman, but Williams didn’t notice much difference in style between playing under a British manager and De Guzman; *“It was difficult to change too much during that time and it seemed a bit of a transition period. I think that the fans will see a different style next year as Jules can mould a team in his shape from pre-season. I wish him all the best and think he will be a very good coach, I really do.”* On the subject of fans, he is impressed with their knowledge, but describes the massive differences to British fans, which he puts down to culture. *“In England people live and die by football, but in Canada it is more of a social affair. They mimic the culture and are very friendly. It is more about camaraderie and the social aspect compared to the massive attachments in England, which does create a slightly different atmosphere”*. Despite this, he notes a particular experience of playing in front of 30,000 people in Cincinnati, where the atmosphere was electric, and although he was often playing in front of 2000-3,000 fans making a lot of noise during his time at Morecambe, Ottawa can often rack up to 9,000 fans, which he labels as a great experience.

“If someone asked me if I recommended going to a different country I would absolutely say yes”

The surface at Lansdowne Park is artificial, a new experience for Williams who hadn’t played on such a surface since he was 13. It is something that he has relished and if this was an option back home he says he *“would probably prefer to play on turf as supposed to a battered pitch in England in January, but there is nothing better than a grass pitch”*, pointing to the fantastic playing surface at Tampa.

In terms of other British footballers abroad, during the past 10-15 years, David Beckham, Michael Owen, Owen Hargreaves and Gareth Bale are the only real so called big-name British players to have played abroad in the pomp of their career. Williams attributes this to the bubble that you get caught in back home. *“It is seen as the be all and end all, whereas there are so many different cultures and styles to go around and experience. For me coming over here, in England I would never have had the experience of playing with Brazilians, Argentinians, Mexicans, seeing the work rate of Canadians and Americans. In terms of athleticism over here, I’ve never seen athletes like it. It is a tremendous experience for me in adapting my game to that style and it helps me to develop different aspects of my game. If someone asked me if I recommended going to a different country I would absolutely say yes. You don’t only grow as a person off the field by looking after yourself in a new culture, but you also grow on the field too for similar reasons”*. In terms of growing on the field, with long-distances to travel to games, there is huge variety in playing conditions.

He recounts his debut in Jacksonville, Florida, in 38 degrees heat; *“I couldn’t breathe! Naturally in that game you have to slow your game down as you can’t run blood and thunder like you can in England. After 5 minutes I had a stitch and realised I needed to think more and needed to process the game rather than go on instinct. You can go to different parts of the States where the altitude may be*

really high and then you have to adapt your game to that again. The challenges on a weekly basis vary so much and for me that has been a fantastic learning experience”. He has clearly experienced many alien things to his British football upbringing and it is to two promising youngsters that the conversation moves onto next; Ravel Morrison and Jaden Sancho.

With Morrison, once the next big thing at Manchester United, having more downs than ups in his career so far, many hope that his career will be revived with Atlas in Mexico, something that Williams thinks will suit him due to the very technical nature of the league. Sancho, having signed for Borussia Dortmund for £10 million in the summer after being the player of the tournament at the U17 European Championship this summer, is clearly someone he rates highly. *“I think he is a phenomenal footballer, he doesn’t play like an Englishman. If his name was Sanchoinhio people would probably be trying to buy him for £30-40 million. The move will be fantastic for him, he will grow up off the pitch and mature a lot and as a player he will get tremendous coaching. I’d like to believe that in the next year or two we’re going to see an English player playing for Borussia Dortmund.”* When asked if he believes these two youngsters moving abroad will set a trend for young Brits, Williams agrees, stating the extremely high quality of the Premier League makes it so difficult for young Brits to break through. It is evident the huge passion that he has for young footballers going abroad and emphasises the tremendous benefits that they would bring which is refreshing to see.

We round off the conversation with questions about Williams’ future and whether he sees that being in North America or with unfinished business back home. *“I definitely feel like I have unfinished business in England. I’ll take stock over next few weeks, see what opportunities come from North America, Europe and England and take it from there. A lot of it boils down to finding a coach who really believes in you and says, “You’re going to suit my system, my style, you’re my guy”, and then that’s the first priority as ultimately you want to be on the field week in, week out and show people what you can do. As I said I do feel like I have unfinished business in England, but also unfinished business in North America. It is a very exciting time and I’m looking forward to what the future holds.”*

“The challenges on a weekly basis vary so much and for me that has been a fantastic learning experience”

Williams is clearly as determined as he is talented on and off the pitch, and his football journey is fascinating. Not just a classy footballer, he sounds very impressive and it is evident that he has much to give to a side whether that is over in North America or back in Europe. His experience with Ottawa should be of great interest to many other British players back home questioning whether it is worth going abroad for a period which he strongly advocates and surely stands him in good stead for the rest of his career.

If you would like to follow Ryan’s journey, follow him on twitter at @RyanWilliams91.

England U17 World Cup Final: England 5-2 Spain

England's youngsters continue to put the senior squad to shame with the U17's latest victory.



Twitter: @England

Joe Roberts
Football

Steve Cooper's side overcame a two-goal deficit to win 5-2 in a captivating encounter in Kolkata.

The win follows a recent trend of major tournament success for our younger teams with the Under 19 and Under 20 sides both taking home trophies from their respective competitions as well.

It is a trend that has reignited the previously dwindling belief that a World Cup triumph for the senior national team may not be too far away.

Much of the recent youth success has been attributed to St George's Park, the FA's state-of-the-art training facility which opened in 2012. The complex has created a specific base for the national team allowing for a greater degree of integration between age brackets and encouraging togetherness amongst each team.

It is this togetherness that was very evident in the victory over Spain. The Young Lions were the first to score in every game leading up to the final so finding themselves 2-0 after half an hour in Kolkata might have caused lesser teams to crumble. Yet, in the sweltering humidity, it was the Spanish defence that started to disintegrate as golden boot winner Rhian

Brewster headed home on the stroke of half time.

The second half was a different contest as England's superior fitness and quality became increasingly apparent. Goals from Morgan Gibbs-White, Marc Guehi and a brace from the impressive Phil Foden sealed a comprehensive victory and a near guaranteed place on a 'Where are they now?' article in five years' time.

We hope the answer to that question will be lifting the 2022 World Cup trophy in Qatar - assuming the farce of an event goes ahead. This is the target the FA have set, but could a group of lads born in the noughties really be the answer to their prayers?

The lack of top flight playing time available to young English players may still prove a sticking point in their development. English youth players find top flight opportunities hard to come by compared to our main European rivals. The England Under 21 side, for example, have played less than half the total top-flight minutes of the Spanish team.

Clearly there is still a lot of work to be done for this exceptionally talented group of lads to become senior world beaters, but when Jake Livermore is still getting a regular game in the senior team, we need something to cling on to.

Home Nations Hammered: A Rugby League World Cup Round-Up

The hopes of the England, Scotland and Wales national teams took a sharp blow as the 2017 Rugby League World Cup kicked off.

Nathan Olsen
Rugby League

In the first match of the tournament, England struggled against a dominant Australian side who proved once again why they are World Champions and exactly how they have managed to win the World Cup a record ten times in total. England opened the scoring with a McGillvary try, but failed to put any further points on the board as Australia emerged the winners 18-4. Former England captain, and Leeds Rhinos legend, Kevin Sinfield, commented that the England side played well, but simply failed to convert effort into points. However, the match also created another point of concern for the England team, as star player Sam Burgess now faces a knee injury, which could sideline him until the semi-finals. Not the dream start for the English then, but they will be favourites to win their matches against Lebanon and France, meaning that in all likelihood, the England team should progress to the knockout stages.

The dominance of the Southern Hemisphere sides in Rugby League was on full display in Tonga's 50-4 demolition of a Scotland team ranked 4th in the world, whilst Wales faced a similar thrashing from a Papua New Guinea side who beat them 50-6. Ireland

can take hope from their opening match though, as they defeated Italy 36-12. However, the strength of the Irish national side will be put to the test in their next match against Papua New Guinea, who have already shown their power in the competition. If Ireland can win that match, then we'll likely see them in the quarter-finals.

Rounding off the results, Lebanon secured their first ever victory in a World Cup, beating France 29-18; New Zealand brushed aside Samoa by a margin of 30 points and Fiji crushed the USA 58-12. Overall then, a phenomenal start to the Rugby League World Cup for the Southern Hemisphere nations. Hopefully the next round of matches will provide the home nations with an opportunity to get back on track. Otherwise, we may see early exits for Scotland and Wales, as well as a possible departure for a heavyweight England side.

Among this weekend's matches, some contests to watch out for are the battle between New Zealand and Scotland (2nd and 4th in the world rankings respectively), Ireland vs Papua New Guinea - which is vital to Irish hopes of reaching the knockout stages - and of course, England's match against the lowest ranking side in the tournament, Lebanon, who pulled off an upset 29-18 against France.



Image: Michael Dodge

Poppy Permission: Home Nations ask FIFA to Wear Poppies

England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland request FIFA’s permission, reigniting the poppy debate in football.



Cian Fox
Football

Every November in the run up to Remembrance Sunday, we remember those who have died fighting in war, with the poppy used to commemorate the servicemen and women killed in all conflicts since WWI. However, in recent years, the act of remembrance has caused serious contention in the world of football, especially after FIFA banned all symbols considered personal, political or religious. The ban extended to the poppy, as FIFA argue it represents a ‘political symbol’ and therefore cannot be displayed.

This controversy came to a head in England and Scotland’s World Cup qualifier last year, as both sides wore armbands displaying the poppy in opposition to FIFA’s guidelines, prompting fines of £35,000 and £15,000 to England and Scotland respectively. This was the ‘Poppygate’ scandal, which caused outrage in the press, as newspapers called FIFA “anti-British”, as well as to the Prime Minister herself, who told parliament that FIFA’s stance was “utterly outrageous”.

The issue has come around once more this year as we approach November’s international break. Under FIFA’s new rules, the four nations can wear the poppy after an agreement is reached with the opposing teams and FIFA.

The FA – ahead of England’s fixtures with Germany on November 10th and Brazil on 14th – released a

statement outlining their intention to seek permission to wear poppy-emblazoned armbands. In the statement, the FA said, “when there are international matches in the week leading up to and including Remembrance Sunday, it is the intention of all four home nations to seek permission from the opposition team and FIFA to display the poppy”.

However, while the controversy with FIFA appears to have been resolved, other issues surrounding the poppy have reared their head in football. The debate about whether players should – or should not – wear the poppy is a tiresome one and has once again been reignited as we approach November. West Brom’s James McClean is vilified – even receiving death threats – for his refusal to wear a poppy as a gesture of respect to the 13 civilians who died during the Bloody Sunday incident in his hometown of Derry in 1972; a political and personal choice that is his freedom to exercise.

The British Legion themselves say that “wearing a poppy is a personal choice and reflects individual and personal memories”. However, at the present time, the reason behind remembrance and wearing the poppy is being lost, as more people seem to care about the sportsmen and women that refuse to wear the poppy than remembering those that have died. As Jonathan Liew of the Independent suggests, for some people “being seen to remember” is more important than actually taking time to remember and commemorate the contribution of those who have fought and died since World War I.



BUCS Fixtures 8th November

- Badminton Womens 1st vs Durham 1st
2pm, The Edge
- Badminton Mens 2nd vs Salford 2nd
2pm, The Edge
- Basketball Womens 1st vs Edge Hill 1st
5.30pm, The Edge
- Basketball Mens 2nd vs Liverpool 1st
7.30pm, The Edge
- Fencing Womens 1st vs Durham 1st
2pm, The Edge
- Football Womens 2nd vs Leeds 3rd
2pm, Sports Park Weetwood
- Football Mens 3rd vs Sheffield 3rd
4.15pm, Sports Park Weetwood
- Hockey Womens 1st vs Durham 2nd
5.30pm, Sports Park Weetwood
- Hockey Mens 1st vs Edinburgh 1st
4pm, Sports Park Weetwood
- Lacrosse Womens 1st vs Manchester 1st
2.30pm, Sports Park Weetwood
- Netball Womens 1st vs Sheffield Hallam 1st
3.30pm, Gryphon Sports Centre
- Rugby League Mens 1st vs Beckett 1st
2pm, Brownlee Centre
- Rugby Union Mens 1st vs Durham 2nd
11am, Sports Park Weetwood
- Squash Womens 1st vs Lancaster 1st
1pm, Gryphon Sports Centre
- Squash Mens 3rd vs Beckett 1st
3pm, Squash Courts (Headingley Campus)
- Tennis Womens 3rd vs Manchester 2nd
12pm, David Lloyd Leeds
- Tennis Mens 2nd vs Beckett 6th
12pm, David Lloyd Leeds
- Volleyball Mens 1st vs Keele 1st
7pm, Gryphon Sports Centre
- Waterpolo Womens 1st vs Northumbria 1st
2.15pm, The Edge
- Waterpolo Mens 1st vs Northumbria 2nd
3.30pm, The Edge

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Image: The New Indian Express

Anthony Joshua Topples Takam

Thomas Lambton
Boxing

Anthony Joshua successfully defended his WBA and IBF world heavyweight titles courtesy of 10th round stoppage win over Carlos Takam at the principality stadium in Cardiff. The victory ensures that Joshua extends his undefeated record to 20 professional fights.

Given the manner of the build-up to the fight, as Joshua's previously scheduled opponent, Kubrat Pulev, withdrew just 12 days before the meeting, the Briton was always the likely victor. However, Takam provided a stern test and his performance is worthy of due credit.

Indeed were it not for Phil Edwards' decision to stop the fight in round 10, a judgement that has since been the subject of considerable criticism, Takam could very easily have become the first of Joshua's opponents to take him the full distance.

The fight also marked the return of boxing to the Principality Stadium for the first time in 10 years, and barring some minor technical difficulties, Cardiff's 80,000 strong crowd produced a passionate and

fervent atmosphere.

There is no doubting Joshua's immense talent coupled with his ever-heightening reputation, and Saturday evening provided further evidence of this. Yet it also exposed certain weaknesses. Joshua was sluggish at times, and presented numerous opportunities for counter-punches, opportunities that perhaps a more formidable opponent, such as Deontay Wilder, would have been able to exploit.

Joshua sustained a broken nose in a collision with Takam during the second round, however he gathered the necessary strength to land a crucial blow during the fourth. The punch resulted in Takam sustaining a troublesome cut above the right eye, and it was an injury that greatly hindered the French-Cameroonian for the rest of the encounter. His subsequent strength of will and persistence to continue has since drawn praise and he gained the sentiment of the Welsh crowd, who were particularly incensed by Edwards' decisions to call proceedings to an end.

Carl Frampton felt the decision did a 'discredit to Takam's toughness', whilst Barry McGuigan argued that he deserved 'the chance to stay in the fight'. It was certainly a contentious decision, but given the

considerable blood flow from Takam's injury one can understand the referee's point of view.

Irrespective of the fight's premature end, Joshua had been superior throughout the completed nine rounds and whilst his performance was by no means perfect, he deserves praise for his adaptability in defeating a fighter of a completely different style to his previous opponents.

Looking forward, there are greater tests in the offing. Joseph Parker and Deontay Wilder represent very viable future match-ups, whilst the calls and aspirations for an encounter with Tyson Fury will persist. The happening of this fight is very much dependent upon the attitude of the self-proclaimed 'Gypsy King' and the actual level of his ambition to return to the sport. Fury represents one of sports most divisive figures, yet there are few who would begrudge the immense spectacle that would arise from such a fight.

It is now the time for speculation and intrigue as to Joshua's next move, yet briefly he should reflect upon what has been an excellent 2017.