



# THE GRYPHON



The official newspaper of Leeds University

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@TheGryphonLeeds

Issue 7

24/11/17

## Leeds Ranks High for Sustainability

The University of Leeds ranks 16th on People and Planet's university league table

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## Trouble in Paradise

The Gryphon explores the phenomenon of celebrities holding money offshore

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# Pro-Life Group Protest Outside Parkinson

*Pro-life campaigners from the group 'Abort 67', who explicitly compare contemporary attitudes to abortion with previous attitudes to slavery, were met by large numbers of pro-choice activists.*

**Reece Parker**  
Editor-In-Chief

The atmosphere on The University of Leeds campus was marred last week by the arrival of pro-life group, Abort 67.

The group, who were stationed outside the Parkinson Building as they could not achieve authorised entry onto campus, have been criticised for the shock tactics they utilise to propagate their arguments.

These tactics include graphic images of aborted foetuses, as well as comparing contemporary society's

attitudes to abortion, to that of the public opinion towards the slave trade at its height.

Abort 67, who take their name from the 1967 Abortion Act, argue that their main aim is "to make abortion unthinkable and to see the law give full protection to the unborn." Whilst this opinion is understandably met with anger by those who believe in the freedom of women to choose to have an abortion, it is the marketing tactics used by Abort 67 which generate the most anger from critics.

At the heart of Abort 67's campaign is the idea that previous attitudes to

slavery are comparable with current attitudes to abortion, which they refer to as "exposing #ourblindspot". This hashtag was displayed on two banners in front of Parkinson, the first stating "#ourblindspot then" above a photo of a black slave and the second reading "ourblindspot now" over an image of a foetus.

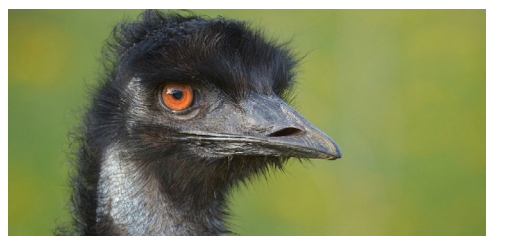
The group were met by numerous pro-choice protesters, who far outnumbered those representing Abort 67. Whilst members of the pro-life group wore body-cameras, and there was a police presence, all of the pro-choice protest group acted amicably,

presenting signs which contained the phrase "my body my choice".

Leeds University Union's Welfare Officer, Chloe Sparks, stated:

*"The deeply personal nature of this event's content and its highly inappropriate use of images of slavery may have caused many of our students distress.*

*"I encourage anyone impacted to seek support from LUU's Advice Centre. NUS and the student movement have been fighting for the rights of women's choice across the world and I strongly support this."*



## The Great Emu War

We recount how the Australian Army attempted to eradicate the nation's Emu problem

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Editor of the Week

Sam McMaster

Sam wrote what is possibly the most insane science article I have ever seen this week. If you're interested in dolphins and LSD, turn to page 19.

Quote of the Week

“Not the first time you’ve been snubbed by Hammond and May.”

Philip Hammond  
[in reference to Jeremy Clarkson]

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# Editor’s Letter:



Dear Readers,

One thing I never prepared for in this job, was the sheer amount of emails I would be receiving. Of the twenty or so which end up in my inbox on a daily basis, the vast majority are of no worth to anyone. Whether it is spam, or a PR agency notifying me that there’s a new app for ‘checking the nearest public toilet location’, most are sent to the trash post-haste. Last week however, I received a rare gift, an email which was both compelling and newsworthy. The subject? Flumpman.

The email was from a member of our university’s alumni, who had studied at Leeds in the late 80s. They described the reign of a figure dubbed ‘flumpman’, who terrorised female students in Leeds University’s libraries over multiple years, by secretly leaving a flump, by their feet in the library, coupled with suggestive notes. Part of me was sure this was a prank, but after searching our archives, it turned out not to be an urban myth after all.

Multiple issues of Leeds Student, the university’s official newspaper before we changed our name in 2014, cover Flumpman’s reign of terror. The most striking of these, from 1994, is a front page story titled ‘Flump Fetish: Man Quizzed’, which said that the

individual had become a ‘campus legend’, with incidents of ‘copycat flumping’ occurring. Perhaps most startlingly, it was revealed that in 1991, a man suspected to be Flumpman was apprehended, but escaped from campus authority by vaulting the security barriers in Edward Boyle Library.

It got me thinking, how many stories, as irreverent, peculiar or engaging as this one, are woven into the forgotten folklore of the University we all know and love? How much is buried in the archives of this very paper? In a chance conversation with another ex-student, I learnt that just fifteen years ago, students would have to check in to their home schools to confirm their module choices for each semester, which created a trend where students would camp outside their schools the night before enrolment sharing food and drink through the night, to assure they were the first to confirm their choices. The Leeds University of the three to five years you live here, is so different from the eras which become before or after, and I think this is truly special.

Yours Sincerely,

Reece Parker,  
Editor-in-Chief  
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I'm writing during the final week of our 'Express Yourself' survey which has seen THOUSANDS of you telling us what you think LUU should be doing over the next four years! It's been so fun promoting the survey around campus, and your feedback will help create our next strategic plan!

Nominations for NUS delegates to National Conference and liberation

It is so exciting to see so many students taking part in activities here at LUU and joining societies. But if you haven't had a chance to get involved or find the society for you then you still have time. I'm really pleased to announce that we have 226 society Give it a Go's planned for Semester 2 which is the most we have ever had. Massive thank you to all the committee

So it's almost the end of term already, and I'm really excited about what the Leeds Community Project are doing in the last two weeks of term.

Next week we are at Hyde Park Picture House on Wednesday 29 November and Friday 1 December from 11am till 3pm collecting your glass recyclables. In case you didn't know, glass cannot go in your green bin here in Leeds. What

This month we celebrate Disability history month! LUU's Disability liberation coordinators have organised an amazing set of events from discussions on mental health and an art exhibition exploring disability all accumulating with a visit from the NUS disabled students' officer. Go to the LUU website to find out more! This week some of the things I worked on

Forum turn-out was awesome this week! Just wanted to start by thanking all the Reps who came. It's a busy time of year so we really appreciate it!

Some great news on my 24 hour Laidlaw library project - it will be taken to the Taught Student Education Board in December after extensive discussions with the library so that's positive news. For those of you who

This week I've started my Toxic Relationships campaign. I think it's really important to promote healthy relationships and also signpost to students how they can get help if they're concerned about themselves or a friend. Unhealthy and toxic relationships are extremely prevalent but also extremely hard for people to open up about and seek the support

zones are still open on our website if you're interested in representing Leeds students at a national level, don't miss out. Meanwhile in democracy, our 'Better Forums' have been running this week with some fantastic student ideas getting passed. Thanks to all the Reps for coming and looking forward to working with the idea holders making change!

members who are doing a great job and have made this possible.

In response to student feedback I have been working on a new LUU award to recognise the amazing students and offer support in recognising their skills to help for life after LUU. I am so excited for this award to be launched in January so please keep an eye out or come and see me if you want to

better time than just before we all leave for Christmas to get rid of it all in an eco-friendly way. We're also giving out reusable bags to make it easier to bring your bottles to us. Bring us a bag of glass and we'll enter you into a raffle with prizes including Bakery 164 vouchers!

We'll be in the same place at the same times on Wednesday 6 and Friday

included planning for the leadership conference that I want LUU to hold in partnership with the University next semester focusing on empowering BME students. This will be a really exciting opportunity for BME students to unite, share successes and stand in solidarity through several workshops and networking events! Aside to this, I had a meeting with important University

are particularly keen on the idea, do get in contact with your School Reps (their emails are on the LUU website follow the representation tab). It was a flagship manifesto point of mine and we're making progress so it's exciting!

On personal tuition, Chloe and I have been invited to sit on a newly formed group reviewing the issue and particularly examining how our

they need. I've also been working a lot behind the scenes on University policy in relation to this issue. So far this has been successful and I hope to have some positive updates next semester.

In the Autumn Forum, an idea about whether content notes should be used in the University's teaching received a split vote and is now going to referendum for all of campus to decide.

Next week, I'll be going to Liverpool for an NUS event called 'strategic conversation' which will be looking at their commercial work and governance with other student officers and staff members from Students' Unions across the country. I'll also be representing you on University Council, which is the University's top decision-making body.

chat about this. In addition to this, Celebrate Week planning is now on my agenda. This is my favourite part of the year at LUU and over Christmas I will be brainstorming ideas for the best event of the year- The Rileys 2018! I really want to ensure every society is represented at this event so please let me know if you have any ideas or again want to chat about this.

8 December to collect donations for a community free shop at All Hallows Church. We'll accept any unwanted clothes, non-perishables or leftovers in your fridge which will all go to someone in your community who needs it more than the bin. Diverting waste from landfill AND giving back to your local community!? What's not to love?

level staff and questioned them about what support the university can offer students from low socio-economic backgrounds to do placements abroad as they are currently chronically under-represented in this area.

Lastly, I want to wish everyone a happy holidays and good luck in all assessments!

input can move things forward. It was our pressure on the university which nudged them to look to take real action. Everyone's experience of personal tutors is so variable; it differs widely within the Schools let alone from School to School. If a student isn't being supported adequately it's a problem, so we're facing the issue head on!

I shall be heading the 'Yes' campaign, as I believe all students should have an equal opportunity to study even if they are struggling with their mental health. Content notes in places like module handbooks would make the world of difference for students going through things such as anxiety, PTSD or OCD, but they really don't hurt anyone else!

# Campus Watch



## 1 Foreign Funded Universities, China Foreign universities to be supervised by the Chinese government

The President Xi Jinping's government is looking to strengthen its control over foreign-funded universities in the country, putting at risk academic freedom.

At the 19th National Congress of the Communist Party of China which took place in October, a new guideline ideology was decided. It orders for the installation of party units within universities, and to give decision-making powers to a party official in the universities located in the country and financed by overseas institutes.

One of the those briefed on these regulations had concerns about it's intentions, stating: "This changes the nature of the game and has ominous potential [consequences] for academic freedom." Indeed, these new rules would give a vice-chancellor status to the party secretaries, and lead to an

underlying veto power.

From another angle Mr Lehman, Vice-Chancellor of New York University Shanghai, remains confident that the freedom of his entity will continue to be guaranteed. He said: "Academic freedom is fundamental to our identity. We have not received any directives that would change things and I don't expect to receive any in the future."

Nonetheless, nothing is certain in a country often criticized for its poor respect of human rights; especially when the President declares during the Congress: "Government, military, society and schools north, south, east and west – the party is leader of all."

Clément Morlhon

## 2 University of Bath Vice-Chancellor under pressure to resign following latest pay rise

A further pay increase for the country's highest earning Vice-Chancellor has sparked controversy again for the University of Bath. The Bath Chronicle has revealed Dame Breakwell was awarded a 3.9% increase in salary last year, translating to an overall increase of £17,500 in 2016-17. This raises the Vice-Chancellor's total wages and benefits from £451,000 to more than £468,000, further widening the gap between the university's leadership and its lowest paid staff.

This latest increase comes after previous controversy surrounding Breakwell's salary. Revelations about Breakwell's expenses caused outrage amongst students last year, with the vice-chancellor claiming expenses totalling £20,000 on everything from gas and electricity to biscuits.

A university spokesperson, responding to the current pressure, told the Bath Chronicle: "It is right the university pays the salaries required to recruit and retain individuals with the skills and experience to ensure the continued success of the university." However, this latest pay rise has reignited the issue surrounding vice-chancellor salaries, as critics continue to call for Breakwell to resign.

## 3 University of Oxford Graduate sues university after failing to get a first

A history graduate is suing Oxford University, claiming that he was the "victim of poor teaching" which cost him the chance of a lucrative legal career.

Faiz Siddiqui alleges he would have got a first, but that "inadequate" standard of teaching he received resulting in him getting a low 2:1. He blames the situation on staff being absent on sabbatical leave and alleges that medical information about him was not submitted to the examiners by a tutor.

Mr Siddiqui, 39, who has put his claim at £1 million, says he would have become an international commercial lawyer if he had gained the top qualification at the end of his time at Brasenose College.

However, Oxford say Mr Siddiqui's claim that he had lost out in his career was "complete speculation and fanciful".

Ian White

## 4 University of Southampton Advert for a chauffeur days after 75 job cuts announced

The University of Southampton has been scrutinised for placing an advert for a chauffeur just days after announcing cuts to seventy-five academic jobs.

The University posted the vacancy for a chauffeur whose role includes "providing a chauffeur and car service to university executives and visiting dignitaries" as well as the University's Vice-Chancellor, Sir Christopher Snowden.

It follows the potential loss of seventy-five lecturers at the University as the University plans to merge eight faculties into five by August 2018.

The chauffeur recruitment has been criticised as insensitive. The University and College Union (UCU) general secretary Sally Hunt said, "Advertising for a chauffeur for the executives while threatening to axe as many as 75 academic posts is insulting and shows contempt for the staff. This move will, understandably, raise further questions about the priorities of the senior managers at Southampton."

A spokesperson said: "The advert is one of many that have been processed this week. It's for an existing role and is seeking a replacement for a colleague who is retiring."

Olivia Noon

## 5 King's College London London's Universities make millions from Library fines

London's 21 Universities have made £3,030,128.11 worth of library fines within the past three academic years.

Universities in London have been charging students who are failing to return library books on time, resulting in a huge accumulation of funds over the past 3 years.

Kings College London is among those institutions generating the largest amounts, accruing £388,602.06 from its students.

The University has insisted that there is a "Heavy Demand" on library resources and the money received through these fines is "reinvested".

The National Union of Students (NUS) has criticised the system saying it is "not workable" for students or Universities.

Aysha Zaheer



# Budget Breakdown: What's in it For Us?

Rabeeah Moeen  
News Editor

This week saw Chancellor Philip Hammond's hotly-anticipated budget announcements, in a speech including uncomfortable jokes about cough sweets and *Top Gear*. The main focus of the budget revolved around housing, duties and transport.

For example, white cider fans will be unhappy to note that duty on such drinks will be increased via new legislation. It will, however, be frozen on beer, wine, spirits and most ciders.

On higher education, despite the possibility of new and positive changes, there was nothing of note. For many, this is unsurprising as the Conservatives did not make any concerted effort to recruit the votes of students in the most recent general election, and this was unlikely to change in the budget.

The only information in the 80-page booklet about universities came under 'previously announced policy decisions,' including information that had already been released.

It made no mention of the reinstatement of maintenance grants that was hinted at in September by government officials. Instead, it simply includes the mention of spending pertaining to the freezing of tuition fees in September 2018 and the raising of the tuition fee loans repayment threshold to £25,000.

On the bright side for frugal young people, there will be a new 'millennial' railcard for all those struggling with ever-increasing train prices. The standard young persons railcard that is currently for 16-25 year olds offers 1/3 off train fares. That age will now be increased to 30, begging the question of what a 'young person' is.

In the budget, the government claim it 'will increase the number of journeys taken,' however it does seem to be too small a change for young people worried about rising costs.

In housing, removal of stamp-duty for first time buyers means house prices will be marginally cheaper. The government has intended this for young people, in

their budget claiming it will 'help young people buy their first home.'

However, as most young people cannot actually afford a house at all, it may seem irrelevant. A £300k house will now be £5k cheaper, which is great if someone can, at first, afford a 300k house; something that seems unattainable after leaving university with over £50k debt. Additionally, the Office for Budget Responsibility has said that it will help owners rather than first-time buyers.

This year's budget reveal can be argued as a success, following last year's speedy turn-around on proposed higher taxes for the self-employed. Other key information in the budget included £28m for the Kensington and Chelsea council to provide counselling and regeneration efforts for Grenfell Survivors; a shorter waiting time for Universal Credit payments; £2.8bn extra funding for NHS England and £3bn set aside for Brexit.



Image: Sky

## Student Accommodation Building Could Resume

Rabeeah Moeen  
News Editor

A student accommodation development may resume construction after it came to a halt two years ago.

The site, Portland Crescent, next to the Leeds Beckett Rose Bowl building, was bought by Select Property Group in September, with plans to create student accommodation there, under its brand Vita Student.

Vita Student has a presence in seven cities in England, with its first site launched in Liverpool 3 years ago.

The site had been proposed as a Hilton Hotel in the arena quarter of Leeds, shortly before the contractor went into administration and building work stopped, simply leaving the concrete shell of the building.

Now, proposals have been submitted to Leed City Council to develop the building further. Under the news plans, there will be 16 floors instead of 14, altogether containing 312 studio apartments.

Councillor Neil Walshaw, who is on the City Plans panel, said there had "been a lot of frustration" over the unfinished site.

He also said, in his capacity as a Headingley councillor, that: "the more purpose-built

student accommodation we have, the more it frees up private housing."

Select Group, who acquired the site, did so after stakeholders involved in the plan for building a Hilton hotel there failed to find a financial solution which would enable it to go ahead. If planning permission is granted for the development of a student accommodation building, the developer says it will start work on the site immediately.



## Universities Accused of Data Laws Breach

Ian White  
News Editor

Several Russell Group Universities have been accused of screening former student's data in order to identify those more likely to donate money as part of a recent fundraising initiative.

Although profiling individuals for fundraising purposes isn't illegal, it is illegal to do so without the individual's prior knowledge, as has been alleged.

Information Commissioner Elizabeth Denham said: "We will look carefully at the individual evidence provided to see if, and where, any rules have been broken and what learning there is for wider practice in this area.

"Personal data belongs to the individual and that means they have the right to make choices about how it's used. The law requires organisations to tell people what it's going to be used for and who it's going to be shared with – and that's what people expect."

A spokesman for the Russell Group said donations from former students are used for a wide range of purposes including bursaries and new academic facilities.

He added that: "All Russell Group universities in England and Wales are registered with the Fundraising Regulator and when there are changes in guidance on best practice they will follow these closely."

"Our members are hugely grateful for the ongoing commitment to higher education shown by so many Russell Group alumni and take their privacy very seriously."



# Leeds Named the 16th Most Sustainable University In The Country

Aysha Zaheer

The University of Leeds has ranked 16th on Peoples and Planet's University League tables. This is an independent league table based on sustainability, which ranks universities based on their environmental and ethical performance. This league table is compiled annually.

Leeds was the second highest scoring Russell Group University. LSE came in first place.

Dr Louise Ellis, Director of Sustainability at the University said: "Being sustainable is part of who we are at Leeds; we take our responsibilities seriously and are committed to make a positive impact on society."

People and Planet are the UK's largest student campaign group. Since 2007 the group has been scoring universities on a set of criteria that investigates their environmental and ethical comments and actions. The criteria in each section adds up to 100%.

The information is collected and made public by the Higher Education Statistics Agency. The rest of the information is made public by universities themselves. However, some do not share information, giving them a score of zero.

The criteria includes carbon reduction, student and staff engagement, sustainable food, workers' rights, ethical investment and education for sustainability.

Dr Ellis went on to say "our continued good performance in the People and Planet University League reflects our continued commitment and hard work by our staff and students and it is good to have this recognised externally. We are extremely proud in what we have achieved through integrating our teaching, research and operations through sustainability. We still have work to do, to be truly sustainable we must focus on long terms aims and commitments, something we have outlined in our vision for a 2050 sustainable university."

Every university is evaluated by team of trained volunteers which will allocate a score to the university based on the evidence which has been made public. Each university is marked twice to maintain rigour and consistency. All universities are given the opportunity to appeal their position if they believe an error was made in their scoring.

Sustainability at Leeds includes initiatives from the Student Conference that took place for the first time last year, to the reusable KeepCups available for sale across the union.

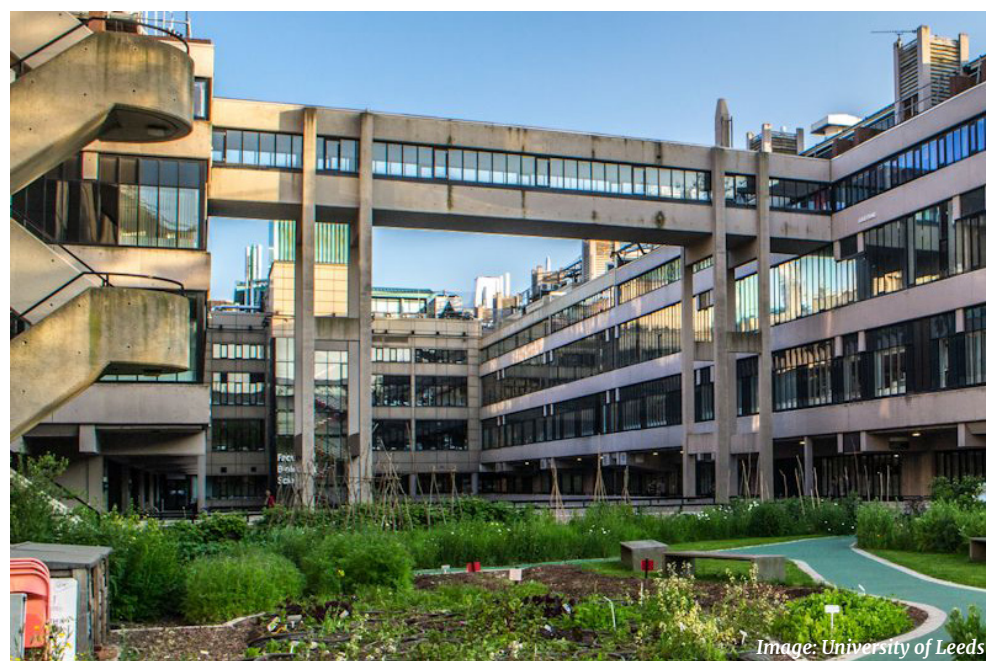


Image: University of Leeds

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# LUU Dance Competition 2017: A Superb Showcase of Leeds' Dancing Talent

Eleanor Smith

Friday 17th November saw fourteen dance acts, from nine different LUU dance societies, take to the stage of the Riley Smith Theatre to compete against one another. The acts competed for six different awards and were judged by a panel comprised of three external dance professionals. The competition was a huge success, becoming the first show to sell out the new Riley Smith Theatre.

The competition acted as a showcase for the great diversity and incredible abilities of LUU's dance societies, featuring performances from Vertical Fitness, Irish, Ballet, Bellydance, and Bollywood, to name just a few. Whilst the societies compete both nationally and internationally, this was an internal competition, offering the societies a rare platform to compete against one another.

The competition featured many group performances, as well as solos from Vertical Fitness, Modern, and Belly Dance, and duets from Freestyle and Dance Exposé. Each performance exhibited their society's style with superb choreography, attention to detail, and passion for their display. There is no dance degree offered at the university, making the level of

the performances exhibited even more impressive, as these are just hobbies for the dancers involved.

An external group of dance professionals made up the panel of three judges. These included Sara Horner, Principal of Sara Horner School of Dance and freelance dance teacher with over thirteen years of teaching experience; Victor 'LaVic' Amango, choreographer, dancer, creative director, and teacher of the only Afrofusion dance class in Leeds; Louise Rainford, freelance dancer, whose credits include performing at Glastonbury Festival, and founding the Dance Fusion Studios in Pontefract.

## The Winners

Best Performer – Zul, Freestyle  
Best Performer – Stella, Street Dance  
Best Costume – Athena, Belly Dance  
Best Concept – Zul and Minori, Freestyle  
Best Choreography – Ballet Dance  
Best Overall Performance – Street Dance

Sara gave a special mention to the Bollywood Vibes performance, commending them for their enthusiasm as each member looked like they were having the best time during their routine.

The evening was hosted by LUU Dance Rep, Lauren Huxley, who spoke proudly of the dance societies and all their efforts: "I couldn't be more proud of all the dance societies for the hard work they put into their incredible routines for the competition. It's an honour to get to represent these lovely people." She also expressed her thanks to the LUU Backstage Society, without whom the show could not have taken place: "I'm so grateful to Backstage Society for helping me create such a wonderful show for everyone."

Not only did the competition showcase the incredible dance societies, it was a great opportunity for dancers to spend time together as societies. Chloë Barlow, a member of Irish Dance Society, loved taking part, revealing her favourite aspect of the competition: "I loved spending time with my friends and getting to know other members of the society better as a result of rehearsals and socials associated with the competition."

The competition was an exceptional showcase of the incredible abilities LUU's dance societies have to offer, displaying not just the skill of the dancers performing but also the wide diversity of dance styles practiced by LUU Dance.

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# Trouble in Paradise: Avoidance, Evasion and Offshore Accounts

*The Gryphon shines a light on the latest leak of British celebrities hiding their wealth in offshore funds and exposing the most vulnerable in society*



Image: Süddeutsche.de

## Inaya Folarin

On the 5th November 2017, millions of documents were made public relating to offshore investments. Named 'The Paradise Papers', these leaks revealed the private financial affairs of the world's elite. The documents showed that millions of pounds from the Queen's private estate have been invested in offshore funds and in companies like *BrightHouse* that have been accused of exploiting poor families. High-ranking political figures in the US, Canada and elsewhere have been found to be dealing extensively offshore, and prominent celebrities like Lewis Hamilton and Gary Lineker, as well as major companies such as Apple and Facebook, have been named in the leaks.

However, despite the vast sums of wealth involved, these leaks are far from the first. 'The Panama Papers' leak in 2016 and the UBS tax evasion controversy in 2008 were not the first to bring to light the immense scale of tax evasion and avoidance, and the lengths to which the extremely wealthy will go in order to hide and hoard their wealth to the detriment of the majority. These revelations are nothing new, but at a time when wealth inequality is rising significantly, it exposes the rottenness in our political and economic system and the failure to address crippling issues or build the fair and egalitarian society so often spoken about by political leaders.

The majority of those involved in the leaks depend on the general public for their wealth; whether that's from the public directly purchasing their goods or by entertainment consumption. Therefore, it seems bizarre as to why they would want to take measures to prevent their wealth from developing society and contributing back towards it through tax; the very societies and people that enable them to build their huge fortunes. It is difficult to fathom the scale of this travesty, which consequently makes it even more difficult for the public and policy-makers to provide adequate solutions.

But one thing is for certain: a collective mass of money in the region of billions of dollars has been lining some very deep and secret pockets. This amount of money has the ability to transform society in extraordinary ways for the better. The Financial Secretary to the Treasury, Jane Ellison, says that "every penny of tax that people evade deprives our public services of essential funding".

A conservative estimate by HM Revenue and Customs calculates that tax fraud costs the treasury £16 billion every year. This is considerably higher than the £12 billion the government sought to cut from the welfare budget which has mainly hurt the most struggling in society.

The government has taken some measures to tackle tax evasion, such as sanctions on offshore tax evaders and making large businesses publish their tax strategies, but many campaigners argue that these measures are superficial and haven't effectively dealt with the issue. Research done by accountancy group UHY Hacker Young showed that the government's

measures have mainly hit small and medium-sized businesses because they are considered "an easier target than many larger businesses". Therefore, government measures don't tackle the greater issue of tax evasion among the financial elite and multinational corporations.

We must question why the elite engage in these practices when most will not spend even a small fraction of their total wealth and refuse to take future generations into account. It leads many to conclude that we live in a society and system that rewards greed for the sake of greed and thrives off of the continuous distrust and resentment between different groups. Despite a survey by YouGov showing that the general consensus from the public is that tax evasion is wrong, the reaction towards the leaks has been lukewarm at best. There is clearly increasing apathy towards these behaviours and it has become the norm and even expected for the richest 1% to hide vast amounts of money at the expense of the rest in society.

However, this kind of apathy is dangerous. In Britain, the richest 1% own as much as the poorest 55% of the population, around 30% of Britain's children are now classified as poor – of whom two-thirds are from working families – and the number of rough sleepers in the UK has risen for six years in a row. Shockingly, according to the Food Standards Agency, one in four low-income households do not eat regularly or healthily because of a lack of money. We additionally see individuals that commit a few thousand pounds of benefit fraud prosecuted and publicly vilified as 'scroungers' while people that evade tax to the tune of millions of pounds get away with it.

These disturbing statistics highlight the ever-growing inequality and separation between the richest and poorest in society and, so far, it has been getting worse. To be apathetic at a time when these problems are growing will only strengthen the position and arrogance of those that participate in these practices. The problem is global, and it can be easy to assume that as individuals, we can't do anything about it. But there are ways in which we can all ensure that this issue becomes a major political one so that everyone plays their role in building a fairer society.

Firstly, it is important that we educate ourselves about tax evasion; once we do our research, we will realise the immense scale of the problem and recognise why it is an important issue to tackle for the betterment of society. In addition, when political parties, politicians and major influencers like the Director General of Enforcement and Compliance for HMRC, Jennie Granger, say "we are determinedly tackling this [tax evasion]. We will find those who think they can dodge paying tax in this country", we must genuinely hold them to account in TV debates, petitions, letters, elections and any situation where we can apply pressure.



# – Social Media – The New Spin Doctor?

As the impact of social media grows stronger by the minute, political campaigns are being manipulated by internet influence. *The Gryphon* explores the impact of fake news on the public



Image: PoliticsHome

## Inaya Folarin

Rising internet and social media usage has enabled millions of people around the world to become more interconnected and gain access to almost endless amounts of information quickly and easily. However, this has also brought counteracting internet censorship and social media manipulation. For example, in recent years the term ‘Fake News’ has significantly gained in popularity. Fake news consists of intentionally spreading misinformation or hoaxes to damage the credibility of a person or organisation and it has enormous reach and potential to influence ideas. An analysis by *Buzzfeed* found that fake news stories often have considerably more social media engagement than news stories from major media organisations.

This manipulation is not only being done by unscrupulous organisations, but by governments and political parties around the world. NGO Freedom House conducted research into this matter and found that of the 65 countries they surveyed, 30 were found to be manipulating social media to “undermine” democracy. Freedom House’s report found that “online manipulation and disinformation tactics played an important role in elections in at least 18 countries over the past year” and that “a record number of governments have restricted mobile internet service for political or security reasons, often in areas populated by ethnic or religious minorities”. This news is worrying but not surprising as Freedom House have previously shown that global internet freedom has been declining for seven consecutive years.

Tactics highlighted in the report included the spreading of fake news, automated ‘bot’ accounts, harassment of journalists and even countries employing ‘armies of ‘opinion shapers’ to spread government views and drive particular agendas. This phenomenon is widely known to be used in countries like Russia and China, however the report also includes the US, finding that “manipulation methods gained particular attention in the United States” during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Utilising social media for political purposes is nothing new to the UK. During recent elections, all of the major political parties used social media to target ads, particularly in key marginal seats. For example, the Conservatives disseminated adverts with messages suggesting Labour would put nuclear jobs at risk to Facebook users in constituencies with nuclear industries. American-style ‘attack ads’ that personally attack individuals have also played an increasingly important role in political parties’ social media campaigns. *The Independent* reported that the Conservatives spent more than £1m on negative Facebook adverts attacking Jeremy Corbyn during the election campaign.

Of course, with the rise in social media, political parties and movements have to find innovative ways of convincing people to support them, and this naturally will include social media. But we must ask at what point does it

“We must ask ourselves at what point does the utilisation and manipulation of the Internet and social media for political purposes become harmful to democracy and inhibit our access to unbiased information?”

become harmful to democracy and inhibit our access to unbiased information? The problem ranges from targeted, fabricated political ads to aggressive harassment of those that disagree with a particular political idea. This inevitably undermines democracy because people either can’t make an informed decision or are scared to freely express their opinions. Events in recent years like the Arab Spring and the Occupy movement demonstrate the immense power of social media to galvanise and energise vast numbers of people behind ideas. This is why it is so important for the public to have access to factual information to make an informed decision.

From this understanding, how do we ensure that this phenomenon doesn’t undermine democracy? Firstly, it is important to have a conscious awareness that most, if not all, information is there to support a particular agenda and not simply just to inform people of the facts. One of the main things that people can do is to not solely rely on media organisations to provide information. Instead, they should utilise primary sources such as government statistics or reports from reputable organisations. Although these can still be manipulated or fabricated, the likelihood of this is much less as they are often based on surveys and direct research. In addition, reading the news from a wide range of media sources can help to decipher the facts. Mainstream and fringe, national and international – read a wide range so that you are not just allowing one perspective to completely shape your view and inform your decisions.

The Internet and social media have had great benefits for the general public, enabling us to seek the truth and research from even a pocket-sized device. But with this incredible ability, we must not forget that there are still those in society that wish to stir us towards an agenda that may not be in our interests.

Therefore, we mustn’t let the internet and social media be hijacked by fake news. Instead, we should utilize it to its fullest potential – to empower ourselves through knowledge and inter-connectivity.



# -Bathroom Politics- Clubbing for Wheelchair Users

As part of our Disability History Month series, *The Gryphon* discusses the incorrect use of disabled toilets in clubs and how this impacts upon disabled users



Callum Dwyer

It's a Friday night, which for many means one thing: clubbing. I find myself migrating towards the venue we have chosen alongside a host of glitter faced, plaid-clad revellers following pre-drinks at a friend's house on campus. Amongst our party are two of my close friends, who are wheelchair users; one of whom I also work for part time as a personal assistant.

Upon arriving at the club, we are greeted cordially by door staff who allow us to proceed straight inside and explain to us the accessible route towards the venue. Accustomed to clearing crowds to allow our friends to get around, we find ourselves by the bar without any major hitches or obstacles. After a few customary doubles, my aforementioned friend asks me if I can escort him to the bathroom.

After negotiating our way through the well-meaning but oblivious crowds, we find ourselves outside the accessible bathroom (which has recently also come to incorporate a gender-neutral facility). Seeing that the lock is engaged, we chat and wait patiently, understanding that for some with mobility impairments, using the facilities can sometimes be fairly time consuming. Five minutes pass. I knock on the door and politely ask that whoever is inside may hurry up. Five more minutes pass. By now, my friend and I are slowly losing our patience, and I knock again, more insistently this time. Eventually, we hear the long-awaited click of the door unlocking and back away from the door, only to be greeted by a flurry of shouting and gesticulation from two able-bodied young ladies, irate at being asked to hurry. After a heated exchange with myself, the two then proceeded to stagger back downstairs towards the dance floor.

Sadly, this is not a first; nor is it even a rarity when I attend such events with my friend. We have had several similar experiences in this club alone, and I am sad to say that, in our experience, it seems to be mostly younger female students who are

preventing my friends with mobility issues from using accessible facilities.

Now this is not to say that we haven't had our share of negative experiences with male students; from climbing over my friend without a single word said to him, to spilling drinks on him without apology, to the sadly inevitable long glances and stares. But for me, this raises a very touchy question: is it that bathroom facilities are not sufficiently sized for the number of women who attend events – as is perhaps evident in queue sizes – or is there an attitudinal problem to be addressed here?

At this point I should say that I imagine many of the people who use these facilities do so on the grounds of a non-binary or trans-gender identity, as they are so intended to accommodate. However, what my friend and I take umbrage with is the attitude of hostility and entitlement with which we are met, despite the visibly evident fact that my friend does not possess the option to use an alternative facility, where others may. Furthermore, I suspect that unfortunately some cis-gendered persons may abuse gender neutral bathrooms in order to avoid queuing, at the expense of genuine trans and gender neutral/gender queer persons – though I am aware that this is already a prominent topic in popular discourse.

The bottom line is this: nobody likes having to wait for the loo, especially after a few drinks. But at the end of the day, accessible and gender-neutral facilities are there for the people who need them, and for them only.





# – Chronic Fatigue Syndrome – “Isn’t That Just Laziness?”

Continuing our focus on Disability History Month, *The Gryphon* looks into Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, the ways it affects sufferers and how it is often misunderstood



## Rachel Berry

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS/ME) is often brushed off as tiredness or attention-seeking, if it's recognised at all. After all, everyone gets worn-out. In reality people have died from CFS, and at its worst those with CFS cannot physically get out of bed. So why is it not taken seriously?

CFS causes debilitating exhaustion (which cannot be alleviated by rest), disturbances in sleeping patterns, extreme pain in the joints, palpitations, poor concentration and memory, dizziness, sensitivity to light and sound, brain fog, insomnia, collapsing due to exhaustion, enuresis (loss of bladder control) and more. Around 250,000 people in the UK suffer from it and, ultimately, there is no cure. It is currently only treated with therapy and medication to relieve the symptoms, although exercise therapy has recently been encouraged.

Because the cause of the condition is contested some doctors have been cautious to acknowledge it, and medical professionals usually do not know much about it unless they have specialised in it. After all, why should the NHS spend vital time and money on something they cannot understand, over a visible and treatable illness? In fact it was only since February 2017, after a study done by Griffith University, which found that those with CFS have ineffective immune systems, that CFS has begun to be accepted more widely within the medical profession. CFS has been dismissed as 'female hysteria', and is rarely talked about in the media among the already taboo subject of disability.

A friend of mine, Bethany, was diagnosed with CFS aged 13 after seven months of her GP not knowing what the issue was. Bedridden and unable to attend school, she missed out on many teenage experiences, and was subsequently diagnosed with anxiety and depression. She uses a wheelchair, unable to walk for more than five minutes at a time. As a friend, it is difficult to find ways to include those with CFS in activities. I chatted with her mum, Sarah, to find out what impact CFS has on their lives and how to help friends with CFS.

### What were the first signs that there was something wrong, and how long did it take to get a diagnosis?

The first signs there was something significantly wrong was when, one morning, Bethany could not get out of bed. I had woken her ready for school but her body was so heavy that she was unable to lift her head off the pillow, her joints were swollen and her speech slurred. Prior to this she had months of generally feeling unwell with no obvious symptoms other than feeling extremely tired, headaches, sensitivity to light and several bouts of tonsillitis and sinusitis. We were back and forth to the doctors and dismissed many times with very little help and advice. After several months they began to run blood tests, then after nearly a year we were referred to the hospital where Bethany was eventually diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue and was then referred to University College London Hospital (UCLH).

### What's been the hardest part about dealing with your daughter having CFS?

The hardest part is watching the young lady who was once so energetic and the life and soul of all social gatherings withdraw into herself. She has been unable to attend school for nearly three years, two of which she has had no education at all. She has lost all her school friends and she is unable to continue with her dancing which she used to do every day, as well as her theatre school classes. It's heart-breaking to watch the sociable, lively, friendly, happy girl disappear into a wall of depression and social anxiety because of her illness.

### How do you feel the doctors and medical profession treat CFS and its patients?

There are many members of the medical profession who still do not understand chronic fatigue. There was one time an elderly consultant told Bethany, whilst she was lying on a hospital bed with her top off and having an ECHO, to do more exercise because the amount she was doing wasn't enough for a girl her age! Equally, though, we have experienced fantastic treatment and help from the staff at UCLH who have made complex conditions such as Chronic Fatigue in adolescents fundamental aspects of their research.

They are unbelievably helpful, caring and medically understanding.

### How does CFS affect Bethany's daily life and yours as a parent?

CFS has affected every aspect of both mine and Bethany's lives. Bethany struggles with everyday tasks – even showering, dressing and using the bathroom. It has affected her schooling, friendships and social life. It has affected mine by having to give up work to become a full time carer to assist her in daily tasks, take her to hospital appointments and generally become her counsellor, friend, carer and mum all in one. It has also affected the rest of the family as we have to consider how and where we can go that is wheelchair friendly.

### What is the best way to help a friend or relative with CFS?

The best way to help a friend with CFS is just to be there for them. Understand there will be days where they will not cope or manage to do anything. Be prepared to sit with them, or go out if they are able. The actual person has not changed, the illness has robbed them of the things they were once able to do. Be patient – sometimes brain fog makes it difficult for them to recall words and speech can become laboured. The collapses can be incredibly scary. Sit with them and talk to them until they come round – they can still hear you, they just cannot move or speak. Understand that the illness has affected every aspect of their life and so depression and anxiety are inevitable and therefore they need love, support and encouragement.

CFS is a largely ignored condition that has not had enough time or effort dedicated to understanding and treating it. Despite the recent scientific progress in understanding its biological causes, the journey of its acceptance in society is far from over, along with countless other disabilities and chronic conditions that impact people's everyday lives.





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# In The Middle

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

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# Eight Trans/Non-Binary Musicians You NEED to Know About

**Despite gifting the world of music with some of its biggest icons, from Bowie to Freddie Mercury to Dusty Springfield to Frank Ocean, it can often feel as though queer musicians still face an impenetrable ceiling to break; none more so than transgender and non-binary artists. In celebration of Transgender Awareness Week, we have compiled of the top 8 trans/non-binary musicians you NEED to know.**

## Mykki Blanco

This rapper and performance artist has not only made a mark on pop music with her fast and ferocious flow, but also by becoming the first living rapper to openly acknowledge being HIV-positive when she revealed her status on her Facebook page in 2011. In addition to her courageous HIV activism, Blanco also draws public attention to prejudices she experiences daily. For example: being refused service by a shop assistant due to her transgender identity and suffering transphobic abuse from a fellow passenger by simply travelling on a Delta Airlines flight. Regardless of her misfortunes, her music and performance style are committed to making waves and pushing boundaries.

## Two Steps on the Water

Possessing a sound almost too innovative to pin down with words, the self-described “emotion punk/heavy folk” trio disarm the senses with their intimate and revealing lyrical content. Conjuring up a mixture of longing, discontent and hope, it would be difficult to find better music to brood to. The band’s singer and guitarist, June Jones, even bravely (and successfully) raised enough money through an online crowd-funding campaign to undergo facial feminisation surgery, which put into perspective the hardships of body image and self-esteem that affect many trans and non-binary individuals.

## Queen Zee and The Sasstones

These rowdy DIY-punks, headed by the boisterous trans rebel Queen Zee, fuse together elements from genres as oppositional as hard-core and pop to make noisy, angry yet unforgettable sound. Brazen, brash and oozing with flair, when the band aren’t penning outsider anthems or staring in outrageously gaudy videos, they can be seen tearing up the stage through ferocious sets after relentlessly gigging throughout the latter half of this year. On being a trans artist in the music industry, Queen Zee has said, “I see myself as a transgender person in a band. It’s not a transgender band.”

## Miss Blanks

Storming the industry like a much-needed breath of fresh air, the Brisbane-native’s slick rhymes, super sass and saucy lyrics have helped the rapper establish her place as one of 2017’s hottest new talents. This aside, she is not afraid to use her platform to fight for change as she proudly brings attention to issues affecting both the transgender community and women of colour. With her first headline tour just announced fresh off the heels of her lauded EP, *Diaries of a Thotaholic*, expect big things to come from this full-frontal up-and-comer.

## Kim Petras

Although at a very early stage in her music career, German pop princess Kim Petras looks set for world domination through a strategy of glamour, stilettos and copious amounts of pink. She has been the focus of much media attention since the age of 13, shedding light on issues of gender dysphoria in childhood and early adolescents and paving the way for serious discussions on laws surrounding sex reassignment surgery. Nowadays however, Petras can be seen fronting sickly-sweet slices of bubblegum pop and worshipping Paris Hilton.

## Angel Haze

Hailing from Detroit, the agender rap goddess burst onto the scene in 2012 with the release of her free mixtape *Reservation* to widespread critical acclaim while dealing with issues of homophobia, racism and rape culture in her lyrics. This led to a Sia collaboration, third place in the BBC’s *Sound of 2013* and an immortal place in the hall of fame of queer hip-hop. On her gender, the MC has said, “When I hear people use the word ‘her’ around me I’m like, who are they talking about, you know? I just have felt this about myself for so long.”

## Ms. White

As a NYC-based jazz-pop artist who is documenting her gender transition through her music, you probably don’t have many artists like Ms. White on your playlist. Armed with a catalogue of finger-clicking-good tunes, if Ms. White’s smooth and suave delivery doesn’t win you round, her sharp wit certainly will. Her most recent track, ‘Fuck Men’, is a playful and light-hearted number that still pack enough of a punch to make a strong statement.

## Shea Diamond

“If you had to wear my shoes, you would probably take them off too,” purrs singer-songwriter Shea Diamond in the opening of her rousing trans anthem ‘I am her’. Unashamed, unabashed and unbothered, her huge vocal power rises above the dirty guitar riffs and pulsing drums to deliver a message of unity, love and pride – a true star on the rise.

Alex Gibbon

## Making Music Herstory Vol 4: Moe Tucker

Maureen Ann Tucker, or just plain old Moe, was the drummer for the Velvet Underground. She began playing drums at 19 without having had any lessons, and she taught herself to play by drumming along to the radio. In a band that was dominated by Lou Reed’s hyper-masculinity, Moe Tucker held her own, showing that girls are literally doing it for themselves.

Tucker’s drumming style wasn’t technically dazzling, but it was her self-starting mentality that gave the Velvet Underground their lo-fi sound, proving anyone could be a rockstar. As Brian Eno said, “The first Velvet Underground album only sold 10,000 copies, but everyone who bought it formed a band.” She played standing up for easier access to the bass drum, and rarely used cymbals as she said that the drummer’s

role was primarily to “keep time” and cymbals got in the way of this. She also preferred to use mallets rather than sticks, which gave her more control over the sound of the drums.

It was Tucker’s non-musical background that allowed her to approach playing music in a wholly new way, leading to the creation of an entirely original sound. What could be more punk than shoving your way into the boy’s club and doing things exactly your way?

Aside from her drumming, Tucker also features on vocals for ‘After Hours’. Lou Reed once said of this track that it was “so innocent and pure” that the only person who could really sing it was Moe. Her voice was a true diamond in the rough: not necessarily the

most beautiful, but the most heartfelt.

Although she has since given up music to raise a family, Moe Tucker’s influence on the music scene is undeniable. Without Moe Tucker, there would be no Patti Smith, no PJ Harvey, no Debbie Harry. As one of the most underappreciated sculptors of the 1960s New York punk scene, she took her position at the back of the stage and simply played, doing whatever felt right. And boy did it feel right.

Tracklist: ‘After Hours’, ‘Venus In Furs’, ‘All Tomorrow’s Parties’, ‘Sunday Morning’, ‘Heroin’

Jemima Skala





Image: Emma Swann

# In the Middle With Trudy and the Romance

**Liverpudlian doo-wop dreamers Trudy and the Romance bought their shuffling 50s pop to The Lending Room last week. The three-piece took the time to answer our questions about their brand new EP, their love for Leeds and their headline UK tour.**

Trudy and the Romance have the ability to carry you back in time. The slur of Oliver Taylor's fragile falsetto and guttural growls, blended seamlessly with ramshackle guitar hooks and shuffling rhythm, instantly transports you to another plane; you're carefree yet heartbroken, troubled but happy, exhausted yet blissfully unaware. This dichotomy of feelings that Trudy and the Romance manage to evoke is what makes their music so immersive and refreshing to discover.

Their ramshackle sound fits in perfectly with the potholed streets of Hyde Park and the DIY culture of Leeds: "We love Leeds a lot; lots of old and new friends here. The Brudenell is probably our favourite venue and we've been lucky to have played there a few times now. It's always the best vibe; and we have lots of fond memories made there. We also played the arena last year supporting Paul Heaton and Jacqui Abbot, so Leeds is our biggest crowd yet too, that one was nuts!"

Since playing Brudenell Social Club at Live at Leeds in April, the carefree dreamers have had a summer of festivals, recorded their seminal EP, *Junkyard Jazz*, and toured right through October and November. However, when asked what they've been up to, the boys are flippantly humble: "Not much really; Lew's got some new shoes, Olly's gone veggie, and Al's broken his finger from too much clicking at a party." Despite this time-consuming shoe-shopping and overexertive finger-clicking, they did manage to squeeze in a support slot opening for 80's post-punk band The Fall in Newcastle: "It was amazing! To see Mark E finally was really inspiring; The Fall are one of Lew's favourite ever bands so he was especially excited; and we got a proper rider." And what would Trudy's dream rider be? "Loads of vodka, cocaine, and a Golden Retriever."

**"We definitely feel a kind of Trudy-vs-the-world vibe when we're together."**

Trudy are certainly charming enough to demand such dream requests. On stage, they joyfully deliver buttery riffs and woozy soundscapes that possess you to shake everything off and jive. The vulnerable heartbreak of their lyrics is empowered by the band's fluidity and effortlessly synchronized rhythm; "We definitely feel a kind of Trudy-vs-the-world vibe when we're together."

Last Friday, Trudy and the Romance unleashed their EP, *Junkyard Jazz*, and its release has been long anticipated by fans and the band themselves; "we recorded it earlier this year so we were sitting on it for a while, trying to decide on how to release it. We were dead excited to share it! we think all the tunes are a bit odd and seem kind of out of place, which in turn allows them to co-exist in the 'Junkyard'."

While, the woozy melancholy of 'Is There A Place I Can Go' has you swaying with sunken eyes, 'Twist It Shake It. Rock & Roll' encapsulates the bands' ability to effortlessly oil your joints and get you, well, twisting and shaking. "It's all about letting go, baby; just let your hair down and boogie to our new tunes; let yourself fall in love with that person you just can't get off your mind."

Let yourself fall in love with Trudy and the Romance. They'll have you slow dancing and jiving in your bedroom, with a heart full of nostalgia, and a mind heavy thinking about that one person you quite fancy. *Junkyard Jazz* is the soundtrack to your woozy November nights.

Meg Firth



# Gig Round-Up

## Milky Chance @ Stylus, 9/11

“Are you okay? Are you alright? Are you having a good time?”

It was on the 9th of November that Clemens Rehbein, lead vocalist of the indie-folk group Milky Chance, asked these at once sincere and imposing words. The trio, consisting of Rehbein, guitarist Antonio Greger and producer Philipp Dausch, from Kassel (Germany), travelled to the *University of Leeds* to captivate their British following.

And captivate they did. At 8pm on the dot, their support act, the half-Italian Fil Bo Riva, struck the audience with his distinctly rough vocals, and delighted us for the next thirty minutes. His powerful and melancholic folk was the perfect opening to the German group that would bring the room fully to life an hour later with ‘Clouds’.

The three group members did a great job at reminding us of the reason for their success. It is the genius and originality in Dausch’s mix of electronica and folk, the singularity of Rehbein’s voice, the utter rightness of Greger’s guitar and his phenomenal harmonica solos. It is the ability they possess to make anyone dance.

Their unity demanded our undivided attention; their music did things to our hearts. Three songs in they played, ‘Blossom’, the title track of their sophomore album released earlier this year and it saw the room go wild, everyone singing along in unison. This was the case no matter whether the songs were from their first album or their second; we sang, danced and clapped.

By the end, everyone was in awe and having a great time. But when they left the stage, it was clear we hadn’t had enough of them, and that they weren’t done with us. The classic chant of “one more song” rocked the walls of Stylus, until the trio re-emerged to undo their fans one more time with masterful performances of ‘Stolen Dance’ and ‘Sweet Sun’.

So, to answer your question, Clemens: we are okay. We are alright. And we’ve never danced like this before.

Sofia Ambrosio

## Sylvan Esso @ Brudenell Social Club, 13/11

Singer Amelia Meath and producer Nick Sanborn, who make up electronic pop duo Sylvan Esso, don’t look like pop superstars. Clad in simple skinny jeans and black t-shirts, Amelia’s reading ‘No Nukes!’, the duo didn’t walk onto stage in spectacular fashion as is expected with pop acts, confetti and blaring entrance music and all. Instead, the two surreptitiously walked onto stage and began to play their first song, ‘Could I Be’.

That’s exactly the reason why Brudenell Social Club, a small venue with lots of character, was the perfect venue for a Sylvan Esso gig. While the electronic pop duo boast a massive 1.4 million monthly listeners on Spotify, and their top 4 songs have all been played tens of millions of times, the duo have a knack for making their biggest-sounding songs feel surprisingly intimate. There were no barriers between the crowd and the stage, and as they played banger after banger, making it feel as though they were singing and dancing with the crowd.

Standouts included ‘Coffee’, a slow-burning, brooding electropop song which Meath sang full of emotion; ‘Play It Right’, a triumphant mid-tempo electronic track which closed the show; and ‘Radio’, easily one of their most recognisable songs with its repeated impassioned hook of “slave to the radio / wait til they forget to go”.

Electronic acts tend to get lost in translation from recordings to stage, falling flat in live settings, but Sylvan Esso managed to bring emotion, energy and flair to the intimate venue. Meath’s live vocal performances matched her studio recordings (and more) as she danced goofily to their songs while Sanborn jumped around his controls. It was definitely an impressive showing from the duo, and by the end of the night there wasn’t a single person in the crowd who could stop themselves from dancing along.

Mikhail Hanafi



Image: Jade Park



Image: Shervin Lainez





Image: Gigwise

## Childhood @ Brudenell Social Club,

A lot has changed since 2014. The alt-right have been given a platform, Bake-Off has moved to Channel 4, and the indie scene is no longer simply about denim jackets and angsty guitars. Walking on stage in full 70's aesthetic (flared trousers included) and their newly found saxophone in hand after a 3-year hiatus, this was a night that marked change. Childhood have emerged from the psych-infused indie pop of the early 2010s, and into something far more compelling.

During 'Don't Have Me Back', we're gifted with a sax vs. vocals vs. the-rest-of-the-band battle, in which no inch of the room was left untouched by this majestic onslaught. Despite having to restart the song after being out of time with each other, this is a high of the night, with the result being a moment of pure euphoria. The band's introduction of a saxophone into their track listing tied the night together, and created a seamless flow between the likes of 'Cameo' and 'Californian Light' – featuring an impressive soul-infused falsetto from frontman Ben Roman Hopcraft.

Perhaps to highlight their break from the past, tonight mainly showcased Childhood's new material. While their old material certainly had a different tone to their newer tracks, the likes of 'Blue Velvet' and encore 'Solemn Skies' proved an audience hit: still as charming, still as catchy, and definitely still as fun as when they first were when first released five years ago.

This was a gig that was exploding at the edges with charm and colour, so it was disappointing to see the Social Club only half full. Closing song 'Understanding' certainly felt designed to knock out a large standing crowd. Initially feeling a tad exposed in this intimate atmosphere, the band injected a much-needed psych-meets-soul instrumental which transformed this summer breeze haze of sound into a wall of roaring buoyancy. With the pink and purple lights flooding the room, you were certainly picked up on Childhood's magic carpet ride of oozing groove.

This was a night of universal highs, flared trousers, and sophisticated groove. Childhood have swapped the charity-shop chic for 70s sophistication, and we are greeted with a band that look like they are having as much fun on stage, as we are off of it.

Juliette Rowsell

## Wolf Alice @ O2 Academy, 18/11

From opener 'Heavenward', Wolf Alice had the crowd at O2 Academy in the palm of their hands. The crowd-surfing and moshing had already begun by second song 'Yuk Foo', setting the tone for the rest of the night.

Over the course of 90 minutes, Wolf Alice took us on a rollercoaster that fluctuated between calm, ethereal lows and grungy, feral highs. That is where the band's strength lie; their ability to be both soft and ferocious, serene and grunge. Frontwoman Ellie Rowsell remains the epitome of cool-girl moody, with her vocals soaring between spoken lyrics, to ethereal harmonies, to ferociously powerful screams. This is all whilst effortlessly playing guitar, a talent which was perfectly exemplified in the vocal acrobatics of 'Formidable Cool'. Her fellow bandmates Theo, Joel and Joff injected an element of craziness with their energy.

Whilst the set list was exhaustive in showcasing the eclectic breadth and talent across their two albums, it did feel like the newer 'hits' were all pushed to the front. 'Don't Delete the Kisses' is a sublime track from their most recent album, and the live version did not let us down. As the audience were submerged in blue light bouncing off a silver disco ball and the opening chords echoed through the Academy, there was an almost instinctive response from the crowd to whip out their phones and record the moment. But given the heartfelt poignancy of the lyrics, I did wonder if it would have been better placed towards the end of the gig to give the song the sense of intimacy and euphoria it deserves.

Nonetheless 'Don't Delete the Kisses' was followed by a mass singalong to 'Bros', before slinking into the steady pacing of 'Visions of a Life' with its slower, richer sound. The crowd were bathed in a sea of green light and smoke, and 'Fluffy' followed in an explosive finale.

Overall, Wolf Alice put on a fantastic show and I look forward to what else they have instore for Leeds in the future.

Clare Redman

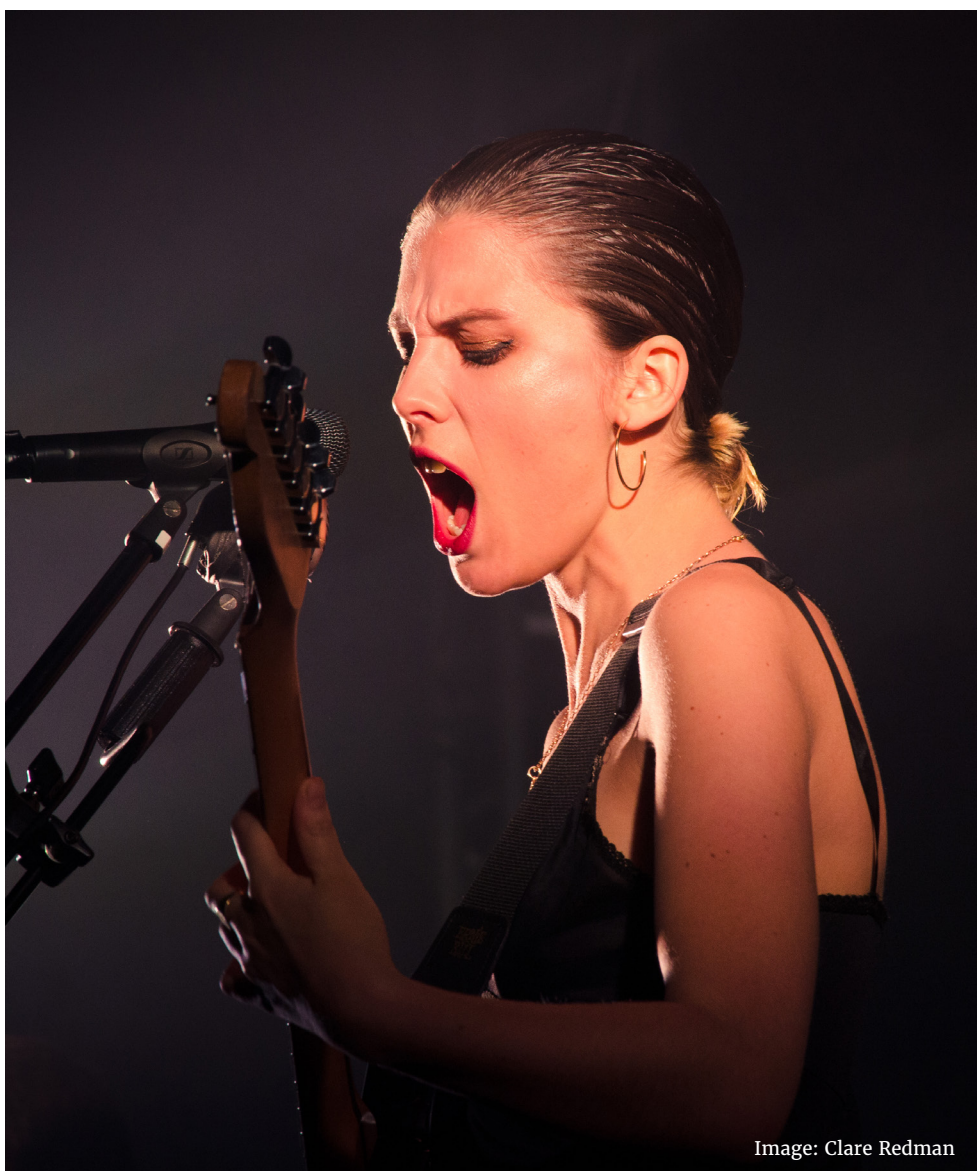


Image: Clare Redman



# InTheMiddle with Valby Rotary



Image: Mixmag

## Following their debut event at Wire, we spoke to two of the Valby Rotary boys about their journey so far.

“After racking our brains for ages trying to come up with names, my girlfriend suggested we call the label Valby Ruta after the IKEA rug in my room”, laughs Tom, one-third of the up-and-coming DJ trio, Valby Rotary. “We changed the ruta to rotary because why not, and then thought, ‘let’s go with it because we need a name’ as it was starting to stress us out. Now it seems to work well!” he adds. Work well it does, with the group carving out a respectable name for themselves across the city, before launching their first event last week, headlined by none other than the label head of Lobster Theremin & Mörk, Asquith.

The second group member, Lou, states that this booking was informed by seeing Jimmy Asquith “in Sheffield last year”, adding that “he was so much fun to watch and very energetic. I’d say Jimmy is someone we look to as being influential not only for his skills as a DJ, but also due to his successful management of great labels and sub labels etc.” The boys explain that the choice to launch at Wire was informed by the venue’s consistent ability to curate line-ups and foster local promoters and scenes. Couple this with the regular deliveries of big names such as Joy O, Four Tet, and Hesse Audio in such an intimate venue, the boys agree that, “Wire is probably our favourite club in the UK”.

It’s clear that each member of the group have a strong passion for what they’re doing, with Tom explaining that Benito, a close friend of his and the third member of Valby Rotary, started a night in their hometown and made him a resident aged just 17. “I was then getting the opportunity to support pretty well-established acts right of the bat. So, I think my first few gigs were warming up for people like Dan Shake, Evan Baggs, Casino Times and xxxy.”. Tom explains that he learned fast because he was “desperate to do a good job!”.

This passion has led to them being recognised all over the city, playing what is often considered the height of Leeds events, Flux, after they had attended “pretty much

every event they’ve put on over the past few years”. They’ve also become invested in the more niche, critically acclaimed side of the city, playing out on Balamii and KMAH Radio. “I think the benefits from these performances come from the people you meet whilst doing them.”, explains Lou, “I have been volunteering at Balamii radio over the summer and have met so many DJs and producers who are doing great things. Having the opportunity to perform is just another benefit.”. “Chris from Slipstone had us on his KMAH show.”, Tom interjects, “in agreement with Lou I think the real benefit with this was just the social aspect. I’ve become good friends with Chris so that’s a plus! I often run things by him and ask him for advice. Shout outs to Chris I’anson!”

From here, the conversation flows to producing music, another string on Valby Rotary’s formidable bow. They make clear that they do not want to pigeon-hole themselves as strictly lo-fi house, but that there are elements of the genre which obviously appeal to them. Instead, they make clear that their aim is to “progress as a label and take influence from many different sub genres”.

Tom has had a release on Seb Wildhood’s label *All My Thoughts*, and credits him with helping them to push themselves as producers, noting that a couple of years ago he suggested they “should start putting some of our own material out instead of trying to send it as demos to other labels”. Tom is adamant however that “most of the support and advice that causes label progression is from within our group, through sharing ideas with each other or with our boy Jeigo”.

For Valby Rotary, the future looks bright, with VALBY003 being recently released. “We both have releases coming out next year with other labels, and I’m working on VALBY004 as we speak. In terms of running events, we’ll be starting to get on with the next one soon. Watch this space...”

Jacob Pitts and George Mason

**“They make clear that they do not want to pigeon-hole themselves as strictly lo-fi house, but that there are elements of the genre which obviously appeal to them.”**



# Drumcode Does Not Disappoint

Adam Beyer's incredible career is an unapologetic testament to the power of sticking to your guns and ignoring trends elsewhere. Whether he's playing his renowned blend of militant, stripped down underground techno or catering for a bigger crowd as a festival headliner, putting his own spin on famous tracks guaranteed to ignite the audience, Beyer constantly manages to surprise and elate.

Adam Beyer presents Drumcode, his label's offering to 2017's *The Warehouse Project* eclectic calendar, promised the typical night of Beyer-and-friends fuelled mayhem and it sure did deliver. *The Warehouse Project*, with its almost mythical popularity and reputation, is one of the few electronic music events in the UK that can sell tickets without almost anyone complaining or questioning the somewhat colossal ticket prices. The grimy spaces of Store Street provide a short but sweet escape from the depressing cold following a summer in Ibiza, at festivals or other European party destinations.

I was lucky enough to catch the sets of a range of DJs at Drumcode, the crowded, heaving audience, not managing to deter myself or others from forcing our way to the front of the packed-out Room One. Here, Scuba's hectic techno brought the crowd alive, pulsing and vibrating to his hybrid mix of slow and trippy and big-hitting, fast-paced tracks. Beyer's own set, as the event's curator and Sweden's techno king, always promised to be the highlight of the night and again he managed to deliver. He proved once again why he's so well-respected in the industry – his shows are never repetitive, or boring.

It could be the first, fifth or tenth time you've witnessed him spin this year, and it's still as electrifying, for each set changes with Beyer's own mood. His set at drumcode was a relative middle-ground for Beyer, neither too erratic and urgent nor minimal; a techno masterclass showcasing both new and old Drumcode signed releases.

One of my personal highlights was Beyer's drop of one of Drumcode's recent releases, a Bart Skills remix of the classic 'Moby – Go'. The track brought a few minutes of stillness to the crowd, a display of Beyer's power as a DJ who is constantly unafraid to drop slow and calm beats even at an event as raucous as WHP. I was initially disappointed to lose Green Velvet from the Drumcode line-up as his sets always deliver the perfect dose of hedonism and fun, but Alan Fitzpatrick's set made me forget about any trepidations I'd felt previously. His closing set was the ideal end to such a crazily diverse night of music, his drop of 'Spektre & Chicago Loop – Shoot From The Hip' uniting the crowd in a euphoric dance that I've scarcely witnessed at other events.

My feet may have been rendered redundant on the 6:30am train back to Leeds, my voice hoarse and eardrums destroyed, but I never for a second regretted any part of the night. *The Warehouse Project* continues to reign supreme on the UK club scene, a titan amongst lesser mortals, its stellar line-ups and perfectly befitting venue a guarantee of a great and memorable night. Until next year?

Poppie Platt



## HighRise Celebrates Fifth Birthday

*Highrise* now forms such an elemental part of Leeds' clubbing landscape that it is rather hard to believe it didn't exist before November 2012. In the 5 years since, it has amassed a powerful reputation as an event regularly filling Beaverworks with a premium blend of urban, underground bass and soundsystem music. The night was always going to be a great celebration, and it had the stellar line up to match.

It could certainly be argued that you would be hard-pressed to find a club night where DJ Marky, Calibre and LTJ Bukem have ever played together; let alone in the same room one after another. These are 3 men who have all headlined *Highrise* individually, and who all represent different sub genres and Eras of drum and bass. This was delightfully apparent over the course of the night in the back room, as DJ Marky masterfully blended his own samba-infused, funky productions, like the amped up VIP remix of 'Silly' in and out of gritty jump up tracks from Serum and Hazard. The crowd was simultaneously grooving then gun-fingering, all infected by the vivacious Brazilians wickedly entertaining and eclectic style of DJing.

Then, Calibre predictably lowered the intensity, deftly stringing together a slew of meaningful liquid that contrasted effectively with DRS' punchy MCing. His tune 'No One Gets You' might seem too poignant or delicate for a club environment, but its subtlety filled the room with sound in a way that only a Calibre song could.

LTJ Bukem followed with a similarly masterful performance, where his unique 25+ year connection to the genre was immediately evident. His soulful combination of clattering breaks, imaginative mixing and jazzy melodies all combined to create a flawless, energizing closing set.

Those strong willed enough to tear themselves from the main room at any point certainly had reasons to do so. Commodo's pumping dubstep in the Basement, the exclusive grimey b2b between Spooky and Grandmixxer with Killa P, or Dubkasm's unique combination of dub and a live saxophone were all excellent alternatives. Like every *Highrise* before it, whilst individual acts stand out, it was actually the breadth and depth of night's offerings that made it worthy of the hype.

James Gwyther





# Christmas Party Edit

**It's that time of year again! The glitter is out, the metallics are shimmering, the snowdrops are glistening and fashion are here to provide you with the lowdown of the top Christmas wardrobe wonders you can get your hands on this year!**

## The Red One



Let's start with the knock-out. This stunning ankle length burgundy number from Missguided is an absolute Christmas Killer this 2017. Of course, one must pick the right occasion for the saucy attire, but if you've got that one special night where you want to enter a room full of jaws dropping, this is the dress for you!

And better yet, it won't even dent the bank! At just £20, this figure hugging stunner is set to get you that mistletoe kiss without needing to bury yourself ten feet deep in your overdraft in the process. Get shopping!

## Metallic Magic



Now for something a little more casual; the beauty of the magical metallic. Urban Outfitters will never fail to provide us with our cutting-edge style selections and Christmas time is no exception. This sparkly metallic slip comes in three different glitzy shades to personalise to your own taste and provides us with scope to accessorise to the max. This dress can be dressed up or down in accordance with the look you're after this festive season and, despite its simplicity, you are sure to catch some eyes in this one. This little cheeky choice does come with a bit of a niggle though, at £46 it's not the cheapest of selections. But is there even a price you can put on your dazzle factor this Christmas?

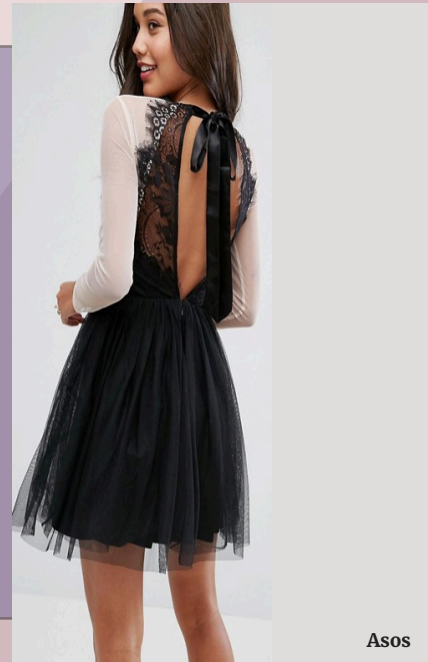
## Glitter Galore



Pretty Little Thing is the only choice when you're looking for the best bedazzling garms. And here they are again, providing us with their glitziest looks for the festive season. This hot little bodycon is black, but that doesn't mean it's not as festive as a purple quality street. The black and gold combination is a classic and this dress is an absolute winner for our Christmas look books. Accessories are obviously the off-set to a one-piece statement so grab yourself an equally glitzy clutch, a statement fur jacket and a pair of killer stilettos and your Christmas look is good to go. And better yet ladies, it's 50% off at just £25!

## The Velvet Touch

Now it's time to get properly festive, and there is no doubt in saying this little find from Nasty Gal is about as Christmassy as Nan's iced fruit cake. At just £25, this velvet skater will make you feel like you're fresh out of Santa's workshop and ready to celebrate the festivities! Its crimson shimmer really is the colour of Christmas and as a classic statement piece, velvet will never let you down. Pair with some statement boot heels and a little leather number to keep you feeling toasty and there you have it, the perfect Christmas combo. You won't even feel the cold after a few glasses of mulled wine so no excuses about the arctic temperatures!



## Lady In Lace

And last but certainly not least remains the statement lace look. Although not the most festive of colours, this little dress will have you feeling like the little nutcracker with its gorgeous ballerina tutu and bow tied back, all the heads will be turning your way for sure! Coming from our old trust ASOS, this lovely little dress again, isn't the cheapest of choices, retailing at £48. However, as with the Urban Outfitters number, you need to ask yourself, isn't it worth it? If you want to feel like a Christmas princess this 2017 then this is the perfect piece for your winter wardrobe.



# Outfit Of The Week

## Fashion writer, Sarah Ashford Brown, explains how to beat the winter blues and spice things up on campus

For me, the best part of music festivals is dressing up for them: sparkles, colours, print, and lots and lots of glitter. It's sunny, and even if it isn't you dress for it, warm (again, debatable), and creates amazing memories. After the holiday glamour, it all goes downhill when you get back to uni. Especially when first year is over and you have to actually do your work; summer is over and it's darker and colder.

To beat the winter blues, I like to pretend that the university campus is a festival field: lecturers are the event's headliners, and seminars smaller band's gigs. 9am starts aren't as hard as they seem when you're getting ready for a new festival.

All you need is a pair of funky trousers, any colourful/weird top you have to match and you're sorted! Not only will you look glittery and fabulous, you'll also be the much needed ray of sunshine during the dark and gloomy British winter.

**Pink fluffy coat: George**

**Pink frills boob tube: Urban Outfitters**

**Checkered trousers: Depop**



Image: Lucy Rose Jones

# Christmas Jumpers: Sleigh or Nay?

**Are they the present you dread opening on Christmas day? Or are they the most stylish thing around?**

## Love them...

This Christmas, ditch your usual edgy Leeds attire, embrace the festive spirit and pick out the silliest sweater you can find.

Christmas only comes once a year meaning we have to make the most of it. And, by making the most of it I mean finding the brightest and glitteriest jumper you can find and wearing it to every lecture you have. If there is any time to let your guard down and have some fun, it's Christmas time – we need to embrace the rise of the iconic Christmas jumper. Furthermore, the shops are stocked so full of the sweaters that you are sure to find something a little more subtle, if you want to avoid looking like a Christmas tree with tinsel and baubles stuck all over you.

What's more, we all know that Christmas is a time for overeating. Who can resist all the turkey, chocolate and mince pies that are floating about? Certainly not me. Therefore, it is an absolute inevitable consequence that you're going to be piling on the pounds over the festive season. And, what better way to hide that extra weight than with an oversized Christmas jumper with a big, jolly Father Christmas or sparkly snowman on the front to divert people's attention.

My style tip? Make the most of the festive season by going and getting yourself the most garish Christmas jumper you can find.

## Loathe them...

Do we really want to look like a tackier version of Blackpool illuminations? I think not.

These days it seems that the motto designers have when producing Christmas jumpers is 'the tackier the better'. I mean, who actually wants a giant, 3D carrot hanging off the front of their jumper? And, why would you want to wear something that lights up? What's more, how do you even wash a jumper with a giant switch inside of it? I have so many questions about Christmas jumpers and I cannot get my head around why people don't just leave them at the wreath-laden door.

Also, are they really that comfy? I don't know about you but I don't want to be sat eating my turkey and sweating like a pig in a blanket. I'd much rather be eating my Christmas dinner at a comfortable temperature in something a bit more appropriate. On top of that, Christmas jumpers always seem to be made from the itchiest material possible and you are bound to get an uncomfortable rash. Personally, I really do not think the Christmas jumper is worth the pain.

I think it is time that we question whether it is worth spending so much money on a jumper that can only be worn once a year.

# A Day in Our Shoes

**You wear them everyday, your outfit wouldn't be complete without them and they're fashion's most important accessory: shoes.**

**Whichever kind and whatever size, they're undeniably important in the fashion world and our daily lives. There's a pair for almost every scenario, whether you're going to a party, running or going to the beach — shoes complete your every outfit.**

**This week, Style Editor's Sara AlHumiri and Stephanie Waring, take you on a walk around the best items to pair with your outfit.**



## **NMD\_R1 Primeknit Shoes—Adidas £149.95**

My personal go-to; a fashion fave. Adidas' NMD's have taken storm of the shoe markets since they were first released, and were heavily influenced and used within 'streetwear' styling. They're comfortable, easy to style, trendy and have a wide variety of colours – the downside? The price tag.



## **Hot Toddy Pointed Boots - Topshop £59**

Red-Hot and flamboyant. What more could you want from a shoe? I was obsessed with the vinyl fabric of the boots, an in-style fabric this season– but was also drawn in by the pop of red. These pair of boots would be fine for the winter, ignoring the killer heel – but the price tag makes me think, are they worth it? Statement shoes are also the type of shoe to get thrown at the back of the closet because they aren't practical, no matter how pretty. However, if you've got the courage and the extra cash, what've you got to lose?



## **Bonbon Kitten Heel Boots — Topshop £36**

Kitten heels. Like marmite: some hate them, some love them. I, however, believe they're the perfect in-between; the same feeling and look of a normal heel, minus the sore feet. This Topshop pair is unique not only because of the mini-heel, but the sock like fabric and beautiful silver/grey shade of the boot. The price tag is just an added bonus.



## **Luna Bow Loafers — Topshop £29**

On the theme of comfort, trying on these slide/loafers was a dream in comparison to the black pom-pom heels. I loved these bow loafers! They were super easy to wear and neutral colour and style makes them easy to coordinate to a number of different outfits. Too bad they're not winter-friendly.



## **Pom Pom Court Shoes — Topshop £42**

These pretty little pumps looked like a dream, but felt like a nightmare. If you're like me and can't walk a line in a pair of heels to save your life, then unfortunately these shoes just aren't for you. The *Clueless*-vibes that I got from these pumps were to die for and would have made them a worthy-purchase – if it weren't for the heel part.





### Adidas Superstar £79

The first store we stopped in was JD sports where I tried on one of my all-time favourites, the Adidas superstars. They usually retail from around £50 to £100 depending on the edition and design. The practicality and comfort of these shoes means they can be worn every day and with so many colours to choose from they never become boring. I currently have a red striped pair and plain white so I decided to try on the pink velvet which I thought would be a good edition for spring/summer shoes or even useful for brightening up your winter wardrobe. I would recommend these shoes to any friend in search of a perfect everyday trainer.

### Anabella Point Chelsea Boots — Office £49

Next we went into Office where I saw these cute flower embroidered boots. I really liked the contrast of the flower pattern against the black suede of the boot as it made a normal ankle boot so much more exciting. The heel also wasn't too high meaning walking around in them for a day would be manageable. The only downside of these shoes was that they weren't very flexible on the feet, but for the exciting splash of colour they bring to your wardrobe, I'd say they're worth it.



### KOBBLE Stud Strap Ankle Boots £42.00

I wanted to try on another pair of boots and instantly fell in love with this pair from Topshop. The silver studs and gold buckles stand out against each other yet also work well on the plain black background. The heel wasn't very high which made the boots more comfortable to walk around in and for £42 these boots are a must have for your winter wardrobe. They can be worn to dress up any casual day time outfit or out at night going to bars or a nice restaurant.

### CARAMEL Velvet Trainers £26.00

After browsing through the Topshop shoe selection, I came across this pair of dark magenta velvet sneakers. I love velvet sneakers because of how the material makes one plain colour so much more interesting. The thick white sole definitely makes the shoes more casual however with the gold detailing they are perfect for a smart casual shoe. What I would say about this pair of sneakers is that they weren't as comfortable as the Superstars but for £26 they are a lot more affordable and still really fun.



### MARGARITA Glitter Pointed Stretch Sock Boots £39.00

The last pair of shoes I tried on were these grey sparkly boots. They had a soft sock top to them which made getting them on very easy. The sparkle of the shoes would be perfect to wear to any Christmas or New Year's party; understated but still able to add excitement to an outfit. Although the design and look of these shoes is perfect for winter, they were extremely uncomfortable to walk around in. The stiletto heel is very thin and high meaning they would not be comfortable to wear for more than an hour. At £39 they are affordable but I would only really recommend these shoes to someone who is used to walking in high heels; or to someone who wouldn't need to do much walking in a day!



# When Age is More Than Just a Number

Image: BBC

**Whilst male actors often have no issues finding work later in life, actresses are rarely afforded the same luxury. Arts writer, Aneeka Hussain, investigates the intersection between ageism and sexism in the film industry.**

The clock is ticking. You're getting older and suddenly childhood is a fleeting moment far behind you. You reassure yourself that it's okay to age 'gracefully'. However, for those in the public eye it's a completely different matter, especially for actresses who have to deal with the constant misogyny of the male gaze. They must endure worldwide criticism of their appearance as it has become an expected component of their job. When they are considered 'too old' to play the heroine, they must silently distance themselves from the big screen; after all, it appears that an actress' on-screen success equates only to how desirable she can appear.

The trope of the middle-aged bachelor falling in love with a visibly younger woman— a.k.a. the 'cool girl' – has become one we know all too well. The refreshing, younger woman transforms him into a new man. She does his laundry for him, she cleans the lad pad and makes him breakfast—she's the trophy wife he so desperately needs. He's too interesting and misunderstood to be considered old. His every mistake is justified because he's battling with his own demons. It's okay for him to be spontaneous, to seek fun but most importantly, to be free. The man's ability to speak openly and freely is a privilege taken away from several actresses, in the roles they play and in real life. The younger woman is solely viewed as his achievement rather than an individual in her own right. Her presence in the story is only vital because it elevates the man's position.

We've all probably had the misfortune of coming across a real-life version of Daniel Cleaver at some point or the other. The ones who get away with being the dashing, eligible, young bachelor. It's become a common occurrence to see men pampered in their childhood, first by their mother and later by their wife. They're never told that they have to be mature, which slowly leads to the rise of the 'manbaby'. This is why we're still forced to endure the repetitive storyline where middle-aged actors play the cool, hip protagonist, who most definitely will end up with the love of their life. Whereas as soon as a woman hits the age of 40, her roles are immediately restricted to that of a mother. Her Bond days are over but the old man's are only just starting. Movies like *Bridget Jones' Diary* clearly display the female protagonist struggling to be taken seriously. This is because she's single. To add further spice to the dinner party gossip, she's considered too old to still be single. The men that undertake the role of the adventurous and mysterious hero

have permission to grow old. Yet, the woman they fall in love with must be considerably younger in order for the movie to be successful. This has become a norm in the industry and says volumes about society's acceptance towards men with such low prospects.

By holding different rules for single men and women, we are perpetuating damaging notions about age and acceptance. This reveals the suffocating reality of ageism. It is often overlooked and viewed simply as a side-effect of being in an industry that pays close attention to every physical alteration. As women start getting older, their opportunity's significantly narrow. This clearly highlights that as a society, we have very narrow personalities if we can so easily dismiss their high level of expertise. Sadly this has become an everyday experience for many actresses. Especially after having children, they are often made to feel that their career must take a backseat. When they should be supported in the same way as men, they are instead turned away from roles that they would be perfect for.

**“By holding different rules for single men and women, we are perpetuating damaging notions about age and acceptance.”**

One thing that everyone does agree on is Morgan Freeman's apparent immunity to the aging process. His vast experience makes him an excellent actor who has successfully stood the test of time. Similarly, Sir Ian McKellen has shown there's nothing he can't do – be that onstage or onscreen. What about the experienced actresses though? Actresses like Julie Walter are forgotten because they no

longer fit the ideal of the 'cool girl'. Despite her being a professional in her field, she is not regarded with the same esteem as her male counterparts. The film industry severely lacks in writing the same varying roles for women as they seem to have no problem doing for men.

Clearly, it's time to stop contributing to the spread of manbabies and ensure that everyone is given equal opportunities regardless of age. We should view actors and actresses in the same light by examining their talent rather than categorising them by age and appearance. There are different rules for casting men and women which must be undermined to ensure that there is fair representation of both.

Aneeka Hussain



# Robert Pattinson Shines in the Safdie Brothers' 'Good Time'



Image: Vulture

**Good Time, the Safdie Brothers' new A24-distributed crime-thriller, kicks into action with an understated daylight bank heist.**

After the money is exchanged via scribbled notes of threat, a concealed dye-pack leads to a crashed car and a pair of robbers on the run: our protagonist Constantine 'Connie' Nikas (Robert Pattinson) and his brother Nick, who has a learning disability (director Ben Safdie). The latter is quickly detained, with Connie's ensuing maelstrom of an attempt to break him out of jail becoming the film's 'one rough night' tale.

The explosive opener is nothing more than a set-up for the uncomfortable, clammy events to follow. Bennie and Josh Safdie don't care for car chases and shootouts. Their view of New York brings to the forefront the gritty sideline-occupiers of those stories and displays them with an intensity we didn't know they warranted. That intensity comes most overtly in the film's style; the NY suburbs are bathed here in red-blue neon hue, with sweaty faces shot in frame-filling telephoto lenses to the sound of Oneohtrix Point Never's pounding synth score. Unflinching performances of moral repugnancy and desperation are staged at odds with this mystical, enchanting haze, and we anxiously inhabit the liminal space between.

The mascot of *Good Time*'s foggy morality comes in the form of Robert Pattinson's Connie. In Connie's

eyes, committing robbery with Nick in tow is more beneficial to him than the therapy sessions he pulls his brother from; "Are you feeling what I'm feeling right now?" Connie excitedly asks, post heist. He loves his brother for sure, but it's a love drenched in toxicity. Exploiting others to deeply cringe-inducing extents, the panicked narrative allows this small-time hustler a surprising amount of murky depth, and he's played to perfection by the American-accented, hooded, bleach blond man one would hesitate to call Robert Pattinson. This proves to be a superior thread in the actor's string of uncommercial post-*Twilight* career moves. Gritty and mad-eyed, all memories of twinkling vampires disintegrate as we're left with a powerhouse performance of early DeNiro calibre. His stare pincers the soul.

A harsh story of brotherly love, book-ended by one of the year's most heart-wrenching final scenes, *Good Time* triumphs as a piece of both zealous style and affecting substance. It casts its neon light on the least-Hollywood corners of American crime with incredibly-directed execution – you won't forget this *Good Time* in a long time.

Elliot Gaynon

## Theatre Group Offer a Fresh Take on Shakespeare's 'Macbeth'

**Featuring a strong cast, excellent production and a modern interpretation of the Shakespeare classic, Theatre Group's 'Macbeth' is a success.**

Ella Kennedy's *Macbeth* warps the classic tragedy into a narrative of underground secrecy, forming a corporate world peppered with criminality below a surface of tough professionalism. Suited up, and fuelled with narcotics, Macbeth's infamously ferocious power drive is manifested in a setting of business competitiveness, where the top spot can only be achieved through sheer inhumanity. It's a cut-throat take on the original tale, and an impressive display of Theatre Group's ability to rework and contemporise Shakespeare.

With a minimal set and an icy, electronic soundtrack, the aesthetics of the show are stark and create an unwelcoming sense of discomfort in Pyramid Theatre's in-the-round stage space. Upon entering, the three witches' (Tife Kusoro, Emma Powell and Emelia Jack) snake-like physicality introduces an atmosphere far from the fantasy world of pointy hats, broomsticks and cackles. Kennedy's witches are a creepy rework of often stereotyped characters. Grooming Macbeth (Calum O'Toole) with their fleshy embraces, they embody an alien, yet somehow sensual, image of female persuasion, later magnified by the femme-fatale figure of Anna Thrussell as Lady Macbeth.

O'Toole's smiles and enthusiasm in the opening scenes introduce him as a surprisingly likeable Macbeth, offering ample opportunity to contrast

this sanity with his later murderous hysteria. It's a unique reflection of the character that invites us to question the psychology of his motivations, demonstrating Kennedy's loyalty to the script's thematic content. This directorial attention to the play's key questions is also demonstrated through Anna Thrussell's handling of Lady Macbeth's feminine authority.



Image: Theatre Group

Costumed in a timelessly smart black dress, Thrussell's wordless aura of prestige as Lady Macbeth balances the notorious female's short-tempered dominance over her husband with a sense of womanly attraction. She creates an uber-powerful image of power without sacrificing the play's toying with themes of femininity, a fantastic portrayal of an incredibly multi-layered role. Thrussell's chemistry with O'Toole onstage offers some of the play's most entertaining moments: the well-known persuasion speech as Macbeth backtracks on his plan to murder Duncan sees the pair explore dynamics of gender and power, with O'Toole diminished by Thrussell's female prowess.

With fantastic acting and an overall aura of darkness throughout, Theatre Group's *Macbeth* is cleverly modernised without losing grip on the poignant themes that have immortalized this tragedy. I look forward to seeing them tackle less commercially popular Shakespeare in the future.

Katherine Corcoran



# Are We Having a Period Revolution?



Image: Huffington Post UK

## You may remember a certain photograph of Rupi Kaur's that was taken down initially by Instagram under terms of 'violating community standards'.

The photo was of Kaur herself, lying on a bed with a few, small splodges of blood on her clothes and bed sheets. She was fully clothed, posted on a site that would allow only those following her to see the image, and it was neither malicious nor discriminatory. Yet it was banned twice by the social media site, and caused a backlash of debate, even fury, in commenters and the press. To me, a person with a uterus who has periods, it just looked like a familiar image of my dreaded second day of bleeding.

Two years on from this incident, and more challenges to the obscene treatment of menstruation in the media are being made. Stockholm's metro art has recently been updated with a new installation. Graphic artist Liv Strömquist has added a series of sketches, entitled *The Night Garden*, to the walls of Slussens station. Her work includes images of nature, animals, pastoral landscapes, and people – some of whom are visibly menstruating. One of her cartoons gently reassures onlookers, "it's alright, I'm only bleeding".

Criticisers of Strömquist's work have argued that they don't want to be forced to think about menstruation on the subway on their way to work. One commuter was outraged by the thought of having to explain to her four year old the spot of blood on one of the supposed otherwise family friendly dancers. Nevertheless menstruation, by nature, belongs in the everyday. On the train. At a meeting. Sitting an exam. We don't have a choice but to get on with our ordinary lives, with or without a period. Periods are not too overwhelming or gruesome to be reminded about on your commute to work. Plenty of them are happening right now. Chances are, if I'm on my period, I'm already thinking about them.

By bringing these harmless and completely natural images to our metros and galleries we are reinforcing the normality of a bodily function that happens to half the bodies in the world. How are we teaching young, developing people to love and accept their bodies if we

shun representation or even acknowledgment of an integral part of so many of them?

Also seeking to remove some of the taboo surrounding menstruation is *Period Piece*, a multimedia show that forms part of the pop-up events being held at the new Science Gallery London. Creator of the project, academic Dr Alana Harris, aims to explore the natural rhythms of women's bodies in relation to technology such as contraception and period tracking apps. In addition to holograms and film footage, the piece will involve biometrically-derived choral music for participants to listen to the rhythms.

In reaction to these projects, words like offensive, disgusting and unnecessary have been thrown endlessly around. However, none of the artists discussed have intended their work to be insulting or provocative. When they have explained their work, similar ideas of openness and empowerment, even celebration, are discussed – isn't menstruation a key part of what enables us to give life after all? Isn't that incredible? So then, it seems this is necessary. The way in which we think and communicate about menstruation is archaic, ignorant and deeply rooted in shame. Isn't the disgusted reaction of people testament to the fact that menstruation is still viewed as something that needs to be hidden, almost as if to deny its existence?

Although these period artworks are still being met with some of the same incredulous cries of disgust and disdain, Stockholm Transport Company SL are staying with their decision to show Strömquist's work, and Kaur's photograph remains on Instagram after they eventually restored it to the site. The constant censorship of anything remotely truthful to the experience of menstruation is getting tiring, but art is proving to be a growingly unstoppable force to fight this.

Natasha Lyons

**"The way in which we think and communicate about menstruation is archaic, ignorant and deeply rooted in shame."**



# The Battle of the Titans: Marvel and DC's Cinematic Universes



**With the release of ‘Justice League’, DC’s plan for an expansive cinematic universe has been set in motion. But how do their films compare to the Marvel Cinematic Universe, and what makes them so different?**

Marvel and DC Entertainment are two powerhouse franchises that always seem to be placed in opposition with one another. It seems as though those who like superhero films have to subscribe to a binary choice between the two. For many, the casual viewing of superhero movies is a thing of the past and with so many impassioned fans, answering such a question can lead you to partaking in a three hour character debate or film comparison, all of which is fun, but raises the question as to why these two franchises are constantly pitted against each other – is one really better than the other?

In terms of popularity and success, I would argue that Marvel definitely has the edge. *Iron Man* (2008) marked the rebirth of comic book movies, starting a cinematic universe that would end up characterising almost a whole decade of film, bringing us the “Golden Age” of superhero movies, dominating the box office and injecting a fresh new take on comic book movies of the past. While Marvel gets credit for driving this trend, DC has put out some enjoyable movies, with the success of *Wonder Woman* (2017) being the first one to really set itself up as competition for Marvel. With the recent release of *Justice League* (2017), there will no doubt be a resurgence of this debate as DC attempts to do what Marvel did all those years ago with *The Avengers* in 2012 in the uniting of its key characters, and has done masterfully ever since. This is not to say Marvel movies don’t have their flaws, there is no doubt that some are definitely better than others; however DC never seems to be consistent and this is a drawback which leaves it always one step behind Marvel.

Focusing on the movies of Marvel and DC rather than the television programmes, what Marvel triumphs at is creating movies which manage to balance humour with action and emotional poignancy. A great example of this is the first *Guardians of the Galaxy* (2014) movie, which combines an epic soundtrack, fun characters, awesome action sequences and moments of real emotional investment. This tonal balance is something that is hard to pull off successfully, something evidenced when DC released *Suicide Squad*, a jumbled mess which gave us little character development, a soundtrack that tried to copy *Guardians of the Galaxy* but just didn’t make sense, and a plot that was

altogether unforgettable. DC’s attempt at humour did not go down well in this movie, something which was reflected in its reviews, and showed them incapable of achieving that balance which Marvel has seemed to master. This is a criticism that DC movies often face; while their movies are supposed to be dark and gritty, sometimes they just take themselves too seriously, giving you the intensity without the relief and therefore only half of what Marvel movies offer to viewers.

What Marvel also offers is relatable, flawed characters who are grounded in reality and many fans feel that DC does not treat its source material in the same respectful manner. Perhaps why people are so critical about movies such as *Batman vs Superman* (2016) is because we’ve seen the likes of Batman be so skilfully portrayed on our screens already (no, I am not referring to Clooney’s role in *Batman & Robin*). Christopher Nolan’s *Dark Knight* trilogy gave us some of the most iconic portrayals of comic book characters ever to grace our screens and it is hard sometimes not to compare this with DC’s less accredited attempts, despite their aim to do something different with the characters at their disposal. This lack of invention is something which really pulls DC back and the recent success of *Thor: Ragnarok* shows just how important it is to keep your characters fresh and offer fans something they have not seen before. Marvel’s increased output and clear direction has allowed them to expand into different genres and it sometimes seems like DC is trying so hard to rush and catch up with Marvel, it means that films like *Suicide Squad* seem disjointed and miss the mark.

Marvel’s studio chief has labelled this divide as “ridiculous”, encouraging people to enjoy all movies and not create this constant comparison. However this is hard to do, especially now both Marvel and DC have really started to develop their respective cinematic universes. Although, while Marvel has the edge at the moment, this may not always be the case and either way it is exciting to see what the next instalments will bring.





# Stop Appropriating Cultural Appropriation



Image: LeAnne Chan

The term 'cultural appropriation' is often met by many with a smirk or an eye-roll. The term has become almost synonymous with 'political correctness gone mad', and is now mostly eliciting responses of derision or anger, detracting from the fact that it is actually a serious issue. It's now being applied to pretty much any kind of cultural output, from fashion to music to slang, and creates a culture in which people feel attacked for anything and everything they do or say. It seems that every other day throws up something else deemed to be 'problematic', be it hooped earrings or even Vans, and it's all too easy to start making fatalistic statements.

The problem lies in the fact that the discourse surrounding cultural appropriation has become overly trivialistic, intent on 'banning' everyday items, leading people to view cultural appropriation as more of a dogmatic list governing people's behaviour, rather than focusing on why these things are problematic in the first place. There's a lack of nuance in the debate, which is dangerous – it can result in people dismissing cultural appropriation as trivial, oversensitive nonsense. In the worst cases, these misunderstandings can result in people thinking that the aim of cultural appropriation's critics is to prevent any kind of cultural mixing at all, and to have a bland, monocultural ethnostate, where no elements of other cultures are to be found anywhere. Ironically, this idea is perhaps closer to an alt-right vision of the world, eerily recalling Richard Spencer's dream of a world where each race has their own nation state, and there is no cultural mixing beyond borders. It's this misconception that leads people to see cultural appropriation as an attack on multiculturalism and freedom of expression, which of course, couldn't be further from the liberal, left-wing progressive ideals of those who call out cultural appropriation in the first place. The term has been so stretched and distorted that it's in danger of losing its original meaning and potency; that is, to encourage people to treat other cultures with respect.

The fact is, cultural appropriation is a complex subject, and requires some element of thought, nuance and sensitivity. As K. Tempest Bradford writes in NPR, "cultural appropriation can feel hard to get a handle on, because boiling it down to a two-sentence dictionary definition does nobody any favors." Cultural appropriation is not, and has never been about the outright banning of appreciating and sharing

other cultures. The problem comes when people start 'borrowing' from other cultures without any acknowledgement of the meaning, history and significance behind those cultural practices, as well as the implications their 'borrowing' might have. The most common and fundamental misunderstanding often comes from a lack of understanding of the power structures at play, and how these have an impact on when cultural appreciation becomes cultural appropriation, or even exploitation. Firstly, they create double standards, for example, when a white person wears dreadlocks it's seen as 'cool' or 'edgy', whereas black people face discrimination for wearing the very same hairstyle that was created by and belongs to their culture. Secondly, borrowing from other cultures without being respectful towards the history and significance of the item in question only serves to undermine those cultures, and perpetuate a narrow, surface-level stereotype of the cultures in question. This can be seen with the countless trends 'borrowed' from Native American cultures, such as headdresses, dreamcatchers and feathers, which almost always so far removed from the tribe in which they originated that they simply come under the generic 'Native American' label, further propelling the myth that all Native American cultures are the same.

Cultural appropriation is by no means a way of shutting down people's fun and preventing us from celebrating other cultures; it's more of an appeal for people to treat other cultures with sensitivity and respect. The aim should be to raise awareness of where certain trends originate, and to credit marginalised creators for art and cultural output that would have otherwise been attributed to the (often white) people who have appropriated them. It's not as simple as not being able to wear something, but rather about why you want to wear it in the first place – is it just because it looks cool and different? Would you still be willing wear it if you had to experience the prejudice and discrimination that comes with being a person from that culture?

It's time to take cultural appropriation back to its roots, if you will, and to recognise its original meaning and intentions. Thinking about cultural appropriation requires nuance, critical engagement, a willingness to learn, and above all to listen to and learn from those whose cultures are marginalised.

Ananya Sriram

**"It's time to take cultural appropriation back to its roots."**



# Kevin Spacey's House of Cards is Collapsing

Following the dozens of women who have recently spoken out against Harvey Weinstein, further accusations are appearing, this time from men, regarding the sexually inappropriate behaviour of Oscar-winner, Kevin Spacey.



Image: Daily Mirror

Amid new sexual assault allegations, Netflix has announced the cancellation of the Emmy-nominated *House of Cards*. The political drama will end after its sixth season which is set to air in 2018. Netflix have further announced that they will not be releasing the film *Gore*, starring and produced by Spacey.

*Star Trek: Discovery* actor, Anthony Rapp, in an interview with BuzzFeed, stated that in 1986 Spacey made sexual advances towards him at the young age of 14. Spacey responded on twitter apologising and claiming that although he did not remember the incident it must have been “deeply inappropriate drunken behaviour”. Spacey, also for the first time, publically announced that, “I now choose to live as a gay man”, timing that has been met with criticism as Spacey almost appears to be attempting to justify his actions with this announcement.

As saddening as these allegations are, they don't come as a shock. It seems that the entertainment industry is rife with male entitlement, with both men and women speaking out about their experiences more and more frequently.

However, despite these allegations, it seems as though the careers of the perpetrators don't suffer much. This begs the question of whether justice is ever served in these situations? We've seen many occasions in which men in the entertainment industry have committed crimes of abuse and have thrived nonetheless. Take Chris Brown, for example, who, despite Rihanna, has gone on to have a successful

singing career with his most recent release, 'Questions', doing well in the charts. Similarly, Johnny Depp, after being accused of domestic abuse by Amber Heard, also seems to be immune from castigation, starring in the greatly anticipated *Murder on the Orient Express*.

Disheartening as it is, men in the entertainment industry often appear to be given special treatment and are rarely severely reprimanded for their wrong-doings. Moreover, when such allegations are made we frequently hear about the offenders getting 'treatment' as though they are in some way ill and therefore not responsible for their actions. This has been seen with both Weinstein and Spacey who are reportedly getting treatment for sex addiction. It is no surprise that victims are so reluctant to come forward with their stories and it is a testament to their bravery when they do.

In the case of Spacey it is yet to be seen how these allegations will affect his acting career, although from past experiences of similar situations we can't say we have much hope of justice being served.

Zoë Louca

## Divine Names - Luay Abdul-ilah

This week you should treat your shelf with a novel published by Leeds' very own Mira Publishing House. If you are looking for a book to read over the holidays that has a little more substance than the average holiday read then why not give *Divine Names* a try.

Written by Luay Abdul-ilah, *Divine Names* is a modern tale regarding the possibilities of being. The novel was originally published in Arabic under a different title: *Comedy of Divine Love*. It tells the story of a group of Iraqi expats in the 1950's living in London and how their lives link and intertwine. As a result, you get four books in one with characters whose lives have been turned upside down.

For the characters in this novel, Iraq, or at least the abstract idea of an idealised and stylised Iraq, is what keeps them alive; while the reality of Iraq kills them, in both physical and spiritual terms. Abdulilah manages to capture complex human emotions throughout the book exploring guilt, anxiety and nostalgia. The to-ing and fro-ing between moments in time, characters and narratives is bound to keep your attention.

Mira Publishing House is a Leeds based publisher who promote an international understanding through the translation and publishing of a variety of literatures from all over the world, they should certainly be on your radar.

Bella Davis

Treat  
Your  
Shelf





# Have a very Thrifty Christmas!

**Christmas is fast approaching and it's the priciest time of the year for most, with the average UK household spending £753 on festivities. Following these money-saving tips won't guarantee a spend-free holiday, but they may help you to cope on a student budget.**

1

## **Book Train Tickets In Advance**

Spontaneously booking your train home for Christmas seems tempting, but some forward-planning could save you a whole lot of cash. For example, one-way Leeds-to-London tickets are now available via thetrainline from £16 on the days leading up to Christmas. These prices will sky-rocket on the day. Ask friends and housemates when they are travelling home so that you can plan your own journey. This way, you can avoid both breaking the bank and missing out on that final group trip to Fruity.

2

## **Be Gift-Wrapping Savvy**

Why is it that, when you need festive wrapping paper, the only roll in the house is one with 'Happy Birthday' scrawled across it in gaudy colours? Invest in some generic (but fabulous) paper which is appropriate for use all year round; this way, you'll only have to buy one roll instead of two or more. Sparkly silver or gold is always a winner. For an extra thrifty wrapping tip, cut out sections from the front of last year's Christmas cards and use them as gift tags.

3

## **Get Creative**

You probably can't get away with gifting your parents a macaroni masterpiece anymore, but that doesn't mean that all handmade presents are off the cards. Last year, my friend made each member of our group a small bottle of vodka flavoured with our favourite sweet. Although I found my friend's liquorice flavour slightly questionable, we all drank our bottles dry. There are also numerous recipes for homemade chocolate, sweets and savoury snacks online. Package these in a pretty, personalised box and you have the perfect gift for the whole family.

4

## **Create Budgets and Cut Out Any Unnecessary Gift Buying**

Christmas is a time for love and generosity but it is easy to get carried away and completely overspend on gifts. If you don't plan on hand-making presents, create a strict budget for each friend and family member and stick to it. In addition, be ruthless about the number of people who you decide to buy for. Ask yourself: does Noreen from down the road really need that new shower gel set? If it suits you, make a pact with your friends to skip buying expensive gifts for each other and, instead, plan a fun activity to celebrate the holiday season together. A night out drinking cocktails, or even a night in watching movies, is likely to be equally, if not more, appreciated than a material gift.

5

## **Build Up Loyalty Points and Spend Unused Vouchers**

Pick up loyalty cards from your favourite shops and accumulate points to spend on gifts or Christmas dinner when you buy for yourself. Admittedly, these points take a while to build up for only a small reward, but every little helps. Also, stop receiving vouchers through the post, stuffing them in a drawer, and forgetting about them. Although some will be useless, you may find some gems if you dig through these. Websites like [moneysavingexpert.com](http://moneysavingexpert.com), [wowcher.co.uk](http://wowcher.co.uk) and [vouchercode.co.uk](http://vouchercode.co.uk) also have an abundance of excellent deals.

6

## **Start Planning For Next Christmas**

It may seem extreme to already be thinking about next year but there are benefits to effective pre-planning. As soon as this year's festivities are over, shops will slash the price of their leftover Christmas stock to a fraction of what it originally cost. Not only does this mean that pigs in blankets and mince pies are going to be cheap as chips, but non-perishable items will also be reduced. Decorations, lights, crackers, cards, can be snapped up for a tiny sum so the stress of next year will be slightly reduced.

Sticking to these tips will help you enjoy a less stressful holiday season. You may even have some spare change for a couple of extra Christmas pints at the pub! And if all else fails, regifting that terrible, unwanted Secret Santa gift is always an option.

Lily Mead



# The Secret to Nailing Secret Santa

**Christmas is almost here and with it comes Secret Santa. Miranda takes a look at how to solve the problem of finding the right gift this holiday.**



Image: Allwording

For many, Secret Santa is a dreaded moment of the Christmas period, where you end up getting a present you don't want and giving one to someone you don't like. A tough time lies ahead for all. However, there are some secret hints and tips to help you make it through.

Firstly, stick to the budget. No one likes that one show-off who splashes the cash and makes everyone else with their £5 festive Primark socks look bad.

Next, choose your shops wisely. Most university Secret Santa's have a budget of £20 tops. This greatly limits the shops you can enter without being tempted to go over budget so stick to the shops with sales, student discounts and low-price reputations.

Then, when choosing presents, buy lots of cheap presents rather than one expensive and disappointing one. This works on so many levels. You please the gift-receivers because they get to shake, prod and open multiple bundles of joy. Here, an extended session of gift-induced excitement is born and, in the end, it doesn't even matter what was in the parcels because they've just had so much fun opening them that they don't care anymore.

Gift wrapping is also key to a successful Secret Santa experience. The bigger the bow the more brownie points you will earn because it looks like you "really made an effort". So, save that extra 50p and sprinkle a bit of festive glitter in the card.

Key tip: everyone loves novelty festive memorabilia. Don't worry about finding that person you don't really know a vase for their collection, get them a novelty turkey hat and watch the hours of laughs unfold. This technique has the added bonus that, because it isn't personalised, you can buy it before you even know who your Secret Santa is! You could even buy the gift in the after-Christmas sale and be ready 364 days in advance which is bound to make you feel like you've really got your life together!

If you follow these tips, you'll definitely nail Secret Santa in terms of your own benefit. If you were looking for criteria on how to genuinely bring joy to your Secret Santa recipients, then I can only apologise that you have been drawn in, but you will not have found this here.

Miranda Wild

# A trip to Leeds Christmas Market

**Deciding whether or not to visit the Leeds Christmas market? Let Jennifer Spence tempt you with mulled wine, garlic bread and all things sweet.**

For me, the opening of the *Christkindelmarkt* at Millennium Square marks the beginning of Christmas at University. With its arrival on November 10th (it's never too early), the market attracts a mix of families, students, and locals. But considering most of us students live in the Hyde Park area, is it really worth the trek?

Since my first time experiencing Leeds markets was last year I can draw some comparisons and my verdict for this year is... slightly disappointing. I don't know what I was expecting, but I at least thought there would be some variation from last year.

The market is small and is configured in such a way that it creates congestion, even at off-peak times. The stalls were not only selling the same old items, but were located in the exact positions as last year - I got a real sense of déjà vu! Not exactly exciting for a returning visitor. The German food stalls and makeshift *Bier Keller* are indeed lovely, but their queues are ridiculous. Who wants to be stood around that long at Leeds in wintertime?

Nevertheless, Leeds would be sad at Christmas without the German market, and it's a great escape from studying. I promise I'm not Scrooge! If you're a keen garlic bread lover like me, be sure to stop at that stall. It sells garlic bread with melted cheese and garlic sauce, my dream! The prices aren't too bad either: I got 100g of fudge for £2.50. However, drinks prices are another story. Around £4.50 for a mulled wine that you have to wait half an hour for - it's a no from me.

Despite my criticisms, if you're a first-timer, the market is still definitely worth a visit. Just avoid weekends unless you want to be trampled on by kids and catch hypothermia waiting in those gigantic queues. My final tip is be sure not to eat before you visit as the array of food is irresistible and you absolutely need to have room in your belly for pretzels, bratwursts, crepes, chocolate, and more!

Jennifer Spence



Image: Leeds Bars





# A Right to Life?

**Due to abortions, only one or two babies with Down syndrome are born each year in Iceland, and the country is not alone in having high termination rates. Rosie Plummer discusses the moral implications of aborting a Down syndrome foetuses.**

Down Syndrome is a genetic condition, which causes distinguishable physical characteristics and a variety of learning disabilities. The condition is usually caused by an extra chromosome in a baby's cells, and can therefore be detected before birth. In the UK, all mothers are offered screening for Down syndrome in their unborn child. Women who discover that their child has the syndrome are encouraged to meet with specialists to prepare themselves for life as a mother, however, many women choose instead to abort the child after learning of its condition.

In researching this article, I was perhaps naively surprised to discover that the argument for preventing Down abortions has become politicised by Pro-Life activists. Almost every link I clicked on relating to Down's-abortions invited me to donate \$20 to prevent 'the murder of babies'. So perhaps I should clarify that I am pro-choice, as I genuinely believe that women should be allowed to have control over their own bodies. However, sometimes aborting a child with Down syndrome is

not a choice made by women purely to reclaim their bodies, but a choice made out of prejudice and fear.

Activist Frank Stephens recently called on Congress to recognise children with Down syndrome's right to exist. In the speech which Stephens made before Congress on October 27th, he called for society to stop seeing Down's as a problem. Stephens focused especially on the link between the condition and Alzheimer's as a justification for each child's life, but arguably it was the first part of his speech which was most moving. He declared, "I am a man with Down syndrome and my life is worth living".

Many children with Down syndrome (as Stephens' own life demonstrates) go on to live happy and successful lives. Indeed, a recent Harvard study that Stephens referred to, notes that such children and their families are actually happier on average than other members of society. Children with disabilities can be loved and valued as individuals, just like everyone else. The narrative that such people are 'unnatural', that it makes

life for those living with the condition not worthwhile, and that having a child with the condition necessarily makes life worse for the carers should be challenged.

I believe that women who genuinely feel unable to cope with the challenges that having a child with Down syndrome may bring should be free to abort, but equally I believe that governments, such as Iceland, Denmark and South Korea, should not be actively encouraging these practices. These governments are reinforcing the misconception that these children are a 'problem'. They are not a 'problem' and therefore they do not need 'curing', and they definitely do not need destroying. Society needs to re-educate itself about this condition in order to adapt and become more inclusive of individuals with Down syndrome, rather than create a world in which they do not exist.

**Rosie Plummer**



# Hashtag Social Media

**Hannah talks about the power of social media, reminding us that despite its many faults, it has enabled a tremendous amount of good.**

Our generation's dependence on social media could be compared to an addiction. It plays into all aspects of life: what we wear, eat and even who we date. Rather than taking someone at face value, we immediately 'cyber stalk' them to gain as much information as possible. A person's life on social media, to many, is now more important than the one they are actually living. However, whilst there are obvious negatives to us being glued to our phones, recently, scrolling through Facebook/ Twitter/ Instagram, we have seen the positive power of social media.

Two weeks ago, no one could go through their feed or read any news without seeing #MeToo. Within the first 48 hours, those two simple words had been used over a million times on Twitter and had created 12 million comments and reactions on Facebook.

The horrifying truth is that at least a quarter of all women and girls have experienced sexual harassment, sexual assault or rape. The Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network (RAINN) reports that 23.1% of female undergraduate students will be raped or

sexually assaulted through physical force, violence or incapacitation. Even now, in 2017, some people are still getting confused about consent, so it's about time that the subject that has been broached and the magnitude of the problem is increasingly being revealed.

Alyssa Milano challenged everyone to share their story, and whilst many did not, the widespread visibility of the hashtag spoke volumes. Sexual assault occurs every 98 seconds, but only 0.6% of offenders will end up in prison. The power of social media may allow for boys and girls, men and women to change this.

Another example of the positive power of social media is the reaction and support that was shown after the Grenfell Tower fire. During the first 24 hours people offered lodgings and support over Facebook, and used Twitter to share helplines and make donations. The fire was filmed and photographed by thousands on Snapchat and Instagram, to the extent that initially there was more live footage and reports on social media than on mainstream news.

Social media allows for unedited versions of events to circulate long before they reach conventional news channels, and for these events to remain in public discourse long after they take place. Throughout the Notting Hill carnival, #Justice4Grenfell was displayed everywhere, and even now #Grenfell is the 14th most tweeted hashtag. The sociologist John Thompson also states how it is now "more difficult for political actors to throw a veil of secrecy around their activities" as more information and images are available in the public domain.

Social media has a bad reputation. It is the root of an antisocial population, but it also creates a community. It is a platform for extremist groups to have their voices heard, but also shows that they are in the minority. It presents unhealthy body images but allows us to see, share and understand societies that otherwise we might never have known. If change, support, and compassion can result from scrolling through my Twitter feed, then I will not complain.

**Hannah Simpson-Orlebar**





# Modern Matchmaking



**Ten million people use Tinder everyday, but do they know how the app is using them? Blogs Editor, Mariana Avelino, examines how technology and design can influence how we think and the decisions we make.**

Initially introduced as a matchmaking app in 2012, Tinder has since been labelled a casual sex app, criticised for promoting shallowness and condemned for enabling promiscuity. Its bad reputation comes from the discourse of many journalists, scholars, and members of the public, though, admittedly, this rhetoric is changing as the app becomes increasingly mainstream and more people are finding long-term relationship partners through it.

A study published in 2016 in the *Journal of Telematics and Informatics* found that Tinder is used for a variety of reasons, including entertainment, self-validation, casual sex, and love. This study reminds us that technology doesn't have an agenda, it is humans who determine how technology is used. Nonetheless, we mustn't overlook the important ways in which Tinder is influencing users' decisions. Technology isn't in complete control, but neither are people.

Consider Tinder's gamification, which simplifies, accelerates, and rewards. The app's UI simplifies decision-making into a binary 'yes' or 'no', it encourages repetitive motions which become fast and automatic (how many times have you accidentally swiped incorrectly for someone just because you were in the groove of swiping left/right?), and it 'unlocks' matches in much the same way a game would reward levelling up. Like a game, it is designed to be easy, fun and addictive. And although there are benefits to making matching convenient and entertaining – nothing like online dating where browsing profiles takes hours and feels like work – the gamification of Tinder is problematic in other ways, especially for users hoping to find long-term partners.

The app's fast pace encourages users to evaluate potential matches very quickly. A study into decision-making by Frost, Chance, Norton and Ariely (2008) has shown

that time-efficient cognitive processes result in people focussing on cues that are easy to evaluate. In other words, cues, such as physical attractiveness, which tend to be the relatively unimportant in the grand scheme of things. It has long been suggested that Tinder prioritises physical attractiveness because of the emphasis it places on photographs. As it turns out, people are capable of accurately assessing subtle traits in others, including warmth and competence, from brief exposures to their pictures, according to a study published in 2000 in the *Journal of Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*. So, the issue is not the photograph, but the fact that Tinder users must make fast decisions. Of course, a partner's physical attractiveness is something people have always considered offline as well, especially during the early stages of a relationship, but there are other cues that come into play, like humour, rapport, and confidence.

Also problematic is Tinder's simplicity, which allows for no middle ground: users must either like a profile or discard it forever within seconds. Finally, Tinder's reward system encourages the quantification of matches, which is complicated for self-esteem. The more a person uses the app, the more they might start swiping for the wrong reason: self-validation.

Tinder doesn't deserve all the bad reputation it gets, but it definitely has its problems. If you use Tinder to meet people you hope to develop a relationship with, I would encourage you not retire from the old-fashioned channels. Chat to new people at events or parties, join societies, and just be sociable in general. We are at university, a place where we are surrounded by people and have plenty of free time on our hands. It'll never be easier to meet others, so why not make the most of it?

**Mariana Avelino**

# Agony Aunt



**"I'm currently experiencing a break up whilst at university, and its hard being away from home. Do you have any advice for how to cope?"**

Break ups are extremely difficult no matter the circumstance and admitting you're having a hard time with it is nothing to be ashamed of. You're going to be hurting during this period, you might even feel like you've lost a part of yourself depending on how long you were in the relationship for, but you have to remember that the pain won't last forever and that you will move on from this. Relationships change us, so you just need to rediscover yourself.

I'm assuming that your home is quite a distance away but if you can, travel back for a weekend. Returning home for a little while can bring a sense of comfort. Your family will be a bastion for you, as will your friends. If it's too far to travel, don't forget about Skype and Facetime. It's not the same as being there in person but it's a lot less disconnected than a phone call.

Take a few days to process your emotions and spend as much time with friends as you can, they will be there to help you through this. Talk through the emotions that you're feeling when you're ready. Until then go watch a few movies and eat some ice-cream or go out for a few drinks with friends. But don't binge, you're meant to feel better, not feel guilty later.

Try to take it easy for a while. But don't stop going to lectures or going out with friends. Your life shouldn't stop because

of what happened. Keep your momentum going and maybe even try something new you've been putting off.

I've seen quite a few people run to Tinder to try to make themselves feel better or just generally go for some rebound sex. It varies from person to person but in general I don't think it's a good idea. You might not realise it at the time but if you do this you're probably just looking for some self-affirmation. You don't need to look for quick gratification in someone else, instead use your time to rediscover things that make you happy.

At the same time don't be scared of the 'rebound' relationship. Just make sure you don't rush into whatever comes up next and that you're getting into it for the right reasons.

If you want some non-judgemental advice, you can always try calling Nightline. They're available throughout the night when other services are closed. When the world is quiet is often the time when we can get stuck in our own minds. Avoid getting bogged down in melancholy and give them a call if you need to.

The main thing I want you to know is that though you may not feel it right now, you'll be okay. Just give yourself time.

**Sam McMaster**





**I did different kinds of dancing — jazz, a bit of ballet, a bit of contemporary and now I'm doing street dance. Yeah, I'm not good in any of them! But it's just a way for me to get busy. I think it's about expressing yourself, and you can be yourself. Usually people don't judge you I guess and yeah, it's just making me happy.**





# Coming Out of Conservatism: Australia's Marriage Equality

Madeline Luke

"Should the law be changed to allow same-sex couples to marry?" – A piece of paper put in my letterbox which determined the course of LGBT+ history in Australia.

On the 14th of November at 11pm, I was refreshing both a live-updates page on *The Guardian* and the Australian Bureau of Statistics website. I hadn't known until a few hours earlier that the survey results would be getting released that day, and I'm thankful that I hadn't. I'd have been a nervous wreck for even longer beforehand.

News of the postal survey on marriage equality received mixed reactions. Many people preferred parliament to have a conscience vote, and while it might have saved time and money, I personally wasn't confident enough that it would pass with our conservative government. If it didn't, we surely wouldn't be seeing marriage equality within the next ten years.

I was more confident in the voluntary postal vote – a watered down version of the initially proposed plebiscite – but it meant more money spent, and months of slander and fear mongering at the expense of the LGBT+ community. Some of my most confident queer friends were torn down and, selfishly, I'm glad my closeted self was out of the country while all this happened.

When we finally got our results, the 61.6% 'yes' majority was conflicting. On the one hand, it was a pass, which finally ripped away the seed of doubt which had grown into weeds within me. As the Coalition for Marriage's campaign rampaged on as the loudest voice against marriage equality, I realised that there was actually a chance that 'no' would be the majority answer. The survey was designed to fail, after all, intentionally undertaken on a medium which would suit the older and more conservative generation: the postal format. Meanwhile, its voluntary nature meant that disenfranchised young people – typically more accepting about LGBT+ matters – may not bother voting.



Image: EILE Magazine

Despite this, we won a majority. Our Prime Minister, Malcolm Turnbull, has announced that marriage equality should become a reality through legislation before Christmas, and that is an absolute victory, especially given that the survey was not legally binding.

However, the result was much closer than it should have been. Rather than filling me with confidence, it felt off-putting. Having confirmed statistics about your country's hate towards you is surreal, even more so when you can break down those figures by electoral division. At least mine is slightly more accepting than average, with 70% of people voting 'yes'. It looks like I only have to be wary of 30% of the people I live near.

Even with the recent triumph, it feels like Australia is, at its core, rigid and unwilling to move away from discriminatory traditions. I've made leaps and bounds with my own sexuality in the past few months that I've been out of the country, but I wonder whether that progress will suffer when I finally return home. I can only hope that when conservative individuals realise that marriage equality has not crumbled the ground beneath them and swallowed their children into the abyss, there will be a permanent cultural shift that allows LGBT+ individuals to breathe at last.

At the time of writing, marriage equality is not yet legalised in Australia.

## Protesting the Protestors

Alex Passingham

Many of you will have noticed the small group of pro-life protestors next to the Parkinson Building last Thursday (16th November). In itself this is not particularly strange; a protest or stall is far from an unusual sight on campus. However, it struck me that the nature of this protest, combined with the counter-demonstration it provoked, raised some potentially troubling questions about people's perception of free speech and other people's opinions.

Firstly there is the nature of the original protest. The anti-abortion group chose to make their point with an odd comparison between slavery in the 1800s and abortion, both of which they labelled as the 'blind spot' of our respective societies. This, to me and many others, seems ludicrous, but more generally it seems designed to provoke a reaction from people on the other side of the argument than make any attempt to convert anybody. As somebody who is pro-choice myself, I don't feel particularly well disposed to my view on abortion being deemed akin to slavery, and doing so certainly doesn't make me more inclined to change my mind.

On the other side were the counter demonstrators, several of whom attempted to block the pro-life group and carried placards. They included a token Socialist Workers Party member (what the cause has to do with socialism, your guess is as good as mine) but, with this exception, the rest seemed genuine and committed to their cause. It does interest me, however, that they felt sufficiently threatened by such a small group of pro-lifers to demonstrate against them. The law against which the first group protested was passed in 1967; their point of view is hardly winning the argument or a threat to what has become the mainstream opinion that abortion should, with proper regulation and limits, be available to women who need it. To feel your worldview threatened by the existence of such a small group of dissenters suggests a desire for total conformity rather than

simply carrying the majority of opinion. In a democratic society, the tolerance of unpopular minority viewpoints (provided they don't threaten violence) is pivotal. To feel unduly threatened by such a small protest betrays a lack of confidence, I feel, in your own point of view.

This attitude might not seem important. However, four police officers had to be moved from what presumably was important work to cover a minor demonstration. This demonstrates an intolerance of ideas which dissent from mainstream thought, which at least has the potential to spill over into intolerance of people who hold such views. A society where people do not feel free to protest unpopular minority views (which being pro-life is, at least on university campuses) is not one which many of us would like to live in, and we ought to take care not to usher it in through the back door.





# Basmati Blues – Misrepresentation, Ignorance, and a Poor Film to Boot

Srika Nambiar

I believe that it is the responsibility of every film-maker to ensure that his/her work is intelligent and in good taste. In a generation which is well on its way to becoming 'woke' – a slang term used to describe an individual or group that is aware of social issues like racism and sexism – there are instances where it really feels like we've travelled 200 years back in time.

That's precisely how I felt when I first watched the trailer of *Basmati Blues* – confused and slightly annoyed by the gross misrepresentation of a culture.

Let's start off with the title. *Basmati Blues* – really? What better way to make it sound appealing than to join two words that have some bizarre significance with India?

Now, I'd probably finish this page by talking about how India is portrayed globally, but to make things quick, I'll just say poverty, ridden with archaic superstition, populated with people who speak subpar English and eat rice and curry.

This is exactly what Brie Larson thinks India is like, and it reflects quite aptly in the trailer of *Basmati Blues*.

Within the first minute of the trailer, you see village women, pollution, and an obscure and weird head

slapping gesture (this is apparently how Indians say hello, and I'm hoping it's a joke). The main focus of the film is how Larson, depicting the typical 'white savior' image, saves a village from buying genetically modified rice which could destroy farmers.

Defenders of this movie have been quick to state that while Bollywood portrays such stereotypes, no one bats an eye, but when it's done by Hollywood, everyone suddenly loses their minds, and this is where I beg to differ.

Although most Bollywood movies revolve around musicals and dance, it is preferred by the audience because it is what everyone usually expects of a Bollywood movie. It in no way trivialises or insults a culture or sect. Albeit, where there are films where stereotypes are used negatively, it is mostly to provide comic relief.

Larson's *Basmati Blues*, however, portrays these stereotypes in a rather serious manner. I'm annoyed that even today, India isn't perceived as being anything more than a poor country. Rather than viewing this as an enraged rant, try and understand how it feels to constantly defend your cultural identity and see someone else screw it up for you!

It is saddening that even now, non-white sects are

constantly depicted as a vulnerable and dumb lot, constantly in need of a white savior.

All these misrepresentations and perpetual stereotypes come from one place: sheer ignorance. The next time artists wish to create work depicting certain cultures that they aren't familiar with, it's sound advice to visit the country and learn about its culture rather than produce mediocre and inaccurate work.

Stereotypes aren't bad because they portray a negative idea of a caste, sect or culture. They're bad because they portray it as the 'only' idea.



## Can We Really Blame Russia For Brexit?

Freya Hillyer

Russia is yet again the source of controversy this week with the revelation that the Kremlin controlled over 400 twitter accounts which sought to influence the Brexit referendum. With Brexit being a beneficial outcome for Russia, due to their hoping it would alleviate some of the harsher foreign policies, they tweeted not only in support of a Britain independent of Europe but also anti-Islamic propaganda to breed hate and extremism.

The twitter accounts were surprisingly effective during the campaign, their most widely spread tweet involving a photo which grew infamous. The picture, showing a Muslim woman supposedly ignoring a man who had been knocked down after the London bridge terror attack, went viral and sparked outrage and hatred across the country.

45,000 tweets about Brexit were sent from the Internet Research Agency (IRA) in Russia which clearly damages the integrity and democratic nature of the referendum whilst also proving the huge power and scope Russia has over other nations. With the ever growing phenomenon of fake news and never knowing which sources to trust, these allegations have cast further doubt on what is real and what is fake. The UK remained relatively sheltered from the Russian controversies which absorbed America and, in particular, the Trump campaign. However, with these news stories brought to light, it is undeniable that the Kremlin has powers which even in the UK we have under appreciated.

Although there can be no doubt that this meddling in British politics is outrageous and completely out of line with Russian-British relations, it would be easy to use the tweets as a way of pushing the blame away from the British public despite the referendum being completely our decision. As much as remainers, and turned remainers, may like to blame Putin and his regime of strict control and meddling, the decision to leave the EU made in the 2016 referendum is firmly on us and no new controversies about Russia will change the fact that 52% voted to leave. To be frank, the assumption that voters would look at a pro Brexit tweet or an anti-Islamic hashtag and be swayed into changing their complete political disposition is outlandish. Despite the number of retweets that picture of the Muslim woman 'walking away' from the attack got, one twitter account called the Texas Lone

Ranger isn't going to distort someone's opinions on a whole community to the extent that they'd change the way they're voting on something as important as Brexit. In all honesty, the people that retweeted and actually believed this anti-Islamic propaganda were probably already inclined to discriminate, therefore, blaming Putin and the IRA has no real impact on the outcome of the referendum. Although not binding, the referendum was decisive and will change British politics forever. Whether we go around blaming Russia or not, it happened.

This argument is not to diminish the daunting prospect of a Russia playing a Big Brother type role and polluting our screens with nonsense propaganda with the sole purpose to inspire chaos and further Putin's regime of power. Nor is it to diminish the reaction many people had to the tweets, specifically that the picture was actually used by some as a way of explaining their voting leave. However, this issue is rooted in discrimination and a lack of understanding, not in Russia.

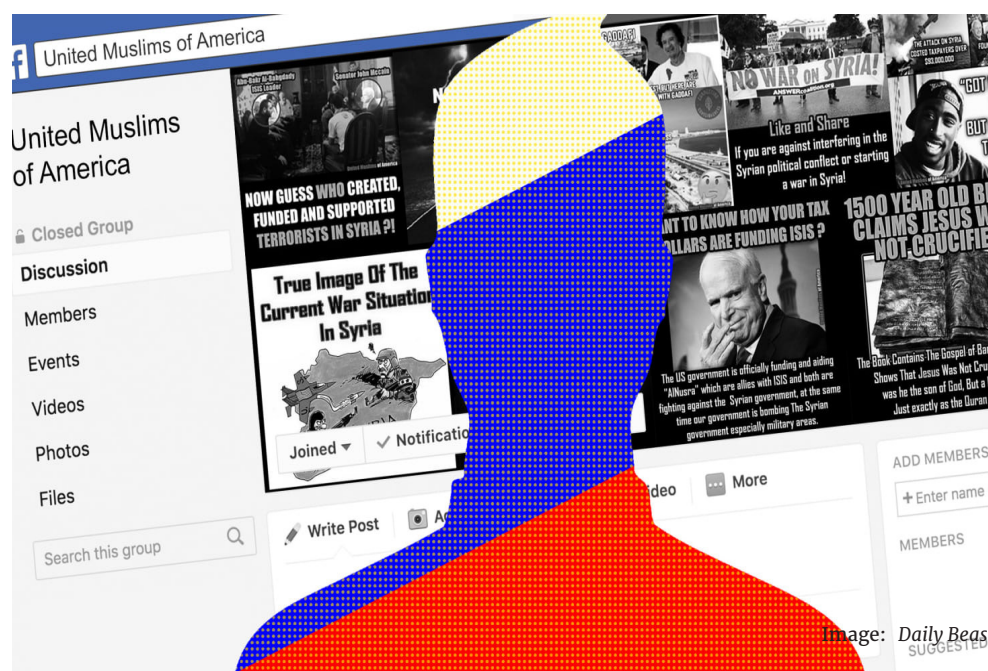


Image: Daily Beast



# Why #metoo Is NOT Synonymous With Men Too

Juliette Rowsell  
Digital Associate Editor

The Harvey Weinstein and Hollywood sexual abuse scandal is one that needs no introduction: it has been the – perhaps unsurprising – revelation that women in Hollywood are being abused, manipulated and raped by men in positions of power. It is the systematic and institutionalised exploitation of women.

Yet, in wake of the scandal, Tom Jones came out and said “what happens to women happens to men as well”, firmly positioning men into this equation of sexual abuse.

And indeed, I have found that following the allegations of widescale female abuse by men in positions of power, near all conversations I have had on the matter have been bookended with the phrase “oh, and this happens to men, too”. Certainly no one is denying that men are raped and sexually abused too, but what the Weinstein, Dustin Hoffman and even Donald Trump sexual abuse, harassment and rape allegations show is not merely a matter of sexual abuse, it is the wide scale exploitation of women. This is a matter of systematic abuse, and part of a societal-wide issue of sexism.

*“We need to discuss how female sexual abuse is a cause and effect of female inequality”*

In England, 93% of rape victims are women. This is a fact. This is not an issue that affects women and men

in near equal terms, but one that disproportionately affects women. The next time you go to your seminar, look around the room, and count to five. Because, according to the Home Office, 1 in 5 women have experienced some form of sexual abuse or harassment since the age of 16. Comparatively, only 2.7% of men face similar issues.

When we talk about ‘equality’, this does not mean talking about issues in equal matters between men and women. Following the Weinstein scandal, we should be able to talk about issues that disproportionately affect women, without feeling the need to talk about men. Yes male sexual abuse needs discussing, but following the revelations of institutionalised abuse against women, now is not the time. By equating male sexual abuse to the systematic abuse of women like Jones’ comments attempted to do, we are diluting the questions that need to be asked.

Right now, we need to be addressing how and why such systematic abuse of women is occurring. We need to ask not why women are raped, but why men rape women in such high figures. We need to ask where it is we are going wrong in our education that leads to such abuse. We need to discuss the relationship between everyday sexism, and the extreme (yet not uncommon) end of misogyny: domestic violence, sexual abuse, and rape. We need to ask why the likes of Harvey Weinstein, Dustin Hoffman, Michael Fallon, Donald Trump and countless others did not see an issue with their behaviour, and why they were allowed to get away with it. By equating the sexual

abuse of men – who, as discussed, account for only 7% of rape victims in the UK – to the systematic and institutionalised systems against women, we are refusing to address these systems. We need to discuss how female sexual abuse is a cause and effect of female inequality. This is not to say male sexual abuse is irrelevant, but to acknowledge that it does not feed into a wider set of systems in the same way that it does for women.

*“This is not an issue that affects women and men in near equal terms, but one that disproportionately affects women”*

Perhaps this is all summarised by Tom Jones himself; when asked how he dealt with such unwanted advancements, he said: “you know, you just avoid it [...] [you] just walk out”. But for women, it is not a simple case of just being able to ‘walk out’. For women, abuse is everywhere.

Whether it is an abuse of power, the gender pay gap, harassment, racial/sexual implications, gender inequality is everywhere for women. This is a time to discuss the systems and attitudes against women, and the Hollywood abuse claims need to be seen as not merely matters of sexual abuse, but as part of the wider systems that act against women.

## Away In A Manger, No Crib For A Roll

Eleanor Smith

The bakery chain *Greggs* faced criticism last week for the advertising image they used to promote their new advent calendar. The image replaced the baby Jesus in the nativity scene with a sausage roll, sparking criticism from religious groups and Twitter users. The image was branded insensitive and offensive, with Simon Richards, leader of right-wing pressure group the Freedom Association, calling for a boycott of *Greggs* and its “sick anti-Christian advent calendar”.

Despite these criticisms of the popular bakery chain’s use of the Christian image, many have responded to the misplaced pastry positively. The image is not seen as offensive, but simply as a light-hearted celebration of *Greggs*’ delicious baked goods, particularly its iconic sausage roll. So is equating the image of Jesus with a sausage roll insensitive? I, along with many others, would say no.

Fundamentally, the image is funny because of its suggestion that the *Greggs* sausage roll is as iconic as Jesus. Perhaps the critics of the image are not aware of the love the country has for the *Greggs*’ sausage roll. The pastry is a classic on the *Greggs* menu and a staple in the diets of many people. It shouldn’t be overlooked that ‘Lord Jesus’ backwards is ‘susejd rol’.

Most of the outrage comes from the Freedom

Association, which is a right-wing pressure group and is, therefore, more likely to take offence to this light-hearted use of religious imagery. More liberal Christian groups have not spoken out about the advertising, as they accept that playful discourse is expected. Anything that perpetuates itself as objectively true and as an actual basis of living should be able to hold up against light-hearted critique.

One of the main criticisms is that other religions would not have their icons used in marketing campaigns, if at all, particularly those that trivialise them in this way. While there is some truth in this, at least officially, Christianity is the majority religion in the United Kingdom, with Christmas being a national holiday.

The advert does not stand in the way of practicing faith and does not suggest that there is anything wrong with Christianity. It can be construed as insensitive but it completely depends on who is receiving it as such. Whether it is insensitive or not is subjective; an atheist, a Christian, and someone of another faith would all receive the image differently.

It has also been suggested that the controversy is simply a marketing ploy as Christmas marketing campaigns become more and more competitive. Creating a controversy is a relatively cheap way to

generate a buzz around the company’s new product, which is what has happened with *Greggs*’ new advent calendar.

Perhaps no-one was offended at all and it was all manufactured by *Greggs*? Whether this was the case or not, it has called into question whether images like this are insensitive or whether they are just another light-hearted marketing campaign.



Image: The Independent





# Fox Set to Sell to Disney Due to Threat of Streaming Services

Clement Morlhon

Walt Disney Co. has held discussions to buy part of 21st Century Fox, following fear among Fox managers that they are not trading well enough to compete with streaming giants Netflix and Amazon Prime.

The talks did aim towards a complete takeover. According to the US regulations, the Disney Company, already owning ABC, is prevented from having two broadcast networks due to a need of media plurality.

Consequently, Disney would purchase FX, which mostly includes original drama and comedy series, and the National Geographic Channel; bypassing Fox News and Fox's sports programming.

If the two sides are no longer actively haggling, the discussions could nonetheless lead to a changing landscape in the industry. After this news was revealed, Fox's stock jumped up 8.9% and Disney shares rose by 2.4%.

Netflix announced plans to spend up to \$8 billion on content next year in order to develop its own catalogue which is for now widely depending on external production studios. More recently the company has cut ties with Kevin Spacey, the star of one of its most watched shows House of Cards, following allegations of sexual harassment against him.

In the meantime, Disney already owns Marvel Entertainment and Lucasfilm, while Fox's entertainment properties contain the entire catalogue of The Simpsons. A deal between these two companies would be a huge threat to others streaming platforms. This summer, Disney said it will stop broadcasting new content on Netflix from 2019, as the company intends to launch its own streaming service. The information immediately impacted the latter company as its stock dipped nearly 4%.

As a result of all of these changes, consumers will now have a growing number of alternatives across the different platforms.

For instance Amazon Prime, launched in the US in 2006 and worldwide in 2016, hired the former Top Gear trio in 2015 in a new show called The Grand Tour. While the BBC's budget per episode was £650,000, the Amazon's one is reported to be nine times larger with around £4.5 million.

"The days of cheap archived content are over," said Jim Nail, analyst at Forrester, a market research company. Competitors "are going to ask Netflix for a whole lot of money."

Nonetheless, investors are still confident in

Netflix's future as its stock is trading at near record levels this year. On the other side, the traditional media companies are playing defence. In the opinion of A.B. Mendez, analyst at Frost Investment Advisors, "the mergers are more of a function of the weaker players not being as viable as consumer consumption changes."

With the regulations surrounding media conglomerates, the best investment may be in original programmes that will bring fresh viewers.



Image: DeviantArt.com

# New Leeds – Manchester Bus Link Opens With Record Journey Time

Catherine Fairbairn

Football, famous attractions or just a day out with friends? A brand new bus route promises to connect Leeds and Manchester at a fraction of the price of rail fares.

A brand new, cost effective bus route recently began operating in Leeds, connecting passengers with nearby urban hub Manchester in about as little as 75 minutes. With two major vibrant and diverse cities in such close proximity, it can only come as good news that there are plans in place to further expand what is already a great variety of transport connections.

The route was developed by bus company Transdev and is part of the 'Cityzap' group, a variety of quick, direct bus routes linking major cities and other popular destinations. This means that a cheaper alternative is now available to those who wish to travel without the heavy fee, as rail fares have continued to soar in today's economic climate. For the first week of its operation, the trip was priced at £1 and is now running at its set fare of less than third of the price of a return rail ticket for the same journey.

Transdev's decision to set up this specific route followed on from the popularity and success of their much frequented service between Leeds and York,

which experienced a quarter of a million customers in the first year of its existence. It is hoped that this new investment will provide equally as useful to customers. With Manchester home to two Premier League football teams, an abundance of history and enough culture to satisfy the pickiest of tourists, it can be assumed that the route will prove beneficial to a wide demographic.

After investing millions into creating and constructing what was a much-sought after trip, Alex Hornby, CEO of Transdev, has successfully addressed the primary issue that passengers face with bus travel – the copious amount of stops significantly slowing down the overall journey time. With a main objective of Cityzap being to incorporate customer accessibility into as few routine stops as possible, Hornby described the venture through saying that "The launch of Cityzap complements our other investments across the North this year".

The state of consumer choice is now wider than ever; one can only guess where Transdev will focus their next major project. With its central location, Leeds is the ideal candidate city to act as a base for a wide variety of revolutionised transportation endeavours.

But for now at least, it seems a trip to Manchester is on the cards for many of us!



Image: flickr.com



# Is Our Economy Slowly Waving Goodbye to Cash?

Chloe Pryce  
Business Editor

This was a question which, in a recent interview, I was asked, and to say the least, I was stumped. Some people like carrying around money, some people don't trust the banking system and the shadow economy were all things I drew on in an attempt to give a reasonable answer. Having done some actual research on the question, here's some insights into the question both for general interest, and so that you and I can ace that question if it ever comes up in another interview.

This morning I paid for my breakfast with Apple Pay, I bought my outfit for a party using Paypal and transferred some money I owed to my friend using online banking. As the economy becomes increasingly digital, people are increasingly beginning to ask, is cash just a phase, and will it once seem a means of transaction about as unimaginable as the days of a barter economy? In my opinion, probably not.

As for statistics, In the US, cash in circulation grew 42% between 2007 and 2012. In the Netherlands, despite 1,400 supermarkets which don't accept cash, an estimated 4 billion payments were made with cash compared with just 2.7 million card payments. Cash, as far as the latest (2015) figures go, accounts for 45.1% of payments.

Paying with cash is generally fee-less. Card transactions on the other hand are subject to fees which banks charge merchants following payments made with cards. This fee is then passed onto the consumer either directly or indirectly in terms of

higher prices; this is especially noticeable in parts of the world where banking isn't free. A side note on this, holiday-goers often prefer to have cash to avoid large fees they may face when trying to use their bank card abroad.

Secondly, a 2014 study by the Cash Product Office found that "the largest demographic of cash users is people aged 18-24" suggesting that future generations may in fact become less, as opposed to more, reliant on using just digital ways of payment.

The survival of cash is also closely connected to the human mind and the relationship we have with notes and coins. Your £50 Morrisons shop seems a lot more expensive when you hand over £50 of notes than when you pop your card into the machine. Cash is tangible and consumers have a unique psychological attachment to it compared with a card.

Students who are trying to save often bring £20 out for a night-out, to ensure they can't spend more than this. For many, using Apple Pay feels like you aren't actually losing money. Furthermore, venues whose card machines are broken, will demand customers who have cash.

Above all, cash is a reliable, tangible, widely accepted method of payment. The convenience of cash and the anonymity it allows are sure reasons to predict that cash will always have its place in the world economy. And if you're still not convinced, can you really imagine a birthday without your Great Aunt Gloria giving you those 3 pounds pocket money that you must spend wisely?

*"Cash is tangible and consumers have a unique psychological attachment to it compared with a card."*



Image: FivePrime.org

# Is Time Running Out For Snap Inc?

Ollie Brown

Shares of Snap Inc., the creator of Snapchat, fell by more than 15% after its earnings report showed that its user growth and revenue-per-user fell short of Wall Street's expectations. The stock is now down almost 30% since it first became a publicly traded company in March. Snap said their lower-than-anticipated revenue was partly down to its new advertising sales system, where they auction off ad spots. This led to advertisers paying 60% less than they did last year for their ads. The underlying point is pretty stark; advertisers just aren't paying as much to advertise on Snapchat's platform. By contrast, Facebook was able to increase its advertising prices during the third quarter due to massive increases demand for mobile ads.

Snapchat's lacklustre user growth may have something to do with it's poor performance in the market. Snapchat's daily active users in the most recent quarter numbered 178 million, up about 3% from the previous quarter, a figure much lower than what would be expected of a high profile social media company.



When first released onto the market, Snap shares were selling at \$17 to new investors. The stock price initially popped above \$27 amid the hype, but fell sharply thereafter – and has largely continued its decline as it repeatedly reported earnings below Wall Street's expectations. Snap says it's going to spend the coming quarters focusing on user growth, content and augmented reality. Needless to say, investors will want to start seeing some better results soon.

One way to increase the user growth that Snap will focus on would be to increase the platform's ease of use. Snapchat is genuinely difficult to use for many older (potential) users; in a sense, this created something of an exclusive community in the app's early days. People too old and/or too tech-challenged to intuitively figure out how to use the app simply didn't use it, giving younger users an exclusive platform. But Snapchat's user growth has stagnated such that it is now going to make the app easier to use. This, however, creates some uncertainty: it doesn't know how its existing users will react.





# The Great Emu War: How Flightless Birds Defeated The Australian Army

Rob Hayman

As humanity expands into previously uninhabited areas, we frequently come into conflict with large animal populations. As a result, humans have had to come up with schemes to manage and control wildlife that could affect their livelihoods. This is common across the world, from using foul smelling repellents on plants to using traps to catch invasive rodents. However, sometimes people take a more inventive approach to dealing with nuisance species, as demonstrated by the Australians in the first half of the 20th century.

Following the First World War, many Australian and British soldiers became wheat farmers in large, unpopulated areas of Western Australia. After just over a decade, these farmers began to suffer in the Great Depression of 1929, particularly as wheat prices began to plummet. As they argued with the Australian government over the price of wheat and numerous failed promises, a new threat appeared. Emus.

The emus in this particular region of Australia tend to migrate towards the coast from the drier inland regions following their summer breeding season. This large-scale migration was traditionally controlled and blocked by a 1,139-mile-long fence built across Western Australia to keep agricultural pests, namely rabbits, away from farmland. However, as this fence runs north to south, the emus simply followed the path of the fence as they migrated, invading farmland that had not been fenced off due to financial constraints.

The emus were previously a protected species, but became classified as vermin in 1922 as result of the damage they were doing to wheat fields. So in 1932, when 20,000 emus arrived around the wheat farms of Campion and Walgoolan, the farmers turned to

their military experience to deal with the incoming bird-based threat. After appealing to the Minister of Defence, Sir George Pearce, the farmers were granted assistance from the Australian military in the form of machine guns. Yes. Machine guns.

Armed with two Lewis machine guns and 10,000 rounds of ammunition, two soldiers from the Seventh Heavy Battery of the Royal Australian Artillery under Major G.P.W. Meredith were dispatched to the wheat fields in October 1932. The soldiers were accompanied by a cameraman to capture what was seen by some politicians as a perfect opportunity for positive publicity.

*“the soldiers had to enlist local farmers to herd the emus towards the machine guns, as the guns had registered little damage with the emus being out of range.”*

In their first attempt at culling on November 2nd, the soldiers had to enlist local farmers to herd the emus towards the machine guns, as the guns had registered little damage with the emus being out of range. Further barrages proved more effective, killing a number of birds.

A couple of days later, a group of over 1,000 emus were spotted near a local dam and Major Meredith set up an ambush. However, the machine gun jammed after killing just 12 emus and the remaining group fled before the soldiers could fix the weapon. The group continued to struggle against the might of the emus, with Meredith at one point mounting a gun on a truck. This failed, partially due to the fact that emus can run at up to 31 mph, meaning the truck was unable to catch the birds over rough farmland. By the 8th

November, a quarter of the expedition's ammunition had been expended, with only 50 emus being killed, although the settlers claimed that up to 500 had been culled. To the relief of us all, Major Meredith reported that no humans had suffered casualties.

Despite withdrawing in the face of this most formidable foe, the military returned on November 13th and recorded a truly astounding victory over the emus, killing around 40 birds over two days. By the time Meredith was recalled in early December, he reported 986 dead emus with 9,860 rounds of ammo having been fired, meaning that the soldiers had a spectacular kill rate of 1 emu for every 10 rounds. Even though the “war” had done little to curb the emu problem, the farmers continued to ask for military assistance, but were refused by the government on three different occasions.

*“The farmers turned to their military experience to deal with the incoming bird-based threat.”*

Emus continued to be an issue for the farmers, with the government choosing to financially incentivise the killing of birds by farmers instead. In spite of this, the birds are seen as a symbol of Australia, even featuring on the country's coat of arms, and are seen as a species of least concern by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. But most importantly, they emerged victorious from what must be the most hilarious military engagement in human, or emu, history.





Image: James Cridland

# Global Swarming

James Deed

At start of the 19th century the world's population was 1 billion, but now it's projected to reach 7.5 billion by the end of 2017. By 2050 it is forecast to hit 9.7 billion, and there is a 70% chance that we will hit 11.7 billion by 2100. This leads to questions; why is this happening? What will it mean for us? And what can we do to stunt this continuous growth?

The main reason for our planet's growing population is due to the fact that we are observing much lower mortality rates in comparison to the 1800s. According to current figures, for every person who dies there are three people who are born in their place. This surplus of births has taken place since the start of the 20th century, with increasing sanitation and awareness of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Recent estimates identify today's population size is approximately 6.5% of the total amount of all the people to have lived on the planet over the last 150,000 years!

This potential for population to grow to 11.7 billion by the end of the century poses a grave challenge for the future of food supplies, healthcare and social cohesion. Sub-Saharan Africa's population is expected to rise the most, from 1 billion to nearly 4 billion.

Previously, there was a considerable decrease in the fertility rates of African countries, and this was expected to continue. However, we have seen no such fall, with the average woman in, for example, Nigeria giving birth to six children during her lifetime. With food supplies for much of the area relying on the wet season and migration of the annual rainfall, will there be sustainable food and water for the future?

50 years down the line if there is an extreme drought, something likely to increase in frequency and intensity with climate change, how will the population be fed?

Without the help of international aid, one could almost expect mass famine and starvation to ensue. In 2016 815 million people went hungry, 155 million of which were growth-stunted children due to the lack of food security. Globally, more than two billion people suffer from malnourishment each year. By 2030, experts predict that up to half of the world's

population could be malnourished, whilst on the opposite end of the spectrum there is an obesity crisis elsewhere due to the large consumption of processed food in our diets.

The potential problem of an increasing population is now strongly debated, with efforts to try and make restricting the growth rates a top priority on the international political agenda. In recent decades the policies surrounding population have been cast aside, rarely being mentioned in discussions surrounding sustainability and development in UN meetings. A failure to provide basic forms of contraception and a lack of female education are inherently linked to larger families in less economically-developed countries. Hopefully in the coming decades this will change, reducing the gender gap for secondary education, and moving away from traditional large families where women tend to stay at home.

Developments in the ability to treat and mitigate the effects of disease are proving beneficial in allowing the average lifespan to increase by up to 30 years over the course of four generations.

This has however led to ageing populations across the globe, acting as a bit of a double-edged blade; we are able to live longer, but will contribute towards the increasing pressures on resource availability.

It is vitally important for governments to reduce birth rates, whilst also not denying people access to healthcare. Focus should be directed towards countries such as China, Brazil, India and within Sub-Saharan Africa. In the coming decades their population growth rates are expected to rise and contribute significantly to the global population.

Whatever your thoughts on how severe the matter is, there is clear evidence that, as a species, we humans need to control the rate our population is growing.

If not then we may experience food shortages and prolonged periods of famine, whilst the richest people will be, perversely, consuming more than a healthy intake of food!

## John C. Lilly: The Dolphin Whisperer

Sam McMaster  
Science Editor

It's extremely entertaining to imagine what would happen if professional scientists took vast amounts of drugs as part of, or during, their research. I'm sure you're wondering what kind of madman would actually decide "This is a good use of my research budget!" – look no further, and buckle up for the bizarre tale of Dr. John C Lilly, the man that tried to talk to dolphins.

Dr. John Cunningham Lilly was born in Saint Paul, Minnesota on January 6th, 1915. He showed an interest in science and was encouraged to pursue it, eventually going to Caltech to study neurophysiology.

Lilly began exploring the human consciousness using sensory deprivation tanks, which he invented. While floating in these tanks he would take ketamine, originally supposed by Lilly to cure him of migraines.

He later pursued funding from the Navy and NASA to find a way to talk to dolphins, believing they could help us communicate with extra-terrestrials and provide help on the battlefield. These experiments mainly revolved around giving dolphins huge amounts of LSD and recording the physical effects and any changes in brain activity.

The experiments only got weirder when, in 1965, a young research assistant, Margaret Lovatt, was recruited to take part in a ground-breaking experiment – living with a dolphin for 10 weeks. Parts of their lab were waterproofed to allow the dolphin to live comfortably and to give Margaret some space that wasn't too deeply submerged. Peter, a young dolphin, was chosen as he had no speech training. While living with Margaret, she tried to teach Peter basic syllable sounds and to say her name. The media got wind of the experiment and tore it to shreds because, in no big shock to anyone, no dolphin was taught to speak and the process proved overly cruel.

Lilly's ideas continued to become stranger and eventually, the once respected scientist was laughed out of research. At this point he believed that a group of benevolent cosmic beings called E.C.C.O. (Earth Coincidence Control Office) had recruited him to work to help the human race. The creator of video game "ECCO the Dolphin" was an avid reader of Lilly's work, which explains just how weird that game was.

In the 1990s, Lilly moved to Hawaii where he remained until he passed away from heart failure in 2001, at the age of 86. Undoubtedly, this unusual scientist made great advances in our understanding of the mind and animal consciousness but not without inflicting terrible cruelty upon the dolphins he was so passionate about.



Image: Wallpaper Abyss – Aloha Coders





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# Nadal Ends the 2017 as World No.1

James Felton  
Tennis

One of the biggest stories in the world of sport in 2017, and yet another example of surprise, is the resurgence of Roger Federer and, in particular, Rafael Nadal. The fact that the Swiss – and greatest player of all time – won two majors, Wimbledon and the Australian Open, has not surprised many. He has been structuring his seasons carefully, so that he is able to peak when Wimbledon comes around. The only reason Federer lost both the 2014 and 15 Wimbledon Finals is because, on both occasions, he came up against a strong Novak Djokovic in the form of his life.

Rafa Nadal, meanwhile, managed to win the 2014 French Open, but, given that that it is a tournament he has made his own, that was no surprise. Over the last few years, he has been plagued with injuries; losing in the opening rounds of Wimbledon against the likes of Dustin Brown, Steve Darcis, Lukas Rosol and, famously, this year, losing a five-set thriller against Gilles Muller. At the age of 30 at the start of this season, it was seen as unlikely for Nadal to win another tennis major in his career; extremely improbable that he would recoup the number one spot. But, as we all know in sport, you should take nothing for granted.

Nadal has spent several years working on his injuries, deciding how he could make the most of his natural, powerful left-handed shots, without putting too much stress on himself, both mentally and physically. A big goal for Rafa Nadal was to win another gold medal for Spain in the 2016 Rio Olympics. Unfortunately, deciding to play in three categories, singles, doubles and mixed doubles, meant that Nadal was too tired to compete at his best level in all three. He lost in the singles to eventual champion Juan



Image: ATP

Martin Del Potro, pulled out of the mixed doubles so as to not aggravate the physical stress placed on his body and, thankfully for him, with his playing partner Marc Lopez, he finally won his second Olympic Gold Medal, eight years after his first.

Nadal was only going to get better from that. Incredibly, in January, Nadal and Federer faced each other in the final of the Australian Open, ten years after Roger Federer last defeated his Spanish rival in a Major Final. It was a match which demonstrated why Federer and Nadal have been viewed as two of the best, if not the two best, players of all time. Fitness, strength and agility, it was a match which showed the younger players that it is not age that matters, but your sporting ability, and, increasingly, how you look after yourself, both physically and mentally.

The Spaniard was then named as the favourite to win the French Open. And after his fantastic Australian

Open, and the fact that he had won nine out of the last twelve editions of the annual clay tournament, this was inevitable. He did, naturally, win, clinching la decima. Wimbledon 2017 was a wobble, having lost, as aforementioned, against Mueller in five-sets. To put the icing on the cake, however, Nadal won the US Open to take his record to 16 major wins, and within three of Roger Federer's all-time record. He also reclaimed the number one spot. This week saw the annual ATP Tour finals in London, where ATP Final debutant Grigor Dimitrov beat David Goffin in the final to clinch the season's last tournament. Sadly, for Spanish fans, Nadal withdrew, because of injury, in a title he is yet to win. Nadal, though, ends the year as number one. Despite the injury he has sustained, he must be extremely happy and proud of his last twelve months. Indeed, Nadal has got over his injuries before. He will do so again.

# F1 says Farewell to Felip Massa

Thomas Lambton  
Formula 1

Felipe Massa will compete in the final Grand Prix of his Formula One career at the Yas Marina circuit in Abu Dhabi this weekend. There is a sense of deja vu to this race in the sense Massa was supposed to retire last year, however Nico Rosberg's shock exit from the sport prompted a chain of events that resulted in Williams resigning the Brazilian for a further year.

Formula One is undoubtedly richer with the presence of Massa on the grid and whilst he has not replicated the achievements of his fellow illustrious compatriots, such as Ayrton Senna and Nelson Pique, his career certainly features many notable triumphs. 268 starts, which places him 5th on the all-time list, 11 wins, including 2 in Brazil, and 30 other podium finishes.

A world title sadly eluded Massa, the closest he came being the dramatic 2008 season. As he crossed the line in Interlagos many thought that the title was his. However, Lewis Hamilton snatched victory from the jaws of defeat as he passed Timo Glock on the final corner to finish fifth, thus scoring the necessary points to overtake Massa in the final driver standings. It was the cruelest of finishes and one couldn't help but feel the deepest sympathy for Massa, as he stood

on the podium in tears, beating his chest during the Brazilian national anthem.

Just one year later Massa would come very close to losing his life during qualifying for the Hungarian Grand Prix. Whilst travelling at 162mph Massa was hit in the head by a loose spring which subsequently fractured his skull. It is the ultimate testament of Massa's commitment to the sport that he was back on the grid for the start of the 2010 season.

Throughout much of his time at Ferrari, Massa was forced to play second fiddle, both to Kimi Raikkonen and Fernando Alonso. This was harshly demonstrated in 2010 at Hockenheim when Massa, whilst leading, received one of the most infamous radio messages: 'Fernando is faster than you'. He duly ceded the place to his teammate and was widely applauded for his graciousness in doing so.

The move to Williams in 2014 revived Massa's career and particularly during the following two seasons, with a very competitive Williams car, he was able to showcase his many talents as a driver. His raw pace may have dwindled slightly, yet it has been replaced by a guile and determination. This was perfectly demonstrated in last week's Brazilian GP, as for much of the race Massa successfully defended a faster Fernando Alonso to secure seventh place.

Massa will be sorely missed, both as a driver and a

person. He is highly revered throughout the paddock and whilst his achievements perhaps do not do justice to his talent, his career is not one that will be quickly forgotten.



Image: Getty Images



# Future Success for England's Youth?

Julien Yvon  
Football

June 2016 saw that oh-so-familiar feeling of heartbreak for England fans. A crushing defeat to Iceland, a nation with a population of just over 300,000 habitants, saw England crash out in the second round of the European Championships. The years of hurt had now stretched beyond 50 years and England fans begged the question: would the nation ever win another major tournament?

More than a year has passed now and a lot has changed in the England camp. The country witnessed the appointment of its youngest manager in the form of Gareth Southgate. The former under 21s manager has overseen a major squad overhaul. Many fans raised their eyebrows at his latest squad selection with inexperienced players such as Ruben Loftus-Cheek and Tammy Abraham receiving a call up over the likes of Jack Wilshere. Some sceptics even described it as England's worst team of the last decade. It is fair to point out, however, that these were the same people who complained of a "big team" bias selection under previous administrations.

The young lions silenced their critics with two awe-inspiring draws against, arguably, the two strongest footballing nations in Germany and Brazil. England's young defence was particularly impressive as it managed to keep a clean sheet against a world class Brazilian strike force boasting the likes of Neymar and Gabriel Jesus. The question must be asked, however: can these young players perform at a major tournament?

One concern which came out of the match against Germany was the sheer difference in the nations' youth policy.

Whilst both nations had the same average squad age of 24.5 years, commentators were quick to point out that Germany's young players had played over 3000 more minutes of first team football for their respective clubs.

Whilst the first team rebuilt from the heartache of the Iceland defeat, the year 2017 saw the success of English youth teams. There were World Cup victories for both the under 17 and 20 squad whilst the under 19s triumphed in the European Championships. Many would believe that this youth success indicates a hope for England's future. However, when we dissect these teams, we find that the majority of these players come from big teams, such as Chelsea and Manchester City, who are renowned for not giving English youth a chance. Chelsea alone loaned out a staggering 44 players to other clubs this season; the majority going to Dutch club SBV Vitesse. Former Tottenham and Aston Villa manager, Tim Sherwood, made an interesting comment following the debut of 20 year old Portuguese star, Renato Sanches, loaned to Swansea from Bayern Munich. Having attempted the fewest passes during the match, Sherwood claimed that if that had been a young English player, he would not be given another chance by his club.

There have been many attempts to boost English youth in the Premier League. This includes the home grown rule, introduced by FA chairman, Greg Dyke, which states that every club must include at least 8 home grown players in their 25 man squad. This could soon rise to 12 players. However, these measures have backfired on the FA as it has resulted in young English talent rotting in the reserves of big clubs who buy them simply to fill the quota.



Image: Getty Images

For the moment, there is no clear solution to this problem. With the ridiculous amounts of money being pumped into the Premier League these days, there is a pressure on managers to bring instant success to their club. This means that young English players are no longer nurtured and given the game time they so desperately need. One can only hope that this year's youth success will encourage Premier League managers to delve into their club's youth academy.

## RLWC 2017: Down to the Final Four

Nathan Olsen  
Rugby League

The quarter-finals of the 2017 Rugby League World Cup went as expected, save for one momentous upset. Australia dominated Samoa 46-0, Tonga narrowly beat Lebanon 24-22 and England, despite a performance riddled with ball-handling errors, defeated tournament co-hosts Papua New Guinea 36-6. The standout match of the weekend, however, was Fiji's 4-2 victory over New Zealand. Despite the fact that this match was only the second try-less match in Rugby League World Cup history, the defensive performances given by both sides were a testament to the quality of the modern game. More importantly, this match witnessed a real twist in how the tournament might play out. Before the Cup even began this year, pundits were consistently talking about whether Australia or New Zealand would win the tournament; Fiji's success in knocking out New Zealand, however, brings some real excitement to the event. Three of the four semi-finalists coming from the Southern Hemisphere is no great surprise after the dominant group stage performances we saw earlier in the tournament, yet the lack of a New Zealand team in the final four may just mean that the final comes down to a contest between Australia and England.

Following on from the quarter-final results, the two semi-finals consist of Australia vs Fiji and England vs Tonga. Although Australia would be expected to win easily against Fiji, the match could go either way – as

shown by Fiji's victory over New Zealand. England, on the other hand, face a Tonga side which only narrowly beat Lebanon, who were the lowest-ranked team heading into the competition and a side that England defeated 29-10. Yet, we cannot ignore the fact that Tonga also beat New Zealand 28-22 in the group stages. I would be very surprised if the result of the two semi-finals wasn't a final between Australia and England, yet Fiji are a real wildcard at this point and Tonga could cause an upset too.

The tournament so far, then, has shown the Southern Hemisphere's dominance in Rugby League. This is not a new development, but such dominance usually rests on the achievements of Australia and New Zealand. This Rugby League World Cup has shown that the All Blacks, ranked No.2 in the world, are not quite as invincible as the Australian national side and that there is real talent in the other Southern Hemisphere teams too. England have so far been quite fortunate in their run of games, having only faced a real challenge in their loss to Australia; it is expected that England should make the final and any other result would be a disappointment for a team that has failed to shine so far at this tournament, aside from star winger Jermaine McGillvary.

The Rugby League World Cup Semi-Finals will take place on 24th (Australia vs Fiji) and 25th November (England vs Tonga). The Final is on 2nd December.



Image: Getty Images



# Can the Unnameables Reclaim the Ashes?

Can a relatively inexperienced England team bring back the urn?



Image: Philip Brown/Getty Images

**Julian Bovill**  
Cricket

Cricket's most anticipated clash began this Wednesday as England, looking to avenge the 5-0 embarrassment received last time they toured down under, take on Australia in the Ashes. Many ex-players and pundits alike have been stating in the weeks building up to the first test at Brisbane that the series, in terms of the cricket played, compared to years gone by might not be of the highest standard. This is perhaps true: England lack the star-studded batting line up that became a feature of their most dominant modern Ashes period between 2009 and 2014, while Australia's most notable absence comes in the form of a certain Mitchell Johnson. Joe Root, one of many English batsmen who was tormented by the Australian quick last time England were down under, I am sure is not wanting for the return of the man who took thirty-seven English scalps in the 2013/14 series.

While such absences are, to some degree, a shame, there also appears to be a heightened interest in the series because of the relative ambiguity that comes with fresh faces. Of the eleven players that started in the 5-0 drubbing of England for Australia in Brisbane four years ago, seven have since retired from test match cricket altogether. The cynicism of the Australian media towards England is something to be expected; even if this series were to be decided by five games of tiddlywinks, it would still be the case and their naming of this England touring party as the 'Unnameables' does not buck that trend. However, the Australian side is no longer full of the household names like it used to be. Watson in for Waugh; Khawaja for Ponting; Lyon for Warne, to name but a few.

The fresh-faced nature of both sides is rather

encapsulated by the captains, who, between them, have captained just thirty-three test matches. Neither have ever led their side out on the opening morning of an Ashes series. So, it should be said, the fortunes of both sides lay hugely with their captains. Should England let Smith continue his imperious home batting form – he averages 68.66 in his home nation – it is hard to see beyond any other scenario than the urn staying in Australia. However, should England come to the fore, and not resign themselves to a beating like they did four years ago, then the urn could well and truly be partying back to Heathrow come January.

England's captain, Joe Root, in particular has a point to prove, not only due to the lingering questions and doubts over his inexperienced and inconsistent England side, but also in regards to his last performance in Australia. In a series that he himself admits was his 'worst in an England shirt', a twenty-two year old Root was dropped for the fifth and final test in Sydney, after only managing an average of 26 with the bat. While he could hide behind much wider issues within the dressing room that time out, he is most certainly front and centre this time around. Should England hope to harbour any hopes of not only winning in Brisbane for the first time since 1986 and the days of Ian Botham and Allan Border, but also winning in Australia, then they rely heavily on Root coming to the fore.

In front of a baying Gabba crowd, calling for English blood like a Roman crowd watching a Gladiator slice down opponent after opponent, there is no hiding place for any of these England players. Should they attempt to come out of their shells and give back a little of what the Australians will certainly be giving them, then they might have a serious chance of winning down under.



## BUCS Fixtures 29th November

Badminton Mens 1st vs Manchester 1st  
2pm, The Edge

Badminton Mens 2nd vs Beckett 2nd  
1pm, Blue Hall (Headingley Campus)

Basketball Mens 1st vs Manchester 1st  
5.30pm, The Edge

Fencing Mens 1st vs Durham 2nd  
2pm, The Edge

Football Womens 1st vs Shef Hallam 1st  
2pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Football Womens 2nd vs Leeds 3rd  
1:45pm, Brownlee Centre

Hockey Womens 5th vs Leeds 6th  
4pm, Sports Park Weetwood  
Hockey Mens 2nd vs York 1st  
5.30pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Lacrosse Mens 1st vs Durham 3rd  
4:15pm, Sports Park Weetwood

Netball Womens 6th vs Huddersfield 1st  
3.30pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

Rugby League Mens 1st vs Nottingham 1st  
2pm, Brownlee Centre

Rugby Union Womens 1st vs Manchester Met 1st  
2pm, Brownlee Centre

Squash Mens 2nd vs Beckett 1st  
1pm, Gryphon Sports Centre  
Squash Womens 2nd vs Trinity 1st  
2.30pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

Table Tennis Mens 1st vs Shef Hallam 1st  
2pm, Cromer Terrace

Tennis Womens 1st vs Newcastle 2nd  
12pm, David Lloyd Leeds

Ultimate Frisbee 1st vs Newcastle 1st  
1.30pm, Brownlee Centre

Volleyball Womens 2nd vs Bradford 1st  
7pm, Gryphon Sports Centre

Waterpolo Womens 1st vs Liverpool 1st  
2.15pm, The Edge

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**bucs.org.uk**



# Leeds University Union Cycling



Image: UoL Cycling (Jenny Johnson)

## Top Ten Result For Gryphons at Sheffield BUCS Hill Climb

Lydia Hunter  
Cycling

October saw the first BUCS cycling event of the year, with a Leeds Gryphon clinching a top 10 spot out of a competitive field of over 60. Leeds medicine student Jenny Johnson came 9th, with a time of 3 minutes 54 seconds up Pea Royd Lane in Sheffield.

The University had six Gryphons competing: Gareth Jooste, John Bland, Chris Pickles and Joe Woodman for the men, and Jenny Johnson and Sophie Hewtison for the women.

235 University athletes from across the country took part in the brutal event, which saw them time trial up a kilometre long climb with an average gradient of 11%.

Crowds lined the sides of the road at the event, with one student even bringing a trumpet to encourage the climbers in his own unique way.

Not fazed by the less than ideal blustery conditions, both the athletes and the supporters ensured that the event was one to remember.

The winners were Kate Mactear from University of Bristol in the women's competition and Andy Nichols from University of Sheffield in the men's. Sheffield had an especially strong team competing, with two students placing in the top 3 of the men's field.

This strong performance by one of our female Gryphons is extremely promising for the upcoming race season.

With the newly built Brownlee Circuit, it will be interesting to see how the cycling Gryphons can perform in a different form of competition, which will also be on their own turf.

Ben Heywood, the UoLCC's Road Captain, was thrilled with the results.

"Jenny Johnson had a fantastic race at the BUCS hill climb event on the famous British hill climb course

of Pea Royd Lane in Stocksbridge, where she placed 9th in the women's event out of a field of over 60 riders. This is a really promising result for a rider who is relatively new to racing and bodes well for the upcoming race season which starts early next year."

"The UoLCC is hoping next year to make our presence felt in the active Yorkshire cycle racing scene, especially with our exciting new home of the Boddington Cycling Circuit at the Brownlee Centre, where, early next year, the club is hoping to stage a series of circuit races."

It's also hoped that such a strong performance from a relatively new female cyclist will encourage more women to compete in the upcoming season. The cycling club has seen an increase in membership this year, with the arrival of some promising female cyclists, and hopes to continue this trend for the future.