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THE GRYPHON

The official newspaper of Leeds University

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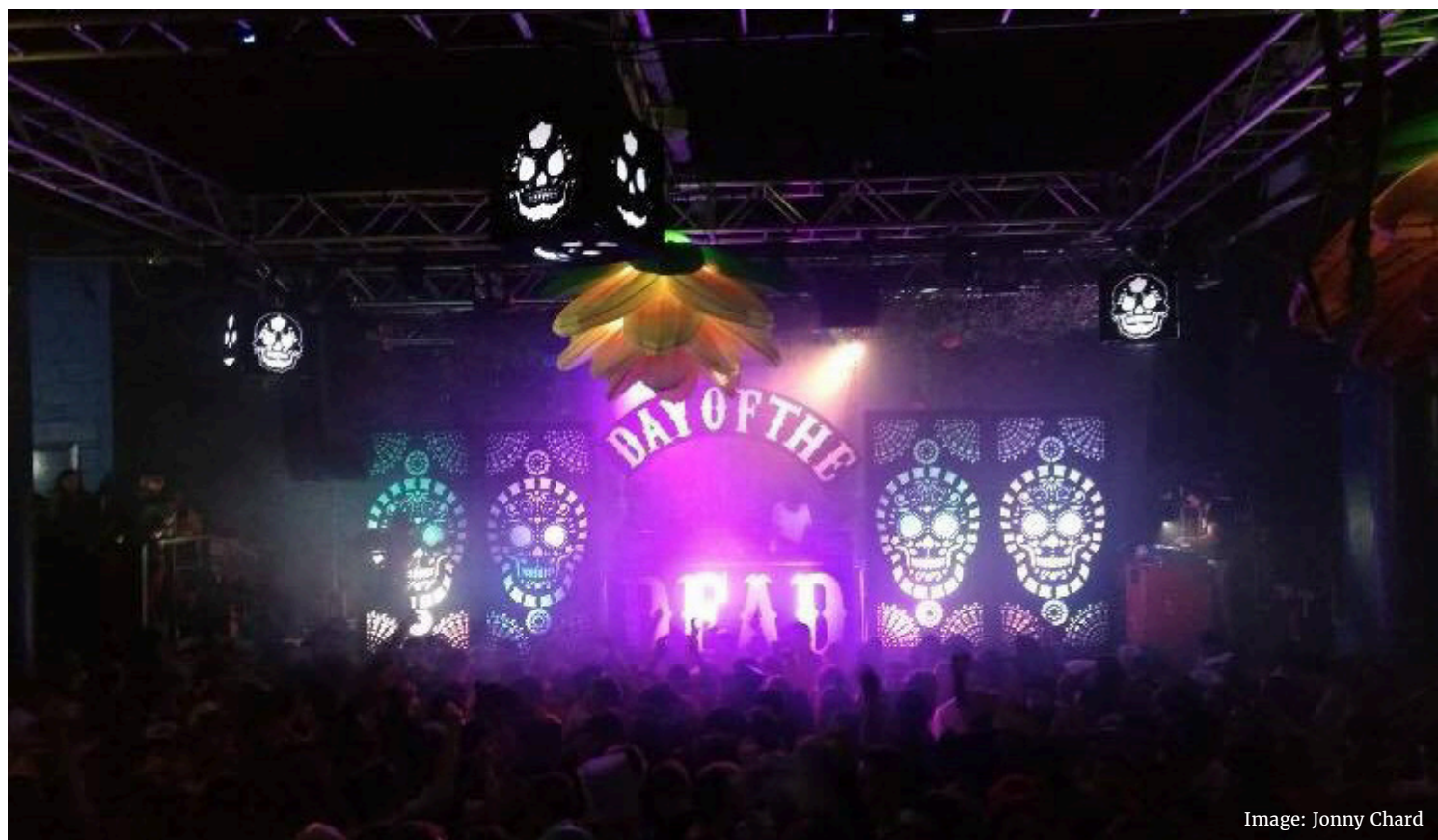


Image: Jonny Chard

Union Condemned For Cultural Appropriation

Despite being advertised as ‘The Living Dead Halloween Festival’, the event’s decorations included the phrase ‘Day of the Dead’, the name of a Mexican cultural festival.

Reece Parker
Editor-In-Chief

Leeds University Union have been plunged into controversy regarding their Halloween event, which, despite being marketed as ‘The Living Dead Halloween Festival’, was populated by decorations emblazoned with the phrase ‘Day of The Dead’.

This has provoked accusations of cultural appropriation from some members of the student body, who feel that the event has trivialised the Mexican cultural festival Dia de Muertos (Day of the Dead).

The cultural festival has its roots in the Catholic event of All Souls’ Day, as well as Aztec and other indigenous beliefs. Its aims are to honour deceased

relatives and friends, with food and candles being brought to graves as offerings.

As well as the ‘Day of the Dead’ sign which dominated the stage of Stylus, other decorations contained Christian crosses, clearly problematic due to the festival’s Catholic roots. Moreover, there were instances of ornate skull decorations, which most attendees would presume to be inoffensive ‘sugar skulls’. However, ‘sugar skulls’ are inspired by ‘Calavera’ or ‘Catrina’ images, which many Mexicans wear masks of for Dia de Muertos. These masks are a powerful cultural symbol which are used to mock death, to show that the wearer is not afraid of such a fate.

This is not the first time that the issue of appropriating Dia de Muertos has arisen in Leeds. Earlier this year, Leeds based company Sneaky Experience announced that they were hosting a ‘Leeds Day of the Dead Fiesta’ on October 25th–27th which was met with widespread criticism.

Dr Laura Loyola-Hernández, a specialist in the politics and culture of Yucatán, Mexico, has written extensively on the subject, claiming:

“In the last two decades, Halloween marketing around the globe has appropriated Día de los muertos (Day of the Dead). Nowadays, it is very common to find in stores across the UK some type of imagery or costume associated with Día

de los muertos. While I welcome people outside of Mexico embracing new customs and traditions, for Mexicans as myself this is something more than a fad. It is part of our culture, a way to see life and a form to remember our ancestors.”

A Leeds University Union spokesperson said:

“We are always eager to take all cultures into consideration when planning an event. Unfortunately, our design supplier misinterpreted our brief and provided us with a decoration and signage that could be culturally inappropriate. We will work more closely with companies in the future to make sure we are always celebrating rather than misappropriating cultures.”

Straw Speaks Out

The Gryphon interviews former Labour Cabinet member Jack Straw

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Our Broken Biological Clocks

Science ask whether there is a ceiling on how long humans could possibly live

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Not Just a Fictional Sport

We break down the sport of Quidditch for those that are not yet initiated

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Editors of the Week

Charlie Green,
Nancy Gillen and
Milly Whyman

Milly organised a very successful Editor’s meal out, Charlie didn’t speak a word when he was given the wrong order, and Nancy lost odds-on and valiantly ate a bowl of chillis.

All worthy victors.

Quote of the Week

“This summer
I travelled to
Israel, on a family
holiday paid for
myself.”

Priti Patel

Credits

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- Digital Associate** ~
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Jenny Thomas, Carys
Norfor

Editor’s Letter:



Dear Readers,

In recent years, every November brings with it a debate about the poppy appeal, the *Royal British Legion*’s yearly fundraiser in support of veterans of war. The issue with this debate, as is the issue of the majority of debates in our current socio-political climate, is that there is no

nuance to it. It seems you are either a crypto-fascist who secretly desires our nation to be at war continuously if you wear the poppy, or that you have no respect for those who have made the ultimate sacrifice for our society if you choose not to. I would like to bring some clarity and nuance to this overtly polemic debate.

The Poppy Appeal was launched following the end of the First World War, a symbol to represent both the horror of battle, and the hope of recovery. The event was termed ‘the war to end all wars’, and it was fitting that the poppy emblemized the consensus that such an act would never happen again.

Following the subsequent Second World War, however, it can be perceived where the understanding of the symbol began to change. The Second World War was undeniably a triumph over near inconceivable evil, yet this began to inform the notion that the British army, forever more, represented unquestionable good. The filtering down of this idea has triggered a revision of the poppy by many, not as a symbol of anti-war, but as an iconic representation of our military prowess.

There have been genuine attempts to bastardise the poppy by far right groups in recent years. *Britain First*’s Facebook page is always

populated by poppy-orientated posts, normally coupled with a Muslim individual’s supposed refusal to wear one, whilst the EDL staged a rooftop protest at FIFA headquarters after they denied the English football team the right to wear a poppy embroidered on their kit. There has become, especially in the footballing community, a bizarre degree of one-upmanship to wearing the poppy, with two fans in the football league choosing to cover themselves head-to-toe in poppies this past week. For many, the poppy has morphed into a symbol celebrating aspects of the military such as bravery and camaraderie, rather than a rejection of the horror of mass-death.

Such an attitude has seemingly begun to infiltrate the *Royal British Legion* itself, with a photo on their website, which has since been removed, showing a girl holding a giant poppy with the phrase ‘future soldier’ across her t-shirt. The aspiration towards war should be the polar opposite of what they wish to achieve.

At this moment, it appears the poppy is at a critical point in its history. Many are opting for white poppies, favoured for their distinct pacifist stance, whilst others are refusing to wear any whatsoever. I feel that the desire to glorify war is a toxin ingrained within the biological makeup of our society, but that the poppy, rather than becoming hijacked by this desire, should be reclaimed as a symbol of our resistance of war. As such, the consensus of ‘never again’ should be returned to the forefront of the *Royal British Legion*’s aims.

Yours Sincerely,

Reece Parker,
Editor-in-Chief
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Exec Columns:



**Jack Palmer –
Union Affairs Officer**

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The *Express Yourself* survey is well and truly underway! We've been out to Halls, walking around campus and we'll be in the 'Living in Leeds' outlet (opposite Santander bank) to give you the chance of winning sweets and Fruity tickets in return for answering just 5 questions about what you think LUU should work on for the next 4 years! To support this, we held an 'Express Yourself Forum' where the Vice Chancellor, the Leader of Leeds City Council and the VP Welfare Officer for the NUS came to speak about what the future looked like for students in higher education, the city of Leeds and the student movement. We then asked the students who came to tell us their ideas for LUU to help guide our plan.

Coming up, we'll be holding elections for NUS delegates! This is a great opportunity to have an input into national student politics and meet students from other Universities. There will be positions for the National Conference and for the Liberation Conferences, get in touch to find out more. By the time you're reading, the ideas for our first policy making forums should be out! There are some really big ideas from students which are going to be debated so make sure you keep an eye out and come along to the forums themselves the following week!



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

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This week has witnessed the launch of the *Express Yourself* campaign where we're going ahead with our strategic review and looking to collate data and view-points from as many different students as possible. So the slogan is "if you give us five minutes, we'll give you four years" and that's just a brilliant way of making sure that the importance of the campaign is understood. As members of LUU it is vital YOU ALL have a say in what you want YOUR Union to be! We're always open to new ideas and we want our members to imagine what the Union will be like in 2022. In that spirit, I've been spending a lot of time all over LUU making sure students fill in the survey and giving out sweets and goodies too!

I've also just been elected to the NUS Higher Education Zone Committee too. This involves taking part in meetings to review and draft NUS policy on Higher Education and lobbying the government as well. It's a brilliant opportunity to network and share best practices with a few other officers on the committee too and I'm really looking forward to it!

Our next Education Assembly is early next week so watch this space! It's the second one of the semester and there's a lot to discuss – exciting times!



**George Bissett –
Community Officer**

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Like the rest of the Exec, I've been caught up in the *Express Yourself* survey, so if you've spoken to me this week, thanks for filling out the survey. Some of you "had a lecture to go to" twenty minutes past the hour: that's fine too, because I know you'll have done it when you got home.

As my Lifestyle and Culture article last week supposed, a lot of you first years are starting to panic about house hunting. Just to reassure you again, you don't need to panic, and you certainly don't need to be house hunting yet. There are more student bedrooms in Leeds than students and the LUU Housing Fair isn't until Monday 22 January 2018. There you can find some quality landlords who won't rip you off with signing fees, advisors who can check your housing contract for you and staff from Unipol who can provide lots of help when it comes to finding your brand new student pad. A recent meeting I had with Leeds City Council was productive, and they've agreed to help the Leeds Community Project and I bring you an exciting Recycling Exhibition (three words you never thought would go together). From Monday 20 November, we'll be opposite Salad Box with games, challenges and other goodies, all for the fantastic cause of recycling.



**Jess Bassett –
Activities Officer**

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Hey everyone. It is only six weeks until Christmas and I am buzzing that I can now get my winter headband collection out. On Friday 10th November LUU will be gunging one of the exec on a facebook live-stream. It could potentially be me and I am so scared. On Friday at 12pm I would really appreciate it if you could save me and vote for George or Zaki. You are probably thinking why is this happening? I have been thinking the same thing. This will only happen when we reach 1000 responses in our express yourself survey. As much as I don't want to get gunged I would strongly encourage you to fill in the survey on the LUU website. This is your chance to tell your union what you want us to be doing for you in the future.

As one of my key objectives to work on a loyalty and reward scheme for LUU, I am excited to let you know that I am one of the two student officers in the UK that has been elected onto the board for the NUS extra card. This is a board that set the direction and discuss the future of the NUS extra card. If anyone has any observations, ideas or opinions around this card, let me know!



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

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Barbershop in the union? Yes! After our panel discussion two weeks ago on black male mental health I approached local barbershop 'Union barbers' and they gave students free haircuts on Wednesday.

A first ever on campus, the barbershop was huge success and got a lot of people talking about the role barbers can play in promoting wellbeing and tackling mental health issues. It was amazing to see so many students excited to get free haircuts, have a chat and sit in the social space that we created.

Aside from barbershops, this week I also sat down with University staff to raise the issue of the lack of support offered to students from BME, LGBTQ+, Disabled and religious backgrounds who undergo study and work placements abroad. I've made it my priority to ensure clear support is established in the form of practical information and resources as well as tailored pre-departure meetings.

This week I also attended a meeting to discuss how the university intends to implement the recommendations from the 'Why is my Curriculum White?' campaign conducted last year.



**Chloë Sparks –
Welfare Officer**

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The days are shorter, but we're all getting busier. The so-called November blues are hitting students faster than essay deadlines. That's why it's so important to make sure you're taking some time to relax and if you're not feeling your best it's ok to let someone know. One way I like to unwind in the week is to head to Global Cafe, grab some free tea and chat with some new people. No matter what your favourite way to chill is, make sure you set some time aside each week for yourself.

I recently chaired the first Wellbeing Board meeting for the year. Massive thanks to all the students volunteering, we had some great discussions around topics like personal tutoring, signposting and how help students to support their friends mental health at Uni. These meetings are so important because I can't solely voice the opinions of 34,000+ students!

Finally, another well done to American Football and Rugby League (and all the other sports clubs who got involved in Pyramid) for raising awareness and money for men's mental health. Any other students wanting to run a welfare campaign, get in touch and I'd love to help.

Campus Watch



1 Cape Town University, South Africa Student protests end with stand off with police

Protesting students were involved in a stand-off with police after disrupting a test and chasing people out of a computer laboratory at the University of Cape Town on Monday.

A small group of students moved through campus in an attempt to shut parts of it down, and had a stand-off with police outside a test venue, with police warning that they could face arrest if they continued.

Student assignments were also reportedly scattered throughout one building and a window was smashed.

The students are demanding that there is no fee increase for 2018, that the president release the report on the feasibility of free higher education, and that an investigation into student deaths at the institution is launched.

In a press statement, UCT spokesperson Elijah Moholola said that the campus was to remain open in spite of disruptions and that all academic activities, including examinations, would go ahead as scheduled.

"The main library has been temporarily closed due to possible disruptions by protesters in upper campus.

"A test in the sports centre has been suspended due to disruptions. A group of around 30 protestors has forced people out of a computer lab in the Menzies Building," he said.

This followed a week filled with fees-related protests, which saw human excrement poured in three academic buildings, slashed tyres and picketing – many resulting in arrests.

Jonny Chard

2 University of Cambridge Big Issue seller to read English after spending years living on the streets.

Geoff Edwards, 52, won a place to study English Literature after gaining distinctions in his Access to Higher Education course at Cambridge Regional College.

He had spent a large part of his adult life on the streets after he lost his job as an agricultural labourer. It was only when he began to sell the Big Issue that he started to regain a sense of optimism for the future.

Geoff said: "Going to Cambridge University was a dream of mine, and studying something I really love – I'm still getting used to the idea.

"This is what I have always wanted to do, but no-one in my family had been to university so I didn't even consider it.

"I didn't think of applying to Cambridge – I didn't think Cambridge University would take someone like me, but my tutor encouraged me to apply. It is the first thing I am proud of in my life."

Ian White

3 University of Oxford University sees an increase in reports of bullying and harassment

Bullying and harassment has sharply risen at the University of Oxford. Data released has shown that the number of complaints received regarding bullying and harassment has doubled between the academic years of 2013-14 and 2016-17.

This data has revealed that the harassment is not just between students but staff too, with staff-on-staff incidents rising from four in 2013-14 to twelve in 2015-16. Student incidents also rose from one in 2013-14 to sixteen by 2015-16.

These incidents have been exposed since the University simplified the process of reporting harassment and bullying cases. The update came into effect in 2015.

A spokesperson from Oxford University commented: "While we take bullying harassment extremely seriously, these numbers suggest that it is incredibly rare in a University with more than 23,000 students and 13,000 staff."

Ayasha Zaheer

4 Florida State University University fraternities suspended after student death.

Florida State University has suspended all its fraternities after a first year student died at an off campus 'frat party'.

Andrew Coffey, a 20-year-old pledge at Pi Kappa Phi, was found unresponsive Friday morning after attending a party the night before, the school said. Tallahassee Police Chief Michael DeLeo said indicators suggest alcohol may have been involved in the case, though police were waiting on an autopsy.

FSU President John Thrasher said he did not have a time frame for how long the suspension would last.

"For this suspension to end, there will need to be a new normal for Greek Life at the university," he said. "There must be a new culture, and our students must be full participants in creating it."

Thrasher said that he wanted to make a point to fraternities and sororities with the suspension.

"I want to send a message that we've got a serious problem and we need to deal with it, and they're part of the solution," Thrasher said. "And the sooner they can come to the table and we can all talk and find those solutions, the sooner this will be lifted."

Ian White

5 University of Cambridge Rare truffle cultivated in UK for the first time

A team of researchers have become the first people to successfully cultivate one of the world's most expensive truffle species in Britain. This species, the 'Black Gold truffle', is usually only found in northern Italy, southern France and northern Spain.

The project began 9 years ago, when researchers planted a Mediterranean oak tree inoculated with truffle spores in South Wales.

However, they think that this experiment is "only possible because of climate change"; as droughts in the Mediterranean area made the Périgord truffle more resistant to harsher climates.

A kilogram of these truffles can cost up to £1,700, however Professor Büntgen from Cambridge thinks "it's a risky investment for farmers... we know remarkably little about how they grow and how they interact with their host trees". It is nonetheless an exciting development for researchers.

Clément Morlhon



Four Year Degrees: the Answer to Britain's Skills Shortage?

Ian White
News Editor

Over-specialisation at an early age is one reason behind Britain's ongoing skills shortage, according to a former minister.

Lord Willetts, a former minister for education, has claimed that the introduction of four year degrees would give students more of an opportunity to decide which course is right for them.

The first year of his proposed four year course would involve students sampling modules from a range of courses before settling on a specific degree in second year. Lord Willetts claims that this would allow students to make more informed choices, reducing dropout rates.

The quality of first year teaching would also increase, according to Willetts, as tutors would be in competition to attract first year students to take up their courses.

"I know there has been a lot of talk about moving to two-year degrees, but I believe the opposite will happen and we will see more and more four-year degrees. That is what students want," he told the Wonkhe higher education conference in London.

Lord Willetts makes his predictions in a book, *A University Education*, to be published this month. "We expect 16-year-olds with hormones coursing their system and everything else going on in their lives to make the decision on what three subjects they want to study. It is a policy disaster," he said.

Willetts describes the UK higher education system

as "unnecessarily rigid" in demanding that students must pick a highly specialised degree at the age of 18.

"Many youngsters realise that they have chosen the wrong subject when they arrive at university, but it is too difficult to change in the rigid UK system. They later find a job in a sector they like but for which they are poorly qualified."



Image: The Times

Local Youths in Firework Frenzy

Rabeeah Moeen
News Editor

Two incidents of firework-related disorder took place in Leeds last weekend, requiring police officers to attend in protective equipment.

In Harehills, a group of youths had built a barricade across Harehills Road, which they then set alight. Objects, including fireworks, were thrown at the emergency services who attended the scene, however the road was cleared after firefighters put out the fire and police dispersed the group.

A similar event took place in Hyde Park, where Queens Road was blocked in a similar fashion, with bins set on fire. Officers had to be deployed to the area in protective gear.

Detective Superintendent, Lisa Atkinson, said that while disorderly incidents were common during bonfire night, "these two incidents were more serious and required officers to deploy in full protective gear."

"Both incidents were dealt with quickly and the groups dispersed but we don't underestimate the impact this behaviour will have had on people living in those areas."

The police are making detailed inquiries into both incidents, including checking CCTV footage, to find out who was involved.

Impressive Images Reveal New £500m Leeds Train Station Redevelopment Plans

William Marriott

Leeds rail station is set to get a modern, contemporary overhaul, it has been revealed.

It comes after new images, sketched by Hiro Aso and released by Leeds City Council, show how the station could be expanded to a similar size as rail stations in European cities from as early as 2021.

The rejuvenation hopes to make Leeds become a “hub of international significance”, incorporating HS2, transpennine Northern Powerhouse Rail high-speed trains and other local and regional services.

Councilor Judith Blake, said: “These fantastic new images of what Leeds Station could look like show not only its exciting future as a distinct and welcoming gateway to the city, but how important it is to get this right by putting people and the visitor experience at the heart of all the plans.

“It must provide a step-change not only for the future of transport and connectivity in our city and region, but also as a key economic driver for our future economy providing opportunities for all to benefit through a clear people-first approach.”

The development is set to revitalize Leeds’s South Bank, creating 35,000 new jobs, developing the local economy and bringing more people to Leeds.

Leeds’s station is already the busiest hub in the North, being used by 100,000 people in a day.

Speaking about the development, Sir David Higgins, chairman of HS2 Ltd, said: “Working together with HS2 Ltd, the Leeds city region, Network Rail and Transport for the North, Leeds has clearly seized the opportunity that high-speed rail represents both locally and regionally.

“Leeds’ plans will leave a legacy that the city and the region can be proud of for decades to come.”

If there are no knock backs, it will take 25 years for the redevelopment to be completed.

While this is a long time, it’s one of the biggest developments Leeds has ever decided to undertake, with the potential to cement its place on the map and generate a lot of income.



Image: Leeds City Council

Student Loans Company Chief Sacked for Gross Misconduct

Rabeeah Moeen
News Editor



Image: Scottish Business Insider

The chief of the Student Loans Company, Steve Lamey, has been sacked after a long investigation into his conduct and behaviour.

Lamey was suspended in July and it was announced this week that his contract had been terminated. He has held the post for just over a year, with a reported salary of over £200k for the position.

At the time, it was claimed that he had mistreated his staff.

In a statement, the company said: “The SLC expects to see the highest standards of management and leadership and these were not upheld by Mr Lamey in his time.”

The decision was made in conjunction with the Department of Education.

Lamey is the third chief executive who is departing the company after misconduct. In 2013, the chief executive left after it was revealed that he would be paid through a private company; and in 2010 another executive left after the company failed to make payments to thousands of students.

Recently, the Student Loans Company has been plagued with stories about inefficient bureaucracy and poor customer service, including graduates

over paying their debts by a collective £50m, the company tripling the interest rate on one student’s loans and repeated complaints about intrusive questions and demands.

“The highest standards of management were not upheld by Mr Lamey”

One student said “the problem is the SLC isn’t regulated like any other company providing personal loans. They are able to fundamentally change the rules: payback thresholds, interest rates, going abroad – whatever they fancy.”

Another said: “The government froze the threshold for repayment and hiked the interest rate retroactively, and, despite there being talk of a legal challenge, none has materialised. It appears that in this country, contract law means nothing if your contract is with a government-owned company.”

The sacking of Lamey comes with rumours of a shake-up within the company, which may include the headquarters being moved from its current headquarters in Glasgow.

The Gryphon Meets Jack Straw



Branded “a troublemaker acting with malice aforethought” by the Foreign Office after a student trip to Chile, elected LUU President, and later banned from the Union building, Jack Straw is not your average Leeds Alumni, before you even consider his stint as Home Secretary. The Gryphon got the chance to discuss with Straw his transition to mainstream politics, his achievements in government, and his regrets over the Iraq war.

Reece Parker
Editor-in-Chief

“I was!” exclaims Jack Straw, with a glint in his eye, when reminded that he was banned from our student union in 2000, despite holding the position of President years before. He goes on to explain that, in this period, the union had a large contingent of “Trotskyists”, who disagreed with his assistance in the Immigration and Asylum Bill, who not only barred him from entering the union, but also removed his name from the Presidents board. Despite his critics claiming the act showed “what a complete right-wig toe-rag I was!”, Straw maintains that the bill “simply streamlined procedures for asylum and immigration”, and is now “regarded as a relatively liberal bill.” Time has ultimately proved Straw right, with him noting that when “more sensible people came back in control of the union they made me a lifelong member”, before adding “I’ve still got the card!”

Jack Straw was heavily involved in student politics whilst at Leeds, being elected as chair of Leeds University Union Labour Society in 1966, then being elected to President of the Student’s Union in 1967, before eventually becoming elected NUS President in 1969. Despite this, he didn’t see himself at this point going into mainstream politics, explaining that “by the time I became President of the NUS, the Labour government was in the doldrums, and very unpopular.” “At that stage I was thinking of going to work for a trade union or for a radical pressure group. It was just a bit of luck that I became President of the NUS and that opened up all sorts of other doors.” Despite his seemingly blasé attitude towards his success in student politics, Straw notes that “I learnt a huge amount about politics and life from student politics.” He continues by criticising those who are “patronising about student politics”, arguing that “everybody who did take part in it took something really important for how they behaved in later life from that experience.”

“I learnt a huge amount about politics and life from student politics. Everybody who did take part in it took something really important for how they behaved in later life from that experience”

As is almost inevitable when in discussion with someone who was such a major part of Tony Blair’s government, the conversation drifts to the decision to invade Iraq. Straw however responds with poise and consideration, describing the idea that many may overlook genuine achievements of this government by fixating on the war as “an extremely interesting and poignant observation.” Straw has clearly devoted a lot of thought to the decision, not only at the time, but lat-

er in life. “Given what transpired in Iraq and over Iraq, which is not what we anticipated [...] it is inevitable that judgements about Iraq should overshadow so much else.” He makes sure to show that there is no comparison between the loss of “innocent lives” and achievements such as “improving education”, but hopes that “in due course our achievements, as well as the things we got wrong, will be brought in the balance.” It is clear that the after effects of such a decision still hang over Straw, who reveals the difficulty of the decision through the anecdote that “both my two children, who were then students, and my wife, would’ve been on the great march had they not been my family and loyal to me.”

“We changed the way that people related to each-other, and in a way that’s more important than the fact we doubled investment in health. It’s absolutely indelible, and I’m proud of it”

Whilst acutely aware of the mistake to go to war, Straw is outspokenly proud of other achievements of the government he served. “If I look at my constituency, which is Blackburn, the transformation there, in terms of schooling, public transport, children’s centres, was just dramatic in those thirteen years, and even though we’ve been out of power for 7 years, no one has been able to totally dismantle what we achieved.” Straw goes on to explain that one of the achievements he is “proudest of” was to set up the Stephen Lawrence enquiry when “my predecessor did nothing. There was a lot of hostility to the idea that an institution like the police could be institutionally racist” he explains, “but we changed the law.” And although he explains it isn’t perfect, he maintains “if you’re black and Asian, your life chances are still going to be fewer than if you’re white, but they’re much larger than they were.” Straw continues by explaining how he forced through a bill to reduce the homosexual age of consent to be in line with the heterosexual age of consent. He notes that it was facing defeat in a larger bill, so he withdrew it and entered it as a bespoke bill which, “despite a whopping majority in the commons, was defeated again.” Through the use of the Parliament Act, Straw finally managed to force the bill through.

It is by musing on this that Straw finally reaches a decision on what was this Labour government’s most profound achievement in parliament. “We changed the way that people related to each-other”, he proudly exclaims. The rejection of the bill regarding homosexual age of consent “would never be a position the Conservatives would adopt today. But it’s not accidental that it’s been a change, it’s because of us as a Labour government. All those things about the way people relate to each-other, in a way that’s more important than the fact we doubled investment in health. It’s absolutely indelible, and I’m proud of it”.



– Sibongile Tshabalala – 'Battling HIV in South Africa'

The Gryphon speaks to Sibongile Tshabalala, activist and chairperson of Treatment Action Campaign, about the continuing fight against HIV and the struggle to make treatment affordable.



Image: Wikipedia

Esther Marshall
Features Editor

In the early Noughties, 1700 South Africans died per day as a result of diseases caused by HIV. Antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) that are used to prevent the growth of HIV and slow down the virus were only available through the private sector, and high prices meant that the drugs were inaccessible for 86% of the population. A monthly dose cost 2000 rand (£200 in 2000), which was far beyond the monthly wage. Another issue facing HIV sufferers was the South African government's denial that HIV could cause AIDS.

Treatment Action Campaign was founded in 1998 by Zackie Achmat, an anti-apartheid and LGBT rights activist. Although Achmat was able to afford ARVs, he refused to take them until they were accessible to the whole population. Life without ARVs is bleak for an HIV sufferer. Sibongile suffered from TB, shingles and pneumonia whilst she was not able to access the drug. She was 'hospitalised at least twice a year.' During this time, she lost her husband to diseases that were the result of HIV.

While Sibongile respects the government's right to research and the benefits of traditional medicine, she does not believe that sufferers should die whilst research is done. Sibongile herself suffered from misunderstood traditional medicines. She was diagnosed in 2000, when the then Health Minister was advocating beetroot and garlic as a way to combat HIV. Her mother pushed her to eat beetroot "every day for every meal, even to drink water with beetroot in it" and garlic "until she felt she was sweating garlic." Although garlic and beetroot do have natural benefits, they should only be eaten in moderation. To this day, Sibongile cannot stand the taste of beetroot.

"High prices meant that the drugs were inaccessible for 86% of the population"

The TAC's first landmark campaign was to make AZT available for all pregnant mothers. AZT can stop the spread of HIV from mother to child during labour. Before the drug was available, thousands of babies were born HIV positive every year. Scientists and lawyers advised TAC so that they had the knowledge and expertise to take the government to court. They used the South African constitution to force the government's hand. Aspects drawn on were that "everyone has the right to life" and "children need to

"A 'normal and happy life is possible after an HIV diagnosis'. Extensive media coverage and campaigns have helped to make it safe to be openly HIV positive"

be protected." The government lost the case and AZT is now available to pregnant HIV positive women. This has helped thousands of women to give birth to HIV negative children.

The TAC has also been to court to lower the price of ARVs, another case that they won, although it was prolonged and difficult. These campaigns have meant that HIV sufferers like Sibongile are now able to access ARVs. Sibongile has not been admitted to hospital since she went on antiretrovirals and has had two HIV negative children. She became involved with TAC in 2009, after her husband died. She wanted to know everything she could about HIV and "live for her son" after her husband's death. After "spending hours in the doctor's office" she was advised of TAC and became an activist. She is now the newly elected chairperson.

Sibongile is adamant that a "normal and happy life is possible after an HIV diagnosis", and her own inspirational life story is testament to that. The stigma surrounding HIV has decreased since her own diagnosis where, despite the influence of her supportive mother, many of her extended family refused to share a glass with her. Extensive media coverage and campaigns have helped to make it safe to be openly HIV positive. However, there is still much to be done in the campaign to fight HIV.

One upcoming campaign that TAC is working on is the decriminalisation of prostitution. Sex workers are some of the most vulnerable people in South African society, not least due to their constant exposure to HIV. Many women are raped or infected by customers who refuse to wear a condom. One medical solution, PrEP, is a pre-exposure HIV drug which reduces your chances of infection by 90% as it can prevent HIV from taking hold in the body.

But, sex workers are unable to access the drug, as you aren't allowed it without providing a reason, and if they declare their trade, these sex workers are liable to be arrested – the punishment of which can range from unaffordable fines to imprisonment. As Sibongile says "everyday more young girls are infected. How can we fight HIV while it is still criminalised?" Even sex workers who have been raped are unable to access PEP (a post-exposure drug) as, treated like criminals, they can still be arrested. Sibongile expects the court case to be organised for 2018.

"Everyday more young girls are infected. How can we fight HIV while it is still criminalised?"

Although TAC are not afraid of the government, and continually take them to court as part of their activism, Sibongile would describe the two as partners rather than enemies. TAC are the "eyes and ears of the government"; they are on the ground and able to see the state of things in a way the government simply cannot. However, it's the fact that the organisation relies on donations and doesn't accept any money from the state that means they are able to hold the government to account.

The work that Sibongile and Treatment Action Campaign have undertaken has been and continues to be invaluable in the fight against HIV in South Africa. Yet there is still work to be done. If you would like to support TAC, please visit their website where you can make a donation or work to support their campaigns from overseas.

Employed and in Poverty, Britain's New Underbelly

Investigative journalist Steven Armstrong published his book 'The New Poverty' this year, in an attempt to document a troubling new trend in Britain: in-work poverty. Last week he visited Sheffield to talk about it and *The Gryphon* went along to find out more.



Claire Wilsher

In a backroom of the Showroom Cinema in Sheffield, spectators greeted by cups of squash upon entrance, Stephen Armstrong eloquently painted a bleak picture of a modern Britain, steeped in inequality and on the brink of collapse. Heavy chat for a Tuesday evening. Perhaps the most troubling focus of Armstrong's work is that it shows that poverty is no longer reserved for those who are unemployed. Two thirds of those in poverty also have a job. Wages no longer cover people's basic needs, and those who work don't necessarily have a roof over their heads.

In the fifth largest economy in the world, we are not paying our workers enough to survive. Poverty is never something to be praised or accepted, but it's easy to ignore when it's a thing for the underbelly of society, those who are out of the picture. Out of sight, out of mind? Not any longer. Poverty is seeping into our system, creeping up the stairs into more and more families' homes. It can no longer be ignored.

For these people being undercut by society, it is only getting worse. In 2015 the *Joseph Rowntree Foundation*, an independent research group focusing on inequality and social justice, added a new category to its measurements of poverty: 'destitution'. Under their categorisation, to be in poverty is "when a person's means are not sufficient to meet their minimum needs". To be destitute is to face sleeping rough, having one or no meals a day, for two or more days, being unable to heat or light their homes for five or more days, going without weather-appropriate clothes or without basic toiletries twice or more in a single month. 1,252,000 people were declared destitute at some point in 2015. Amongst these figures were 312,000 children.

Armstrong's work underlines a bleak cycle of low wages, a system which punishes rather than helps those in need, and a press which vilifies the most vulnerable. What's evident of poverty here is that once you are in, you can't

get out. And most importantly, and what is most abundantly clear in Armstrong's discussion, is that this is no accident.

Armstrong's book exposes that people are plunged into poverty by the systematic pursuit of profit and not welfare. Does this sound like another loony lefty trying to get you to smash

Without fail, every day we are bombarded by terrible images of those on the lower rungs of our society. Benefit 'scroungers', homeless addicts, thieving immigrants. We are taught to hate them all. And out of this, someone benefits. Every time we accept these images, we take one step closer to blaming the poor for our problems. These are the people who are stealing our jobs and having more kids just to get more benefits. Why would we want to help them?

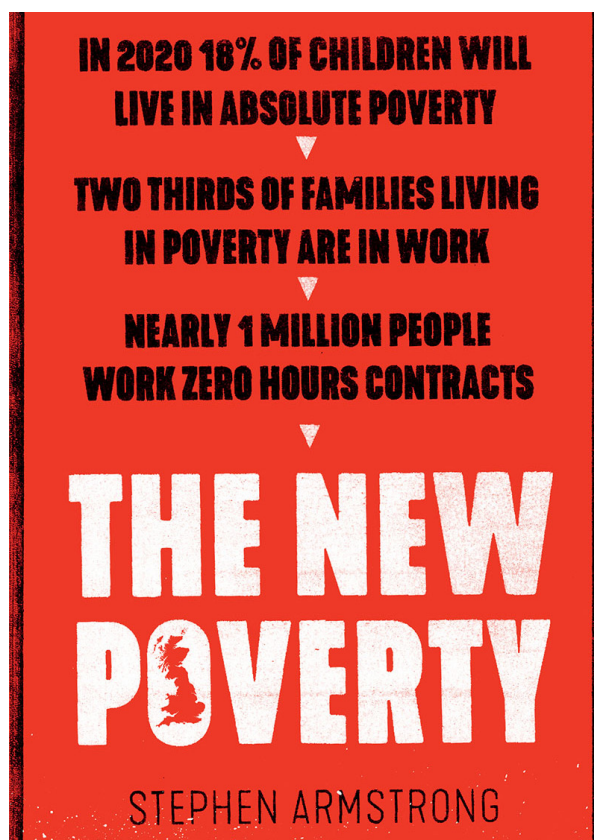
Out of this, of course, we forget to look up to see whose million pound pay cheques are getting bigger while we squabble over petty change. It feels like a tired argument, maybe even a stale one, yet consistently and repeatedly we fail to challenge the fact that, as we bicker, the rich are getting richer.

"Does this sound like another loony lefty trying to get you to smash the system?"

So how do we get out of this mess? Armstrong's book is a fantastic exposure of the huge problems Britain faces, but with very few solutions. Because the problem is, his work and his speech represent nothing new. We've heard it all before. His talk was heartfelt and intensely interesting, but it was made to a room full of people who already see a problem with Britain today. His book will surely be bought by the same circle who already yell at marches against Tory cuts, and read *The Guardian*, and hate *The Sun*.

The system is spiraling out of control and it seems the same people are benefiting, the same people attempting to put plasters over gaping Tory cuts. What is new though, is quite *how far* it has gone. The Armstrong depicts is one at a crossroads. One direction points to more poverty, pain and division, the other to positive and lasting change.

Perhaps finally something will change and Britain will face a complete re-thinking of who our system is being run for.



the system? That may well be the case, but the hard facts are there. The system isn't working; two thirds of British people in poverty are employed, and child poverty is at an all-time high.

In highlighting this, his work also shows us the simplest, most age old political statement; we need to stop looking down and start looking up in pursuit of solving our problems.



Lifestyle and Culture Editor, Bella Davis, explores the growth in gender neutral toilets, with special emphasis on how *The University of Leeds* is responding to increasing demand.

Bella Davis
Lifestyle and Culture Editor

In recent years, it seems as if there is a political argument concerning almost every aspect of society. And it appears this is unlikely to change. However, I may be the first to admit that I never thought going to the loo would become a subject for political discussion—after all, it is a basic human right. But alas, the day has come where there is the need to talk about the matter of gender neutral toilets. So why can we not just move past the idea that they are just toilets for anyone and everyone. Why can't we just call them toilets? Not male toilets, not female toilets, not gender neutral toilets. Just plain and simply 'toilets'. Because that is what they are: toilets—doing exactly what they were made for, letting everyone pee.

Genders that exist outside the binary have grown increasingly pronounced in the UK and across the world in recent years, although they have existed without widespread recognition since the dawn of human nature. Politically, people who fall under the 'trans' umbrella are not often acknowledged, and even within the LGBT+ movement, they face discrimination. Simple things that cisgender individuals take for granted like being called by the right pronoun or name, and using gender specific bathrooms, are not always straightforward for people who either don't identify with a binary gender, or do not identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.

After long debates and controversy both outside and within the trans community, there has been a rise in the installation of gender neutral toilets, designed to help transgender and non-binary people feel safe and

comfortable when going to the bathroom. Personally, it is saddening that it has come to society needing to create gender neutral toilets because, in an ideal world, wouldn't it be great if we could all just use the toilets we wanted to use without feeling physical, sexual or verbal harassment? And, at the same time, wouldn't it be amazing if we could all fully understand the need for them, while realising the anxieties that some people feel towards them?

Gender neutral bathrooms have been installed all around *The University of Leeds* campus in places such as *Roger Stevens*, *The Michael Sadler Building*, *The Worsley Building* and *The University Union*. These toilets are important for non-binary people, who may feel uncomfortable in either the male or female gendered toilets. These gender neutral toilets also send a much deeper message about inclusivity, which hopefully will be felt throughout the LGBT+ community across campus. Going to the toilet should not make people feel nervous or worried and gender neutral toilets

"I may be the first to admit that I never thought going to the loo would become a subject for political discussion. After all, it is a basic human right."

remove the anxiety from non-binary people who feel uncertainty about which bathroom to use.

There are plenty of reasons why all toilets should be gender neutral. Gender neutral toilets make life easier for all families, meaning that parents do not have to leave their children with other members of the family or friends when going to the bathroom, and if nappy

"These toilets are important for non-binary people, who may feel uncomfortable in either the male or female gendered toilets."

changing units were in all toilets then it would save dads having to leave it up to the mums. Historically, segregated bathrooms have been used to oppress marginalised groups, with most toilets being designed for men. It was only in 1739 that the first segregated bathrooms for men and women were made.

More importantly, gender specific toilets cause stress for parents of children who do not conform to a traditional gender, an issue which will cease to exist with gender neutral bathrooms. For those who are in the closet or have not decided on their gender identity, all-gender bathrooms remove the conundrum of deciding which toilet to use. Additionally, if all toilets were unisex, then there would be shorter wait times for women. Cisgendered women often have to go to the toilet more (and take longer) than men because we have to sit down to pee. On top of that, cis women have to deal with menstrual hygiene. Ultimately, the most important reason for gender neutral toilets is that everyone should feel safe and comfortable when going to the toilet.

I am really proud that our university is sending a clear message that we have an inclusive and diverse campus. Hopefully, in the near future, we will see more and more gender neutral toilets pop up both on campus and around the country on our journey to inclusive bathrooms.

In The Middle

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

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Stranger Things Season Two: Back to the 80s

Everyone's favourite Netflix original, *Stranger Things*, has finally made its return, after its acclaimed debut season in July of last year. Many of us here at In The Middle have already binged Season Two in full, and we can't deny that the soundtrack is one of the best parts of the show. Andrea Loftus breaks it down for us.



Image: Jackson Lee Davis / Netflix

Stranger Things is finally back, and with it comes the long-awaited return of the 80s, and the iconic music that defines it. This season consists of 40 tracks which tell their own story, subtly foreshadowing events to come within the episodes. The tactful musical choices guide the season's tonal transition from small town Halloween excitement to the inevitable standoff between good and evil, aka a 13-year-old and a big old rip in space and time.

With the bouncy energy of Devo's 'Whip It', we're transported to 1984, where the boys have levelled up from playing D&D in the basement to the wonders of the arcade. As Oingo Boingo's 'Just Another Day' guides us around a seemingly normal town, we see snapshots of shop fronts and people walking about like there's no Demogorgon infestation imminent, and no pre-teen with powers stashed in a cabin in the woods.

A major theme in the first few episodes is Halloween, with many a middle-aged man sporting a blonde wig, a box of Eggo's and fake blood. A splash of Gary Paxton's 'Spooky Movies' here and a dash of 'The Monster Mash' there, everything's light-hearted and fun, as Halloween should be. Episode two opens with a nostalgic one for the mums, acting like the papz whilst their kids get kitted out as Ghostbusters. The well-known theme opens the episode as a fun side-dish to the costumes but closes it in the credits as a premonition of Dustin's discovery, making it clear the boys will have to assemble against something strange in their very own neighbourhood.

As episode one ends, 'Every Other Girl' plays through the Hawkins Lab technician's headphones and the control board flashes, indicating the girl who's not like every other girl is back on the scene. Jim and El's unconventional father-daughter dynamic is pretty much asserted when the dad dancing kicks in, as Hopper cuts some shapes to 'You Don't Mess Around with Jim' by Jim Croce. We also get to see El looking as

badass as she acts, with Bon Jovi's 'Runaway' blasting as she departs Indiana looking like "Shirley Temple" and is transformed into "some kind of MTV punk" to The Runaways 'Dead End Justice'.

We get a lot more pairings this season, the most surprising being big brother Steve with hopeless romantic Dustin, but Big Giant Circles' 'Outside the Realm' symbolically plays over two poignant heart-to-hearts. 'Emo' Mike is heartbroken, but finds camaraderie in Will, who is simultaneously struggling with the aftermath of last year's events. The other union is pivotal in opening a future route for the show, as the song plays over Kali, test subject '008' from Hawkins lab, revealing her mental abilities to 'sister' El.

"No matter what the future holds for this show, as long as 80s anthems remain at its core, it's going to be well and truly bitchin'."

Season two is transformative for most characters, but first and foremost Steve goddamn Harrington, who went from tool-ish jock stereotype to the babysitter of our dreams. Someone had to fill the boots of the antagonist so cue bad-boy Billy, his dramatic entrance to the Scorpions 'Rock You Like A Hurricane' signifying the trouble to ensue. This is reiterated as he gets ready for a big date to Metallica's 'The Four Horsemen', his red shirt paralleling the red horseman of war, the likes of which he's going to wage on Steve. Despite being a low-key psychopath, Billy's a bit of a charmer, and Karen Wheeler's bubble bath and romance novel reading to the sweet sounds of Barbara Streisand shifts to Donna Summer's 'I Do Believe (I Fell In Love)' the moment she opens the door to this

mullet clad beef cake. Although I'm not sure anyone is quite ready for this sub-plot, it's undeniable wine-mom Karen deserves better than Ted.

It's not all darkness, doom and Demogorgons (for now), as Jonathan whacks out his 'Should I Stay Or Should I Go Now' cassette once again and Billie Holiday serenades us through Jonathan and Nancy's tedious 'will they won't they' romance. I never thought I'd have a reason to parallel Winona Ryder and Sean Astin with my parents, but it seems 'Islands in the Stream' is the perfect slow dance tune for both a silver wedding anniversary and a quiet night in with Bob 'superhero' Newby and Joyce. The true musical highlights are held out until episode 9's infamous Snow Ball. One can only assume 'Jingle Bell Rock' was on the radio as it plays in every house whilst the kids get suited and booted for the big dance. Dustin's new mentor Steve gives him some last-minute tips over Pat Benatar's 'Love Is A Battlefield', foreshadowing the heart-wrenching scenes to follow, but don't worry Dustin, they don't know what they're missing. We see the girls take the lead as the first slow dance anthem, Cyndi Lauper's 'Time after Time', glides over the speakers. The last song of the season, The Police's 'Every Breath You Take', accompanies an adorable slow dance between Mike and El, and will be ingrained forever in the memory of actors Sadie Sink and Caleb McLaughlin as they share their first kiss. But as the camera does a 180, the lyrics 'I'll be watching you' get a whole new meaning as the Mind Flayer hovers over an unsuspecting Hawkins Middle.

No matter what the future holds for this show, as long as 80s anthems remain at its core, it's going to be well and truly bitchin'.

Andrea Loftus



In the Middle With Nick Mulvey

Gryphon Associate Editor, Robert Cairns, sits down with Mercury-nominated Nick Mulvey before his gig at Church to discuss his latest album, the impending doom of politics, and the importance of British rave culture.

Sitting in the dingy alcove of a backstage dressing room in Church, Nick Mulvey radiates amidst the surrounding gloom with a charm and energy that is almost too intoxicating to comprehend. His voice cuts through the murky atmosphere, as he speaks with breathless passion and the wandering mind of a creator.

Asking whether the folkloric elements that permeate his music were merely additional afterthoughts or intrinsic elements of the recording process, Mulvey’s answer is predictably articulate. “I think all of the ingredients that make the end product are involved before, during, and after. When I start to write a song, all the music I have absorbed through my life, all of that expiration in African guitar, is there in the background informing what I’m doing.” Delving deeper into the guitar-picking technique, Mulvey plucks the air with such precision that you think he could actually turn thin air into an instrument. Mulvey likes to give autonomy to his individual fingers, “there is a kind of African technique which I play which is about independence of fingers, so they’re all doing a different interweaving lines. I always actually think of my fingers as some form of band, you know? So the thumb is the drummer, the index is the keyboard player and the middle and so forth, and they all interlock.”

It’s a complex notion, but Mulvey makes it look stupidly easy. Something that Mulvey finds more difficult, however, is the global political shit-show we’re only just beginning to wake up to. Like some shitty guidance counsellor, I speculate whether the politically conscious edge to *Wake Up Now* came from a regret from the experience of *First Mind*, but Mulvey disagrees and adds, “in my journey as a writer I felt all these things about the world. I could see that the very structure of our society is based on injustice and I’m confused like everyone else as to how the fuck is this going on? Just at the same measure that I find life so exquisitely beautiful every day just seeing what it is to be alive and to be in a body and to wake up in the morning and to look around at nature and be alive and the poetry of it all– at the same time I’m starting to see what a nightmare we’re creating.”

We dive even further into the cloudy world of politics, this time discussing everyone’s favourite knitted sweater enthusiast, Jeremy Corbyn, and whether Mulvey believes it’s important for students to have a figure like that to look up to in the world of politics. “He’s the next prime minister; he’s got to be.” [We fucking hope so, Nick] “It’s really important, of course it is. I heard Billy Bragg say that politics is far too important to be left just up to the politicians and it’s amazing and I’m so motivated because for the first time in my life time there is a genuine alternative to those who perpetuate the order, someone who for all intents and purposes really appears to be the genuine alternative.”

Mulvey goes back to the beginning. “I remember these feelings starting to come at the raves as a kid when I’d meet people who were very different with alternative stories to tell me about the world, and I really remember starting to see things differently. At the raves with these people we started to question the idea of having to earn a living because, when you’re living, your liveness is the only thing you’ve never had to earn or achieve, it’s the one thing that’s always been there. And I felt all of these things during the first album, but as a writer putting it out there in a

new experience of being a solo artist – I wasn’t ready to just go and put it on the frontline. But I would veil the lyrics in a lot of metaphors.”

“For instance, the song ‘The Trellis’ contains the lyric: “Just when the evidence seems clearer than day / could it be that providence is leading us astray?”. We’re fucked and must be way off-course – almost logically can it be that, if such a thing as providence exists, when you look at the way the universe unfolding, then, what we’re going through must be there for a reason. But with *Wake Up Now* I think I began to understand that I could speak my mind, that it would be okay if I spoke my mind. And writing this album as I did throughout the course of 2016, it would have felt weird and strange and almost an act of denial for me not to talk about these things. To have another album just talking about myself would be like being in a house that’s burning and you’re just making a cup of tea.”

I mention whether there is a hidden message beneath the artwork for *Wake Up Now*. Mulvey’s eyes light up. “That’s the first time I’ve heard someone mention that. The artwork for the front cover is a photograph from a part of the ceiling of the Pink Mosque in Iraq. This mosque... it’s just covered in euphoric mosaics. It looks like how music feels at the best moments– it’s just like: Boom! Instant connection and divinity. So I loved it as soon as I saw it and wanted it as my front cover. And then I felt I should do some due diligence, so I went to my Muslim friends to ask what is it like for me to use this cover? Does it offend anyone? Am I just helping myself? What does cultural appropriation mean in this situation? I heard back from everybody: ‘this just sings

with music, your intention is this, go with it, it’s cool, it’s respectful’. But one Muslim friend said ‘but you should know that those squares in the middle are a form of script’. So these radiating squares at the bottom which I thought were just these really cool black and white lines– they are a script. And they read “Peace, Unity, and Love”.

The time comes for us to part ways. Mulvey’s got a pre-gig sushi date with his family and friends to run off to, and I’ve got a microwave meal for one that isn’t going to eat itself. But, before he leaves, I pluck up the courage to ask how to go about improving myself as a musician, what it takes to feel confident in the music that you write. “It’s always a combination of being a geek about it and just cracking on hours at a time. Anyone can do that. And then the other side of it is to not worry too much about comparisons outside you. Like, when you’re doing your stretches in the morning, you’re not comparing yourself to anyone else. And it’s like that with music. You’re just stretching your mind and then when you write music it comes from a place within, and then whether it’s compared to that person’s music or this person’s music is irrelevant really.”

Mulvey slips out through the heavy wooden door with an electric smile and an already-vanished wave, before I get the chance to fan girl over him any harder. Speaking to him was like putting all of his music into a comprehensive perspective, an unravelling of the introspective layers and an uncovering of the eloquent, socially conscious, delightful man that lay beneath.

Robert Cairns

Gig Round-up

Ghostpoet @ Brudenell Social Club, 30/10

“Seeing Ghostpoet counts as uni work because he’s a poet”, I kid myself, as I ditch my poetry seminar prep for my second visit to the Brudenell this week. Fortunately, this (gladly-taken) sacrifice definitely proves to be worth it; Ghostpoet does not disappoint.

The night commences with Norwegian singer-songwriter EERA (Anna Lena Bruland) who, despite having a faulty guitar, gives a flawless performance. Her sultry vocals combined with her sorrowful guitar sounds created a mystical, almost witchy atmosphere: perfect for the night before Halloween.

Ghostpoet continues this dramatic atmosphere into his entrance. After what feels like several minutes of ominous, reverberating synth, the London-born, spoken-word rapper confidently strolls on stage, suit-clad, alongside his similarly smartly-dressed band. “I absolutely love playing Leeds”, he says, grinning, after playing his first couple of songs – “I mean it: I don’t bullsh*t”. After a swig of red wine, and a chorus of appreciative cheers from the crowd, he swings into ‘Dopamine If I Do’, a track from his newly released album *Dark Days + Canapes*, with accompanying vocals from EERA – an absolutely magical collaboration. The clear passion he has for his songs and the messages he conveys through them completely enlivens his music: crossing that all-important boundary between simply playing the music, and performing the music. Throughout the set, Ghostpoet masterfully dips between songs old and new, with the Brudenell crowd caught in the grip of his powerful, unrelenting verse.

He takes us into a more slow-paced section, with the intense ‘Meltdown’ showcasing his raspy, languid vocals, and closing ‘End Times’ with a whispered, almost menacing repetition of “is it end times?”, into silence. Before drawing to a finish, he brings the show back up to energetic heights, with jazzy, hectic, yet harrowing new songs ‘Immigrant Boogie’ and ‘Freakshow’, and concluding with a triumphant encore of the old favourites everyone has been waiting for. His experienced rendition of the life-contemplative ‘Survive It’ and crowd-favourite ‘Off Peak Dreams’ leaves us with no doubt about one thing only: Ghostpoet remains one of the most original, perceptive, and thrilling performers in the UK spoken word/hip-hop scene.

Hollie Griss

Trio de Kali @ Howard Assembly Room, 22/10

As Trio da Kali stalked onto stage dressed in traditional dress, I was left feeling as if I should have made a little more effort and hoping that they sounded half as sharp live as Mamadou Kouyaté’s cheekbones looked. Never a disappointment, they proved to have both style and substance.

The evening began with Hawa Diabaté singing a capella and I was transfixed by both the gravity and the soulfulness of her voice. The clarity of her voice was stunning as she showed the range of her ability, equally as comfortable on upbeat and sombre songs. However, this was not a one-woman show. As Lassana Diabaté on balafon and Kouyaté on the bass it became clear that they were not merely there to accompany her, but were stars in their own right. Their playful batting of solos back and forth across the stage, attempting to best one another, was a whimsical interlude. Kouyaté eventually accepted defeat to Diabaté’s spirited musicianship that subverted the balafon’s traditional roots as background percussion and let it shine on its own. Though slightly less successful, Hawa Diabaté’s attempt to get the audience to get out of their seats and dance. The fault was not in the conveying of the message in hesitantly offered English but sadly the very ‘English’ reserve of the audience, with only a few of us grooving at the sides. Despite this reserve it was pretty clear that the room was swept away with the evening, judging by the snatches of discussions I eavesdropped at the interval.

Despite only being together a relatively short time there was a clear generosity with the audience that reverberated through the evening– especially at its close. Through an eager audience member who offered to translate the group communicated the significance of their roots in the griot tradition, who traditionally are the keeper of songs and stories in West Africa. Before they sang a Malian song of thanksgiving, they taught the audience a couple of lines which we dutifully repeated throughout. Despite our talents being no match for theirs and having no understanding of the lyrics, the experience was one of the most profound I’ve had at a gig.

Unfortunately, it was over far too soon, and I was ejected from the Howard Assembly Room with only the glow of my memories to keep me warm on the wintry walk home.

Victoria Beyai



Image: Getty



Image: Oxofrd Contemporary Music

Emeli Sande @ First Direct Arena, 24/10



Image: Irish News

After a five-year break, *Long Live the Angels* was a long awaited album from Emeli Sandé, and, naturally, her accompanying UK Tour was certainly highly anticipated.

Emotional and spiritual, the new album chronicles her divorce, so it was inevitable her live performance would be even more so. While this raw emotion was evident at First Direct Arena for Tuesday night's concert, Sandé performed with a surprising radiance and positivity. She fittingly opened up with a funky up version of 'Selah', the opener of the album. Although the ethereal quality of 'Selah' was almost abolished in this glittered-up concert version, things soon looked up. Sandé raced through more of her upbeat numbers, and I was reminded just how many hits she has had.

Undoubtedly the highlight of the night was when she moved to the piano. This is where Sandé holds her own. She was raw, evocative and powerful. This was the perfect setting for her soulful voice. Somehow, she managed to create intimacy in the First Direct Arena; the crowd gathered around the small platform with her and the piano, and it was as if you were watching one of your friends at the pub.

After everyone had dried their tears from 'Read All About It Part III', she moved back over to the main stage and injected an incredible power and zest into the final numbers, 'Wonder' and 'Next to Me', it was impossible to stay seated. There were some African elements such as bongo drums, perhaps hinting at her Zambian roots, lending a festival vibe to the end of her set. To sum up, Emeli Sandé's performance was innovative, personal and a bloody good gig.

Sophie Baker

Dodie @ Stylus, 28/10



Image: Summer in the City

No word describes dodie's gig better than wholesome. Not only in her performance, but the purity and engulfing sense of goodness that radiates from her and her fans was just awe inspiring. I felt like I was attending a family gathering of people who had never met, yet were anything but strangers.

In a bubbling crowd of young girls, dressed mostly in "dodie yellow", accompanied by their parents, I certainly felt out of place, but not at all unwelcome. Standing at the back as to not block anyone's view, I witnessed a spectacle of a safe space, far away from this growingly disturbed world. Dancing, crying, and singing without a care for who was watching, the crowd felt like a connected unit. A girl passes out, dodie stops the gig to check if she's ok, and another girl from across the room passes her water. Moments like this convinced me that this was the best crowd I've ever been in.

dodie's music focuses on themes that revolve around the struggles of a young, queer, mentally ill person in 21st century Britain. Yet her songs offer messages that are anything but platitudes.

Her music, just as any other, is worthy as political music. The lyricism of her songs, such as 'She', offer a personal take on queer heartbreak in a heteronormative world, 'In The Middle' talks about experimenting with sex for the fun of it, and '6/10' offers a take on never feeling quite enough. It's more than important to understand the crowd here. It's incredibly important for teens to have a role model like dodie telling them it's ok to be curious and it's ok to not feel good enough. Not only in her music but through captivating monologues, too. dodie half way through the gig stops to wave a bi pride flag handed to her from girls at the barrier further demonstrating the political theme her music holds.

The most important thing I took away from the gig was the importance of artists like dodie empowering and sending positive messages to teenage girls. I've seen abuse thrown at her for 'just being a YouTube musician' but this couldn't be further from the truth. dodie provides beautiful, angelic melodies and, most importantly, gives empowerment to a group who are desperate for role models.

Christopher Tobin

Making Music Herstory Vol 3: Odetta

Odetta, born Odetta Holmes, is the greatest folk singer you've never heard of. She championed the American folk revival of the 1950s and 60s, influencing all the big names: Bob Dylan, Joan Baez, Janis Joplin. Early in her career, she caught Harry Belafonte's eye and performed the duet 'There's A Hole In The Bucket' on Tonight with Belafonte. This comedic sketch proved that folk wasn't all pain and heartbreak, and she enlivened the scene with her light touch.

Odetta featured prominently in the Civil Rights Movement. She is remembered for her performance of 'O Freedom' at the 1963 March on Washington, the largest political protest in United States history. Characteristically modest, Odetta described herself as "one of the privates in a very big army" fighting for civil rights in America.

If any more evidence is needed for her brilliant talent, take 'Water Boy' as Exhibit A. The song opens with her powerful vibrato, holding the note confidently and demanding the attention of everyone in the room. Her guitar strokes are few and far between but precise, punctuating her vocal

phrases. With her voice gracefully touching each of the soulful lows and whimsical highs, there are points in the song that sound as though Odetta is on the edge of tears. The song builds gradually until Odetta releases an otherworldly growl from the depths of her diaphragm. It is arresting and animalistic, and speaks of a desperation that simply can't be sung. This is Odetta's greatest talent: she articulates the purest of human emotions without dilution or showmanship: just raw feeling.

Odetta never stopped working hard to get where she deserved to be, and consequently can be heard in snippets and guitar twangs throughout music history. She put folk music on the map again, and we would do well not to forget it.

Tracklist: 'Water Boy', 'Don't Think Twice, It's Alright', 'If I Had A Hammer', 'Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child'

Jemima Skala



Electrifying Joy Orbison Returns to Wire

Clubbing on Halloween weekend always seems to throw up a treat or two; the same weekend last year saw *Red Bull Music Academy* bring a monstrous line up headed by DJ Harvey to Canal Mills. This year, though, Wire claimed bragging rights with a scarily good double-booking that saw one of 2017’s most talked about young talents join one of contemporary UK dance music’s most inimitable pioneers.

It would be hard to find a more exciting warm up DJ than Or:la’s in Leeds this year. The striking Irishwoman’s three hour warm up set displayed a musical wit and technical proficiency that far exceeds her 25 years. Slowly building from deep house into the kind of slamming percussive tracks that have defined her sets of late, leaving Joy Orbison bobbing his head approvingly. She finished with the gritty Servito and Cudmore remix of Gunnar Haslam’s ‘Scale No Flam’, and in doing so, set the tone perfectly.

It’s hard to know where to start and even harder to know where to finish, when describing Joy Orbison. Perhaps it’s best just to say that he’s the kind of DJ that kept Wire pulsing with energy ‘til 5am; and made it look totally effortless. His set saw no corner of dance music go untouched, as he went from hard-nosed electro to obscure UK Funky with ‘Brave’ by Dynamite. Before any clubber could stop to think he surged into a gun-finger inducing blend of his own ‘Off Season’ and the 10 ton remix of Tessela’s ‘Hackney Parrot’.

By the time 5am hit, Orbison was treating (a still packed) Wire to a stream of sexy jungle, not too dissimilar to records his uncle Ray Keith might have once played.

His skin-tight mixing throughout made wild cross genre leaps seem elementary, but it was his inventive use of acapellas throughout that really stood out, serving as interludes to a musical journey that was both outstandingly thoughtful and genuinely eclectic, where he made sure every song had a purpose and further solidified himself as one of UK’s most treasured DJ’s.

James Gwyther

Songs For The Winter Blues

November is upon us. Puffer jackets have returned en masse (although in Leeds they never really went away), and the latest generation of second years are now discovering the chilly delights of their damp-ridden terraced houses. And whilst these colder months bless us with pretty dead leaves to look at, and an abundance of overpriced syrupy hot drinks to buy (£3.75 for a pumpkin spiced latte, anyone?), we’re also given darkness at 5pm, and likely a vitamin D deficiency to boot.

But rather than long for summer, it’s time to embrace the long evenings. As the winter blues hit, here’s a playlist of unashamedly sad songs. Spanning ambient, house, and techno, these emotional cuts are sure to soundtrack your most reflective moments. Some tracks just sound better at night.

Aphex Twin – Rhubarb

Listening to an Aphex track can go one of two ways. Put on one of his ambient pieces and find yourself immersed in sonic heaven. Put on some of his other work and find yourself assaulted by a cacophony of bleeps and breakbeats. Rhubarb falls into the former category. This simple but gorgeous track is a smooth, atmospheric gem that instantly provokes nostalgia.

Moodymann – Why Do U Feel

The Detroit legend has a personality that almost overshadows his immense talent. But tracks such as this remind you just why Moodymann is so revered. The sample aches “You say you don’t need me no more... you’d be happy somewhere else” as the track shifts, to and fro, between gloomy heartache and ever-so-slightly more upbeat groove. Brilliant, yearning house music.

Gaussian Curve – The Distance

Gaussian Curve make music that reflects the way it was created. The album that this track appears on was made from scratch in one room over a four-day period. The minds behind the compositions bounce off of one another, creative inspiration provided by the intimate settings. Here, soft, glimmering synths shape a pensive mood from the off. The song never breaks from a subtle, but beautiful soundscape that invokes introspection from the listener. One for a brooding late-night stroll.

Omar-S – XSE

It says a lot about the talent of the producer when he’s managed to take the harrowing screams of pigs being slaughtered, yet somehow produce delicate track. Omar-S is known for his knack of producing affecting dance music, and XSE manages to be at once chilling and moving. More frostbitten than sun-kissed, that’s for sure.

Traumprinz - 2Bad (DJ Metatron ‘What If Madness Is The Only Relief’ Rework)

One of the standout releases of 2016, the enigmatic nature of the producer is encapsulated in the track title: Traumprinz is DJ Metatron. The track is danceable but still solemn in tone, soft horns oscillating throughout. The simplicity of the song is what makes it so deeply sad, the regret-tinged sample repeating “it’s too bad... too bad, baby” till the work drifts into a subdued, hazy, ambient finale. Emotive listening that comes to life during the early hours.



Image: TallyPress

Living Dead Gets Groovin’

Halloween’s spookiest club night production, the *Living Dead Festival*, descended on *Leeds University Union* on the 31st of October, ready to flip the Leeds student favourite of *Fruity* on its head, placing its own unique spin on the well-known space of the union with its plethora of chart music gems and VK’s.

Stylus was transformed into a Halloween wonderland, complete with spider-webs dangling from the ceiling and dancers covered in blood and gore up on stage. The non-intentional but altogether seasonal abundance of toxic blue and witchy green VK’s clutched in the hands of every intoxicated person in the crowd added to the spooky vibes. In addition to the usual hordes of sexy cats, zoo animals and zombie cheerleaders was a range of costumes from Pennywise in the recent *It* adaptation, Greek mythology’s favourite stony-eyed gorgon Medusa, and even a group of boys channelling the members of Kiss, complete with monochrome face makeup and lengthy black capes.

The *Living Dead Halloween Festival* had promised to be the most fun, affordable and all-round best event on Halloween night in Leeds for students, and it delivered.

Compared to the pricier alternatives of Beaverwork’s cult night *Flux* and fancier establishments in town, the *Living Dead Festival* promised to be a night of good-hearted hedonism at the union, not too far to travel and a guarantee of a messy night, fuelled by Satan’s own liquor of choice (VK’s, obviously) and resulting in either a) cheesy chips from *Flames*, b) waking up not in your own bed, or c) falling down Royal Park Road at 4:30am and waking up the day after with no recollection of how you achieved that sprained ankle. The latter may be an extreme, but the night promised to be a sure-fire route to fun and it was.

The music was eclectic, ranging from the cheesy tracks revered at *Fruity* and *Mischief* on display in Stylus, to Terrace featuring all the best house & disco vibes courtesy of P.A.R.T.Y. The R&B and hip-hop classics on offer at Pyramid served as the perfect foil to what you wanted your night to be, and what it actually ended up being. Dancing like Beyoncé was your spirit animal to ‘Bodak Yellow’ in a “Little Dead Riding Hood” costume might have appeared in your drunken consciousness as the best idea ever, definitely sexy, never embarrassing, but the morning after you’ll remember all this and realise you looked more like an escapee from a Victorian asylum as depicted in a Dickens novel.

That’s the fun in Halloween; costumes and face paint make you feel like you’re someone new, just for a night, and because of this your whole experience is altered for the better. You dance harder, drink more, and eat two burgers on the way instead of one. It promotes the extreme. If you want a Halloween night this good in 2018, I have just one piece of advice: forget the pretentious events and buy a ticket for the *Living Dead Festival*, you won’t regret it.

Poppie Platt



Regression Sessions Up Their Game

Regression Sessions is always a safe bet for Halloween, known for putting on events with special effects and props that do not disappoint. 2017’s event at Canal Mills on Tuesday 31st was no exception to the rule.

This Halloween saw the inclusion of some special effects at epic proportions; with freak show entertainers and fire-eaters parading the stage while the likes of Jack Swift, Mad Villains and Kid Dyson worked their magic on the decks. Giant inflatable eyes were suspended from the roof of Canal Mills’ warehouse, with pumpkins and masked DJs all featured alongside the ball pit (“blood and guts pit”) and bouncy castle.

Crowd numbers had dwindled at their Space Safari event earlier in the month with a lower production value than usual, so it was comforting to see that RG had upped their game in time for Halloween.

The genre of choice as always with RG was house and techno, and whilst the standard was high it did feel a little repetitive. The sets could do with a little more variation and individualism between DJs to keep the crowds entertained.

It’s worth checking out the second room at the back, for a break from the electronic mixes in the main room. Here you’ll find DnB with elements of hip-hop and futurism, with a much more simplistic style of décor.

Regression Sessions and Canal Mills are somewhat of a match made in heaven– the venue is big enough to witness some top DJs playing to massive crowds, whilst *Regression Sessions* add an element of childlike fun with their antics in a space that is small enough to not feel lost in.

However, whilst RG did well this year amongst the plethora of Leeds’ Halloween events, they might have to up the level of variety they put into their choice of DJs and mix up their production value to keep the audience intrigued.

Clare Redman



Outfits Of The Week

With winter looks beginning to dominate student styles as the nights draw in, it makes perfect sense for us at In The Middle to showcase our writer's individual styles. Therefore, this week we have dedicated a whole page to our Outfits of the Week! So here we have two contributors, confident to strut their stuff on the campus catwalk.

Starting off our feature OOTW section this week is Sarah Ashford- Brown, giving us her outline of a look to prepare us for the depressing, gloomy walks to come in our trek to Uni through the harsh Northern winds.

Sarah Ashford-Brown

The Jacket – Columbia, Urban Outfitters

Anyone relatively interested in fashion will have noticed by now that furry jackets are very in at the moment. Whereas it is to chill at home, to go for a day at the library or just to be comfy, yet fashionable, there is no wrong in wearing it.

The Top – Brandy Melville

Everyone owns a plain black top, and with us in the cold north, this one is a long sleeve. An off the shoulder cotton top which you can wear on a 'throw anything on day', it is a go to when you want to appear a well-focused, motivated student (how truthful it may really be could be debatable).

The Trousers – Adidas

The burgundy sweatpants I'm wearing have gotten me quite a few comments, which I am unsure whether to take as compliments or not. I have generally liked to wear quite different things to what other people would normally wear, however, when you're a student in Leeds, I feel like anything is possible.

The Shoes – Stan Smiths, Adidas

I must admit, I've had those trainers for years now, it's been so long that my mum begged me to never wear them again, unless it's to take the dog out on a rainy and muddy day. But come on, old Stan Smiths are something to be extremely proud of: they are the only pieces of clothing I've ever queued for outside of a shop. I've always made fun of people for putting that much determination into their shopping, like the incredible ques for the latest iPhone, but when the iconic red Stan Smiths were being released again in Paris, I had to be one of the first to purchase them.



The lovely Frankie has kindly gifted us with another one of her famous style combos for this Outfit of the Week, contrasting light grey colours with a bold black coat for a winning look.



Frankie Clarke

The Jeans- Warehouse

Beginning with the basis of a killer outfit, these jeans bought from Warehouse really aid as an incredible foundation to the look. And every girl needs that trusty pair of black basics, am I right or am I right?

The Dress- H&M

Normally a challenging combo to perfect, this look managed to style the combination of dress over jeans. The grey dress acquired from H&M works well in a more grunge-chic look made to look more casual and suited for the colder weather.

The Blazer- H&M

This look manages to pull off a statement blazer, the black garment, again bought from H&M, really ties together the whole look and again makes the grey dress appear more casually suited for a streetwear style.

The Belt- Karen Millen

Bought from Karen Millen, the skinny black belt helps to draw attention to the waist area, bringing in the loose grey dress to clinch at the waist and create some great texture to the outfit.

The Shoes- Topshop

Of course, the best is saved until last! These shoes are from Topshop and complete the entire look. Perhaps a little breezy in terms of the open foot but I think it's worth it for the envious street style pulled off as a result.

There we have it, 2 very versatile and unique outfits yet all deriving from our very own students here at the University of Leeds. and better yet, high street centred, so get out and creating your statement street style with the wonderful tips learnt here today!

Flare for Fashion?

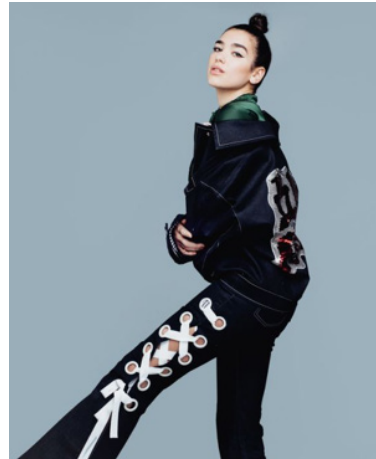
Wide leg trousers and flares have always been popular at various points through history, with bell bottoms in the 1970s, bootcut jeans in the late 1990s and now the 2010s showcasing a penchant for flares. For the past decade, we have shunned these cuts in favour for sometimes uncomfortable and dull skinny jeans. While the rich and famous have continuously worn wider leg trousers, only recently has the high street provided us with some great dupes. Celebrities such as Gigi Hadid, Hilary Duff and Dua Lipa have all shown their love for flared trousers. Worn for an array of occasions, in an array of styles these famous faces prove flares are for any time and anyone. If you're feeling bold, you can opt for a metallic flare ensemble like Gigi or if you want to be more causal for those 9am lectures, simply pair with a T- shirt like Hilary Duff.



Gigi Hadid, Forbes



Hilary Duff, inTheStyle



Dua Lipa, Pinterest

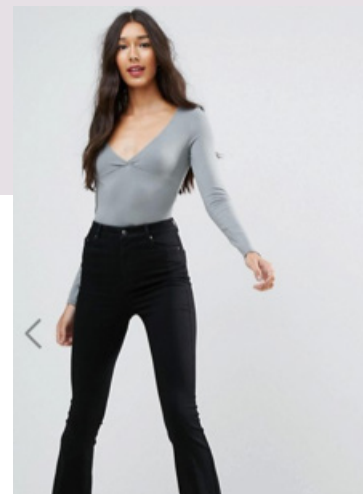
Where do you find yourself a pair of flattering flares? Online retailers like Missguided and ASOS have an abundance of styles, so you are sure to find a pair or two that you love. What's more, they have student discount. While skinny jeans are a great staple, I think it is time to spice your wardrobe up with some flares. Not only do they look super flattering on, but are amazingly comfortable and your favourite stores are offering them super cheap. What else could convince you?



Misguided



Misguided



ASOS

Sarah Harrison

Top Fashion Film - Student Review

Fashion writer, Isabella Minns, lends a style-keen eye on the age-old classic, A Big Splash.

Film: A Big Splash

A remake of the 1969 French film *La Piscine*, *A Bigger Splash* is set in the backdrop of an idyllic Italian island as ageing rock star, Marianne (Tilda Swinton), recovers from a vocal operation with her film-maker lover, Paul (Matthias Schoenaerts). However, Marianne's complicated rock 'n' roll past is brought to light when her record producer ex-lover Harry (Ralph Fines) turns up on the island with his sex-symbol daughter (Dakota Johnson).

Marianne finds herself caught between her nostalgia for Harry and their wild rock 'n' roll lifestyle and her gentle sweet love for Paul. With a storyline almost entirely unrelated to fashion, you may be confused as to why this film has made the list. Besides the beautiful filmography and absorbing acting, the costume design of *A Bigger Splash* cements its rock star artsy glamour. Designed by Raf Simons, as the Creative-Director of Dior, Marianne's effortless glamour resonates the iconic brand. Featuring an elegant black silk body paired with a floating white silk skirt, a subtle white silk jumpsuit and a white and blue striped cotton shirt dress teamed with a basket bag, the film's French origins resonate through the French brand's classic costumes.



Isabella Minns

To Be Or Not To Be? That Is The Mystery

Arts Writer, Eleanor Smith, discusses the Shakespeare Authorial conspiracy theory and discusses the playwright's significance in today's society

William Shakespeare is often regarded as Britain's greatest playwright. Four centuries after the composition of his works, he is still celebrated on school curriculums, in television, film and theatre, and in everyday life. You just need to look up some of the phrases he coined to see his continued relevance today. If you've ever said you're 'as dead as a doornail', something has 'vanished into thin air', or there's 'method to your madness', you're quoting Shakespeare. So what if the Shakespeare we know so well was not the author of his plays?

Scholar Alexander Waugh has proposed that he has found evidence that proves that the author of Shakespeare's catalogue was Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford. The suggestion that Shakespeare did not write his own works is a historic and lengthy debate, supported by figures such as Charlie Chaplin and Mark Twain, and today by Sir Derek Jacobi and Sir Mark Rylance. Among other proposed candidates are Sir Francis Bacon, Christopher Marlowe, and William Stanley, 6th Earl of Derby.

Waugh claims that, through the decoding of a series of encryptions on the title and dedication pages of Aspley's edition of the 1609 sonnets, he can prove where Shakespeare was buried: beneath the 1740 monument dedicated to Shakespeare in Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey. The hidden grid patterns, geometrics, and other clues indicate that the monument is the playwright's final resting place, as well as that it spells 'Edward de Vere lies here'.

The theory that Oxford was Shakespeare is well established. Scholars - known as Oxfordians - believe that records which prove that Shakespeare authored his plays and sonnets were falsified to protect the true author's identity. Instead, Oxford, a man of high status, penned the works. He was wealthy, well-travelled, and educated, as you would have expected the author of such a remarkable catalogue of work to be. In contrast, William Shakespeare of Stratford-upon-Avon lacked the education, awareness of the courts, and wealth to have written as he supposedly did. There is little evidence surrounding Shakespeare's personal life. There only exists a few signatures, a will, and the record of his marriage to Anne Hathaway.

The arguments for Oxford to be the author come from instances and events in Oxford's life that appear in the sonnets, longer poems and plays. For Oxfordian scholars, Shakespeare was an actor or a frontman, publishing the plays under his own name while Oxford wrote them. Arguments against the Oxfordian theory come from the assumed chronology of Shakespeare's plays; twelve of the plays were supposedly written after Oxford's death in 1604. However, there is an increased

presence of revision and collaboration with other playwrights and writers in these later plays, suggesting they were completed by other playwrights after Oxford's death.

The Shakespearean authorship debate can never truly be proved because we are over 400 years too late to ask. Waugh's evidence is persuasive, but it is still based on the assumption that discovered 'clues' were intentional. Despite this, the debate is still relevant today because of its implications, both on the works attributed to Shakespeare, and other pieces of Renaissance art. Without knowing the authorship, we do not understand the comprehensive context of their composition.

A clear idea of authorship may help in the questions raised in some works, such as the question of the author's sexuality, raised most notably in Sonnet 18 and Sonnet 20. Both sonnets suggest a male attraction by the speaker; knowing the poet's true identity may help in understanding intent. Also, it is nice to think that a glover's son from Stratford-upon-Avon may have penned such an extensive, skillful body of work, possessing such an ability and obtaining the platform and means to present his work, after coming from a rather low beginning.

By questioning that the author of Shakespeare's works was not the man we believe it to be, questions may also be asked about the authorship of other pieces of Renaissance literature, as well as the creators of art and music. Who else in the period was writing under a pseudonym or using an actor to hide their identity? This is particularly important when considering gender. There is a huge lack of women as creators of art in the Renaissance period because of limitations placed on them. Therefore, it is likely that women were writing under pseudonyms. Perhaps some of the key writers, artists, and musicians we continue to celebrate today were women, hiding their identities in order to be allowed to simply create art and have it appreciated and recognised.

The Oxford theory is noteworthy in the Shakespeare debate, especially in light of this new evidence that Waugh has discovered. Its implications of authorial intent and gender are worth considering, however the true answer to the authorship of Shakespeare's works will always remain a mystery.

Eleanor Smith

The Roman Polanski Retrospective and its Moral Implications

Hannah Stokes discusses the recent retrospective held for Oscar award-winning director, Roman Polanski, and discusses the possible need to separate art from artist

This Monday, a retrospective for Roman Polanski opened at the Cinematheque Francaise in Paris. Polanski is a French-polish director with a long career, his works including famous films *Rosemary's Baby* (1968), *Chinatown* (1974) and *The Pianist* (2002).

Roman Polanski is also a convicted rapist; he is wanted in the United States for the statutory rape of a 13 year old girl in 1977, however fled to France in 1978. In the years following further women have come out of their own stories of sexual abuse as children at the hands of Polanski, and just last week he was also accused of sexually assaulting a 10 year old in 1975.

The decision to host the retrospective appears especially ill-timed in the wake of the Harvey Weinstein scandal, a powerful Hollywood figure who, like Polanski, has been accused of sexual assault and harassment by many women, yet has managed to live the most part of his life without consequences. Many in the industry knew what Weinstein had allegedly done and continued doing, in the same way that the world knew what Polanski had done, but regardless he was still awarded with a best director Oscar in 2002. It is thus easy to see why the retrospective has caused so much controversy, with Monday night seeing a crowd – formed largely of French feminist groups – protesting outside of the Cinematheque. Many protestors bore placards drawing attention to the crimes and accusations surrounding Polanski as well as banging on the windows of the Cinematheque chanting the words “Polanski, violeur” (‘Polanski, rapist’).

This retrospective raises a question that has plagued art and media history for centuries; can we separate art from its artist? Many artists have proved to be problematic in varying degrees, but does this mean that we should never look at or show their work? It is almost impossible not to contextualise what we look at, not to bring in what we may know about an artist or a subject and let it influence how we view the art piece or film. When a scandal such as that of Polanski or Weinstein comes out, it is difficult to not feel a least slightly uneasy about watching one of their films. However, this does not mean that we should stop watching these films altogether.

I’m not ashamed to admit that *Chinatown* is a good film, but by saying that it is good, whilst I may be seen as saying that Polanski’s directorial efforts in that particular film were good, I am by no means saying that Polanski is a good person. Watching one Polanski film on Netflix is entirely different to hosting a whole retrospective dedicated to him; retrospectives are celebratory, not only of the works presented but of the artist themselves as they usually include extensive information about the artist, their life, their influences and so on.

There is thus a focus on both the work itself and the individual as a whole, and a rapist such as Polanski should not be afforded such positive attention. The same goes for Polanski’s 2002 Oscar, which was an award he could not collect in person because he had fled to France due to his statutory rape charge. When you give someone an award for best director or best actor, you are not only celebrating a person’s work in a film but the individual as a whole; it is not the film that receives the applause but the man or woman that gets up on stage.

Whilst social media campaigns such as #metoo and the recent petition to ban Casey Affleck – who was sued by two female colleagues for sexual harassment in 2010 yet still received a best actor Oscar earlier this year – from the upcoming Academy Awards have shown a public urge to increase awareness surrounding sexual assault and those who perpetrate it, especially in the entertainment industry, where there is still much more progress left to make. The reason that the Polanski retrospective is so harmful is that it shows a continued acceptance of a known rapist by the industry; a person with authority and influence in Hollywood, who then used this power to sexually exploit a young girl. He cannot be allowed to maintain his standing without consequence. It is this continued acceptance that prevents sexual assault victims from speaking out, for fear that they will be blamed as victims whilst the perpetrator is never fully condemned.

Hannah Stokes

In the Middle with Phil Jupitus



Image: BBC

Arts Writer, Ellie Montgomery, catches up with renowned comedian Phil Jupitus, discussing political comedy and the need for men to move aside and let women take centre stage

Long-time comedy veteran Phill Jupitus is admired across the world for his stellar stand-up, various acting roles and as a beloved team captain on the panel show *Never Mind The Buzzcocks*. Beginning his career touring as a performance poet with the likes of The Style Council and The Housemartins, Jupitus then went on to direct music videos for Billy Bragg and Kirsty MacColl. Jupitus brought all of these experiences to his interview with *In the Middle*, discussing music, politics and comedy.

Over the years, Phill Jupitus has had prevalent associations with left wing politics and political protest. Discussing Brexit and the current political climate, he muses about “Boris Johnston and that fucking NHS bus, I’m glad he did that because it’s never going to go away. A man standing in front of one of his biggest lies. Good. A visual reminder of what a dick that man is.”

“There has to be another way, that’s all it is. The thing is if I knew what that other way was then I’d be a politician but I’m not – I’m a clown. Don’t come looking to me for answers, all I’m there to say is that this is wrong and you don’t have to have an alternative to say that something is wrong. I’ve got a chest of drawers over there that are broken, I can’t fix it but I know it’s fucking broken! Am I not allowed to say it’s broken because I’m not a carpenter?”

In more recent times Jupitus has, however, moved slightly away from politically charged comedy stating that “I put overtly political stuff less in my shows because it just makes me angry and angry is not entertaining. I just get really ragey really quickly. There’s an almost extreme noise-terror moment of politics which I do just to show why I can’t do politics anymore.”

Despite this, it is extremely clear that Jupitus remains insightful about the role of both comedy and culture in relationship to the political landscape. With a detailed knowledge of popular music, Jupitus considers that “our culture is a mirror to the world around it, the misnomer is that somehow music is a force for change: that it is a broad movement. It’s not, it’s more about changing individual minds and showing alternative perspectives.”

The understanding of current issues and affairs is also apparent in Jupitus’ opinions on the current, and future, direction of the stand-up scene: “The interesting comedy now is mostly from the women. You only have to look at what’s happening in the world with the #metoo campaign. What the women are saying: that’s the new punk rock. How many more middle class white men do we really want to see?! Let us listen to the women – we’ve had the blokes.”

This consideration of the movement of stand-up additionally extends to the discussion of the dichotomy between mainstream and alternative comedy in the 80s, Jupitus reflects that “the reason alternative comedy came about was because of the class system in this country. We like giving things labels and putting things in boxes. My audiences are very broadly spread; it brings a different energy. There’s loads of different people from loads of different backgrounds but you’ve been brought together by a common interest in what I’ve got to say.”

Jupitus is currently touring his latest stand-up show *Juplicity* across the UK including playing Ilkley, Yorkshire on 6th November.

Ellie Montgomery

“Boris Johnson and that fucking NHS bus, I’m glad he did that because it’s never going away.”

Cabaret at Leeds Grand Theatre

Cabaret is a difficult show to get right, especially now, when it seems so eerily prescient. The balance between subversive enough to press the point and tame enough for the regular theatre-goer is fraught, the line between satirising and trivialising the enemy difficult to parse. For the most part, this bombastic and glittery interpretation hit all the right notes, even if sometimes it came at the expense of the subtle moments that make *Cabaret* so chilling.

Though the choreography's steady motif building and hard contemporary edge was hard to fault, at times it seemed to be utilised for all the wrong reasons; namely to swaddle ingenue Louise Redknapp in a blanket of spectacle should she falter. Such measures proved to be unnecessary, Louise was a faultlessly textbook (if not overly memorable) Sally Bowles, whose astonishing pipes carried her breezily through the few moments where her acting inexperience showed.

As the other celebrity draw of the tour, Will Young delivered a surprisingly layered portrayal of the famed Emcee, with camp sauciness giving way to sheer mania and heartbreaking humanity as the show went on. Though in places he lacked the eerie *Commedia dell'arte* caricature of Joel Grey or the unapologetic menace of Alan Cumming, his measured approach was the perfect homage to both, and the reverence with which he approached the part shone through.

In short, there were moments when the added scale really did add to the impact, the literal puppeteering of the volt during a vicious rendition of 'Tomorrow Belongs To Me' was utterly nightmarish for example, and the quick change reveal of If You Could See Her certainly had the desired effect on the audience. However, the message of the show came through best in those less obvious, quieter moments wherein the crowd was forced to comprehend the unglamorous reality of the characters, and those moments were sometimes traded off in favour of selling the show as a fun, over-the-top, romp.

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Rhiannon-Skye Boden



Image:York Press

A Safe Place to Hide at stage@leeds

Louise Johns' *A Safe Place to Hide* sees the banality of office life at Silchester Publishing Ltd disturbingly suspended upon the entrance of a gunman to the building. With only an office door and makeshift barricade between the seven team members and the madman outside, the staff's vulnerability exposes the intimacies of each of their personal lives, guiding their understanding of one another's psyche in a way that a 9-5 day could never achieve. Whilst the play provides a nuanced and psychologically-rooted exploration of workplace relations, its main pleasure lies in the comic ordinariness of Johns' writing.

The stereotyping of workplace stock characters in the opening scene rings true of the niche, cynical humour we love in *Peep Show* and *The Office*. The awkward birthday boy Alex (Owen Saunders) keeps a low profile at work, sitting stiffly beneath his banner and showing subtle discomfort towards the attention he receives from bubbly Kathy (Lauren Kelly), the office chitchat. The actors' attention to detail in characterisation is impeccable, particularly in the case of Kelly, whose indiscreet whispering as she asks her boss if everything's alright work-wise displays an innocent blunder of a woman with great intentions but rather poor subtlety.

When the gunman enters the building, the sophistication of Johns' comedy is not compensated. Rather than breaking into frenzy, the staff at Silchester orderly push tables against the door whilst the boss (Emma Powell) reminds them to watch the computers. Sheltering under the tables in their safe place to hide, there are no mad gestures of hopelessness or outpourings of affection. The characters continue to bicker, and when the sleazy office attention-seeker Phil (Nicholas Johnson) threatens to sacrifice himself to the gunman, his foolishness is dismissed as a 'temper tantrum' by Kathy. It's a very British response to a near death situation.

One simple gesture takes the script from comedy to poignancy as Hugh (Cyrill Apelo) silently takes a framed photo of his wife and children from his desk and gazes at it whilst still sheltered on the floor. The action not only creates a powerful visual image for the audience, but also for Hugh's colleagues, and provokes them to speak about their loved ones and life outside of work. As more is revealed on each character's background, Johns moulds their persona to be no longer a comic stereotype, but a maturely-constructed image of individuality and human experience, and the transition from lighthearted comedy to this level of depth is flawlessly smooth.

With well-balanced comedy, detailed characterization and an intriguing plot, *A Safe Place to Hide* is a fantastic new play that explores human relationships with touching poignancy.

Katherine Corcoran



Activities Galore! Getting Out and About in Leeds

Why not recapture that fresher's freedom by checking out some of the best activities that Leeds has to offer?



Image: Day Out With the Kids

The Climbing Lab

Just around the corner from Oxygen Jump, the Lab is an indoor bouldering park, containing multiple climbing walls. With no ropes used on these walls, the idea may sound a little unnerving. Yet if you're a beginner, then you'll have a supervisor to guide you. And even if you fall, the mats underneath are super soft. Climbing is a great way to have fun and get fit at the same time. With every Wednesday being only £5 a session for students, it can also be cheap. So, grab some climbing shoes, some chalk and get ready to climb.

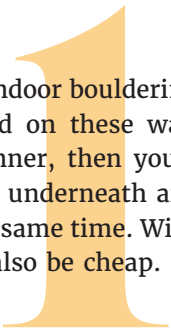


Image: Roxy Lanes

Roxy Lanes

What's more fun than engaging in light-hearted recreational sports and activities? Doing it whilst drunk. At the Roxy Lanes located in the heart of the city, you can opt to play a range of activities such as table tennis and mini-golf, whilst enjoying a delicious alcoholic beverage. On top of this, Roxy Ballroom serves tasty food, giving you all the fuel and energy you need to completely annihilate your ping pong opponent. With £5 cocktails every Monday, there really is no better way to kick start the week than with some alcohol and a healthy bit of competition.

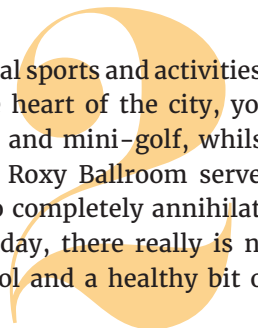


Image: Oxygen Freejumping

Oxygen Freejumping

Needing to burn that Freshers 15? Look no further! Oxygen Freejumping Park offers its guests an hour of jumping around their vast trampoline park, which is not only incredibly fun, but also makes you work up that sweat without needing to hit the gym. Besides the general fitness benefits, Oxygen Freejump is a great day out for all. If the endless sea of trampolines can't keep you occupied, then there are also a range of games and activities you can play, such as dodgeball, assault courses and reaction tests. To top it all off, there is a giant pit filled with foam balls that you can dive into.

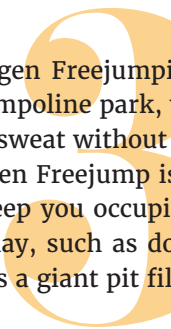
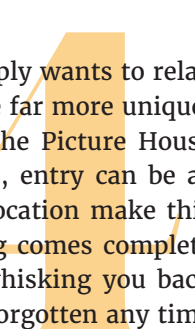


Image: BBC

Hyde Park Picture House

Whilst the cinema is a classic destination for anyone who simply wants to relax and be entertained, make your next cinema trip to somewhere far more unique. Located at the heart of Leeds' most thriving student area, the Picture House shows the best films at the best prices. With a student card, entry can be as low as £5, and the cheap price paired with the convenient location make this a must for any student. The beautiful grade II listed building comes complete with original features such as a ticket booth and balcony, whisking you back 100 years, and making your cinema experience one not to be forgotten any time soon.



So, there you have it, 4 completely different ideas for ways to have fun in Leeds. Far more memorable and sociable than any binge-watching session on Netflix. I guarantee you.

Novel to Screen: Do Film Adaptations Devalue The Book?

With the instant gratification that films provide, the majority of consumers prefer to enjoy stories through the big screen. However, does the slow-burning fascination offered by books trump the sensation that films provide? Lifestyle and Culture writer, Eleanor Smith, explores the best way to experience a story.

Watching a film that is an adaptation of a well-loved book is more of an experience than simply watching the latest blockbuster. The film has a whole new dimension to it. It is both exciting and nerve racking: you are anxious to see how your beloved characters have been interpreted by actors, how the scenes that you have imagined so vividly in your head have been recreated with studios and CGI, and how the story you are so fond of has transferred from your heart to the big screen. As both a bookworm and an appreciator of the film industry, film adaptations leave me with mixed feelings.

In some ways, the very presence of a film version of a book devalues the original. If a person sees the film version of a book first, they are unlikely to then go out and read the book that it was based on, unless they are a real book-lover. Books are not being appreciated in their true form. The author's plot, characters, and construction of the story is recognised in the film but their writing ability and telling of the story through the power of their words is not. Film adaptations allow you to experience the story in a couple of hours whereas books take a lot more time and concentration. People are more likely then to choose the film over a book if the option is there, especially as technology enables such easy access. The ease, convenience, and practicality of films leaves books underappreciated and devalued.

For me, the film version is never better than the book. Films do not have the same immersive quality that books possess. There are also usually cuts and edits to the author's material that anger existing fans. In the film adaptation of *My Sister's Keeper*, the sister that died in the end changed, altering the whole outcome of the film. In some cases, characters are excluded from the film and the story is altered accordingly. In *The Hunger Games*, Madge Undersee (the Mayor of District 12's daughter) is omitted entirely; instead of this character gifting Katniss the Mockingjay pin, an emblem that becomes the symbol for the entire revolution, and for the film franchise itself, Katniss finds it at a market stall. A touching moment is



removed and its effect is small but noticeable to existing fans.

Film adaptations do have some distinct advantages. The creation of a film adaptation can add another dimension that books are not capable of: music. While sound can be mimicked in books, music cannot be. David Mitchell, author of *Cloud Atlas*, regards music as "an extra character that can amplify emotion or subvert it or stitch a narrative together". Music has the power to transform a scene and evoke emotion, evident in the film adaptation of *Cloud Atlas*, which received much critical acclaim for its soundtrack.

Some changes made to film adaptations are necessary. In some cases, book are used as more of a source material and a guide, rather than an actual script to be followed scene by scene. When reading a book, you imagine certain characters and scenes and often these are different to how others have interpreted the same descriptions. Filmmakers take artistic license when creating films, using their own, completely valid interpretations to recreate the book. If a book has an established fan base, the filmmaker is not going to want to upset such a large potential audience by making changes that they do not deem necessary to the transfer of the story from page to screen. Filmmakers really have a difficult job. In the Harry Potter series, the filmmakers had a hard task of condensing such an extensive and complex story, with some books over 700 pages in length, into a series of two hour long feature films.

Transferring a story from book to screen is a complex and arduous process. Filmmakers have a vast amount of people to try and please, including the author and existing fans, as well as a new audience. While books and their film adaptations are not necessarily mutually exclusive, I will always prefer books, while still appreciating the value that a film adaptation has.

Eleanor Smith

**Treat
Your
Shelf**

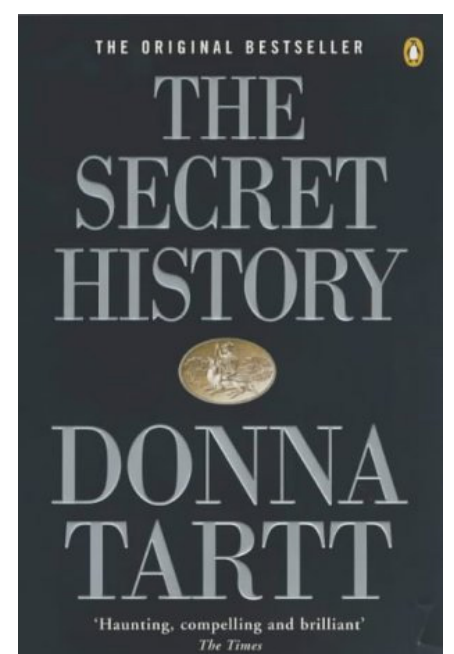
The Secret History - Donna Tartt

It is a truth universally and notoriously acknowledged that, as students, we suffer from crippling debt which threatens to impede upon pursuits of enjoyment.

However, *The Secret History* by Donna Tartt is definitely one of those moments where you reconsider your bank statement's horrific prognosis and decide to treat yourself. Against the background of a New England University, a group of Classics students transgress the boundaries of mythology and morality as they stumble from obsession to crime. Not only is the plot completely engaging but Tartt's style is incredible. Lexically beautiful and both wholly intriguing and slightly chilling, it's definitely worth adding to your shelf.

As Tartt aptly writes "Beauty is terror. Whatever we call beautiful, we quiver before it." The novel skilfully combines that which is gorgeous and petrifying, resulting in a truly fantastic read.

Stephanie Bennett



Under the Ocean with Blue Planet II

The first episode of the much-anticipated Blue Planet II hit our screens last Sunday, and if you thought David Attenborough had exhausted the power to thrill us with the natural world, think again.

It's been 16 years since the first series of *Blue Planet* and new technology has now given us the chance to delve deeper into the ocean than ever before. With stunning imagery from oceans all over the world, the program featured surfing dolphins in South Africa, sea dragons in the Great Barrier Reef and a relatable sea cucumber who never stops eating. In the waters off Japan, a male kobudai pursued a range of female mates, showboating his bulbous head. But within moments we're shown the female fish turning the tables by amazingly changing sex and forcing the old male off his patch. A transgender fish? You must be joking.

This week's nightmarish creature from the deep, turned out to be a giant trevally from the Indian Ocean. These large, gaping mouthed fish catch birds by leaping out of the water and swallowing them whole. The greatest tension filled moment of the episode came watching a young bird narrowly escape one of these monsters.

A more emotional encounter came later on where viewers were drawn to pity a mother polar bear starving with her cubs in the Antarctic while also praying that her walrus prey managed to escape. But this time there's a third player in the chase. It's us who have imbalanced the playing field, as climate change continues to melt the shrinking ice caps where the walrus' take shelter from death. The Arctic portion of the show highlighted the environmental damage humans have dealt the world in a way that the first series arguably neglected. With a gentle yet poignant touch, we are once again reminded of the importance of conserving the world's oceans and the effect that we have already had on them.

Esther Marshall



Image: entertainment.ie

Junior Doctors: Blood, Sweat and Tears

Lily Mead reviews the first episode of the BBC Three series documenting on the lives of junior doctors.



BBC Three's new documentary series, *Junior Doctors: Blood, Sweat and Tears*, was first broadcast on 25th October 2017. The series is set in New Cross Hospital, Wolverhampton, and follows the hospital's newest recruits: the fresh-faced, newly qualified junior doctors who are just beginning their work placements. On top of being responsible for the lives of their patients, the doctors have to worry about the same issues we all do when starting a new job: Where is the main office? Who do I report to? Will people like me?

The doctors struggle to maintain a healthy work-life balance under extreme circumstances and find their own unique ways of coping with the stresses of the job. For example, Emeka Okorochoa, a self-confessed 'ladies man' and previous Hollister model, caused a social media storm when he showed off his dance moves in episode one. He claimed this to be his tactic for staying alert during night shifts, but it looked more like flirting in truth.

This is most certainly not a programme for the squeamish among us. Within the first minute, we are bombarded with images of bloody limbs, infected wounds, and wires protruding from various body parts, and that's just the introduction! Admittedly, I did have to watch some scenes through my fingers, but it's not just gore for gore's sake. The graphic scenes communicate the true difficulty of the job. This is not *Grey's Anatomy*; it is not glamorous. If there ever was a case for increasing NHS funding then this is it. These people are not much older than most of us, yet they face the frightening realities of life and death everyday, in a workplace stretched to its limits by austerity.

This series is definitely one to watch and you can catch it every Wednesday on the BBC Three section of BBC iPlayer.

Lily Mead

Netflix and the Serialised Television Phenomenon

Where TV series of old tended to stick more rigidly to a procedural format, telling their stories within self-contained episodes, we've begun to see more and more shows embrace serialised storytelling. Arts Editor, Mikhail Hanafi, explores the trend.



With shows like *Breaking Bad*, *Mad Men* and *Game of Thrones* weaving complex, elaborate stories across seasons, it's a development in storytelling that has allowed television to grow as a genre, as showrunners and writers are better able to bring a depth to the medium through sustained storytelling. That just didn't really exist before to the degree that it does now, aside from in tiresome soaps, and is a major reason why the 2000s onward is called 'the golden age of television.' As of late, however, there's been a bothering rise of shows which seem to interpret 'serialised television shows' as meaning 'really, really long movies'.

Last month saw Netflix release the second season of its immensely popular original show *Stranger Things* to massive fanfare. An estimated 15.8 million people watched the premiere episode within the first 3 days of its release. By all accounts, the show is a cultural phenomenon. What sets *Stranger Things* (and much of Netflix's other original programming) apart from traditional TV is that instead of putting out one episode every week, they drop an entire season in one go. An estimated 360,000 people binge-watched all 9 episodes within 9 hours of release. Jump on Twitter and you're likely to see a tweet about how *Stranger Things 2* took up someone's entire weekend. Binge watching isn't just a thing that people do to catch up on a show anymore; it's become a legitimate way to consume television, and Netflix is using this to their full advantage.

But this distribution strategy hasn't just changed how people watch these shows, it's also changed the way these shows are written and made. Netflix shows are often described as being '10-hour-long films' instead of 'just' TV shows. *Stranger Things* feels like a 9-hour-long 80s horror film. *Daredevil* feels like a 10-hour-long Marvel film. Netflix's popular dark comedy prison drama *Orange Is The New Black* fully embraced this idea in its fifth season, which stretched out the events of a single day across its 13 episodes.

One of the main criticisms of *Orange Is The New Black*'s latest season was that nothing really happened in each episode. The season as a whole had the structure of a story — e.g. a beginning, conflict, rising action, climax and conclusion — but those elements were more difficult to find in each episode, and that's a major, fundamental storytelling flaw for a television series. Compared to the previous season, which achieved a Metacritic score of 86/100, season five was met with a lukewarm 67/100. It's a great example of where this model can fall short and highlights how Netflix often fails to understand how to properly execute a serialised tv show.

Before I incite fan backlash, don't get me wrong: I loved *Stranger Things*, and I think that it's a well-written show. But when I look back at the whole show, it's difficult to pick out individual stand-out episodes (save for a single, very polarising stand-alone episode in season two). Compare that to a show like *Breaking Bad*, which manages to make compelling episodes which stand on their own merits but still build upon each other to craft a larger story. The best serialised television shows don't set out to make really long films, they aim to make individual episodes which build upon each other to tell a larger story. And let's face it: *Stranger Things* even titles itself like a film. It's not *Stranger Things: Season 1 & 2*, it's *Stranger Things* and *Stranger Things 2*.

People often consider film to be more 'highbrow' than television, so when a television series is described as being 'like a film' it's considered an achievement. But television is not film; its episodic structure makes it inherently different, and there's a worrying trend of shows discarding the storytelling conventions of television to mediocre results. Shows can be binge-watched, but they shouldn't be made to be binged. There's an art to writing stories which work on both an episodic level and a bigger, season-wide level, and I'm not convinced that Netflix is doing that consistently enough.

Video Games As Art

Bradley discusses the artistic value of video games and argues for displaying them in museums.



For a gallery with the word literally in its name, the *Tate* isn't very modern. It's all a bit samey. Behold one thing unexpectedly on top of another thing. Over here is a domestic appliance nailed to a wall, and over there is something phallic.

For the last few years walking around exhibits in the *Tate Modern* hasn't been much different from a tour through all the one star motels in Swindon: each one is indistinguishable and it's probably best not to touch anything.

What is missing is something that challenges our preconceptions of art. What is missing are videogames.

Eschewed as mere entertainment, their stunning visuals and social commentary have for too long, gone unrecognised. Take *Wolfenstein II: The New Colossus* which is to be released by Bethesda this year. The original *Wolfenstein* near invented the first-person shooter. Admittedly, there is a reason the 1992 8-bit game didn't make it into any galleries. It had about as many pixels as the Union has accessible water fountains. But 25 years later and the franchise is set to release a visually stunning and controversial sequel in which the Nazi's won the war, conquered America and emboldened the KKK.

It explores race relations, the justifiability of political violence and the resurgence of fascism.

When asked if in the current American climate he was poking the hornets' nest, the PR Director for Bethesda said "maybe a little bit, but the hornets' nest is full of Nazis so fuck those guys." *Wolfenstein II* is impactful, relevant and it significantly departs from the traditional styles and values of 20th century art. Is this not, after all, exactly what modern art is?

Bradley Young

Taylor Swift: The Girl We All Love to Hate

Emily discusses our obsession with the life of celebrities and criticises the misguided entitlement we feel to judge them.



It's 2017, otherwise known as the era of ultimate street cred for saying that you "hate" Taylor Swift. Upon the imminent release of her sixth studio album, *Reputation*, and the inevitable witch hunt that will swiftly (no pun intended) follow its release, it's time to question what justifies such vehement criticism.

She bounced onto the scene in 2006 with sparkly dresses and ringlet curls and pretty much instantaneously became the butt of every joke. Yes, she was sugary sweet, and that was her brand. Love it or leave it; no need to jump on the bandwagon and hate it.

It began with a mockery of her tendency to be unlucky in love, and then write songs about it. Never mind that the slut-shaming wouldn't have occurred if it was a male popstar, why should we dwell on a young woman having a few boys in her past? It's nothing new, and it's nothing to be ashamed of. If I could write about break ups and earn a few million in the process, I wouldn't think twice about it. It's business.

After a few high-profile relationships, people felt entitled to slate her for, well, practically anything. For the idea that she turned feminism into a commodity with her "girl squad" (forgive me for thinking that it's good to value other women). For remaining silent on social media during times of political change. I, with only a few people listening, fear shouting about my opinions in case I make a mistake. I can't imagine how that would feel magnified, knowing that there's an army of internet trolls waiting to pick apart my every word.

It's a case of selective memory, because when she stood in a court room as a sexual assault victim and spoke out against victim shaming, the event disappeared from public discourse almost as soon as it happened.

As for her heavily documented "feuds", one of which was originally started by Kanye West when she was just nineteen, if you're telling me that you've never acted like a bit of a snake, then I think you need to

re-evaluate. What is it about celebrities making mistakes, which we have probably also made, that we interpret as just cause to verbally abuse them? We don't know them beyond glimpses on a screen; certainly not enough to justify hating them.

She is privileged, and she is powerful. She is also just a young woman. She isn't a victim, but she is also far from the monster that many people portray her to be. Taylor Swift is a business savvy individual who grew up in the spotlight, dated a few guys, acted a bit pettily on the odd occasion, and made a lot of money. Are we over hating her yet?

Emily Merrill

The Power of Now



Megan talks about the importance of ‘now’ and how making the most of the present can unlock potential and opportunities.

“I’ll do it later”, “I’m busy doing something else”, or “I’m too tired”: a small selection of excuses we are all guilty of when it comes to putting off doing something, or generally just not living in the moment.

You’d be surprised by the amount of time we waste on things like pining over a past memory, planning the future, or developing the *idea* that we will create a specific memory at a certain point.

Why schedule something, though, when you could be doing it now? Now – three little letters, too often overlooked, are the key to life.

Yes, it is nice to plan things for the future. Having something to look forward to is a good feeling. But if all we have is things in the future, we will spend the present twiddling our thumbs, letting time slip away. In the end, we don’t know what the future will bring anyway; even more reason to focus on the present.

Sometimes we might have to do work or chores that we really don’t want to do. In those instances, we’ll often put our responsibilities off, choosing to go out with friends.

At first, this may seem like a better way to spend your present, but the reality is that whatever task you are putting off will not

disappear. It will get to the point when you are rushing to complete your assignment hours before the deadline, or having to go into the kitchen to wash up an enormous pile of dishes.

When it comes to things we don’t like, do them now. Not only does it mean we get them out of the way, but we can then relax and enjoy ourselves even more without work looming over us. Or, achieve something new.

Alec Dudson, Editor-in-Chief of *Intern* magazine, gave an inciteful presentation in the School of Media and Communication on freelancing, and how getting creative now can unlock a world of possibilities. Why label ourselves as students when we can be an artist, writer, engineer, linguist, or historian? If you have a dream, it is not going to come true if you do nothing now. If you have a project you want to do, a company you want to work for, places you want to visit, there is no better time to do it than the moment right here.

If you start acting in the present, then every future second has the chance to be even better because of what you are currently doing. All this with just three little letters. Now.

Megan Harrison



Agony Aunt



“I’ve recently decided to become a vegetarian but it’s easier said than done! Do you have any tips to help with the transition?”

I never agreed with the meat industry, but it wasn’t until I had to cook for myself that I began to fully consider vegetarianism for a number of reasons, including:

Money – Seriously your loan does not cater for steaks;

Environment – Meat production uses up a huge amount of land, energy and water;

Health – You will (statistically) live longer;

Time – Generally, veggie dishes are quicker to prepare than meat dishes, which is ideal when your deadlines start hitting;

Animal rights – You will no longer be supporting a cruel industry.

Despite these appeals, the transition can still seem daunting, so here are my top tips for phasing meat out of your diet:

Protein: Make sure you are getting enough! While many people go straight to Quorn for their protein, eggs are also a great solution. For anyone brave enough to go vegan, beans, pulses and nuts can be an ideal substitute, and my sister absolutely swears by tofu (although it’s a little tricky to cook so leave time to experiment). Make sure to alternate a few different sources of protein, rather than just relying solely on meat substitutes. Having said that...

Quorn: Quorn is a lifesaver, and even better, a large amount of Quorn products are also vegan. My rookie error as a fresher was simply to replace absolutely everything with halloumi. Do NOT do this – cheese is amazing, but also incredibly fatty (and still an animal product). Quorn

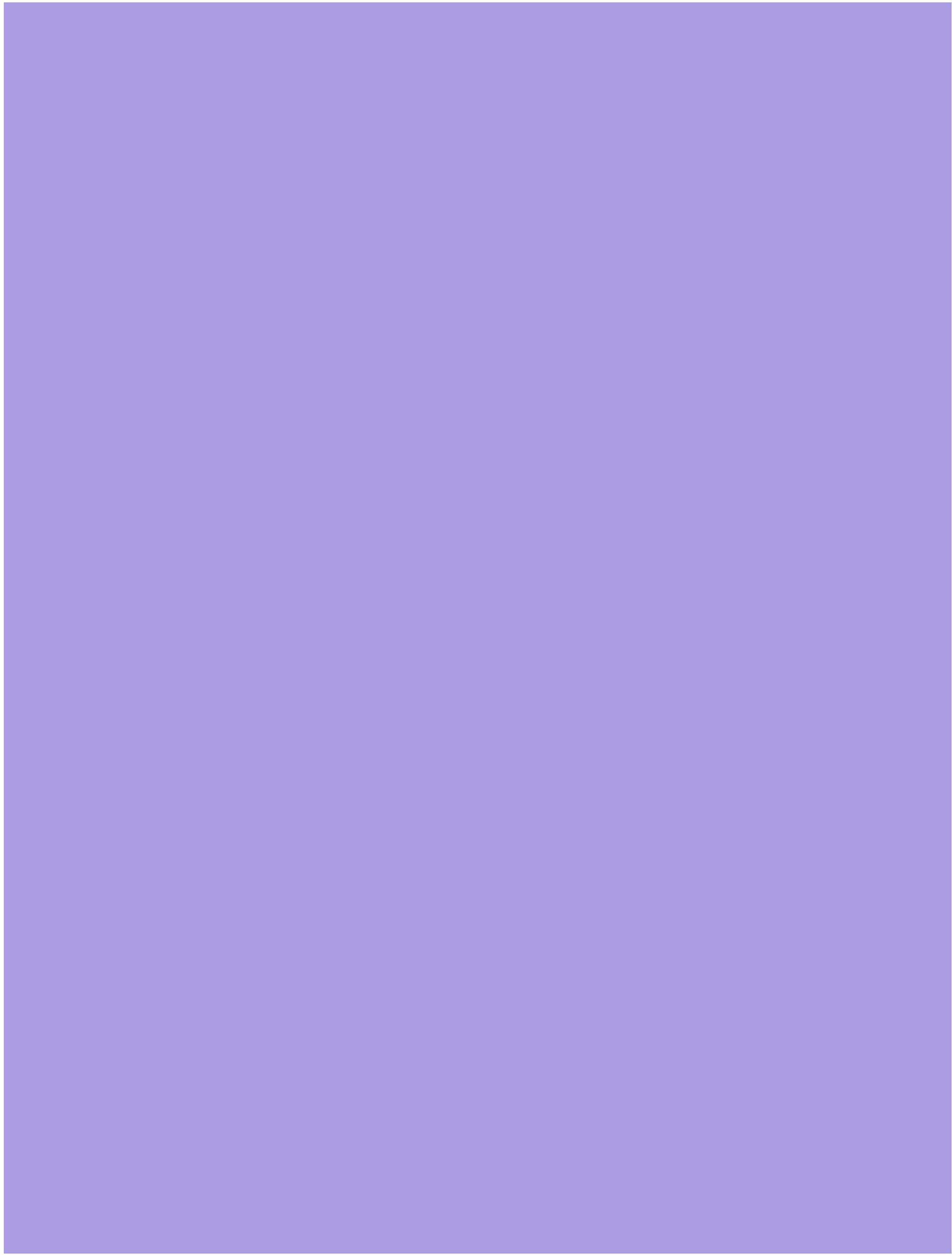
is a great substitute as it allows you to cook most meals the same as you normally would, without having the ‘is my chicken properly cooked’ worry. I know many vegetarians who lapse after a night out because of chicken nuggets, but other than the fact that Crispy’s don’t sell them, Quorn nuggets are just as good!

Flexitarianism: For anyone who struggles to totally eradicate meat from their diet, I would 100% recommend flexitarianism or pescitarianism. Flexitarianism is a new trend referring to those who only occasionally eat meat, this more flexible approach can be ideal if you have just become vegetarian at University, as when you go home there is bound to be at least one person who forgets.

Expect the unexpected: Finally I would just warn you that there are many unexpected things which aren’t vegetarian friendly. These include (but aren’t limited to) some wines, make-ups, sweets and even some cheeses. So, if you are going to commit to the lifestyle, make sure to check your labels.

While some people find that they can cut meat out their diet in one fell swoop, for me, it was a slow transition – I stopped cooking meat for myself long before I stopped buying it in restaurants. So, though initially it may seem challenging, the key is to be open to trying new things; whether that’s vegetarianism itself, or even just that first vegetarian recipe.

Rosie Plummer





Awaiting More Than Awareness

Sophie Wheeler

Movember is here and that means just one thing: men forsaking their razors for the cause of raising awareness of men's health, with more and more of a focus on mental health. With suicide being the leading cause of death for young men (aged 20-49) in England and Wales, it's easy to see why such campaigns are putting more emphasis on this critical issue.

Whilst I fully applaud such an effort to raise awareness of mental health issues, particularly amongst men who are often the least likely statistically to seek help, and the most likely to take their lives as the result of a mental health issue, I cannot help but feel these efforts, whilst commendable, distract from the real problem at hand.

The figures make for alarming reading. Whilst incidents of mental health problems have risen dramatically over the years, this trend is particularly pronounced amongst young and BAME people. You probably know someone – perhaps a parent, a sibling, or a friend – who has a mental health problem, whether you're aware of it or not. It is estimated that 1

in 4 of us will suffer with a diagnosable mental health problem at some point in our lifetime.

In spite of this, mental health funding has fallen. Mental health trusts faced an 8.25% cut in real terms between 2010 and 2015. In more tangible terms, this means longer waiting times for counselling, more people being refused treatment and fewer early

"I cannot help but feel these efforts, whilst commendable, distract from the real problem at hand"

interventions – resulting in patient's conditions to deteriorate until they reach a crisis point. Although the new Conservative government has pledged 'extra' funding to mental health services, this funding is not nearly enough to deal with current crisis levels. Also, the way that funding is translated into extra support appears to be patchy across the country, leading to a postcode lottery when it comes to accessing these vital services.

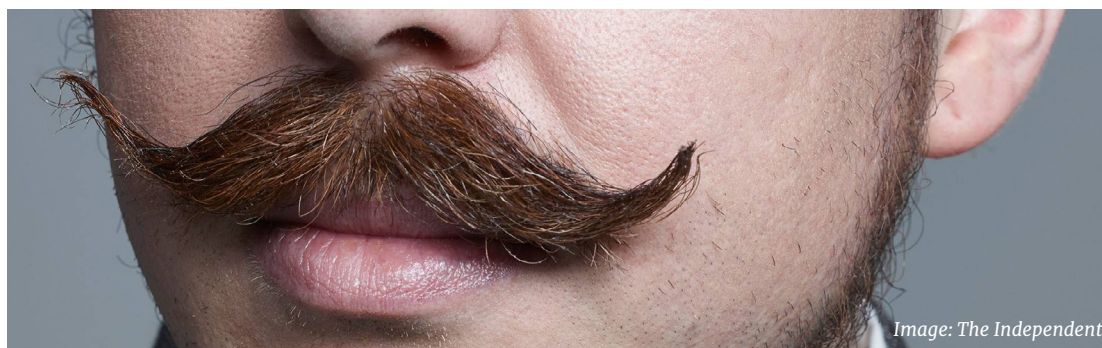


Image: The Independent

Not only is a lack of early intervention and preventative care in mental health obviously an issue for the individuals themselves dealing with such distress, it is also an issue for the NHS. Early intervention has been proven to be more effective and cost efficient than waiting until an individual has reached crisis point in order to provide treatment. By not investing in mental health services and early intervention, the government will be costing the taxpayer more in the long run.

Awareness is not the key issue. Theresa May in her maiden speech acknowledged that a lack of resources available for mental health problems was a major issue of our time. Yet she seems to be unwilling to put her money where her mouth is, with shiny pledges of extra funding for mental health services going only some way to plug the gaping hole in mental health funding.

When it comes to mental health, the personal is political, and it's high time we paid more than lip-service to what is arguably one of the most pressing issues of the 21st Century.

The Poppy: Patriotism or Personal Choice?

Alex Passingham

An increasingly large number of people have decided that the traditional red poppy of remembrance either does not reflect the kind of commemoration they wish to participate in or, in some cases, that the poppy actively symbolises things they dislike about Britain's past. Here I hope to summarise people's objections, give their reasoning and explain, with respect, why I will not be joining them.

The most serious allegation levelled against the poppy is that it somehow glorifies some of the less savoury episodes of Britain's past. There is a logic to this; the British armed forces have in the past been responsible for the subjugation of various peoples all over the world. A high-profile example of such an objection came a few years ago when West Bromwich Albion player James Mclean opted not to wear a poppy embroidered shirt due to his staunch Irish republican beliefs.

However, much as I respect Mclean's freedom to commemorate as he wishes, I feel that the red poppy does not carry such connotations. For one thing it originates, as we all know, from the First World War. This was not only labelled 'the war to end all wars', a sentiment we can surely all support, but was a war in which Britain's involvement cannot be seen as that of the aggressor. Furthermore, the tragic waste of life was in part fought by conscripts rather than professional soldiers, a fact which makes the poppy a potent symbol even for those who oppose war in principle. In addition, in the years since the First World War, Britain has largely fought wars against

those who oppose our liberal democratic way of life, a way of life which, from time to time, unfortunately requires defending.

Secondly, some anti-poppy sentiment comes from the sense that it is a political symbol. This is entirely understandable given the way some seek to use it – we've all seen the worst excesses of tabloid hyperbole, which would have poppy wearing mandated by law from around mid-September. Such outrage clearly misses the point of voluntary remembrance and most people can see through it. It almost goes without saying that the poppy only means something if you wear it voluntarily. However, using this as grounds for not wearing the poppy I feel risks ceding the act of remembrance to divisive extremists. I believe we as a nation are better than that, and thus that the more people wear it, the less fringe groups will be able to claim a unifying symbol of remembrance for their own ends.

Ultimately, despite my personal views, such remembrance is a deeply personal matter. Few families were left untouched by the two world wars in the twentieth Century, meaning many feel a strong connection to the cause of the November 11th commemorations. The fact we can disagree about the nature of our remembrance is in itself a kind of tribute to the fallen; but perhaps at times it would be preferable if we stopped petty arguments over the minutiae of the poppy symbol and used Remembrance Day as an opportunity to focus on what unites us as one nation – values which continue to inspire ordinary people to do extraordinary things to defend them.



Hillsborough Families Report: Why Has It Taken 28 Years?

Eric Kostadinov

The fact that it has taken 28 years for a Hillsborough families report is nothing short of a national disgrace. Many Hillsborough family members and also survivors of the disaster have had to deal with awful mental health problems as a result of the tragedy in 1989. An example of this is Becky Shah whose mother died in the disaster. She has since spoken out about her Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and feelings of guilt as she survived the disaster. Adequate support hasn't been given to people like Becky for numerous reasons. But clearly the most important reason as to why there hasn't been a Hillsborough families report is that, for 25 years, consecutive governments and the national press did not believe that the ninety-six Liverpool fans were unlawfully killed. Consequently, they did not believe that the families were right to fight for justice.

The authorities wanted to suppress the families, not help them. David Duckingfield and other members of the police force knew exactly what went on at Hillsborough but instead chose to blame innocent fans. But, it went beyond blame. The police, the Thatcher government, and especially The Sun newspaper had an interest in not only blaming Liverpool supporters, but vilifying and dehumanising them. The authorities

felt the same way towards the Hillsborough families due to an institutional belief of superiority and power. Nobody wanted to help the Hillsborough families as they were simply viewed as an annoyance by those in power. Even under the Labour government, a party which was created to fight for the working classes, their leader, Tony Blair, did not publish a Hillsborough inquiry in order to appease his friend Rupert Murdoch at The Sun – a newspaper that had just given their support to Labour. No one with any power wanted to give any attention to the Hillsborough families as they simply wanted any news of the disaster to disappear and be swept under the carpet to keep the police's credibility intact.

Clearly, attitudes towards mental health are different in 2017 than they were in 1989, but this is absolutely no excuse for not offering support to those affected immediately after the tragedy. It is outrageous that only since the truth has come out there is now a Hillsborough families report. This suggests that those in power thought that before 2017 there was no need to publish an official report for the simple reason the families were wrong. This argument completely forgets the fact that Hillsborough families have been dealing with the losses of loved ones for the

past 27 years, and not only that, their sons, brothers and daughters were being labelled as hooligans by the police and The Sun newspaper. Ultimately, it's as if the authorities have said, 'When we thought you were wrong, you did not deserve our help'. This report is 28 years too late, and we can only hope that a situation like this is never repeated again.



Has Technology Killed Human Decency?

Zahra Iqbal

On Wednesday 31st October 2017, New York was subject to a terrorist attack in which 8 people were killed and 11 injured. The attacker ran over pedestrians before crashing into a school bus filled with children. Almost directly after the attack, CNN News released footage of the school bus that the attacker had crashed into. It showed the school bus driver screaming outside of the bus and asking for the person recording to help. Watching the footage, it was incredibly distressing to see children on the bus unable to escape, and to see many people in a state of shock and horror. Despite the bus being damaged, the children appeared to be unscathed.



Image: NBC News

However, I felt an overbearing sense of anger that the video was being taken and the man was not attempting to actively help the screaming people around him or the injured people in front of him.

The footage raised the question as to whether there is a duty to record and document these events, or if aiding people should be paramount. This is debated frequently as, on one hand, documentation of these horrific events is essential for not only the news, but for investigation purposes. However, like many others, I believe that helping those involved should have been more important than documenting the aftermath of the attack. Personally, the humanitarian duty should surely be overwhelming. Why is there an expectation and necessity to record everything that happens, without considering our duties as humans or how best to help? It's almost as if in the modern world, morals are disposable, and they can be sacrificed for a short phone recorded clip.

This also exposes the question as to why being a good Samaritan seems to be frowned upon. There is a fame hungry culture that still takes hold in moments of great distress, where people seem to believe that being the first to capture a moment will aid their rise to fame, or just get them a bit of extra cash. It should be noted that I'm not entirely arguing the person recording was wrong. However, in New York City, surely there's surveillance cameras recording every inch of the incident from every possible angle, so why was reaching for his phone the first thing that seemed to spring to mind? At the end of the footage you can hear the man calling other people, including police officers, to help the children.

Additionally, despite the atrocities, the city's main Halloween parade proceeded and festivities continued throughout the night. There is the argument that these attacks should not and will not interfere or disrupt our daily life, showing the terrorists that their plans haven't worked, and that we are stronger. On the flipside, some argue that there should have been a period of adjustment or even mourning, not only as a tribute to those who were killed but also to demonstrate the profound impact of the attack and to allow it to 'sink in'. For me, one main question arises: if there isn't a global or national period of adjustment, does this give the news channels, like CNN, an open invitation to release details almost instantaneously and not respect the profound nature of what occurred?

London's Knife Problem: The Rise of Violence on the Capital's Streets

Cian Fox

Violent knife crime has risen shockingly in the past year, with offences in London up more than 34% since 2016. According to new data obtained by the BBC, knife crime is increasing nationally yet police are prosecuting fewer cases. These figures show the extent of the problem, with this 'epidemic' worsened by cuts to community police numbers and budgets.

The effects of soaring knife crime are evident for Londoners, with knives becoming part and parcel of everyday life in our capital city. From a young age, kids are growing up around knives, with studies suggesting 50% of London's young know someone who carries a knife. The age of those involved is shocking, with over 1,200 young people stabbed in London last year and the average age of moped criminals – who often carry knives – only 15 years old.

Knife crime is changing people's lives for the worse, and these figures suggest things are not getting better. The BBC spoke to one man who claimed he carries a knife for protection, as it is a "part of life now, you have to keep a knife with you" in case of attack. Obviously, this increases the number of blades on London's streets and undoubtedly increases the possibility of violence, but the man responded by suggesting he would rather have one than not, as "everyone else is carrying knives".

The question of how to tackle the epidemic of knife crime is one that the police and government have been debating for many years. The Metropolitan Police have changed their controversial stop-and-search policy after tension about the tactics employed, and report to have received a 60% decline in complaints as a result. The Metropolitan Police Commissioner Cressida Dick has also stated that tackling violent crime is her "priority" and the stop-and-search method provides an "invaluable tool" in ridding London's streets of violent weapons – both guns and knives.

However, this short-term approach is clearly failing, as small interventions without proper funding from central government will never be able to effectively tackle the issue. Cuts to public services across the UK have crippled local communities, in policing, schools and education, youth centres and health – all of which play an important role in decreasing violent crime in the community. It is no surprise that many young people have become involved in or been affected by knife crime when you observe the cuts to local services in their communities. Indeed, Sadiq Khan has recently outlined a new proposal pressuring Ofsted to judge schools on how they root out knife crime, aiming to tackle the issue in schools.

The issue of knife crime is clearly a large one, and there will be no quick fix to stop it. However,

as violent crime soars – with an incident involving a blade occurring every 14 minutes – something has to be done to tackle the widespread nature of violent knife crime, especially in London where much of the problem is focused.



Image: Channel 4

Queer Too: Kevin Spacey Normalising Sexual Assault Within Queer Culture

Caleb Forward

Following the recent sexual assault allegations against Kevin Spacey and his subsequent coming out, I had initially thought that this might shed light on the issue of sexual assault within queer spaces. But instead I saw something else; people passionately having to protect queer identities from being aligned with predatory behaviour and in doing so silencing victims of assault within the queer community.

It is true to say that queer rights are better than they have been historically, but the fight is not over and the scars of our history still affect every facet of our lives. A decade ago when I entered school, it was only 5 years after Section 28 had been repealed and schools were allowed to talk openly about homosexuality. It is this kind of environment that meant that most people's first interactions with the LGBTQ+ community were behind closed doors and the question has to be asked, what kind of protections are people afforded in the shadows?

Of course, if you're behind closed doors with completely innocent people there isn't a problem, and I at no point want to suggest that there is anything fundamentally predatory about queer individuals, because there isn't. But the same factors that create misogynistic straight men create misogynistic queer men; if men are taught to believe they are both entitled to sexual gratification and that an inability to get it is weak then what kind of behaviour are they going to exhibit?

The best and most obvious example I can give about how misogyny affects the queer community would be the popular dating app for men, Grindr. Essentially, Grindr allows men to see how far other men are from them who might be looking for anything from a romantic interaction to immediate sex. Go on this app for a month and you will receive hundreds of unsolicited inappropriate photos, offers of sex and offers of money for sexual acts. I first downloaded this app when I was 17, and consequently met the first person I slept with. I know men who started as young as 13. If there were more resources available to allow young people to interact with the queer community, if people could discuss sexuality honestly and openly in schools, and if we made inroads to fight casual and internalised homophobia across generations, then young people would neither seek out or be placed in an environment where sex is commodified in this manner.

When I was 19 I started going to gay clubs, and whilst it isn't true to say that these clubs have any more of a 'hook-up culture' than straight clubs it also wouldn't be fair to say that sexual assault didn't occur within these environments. The amount of times me or my friends have been harassed or touched by men and had this behaviour excused because they're "drunk" or any number of reasons (how we dress, that we started a conversation, they bought us a drink, we were dancing, etc.) is ridiculous.

As opposed to this kind of behaviour being unknown to the majority of the queer community, it is instead accepted as normal or something we

can't talk about because of the fear that doing so would have a negative impact on our civil rights. It is especially the case that straight people I know have been uncomfortable mentioning things or making a fuss for fear of being labelled homophobic. We need to fight misogyny wherever it presents itself and we can't continue being silent about how rape culture affects queer people.



Image: IMDB



Up to 75,000 Banking Jobs in Jeopardy Thanks to 'Hard Brexit'

Natasha Lyons



Image: FlixBus

As Post-Brexit trade negotiations prepare to launch, pressure is amounting to strike the right deal to avoid further loss of banking jobs in London. The Bank of England are claiming that up to 75,000 jobs could be lost in the financial sector.

A possible outcome of the trade deal could be 'location specific regulations', insisting where trading

should be based. This would impact offices in London, which could be made to relocate to other European cities such as Paris and Frankfurt.

Goldman Sachs Chief Executive Lloyd Blankfein has tweeted suggesting that the bank's Frankfurt office will become a prominent centre for European affairs post-Brexit rather than their current London HQ. This follows earlier news that Goldman Sachs are already planning their new leasing space in the German financial capital which would lead to an increase of up to 1,000 staff from the 200 that currently work in the city.

Blankfein also commented on the volatility of the UK-EU trade deal by tweeting: "In London, GS still investing in our big new Euro headquarters here. Expecting/hoping to fill it up, but so much outside our control. #Brexit". Although the company are still developing their new ten-storey London building, due to be finished in March 2019, its future is still undecided. Goldman Sachs can choose to sublet space once it is completed rather than occupying the whole building which it may well choose to do if the post-Brexit deals are poorly executed.

Like many banks, Blankfein is concerned about the trade deal that the UK will attempt to negotiate with

the EU, and acknowledges that its outcome is looking particularly uncertain. The clock is ticking for a deal to be made, and Goldman Sachs has suggested that if a trade deal is not negotiated by Christmas, a 'hard Brexit' will be assumed and the move of staff and offices to Frankfurt and other European cities will follow imminently. Similarly, Sam Woods, a deputy governor at the Bank of England, has also stated that the later an agreement after Christmas, the less likely an agreement will be made to benefit City firms.

In a post-Brexit world, Frankfurt is tipped to be the most popular choice for banks and financial services moving staff from London. Reuters are among the other banks that have decided to also lease new offices in the city, which would also accommodate up to 1,000 staff. However, this is not the case for all major banks. J P Morgan originally announced before the referendum that it would have to move 4,000 jobs but it has now claimed it will only move 1,000. Meanwhile, the City of London Corporation are keeping a tally of official announcements from City firms about contingency plans. According to the Corporation, more than 9,750 potential jobs have been announced to be under threat and many of them will move to Frankfurt.

Will 'Drones' Have Taken Your Job By 2020?

Chloe Sainsbury and Eleanor King

What does the future hold? A question we all ponder from time to time no doubt. Stereotypical visions of the future include all sorts of exciting prospects such as hover cars, robotic butlers or time travel. Whilst some of these involve a lot of imagination, current technological advancements could see us moving towards a different way of life quicker than most would anticipate.

One of the key technological advancements in recent times has been the drone. Increasingly popular with photographers to get that perfect angle of scenery, the drone is becoming more and more prominent – not just with the new generation of budding photographers but with businesses too. What if drones could take over not only your photographing duties but other jobs too? Well in reality they already are, at a much more cost effective rate also.

According to Argon Consulting, it is estimated that just two drones could do the equivalent amount

of work as 100 humans. The industries most under threat from drone replacement are infrastructure and agriculture, but it is across several industries that services and labour up to the value of \$127 billion is estimated to be replaced by drone powered solutions in the near future, according to PwC.

Within the agricultural sector, drones should be able to help with analysis of soil and drainage or crop health assessments, whilst tasks such as crop spraying can also be done more precisely with drone assistance. Although these advancements can only be good news for producers in a sector such as agriculture, the question is what does this mean for the labour markets these drones will be replacing?

This is not the first time technological advancements have been viewed as the downfall of the labour market as we know it. In the recent past, we have seen the economy adapt to significant task automation in the manufacturing sector. Recent history suggests that the increase in productivity from labour being replaced by technology, increases demand for new products and services. This in turn creates new jobs for displaced workers in order to satisfy increased demand. So, whilst a drone might replace your job by 2020, if history has anything to say about it another one will soon be available.



Image: Financial Tribune

"According to Argon Consulting, it is estimated that just two drones could do the equivalent amount of work as 100 humans."

Is Your Meal Deal Shattering Your Daily Sugar Allowance?

Ian Bond

Customers are facing serious health risks by consuming high sugar combination meal deals on a daily or regular basis, according to the charity *Action on Sugar*.

Their research suggests that high-street lunch meals, a firm favourite of students, can contain up to 30 teaspoons of sugar. They have gone on to criticise retailers for including super-sized fizzy drinks and snacks such as chocolates and sweets in them.

Action on Sugar highlighted WH Smith and Tesco as the worst offenders, with Morrisons coming close. Their “mix and match” meal deals contains up to 30 teaspoons of sugar, four times the recommended daily adult intake.

Graham MacGregor, professor of cardiovascular medicine at Queen Mary University of London and chairman of Action on Sugar said “Supermarkets pretend to be on the side of their customer’s health to encourage loyalty, but this survey clearly shows that they are not. Eating too much sugar is linked to obesity, type 2 diabetes and tooth decay.”

WH Smith responded claiming the meal deal was “incredibly popular and contains a number of healthy eating options, including sandwiches and salads.” Morrisons also stated that they “offer thousands of meal deal combinations for just £3, many of which include low sugar and sugar-free drink options.”

Tesco have already taken steps to make their products healthier, a spokesman claimed. “We are

continuously making our products healthier so it’s easier for our customers to make healthy choices. That’s why we have already removed 9.4 billion calories from the annual consumption of our own label drinks and they all now contain less than 5g of sugar per 100ml.”

Kawther Hashem, registered nutritionist and researcher at *Action on Sugar*, said “It is staggering that by just making simple swaps at lunchtime, you can reduce your sugar intake by a massive 29 teaspoons of sugar. Often it is the drinks included in the meal deals which are extremely high in sugar.”

Action on Sugar have called for a ban on all items

that have been given a red traffic light label, meaning high in sugar, and to include a wider choice of healthier options. However, opponents to a ban cite that adults should be given the freedom to make their own decisions. They state that focusing more on healthier options and giving them prominence over others can help achieve a healthier society without having to ban anything.

The important thing for students to consider when choosing a meal deal is to check the label, see what the sugar content is, and remember the all-important motto: everything in moderation.



Image: Up & Adrift

Online Cryptocurrencies: The Pros and Cons

Grace Ennis

For the vast majority of us, the term ‘bitcoin’ may conjure up associations with junk mail and phishing scams. As an undeniably elusive area, politicians have recently discussed cryptocurrencies sceptically, with US Attorney General Jeff Sessions suggesting crime on the Dark Web is facilitated by the anonymity of bitcoin. This comes only weeks after ‘initial coin offerings’, as opposed to IPOs, and cryptocurrency exchanges were banned in China. Yet despite this consistent hampering, leading derivatives exchange CME Group has announced it will launch bitcoin futures by the end of the year. This leaves us to question what the future may hold for bitcoin, and whether it can be sustainable in practice.

Firstly, it is important to understand the differences between bitcoin and the currency we use in our day to day lives. According to American financier Jeffrey Epstein, bitcoin does not technically qualify as a currency. In order to be legally recognised, bitcoin would have to receive sovereign guarantee from the state, but because it is electronically powered, this is unlikely to happen. Bitcoins are not produced in print, and there is therefore no central financial authority to regulate it. In essence, bitcoin is a free for all;

individuals can produce their own currency through a process called ‘bitcoin mining’. Perhaps strangely, an upper limit of 21 million bitcoins has been set, but this is integrated into a computer code rather than

being based on a maximum supply.

Naturally, investors are cautious. In *The Economic Times*, Vivek Pethe recounted his experience of delving into the world of cryptocurrencies from India, outlining that he received ‘operational error’ messages when trying to withdraw 5000 rupees from his online holdings. This supports claims that these currencies are volatile and insecure, and their risk is difficult to analyse because there is insufficient reliable information. What’s more, the lack of centralised regulation has allowed cybercriminals to mask their addresses and activity. With hacking a growing concern for companies of all sizes, the potential loss of financial data is enough to deter investment.

All is not negative, however, as there are advantages to be found in bitcoin’s innovative make-up. Due to its relative independence, bitcoin is not susceptible to fluctuations in value based on financial markets, which does provide some stability for investors. In addition to this, Epstein made the case that many of the problems associated with cryptocurrencies could be eliminated if it were formally implemented. A degree of government involvement would work to prevent counterfeit and bring a new sense of legality to bitcoin. What is certain is that in an increasingly digitalised world, cryptocurrencies in some form will play a part in the economic landscape of the future.



Image: TechCrunch



Image: Vision.org

Who Wants to Live Forever?

James Deed

Have you ever wondered how long you will live to? Or what the world's population will be like in the future decades? Can humans live forever?

Over the past 50 years, the massive worldwide development in technology has vastly improved the average length of life across the world's population. During the 20th century, average life expectancy of the United Kingdom was 48 years, nowadays it is 81 years. This extension of the human lifespan of 30 years has taken place over the course of four generations!

There is huge debate between the scientific community with regards to the maximum lifespan that humans can live to, with a recent journal article having been published in *Nature* identifying that the maximum scientific lifespan is no more than 115 years. "On average, people live longer, but the very oldest among us have not gotten older over the last thirty years." This has caused quite a commotion between academics, with five papers having been published later that year to prove quite the opposite – that humans have the potential to live much longer. The only problem with such research is that there is minimal data for people living beyond the realm of 110, and the quality of such data can be argued to be somewhat unreliable.

"On average, people live longer, but the very oldest among us have not gotten older over the last thirty years."

In April of this year, Emma Morano, the oldest living human in the world at the time, sadly passed away at the ripe old age of 117. She was known as a "supercentenarian" – someone who surpasses the 110-year mark. However she was not the oldest human ever, a French woman known as Jeanne Calment died

in 1997 at the supposedly record-setting age of 122; the reliability of this information can be disputed, as many supercentenarian's hold little documentation. Either way, if there actually is proof behind the supposed ages of the two people in question, then the maximum lifespan will surely be higher than 115 years.

But how far can we go into the realm of immortality? Researchers have found that it takes 7-10 years for every cell to replace itself, essentially making you a new copy of yourself. Could we continue this replication as we get older, creating an endless cycle of rejuvenation? Probably not, as we get older our body cells gather mutations, causing them to stop functioning properly and accumulate into forming cancerous tissues.

We are constantly reminded of the detrimental effect that drugs, our diet and living habits can have upon our health – would technology be able to allow us to still live longer whilst still enjoying going out and consuming a month's worth of alcohol every weekend? This can be identified by something known as the "Glasgow effect" (yes, that is an actual phrase commonly used). Here it can be observed that such a recreational lifestyle, filled with careless drinking and bad diets, has reduced the average lifespan of some areas in the outskirts of Glasgow to just 54! Have you ever wondered why people in Japan live much longer? It's predominantly because of their lifestyle choices, exercising regularly, eating very traditional food (keeping clear from western food-chains) and regular doctor check-ups.

There is also a common theory that oxygen is the main killer of humans, slowly poisoning you for 80+ years until your body essentially cannot take any more. This acts as a basis as to why regular consumption of antioxidants can benefit your health. You could almost link this to the survival of some people past 100 who drink a glass (or two) of red wine each day

– so maybe that is the key to survival, drinking (in moderation of course)!

But what would the quality of life be like in the future? Some academics predict that by 2300 the maximum human lifespan could be as high as 150 years! But would spending the last few decades in a body that has deteriorated and would struggle to properly function be worth it? There are also the ethical problems associated by a wealth divide, with developed countries having a much more advanced healthcare service, whilst other countries have high mortality rates as a result of lacking infrastructure

"Such a recreational lifestyle, filled with careless drinking and bad diets, has reduced the average lifespan of some areas in the outskirts of Glasgow to just 54"

and even basic sanitation. Does that mean that the rich will be allowed to live for longer, whilst people living in poverty will be left to their own devices? This type of scenario could be observed by the film "In Time", a dystopian science fiction which highlights how wealth is measured by time and the ability to not age.

Although the concept of living for much longer does seem quite cool, it would have some pretty adverse implications to the planet, one being as to where would we even fit these people? If the entire world's population lived in the same conditions as Beijing, then we could fit them in an area the size of France. But the quality of life would almost certainly be a lot lower. Either way, there is a long list of things that we probably should focus on first before we push for longer life, such as making sure that we have a planet hospitable to live in!



Image: Joe Amon/Getty Images

Fentanyl: US Drug Epidemic Makes Landfall in the UK

Paul Sieradzki

In the past nine months over 60 drug-related overdose deaths, largely occurring in the areas of Humber and Yorkshire, were linked to the super-strength opioid fentanyl. Due to the sudden spate of deaths caused by fentanyl, a nationwide warning was issued by the National Crime Agency, as the Guardian reported in August. Coupled with increased police activity, the number of deaths is now slowly tailing off again.

Fentanyl has been around for 45 years, originally patented in 1959 and produced from the 1970s onwards. It's 50-100 times stronger than morphine and its analogue carfentanil is 10,000 times stronger, but even just a milligram of fentanyl is lethal. Due to its wide therapeutic index when controlled in solution, fentanyl has been used as a powerful painkiller by the military, and for patients who have developed opioid tolerance. It has also been linked to the famous Moscow cinema hostage crisis in 2002. During the raid, Russian anti-terror units used what are believed to be analogues of fentanyl in aerosol form to knock out Chechen terrorists and hostages. Of the 850 taken hostage, 130 died as a result of respiratory failure due to overdosing.

This certainly raises some concern over the recent international rise in fentanyl use by the public. In the US alone, usage has seen a meteoric rise, with an astonishing 540% increase in overdose deaths in the last three years. This means fentanyl-caused deaths now out-weighs both the number of car crash

deaths, deaths at the peak of the US HIV epidemic, and gun deaths (suicide included). As a result, many have accused the pharmaceutical industry of profiting from opioid prescriptions.

The pharmaceutical opioid industry is responsible for supplying 300 million prescriptions per year, roughly equal to \$24 billion, with the US being responsible for 57% of the world's consumption of opioids. However, the Drug Enforcement Administration notes that the majority of fentanyl seizures have not been from pharmaceutical diverted sources, but are clandestinely produced and trafficked.

The main source has been commercial labs in China, where there were no legal constraints on its production and export until this was recently requested by the US. Like the US, Canada has seen a massive increase in overdose deaths and the interception of smuggled analogues of fentanyl from China has seemed to confirm this is their source. The Canadian Border Services Agency reports identifying a parcel imported from China, labelled "printer accessories", which contained one kilogram of carfentanil – enough to kill 50 million people! As fentanyl is relatively easy to produce, Mexican cartels and other organised criminal elements have been implemented in cutting heroine with carfentanil to increase the potency for drug addicts whom have developed high opioid tolerances. However, this imposes a significant risk of overdose deaths and enhanced addiction issues for new users, even though fentanyl and its analogues don't produce the same highs as heroine when taken alone.

Fentanyl has already hit Estonia, which has the highest overdose rate per capita of any European country – over three times higher than its closest competitor, mainly due to fentanyl analogues imported from Russia. The UK is in a vulnerable position and may be hit particularly hard by the surge in fentanyl availability. The UK accounts for 31% of all overdose deaths in Europe, mainly because of heroine users whom fentanyl would also target, thus increasing their risk further. Fentanyl, unlike cocaine in the 90's in America, has not yet resulted in a rise of crime rates from turfs wars over drug sales. This is because of the ease of its production, import, and distribution which has low capitalisation and can sometimes skirt on semi-legal boundaries.

The fentanyl surge is symptomatic of a far greater crisis. The epidemic has been centred on the collapse and deprivation of the remnants of the white rural working class of the US. This particular group, relative to others, have a seen a unique drop in life-expectancy with a reversal of a 200-year trend. This seems to stem from a lack of recovery from the 2008 recession, with a general sense of helplessness, ennui and social malaise, which has not only affected the US, but the entirety of the western world to varying degrees. It appears a great decoupling has occurred in the experience between those at the bottom and at the top, in line with their financial fortunes since the recession, and this has not been resolved but has deepened. This has not only had obvious consequences for the political climate, but has also generated an unexpected death toll of epidemic measures.

What's New in Science This Week

Sam McMaster
Science Editor

1

Government Climate Science Report Contradicts Trump

The Climate Science Special Report released last Friday has stated with an unprecedented degree of scientific certainty that global warming is affecting weather in the U.S.A. and around the globe. This report flies in the face of statements made by Trump and senior administration officials.

2

Researchers Solve Dengue Mystery

Dengue infections has been a source of counter intuition for years, as antibodies generated during previous infection seems to increase the risk of more severe disease. A new study has shown that antibody-dependent enhancement can occur, where virus-specific antibodies facilitate virus entry into host cells, thereby increasing infectivity.

3

Archaeological Criticism of Pyramid Void

Using sub-atomic particle scans, The ScanPyramids project revealed a void discovered in the Great Pyramid earlier in the week. This announcement has been met with criticism from Egyptologist Zahi Hawass, who heads the science committee overseeing the project, stating "The pyramid is full of voids and that does not mean there is a secret chamber or a new discovery".

4

Theoretical Fusion More Powerful Than Hydrogen Fusion

In a paper published in Nature it has been shown that theoretical quark fusion releases much more energy than originally thought. Previous work performed at the Large Hadron Collider showed that the fundamental particles that make up protons and neutrons, in addition to other baryons, release increasing amounts of energy upon fusion into heavier particles. The researchers have stated that, at this point, their work is purely theoretical.

Society Spotlight: LUU Skate Society



Image: Skate Soc

Mary Lumley
Society Editor

Society Editor Mary Lumley sat down with Mohsan Lin, a third year Digital Media student and president of Skate Soc, to ask how his society keep things fresh, and how students can get on board. A skater for ten years now, Lin is aiming to bring the same passion he has for the sport to the society, and to take it to new heights.

Can you tell us a bit about Skate Soc?

Skateboarding came about in the 70s from surfers in the US. They wanted something to surf when the waves weren't good enough, so they put together roller derby wheels and old boards to "surf" on land. Since then, this form of art has grown so much. It's easy to see skateboarders as a bunch of gnarly, concrete eating dudes. But it's such a unique, diverse culture that is open to everyone and encourages creativity. We're a society that aims to indulge in the spirit of skateboarding, which is having fun! We have about 50 active members who meet up once a week to skate The Works Skatepark down in Hunslet (South Leeds).

Our sessions simply involve getting together to skateboard. Nothing else to it. We meet up to skate, have fun, take a fall or two, and learn something new.

What is the best thing about being part of Skate Soc?

Apart from the free membership, I think it's getting to learn everything about skateboarding with other people who are starting out as well. Everyone is so supportive of each other in getting them to try new things and push themselves out of their comfort zone. It's such a thrilling and fulfilling process to watch and be a part of.

What makes you stand out from other societies?

I think it's the skateboarding that makes us stand out from other societies. Who else is doing it? We're open to people of all abilities and what we do brings people together to have fun in a super friendly environment.

Is skating a dangerous sport?

I don't think skateboarding is dangerous. It's what people do with skateboarding that's dangerous! Ollieing off buildings, grinding 20ft rails, you name it. The footage of skaters doing these ridiculous tricks is surreal.

But at whatever level of skateboarding you're at, you have to accept that you're going to take a slam at some point. It's part of the game and what skateboarding will teach you is to never give up and to try again. I know plenty of skaters who have slaved hours to landing one trick. Myself included. We'll spill some blood sure, but that won't stop us. When you want something that badly, you're just going to keep trying til you get it.

What are your plans and ambitions this year?

With the new committee this year, we're looking just to keep things simple at this point in time. Skate sessions and socials will be a staple in our agenda. But we're also looking to organise trips to other skateparks in the UK and maybe even abroad. We're still a relatively new society, so we're still in the process of working out what's best for the society and the people in it.

What achievement are you most proud of?

I'd have to say, for this year, it'll be organising our Give-it-a-Go. We had over 65 people join us to skate The Works and it was truly a sight to behold. 65 people doesn't sound like a lot, but it was so rewarding to see people come down, try out skateboarding, and have a good time.

What's your favourite 'trick' of the trade?

For me, it'll have to be transition skating- which is basically grinds, grabs, and airs on ramps. It doesn't involve too much popping of the board, instead it's about flowing with ramps to do grinds and slides. It's one of favourite styles of skating and it honestly makes me feel like a surfer but I'm cruising concrete instead!

What's your opinion on recent press arguing that non skaters wearing Vans is 'cultural appropriation'?

I don't have a problem with people wearing Vans if they aren't a skater. People should be able to wear and style themselves how they want. It's just such a shame for us skaters though. We see people wearing Vans or Thrasher then talk to them to find out they don't skate. We could've hung out!

Insights From Women in Leadership

Eleanora Peruch

2017 saw the formation of a new society aimed at empowering a new generation of female leaders. Eleanora Peruch went along to hear their Building Bridges event on 2nd November to hear talks from six women Leaders who discussed the challenges they've overcome to get to where they are today, especially in regards to mental health, relationships and graduate life.

All coming from different backgrounds, Kimberley Bottomley, Charlotte Scott, Michelle Beckett, Meenakshi Sarkar, Damarie Musenya and Chelsey Needham offered differing interpretations of their journeys into leadership. The speakers offered their interpretations of 'bridges' within business.

The concept of a 'bridge' is replaced by the one of a swing rope by Kimberley, Head of CX at Cocoon. According to Kimberley, the bridge is "linear, static, univocal", while a rope is "multidirectional, quicker, under our control". She is strongly convinced that, nowadays, flexibility and multiple possible directions are needed; since changes have been shaping our modern lifestyles, we should constantly redefine our perspective and think about them as a challenging and exciting opportunity, not just something to be scared of. "Be bold!" was her tip.

Charlotte agrees with the idea that bridges can divide and thus it is necessary to change our point of view. Dealing with the theme of leadership, she explained how many women are ambitious but find themselves precluded from high levels of leadership, because of structural norms that affect them. That is why, if you're a woman and you are not sensitive and compromising but more competitive and decisive, you are cut out of leadership or accused of being 'bossy'.

Charlotte's discourse overstepped the border of gender, observing that the same situation affects men as well. Her acute observation put the debate on a wider 'human' field: we, as an individual, have to be our own leader. If an issue concerns women it will undoubtedly affect men as well. Change, according to Charlotte, needs a strong group effort to be realized. Why can't we work together for a



Image: LUU Women in Leadership

Leeds Women in Leadership Society

Empowering all genders to be successful, inclusive leaders

common purpose? Men and women are two sides of the same coin. Similarly, Damarie Musenya implored that we should transcend gender barriers and establish a genuine conversation between men and women. She asserted the necessity to engage men in women's issues. Accusation should be replaced with conversation; it can be incredibly difficult to identify with a topic you have little understanding of.

Throughout the conference, both rationality and emotion emerged as necessary tools to build bridges and reach positions of leadership. Being CEO of ADHD Action, Michelle Beckett strongly asserted the practical necessity of diagnosing girls with ADHD, supporting them, and thus guaranteeing more female leaders. In contrast, Chelsey Needham identified emotions as the bridge between work-life and personal passions. Passions are the key elements for our life, and since they make us happy, they should be conceived as values. Chelsey advocates integrating such values into our work and to always listen to our body because this is where our dreams come from. "Follow your dreams" was Meenakshi Sarkar's tip, "listen to your heart, find your way and undertake it with courage."

I would like to end with Meenakshi final statement: "everybody was born with the power of an elephant". Believe in your power, and not in what society expects from you. Women and men share an equal ability to lead as well as become role models.

Women’s Ashes Set to Heat Up

The England Women’s Cricket team are preparing themselves for the only test match in their Ashes tour of Australia.

Elliot van Barthold
Cricket

The England Women’s Cricket team are preparing themselves for the only test match in their Ashes tour of Australia.

After the first two One Day Internationals (ODI), things looked bleak for the England team down under. Australia won them both, giving them a four-point lead over the Tourists, needing only four more to retain the infamous prize. However, the team put in a much better performance in the third ODI and now find themselves with just a two-point deficit with ten more points available.

Batter Lauren Winfield has said that England will be motivated by revenge in the inaugural Women’s day-night test, a new format designed to attract more crowds. “They’ve got the Ashes. We want the Ashes, so there’s an air of revenge” Winfield told BBC Radio 5 Live.

The Test, which is worth four points, will be the first that the England side has played since losing to Australia at Canterbury, in 2015. The Tourists drew a two-day match against an Australia XI over the week-end, but captain Heather Knight seemed uninterested by that, instead focusing on the ODI win in October.

“Hopefully with that last win in the ODIs it gives us a little bit of a shift in momentum and obviously gets us back into the tour. If we can get those four points, we’ll be set up very nicely.”

Ahead of the Test, England have brought in three Australia based players in the shape of pace bowler Kate Cross, wicketkeeper Amy Jones and left-arm seamer Tash Farrant, all of whom are previously capped.

Australia, on the other hand, have decided to bring in some fresh faces to their Ashes squad. They have called up five players, all of whom are uncapped at Test level.



Image: Twitter

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New Nassar Abuse Claims Surface

Revelations about sexual abuse allegedly conducted by an ex-USA Gymnastics physician have emerged

Ryan Wan
Gymnastics



Image: Time

The recent allegations regarding Harvey Weinstein and gross sexual misconduct relating to women in Hollywood have shocked the world and, whilst more allegations continue to emerge, many are hoping that this is a watershed moment that forever changes the showbiz industry for the better. Many other women have also spoken out about sexual harassment and abuse that they have experienced, especially on twitter using #MeToo, and the sporting world was not exempt from this.

One of the most high-profile people to speak out was that of former gymnast and Olympic silver medallist McKayla Maroney. She described how she was molested at age 13 by former USA Gymnastics team physician Larry Nassar and that it didn't end till she left the sport. She has described the abuse as "systematic", and stated that the coaches were also abusive, but in verbal manner.

Nassar ended his involvement with Team USA in 2015 after the organisation contacted law enforcement about a number of claims that several athletes filed. However, he was not arrested until December 2016, but on charges related to child pornography.

He also treated various athletes during his time at Michigan State University, where more claims have surfaced, the first of which dates back to 1992. At least seven women have said that they raised concerns to various bodies about Nassar's conduct in the late 90s.

Former USA Gymnastics doctor, Nassar, is alleged to have molested 140 women and girls and faces 23 sexual conduct charges. His legal team are seeking to extend mediation until 5th December in lieu of these new allegations.

The US Olympic Committee has also issued a statement apologising for its shortcomings. USA Gymnastics CEO Steve Penny resigned in the wake of this scandal. However, people have demanded even more board members be removed on a Change.org petition, which has gathered over 13,000 signatures. It states. "USA Gymnastics Chairman Paul Parilla, Vice Chairman Jay Binder and Treasurer Bitsy Kelley have focused their attention on money and medals while USA Gymnastics is attempting to cover up the largest child sex abuse scandal in the history of sports. They must be replaced by people who will put the health and safety of athletes first."

Both these claims are particularly troubling since it raises the question of whether organisations are doing enough to protect minors from abuse by those often in a position of power. Athletes have said that fears over their position on the team being taken away affected their decision to not lodge a formal complaint. Although a different type of abuse, these are claims that many in the UK would cite as to why Eni Aluko was omitted from the England squad.

Real Madrid in Real Trouble?

Is Real Madrid's poor start indicative of greater problems at the club?

James Felton
Football

To say that Real Madrid, a team which is used to winning, and winning big, have had an atrocious start to the season is an understatement. Losing traditionally easy league matches against Real Betis and newly-promoted Girona and drawing against Levante, as well as the emphatic way that Tottenham demolished Los Blancos at Wembley, shows the seriousness of the problems that the Spanish side have faced, with some even talking of a crisis at this early stage of the campaign. Indeed, Zinedine Zidane is being criticised daily, such is the pressure that the French manager, and winner of the last two editions of the Champions League, has faced.

The recent deterioration in form was neither inevitable nor easy to explain. After all, the season started positively. Beating Barcelona in the Spanish Super-Cup, winning against Manchester United in the European Super-Cup and the form of the supremely talented Marco Asensio led many Madrid fans to react positively to the beginning of the campaign. This was accompanied by the signing of Spanish starlet Dani Ceballos, as well as the promotion to the first team of both Jesus Vallejo and Borja Mayoral, meaning that Real Madrid would, finally, have a plethora of Spanish players in most positions on the pitch, something which had been a cause of criticism during the Galacticos era under Florentino Perez. Indeed, it is Barcelona – and more recently, Atletico Madrid – who have developed and utilised Spanish players, whilst

Real Madrid signed the best players throughout Europe. Now, Real Madrid can play a match with eleven Spaniards, and whilst key players like Ronaldo, Kroos and Keylor Navas obviously would be missed, the natives still possess quality good enough to beat most teams in the league.

But, despite the initial positivity surrounding the club's campaign – which was exacerbated by Neymar's departure from Barcelona, as well as Atletico Madrid's transfer ban – Real Madrid have faltered over the last couple of weeks. Against Girona, five minutes of amateur defending in the second half gifted the Catalan minnows the opportunity to score two goals, in a match they would win 2-1. Only Isco was putting in the effort required, which just summed up the season. For whatever reason, Real Madrid are off the pace, which is more evident against teams of a high quality, such as in their recent match at Wembley. Tottenham showed Real Madrid how to play football, how to entertain the crowd and how to win a match convincingly. Three things Madrid fans are used to seeing from their own team.

Can Madrid win the league? Probably not now. But Barcelona are far from the perfect team currently. Luis Suarez can't score, they have not filled the gaping hole left by Neymar and their new signing Ousmane Dembele is injured. But Barcelona still have Iniesta, Busquets and Pique, as well, of course, the best player of all time Lionel Messi. Atletico Madrid simply cannot score goals. Unless they improve and start taking points now, ahead of the incoming signings of Diego Costa and Vitolo, Atletico Madrid won't have much to

celebrate in their new stadium. Valencia are playing in a vibrant way, having defeated Sevilla 4-0, drawn 2-2 at the Bernabeu and have been the highlight of the La Liga season thus far. Whilst the league already seems in doubt, Real Madrid can still win the Champions League and Copa Del Rey. That would be enough to keep Zidane in his job, for sure. Their next game after the international break? Atletico Madrid, away. It already seems like the game-defining of the season, despite it only being November.



Image: Getty

The Muggle’s Guide to Quidditch

The Gryphon gets to grips with this up and coming sport that you might have thought only existed in the world of fiction.



Image: WB

Emily Anthony Quidditch

I am one of thousands of people in over 40 countries who play a sport called Quidditch. Contrary to what you might think, Quidditch in its current form has very little to do with its fantasy origins. First adapted in 2005 at Middlebury College in Vermont, USA (because if anyone is going to look at something fictional and take it too far, of course it’s going to be the Americans), the sport has experienced massive worldwide growth in the last 12 years. Most universities throughout the UK have a team, and I’m proud to be part of the University of Leeds’ team, the Leeds Griffins.

In the UK, there are three major tournaments each year: Northern Cup, Southern Cup, and the British Quidditch Cup (BQC). Northern and Southern are regional tournaments that determine which teams get to compete at BQC. The Leeds Griffins will be competing at the Northern Cup on November 25–26 in Sheffield for a spot at this year’s BQC, a tournament we’ve attended ever since the inception of our team in 2011. With a squad comprised mostly of veteran members and a few eager freshers, we will be battling it out against 26 other teams for coveted spots.

Are we worried? Nah, we love our sport, and we train hard all year round for this. Are we excited? Absolutely! Under the leadership of captain Claire Cooper, vice-captain Joe Croucher, and coach Matty

Percival, our team of 30 are all committed to playing our best Quidditch, all the time. We often play friendlies against neighboring teams such as York and Manchester, and the UK has a large, welcoming community consisting of players, referees, supporters, and staff.

And now, because I know you’re dying to ask, here’s an FAQ:

Do you use brooms?
Yes, they are lengths of PVC about 3 feet long, and they must be kept between players’ legs at all times. This adds an extra element of difficulty to the game, much like the traveling rule in basketball. You’re more embarrassed about this than we are.

How does the Snitch work?
Very similarly to touch rugby. A Snitch runner carrying the Snitch (a tennis ball in a sock) tries to evade the Seekers from either team, and they must catch the Snitch from the Snitch runner while the game continues around them. A Snitch catch earns the catching team 30 points and ends the game.

How do you fly?
We don’t. But if you’d like to see what we actually do, which is play a full-contact, mixed-gender sport with elements of rugby, netball, and dodgeball, we practice every Wednesday and Saturday from 12–3 on Woodhouse Moor.



BUCS Fixtures 15th November

- Badminton Mens 2nd vs Sheffield 1st
2pm, The Edge
- Basketball Womens 1st vs Newcastle 2nd
5.30pm, The Edge
- Basketball Mens 1st vs Beckett 1st
8pm, Arena (Headingley Campus)
- Fencing Mens 1st vs York 1st
2pm, The Edge
- Football Mens 1st vs Trinity 1st
2pm, Sports Park Weetwood
- Golf Mixed 1st vs Newcastle 2nd
11am, Leeds Golf Centre
- Hockey Womens 1st vs Birmingham 2nd
5.30pm, Sports Park Weetwood
- Lacrosse Womens 1st vs Liverpool 1st
2.30pm, Sports Park Weetwood
- Lacrosse Mens 1st vs York 1st
4pm, Sports Park Weetwood
- Netball Womens 1st vs Chester 1st
3.30pm, Gryphon Sports Centre
- Rugby League Mens 2nd vs Sheffield 2nd
2pm, Brownlee Centre
- Rugby Union Womens 1st vs Beckett 1st
1.45pm, Brownlee Centre
- Rugby Union Mens 1st vs Nottingham 1st
2pm, Sports Park Weetwood
- Squash Mens 1st vs Durham 1st
1pm, Gryphon Sports Centre
- Table Tennis Mens 1st vs Sunderland 1st
2pm, Cromer Terrace
- Tennis Mens 2nd vs Beckett 4th
12pm, David Lloyd Leeds
- Volleyball Womens 1st vs Lancaster 1st
7.15pm, Gryphon Sports Centre
- Volleyball Mens 1st vs Beckett 1st
3pm, Great Hall (Headingley Campus)
- Waterpolo Mens 1st vs Manchester 1st
2.15pm, The Edge

Full Fixtures and Results at
bucs.org.uk

Leeds University Union Vertical Fitness



Image: LUU Vertical Fitness

Hannah Ryder
Vertical Fitness

2017/18 is set to be a great year for Vertical Fitness. Pole dancing has finally been recognised as an official sport and the International Pole Sports Federation has begun the application to become an Olympic contender. The sport has appeared in talent contests around the world and there are over 5 pole dancing studios in Leeds alone. It's not surprising that hundreds of students are interested in joining. So, this year *Vertical Fitness* are aiming bigger and better, with more shows, more events and more aerial action!

We are super excited to be working on lots of events throughout the year, from competitions and performances to fundraisers and film screenings. We are once again raising money for the charity *Basis Yorkshire* and all our solo events are helping support their amazing work in providing help and support to sex workers and victims of child sexual exploitation. First up is the Men's Pole Night in the Scarlett Studio on the 12th November. Don't lie, you know you're curious. Men can pole! Our incredible teacher last year was an award-winning, male, pole-dancer. We have had male members. Pole fitness takes an insane amount of strength, coordination and endurance. You

get a lot of bruises, but you also get a lot of gains. On Sunday, we'll be showing men just how strong they are, but reminding them just how strong we are. All men are invited, and women are too – just bring a male friend!

On the 17th November we are again performing in the annual Dance Competition in the Riley Smith theatre! For the first time, we'll be showing off with a solo performance from Christina Coll. And our award-winning Performance Rep, Georgina Trace (1st place Intermediates- Pole Sports UK) is choreographing our group performance and aiming for a second trophy under her belt. We're also hosting a private screening of *Chicago* in Pyramid theatre on the 27th November, to everyone who likes a bit of burlesque! The night will start with a little showcase of our skills, when our committee perform a cheeky routine from the film. Tickets will be five pound. The 8th December will see our 24 hour Poleathon in Market Square. Last year, we defied our own expectations by poling for 24 hours, in the middle of the freezing Union foyer. We even raised an amazing £600 for Basis Yorkshire!

This year we're hoping to raise even more by again poling from 6am-6am. We'll be showing off what our members can do for a solid 24 hours, while raising money for an amazing cause. Expect Santa hats and

lots of jolly cheer, even at 4am when the last of the Christmas Fruity goers leave. Last year we even sold some donuts after Fruity, so look out for mince pies and other tasty treats! Our Cabaret Showcase will be held on the 13th February in Riley Smith Theatre. This annual showcase falls in Valentines week this year, meaning it's the perfect time to put on something a little special! We'll be performing in a cabaret style setting – think tables, chairs and lots of tasty nibbles and wine – with support from Big Band and other wonderful societies. Doll yourselves up and come along for a unique night of dancing, entertainment and musical thrills to support Basis Yorkshire. Call it whatever you want – pole fitness, pole dancing, 'stripping'..., everyone at Vertical Fitness is proud to call themselves a pole dancer.

We can't wait to become a recognised Olympic sport, but until you can see it on TV, come watch what we do at any of our events. Stereotypes aside, we are, actually, an extremely inclusive and friendly society. If you walk past the dance studios on a Monday, Tuesday or Wednesday, you're more likely to see people stupidly dancing or pulling pained faces rather than lingerie clad models in heels. That said, we are pole dancers. We can do both.

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