



# THE GRYPHON

The official newspaper of Leeds University

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## 19% of Top Jobs Held by Women at Leeds University

*Statistics show that there were 31 women in jobs with salaries higher than £100,000 at the University in 2018/19 compared to 132 men, with a gender pay gap of 18.9% across the entire University.*

**Ed Barnes**  
Editor-In-Chief

In a Freedom of Information request, The Gryphon can reveal that there has been consistently higher numbers of men in jobs with salaries higher than £100,000 than women over the last four years. The highest proportion of women in jobs that were in this category ever was 26.3% in 2017/18.

The number of women in top jobs in 2015-16 was twenty-two with an increase of seven in 2016-17. Since then, the number has only increased by 2. The number of men by comparison in 2015-16 was 116, increasing to 126 in 2016. There was then a decrease of 16 the following year following by an increase of 22 last year.

The percentage of female staff at the University in July 2019 stood at 54%, an decrease of 1% since 2017.

The statistics also revealed the number of BAME employees on salaries higher than £100,000 has not increased more than 7 in any year

with the number dropping below 5 in 2017-18. This meant there were 7 BAME employees earning more than £100,000 compared to 117. This meant they only made up 4% of staff in this grouping. By comparison, the percentage of BAME staff across the entire University is nearly three times as high at 11% with the wider BAME population in Leeds standing at 15%.

However it must noted that at least more than 20% of employees in the last three years have not declared their ethnicity and this absence in the data could affect the figures we see above.

The Gryphon previously reported a pay gap of 39% for Black employees at the University of Leeds compared to White employees.

The Gryphon was not able to reveal the figures for BAME men and women individually with salaries higher than £100,000 because the numbers of staff were less than or equal to five. These numbers would be low enough that staff might be able to be identified

from the statistics.

The news comes after the University of Leeds has just appointed a woman as Vice-Chancellor, Simone Buitendijk. Less than 15% of Vice-Chancellors in the UK are women according to research by Lancaster University. Women make up 51% of the general population.

A University of Leeds spokesperson said:

*"Gender imbalance across roles is a contributing factor in our gender pay gap and we know that there is more to do to achieve the right balance. This is an issue across the sector."*

*"Through a strategic focus on recruitment, reward and people development practices we have seen a reduction in the pay gap since 2017, and each year we're learning more about the causes, introducing further programmes of work and embedding long-term sustainable practices to create a fairer and more inclusive workplace."*

**Story continues on page 7.**

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06/03/20

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A new Wetherspoons is opening up in Headingley just up the road from Hyde Park Book Club

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Features analyses the recent greenlighting of HS2 and whether building the lines from London was the best idea

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### Getting down with MP Hilary Benn

Views Editor Eloise Barry sits down with Hilary Benn to discuss transport in Leeds and how he wants Labour to get stuff done.

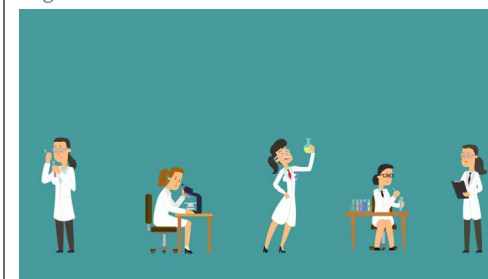
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### Tackling Gender Equality at the STEM

Science writer Eleanor King looks at whether STEM subjects at the University of Leeds are inclusive enough of women.

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Editor of the Week  
Anna Davison

Anna has been a fantastic Science Editor this year doing a great job with Michelle.

She has set up a group chat for writers, organised socials for writers and on top of this, laid the pages up wonderfully and helped produce great content every week.

Quote of the Week  
“Paddington is the only man I’ll ever love”

Megan Ardis offers her thoughts on the all-round icon that is Paddington Bear, an ally to all.

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# Editorial Letter:



Hey readers,  
So it is now March and alas it is coming to the end of my time as Editor of The Gryphon – something some of you may be happy about. Pretty soon we will be finding out soon who will be my successor and I just want to say a big congratulations to Clare, Michael, Safi and Jess for running fantastic campaigns. It’s stressful putting yourself up for a public vote across the

whole of campus and I’m very proud to see such great ideas being put forward that will mean The Gryphon has another very successful year ahead of it.

As well as this week celebrating the end of LeadLUU (at long last), this Sunday will be International Women’s Day, a celebration with the theme this year being “I Am Generation Equality” with events being held across Leeds and the country to mark the achievements of women.

To honour all things women, the Gryphon’s Editorial Team, 77% of whom are women, have centred the contributions of women and gender non-conforming people to arts, music and culture in this week’s *In The Middle*. Now women, what should I say about them? I might as well point out the obvious which is that I’m not one and therefore this is a subject I may not be the world’s greatest expert in but I will give it my best shot.

If someone was to ask me what my taste in music is, the most accurate reply I could provide is that clip of Saoirse Ronan saying “women” in *Little Women*. Anyone who has lived with me can attest to this as I will happily play the same ten artists on repeat. My Spotify Wrapped every year is pretty predictable with very few men to break into my top 5 (and they’re probably gay if they do). My Top 5 this year was topped by Beyoncé, followed by Kim Petras who had made a rapid ascension this year to second place. The following three were rounded out by Charli XCX, Lana Del Rey and Tove Lo.

Despite my musical love for feminine artistes, the world is still a difficult place for women whether that is at home, in the workplace or out on the town and MP Jess Phillips every year still reads a long list of women who have been the victims of domestic violence across the country in the run-up to International Women’s Day. As the front page this issue can attest to, there are still financial barriers to women progressing right here on campus and Higher Education in general. Last year, we elected an all-female Student Exec for the first time. However we won’t be able to continue making progress unless we continue to support the women around us.

It is up to those of us who aren’t women to listen and understand. Like with anything, it is important to acknowledge the limitations of your own perspective. You might not see something as sexist or contributing to the marginalisation of women but that doesn’t mean it is not there. Issues like the gender pay gap are less obvious

because everyone doesn’t go around talking about their salaries and as a result, are only revealed through statistics.

Now I feel it is only apt given my discussion of my female-centric music taste that I give the rest of my editorial over to some fantastic women who in my humble opinion have produced some great music over the past year. As Janelle Monae says in her song *Django Jane*, it’s time for me to ‘hit the mute button’.

**Never trade you for anybody else/Singin’ brown skin girl/Your skin just like pearls/The best thing in the world**

*Brown Skin Girl*, by Beyoncé, Blue Ivy, SAINT JHN and WizKid. One of the best songs of this year in my opinion and for good reason. Tackling issues of colourism, the song quickly became a hit across the world and shout-outs influential Black women such as Kelly Rowland and Lupita Nyong’o.

**Hope is a dangerous thing for a woman like me to have/But I have it/Yeah, I have it/Yeah, I have it**

*Hope is a dangerous thing for a woman like me to have – but i have it*, by Lana Del Rey. Norman F\*cking Rockwell in my opinion should have won Album of the Year. No album this year I felt had such clear direction with each song telling a narrative that moved from one record to the next. It is in Rockwell that Del Rey shatters the masculine ideals of the men her persona previously looked up to.

**If I’m shinin’ everybody gonna shine (Yeah, I’m goals)/I was born like this, don’t even gotta try (Now you know)/I’m like chardonnay, get better over time (So you know)/Heard you say I’m not the baddest, bitch, you lie (Haha)**

*Juice*, by Lizzo. An absolute banger. Lizzo was the hot ticket in 2019 and what a refreshing breath of air in the seriousness of Hollywood’s music industry. Who doesn’t like a love- yourself message over a sick beat?

**Never no tears for that sucker/Only one d\*ck, that’s a bummer/Dancing all night, get guys’ numbers/(You’re better off, I’m glad that he’s gone, he’s gone)**

*Glad He’s Gone*, by Tove Lo. Lo here is that supportive friend you always wished you had. The one who always has your back and wants you to leave that boyfriend who just isn’t treating you right.

**I remember our first date/No chocolate and no bouquet/But the way that you kissed me/These are the things that could make us official**

*Official*, by Charli XCX. Charli operates on another planet. I know she isn’t to everyone’s taste but we can’t all operate in 2049. In *Official*, a highlight on the album, XCX explores the vulnerability of being in a relationship that doesn’t follow the usual rules of romance.

**I’m the b\*tch with the sauce, apparently/Gave a few of y’all drip, that’s charity/I ain’t worried ‘bout sh\*t, you a parody/Clarity, I got clarity**

*Clarity*, by Kim Petras. There are very transgender voices in music. That’s a fact, and who doesn’t love a pop song about brushing off those haters?

Ed Barnes  
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# Exec Columns:



**Union Affairs Officer**  
**Lauren Huxley**

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‘Happy Lead LUU Voting Week everyone!’ Well it is all over now. I can’t believe we’ve already got to that time in the year when we find out who your next student Exec will be.

I have to admit, I’m pretty sad that my term must come to an end but I am so excited for the 7 students who will get this opportunity next year! I hope you all used your votes and had a chance to chat to some of the candidates over the last couple of weeks, they have been

absolutely amazing and ran some really innovative campaigns. In other news, I was lucky enough to be invited to visit Wisconsin’s Student Union last week with a couple of colleagues to see how one of the best SU’s in the States runs and values its members.

We learned so much on the trip and once we’ve recovered from the jetlag, we’ll be sharing these with the whole organisation... Keep an eye out for some exciting projects. We’re almost

into the last week of strike action now too, so please remember that our Help and Support team are on hand if you have been affected, as are our Political Engagement team if you want to find out more about the dispute.’



**Education Officer**  
**Abiha Khan**

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Hello everyone! It’s been a busy few weeks where I’ve seen big progress around my manifesto objectives – a lot of my projects seem to really be coming together as of late.

I am working with a team who are committed to improving the Joint Honours student experience in Arts, Humanities and Culture. Most recently we have successfully implemented deliverables to improve induction, frontline support, community building and timetable clashes.

I have also been working with the University to create dedicated study spaces for our postgraduate researcher community. The provision of available

study spaces for postgraduate researchers is not distributed evenly across the University. It is really important that we do more to make PGR students feel part of our campus – research has shown that researchers who are able to work alongside their peers form stronger social and professional communities and so are less likely to experience feelings of isolation commonly associated with research degrees.

I was also lucky enough to join Ed on the GryphOn Air Podcast! We spoke about ‘Closing the BAME Awarding Gaps’, the current industrial action and our experiences during Lead LUU.

Please have a listen!

Last but not least we are coming up to International Women’s Day! We’ve come a long way in the fight for gender-equality, but inequalities continue to reign supreme and we simply cannot accept that. Together we can continue to break stereotypes, to challenge gender norms and to end gender-based violence.

Women have the right to bodily autonomy and for sexual and reproductive freedom. I’m so thankful for all the incredible women in my life and that includes my fellow Exec team.



**Community Officer**  
**Cat Fairbairn**

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Quite a community-focused week for me this week. I have attended meetings to speak about how we can make the transition of first year students moving out into our inner Leeds communities as easy as possible.

I have also been preparing to co-chair a meeting of local community representatives and student groups in the Hyde Park and Headingley areas, working together to create solutions for some of the issues we face as residents of such a diverse area. I will also be meeting with members of the student education services to talk about their

community theme, and how I can get as involved as I can

My housing research is officially live! I am searching for your experiences of private rented housing, and how factors you can’t control might get in the way of you having a smooth ride as a tenant paying rent. Head on to my twitter – @CatheryneLUU to find the link. We have some big prizes up for grabs, so remember to give us your email address to be entered into the draw!

I’m sure you will have noticed a buzz around campus, more specifically

around the LUU building. It was LeadLUU and you all decided who your officer teams will be next year! We had some excellent candidates, and I wish them the best of luck tonight on result’s night!



**Equality & Diversity Officer**

**Chloé Elliott**

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What a week! I hope you’ve been enjoying this round of LeadLUU.

It’s an exciting time of year to hear more about the changes you would like to see on campus and have a say in who will see those changes through! I’m certainly looking forward to seeing what’s in store for the next academic year with the new Student Executive Team. If you haven’t got involved with

LeadLUU but would like have more of a role in LUU, there are plenty of student leader roles to consider for the next academic year.

This week also marks the beginning of International Women’s Day celebrations, because can they really be confined to just a day?!

This year we have a range of events supported by our societies and our

Liberation Coordinators including the Women in Leadership Society and African Caribbean Society collaboration event which celebrated the WILS mentoring scheme and the talent within ACS.

You can find more details for the upcoming events on the LUU website.



**Welfare Officer**  
**Amy Wells**

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Hi everyone! As I write this, I’m on a train down to Westminster to meet with the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Students on the topic of student finance reform after a campaign with some other Officers from around the UK.

I’ll be talking about the impact of the broken system on students’ mental health – now that financial worries are being reported as one of the top stressors for students and with the high

profile student mental health crisis, it’s absolutely disgusting that as with most issues affecting students at a national level, no one is doing anything about it.

The issues I’ll be raising are around students having to work alongside studying to the point where it affects their performance, financial barriers to activities that increase wellbeing, the extra stress on parents, carers, unpaid placement students.

Student finance rates haven’t kept up with the hike in rents over the last few years and we’re at a point where we have people on a 5k loan not even being able to cover rent because SFE has deemed your Mum’s new husband, who you’ve met twice and don’t like, as being able to financially support you.

It’s just not good enough.

# Campus Watch



## 1 Palm Beach Atlantic University Melania Trump receives 'Woman of Distinction' award amid student backlash

Palm Beach Atlantic University (PBA) has awarded first lady Melania Trump with the 'Woman of Distinction' award. The decision was made despite backlash from students and alumni.

Trump changed her primary residence to Palm Beach alongside her husband last year and stated that she was "grateful" to receive the award. The school website states that the award is for women "who cherish community and family and want to preserve these ideals for others."

Upon accepting the award, Trump said: "As the first lady of the United States, it is a great honor to serve the people of this country." When discussing her 'Be Best' initiative, a campaign that aims to tackle issues that affect children, she stated: "when we

teach our children to cherish our values and care for each other, they are better prepared to carry on Americans' legacy of compassion, service and patriotism."

Students, however, have voiced uproar about the decision to award the first lady. Graysen Bohening, a senior at PBA, stated: "I have not been convinced that the first lady's character or impact here is worthy of that recognition."

Scott Hampson, who graduated in 2013, argued that Melania Trump's anti-bullying initiative is "laughable" since "she's married to one of the biggest cyberbullies in our country". Lea-Sophie Montjoie

Charly Loughlin  
News Editor

## 2 Imperial College London Imperial Student Wins 'Women of the Future' Award

## 3 University of Loughborough Loughborough student sets up sustainable company

## 4 University of Leicester International Women's Day to Include Trans Women

## 5 University of Lincoln Student Uses 'Sugar Daddies' to Fund Student Life

Last year, Imperial Maths undergraduate Vanessa Madu won a 'Women of the Future' Award.

She has been challenging the lack of diversity in mathematics since the start of her degree, becoming involved in outreach projects such as STEMettes, her own initiative Project Insight, and interviewing STEM professional women.

It was from the STEMettes mentoring programme that Vanessa was able to travel to the Grace Hopper Celebration of Women in Computing conference in Florida, and since then she has resolved to improve STEM engagement with school children through maths outreach alongside her department.

She said: 'exposure at a young age is what makes a long-lasting change...' Her blog sharing insecurities about getting into the world of tech as a young woman was recognised by the Women of the Future panel. Her nomination was 'on the basis of a lot of things that I had been doing since coming to Imperial, because I had started to get the ball moving on things I was passionate about.'

Amelia Cutting  
News Editor

19-year-old Raena Ambani, who is studying Sports Technology at Loughborough University, has set up her own social enterprise to fight for female empowerment and waste management in rural India.

Ambani is the founder of 'BigPA', which uses textile waste to produce a range of products in order to prevent them from being sent to landfills. Her inspiration came from visiting factories in India and noticing the extent of poly textile waste which could not be recycled. Ambani also noticed that there were very few women working in these industries.

BigPA not only tackles textile waste but also provides jobs for women. When attempting to employ more women, Ambani stated: "It wasn't an easy job to convince them to work with me because they still had that old mindset that women should stay at home, cook, clean, and do domestic chores." While studying for her degree at Loughborough, Ambani acts as a mentor for the women who are currently employed at BigPA. After teaching them how to use mobile phones and computers, she is able to stay in touch with employees during term time.

Charly Loughlin  
News Editor

The University of Leicester has come under fire after it rebranded its celebration of International Women's Day to also include transgender women. The university decided to rename the day to 'International Womxn's Day' in order to make it more inclusive for all women.

Some, however, have taken offense to the alterations made and have described it as 'insulting' and argued it 'belittles everything women have had to fight for'. The backlash comes after students elected Dan Orr, a trans woman, to the position of woman's officer.

However, one individual when speaking to the Times stated that she feels silenced due to backlash she would face from the university if she were to discuss her feelings of upset. In her election manifesto, Orr states: "Feminism is nothing without women of colour, migrant, disabled, queer, trans, black and sex working women".

She adds: "As a trans woman, I have been lucky to work with and be supported by some deeply compassionate women activists and I want to extend the same support to women who are often excluded from certain types of feminism".

Charly Loughlin  
News Editor

University of Lincoln student, Gracie Adams, has been using her five sugar daddies to pay for her studies. Insisting that her relationship with the men is purely platonic, she has dresses, rent and food paid for her in exchange for her precious company.

Gracie aims to attend one date per month in order to pay her bills.

Gracie began using the site 'seeking arrangements' at the age of eighteen and states that she 'wasn't thinking of seriously committing to the sugar baby life'. She can earn over £300 per date, including new clothes and shoes.

Gracie has been very open about her relationship with her sugar daddies to both her family and boyfriend. Although worried about her online safety both parties were supportive of her way of gaining financial stability during her time at university.

Lydia Smith



# University Admission Process Under Assessment



**Amelia Cutting**  
News Editor

The higher education watchdog has launched a review that sets out options for a large and radical overhaul of University admissions in England.

The Office for Students has suggested an entry system that scraps the use of predicted A-Level grades. This comes after their three-month review of how universities allocate places to prospective students followed concerns about the fairness of using personal statements, references and exam grades.

**In 75% of cases, A-Level students are not making their predicted grades**

Statistics from the Watchdog showed that pupils did not make the grades predicted by their schools in 75% of cases. They also highlighted the discrepancy between the grades that the universities advertise, and the often much lower grades that are actually needed to gain a place.

There have also been warnings that personal statements can be favoured towards those who have the most support from teaching staff or parents. Speaking of this, Sir Michael Barber, chairman of the Watchdog, said that: "it may be especially unfair on

**Students are disadvantaged by the discrepancy between the grades universities advertise, and the lower grades that are actually needed**

students from disadvantaged backgrounds."

There have been three options for reform laid out by the Watchdog:

1. Universities would not make pupils an offer until they have received their A-level results. Applications, however, could be made in advance as is the case now.
2. Applications would not be made until students had received their A-Level results. Universities could have been visited and interest registered, but students would not make a final choice on applying until they knew their exam grades.

3, Keep the current timetable relatively unchanged, but take more account of the disadvantages that some pupils face, reconsider the use of personal statements and have more transparency over required grades.

Should offers be made once A-Level results are known, some timetabling changes would have to be made whereby either A-Levels would be taken earlier, results published earlier, or university terms starting later.

It would also mean that unconditional offers would no longer be needed.

Leader of the UCU lecturers' union, Jo Grady,

said there was "growing support for a shift to a fairer admissions system, where students apply to university after they have received their results.

"This review is the opportunity for us to finally move to a system where university offers are based on actual achievement rather than unreliable estimates of potential."

The Higher Education Policy Institute has suggested a different approach to creating a more open access to university.

They believe that anyone who is in the first generation of their family to go to university should not pay tuition fees in their first year. The aim of this

**The Higher Education Policy Institute suggests waiving year one tuition fees for students who are the first generation of their family to attend university**

is to remove financial barriers for disadvantage, as the Government will pick up the cost.

As universities are independent bodies, change cannot be imposed upon them. However, Universities Minister Michelle Donelan said that it is vital the admission process was "transparent and work in students' best interests."

The watchdog will publish its findings when the admissions review comes to an end in May.



# New Wetherspoons to Ban Otley Runs

Ella Jones

Plans to construct a JD Wetherspoons Pub in Headingley have been granted by Leeds City Council. However, the pub will have regulations to ensure it doesn't encourage further anti-social behaviour in the area.

As part of this, the pub will not permit 'Otley Runners' (large groups in fancy dress on a pub crawl) to enter the premises.

The pub has also been prevented from having loud entertainment or music – in order to reduce its impact on local residents. JD Wetherspoons have stated their desires to make the site a 'food-led establishment' and aim to be a family friendly pub. In addition to these restrictions, the Wetherspoons pub will have opening times of: Sun–Thurs 9am–10:30pm and Fri–Sat 9am–11pm.

These restrictions follow previous rejections of the plans (in 2016) due to The Headingley Network community group's oppositional concerns over

alcohol-related antisocial behaviour and a potential threat of security and encouraged crime in the area.

A spokesperson for Leeds City Council said that: *"The council has granted an application by JD Wetherspoon PLC for the grant of a premises license for the former Elinor Lupton Centre on Headingley Lane. Our Decision has taken into account various representations from residents, business owners and local councillors.*

*We have also carefully considered the relevant legislation and statutory guidance, as well as the council's own licensing policy. The terms of the license we have granted in order to reduce the risk of the operation of the premises leading to public nuisance or crime and disorder.*

*One of these conditions is that the premises will not permit entry to people it has reason to believe are participating in the Otley Run.*

*Going forward, we will continue working with the premises to ensure it complies with the conditions of its license"*

In reaction to the granted planning permission, Eddie Gershon, a Wetherspoons spokesperson,

responded with: "We are delighted permission has been granted for the site in Headingley. We are as keen as ever to open a pub on the site and believe it will be an asset to the area."

The proposed site for the Wetherspoons is located on Headingley Lane, adjacent to Richmond Road. The Grade II listed Elinor Lupton Centre was bought by JD Wetherspoons in 2014, but the company faced issues with obtaining an alcohol license for the site. Although planning permission was granted for the site in 2019, the alcohol permission license was only granted this month.

Previously the building was owned by Leeds Girls' High School until 2004, following the merge of the school into Leeds Grammar School. The site has been unoccupied since 2010.

Eddie Gershon added: "We also believe that it will act as a catalyst for further investment for the area. We thank all those people who supported the application over the years."

# Simon Armitage Announces Plans for National Poetry Centre in Leeds



Jeremy Sutton-Hibbert/Getty Images

Zahra Iqbal

Simon Armitage, Poet Laureate has announced his plans to build a National Poetry Centre in Leeds by 2023 as a gesture to mark his decade-long tenure. The centre is to be built in major collaboration with Leeds City Council and the University of Leeds, where Armitage is currently the Professor of Poetry.

When announcing his ambitious plans, the Yorkshire born poet remarked that poetry needed a home outside of London something "along the lines of the Centre for Fiction in Brooklyn or Poet's House in New York".

He also explained that "Poetry is one of our most ancient and proudest artistic endeavours, steeped in tradition, history and ritual" and that the genre is "undergoing an incredible renaissance at present particularly in relation to a new generations of writers

and performers across diverse backgrounds who have found poetry a way of articulating their concerns and expressing their feelings".

Armitage said that the centre will be a base where poets can "get on with their writing, teach, eat, drink, debate, argue". The space will also allow poets of all calibres to research, write, exchange ideas, perform readings as well as, hopefully accommodating visiting writers from a wide range of backgrounds.

*Poetry is one of our most ancient and proudest artistic endeavours, steeped in tradition, history and ritual*

He also commented that "In my view the centre needs to be outside London and Leeds is an ideal location: accessible, central, dynamic, contemporary,

future-minded, people-oriented, community-aware, committed to cultural regeneration, and building momentum towards 2023."

Vice-Chancellor of The University of Leeds Sir Alan Langlands said: "We are very proud of our literary achievements, and a national centre for poetry is a wonderful fit with both our mission to educate and engage, and our aspirations to be a world-leading University with strong local roots and a truly international character and outlook.

As an English Literature student I am very excited to see the university involved in the opening of a dedicated space for creatives in which we can learn and work with other students and poets outside of a university environment to enhance our work and showcase our skills investment for the area.

We thank all those people who supported the application over the years."



# Crowded Lectures Push Students to Watch Lessons Online

Yasmine Moro Virion

University students are increasingly facing overcrowded classrooms and encouraged to use online services to keep up with lectures.

Institutions in Manchester, Nottingham and Lancaster are running out of seats for people paying full tuition fees, claims The Observer. Manchester University's solution was to give its maths students the web address to a live YouTube video and watch the lesson somewhere else. This didn't give them the opportunity to interact with classmates or with professors to solve doubts about the topics.

An anonymous student said that she ceased attending lessons because the number of people distracted her from focusing on the topics explained. To keep pace with the lessons she used the streaming services available.

She thinks that the excessive number of students at higher education contribute to an oversight of student's mental health struggles. She struggled herself with her anxiety disorder, claiming that "It is possible that my overcrowded degree course contributed to these feelings [of loneliness and isolation]".

A working position to control overflow live stream

at an hourly rate of £9.65 was recently opened by the University of Nottingham. Overflow rooms are often used for a high number of attendees when popular individuals talk at lectures. These were made available to University of Lancaster's students.

The universities of Nottingham, Manchester and Lancaster claimed to use these measures temporarily due to the hectic initial period of the academic year and the popularity of courses.

A physics student from King's College claimed to be bringing his own chair to lectures on multiple occasions.

Others also say to be standing at the back of the room due to the large number of people.

Another teenager from the University of Birmingham said: "I think it's ridiculous that we pay £9250-a-year but can't fit into a lecture theatre".

Times Higher Education (THE) analysed UCAS figures and showed that Aston University, Coventry University and University of Surrey have increased the number of national and European students by 50% or over.

Furthermore, HESA (Higher Education Statistics Agency) confirms this as the number of students enrolled in higher education has steadily increased

since 2014. The total number of undergraduate and postgraduate students was over 2,380,000 during the last academic year.

This January, the University of Bristol was encouraging students to do course work at SS Great Britain, a Victorian ship and museum, because there weren't enough library desks. The location is over a mile away from the campus and individuals were offered reduced prices at its café. As of 2019, the institution offers education to more than 25,000 people.

To cope with the overcrowding problem, various universities have announced expansion plans. For example, the University of Durham will provide new classrooms, facilities and student housing with a £350 million price tag. UCL also revealed its plan to open a new student centre and an East Campus, amongst other objectives, by 2034.

Moreover, the University of Leeds invested in the establishing of new edifices for its business and law students and teachers.

The LUBS and School of Law Expansion project consists of three phases affecting the Charles Thackrah, Newlyn and Esther Simpson buildings. The latter will cost £35 million and will be completed by autumn 2021.

## Women Paid 18.9% Less at Leeds Uni.



Continued from front page

Looking across the University as a whole, data published by the Equality Policy Unit shows a gender pay gap of 18.9%. This is an improvement compared to 2017 when The Gryphon reported there was a gap of 22.5%. However the figures are significantly higher than the Higher Education average of 12% according to trade union UCU.

UCU argue that a gap of 20.1%, the mean in 2018, is equivalent to women working at the University of Leeds working the first academic term for free.

According to the Equality Policy Union, there has been slight improvement with women in the upper quartile of pay increasing by 1.9%. However they still only make up 41.9% of this group.

The Gryphon does not currently have equal pay data – comparing the salaries of men and women in the same position – but the pay gap will partially

be down to the lack of women earning higher salaries.

According to data published by the government in March 2019 about the University of Leeds, women earn 88p for every £1 that a man earns with a median hourly wage that is 12.5% lower than men's.

On bonus pay gaps, the Equality Policy Unit data states that there is an mean bonus pay gap of 12.2% in 2019. However according to the government's data for the same year, women earn 50p for every £1 than men with a mean bonus pay that is 82.1% lower.

Gender pay gaps and a lack of women in top positions seems to be an issue across the Higher Education sector as a whole. 0.2% of all female academic staff employed in Higher Education bodies are in manager, director or senior official

positions. However they do make up 42% of those who hold positions in this category and make up 46% of total academic staff employed across the Higher Education sector.

In non-academic roles interestingly, women outnumbered men in most categories including senior managerial and directorial roles.

Women are poorly represented in top level positions across the UK and not just in Higher Education. Four-fifths of those on £119,000 or more are men in the UK. Those with a salary of £119,000 are in the top 1% of earners in the UK.

If you are interested in more information on the gender pay gap at the University of Leeds, please visit <https://equality.leeds.ac.uk/equality-data/gender-pay-gap/gender-pay-gap-2019/>





# More Scandals at the Home Office

**A new scandal has arisen involving Priti Patel and bullying claims within the Government. In recent times, Home Secretaries have more often than not found themselves at the centre of a media storm. Matthew Whiteley analyses the public figures involved and the consequences.**

**Matthew Whiteley**

At 8:30am on a Friday in April, a powerful woman entered the imposing building on 2 Marsham Street, London, to begin work. Just over 48 hours later, the woman was powerless, disgraced and besmirched by scandal. The woman was Amber Rudd, the year was 2018, and the Home Office had mercilessly claimed its latest victim as a result of the Windrush Scandal. The next day Sajid Javid was appointed the 93rd Home Secretary and the Whitehall clocked ticked on.

Since its creation in 1782, the office of Home Secretary quickly established itself as one of the four great offices of state, the political haven that politicians who seek to reform the domestic agenda have always aspired to. On his first day in office, Alan Johnson, Labour's last Home Secretary, described the job as a "three course meal with a coffee and dessert." With responsibilities ranging from terrorist prevention and the emergency services to border security and drug policy, it is not a job for the weak stomach.

The true nature of the Home Office is, however, far from a political haven. Like a Shakespearian tragedy, where the Home Office is cast as the cunning Iago or the culpable King Lear, a trail of quickly discarded political careers are strewn across the mighty stage upon which it operates. It is feasible to imagine the career of many a forgotten Home Secretary paraphrasing a dying Julius Caesar: "Et tu, Home Office?" they would ask, as the public, the media and often the Prime Minister drove their vituperate attacks into the back of a wounded political beast.

In recent years, the office of Home Secretary has become the embodiment of Donald Rumsfeld's axiom: "In politics, every day is filled with numerous opportunities for serious error." The latest 'error' to befall a Home Secretary concerns allegations that the current office holder, Priti Patel, "bullied and belittled" officials and

attempted to have her most senior civil servant, Sir Philip Rutnam, removed from the Home Office. Despite the BBC reporting that both individuals are "deeply concerned" by the "false allegations", Sir Philip has since resigned and intends to "issue a claim against the Home Office for constructive dismissal." In the last week, it has also been reported by the BBC that a former aide to Priti Patel allegedly took an overdose and received a £25,000 payout back in 2015 following bullying by the minister. For now, there is no solid evidence of iniquity from the Home Secretary, but nevertheless, the litany of scandals to befall the office could easily increase should a reputable source come forward or should the enquiry into Patel's conduct ordered by Boris Johnson prove fruitful.

Home Office scandals historically show no favour or prejudice, and party affiliations are meaningless. Just ask Mrs. Patel's predecessors. Since 1997 there have been ten Home Secretaries; four resigned amid a scandal (David Blunkett, Charles Clarke, Jacqui Smith, Amber Rudd), three were promoted (Jack Straw, Theresa May, Sajid Javid), one retired (John Reid), one was voted out of office (Alan Johnson), and the incumbent (Priti Patel). Virtually all faced a scandal at some point in their tenure. For comparison, the same period has seen nine Foreign Secretaries, six Chancellors and five Prime Ministers.

David Blunkett's resignation came amid a remarkable scandal. It emerged in 2003 that Blunkett had abused the powers of his office to "fast track" a visa for the nanny of the mother of his illegitimate child. The momentum of Home Office scandals only sped up under his successor. Charles Clarke's advocacy of the 2006 Identity Cards Act was considered controversial, especially when costs spiralled to over £5.3 billion, but it was the release of 1023 foreign-born prisoners without them being considered for deportation that ended his career. This included drug

importers, assaulters and attempted murderers. Of these prisoners, 288 were released after the government learned of the scandal. The situation was exacerbated by the fact that the Home Office had suffered a series of major prisoner breakouts in the mid-1990s under Michael Howard.

The next Home Office incident was much more personal. Jacqui Smith – voted the worst performing cabinet member in 2009 by Labour Party members – was forced to resign after it emerged that she had claimed MPs expenses for pay-per-view films. Whether these were submitted by her husband, as she claimed, has never been proven. This was just a small link in the larger chain of the MPs expenses scandal, but it nevertheless damaged her career, the Labour Party, and the Home Office.

Jacqui Smith's demise became Alan Johnson's rise, and he immediately set to work in restoring the tarnished image of the Home Office, which, by the time he was appointed, was realistically much more akin to a half-eaten packet of cream crackers than the "three course meal with a coffee and dessert" that he described. Alan Johnson was perhaps lucky that his Home Office tenure ended with the relative dignity of Labour's 2010 electoral loss.

The most recent major scandal led to Amber Rudd's resignation, but was in fact started under her predecessor, Theresa May. The Windrush scandal involved the re-assessment of hundreds of British citizenships and led to at least 83 illegal deportations under Theresa May. These were children of the Windrush generation – men and women invited to Britain in the 1950s to work in British services. Most had spent their lives contributing to British society; all were castigated under the so called "hostile environment."

The word 'scandal' has become much more than just a hush word around the Home Office. It is an invitation to drink from the poisoned chalice; a sentence of impending political anonymity.





# Northern Cities Need Better Rail Services... But is HS2 the Answer?

The Government has given the green light to the development of a high speed rail line, connecting the North and the South. However, is the decision to begin building from London the best for England?

Emrys Luker-Brown

First conceived of in 2009, more than £8bn has been spent on HS2 since the project's first phase. It's unlikely to be completed until 2040, and the Euston departure station is still yet to be built.

Yet on 11th February, Boris Johnson gave phase one of High-Speed 2 the green-light, a project the PM claims will "deliver prosperity to every part of the country". By contrast, Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, gave a statement on the same day, suggesting there is "no guarantee HS2 will ever connect to the north."

This is not simply a Boris-style plunge into public infrastructure investment, nor a partisan debate. For instance, Richard Leese, Labour leader of Manchester City Council, has backed the project, stressing the need to start work soon, as the "the only way we can truly rebalance the country's economy towards the North."

The prospective economic impact of a project of this scale for the local area cannot be denied. The UK needs world-class infrastructure, and HS2, with its potential to cut journey times and increase capacity on trains will certainly hope to spring corridors of growth throughout the North.

HS2 has gathered steam in the public imagination. Much of the coverage of it in the last two months has considered the changing completion date, now projected latest 2040 according to the Yorkshire Evening Post.

For phase one, the return-rate on track-building has sunk to 80p for every £1 invested. Phase two, by contrast, is a projected £1.40 for every £1 invested, though how reliable this information is prior to building is uncertain.

These sources of information are largely hypothetical, and whilst not incorrect, can warp the narrative. HS2,

as much as it could help in the "leveling up" of the North, does also have the potential to strip money away from other areas of the economy. It's important to note that financial trouble also plagued HS1, a line that now boasts 93% passenger satisfaction, with its services carrying over 20 million passengers in 2016 alone.

However, is HS2 necessary? Could it be instead a case for local investments?

The Northern Powerhouse Rail, a proposed fast line between Bradford, Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool is another rail-possibility operating alongside HS2 that some have argued needs immediate priority over HS2: this project would cost £39bn. In 2018, TfN reported that just 11% of workers in the north commute by bus and train, compared with 45% of Londoners who commuted in 2015.

A 2019 House of Lords analysis considered that the overcrowding on Northern lines – a central driving reason for HS2, as opposed to journey duration – was in fact considerably worse on local lines.

Take, for example, the line between Newcastle and Liverpool. Anthony Berkeley has used this to denigrate the project, blaming the project for eating away from other local services, and a 'Stop HS2' online campaign has since received considerable backing.

Such begs the question: is the question of rail-link investment better answered on a local-scale? Certainly a question of whether it is the best, and most necessary option at the time looms over the project, something Johnson has defended with the Oakervee Report into the project, citing the £13bn pull out costs at this stage as a reason to continue ahead with the project.

Meanwhile, the total planned investment for HS2 keeps growing, last cited at £108bn.

Furthermore, though Johnson has used the outcome of Oakervee's report – which it must be said, references

its own lack of depth – it disagrees with a number of aspects of HS2.

Two important red flags stand out. Firstly, the investment plan, the inflation of which, from £50bn to over £100bn, the report considers largely due to contracts and affiliated contractors taking on all the risk for the project.

Secondly, both the National Rail station and the HS2 station at Euston are in development, and Oakervee has suggested ending HS2 at Old Oak Common instead for the time-being, whilst Euston sorts itself out. This would, however, take the station further out of the centre of London, costing the passenger a Thameslink journey if they wanted to get to HS1, meaning HS2 would lose the tidiness of a swift connection between the North and Europe.

These aspects are important, rather than marginal, since they hugely influence the return-rate of the project.

There is clearly an appetite for improving the Northern transport lines. 'Transport for North' (as a subsidiary of TfN) was only formed in 2018 to co-ordinate development, partly to deal with the Northern Powerhouse line.

Furthermore, in January this year, it was announced that the rail company Northern would become the second rail-line (the first being LNER) to be brought under government control, after Grant Shapps' labelling of the firm's service's delays and cancellations as 'unacceptable'.

Clearly, the green-light for HS2 is portentous: Johnson has confidence in the project, and the next two decades are likely to be shaped by continual developments surrounding the project.

Its relationship with the North is by no means straight-forward, though. Trust needs to be re-gained in the project, and facts properly straightened out.



Image: Matt Dunham (AP)



# Julian Assange: Political Villain or Robin Hood of the Truth?

Isabel Ralphs

Few figures are simultaneously quite so feared and admired as Julian Assange. The Wikileaks founder has had a long and tumultuous history in the public eye, as the legal battles and moral debates surrounding him continue to rage on.

Assange's name was back in the headlines recently amidst rumours that the White House had attempted to broker a deal with him, allegedly offering to pardon him if he would publicly deny Russian involvement in the leaking of Democratic emails during the run up to the last election. Emails released by Wikileaks in 2016 proved hugely damaging for Hilary Clinton's campaign – though rumours of Russian involvement in the leaking have long since haunted the current serving President. The WikiLeak was conveniently timed in the immediate aftermath of the release of a video that had appeared to show Donald Trump boasting of molesting women, detracting attention on the PR blunder from the Reds to the Blues.

Trump has denied any involvement in the attempt to liaise with Assange; eyebrows have been raised by the accusations nonetheless.

Australian-born Julian Assange founded Wikileaks in 2006, as a platform that would allow sources and whistle-blowers to anonymously share their confidential stories, documents, images and videos. The website first caught widespread public attention in 2010 when it released footage showing US troops shooting dead 18 innocent civilians in Iraq, alongside a heap of classified documents detailing US military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan and as many as 5 million confidential emails from US intelligence company Stratfor.

It was this exposure that really sparked the debate over whether Wikileaks's role as a whistle-blower was

a noble effort to expose the truth and hold politicians to account or a public nuisance, releasing potentially life-threatening information, fuelling conspiracies and distorting views on the basis of what it chooses to publish.

Sentiments swayed more towards the latter point of view when, later in the same year, Assange became the subject of sexual assault allegations from two women in Sweden. In 2012, Assange sought refuge in the Ecuadorian Embassy in the UK, in order to avoid his extradition to Sweden to face charges. Assange also feared that he would be extradited to the US on the charge that Wikileaks had been involved in the unlawful publication of secret government files.

After 7 years in the embassy, a deterioration in the relationship between Assange and his Ecuadorian hosts saw his status as an asylum seeker revoked. In April 2019, he was finally arrested by British police for breaking his original bail conditions and is currently being held on remand in Belmarsh Prison; no longer a serving prisoner, but now a prisoner awaiting extradition.

While the allegations of sexual assault from Sweden have since been dropped, the US have upped the ante on Assange, filing 17 new charges against him under the Espionage Act for publishing classified military and diplomatic documents. Combined, the 18 charges Assange faces from the US could land him up to 175 years in jail. This year marks the start of what is likely to be a long and complicated legal battle, where Assange will attempt to block UK authorities from extraditing him to the US for trial.

Wikileaks, who continue to market themselves as a modern-day Robin Hood for the truth, labelled the decision to file further charges against their founder as 'madness' and a malicious attempt to undermine the First Amendment. Interestingly, Wikileaks has

actually been nominated for the Noble Peace Prize on a number of occasions for its 'promotion of human rights and freedom of speech' – though not without controversy.

Assange further claims that allegations against him are politically motivated and part of an unwarranted conspiracy to thwart his efforts to expose the dark secrets of government.

Among the charges against him are conspiracy to hack into US Department of Defence computers, with the help of former US army intelligence analyst Chelsea Manning (who, incidentally, is also currently in jail for refusing to testify against Assange). On the one hand, the US government's anger is understandable, given that releasing classified intelligence could thwart defence efforts that rely on confidentiality to work.

On the other, there are few countries in the world that hold up First Amendment rights to free speech quite so highly and therefore the fact that the government are so keen to waive it in this case may suggest that they might have more to hide than they would really like to let on.

The fairest summation seems to be to conclude that the issue of Assange and Wikileaks's moral status isn't quite as black and white as it is often made out to be. There are certainly cases where whistle-blowing works for the greater good, with its capacity to increase political accountability and prevent human rights breaches. However, exposing classified defence strategies or selectively sharing stories that favour certain candidates over others cannot necessarily always be justified on the same grounds. There is a fine line between help and hindrance when it comes to exposing the truth and, when crossing it can involve putting lives at risk, it is not something that can ever be taken lightly.



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# The Most Colourful Festival in Leeds – Rang Barse

**This week we spoke to Leeds Indian Students Association about their annual Holi Festival and why you should attend!**

**Tilly Judges**

Formed in 2007 the society has been helping to celebrate Indian Festivals and promoting Indian culture throughout Leeds for over a decade. The committee aims to organise exciting socials and fun filled events for their members to enjoy. Members of Leeds Indian Students Association state that one of the highlights of their society is Bollywood night socials. They describe them as fun for everyone who enjoys “funky Bollywood tunes and dancing”.

The society has something for everyone as they provide day events, with games, performances and food as well as nights out around Leeds.

They also host Give-It-A-Gos and sport socials which they believe are the perfect place to meet new people, socialise with friends and engage in new activities. The vast variety of socials, from playing badminton to the infamous Otley Run, means that there is something in this society for anyone who is interested in celebrating Indian culture.

The committee states that every year they work to make their socials more eventful, inclusive and grand. The Indian Students Association aims for all of their socials to improve every year, but their current focus is their annual Holi Event. The committee describe this as their flagship event of the year, and they plan for this to be the biggest one yet.

Holi is a colour festival celebrated in India by throwing colours and enjoying tasty Indian snacks. In previous years the celebration has taken place at venues including Mint Warehouse and Church. This year the well-known venue Beaver Works hosts the society’s colourful celebration.

The event will provide two DJs, live music, street food and free colours to celebrate Holi. The festival is a celebration of togetherness, colours, peace and love and the Indian Students Association invite you to join them to celebrate at Beaver Works on the 21st March. The committee describe the event as fun for everyone and an event not to be missed, as

they promise it’s going to be bigger and better than ever.

To find more information about the event and buy tickets head to their Facebook page **Leeds Indian Student Association** or go to [www.luu.org.uk/indian-student-association!](http://www.luu.org.uk/indian-student-association!)



## Sikh Society Combat Period Poverty

**Jess Farmer**

In line with International Women’s Day on 8th March, LUU Sikh Society have organised a Period Poverty Drive.

Period Poverty refers to having a lack of access to sanitary products due to financial constraints. Recent studies have shown that one third of the UK’s population have experienced period poverty in recent years.

Many young girls feel too embarrassed to ask for sanitary products from their families. They live with difficulties of buying food and shelter, viewing their need for sanitary products as a financial burden.

Many young girls feel embarrassed and ashamed of their need for period supplies as menstruation is still

considered a taboo subject. No young girls should be made to feel guilty or helpless when on their period.

Therefore, to help to combat this issue this week LUU Sikh Society have placed donation boxes around campus where you can donate various sanitary products which will be given to charities to help those in need. This is a really simple way to help others and to support women this International Women’s Day.

Sikh Society have been working hard to decorate boxes for the period poverty drive and the boxes to donate can be found in Leeds University Union foyer, the Clothworkers North Building reception, the Worsley airport lounge, the Baines wing cafe and Leeds Beckett Student Union City Campus Leeds.

I really encourage you to donate and help out with a great cause!





# IN THE MIDDLE

# Fashion - Blogs - Lifestyle -

## ISSUE 9

## Music - Clubs - Art - Culture



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# GIG REVIEWS

## CAGE THE ELEPHANT



Image Credit: Jessica McCarrick

Venue  
**O2 Academy**

The start of a prolific tour across the UK and Europe, the arrival of Cage the Elephant at O2 Academy didn't have quite the frosty reception that the weather might predict. Instead, on the night things quickly heat up as the Kentucky rockers unleash a completely frenzied storm upon the venue, enough to rival even Storm Dennis' wrath just outside those walls. With support from American punk-rockers SWMRS, who absolutely shine on songs like 'Miley', the sold-out crowd was electrified from the get-go.

Matt Schultz is an absolute vision of brazen confidence and Mick Jagger esque swagger as he storms onto stage to the sounds of 'Broken Boy' from their latest

album, *Social Cues*, an album regarded by NME as seeing the band "truly find themselves". It's an album that in its recorded state is good but there's a sense that there is something lacking. Performed live, however, it is completely transformed – perhaps due to the distinct shining quality that frontman Schultz possesses.

A perfectly curated setlist, the band guide the crowd through old and new, with the audience knowing every word regardless of how recently the song was released. Of course, tracks like 'Cold Cold Cold' and 'Come a Little Closer' go down a treat, unifying the crowd completely, but more recent releases like 'Skin and Bones' are equally as charming. Arguably, 'Trouble'

is the most heart-warming moment of the night. Arms are everywhere around one another or in the air and it's nothing short of magical. The bands music completely lends itself to sing-alongs, which completely makes the night – 'Cigarette Daydreams' is always going to be a special song but singing it with 2000 other people is something else.

The night draws to an end with an encore of two acoustic numbers by a lone Schultz – lulling the room to a peaceful contentment. He serenades his Leeds fans with 'Goodbye', and it's perfectly bittersweet.

**NEIVE MCCARTHY**

## INHALER



Image Credit: Kelsey Raynor

Venue  
**Leeds Beckett  
Student Union**

Haling in from Dublin, four-piece Inhaler brave the stormy weather with their tour and make their long-awaited return to Leeds to provide an unforgettable sold-out show.

The quartet don't fail to live up to their reputation of being comparable to Echo and the Bunnymen and Editors. Perhaps more obviously there are sounds reminiscent of U2, particularly with frontman Elijah Hewson, Bono's son, having undoubtedly grown up around their influence. While both their lyrics and sound remain modern, a single listen to 'My Honest Face' and it all becomes clear that Inhaler are producing a sound that is very much embedded within and endowed to another era – an era that the audience, including myself, love.

Doors opened promptly at 7:30 and Leeds Beckett's Student Union filled up quickly with much of the audience appearing to be in great anticipation for Inhaler's support act, FEET. Needless to say, FEET also put on a spectacular show and utilised every bit of stage space they had with their rock 'n' roll stage presence.

Inhaler took to the stage shortly after 9pm to deliver their short but sweet set, providing everyone with an eclectic mix of tunes. The group didn't skimp out on new projects as they intertwined several new tracks with their much-loved ones such as 'Ice Cream Sundae' and 'We Have to Move On'. Having been musically entwined with each other since their school days, the magnetism between the four was blatant as they exchanged glances of awe and

happiness between themselves while performing – evidence that their Leeds crowd blew them away just as much as they put us in awe.

The mixture of fans that filled the venue only proved the their appeal to the masses and the great range of their sound further; with the crowd ranging from students to an older audience, more specifically this one biker-looking bloke at the back who was evidently having the time of his life.

As the bands performance came to a close, much to the despair of their audience, it's clear to see that the boys musical career together has only just begun.

**KELSEY RAYNOR**



# FEMALE AND NONBINARY ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

## HALSEY

Halsey has carved out a prominent space for herself in alternative-pop, with albums that grow only more and more technically innovative and interesting. Sampling movies in *Manic*, she proves she has the taste necessary to cut each at exactly the right length, and accompanies them with song-writing that shows a development from the internalised-misogyny some accused her of with earlier tracks. She isn't afraid to be difficult, loud, and explicitly talk about her experiences of femininity and womanhood in a manner that might make audiences uncomfortable.

EVA LIUKINEVICIUTE

## DOJA CAT

Doja Cat has been bringing us candy-coated, relentlessly energetic tracks since 'So High' in 2014. The absolutely brilliant video for 'Mooo!' has now been followed by the visuals for 'Say So', in which the L.A. artist recreates the tik-tok dance that cemented her song as a hit. Doja Cat has proven she has a sense of humour within her music that most artists can only dream of naturally possessing, and shows no signs of slowing down.

EVA LIUKINEVICIUTE

## LILY ALLEN

Though she cemented herself as an icon with the release of 'Not Fair' in 2009, it's Lily Allen's latest material which has proven why women's voices in music are so essential. *No Shame* continues Allen's lack-of-filter approach, but in a sophisticated manner that is more truthful than ever. She talks about the pressures placed on her as a new mother and wife by the media and public, and feeling constantly under attack. There's raw pain and difficult decisions being shared with her audience, and yet the album remains beautiful and at many moments, upbeat. Having been scrutinised since an incredibly young age, Allen has taken the pressure both comedically and destructively, but has produced truthful, original tracks throughout her career. Still a shame the rumours about her performing at Leeds Ball last year never materialised.

EVA LIUKINEVICIUTE

## CLAIRO

Internet sweetheart Clairó went viral in 2017 with the release of 'Pretty Girl' – a sardonic offering of bedroom-pop that paved the way for her rising success over the past few years. 2019 saw the release of her debut album *Immunity*, a stunning selection of soft-rock grappling with sexuality, adulthood and reflection. It moves from achingly-heartfelt, intimate ballads such as 'Bags' to breezy, synth-filled tracks like 'Sofia'; each song is carried by her stunning vocals and earnest, confessional lyrics. At just 21, Clairó has many more years of heart-wrenching releases to come, and we can't wait.

NEIVE MCCARTHY

## JORJA SMITH

Multi-talented and arguably the love of everyone's lives, Jorja Smith has the absolute voice of an angel, and her debut album *Lost & Found*, released in 2018, testifies to that completely. The product of five years of writing, the album's jazz-tinged R&B and vocals sweeter than honey are completely seminal. Her usually quite earnest tracks were deeply contrasted with last year's release of 'Be Honest' with Burna Boy: a definitive release for everyone's Hot Girl Summer, it saw Smith's charm take on a new strain. Self-assured and slick, Jorja Smith is completely unparalleled.

NEIVE MCCARTHY

## NATHY PELUSO

Despite hip-hop being an overtly male-dominated genre in Latin America and Spain, Nathy Peluso is able to stand out from all other artists through a uniquely authentic fusion of urban rhythms, soul, jazz, trap and R&B. A proud Latina woman, Nathy Peluso is for Spanish music what Lizzo is for the USA. Throughout her musical career she has proved her ability to reinvent her sounds, supported by some truly outstanding vocals. Songs such as 'Natikillah' and the most recent 'Business Woman' are statements not only of character, but also interesting insights into her own view of the world. However, 'Hot Butter' is the track I would truly recommend. If you're looking for new BAME women in music, Nathy Peluso is one to watch.

ELENA SOTELO

## ROSALIA

Spanish singer Rosalía has managed to make herself into a true diva in less than two years. Although she has recently turned to more urban genres – a rather controversial move for some – there is no doubting her musical talent at this point. Her album *El Mal Querer* has been widely praised and regarded as one of the best Spanish records in years. It has made history as both a feminist fantasy and as a fresh take on flamenco. By managing to relate to her Spanish audience while offering English and American audiences an attractive Flamenco brand, Rosalía has become one of the most interesting women in music today.

ELENA SOTELO

## AMY WINEHOUSE

Despite Amy Winehouse's untimely death at the tender age of 27, her deep yet ultra-smooth-sounding jazz vocals continue to live on. Her unique, soulful voice resonates in tracks such as, 'You Know I'm No Good' and 'Rehab', both of which dazzlingly conjure the character of a defiant, ambitious, artist who wished to make music on her own terms. However, Winehouse's powerfully poetic words and tenacious attitude belied a more vulnerable, sensitive edge, which can be heard most vividly in tracks, such as 'Wake up Alone' and 'Love is a Losing Game'. Winehouse's oeuvre was distinctively eclectic. Winehouse's prowess at combining sounds of rhythm and blues, jazz, and soul meant that she was in a league of her own, and this is why her music remains irreplaceable.

SHANNON COOK

## PRINCESS NOKIA

Puerto Rican-American rapper Princess Nokia has not stepped onto the music scene falteringly: their braggadocios raps express their effortless, thrifty, style in 'Balenciaga', which speaks to the politics of unnecessary consumerism, and lively defiance of feminine ideals in 'Tomboy' (Nokia identifies as gender non-conforming). The energetic, self-assured rapper also refuses to be defined by the "scars" left behind from their fractured childhood which they rap openly about in 'Just a Kid'. Princess Nokia is a refreshing entrance into the male-dominated rap game. Nothing seems to deter them from continuing to experiment creatively with music. This is neither their tumultuous past, nor the fact that they are a minority in the hip-hop scene as a gender non-conforming musician. We can only hope that Princess Nokia's empowering, feminist-driven music will inspire a generation of gender fluid artists to take up their rightful space within hip-hop/rap scenes.

SHANNON COOK





# IN THE MIDDLE WITH BRAZILIAN WAX





Images Credit: Dilly Sky

A caipirinha is meant to be an easy drink to make. Brazil's national cocktail consists of just three ingredients: ice, lime and a distilled spirit made of fermented sugarcane, cachaça. The ice clinks against the glass as I stir a healthy dose of sugar into each cup. Sitting on the my living room floor, I make 4 caipirinhas. One for me, one for my roommate who refuses to leave, and two for Joe Osborne and Henry Weekes who you may know as Brazilian Wax. Henry, on seeing the size of his beverage, expressed some alarm. "but aren't you meant to be half Brazilian?" I ask, quizzically. "Yes, but I am not meant to be half drunk", he fires back.

Protests notwithstanding, Brazilian Wax have come some way since their small LSR radio show in first year. As DJ's they have played venues and festivals up and down the country, established a residency at NT's in London and have performed with the likes of Nubya Garcia, Mafalda and Mr Bongo. Their 2020 tour will see them playing with Trepanado who co-founded the hugely influential Selvagem party collective and currently heads the Selva Discos label. They have dates confirmed in London, Brighton, Edinburgh, Leeds (March 20th) and Sheffield.

Both members of Brazilian Wax came to the music from very different angles. Both have family connections to Brazil. Henry's mother was born and raised in Sao Paulo while Joe had a Grandma who grew up in the northeastern city of Recife, as well as an Uncle who emigrated from the UK to Porto Alegre. It was Joe who was the first to properly encounter Brazilian music and somewhat unsurprisingly, his exposure to it was dictated by Brazil's other cultural export, football. Whether it was playing Futsal in a local town hall or slogging through Fifa's management mode, Brazilian tapes and vinyl provided the backing track to Joe's primary school years. This eventually culminated in his first gig, watching legendary Brazilian pop samba artist, Seu Jorge. With *America Brasil: O disco* on repeat, a young Joe's hunger for Brazil's music scene was entrenched.

Despite his more apparent ties to Brazil, it was Joe that introduced Henry to the music which had helped narrate his childhood. Together, they began Brazilian Wax as a radio show for LSR, in 2016. Here they played tracks which put Brazil's rich and dynamic sounds on display while also exploring the complicated and turbulent history which contextualised them. Instrumental to the country's past and to Brazilian Wax's early sound is Tropicália. Beginning in the late 60s, Tropicália was an artist movement which distilled new directions in Brazilian art, music and performance. Joe explains that musicians would take inspiration from the colours and imagery presented in the immersive installations by artists such as Hélio Oiticica. In reference to Oiticica's Tropicália: Penetrables PN 2 'Purity is a myth' art installation Joe says that "musicians would see the green leaves of the tropical plants and touch the white sand on the floor as they walked through the hut ...it had an inherent Brazilian feel to it".

The Tropicália movement was an artistic expression of Brazil's cultural cannibalism. Popularized in the late 1920's by the Brazilian poet Oswald de Andrade, Henry explains that "cultural cannibalism is the idea that Brazilian nationalism is inherently outward looking, and is continually reconstituted by its devouring of other cultures that it comes into contact with". From the West Africans forced to work on the northern sugar plantations during slavery to the Germanic and Japanese diasporas in the South, Brazil's musical production has continually incorporated the nodes, rhythms and beats of different groups into its sound. Joe exclaims that "musically, Tropicália does stuff that all art does on a grander scale – it communicates with what comes before and navigates what their own country does in a more interesting way

than in a genre of music that is just inherent to one country". Though the movement was initially apolitical, Tropicália increasingly situated itself in opposition to the state through its celebration of liberty and the freedom of expression. The music that came out of the movement was seen as so transgressive towards the coercive military dictatorship (1964-1985), that two of Brazil's most important musicians, Gilberto Gil and Caetano Veloso, were forced into exile. Both artists fled to London where they resided in Chelsea and then North Kensington: a path across the city which Brazilian Wax retraced last year.

For Joe and Henry, it was the music and art produced within this reactionary period of Brazil's history which made them fall in love with the country. However, due to the current political climate in Brazil, these past events have taken on a new contemporary relevance. Both DJ's see President Jair Bolsonaro as an apologist for the old military regime, and his authoritarian tendencies to marginalise women, indigenous and LGBTQ+ communities as reminiscent of the same oppressive policies that it pursued. Nevertheless, just as Tropicália provided new avenues for political and artistic dissent, Brazil's increasingly hostile political environment has resulted in artists, musicians and activists developing new strategies to resist and oppose the new regime: according to Joe, "groups such as Mamba Negra, who are a female and non-binary collective, and are throwing free parties in Sao Paulo. They want to create a safe space for marginalised communities and for a general freedom of expression". One of Mamba Negra's founders, visual artist Laura Diaz, is also part of Teto Preto, a collaboration beloved by Brazilian Wax. Their 2016 release, *Gasolina*, was seen as a track encapsulating an anger and discontentment in Brazil society which would ultimately result in Bolsonaro coming to power. "Oh yeah, the tune also bangs", Henry adds.

Throughout our chat, Joe and Henry gave me a vague picture of how they want Brazilian Wax's work to evolve. They want to engage more with the modern musical and political trends in Brazil, with Joe floating the idea of going over to make a documentary about the country's thriving club scene, and how today's transgressive social movements and collectives compare to the time of Tropicália. Moreover, they want to avoid perpetuating the misplaced exoticism and romanticism that often pigeon holes Brazilian music. "It would be doing the country an injustice if we just played stuff from the 1970s and 80s, because that's not the country it is today", Joe explains. "I want to play the real sounds of Brazil".

Caipirinhas half drunk and our words beginning to slur, I concluded our chat by asking Brazilian Wax for the songs and sounds currently influencing them. This year, Joe has taken inspirations from the darker house beats and heavier Brazilian techno played by the likes of Cashu and Gop tun. Henry on the other hand has fallen head over heels for Batucada, an Afro-Brazilian percussion style from the north east of the country. "I love that angle on it " he says excitedly "for me, its music without any of the synthesis, it just makes you dance" – a final thought that I think sums up a night with Brazilian Wax pretty well.

**JOE CARTER**





All images on this page credit: Julia Kaut and Emily Moor

NOTHING



# ELYSIAN: A RECORD BREAKING SENSATION

**Lydia Varney reviews the twelfth Leeds RAG Fashion show (LRFS), talking all things fashion, showbiz and authentic climate action.**

The room is immersed in darkness, the sense of anticipation heavy in the air. The crowd, dressed and glammed up as if they themselves are part of the show, fall quiet. The room pauses, stretches. Then, suddenly, lights. Lights, cameras, flashes, fire.

The opening scene of LRFS is difficult to describe without launching into a novel-worthy extract about how the room exploded from expectant silence to a loud, whirlwind of energy, light and ... well, orange. Elysian was a clearly structured show; set into five distinct parts, the five elements. It would take less than a second to work out which was which, even to the untrained eye. Certainly, the show began with 'Fire' embodied across a range of outfits, varying from hardly subtle to unmistakably obvious uses of the theme. This is certainly not a criticism, in fact for the opening scene, it created an unrivalled impact; each of the twelve designers in this section were tied together so seamlessly that the pieces were intertwined, caught up in a moment of fiery blaze.

Scene two transported the crowd away from the noise and heat of 'Fire' and into a serene, blue calm: 'Water'. Where before models had strutted out one by one, the stage to themselves, the space was now shared between a line up of models draped in hues of blues, teals and turquoises, perfectly encompassing the liquid theme. Hazy blue lights panned across to a dancer in a hoop, central in the tranquil display. The scene was set; the models then flowed down the catwalk, finally allowing for the glorious details of each outfit to be taken in. A particular highlight at this point was a statement tier skirt, set with clashing blue prints dropped against one another. There was also an impressive amount of unusual layering and silhouette's; baggy knits thrown together with bikini bottoms, finished with the most spectacular over-the-knee boots I have ever seen (seriously, I want a pair right now).

Air, the third of the five elements, was a free-flowing whirlwind of white, distinguished by a beautiful set of dancers who populated the catwalk. In some ways, this seemed to detract from the pieces on display, as the dancers were so enchanting it was difficult to focus not solely on them. However as 'Air' encompassed a more subtle selection of outfits characterised by delicate details and gentle shapes, I personally felt that the dancers were essential in creating impact in the scene. After all, a fashion show is not merely about the outfits on display, but equally the display itself. The Elysian team, for sure, cannot be faulted on their ability to create a show; there was drama, suspense and jaw-dropping moments throughout.

Three elements in, half time called. At this point, there was an all-round sense that what the crowd was witnessing was totally exceeding all expectations. Yes, LRFS has a city-wide reputation that has been built through years of hard work. But, at the same time, it was safe to say this year's show by far exceeded that. We were, quite simply, in awe. A quick trip to Northern Bloc's ice cream stand, a fresh glass of G&T, and we were straight back to our seats, eagerly awaiting the final two scenes.

Void was, as could be imagined, a dark chapter of bold, black pieces storming down

the runway, models boldly decorated with blackened eyes and lips. I think at this point it's worth taking a moment to reflect on the makeup genius that was so essential in tying this show together. With all artists volunteering their time for charity, it could be easy to presume that the standard may be something less than professional, however this could not have been further from the truth. From start to finish, both hair and makeup was a sensation; it was creative, unique and edgy, yet also so suited to each scene that it perfectly complimented the clothes on show. It was, excuse the cliché, the icing on the cake.

The final scene of Elysian, 'Earth', was bittersweet only in that as an audience we knew the show was coming to an end. For me personally, this scene was the best of the best. Up to this point, whilst I had loved the unity across each of the other elements, I had also been aware of the danger that such distinct themes could have on creating quite clichéd

looks. In some ways, it was a triumph that each episode was so recognisable. In other ways, I wondered if it had meant some designers had been so pulled into sticking to a theme that it could have restricted creativity. Yet once the 'Earth' scene was complete, it seemed to pull the entire show together. 'Earth' was a mash of colourful creativity, crazy combinations and everything in between. Here was a display of wonder; a chance for fun and playfulness. I had perhaps assumed 'Earth' would include only natural hues, a woodland-esque episode. Instead, the runway was lit up with dancing, from the models (who were, from start to finish, absolutely sensational) who seemed to be having the time of their lives. There seemed a reflection here of combining differences to create something beautiful - Earth is, after all, so dramatically beautiful because it is so dramatically different from place to place, culture to culture. It was amazing to see some model diversity at this point and throughout the show, however it may have been better yet to have seen more plus-size or other alternative models throughout.



Showrunners Mollie Ford and Michele Fawwaz. Credit: Julia Kaut and Emily Moor

All in all, Elysian was a masterpiece. Our team could not have been more impressed with the dedication of the models, stylists, designers and rest of the team on putting on a show that was so professional and sleek, yet also a burst of fun and creativity. It is not an exaggeration to say that the audience were lit up with smiles from start to finish. However, for me, what made LRFS 2020 so unique was the authenticity behind the showbiz, and the passion the team showed about raising money to help protect our planet. This year, records were broken as a staggering £27,600 was raised towards two fantastic charities, Plastic Oceans UK and Hubbub, both who work to promote a more sustainable future. Beyond this impressive figure, what struck me was how dedicated the team were throughout. It was evident, through speeches given and small changes the committee had made (using QR codes to scan details about charities to reduce paper wastage, calculating and offsetting their own carbon emission), that there was a genuine, authentic care for the planet and a real desire to bring about positive change. A show celebrating the beauty of our planet, perfectly set up to raise money to preserve this very beauty, Elysian was a sensation, and a real privilege to see.

**LYDIA VARNEY**



# LEEDS RAG FASHION SHOW: MODELS BEHIND THE SCENES

Leeds Rag Fashion Show (LRFS) has shown that Leeds University have some serious model talent. Online editor Sarah Mortimore catches up with two of the models, getting the behind-the-scenes lowdown on preparing for the show and their outfits.



Credit: Sarah Mortimore

**Aoife is 22 years old, and a fourth-year medical student. She first modelled in LRFS last year, and has since done a few bits around Leeds, mostly for other students.**

**Eleanor is a second-year medical student, and this was her first-year modelling for LRFS.**

**How did you get prepared for the show? (e.g. any product recommendations, pamper, workouts etc?)**

**Aoife:** I made sure to be really diligent with my skincare routine in the weeks leading up to the show, and I used the ordinary's AHA + BHA peeling mask the morning before for a bit of extra glow! I didn't change my workout routine at all, but I did a gentle all body workout on both Friday and Saturday morning, because I find it helps me feel more toned and energised. I didn't want to wear myself out though!

**Eleanor:** I didn't prepare physically for the show - part of what made it great and unique is that you didn't have to fit the typical "5'8, skinny, curves in all the right places" criteria.

**How did you get prepared mentally for the show (e.g. were you nervous)?**

**Aoife:** I don't tend to get nervous until I'm backstage just about to go on. I just try to really enjoy the whole day, spending time with the other models as we're getting ready. It can actually be really boring sitting around after your hair and makeup is done, trying not to ruin your look, you almost forget to be nervous

because you're too busy trying not to be bored!

**Eleanor:** I did have to work on my confidence, but that just comes as you practice more. You start to just walk home as if you were on a catwalk. It's fun.

**How did it feel to walk on the runway?**

**Aoife:** It's really exhilarating. I love hearing and seeing people's reactions to the look, but most of the time it all goes by in a blur and it's all over way too quickly. You spend the time trying to think about a million things at once, like not falling over and trying to look elegant while remembering the choreography.

**Tell us about your outfit:**

**Aoife:** My dress was by Unravelau, a Dutch clothing brand who use only sustainable resources. It's made up of a patchwork of sandy coloured linen. It's not a colour I'd normally pick out for myself, so I was really pleasantly surprised with how it looked on. It was also a gorgeous shape and felt really flattering.

**Eleanor:** My outfit was part of the Void scene, I wore a white turtleneck and shorts with a black coat with cut out panels on top. The makeup was really fun - thick black liner and lipstick. Not what I'd usually do at all!

**Besides your look, which others were your favourite?**

**Aoife:** I loved all of the looks in the fire section, I wouldn't

mind one of those for festival season!

**What made you want to take part in the show?**

**Aoife:** I originally did it as a challenge to test my confidence, but since then I have loved meeting new people through LRFS and getting to try out different styles that I wouldn't normally get a chance to wear.

**Your best sustainability tip?**

**Aoife:** I've recently tried to move away from fast fashion, and now shop second hand a lot, on Depop and eBay. I've also recently discovered clothing exchanges which are really fun! As well as being better for the planet, buying second-hand means you find really interesting pieces, and you don't look the same as everyone else which can sometimes happen when shopping on the high street.

**Eleanor:** I don't have a specific sustainability tip but I do think that once you become more aware of your choices, you start to realise there are so many things you could do. Things like buying fewer meal deals because of the plastic, getting canned drinks rather than single-use plastics, and shopping more sustainably. There's a really good app that Emma Watson pioneered called 'Good on You', which gives fashion brands sustainability ratings, I'd really recommend it.

**SARAH MORTIMORE**



# LITTLE WOMEN'S ONLY OSCAR WIN, AND WHY IT WAS COMPLETELY UNDESERVED

**Sara Fabek Zovko presents a convincing case for why *Little Women* was robbed of success at the Oscars - and then given an award it might not have deserved.**

Greta Gerwig's 2019 film adaptation of the classic novel *Little Women* arrived at this year's Oscars with six nominations, and disappointingly left with only one win. While it would have been completely justified and well-deserved for Florence Pugh and Saoirse Ronan to win awards for their portrayals of Amy and Jo, the film's costume designer, Jacqueline Durran, took home an Oscar for Best Costume Design instead.

It would be highly unfair to say that Jacqueline Durran is an untalented costume designer; her work on the 2005 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* and Joe Wright's 2007 film *Atonement* definitely did a lot to contribute to the effect and execution of these two films. However, to claim that she deserves an Academy Award for costume design while *Rocketman*'s Julian Day wasn't even nominated for his exquisite work in 2019, is unwarranted and baseless.

The biggest issue with Durran's work on *Little Women* is one that should have taken her out of the running for Best Costume Design very early on in the nomination process: complete inconsistency with the time period. From the inaccurate silhouettes and completely out of place colour schemes to the lack of crucial elements and accessories, such as bonnets, an objective look at the fashion of *Little Women* places it in an ambiguous and stylistically messy time period that has never truly existed.

Beginning with the materials used on the costumes, it can immediately be noted that they are extremely inconsistent with the historical context *Little Women* takes place in. From the use of lace for the costumes made to dress a working class family that could not afford it and the consistent utilisation of cotton that was not readily available at the time, to the messy, unwarranted use of brighter and pastel colours, there is no shortage of historical inaccuracies to criticise in the costuming of this film. There is an overwhelming amount of frames that show the four sisters wearing outfits featuring pastel shades that would not have been available at the time, and while there is always room for creative freedom when it comes to certain aspects of costuming, there should also be a line drawn when this freedom is exploited for the sake of an inaccurate aesthetic.

Much like elements that were misplaced or misrepresented, there is a lot to be said about things that simply weren't included. The most prominent instance of this is the complete lack of bonnets, a crucial accessory for the 19th century working class woman, throughout the entire film, but this is by no means the only element Durran has excluded from her work. Buttons on the front of daywear, the 1800s staple hairstyle of sausage curls, hoop skirts and big, puffy sleeves are all elements that are nowhere to be found in this film. If this were a creative choice that somehow contributed to the film, it wouldn't be brought into question; however, it isn't, and it arguably takes away from the visual representation of the character development the girls undergo.

Had the costuming been historically accurate, the flashbacks would feature the girls in shorter bodices and fuller skirts, adorned with bonnets and presenting an air of innocence and childishness that came with women's fashion in the Civil War. The post-war shots would include more fitted gowns with fitted sleeves and a fuller back, as well as smaller hats used to accessorise. This vast difference in the during and post-war fashion could have been used to the film's advantage, using historically accurate costuming in order to highlight the coming of age story taking place. However, the opportunity was sadly missed.

Aside from these historical errors reflected in the costuming, there is also a significant discrepancy between the costumes and various elements of Louisa May Alcott's original story. It would be very unlikely for the financial and social status of the March family to allow for an outfit change for all four sisters in every scene. While no one expects the costumes for a multimillion dollar film to be reduced to two per character, a rarer rotation would do the film no harm, and neither would the use of the same costume by more than one sister, as hand-me-downs would have likely been a



Credit: New Statesman

occurrence in a financially struggling, working-class family.

These mistakes aren't limited to daily wear, however: when Meg attends a ball that, in the novel, results in her being severely scrutinised by the other attendees for the way she dresses and behaves, her costuming in Gerwig's adaptation does nothing to reflect the situation. The latter half of the 1800s saw v-neck, off the shoulder gowns come into fashion, which is why it makes little sense for Emma Watson to wear an on the shoulder gown with a square neckline that covers more than the gowns of the other attendees. Much like the rest of the costuming in this film, dressing Meg's character in such a way for a scene which aims to portray her in a scandalous light is hideously misplaced.

Ultimately, although Jacqueline Durran is by no means bad at what she does, her work on *Little Women* was a colossal underperformance for what she is capable of. To say that Durran was deserving of the Oscar this year while Mayes C. Rubeo was snubbed for her work on *Jojo Rabbit* and Julian Day didn't even receive a nomination for *Rocketman*, is an uneducated claim, and likely one of the many reasons people question the validity of the Academy Awards more and more each year. So, although *Little Women* was great on Gerwig's part, one could say that the costume work on this rendition was deserving of as many Oscars as we saw bonnets in the film: none at all.

**SARA FABEK ZOVKO**



# JEMIMA WARD: THE LRFS DESIGNER TO WATCH OUT FOR

**Fashion editors Lydia Varney and Sarah Mortimore caught up with one of Leeds Rag Fashion Show's incredible designers, Jemima Ward. They went behind the scenes to discover the work and inspiration that goes into creating the magic of the fashion show.**

**What did it feel like to see your collection on the runway?**

JW: It felt really great to see hard work pay off. I felt excited and proud to do my bit for such a good cause!

**How do you come up with your designs?**

I come up with my designs from being aware of emerging trends with a lot of my own personal twists. I get a lot of inspiration from streetwear, young people on the streets who like to be comfortable and look good. I am inspired by natural elements and a lot of the time I'm inspired by science. Especially space science, I find astrology fascinating. I also get inspired by other creatives of all sorts, artists, poets and music. Surrounding yourself with creativity is important when coming up with ideas. Using social media in healthy ways too, by admiring work from other creatives.

**What materials did you use/talk us through the making process?**

I use a lot of re-purposed fabrics. I enjoy upcycling old fabrics that I've had for years or textiles from old garments. I'm always cutting up fabric that's not being used and this can actually create innovative shapes and silhouettes because you are being limited to only a certain shape or part of fabric. I love to mix fabrics too, it adds more character to the garment for it to be made sustainably like that. My process involves pinning all parts onto the stand and then sewing and cutting; I think it's normal to be constantly re-designing and editing whilst creating garments, creating garments for me is like problem solving, like a puzzle. I don't think there should be a set way for the process, every designer is different. It's about trying to see what works for you!

**What was the biggest challenge you found when creating your designs?**

The biggest challenge for me is almost having so many different ideas for one garment that it ends up becoming too over-complicated for me to produce. The creative process for me is like a spider diagram in my head that sometimes gets too complicated. Sometimes simple is better.

**Who is your design hero/inspiration?**

My design hero/inspiration are designers like Raf Simons, Alexander McQueen, Virgil Abloh, Rick Owens and Robyn Lynch. I'm very inspired by unique streetwear designers. One of my biggest inspirations is Elizabeth Gilbert who wrote Big Magic, the book about creativity. This book helped me massively during times I wasn't feeling inspired and every creative should read it!

**If you could describe your LRFS collection in one word, what would it be?**

Fun and a celebration of people!!!

**Best fashion sustainability tip?**

Shop sustainable and re-use and re-purpose or clothes swap with your pals or your family! Even your dad's old shirt could make a nice new outfit! Get creative with it!

**What's your insta/design insta?**

My design instagram is @cliniic and my brand instagram (which will be releasing some new things soon) is @stolenfromboys - which is a mix-gendered eco streetwear brand inspired by those comfy garments you steal from someone (yet they are cooler than your dad's old shirt)!

**LYDIA VARNEY AND SARAH MORTIMORE**



Credit: Lydia Varney



Credit: Cliniic



# HOW VIOLET CHACHKI IS CHANGING THE FACE OF FASHION



Credit: Mic

You may know Violet Chachki as the winner of season seven of *RuPaul's Drag Race*. However, since winning the reality show, the 27-year-old has flourished in the fashion world, making regular appearances both on the sides of, and on the runways. A drag queen since the age of 19, Chachki consistently pushes gender boundaries while staying on top of the latest trends in her own, Chachki-esque way.

Chachki comes from a twist on the Russian word 'tchotchke', an item that serves little purpose except for decoration, and this sums her up perfectly. A visual delight, with her signature waspish waist (a mere 19 inches at its smallest) and burlesque dressing, Violet's brand is cemented in Bettie Page, dominatrix-inspired aesthetics. She embodies all that is brilliant about fashion, the maximalism that others so often shy away from, and the ways in which the fashion industry continues to push the boundaries of what the world considers 'the norm'.

Fashion has always valued the chameleons, those that come off as androgynous. Think of recognisable faces like Agyness Deyn and trans supermodel Andreja Pejć. However, it's only recently that queer figures such as drag queens have been recognised as legitimate in the mind of the fashion world. Often seen as a form of entertainment through their shows, *RuPaul's Drag Race* brought attention and success to 'fashion queens' such as Chachki and Miss Fame who have both gone out to become big names in the fashion world.

In their drag forms, it would be odd for them to model men's fashion, whilst women's was usually too small (drag queens often have to buy or create custom garments). However, designers now see the value in dressing drag queens,

and indeed drag has developed a cult following recently. Chachki's latest one-woman-show, *A Lot More Me*, featured custom Swarovski crystal eye appliques designed in collaboration with Pat McGrath, and even two unique Prada gowns, inspired by Art Deco legend Erté. Pictured above in one of these ensembles, Chachki told *Vogue* that the pieces were 'completely hand-beaded', speaking volumes about the lengths at which designers now go to in order to dress her.

Violet doesn't look like a biological woman, and that's part of the appeal. Painting herself to look like whatever she feels in the moment, through this she transforms into an almost cartoon-ish extension of herself and embodies her drag persona, a catty, confident woman. Brands select her to work with because she is larger-than-life, as her YouTube channel displays. Set up just last year, here Violet exhibits her makeup prowess through tutorials, discusses her love of fashion, and gives us a behind the scenes look into some of the craziest moments of her life.

From her first major modelling job as the first drag queen in a major lingerie campaign for pin-up brand Bettie Page Lingerie to her appearance at the 2019 Met Gala dressed in a custom Moschino black glove gown, it's clear that Violet is changing the world of fashion for the better. With brands becoming more open to working with drag queens and other members of the LGBTQ+ community, Violet Chachki is a rising star and a name to keep your eye out for in 2020.

**LIZZIE WRIGHT**



# FEMALE DIRECTORS: GIVING WOMEN A VOICE



Credit: Lili Films

A girl from rural Pennsylvania and her cousin put together some money to travel to New York so she can have the abortion her home state doesn't give her the right to have. A sexual assault survivor exacts revenge on "nice" men who take advantage of her while dealing with her trauma. The joker and his girlfriend break up their toxic relationship and the story focuses on her and a group of ragtag women joining forces. Batman's most popular villain doesn't even show up. A female painter has to paint the portrait of a wealthy woman to send her husband-to-be before they are to be married, instead the two women fall in love with each other.

These are some of the most recent and acclaimed films directed by women, about women. Movies like these, *Never Rarely Sometimes Always* directed by Eliza Hittman, *Promising Young Woman* directed by Emerald Fennell, *Birds of Prey (And the Fantabulous Emancipation of one Harley Quinn)* directed by Cathy Yan and *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* directed by Céline Sciamma are the proof that giving women a voice and creative control over projects guarantees that a wider range of stories get told, and that they get told really well.

In the post #MeToo era, we can't ignore how some of these movies focus on a woman's rights to her own bodily autonomy. This was a kind of narrative rare in mainstream studio films only just over a decade ago. Now, films like Hittman's drama have a score of 100% on Rotten Tomatoes, also having just won the second most important prize at the Berlin Film Festival. In an interview with IndieWire, the director said she was inspired to make it after watching

another abortion movie, *4 Months, 3 Weeks and 2 Days* directed by male creative Cristian Mungiu and looking what he did wrong in terms of empathy towards women seeking abortions.

In *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*, Héloïse (Adèle Haenel) doesn't have a choice over whether she gets to marry a man she has never met before. But Sciamma makes the decision to never show him onscreen. His existence is just confirmed via conversations between mother and daughter. We know just as much about him as she does, and that helps focus the attention of the audience on what really matters. Marianne (Noémie Merlant) and Héloïse are falling in love, and their relationship to women around them is what is focused on, not the guy who is threatening to take someone's freedom away with marriage. It gives the bride to be a chance to explore her own desire over another woman in a remote island just on the edge of real life, providing her with a final fantasy fairy tale that we feel the character deserves.

Emerald Fennell's film is more aggressive in its approach. It seems to be 100% in support of its character's actions as a sexual assault vigilante, who tricks potential rapists into taking her home in order to take justice into her own hands. This is a film that shines its light on what most women are well aware of by the time they reach puberty: the danger of a "nice guy" who thinks he deserves a prize for being indeed so very "nice". It is this kind of attention to the specifics of losing or regaining the right to choose what happens to you that translates so well when these female directors are choosing what happens

in front of their cameras.

The way the female body is portrayed through a male director's eyes compared to the female gaze is very different. In *Suicide Squad* directed by David Ayer, Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie), a character who uses her sexuality as a weapon whenever she wants, wears tighter clothing (a shirt that says 'Daddy's Little Monster') and performs her sexuality for, undoubtedly, the male viewer. In contrast, in *Birds of Prey* Yan is not worried about Robbie's curves in booty shorts. When she's dancing and flirting at a club, she doesn't sexualise her body. Harley Quinn has actually believable friendships with the other female main characters; a scene where Quinn notices Black Canary's (Jurnee Smollett-Bell) difficulty in fighting because of her long hair and promptly lends her a hair tie mid-battle was a simple but poignant show of solidarity between women.

But, while factual change is happening for women in the film industry, the Academy Awards couldn't even be bothered to nominate one of the 6 female directors everyone was speculating could win an Oscar this year, and Roman Polanski, a convicted sex offender, won the biggest movie prize in France, the Cesar for Best Director. There is a constant push and pull of the fight for gender equality inside the entertainment industry, so we must celebrate what we have, but not forget what we still have to achieve.

GIOVANA CHICONELLI



# A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Directed by  
**Marielle Heller**

Starring  
**Tom Hanks**  
**Matthew Rhys**

Released  
**12 October**

## 4 ANTICIPATION

Don't know much about Mister Rogers but love Tom Hanks!

## 4 ENJOYMENT

Hanks gives a great performance in a film with a simple message of kindness triumphing over cynicism.

## 4 IN RETROSPECT

Mister Rogers' philosophy may be apter now than it ever has been before.

Directed by  
**Wes Anderson**

Starring  
**Owen Wilson**  
**Timothée Chalamet**

Released  
**28 August**

## 5 ANTICIPATION

Anderson's first feature since 2018's *Isle of Dogs*, an overloaded A-list cast and music such as the likes of L'Ultima Volta by Ennio Morricone and Aline by Christophe equals very high anticipation

## 5 ENJOYMENT

From the chemistry in the McDormand-Chalamet bathroom interaction to the stunning embellishment of colours, we expected nothing less from Mr. Anderson

## 5 OVERALL TRAILER

I cannot wait to see how Anderson's exclusive lays out Swinton, Wilson, McDormand and Wright's reporter stories and eagerly awaits a film conceivably *Grand Budapest* in standard.



Image: Vox

'It seems to me that some of us value information over wonder, and noise over silence,' the children's TV legend Fred Rogers once said in a 1994 interview with Charlie Rose. 'You and I,' he told the interviewer, 'have a chance to help people know the value of silence.' It has been 17 years since Mister Rogers died, but his simple message of kindness and acceptance seems more relevant today than it has perhaps ever been. For 33 years, he hosted the kids' programme *Mister Rogers' Neighbourhood*, and although not well known in the UK, most Americans born in the '60s and '70s are familiar with Rogers' red cardigan, gentle cadence and welcoming manner. The show was revolutionary in the way it broached difficult subjects, such as death, grieving and divorce, without patronising its audience.

In 2018, *Won't You Be My Neighbour?* a documentary detailing the life and philosophy

of Mister Rogers, was released to widespread acclaim. Now, we have a new biopic – *A Beautiful Day In The Neighbourhood* – starring Matthew Rhys alongside Tom Hanks, who takes on the role of Rogers. Rhys plays Lloyd Vogel, a cynical journalist loosely based on the real-life Tom Junot, who is sent to interview Mister Rogers for an *Esquire* piece on American heroes. Vogel is fascinated and frustrated in equal measure by Rogers' seemingly impenetrable façade, and endeavours to expose the TV host's dark side. At the same time, he is struggling with a whole host of personal issues, chiefly his toxic relationship with his desperate-to-make-amends father.

Tom Hanks gives a brilliant turn as Mister Rogers, perfectly capturing his slow, calming drawl without ever making it feel like an impersonation. Hanks is just about the only actor working today who could have pulled off Rogers' aggressive kindness, and,

despite not being the film's protagonist, easily steals the show. That is not to say that Rhys doesn't hold his own, giving a solid performance as a man harbouring deep-rooted resentment who, through his encounters with Rogers, slowly learns to deal with this anger in a positive way.

The film is not without flaws: there is one slightly incongruent dream sequence, while the particular set of issues Vogel is facing smack to some extent of contrivance. All in all, however, *A Beautiful Day In The Neighbourhood* is every bit as warm as the incredible man who inspired it, and its modest endorsement of empathy and forgiveness resonated with me at a time when it's easy to overlook the value of silence.

**THOMAS VEGERIS**

# THE FRENCH DISPATCH

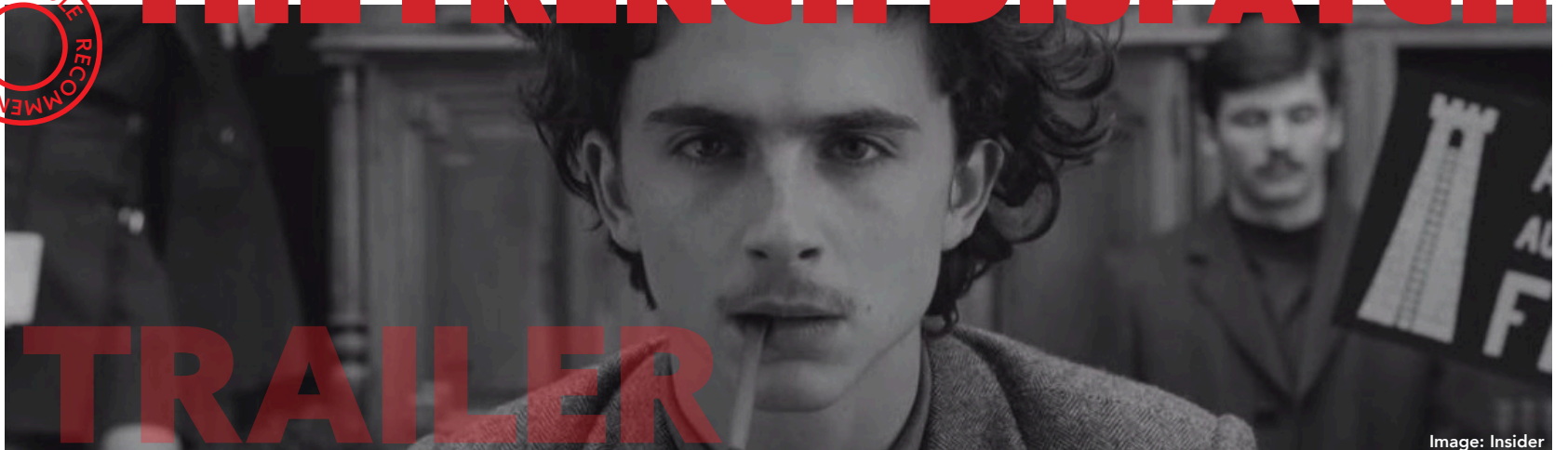


Image: Insider

Wes Anderson's notorious auteur colour palette has once again brushed our screens with the trailer for *The French Dispatch* or *The French Dispatch of the Liberty, Kansas Evening Sun* (to give its full title) hot off the printing press, receiving flying colours. This comes after his last quirky stop-motion animated feature *Isle of Dogs* that was released back in March 2018.

Back with another stellar cast printed all over the teaser including the likes of Anderson heavy hitters Bill Murray, Owen Wilson and Jason Schwartzman and less common but nonetheless exciting collaborators Frances McDormand, Mathieu Amalric, Jeffrey Wright and Léa Seydoux. In addition, young stars Timothée Chalamet and

Saoirse Ronan reunite after their previous venture into the indie with performances in Greta Gerwig's *Little Women*. If you thought that was too much, prepare for more as these are not the only A-listers set to feature in Anderson's latest flick. The end of the trailer reveals heavyweights such as Willem Dafoe, Christoph Waltz and Tilda Swinton, really making you question how Anderson will weave all of them into a runtime of just 108 minutes.

The French Dispatch also looks set to engage audiences in a typical semi-chaotic idiosyncratic Anderson storyline which tackles politics (with chaotic black and white sequences) set against a stylistic 1950s French backdrop. Chalamet, Benicio Del Toro and McDormand appear to be part of

the Parisian political turmoil narrative bubbling under the surface whilst unassuming editor Murray commands an American magazine company set in the fictional commune of Ennui-sur-Blasé.

The trailer combines many Anderson tropes in one neatly cut together montage. A mix of Anderson's all-too-iconic symmetrical centre-framed shots with whip pans all look as though Anderson is parodying himself. However, although *The French Dispatch* may have the makings of another glossy Anderson copy and paste masterpiece with a French flourish, I for one, cannot wait to digest it.

**OWEN FROST**



# AN INTERVIEW WITH 'THE BOOKISH TYPE': LEEDS' FABULOUSLY QUEER INDEPENDENT POP-UP BOOKSHOP

Alex Gibbon talks to partners Ray and Nicola from 'The Bookish Type' about seeking solace in among the shelves, the ups and downs of setting up their business and the queer fiction you should be reading.

**What is 'The Bookish Type'? And what made you decide to set up shop?**

**Nicola:** The Bookish Type is a pop-up independent queer bookshop in Leeds run by myself and my partner, Ray. We both love reading and visiting bookshops. After visiting Category Is Books in Glasgow, a 'fiercely independent and queer' bookshop we were so inspired by their friendly and welcoming space we thought how lovely it would be if Leeds also had its very own place like that.

**Ray:** When Nicola and I were teenagers we would hang out at a bookshop in Hull called Page One – it's no longer there, sadly. It was a space where I felt very comfortable. Bookshops tend to be quiet and welcoming spaces, Page One was somewhere that I could find books, magazines or flyers about subjects that you wouldn't be learning about in school.

**Nicola:** Yes, it was such a great place to go as teenagers; you could sneakily grab a copy of the Pink Paper (a free LGBT newspaper) and scurry home to read it. Page One was such an important place to find out that other queer people existed thanks to them stocking lots of LGBTQ+ publications.

**Ray:** When we open our permanent shop in Leeds we hope to be a space for all the LGBTQ+ community. Just like when we were young and figuring out our sexuality it was so important that a community bookshop existed. And now, even though we're much older and our bookshelves at home are full of LGBTQ+ books, I still love going to radical independent bookshops and buying even more books I may or may not get around to reading!

**What was the inspiration behind the name The Bookish Type?**

**Nicola:** It's really hard to come up with a shop name! We like that it says more about the kind of people that come to our bookstalls than the actual shop. We're still toying around with our strap line but currently it's something like 'independent queer bookshop'.



Image: thebookishtype  
Illustration: freepix.com





Image: halfpriceblog

### How were the early stages of setting up shop?

**Nicola:** We'd had a chat with a friend about our visit to Glasgow and mentioned that we'd love for Leeds to have a queer bookshop. A couple of weeks later Ray and I were at a party and someone said 'Oh, aren't you the ones opening a queer bookshop?'. So that then spurred us on to actually follow through with our vague mumblings about creating this space in Leeds.

**Ray:** Initially we did lots of research to find suppliers, choose books to stock as well as registering as a business, designing a logo, etc. Then we were ready for our first Pop-Up which happened at Leeds Queer Film Festival in May. Now that we're planning for the opening of our shop we have to find out about so many more things. Silly things like which fire extinguisher you need or which cash register to install for the shop. These are all the kinds of details you don't think about when your dream is just to open a bookshop.

**Nicola:** Yeah, we just want to share our love of books, not get bogged down with health and safety rules! We know that everyone who has supported us this past year has been really lovely and hope they'll be just as kind when we're bumbling our way through our first few weeks in the shop.

### (I believe) The Bookish Type is approaching its one year anniversary. Any plans to celebrate?

**Nicola:** We ran our first Pop-Up in May 2019 so will hopefully be celebrating our first anniversary in our new shop. There will be plenty of events going on in the space. We're not sure if we'll do some kind of grand opening as both of us are pretty shy.

**Ray:** We'll probably just open the door and hope all the bookish queers will wander in.

### How do you feel the literary world is doing in terms of queer representation?

**Nicola:** Pretty good – we'll certainly have no problem filling up our shop with books by and about queer people. What has been a pleasant surprise is discovering how many YA (young adult) books there are with queer representation. It's really heartening to know that younger queer readers will now see themselves represented in stories.

**Ray:** It's so different from when we were young and looking for those representations. Some of the books I read growing up were so old fashioned, like Enid Blyton, or I had an Agatha Christie phase. It's great that there are so many books published these days

with characters or themes that actually reflect the society we live in.

### Any tips on new releases that have/will hit your shop soon?

**Ray:** There were some real stand out books from 2019 that are coming out soon in (more affordable) paperback such as *Paul Takes the Form of a Mortal Girl* by Andrew Lawlor, *Frankissstein* by Jeanette Winterson and *Girl, Woman, Other* by Bernardine Evaristo.

**Nicola:** I'm excited about Meg-John Baker's new book although it isn't out for a while yet. They spoke at the Leeds LGBTQ+ Mini Lit Fest last weekend and are such a good writer. I really like how they make fairly academic topics accessible. Their new book is a graphic guide called *Sexuality* which follows on from the graphic guides they have previously published called *Queer and Gender*.

### What are your reading recommendations for LGBTQ+ history month?

**Nicola:** My all-time favourite book is *Tales of the City* by Armistead Maupin which came out in 1978. It still feels so relevant even 40+ years later, the idea of queers of all stripes moving to a city to live their best lives. It's a book with so much heart and one that I have re-read many times since I first read it as a baby queer back in the early 90s.

**Ray:** I'm currently reading *Confessions of the Fox* by Jordy Rosenberg. It's hard to describe the plot but it's basically a made up bawdy tale of a trans guy named Jack, an 18th century thief and jail breaker, told by a trans academic who has found some manuscripts about Jack. I guess it's like a less dense and very queer version of a Charles Dickens novel. I'm reading it in time for the next meeting of Queer Book Club Leeds in March. It will be a really interesting discussion as the book is so layered with so many things to talk about.

### Where can our readers catch you next?

**Ray:** We are on tenterhooks waiting for our lease to come through for our new shop. It's in Leeds city centre and we'll reveal all once everything is finalised as we don't want to jinx it!

**Nicola:** For sure, it feels like it is taking ages for all the paperwork to come through but I am so excited that Leeds is going to have its very own queer community bookshop.



# DEAR ANIME: WHERE ARE YOUR WOMEN?



Credit: Nave Bepop

**Hunter X Hunter. The Seven Deadly Sins. Naruto.** Titles such as these bounce from the tongues of eager fans as some of the most engrossing long-time manga and anime adaptations to date. Their plots are well-written, their philosophies complex; the atmosphere tense and action immense. However, if there was anything that could puncture such popularity, it is the aged and drained reality that women are still not approached as they should be.

As of 2020, we women are still witnessing either being hyper-sexualised or else side-lined to support the male characters that hog the spotlight. The stereotypes in anime that spring to mind are the lolicons, obvious fanservice, magical girls, stock shounen heroines and witless fangirls. With these stock characters in mind, it does seem to feel like talking to a brick wall when trying to convince outsiders as to why anime should be given the serious time of day. In terms of the over-sexualisation of anime culture, this may already have an interesting history as to why such representation has persisted. The earliest form of print culture in Japan's history is potentially the practices of ukiyo-e. Established during the Edo period (1603-1868), 'ukiyo' was a concept of places known as the 'floating worlds' that encapsulated the paradoxical experiences of pleasure with transience – this being an ample way that one might describe the experience of going to the brothel houses.

The woodblock painting forms that encapsulated this lifestyle, depicting erotic scenes and beautiful courtesans from behind the scenes of Shimabara,

Shinmachi and Yoshiwara could arguably be what continues to inspire print culture in Japan so many eras down the line. It becomes understandable then as to how and why female sexuality and sexualisation continues to swell at the heart of Japanese animation, it becoming seemingly rueful that this element cannot be taken away from how women are portrayed as this would cause the entirety of the anime industry to wither and crumble.

It is not a matter of diminishing female sexuality but balancing it. It raised the question why the intelligence and artistry behind the ukiyo-e has not been properly embellished in depicting femininity. Many a competent writer and scholar from Haruki Murakami to Judith Butler, acknowledge how much of female sexuality is about performance and agency; it is a weapon that veers into either misogynistic archetypes of self-gain or more empathetic ideas of survival. It is imperative that in order to value the body, we must also value the brain. We must revise and humanise how we perceive female sexuality, for eradicating and diminishing it only threatens to serve the misogyny surrounding expectations of how women 'should' behave. This is what makes the best of the women sketched in the anime frame: this listicle including those that are quick-witted, passionate and determined yet also afforded the scope to be sexually articulate – to know and earn it.

Moreover, just as what often makes the sports genre of anime so popular – such as with *Free!* And *Haikyuu!!* – is how we often witness broiling emotions, complex rivalrous dynamics and intense characterisation as a result of infuriating setbacks.

This should be the case for women too. Women should be depicted as being allowed to strive for self-improvement and liberation; to not merely be concerned for the men in the game but also to burn for their own achievements and self-improvement. This lack of personal drive and ambition is what scraps many a long-standing anime from being recommended as feminist-friendly – Detective Conan's Haibara Ai being arguably the only reason why one would give the series the time of day anymore. Even *Shingeki no Kyojin* (*Attack on Titan*) spins on thin ice given how the ace Mikasa Ackerman is depicted as being so overly protective of the male main character as her love interest, these formidable characters being castrated by the idioms of their gender and prevented from fully embellishing their own agendas.

Thankfully, there are animations that are more celebratory of representing female authenticity. Hayao Miyazaki's Studio Ghibli productions have long been the centre of discussion for fair and inspiring female representation; *Spirited Away's* Chihiro, *Princess Mononoke's* Sophie from *Howl's Moving Castle* alongside *Nausicaa* and *Kiki* being only a taste of feminine greatness. There are many other anime series that boast women of quick wit, ambition and sensual expertise - this range of the popular and underrated setting suitable examples for the industry to follow as we take on 2020.



## GINTAMA

When the title is a play on the lead character's name and the Japanese word for testicles, it would be understandable for one to underestimate *Gintama* for its impeccable comedic and dramatic potential. It plays on the crude and slapstick humour that is true to the Edo period in which the series is set, somehow managing to marry its ridiculous adaption of outer-space aliens being the first to discover Japan with a nuanced taste of foreign entities destabilising the security of the homeland. The women fall into and embrace this balance of tragedy and comedy. Kagura Yato poses as the loveable and physically formidable third member of the leading trio, but the ensemble of fleshed-out females is not rooted with her. Other revered names include golden yet temperamental Shimura Tae, protective and perverse Sarutobi Ayame; sexually conflicted yet samurai-hearted Yagyu Kyuubei and impeccable representative of Yoshiwara itself, Tsukuyo – Courtesan of Death. The ensemble doesn't even stop there; the anime being more admirable for being able to develop such a carnivalesque ensemble of women that are grotesque yet loveable; easy to invest in and determined to never be stuck in the binary.

## THE WOMAN CALLED FUJIKO MINE

You may know her as accomplice, lover and rival to Lupin III, but even before *The Women Called Fujiko Mine* manifested it has long been acknowledged that the titular character has a whole mind of her own. Fujiko Mine may be a professional criminal, cat burglar, spy and seductress, yet she is far from any stereotypical temptress, with this 2012 series being determined to prove this. Whilst the Lupin III franchise has spanned many series and movies for many years and many audiences, Fujiko's story is not for the light-hearted. The tone is significantly darker and racier, yet the explorations of sex are fuelled with questions of morality, identity and psychology. The sketchier aesthetic perfectly compliments the sketchy and elusive character, Fujiko being perhaps more fascinating for not having a tragic backstory, instead simply being an embrace of women with adventure and greed as part of their natural arsenal.

## GEKKAN SHOUJO NOZAKI-KUN (MONTHLY GIRLS' NOZAKI-KUN)

Far more comedic and lighthearted in tone than the last on this list, *Monthly Girls* will hold a special place in your heart with its charming sense of ridiculousness. This romantic comedy follows high-school student Chiyo Sakura as her crush on schoolmate Umetarou Nozaki leads her into helping him illustrate his weekly shoujo manga. This may not seem such an inviting premise for female representation, yet the main plot acts as a trojan horse for plays on character tropes and genre. Similarly to equally funny and fluffy *Wotaku ni Koi wa Muzukashii* (*Wotakoi: Love is hard for Otaku*), this anime embraces the embarrassments and mishaps that comes with experiencing first love, yet allows Chiyo to be so open and inquisitive that she befriends a whole cast of characters outside of her love interest. One might say that the anime then is able to adapt a true essence of love that is platonic – not a relationship between male and female that is 'purely friendship,' but rather one that is based on unions of minds, ideas and art rather than diving head first into lustful scenarios that will inevitably fall apart.

## YAKUSOKU NO NEVERLAND (THE PROMISED NEVERLAND)

There has rarely been so terrifying and intriguing a depiction of female villainy as within this very anime. Child protagonist Emma is enough of a reason to want to watch the series as her buoyancy and determination are normally the given traits for the male lead in any given sports anime. Regardless, if we had to give a prize for a product of narratorial genius, then

Isabella and her uncanny poker-face win with flying colours. The impeccable animation with its focus on scene timings, musical accompaniments and attention to expression make it a masterpiece of tension – an animated equivalent to *Parasite* if there ever was any. It is no exaggeration to call Isabella a truly terrifying foe – her poker-face and unnerving grace whilst selling off her beloved children causing you to think that she is in fact as monstrous as it gets. Despite this, it is a true credit to the writers that even Isabella can be conceived as a victim in this mess. This is not a story necessarily where there is scope for forgiveness and redemption, but it is understanding that nuance that allows the anime to grab our attention – highlighting women not in the brackets of their gender but as fighters to be the last contender.

## MICHIKO TO HATCHIN

You will be hard pressed to find decent anime that depicts ethnic minorities alongside complex femininity, but thankfully this package deal is available in the form of combo *Michiko to Hatchin*. Following escaped convict Michiko Malandro on the road with pet-named Hatchin – the supposed child of Michiko's lost lover – this series upends and usurps everything you think you know about anime. With its gritty tone, focus on crime, bloodshed and embellishment of Latin American aestheticism, the show proves that anime has a cultural range that many studios fear to go. You might compare Michiko to Jessica Jones – each formidably moody and edgy with turbulent emotivity, Hatchin acting as a somewhat bratty foil whilst simultaneously being adaptable to the dangerous world around her. The quarrelsome duo make for an intriguing dynamic as you are never sure whom is the more empathetic or temperamental of the two. Theirs is a gruelling story of abandonment, mistreatment and rebellion, their dauntless partnership however outstanding against a backdrop of bleakness and corruption.

## AKATSUKI NO YONA (YONA OF THE DAWN)

Last but by no means the least, here is anime with such outstanding female potential that the writers of *Game of Thrones* could take notes in their professional exile. Princess Yona begins as the product of many an irritating female archetype: a spoilt princess caught in the midst of a love-triangle, this being flipped swiftly upside down as her would-be love interest is responsible for her father's death and taking over the crown. This forces Yona and her childhood friend and bodyguard, the 'Thunder-Beast' warrior Hak, into hiding whilst pursuing the myth of the formidable 'four dragons' who used to serve King Hiryuu – a member of Yona's ancestry. Starting off as a typical shoujo comedy, it is remarkable how Yona's characterisation is able to evolve with such finesse and subtlety. Her narration is like Daenerys meets Mulan – an embrace of the former woman's insecurities and vitality, but like the latter, she is allowed to embrace her strengths as a warrior queen and embellish her influence over the male characters in her esteem. Yona is constantly haunted by the past yet still manages the strength to be compassionate, her journey allowing her to perfect her own combative skills as a formidable archer outside of Hak and the dragon's protection. Unfortunately, there are only two seasons of this brilliant series available, yet the manga is still ongoing. Yona's is a story that many a writer should find enviable – a demonstration of individual and communal power that the western world sees as tyrannical 'madness' instead of much needed female courage and independence.

TANIKA LANE



Credit: YouTube



Credit: YouTube



Credit: The Movie Database



Credit: Twitter



Credit: YouTube



# MENTAL HEALTH IS WEALTH: WOMEN VS STIGMAS

Research shows that nearly nine out of ten people with mental health problems say that stigmas and discrimination have a negative effect on their lives. With the current global discussion around mental health, it is more important now than ever that people speak up about mental health to raise awareness and challenge stigmas preventing people from having important discussions and seeking help.

Various social factors put women at great risk of poor mental health that may not impact men as much, such as low income and low status jobs, physical and sexual abuse, and isolation due to domestic responsibilities. Celebrities have a huge platform, making them a useful facilitator in sparking discussion. Here are five brave women who have done so:



Credit: Getty Images

## LADY GAGA

Famous for her overstated fashion sense, Lady Gaga has recently targeted society’s understatement of mental health. The well-known singer and actress has famously spoken out about her struggles with PTSD as a sexual assault victim, and has been vocal in encouraging others to open up about their own experiences. She once said in a speech: “We need to bring mental health into the light. We need to share our stories so global mental health no longer resides and festers in the darkness”. The Born This Way foundation was established by Lady Gaga in 2011 with the aim of creating a “braver, kinder, world for youths”, demonstrating her dedication to and activism for the future of mental health.



Credit: Pink News

## KESHA

In November 2017, Kesha composed an essay for TIME magazine to reach out to people with mental illnesses in the holiday season during which she urged her readers to be kind to themselves. The singer has struggled with mental illness for many years as she entered rehab for an eating disorder back 2014. More recently in 2018, Kesha released a documentary called *Rainbow: The Film* that conveyed her struggles over the last five years. In her discussions of mental health, Kesha has said: “Depression, anxiety, and mental illness are things we all need to talk about more, and there is no shame in asking for help”.





Credit: Republic Records

## ARIANA GRANDE

After Ariana Grande and her fans were tragically targeted in a terrorist attack in Manchester in 2017, the singer has been increasingly more open with her struggles around mental health, particularly PTSD, anxiety and depression. She took to Instagram to share a candid post with her fans explaining her reasons for cancelling her tour, sharing that her anxiety and depression had recently been at an all-time high. The singer’s honesty about her struggles and her decision to prioritise her mental health can serve as an inspiration on her incredibly large platform.



## MICHELLE WILLIAMS

Mental health issues do not discriminate based on race; studies have shown that African Americans are 10% more likely to experience serious psychological distress. This is why it’s important that celebrities such as Michelle Williams from the famous girl band *Destiny’s Child* have spoken out about their experiences. In 2013, she revealed that she had suffered a long battle with depression dating back to her teenage years. In an interview she spoke out to her fans saying, “It’s OK if you’re going through something. Depression is not OK, but it is OK to get help”.



Credit: AFP/Getty Images



Credit: Invision/AP Images

## DEMI LOVATO

It is fair to say that Demi Lovato has been nothing short of inspiring when it comes to breaking down mental health stigmas, participating in candid interviews and frequently writing and sharing moving lyrics about her struggles. She produced the MTV documentary *Stay Strong* following her recovery, and has been active in her contribution to discussions around mental health. Lovato has suffered from a multitude of mental illnesses such as depression, addiction, eating disorders and bipolar disorder, making her story particularly inspiring and helpful to others. Her vicious cycle of relapse is something that infuses a sense of realism to the topic of mental health discussion.

Her recent performance of ‘Anyone’ at the Grammys received a standing ovation.



No amount of money or fame can promise you happiness. With the recent devastating news of Caroline Flack, it is more important than ever that celebrities are able to show that they can struggle too. Mental illnesses can be found where you least expect them; it can sometimes be those that seem the happiest who are struggling the most.

If issues discussed in this article have affected you or someone you know, support is available from Leeds MIND, Leeds IAPT, the University of Leeds and Help and Support at Leeds University Union.

NISHA CHANDAR-NAIR



# CHANGING THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES

Statistics show that 83% of chefs in the UK are male, according to data from the Office of National Statistics employment in 2018. Time then to cover three incredible chefs, who have managed to force their way into the small demographic of female chefs to show that women can be successful in a culinary world.

If you don't know Claire Saffitz then where have you been? Not only is Claire Saffitz a trained pastry chef (though she recently claimed that she's "not a chef") and a contributing food editor of Bon Appétit magazine, she is also a YouTube sensation! Saffitz' stardom began in 2017 when she began the show Gourmet Makes for Bon Appétit's YouTube channel. The show consists of Saffitz trying to recreate popular snack foods as well as elevating the foods to a more gourmet standard. Indeed the rising popularity of Gourmet Makes was due to Claire's relatable 'low' moments.

Claire herself stated in an interview with Mashable that "there's some sort of transference from people, they get stress relief from watching my stress" and for anyone that has watched the show, this is certainly true. We are used to watching culinary shows where the chef is the expert and we absorb the information as viewers but it is Saffitz's stressful cooking that engages us with content that has more entertainment value. It is certainly uplifting to watch Saffitz go through a rollercoaster of emotions, to then seeing her happy and relieved at the end of the episode. Therefore it is this emotional vulnerability, that women is often deemed a 'weakness' in women, which has catalysed Claire Saffitz's success.



Credit: Bon Appetit



Credit: The Times

Ravinder Bhogal was born in Kenya to Indian parents and grew up in London. It is this mixed culture and heritage that has enabled Bhogal to create impressive fusion dishes and menus. Bhogal is not just a remarkable chef, for she is also an award-winning food writer, journalist, TV presenter, stylist and restaurateur. Her most impressive achievement is the opening of her restaurant Jikoni in 2016.

Jikoni is frankly an adorable restaurant with a cosy almost café-like feel to it and is designed in an overtly 'feminine' style, with a pale pink colour scheme and floral designs. However, it is not only Jikoni's design that makes a statement, but Bhogal's menu too. Jikoni offers a variety of Asian comfort food, but with intriguing British, African and Middle Eastern twists, showing off Bhogal's accumulation of travel and culture. The dish on the menu that appealed to me the most was the "Cold Silken Tofu, Peanuts, Puffed Wild Rice, Caramelised Foxnuts", mainly because I was very intrigued by what foxnuts were, and also because it was one of the many creative vegan options on the menu. Bhogal's interest in developing vegan dishes came about when her niece decided to become vegan. Consequently, Bhogal created a completely vegan menu for W London, which included her niece's favourite, caramel tofu with garlic confit rice and chilli smacked cucumbers.

Samin Nosrat introduces herself on her website [ciaosamin.com](http://ciaosamin.com) with "Hi. I'm Samin Nosrat. I cook. I write. I teach" and while it's clear and simple, it undoubtedly does not give Nosrat's talent justice. If you're a foodie, or simply have access to a Netflix account, then you need to watch Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat. The docuseries is based on Nosrat's New York Times bestselling, and James Beard Award winning book titled Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat: Mastering the Elements of Good Cooking, which is written on the premise that the way to master the culinary arts is to master these four elements. In the Netflix series, the four elements are explored through four episodes in four countries: Italy, Japan, Mexico, and her home California, USA. Its success led to Nosrat becoming an international culinary celebrity.

Nosrat is recognised for her talent as well as her endearing personality (please watch "Brad Makes Focaccia Bread with Samin Nosrat" on Youtube). The Guardian even described her as someone that "projects the kind of charisma that fosters a sense of familiarity, allowing audiences to believe they know her", which is very similar to the reason behind Claire Saffitz's success.



Credit: Stylist



# HOW GENDER ALTERS MONEY

Sachi Thakkar, LUU's Health and Wellbeing Ambassador, discusses the effect gender has on financial freedom.

It may be nice to wear good heels and a dress but it's less fun when you have to ask your man or parents for the money and thus give them the financial power over your look, your life and your decisions. At times you might want to shop more than usual or buy a piece of jewellery, but is it worth it if you have to give an explanation to a man as to why you need more money?

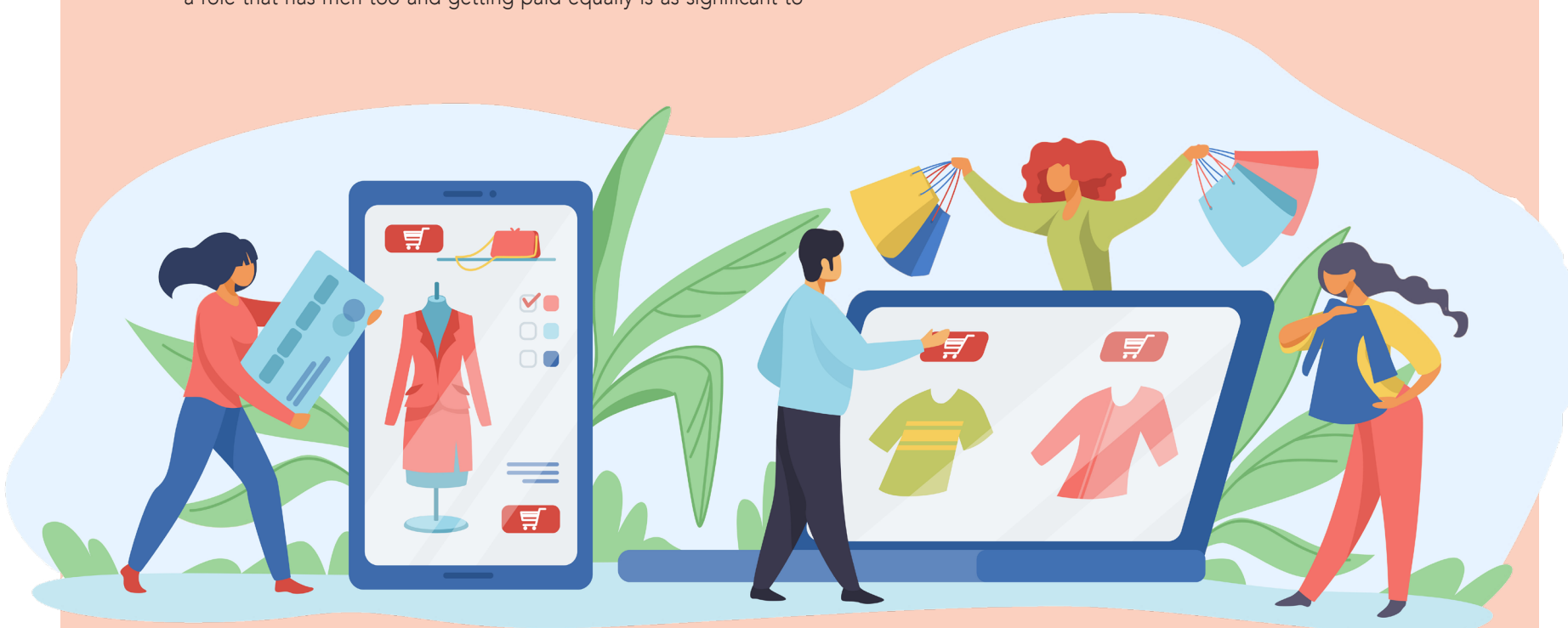
Compared to previous generations, we have become more egalitarian but old-fashioned and anti-gender equality beliefs and assumptions still exist when it comes to men, women and money. Men and women both react to financial freedom differently. It is vital to talk about it instead of pretending that money and opportunities mean the same for every gender. We may have loosened up to the idea that women are supposed to be homemakers but we are still holding onto the idea of men providing for the family. There are still professions defined as a men's field in an economic sense. At times where men are breadwinners, women manage money allotted to them and in cases where women and men both earn, men happen to control both of their accounts and expenses. A woman should not only earn but also be given chance to develop financial literacy by managing her own money.

Every woman should feel independent, equal and balanced in an economic sense. At the age of 19, I vividly remember the first time I had earned money at my part-time job. I felt empowered because I could pay for what made me happy, which previously used to be paid by my father. I had gained the ability to make my own buying decisions. Being a part of a team led by a woman and working in a role that has men too and getting paid equally is as significant to

me as getting the opportunity to work. Managing my money myself and not having to give an explanation for where I spend this money also adds to my independence. I have not become completely independent but the little that I contribute to my living expenses is a rewarding experience. I do not feel the pressure to justify my actions, but not feeling this pressure makes it difficult to budget myself. Being a teenage student we are used to living under stipulated budget allotted by our parents. Thus, it can be hard now to manage it on your own. It's like limiting fatty foods in your diet as you want to be healthy.

In today's generation, equal opportunities are not just about what they are but also about how and where the opportunities are given. Culture plays an important role for me in terms of independence and entitlement. My home country doesn't have a part-time work culture. Working while studying is considered a distraction or a burden over studies and hence, we are not encouraged to work part time. Studying in the UK's culture gave me an opportunity to develop financial literacy. Hence, earning money and managing money yourself are both equally important for your economic wellbeing. Our gender shouldn't affect our economic wellbeing. Woman should have an equal scope at gaining financial power to put their security and comfortable lifestyle into their own hands. Financial literacy makes woman aware of the tools that are available to grow their wealth and realise their potential to make it. It is an ongoing continuous process and an important foundation in a girl's upbringing.

**SACHI THAKKAR**



Credit: freepix.com

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## Girlhood as a thing that happens to us

Once Upon a Time there was a girl,    Mama whispers *Be a good girl now.*

I see a head full of my mother's hair and I name it so

I am drunk on warm milk.            The strong women I'm built from  
say *watch my example and follow suit.*

Learn how to gently peel open a pomegranate  
Sparrow legs,            Nana comforts by saying *the world is beautiful, the world is pink and  
the world is warm.* I am like Bambi learning how to stand            Isn't she lovely?

Playing cat's cradle, chewing on dusty bubble gum. Linking arms with other girls  
like lovers walking in the breeze.            A rabbit's soft ear whilst warm light is melting  
over my crown.            My sister and I performing dance routines

flicking through magazines, candy shaped like hearts            and grazed            knees  
running through the shallow stream. Dressing up.            Fleshy tongue sticking out, busy  
school bag slinging from shoulder to shoulder.            -            losing time like puppy fat.

Fingers bathed in milky moonlight watching clouds dancing into shapes  
making these potions out of our parents' bath milk.  
Sugar and spice,            little mouth all full of starlight.

Promise me with your baby finger.            I was twelve the first time someone  
didn't ask if it was alright.            Daisy chains and all things nice.            *Be polite.*

Cotton summer dress.            The world is suffocating,            a pink plastic bag but  
Mama soothes.            Blowing nails dry, hiding them under scratchy mittens.

Dress down in romantic raspberry light,            skimming stones.            A bike  
with stabilisers.            Take it off.            The blue tit in the blossom tree,

wishing on an eyelash.            Hips.            A head full of bubbles and vanilla  
ice-cream is melting down my arm            Dip your net into the water and out

I am scooped, a pale squealing jellyfish.            Pink iPod Nano singing,            swinging  
high in the playpark.            Another bike with two wheels and silver tassels.

Picking strawberries in the summertime, an egg            falling from a nest.            Skipping rope,  
soft bellies, sleepovers,            small secrets between friends.            Drunk again

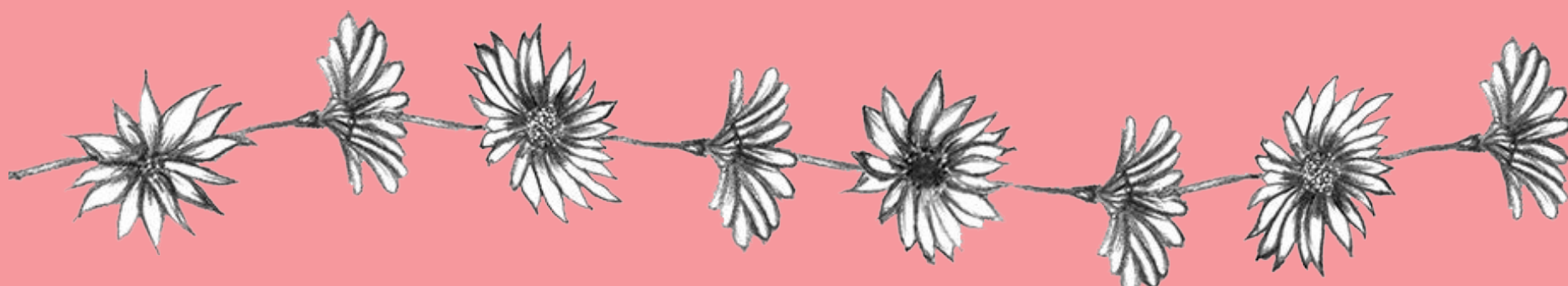
on alcohol.            Giddy like *Oh My God There They Are Pretend I've Said Something Really  
Funny and Laugh Really Loudly.* Icing a cake.            Bright beads in plaited hair,

dusty feet in summer sandals.            Picking daffodils  
Experimental lipstick.            Girlhood observed.            Men in anonymous matte vehicles

Shouting *sweet thing.*            Shouting *sexy mama.*            Shouting *ugly bitch.*

Deep cherry red. Sun shy thigh.            A threat disguised as a joke. *Yeah, you'd better like it.*

by Millie Rosette







# Food Should Be Made More Affordable on Campus

Seamus O'Hanlon

The news that Leeds Beckett University has opened up a foodbank for students who have to pay up to eighty per cent of outgoings on rent is damning evidence that austerity and its destructive consequences are not over. Food banks themselves offer practical solutions to young families, pensioners and those receiving Universal Credit. The volunteers who run the City Campus food bank should be commended for their generosity and diligence, but as expressed by Beckett's Union Affairs Officer Charlie Hinds, this is no cause for celebration.

*Food poverty affects academic attainment, social experience, and physical health*

Food bank usage has grown rapidly, with the Trussell Trust reporting an increase of seventy-three per cent over the past five years. Food banks are used by various groups of people: families with two working parents, the 'just about managing' category, and now students. Students have been demoted from no fees to modest fees: bursary provision has been reduced to the current system where maintenance grants are crudely doled out with the payment being simplistically the same outside of London. Starvation is presented as a cruel option when grants just about cover accommodation. Food poverty affects

academic attainment, social experience and physical health which all limit disadvantaged students upon graduation.

Looking after the physical and mental health of students should be the top priority of all parties concerned, which means that wholesome meals, fresh fruit and vegetables and variety should be treated like attendance by the University. How many personal tutors or support staff proactively enquire about the diet of their students? Universities are still transitioning from the assumption that those who get in are broadly middle class and can afford the cost of living. Positively, it now seems that some universities are addressing students who have to go without. Opening up a food bank is a great practical step. However, I worry that reliance on food banks further marginalises poor students from important socialising heavily associated with lunches and dinners that many universities push.



Universities provide specialised education to all, ranging from international students to first-generation to low income. Many have support staff to help facilitate equality of opportunity. I would argue that universities should be more concerned with affordable on-campus food that is accessible and nutritious, albeit basic, rather than whatever faddish, costly food store they put in place. The Union has a right to make a profit for its investment but it must provide affordable options that don't exploit the lack of convenience and competition on campus.

*Reliance on food banks further marginalises poor students from important socialising*

ToastLovesCoffee in Harehills is a local establishment that the various universities in Leeds could and should follow the example of: using otherwise wasted supermarket ingredients with no prices on the menu, it makes food accessible for those on various incomes by employing a 'pay as you can' method. I believe that a better partial solution would be for the University to adopt this system in a few establishments as an experiment that could benefit those who could pay for their lunch but not at that price.

The University has the chance to champion dignity and inclusivity and make campus food available for all catered and non-catered if it can remember that food is a human right.

# Finally: Justice for Weinstein's Victims

Lucy Barber

The #MeToo movement began in 2006, when Tarana Burke created the phrase, however it was popularized in 2017 when Alyssa Milano encouraged victims of sexual harassment and assault to speak up on Twitter to increase the magnitude of the campaign. It did exactly that.

In October 2018, a year after Milano started the hashtag, it had been tweeted more than 19 million times, emphasizing how much impact the movement had on social media.

Allegations against Harvey Weinstein in October 2017 were one of the first to come out of this revival of the #MeToo movement, creating an uproar among the Hollywood and entertainment crowd. It gained momentum as celebrities started to tweet about their experiences or simply used the hashtag #MeToo, indicating that they, too, were victims of sexual harassment.

During the award season of 2018, celebrities in the masses all wore black to show their solidarity to those victims of sexual assault, in particular those who were victimized by men in positions of power, such as Harvey Weinstein, as well as Kevin Spacey, R. Kelly and Donald Trump.

Although this got the word out about #MeToo to a higher level and increased its significance in 2018, it still did not change the fact that so many people in power had violated others and it had not particularly impacted their career or their status. This is why Weinstein being found guilty is so influential in the battle against sexual harassment and is so significant for the #MeToo movement.

In February 2020, Weinstein was found guilty with third-degree rape and first-degree criminal sexual act. Although he has been accused by more than 80 women, including Gwyneth Paltrow, Salma Hayek and Uma Thurman, and only charged for two instances, he still faces up to 25 years in prison. Had the jury not acquitted him on two counts of predatory sexual assault, Weinstein may have faced a life sentence. He will face his official sentencing on 11th March.

Although Weinstein was not charged for the majority of the cases that he was accused of, the fact that he is facing a substantial amount of prison time is still a success for the #MeToo movement.

When people in power see that there are consequences to their actions, then maybe they

will be less likely to commit such acts.

Despite the involvement of celebrities, such as wearing black on the red carpet and tweeting the hashtag, being a step in the right direction when it comes to tackling sexual violence, the guilty verdict of Weinstein accelerates the movement much further.

When the accused people are facing their consequences, it is then that we can understand the significance of their actions, and start to believe victims, and try to prove them right instead of trying to prove them wrong. It may mean that more victims may come forward, as it can be seen that justice can be served, even when up against a powerful person, and that their voice and their stories do matter.

It is evident that Weinstein being found guilty for third-degree rape and first-degree criminal sexual act is a success for the #MeToo movement, but there is much more to be done.

Weinstein was only one case in the hundreds of people that have been named; more action needs to be taken in order for the victims of sexual harassment and assault get their justice, and for the #MeToo movement to change and improve more lives.



# Hilary Benn: Time to Challenge the “Soap Opera” at Number 10

Eloise Barry

As I interview Hilary Benn, MP for Leeds Central, it is obvious that he’s been here many times before. Having held the same office for twenty years, Benn is a seasoned politician. Perhaps this comes from his father, Tony Benn, the former Labour MP famous for his socialist views?

Yes, says Benn, politics is a family tradition. As a child, Benn assumed that all families talked current affairs over breakfast. Decades later, having sat in numerous Cabinets and Shadow Cabinets, from Blair’s to Corbyn’s, Benn maintains that a politician’s role is to listen to ordinary people with ordinary problems.

Following in this vein, I ask him about something which, though not very glamorous, affects many Leeds residents’ daily lives: transport. Benn has been a vocal supporter of HS2, the government’s notoriously over-budget, long overdue project. Aiming to offer high-speed rail connection between London, Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds, HS2 has cost the taxpayer £9 billion on the first phase alone, which remains unfinished.

Would the money not be better spent on something people actually need, like better local transport? After all, Leeds is the only major city in western Europe lacking a mass transit system. Benn retorts that the completion of HS2 is the necessary condition for the success of Northern Powerhouse Rail. Nevertheless, the London-Birmingham branch of HS2 will not be completed by 2030, while the second phase which includes Leeds, might not appear until 2040. Benn, however, states that such a transformative scheme takes time, and that the payoff for the North is worth the wait.

In the meantime, I ask, what can be done to combat the dangerous levels of air pollution in the city? Last year, campaigners found that one street in Leeds had levels of nitrogen dioxide higher than London. Benn speaks at length about the future of zero emission vehicles, and government



Image: BBC

strategy to promote electric cars.

Although all good ideas, I remain unconvinced. What about more investment in buses, which are currently the most used form of transport to work in the North? Benn believes that buses in Leeds should be brought under public control, but states that even this will not ease the congestion partly to blame for regular delays. I wonder, then, why he focusses so heavily on electric vehicles, when surely more buses for people to use would lead to fewer cars on the road.

Benn’s constituency, Leeds Central, covers an area ranging from the universities to the legalised red-light district in Holbeck. Benn’s approach to the future of the scheme is pragmatic. “You can’t arrest your way out of this problem,” he says. He is critical of the BBC documentary, ‘Sex, Drugs and Murder – Life in the Red Light Zone’, for encouraging people to come and gawp at the women featured. He hopes that the findings of the council’s independent review will prove more constructive in determining the future of the scheme.

For the city as a whole, Benn’s most pressing issue has remained the same throughout his tenure. “The city has had a lot of success,” he explains, “but not everyone shares in that prosperity, and that that remains for me the biggest single priority.”

Apart from his commitment to his constituency, Benn has played a major role in national politics; from a stint at Shadow Foreign Secretary to his current position as Chair of the Exiting the European Union Committee. Having been dismissed from the 2016 Shadow Cabinet for rebelling against the leadership, Benn has no qualms in blaming Corbyn for the loss of the recent General Election. “The easiest way to sum it up is that we didn’t win [voters] trust and confidence.”

He is, however, fairly dismissive of my suggestion that Labour’s shift in its Brexit stance, from campaigning to Leave to supporting a second referendum, was to blame for their downfall: “The thing about Brexit,” he says, “it’s a binary decision. You’re either for it or you’re against it. That was a factor, but it was not the only factor.”

In 2015 Benn backed the government’s plan

for airstrikes against ISIS in Syria – publicly disagreeing with his boss Jeremy Corbyn.

Benn emphasises that he voted for intervention against Daesh, not the Syrian people; yet, civilians are inevitably collateral damage.

I put to him the recent accusation by MP Richard Burgon, who is running for Deputy in the Labour leadership race, that Labour MPs who supported military intervention in Syria were “strutting about like frustrated Churchills.”

*[Leeds] has had a lot of success... but not everyone shares in that prosperity, and that remains for me the biggest single priority*

Benn ignores the slight, instead telling me that Burgon’s proposals to put military intervention to a membership vote is unreasonable. “To say that the safety and security of the country [Britain] is going to be put on hold while we consult our members,” he says, “is impractical.”

However, I wonder if this statement conflates attacking a fascist regime with preserving the image of Britain as a nation not to be messed with.

It also begs the question as to whether or not intervention in Syria would improve the security of our country; it appears that previous interventions in the Middle East have increased terrorist activity in Britain.

Given his politics, it is unsurprising that Benn is backing Keir Starmer in the Labour Leadership Race.

He believes that Starmer’s ability to command respect of the House will translate to the public. Whatever the result, Benn asserts that the new leader will face the unenviable task of scrutinising and challenging “the soap opera in No. 10 with Mr. Cummings.”

“In the end,” he says, “It’s nice to debate issues, but I didn’t join the debating society. I joined a political party whose very purpose is to win power, [in order] to get stuff done.”



Image: Hilary Benn MP



# Gender Bias in the Healthcare System

Maisie Ingram

Gender bias in healthcare occurs when genders are not offered equal quality of treatments and care for the same medical complaints, or when variable manifestations of disease are not considered based on sex. Increasingly, researchers and clinicians are recognising the importance of accounting for sex as an important biological variable.

Yet the diagnosis and treatment of health problems is largely based on male-centred research, which fails to account for the role of hormone fluctuations and reproductive cycles in women's symptoms. Even when women are included, a large number of studies fail to report their findings by sex, which begs the question as to whether these discoveries safe and effective for women.

The underrepresentation of women in chronic pain studies is just one of the examples sparking discussion of gender bias in healthcare research. Women dominate most diagnoses of chronic pain, yet 80% of studies on chronic pain used only male mice or human men. The problem arises in the assumption that women's biology and experience of pain are the same as those of men.

However, studies have shown that women have a greater sensitivity to pain and perceive pain differently to men. In addition, the sexes are often treated differently for pain, leading to disparities in its management. It is unsurprising that many of the chronic pain conditions for which we do not have treatments are more common in or exclusively affect women, such as endometriosis and polycystic ovarian syndrome.

This may be due to lack of investment in understanding women's health. One-third of women will suffer from a reproductive or gynaecological problem in their lifetime yet only 2.5% of publicly funded research is designated to reproductive health.

In practice, this ingrained gender bias in medical research has led to a dismissive attitude towards women's healthcare complaints. Women have reported being described as hysterical, emotional and fabricating pain by healthcare professionals when discussing chronic pain issues. They have described how hard they have had to work to be taken seriously, believed, and understood in medical encounters.

Unfortunately, I have seen such gender bias firsthand in clinical practice: a woman writhing in pain from cervical cancer, was blamed by the team caring for her for not attending her latest smear test. Meanwhile, down the corridor a male counterpart is rewarded for his 'bravery' for coming to see the doctor about his testicular pain.

The gender bias in clinical practice does not stop with the patients. With female doctors too often being referred to as 'lady doctors'. Yet 45% of doctors in the UK are female, with this expected to rise, as 53.4% of medical students are female. So, I ask myself, am I being difficult if I challenge patients when they use such a term? Maybe they don't mean any offence? But also is accepting such inadvertent sexism contributing to a system of gender bias?

My own experience of gender bias involves regularly being mistaken for a nurse despite introducing myself as a medical student. However, my male peer with the same introduction is referred to as a doctor.

Such unconscious biases highlights how deeply the gender stereotypes are ingrained in medicine. There have been moments when I have been interrupted by a patient with an irrelevant comment about appearance or a misogynistic joke. However, this is just further evidence of a much larger problem: the insidious misogyny evident in our society.

It is important to note that efforts are being made by the scientific community to counteract the neglect of women in healthcare. For example, women are now routinely involved in clinical studies, and we are beginning to explore the differences in the ways that men and women experience certain diseases. Developing awareness around gender norms is important, both in research and clinical practice, in order to counteract the gender bias in healthcare and to support healthcare professionals in providing more equitable care to meet the needs of all patients.

You may be thinking, what can I do as a student to help combat gender bias in the healthcare system? You may feel that this is a systemic problem which is out of your control. However, there are steps we can take as individuals to work towards the advances in women's health that we need.

Firstly, start to think about women's health in the same way you think about other causes that are important to you. Read up, share posts, and start discussions with friends and colleagues. Most importantly, if you find yourself in a healthcare setting, ask the doctor who cares for you: is this disease or treatment of it different in women? While the doctor may not know the answer yet, if asked, they will be made aware of it and the conversation into women's health will start to open up.

# Is Bullying Rife in the Charity Sector?

Alex Chitty

This month a Guardian investigation uncovered that the Alzheimer's Society has spent as much as £750,000 on securing staff to sign non-disclosure agreements. According to a whistleblower, these NDAs were an attempt to silence staff that had complained about bullying within the organisation.

These allegations about bullying centred around Jeremy Hughes, the current CEO of the charity. The Guardian source reported he had an explosive temper and often shouted at both junior and senior staff.

As a standalone case, it is outrageous that a charitable organisation is diverting such huge sums towards covering the back of its management. However, the culture of bullying in the charity may be symptomatic of a much wider problem.

Within the sector the case is not unusual. In January last year, Oxfam was found to have failed to keep in check an environment that tolerated sexual misconduct and bullying. At Save the Children 25% of the charity's 700 staff reported suffering discrimination or harassment in 2018.

Bullying is apparently an endemic problem within the sector. But why is this? Siobhan Endean

from the trade union Unite suggested that part of it comes from a lack of training for managers, and unclear employment legislation. If this is the only problem then a clear, and easy, solution presents itself. But this would suggest people are innately prone to bully each other in the workplace. This doesn't explain the growth in bullying in recent years.

*The growth in the gig-economy has translated to an innate change in how workers are valued in the workplace*

Endean also suggested that it could be partly down to a great pressure to deliver heavy workloads off the back of insecure funding streams.

This cause sounds very familiar to what we keep hearing about many other sectors. Pressure on NHS hospitals and doctors to meet targets whilst funding is slashed.

The 2018 NHS Staff Survey shows that bullying and harassment remains a problem in the health sector with one in five staff reporting personally having experienced harassment, bullying or abuse at work.

As the pressure was on Parliament last year in the gruelling task of delivering Brexit, a scandal broke about the prevalence of bullying of staff in Westminster.

Arguably, it boils down to something much more widespread – and much harder to address than legislation and training. That is, a change in our relationship to work.

The growth in the gig-economy has translated to an innate change in how workers are valued in the workplace. As we continue to shift to a working culture based on minute targets and geared towards the greatest possible productivity, we have also shifted away from more human aspects of work.

Workers are parts of a much greater machine, replaceable parts, as competition for work feels increasingly tough.

So, if improved training and workplace legislation is a sticking plaster to the problem of workplace bullying, what is the real solution?

We need to change the way we relate to work. More than this, we need to change the way that our places of work relate to us.

Whilst platforms such as Uber and Deliveroo have provided work for many people, their impact on the working economy has had a huge impact on the quality of that work.



# Darkness Falls Over ‘The Sun’

Maddy Sherratt

The Sun is dealing with a staggering £68 million loss, with the company still drowning in legal expenses more than a decade after the phone-hacking scandal began. As revealed by The Guardian, the company is “still spending an eighth of its revenue” dealing with the repercussions related to the scandalous activities of The News of the World whilst facing new legal cases involving prominent figures such as Prince Harry.

The tabloid is also struggling to retain its title as “the UK’s biggest-selling print newspaper” with daily sales falling 8% to 1.38 million in the year to July as it battles a growing online demand against the Mail Online. Recent activity within Murdoch News UK has also seen a major reshuffle, with the appointment of Victoria Newton as editor-in-chief and Tony Gallagher’s move to sister company, The Times, as deputy editor following four years at the tabloid.

The Sun spent an enormous £54 million on legal fees relating to the illegal interception of voicemails combined with additional losses of £14 million, subsequent to declining print sales in the 12 months leading up to July 2019. Print sales have been down, with 125,000 fewer sold during the same period in 2018. Despite this, Murdoch News UK claimed more people were visiting their online platform and declared that 32.8 million adults visited the site last year, 3.6 million more than the previous.

Losses would have been substantially higher

according to the Telegraph, “the losses would have topped £100m had The Sun not benefited from a £40m payment from the Australian gambling operator Tabcorp for pulling out of Sun Bets, a joint venture which failed to challenge established bookmakers.”

The declining financial situation of the Sun

*Faced with a decline in print sales, how will The Sun survive?*

is juxtaposed by the performance of its sister company which owns the Times and the Sunday Times. The boost in revenue for the two more upmarket papers has been attributed to the introduction of a hard paywall, which has seen a growth of 300,000 digital subscribers – closing in on the doom and gloom of print sales.

With plans to bolster their digital outreach but faced with a decline in print sales, how will the Sun survive? Recently, the decision to appoint Keith Poole – previous digital editor – as the new deputy editor-in-chief would suggest that the Sun is feeling the pressure to attract more of an online audience, especially with the threat of the Mail Online stealing their top spot in print readership.

However, recent events such as the tragic death of late TV presenter, Caroline Flack saw a huge online backlash towards the Sun Online wherein Twitter users highlighted a deleted article

mocking the recent assault case with Flack and boyfriend, Lewis Burton.

The Sun removed a “brutal” Valentine’s Day card – which mocked the deceased former Love Island presenter – immediately after news broke out about the presenter’s death. Flack had been repeatedly scrutinised by the tabloid press following her arrest for the alleged assault against her boyfriend, Burton. As Flack’s tragic story began to attract more attention on social media, hashtags such as #DontreadtheSun and #BlocktheSun began to circulate. Since the presenter’s death, calls have been made for a law to be created as a protection mechanism for celebrities against the press as well as for the police to intervene and regulate social media channels.

With the ever-growing popularity of social media, the current issue of debate is whether print news will continue to flourish? Think about how you obtain and read the news... do you pick up a daily newspaper or do you refresh your feed every morning?

James Mitchinson, editor-in-chief of the Yorkshire Post, made an interesting observation regarding the future of journalism. He claimed that he felt “defeated” at how clickbait sensationalism has outweighed truthful, ethical and honest journalism. Be careful with what newspapers you choose to read from and remember to #BeKind online.

## “Boys Will Be Boys” is No Excuse

Saminda Sidhu

Women are frequently subjected to unwanted sexual behaviours in public, to such an extent that it has become normalised in our society. With 56% of respondents in a recent study saying they have encountered unwelcome sexual behaviour, including inappropriate touching, explicit messages, catcalling, being followed and being forced into sex or sexual acts.

Sex Education S2 E7 highlighted how almost every girl has experienced some form of sexual assault or sexual harassment in their lives. These experiences never leave you. Merely dismissing this behaviour as ‘Boys will be boys’ or ‘Men are Trash’ is only going to enable it to persist without consequences or correction. Unwelcome sexual behaviour has become normalised; there are no consequences meaning that many people remain unaware and perpetrators continue to offend. The objectifying and derogatory nature of acts such as catcalling leave women feeling uncomfortable, inferior and unsafe.

Bystanders can no longer afford to sit idly while these acts happen before them. By not discouraging this kind of behaviour, you are in fact encouraging it. To not speak up and question your friends’ behaviour is condoning and assisting the rape culture that exists. Alcohol is not an

excuse for someone to become a pervert, neither is being in a club environment or the outfits of their victims. Keep your hands to yourself when they are not welcome, and if you are unsure then do not proceed. Be mindful of the fact that you could be making someone feel uncomfortable.

This kind of behaviour is a kind of power play; many perpetrators enjoy the fact they are making women feel uncomfortable. The reality is that women are not waiting for validation; and unwanted, disrespectful advances are never attractive.

This kind of behaviour is so normalised that it is not uncommon to hear in popular song lyrics, for example: “she caught me staring, what do you expect when your skirt so short” and “tell that girl that she can stay if she gon’ give it up.”

Due to the cutthroat nature of online humour where anything is up for mockery, those who try to stand up to such offensive attitudes are often dismissed as ‘snowflakes’ – a recently coined term describing someone that is too easily offended and cannot take a joke. We need to be mindful of when these ‘jokes’ begin to normalise or encourage derogatory behaviours.

So, what can be done? Do not be afraid to question the behaviour of others or to report misconduct. Intervention is key; if you see something inappropriate help the victim escape

that situation and condemn the perpetrator. This is not asking you to be a hero; sometimes even a simple “I hope you’re okay, that was really inappropriate” can comfort a victim. Remember to be mindful, observant and treat everyone with respect and care. See it, say it, sort it!

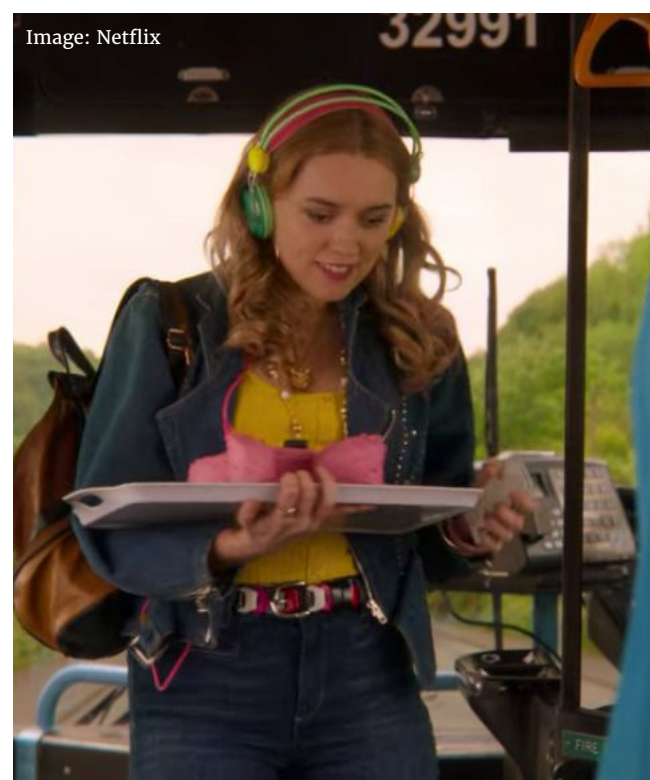


Image: Netflix



# How to Get Away With Murder: Write for the New York Times

Aaron Kwon

Who writes Op-Eds for the New York Times? Winners of the Nobel Memorial Prize. Authors of nationwide bestsellers. Pulitzer-winning journalists. And recently added to the list, is a global terrorist group: Taliban. The Times published an Op-Ed article on February 21st titled “What we, the Taliban want” written by the deputy leader of Taliban, Sirajuddin Haqqani.

The decision to publish the article was questioned and the Times immediately faced fierce criticism. Grave concerns were raised about one of the most internationally influential media outlets propagating words of a despicable extremist group accused of violating human rights and causing chaos in Afghanistan for nearly two decades. Voicing claims through a renowned paper which sugar-coated Haqqani’s piece and made it look like other Op-Eds allowed the Taliban to appear as a legitimate entity. This in turn made their voice seem persuasive and worth listening to, which is what the Taliban had been craving for years.

Are those concerns far-fetched? Are we fixated by the third person effect, biased that others would be more vulnerable and easily persuaded by media messages than ourselves?

Maybe we are underestimating the readership as the Taliban has received massive media coverage since the “War on Terror.” Their constant presence in the media may have informed readers about situational awareness in Afghanistan, well

enough to cast reasonable doubts against blatant propaganda. Making the Taliban look legitimate might be inevitable. Albeit not recognized as a state, the Taliban is in fact a partner to the U.S. in negotiating a peace deal withdrawing American troops. This lays ground for publishing their claims, informing the public of a major diplomatic breakthrough by providing robust opinions on the other side of the table.

But this certainly should not be the case for granting Op-Eds. The threshold for facts lowers substantially in Op-Eds to deliver original viewpoints, and duty for fact-checking is largely delegated to contributors. Loopholes in the editorial process can thus resonate unsubstantiated and misleading arguments just like this article.

Mr. Haqqani almost portrays the Taliban as guardian angels of peace, claiming to make the new Afghanistan a “bastion of stability.” While Afghanistan is again turning into a volatile battleground, there are prevailing concerns among international media; he denounces them as “inflated,” and “politically motivated exaggerations by the warmongering players on all sides of the war.” There are touching yet appalling lines, like “Everyone has lost somebody they loved. Everyone is tired of war. I am convinced that the killing and the maiming must stop.” As a matter of fact, 3,403 civilians were killed and 6,989 were injured in Afghanistan last year. 47% of these casualties were caused by Taliban attacks, according to a recent UN report.

It is hard to believe that Op-Eds were the only viable option for the Times. Any form of article that would involve the editorial process and provide leeway for reasonable doubt would have been possible – interviews involving reporters, rebuttal comments added by editors, fact-checks to debunk the Taliban’s flagrant lies, just to name a few.

CNN’s exclusive on the Taliban published last year epitomizes how journalism should perform the challenging task of depicting the evil, without normalizing or legitimizing it. In February 2019 two

CNN reporters were granted 36 hours of access within Taliban-controlled areas. Improvising interviews with residents and making observations under Taliban guidance, they denied to serve as mere amplifiers. Examinations and dialogues were either supported by further analysis or juxtaposed with contradictory arguments, such as adding comments like “To many Afghans, however, the Taliban is better known for civilian casualties than civilian governance” directly put after reporting Taliban-led governance.

Op-Eds are “Anything well-written with a fact-based viewpoint we believe readers will find worthwhile,” quoted from New York Times. Failing to meet its own editorial standards by delivering one-sided and partisan extremist views, the Times’ decision will continuously be referred to as a negative precedent of media withdrawing from its own journalistic duties.

## “Gender-Correcting” Surgery is Cruel

Lucie Phipps

According to *Sexing the Body*, a book on gender politics and sexuality by Anne Fausto-Sterling, being intersex is about as common as having red hair. It is estimated that 1.7% of the population is intersex. But what does it really mean?

When a baby is born intersex, the baby has a variation of sex characteristics that don’t conform to our binary perception of sex. The baby is neither a boy nor a girl; they have sex characteristics from both. For instance, some intersex children have a combination of male and female genitalia, but not all intersex people have a mix of genitalia. For example, someone who is intersex but who is unaware of this could identify as female and have an enlarged clitoris.

So, when an intersex baby is born, should we perform gender correcting surgery and assign them to a sex?

This is a complex issue because if you assign your intersex child as female but they do not feel that their sex corresponds to their gender identity, this could cause significant emotional turmoil and confusion. As a parent, you don’t want your child to be bullied for not conforming to the binary sex and gender norms. So, perhaps calling them a girl

and agreeing to surgery that gives them female sex characteristics is the best action to take as a parent.

However, this doesn’t seem logical. Why should sex be a binary concept when sex is evidently a spectrum as there are considerable intersex variations? We don’t dye our ginger children’s hair in fear that they will be bullied for being a minority on the hair colour spectrum. So, why should we make our children conform to male or female because of fears of bullying?

**The rights of intersex babies are not respected when medical experts and their parents decide their sex for them**

Rather than changing babies sex to make them conform to society’s standards of sex, we should educate people about the reality of sex. Society has become more and more open-minded as we have educated people about variations in sexuality and gender, so why not include sex too?

If we include education on intersex people in the curriculum, parents won’t fear that their

children will be bullied for being different and they won’t be pressured into elective surgery for their intersex baby by medical experts.

Educating people about variations of sex characteristics won’t change the fact that the rights of intersex babies are not respected when medical experts and their parents decide their sex for them.

Intersex babies cannot give legal valid consent as they do not have the mental capacity to understand the complicated distinction between sex and gender. Until intersex people are at an age where they can understand the concept of sex and the lasting implications of surgery, their to not have surgery need to be upheld.

In Malta in 2015, the Maltese Act outlawed any “medical intervention which is driven by social factors, without the consent of the individual concerned”. This act gives intersex people the autonomy to decide their sex and takes power away from parents and medical experts.

But those most vulnerable, babies and children, are not protected by such an act in the UK. The UK government needs to recognise the rights of intersex babies and children, or they will continue to be subject to psychological and physical trauma at the hands of medical professionals.





# 2020: A New Era for Blockchain

Business Editor Chloe Pryce catches up with blockchain expert and author John Palfreyman and discusses the current and future applications of the technology.

Chloe Pryce  
Business Editor

Most of us have heard of blockchain, but few of us actually understand what it is or the value it can bestow on organisations. A common misconception of blockchain is that it is just the same as Bitcoin. In reality, Bitcoin is just one use of blockchain. There are many other exciting uses, some of which may come to fruition in 2020.

Intrigued by the potential for blockchain in the future, I caught up with John Palfreyman, author of *Business Blockchain: Unlocking Transformational Potential* and ex-IBM Director of blockchain, to find out more.

## The Building Blocks

Satoshi Nakamoto invented blockchain in 2008 to serve as a public transaction ledger of the cryptocurrency. However, the same public transaction ledger technology can be used across a variety of industries, for example the jewellery, automobile and road industries.

Blockchain technology provides a shared, distributed ledger which records transactions between parties efficiently and in a verifiable and permanent way. In essence, it allows us to trade with people across the globe without knowing them personally and without an intermediary between the buyer and seller, for example a bank or PayPal.

Instead of one company holding the information about the transaction, the transaction is validated by everyone across the network (i.e. it is decentralised) and then encoded permanently. This way, every party has the same version of the transaction history. It increases trust and efficiency across the network.

## The Rise of Blockchain

2018 and 2019 saw some exciting proof points for blockchain – several companies showed us blockchain's true capabilities. However there still remained a lot of confusion regarding what blockchain could and could not do and the key differences between business blockchain and bitcoin.

This continued confusion saw blockchain slip into what Gartner's hype cycle terms the 'trough of disillusionment' whereby organisations' failed experiments with blockchain caused frustration and unrealised business value – although this was often due to blockchain being used for the wrong use case.

Regardless, several companies got it right. IBM and Maersk jointly developed TradeLens, a blockchain-enabled shipping solution designed to promote more efficient and secure global trade, supporting transparency.

The platform allows multiple trading partners to collaborate by establishing a single shared view of a transaction, as opposed to fragmented views for different partners. Real-time access to shipping data and documents allows more efficient interaction between partners.

Blockchain is also being used to improve food

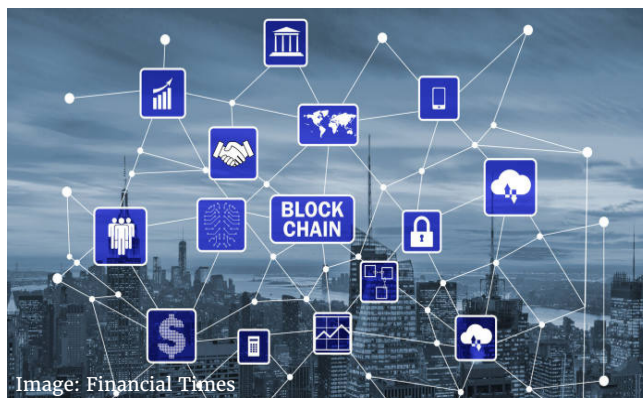


Image: Financial Times

safety. Walmart has been working with IBM using their Food Trust solution to transform their supply chain. Moving away from the manual supply chain processes, blockchain will make the supply chain more traceable, transparent and fully digital. Should a food safety issue occur, the new technology would make it easier and faster to track down the root of the problem.

Transaction partners including producers, suppliers, manufacturers and retailers are able to share food information, creating a transparent and trustworthy global food supply chain. Food system data is then shared and recorded permanently, allowing increased food safety, freshness and minimum waste.

## Blockchain in 2020

Speaking with John, he hopes that blockchain will move through the 'trough of disillusionment' and up the 'slope of enlightenment'. This should happen as an increasing number of projects move from experimentation into production. As for new projects, blockchain should find its place in the digital transformation 'toolkit' and be used for the appropriate use cases with regards to organisational strategy.

More on this can be found on John's LinkedIn over the coming weeks. Robbie Moulding, a former LUBS post-graduate student also discusses the importance of defining a problem statement and key pain points before implementing the most appropriate technology to align with an organisations strategy; blockchain is not always the most appropriate technology and this is a common mistake companies make when implementing the technology. Blockchain is part of the tech toolkit and should be chosen only for the suitable business use cases.

According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), the focus on blockchain in 2020 will be on quality, social impact, governance and a collaborative approach. An example of an upcoming project is the WEF's government transparency project which focuses on aligning civic engagement with a blockchain deployment designed to reduce corruption in public procurement. This will be piloted in Colombia in early 2020.

A collaborative approach is important to increase business confidence in blockchain. The WEF aims to rationalise the technology and increase knowledge sharing for example through sharing learnings and challenges. The public sector supports this as can be

seen through their Central Banks Digital Currency project which was launched in Davos last week. Increased governance should drive adoption.

Whilst governance surrounding blockchain may increase confidence in the technology, it is important that regulation does not stifle innovation. In the bitcoin space, one might argue that regulation is actually lagging as different countries treat crypto differently for taxation. Regulation of bitcoin should be treated entirely separately to regulation of business blockchain.

## The Future of Blockchain

There are many exciting blockchain projects, both past, present and future. My final question for John was which projects excite him the most. The ones he cited were blockchain in government, blockchain as an enabler of decentralised trust systems and blockchain in supply chain.

Blockchain has the potential to transform governments through busting bureaucracy and improving citizen engagement; modern governments are already progressing roadmaps of blockchain projects. For example, Australia's National Blockchain Roadmap looks at regulation and standards, skills and capabilities, international investment and finally, sectoral opportunities such as the potential to use blockchain in the wine sector and the university sector.

Blockchain is also an enabler of decentralised trust. Here, John spoke about the breakdown of traditional systems of trust and the potential for blockchain to build new decentralised trust economies.

More on the breakdown of traditional systems of trust and the emergence of new trust systems can be found in Rachel Botsman's book, *Who can you trust*.

Finally, blockchain in supply chain has exciting potential, as has been discussed extensively Robbie Moulding in his LinkedIn post, *An introduction to my thoughts on blockchain technology and its impact on relationships between actors in the supply chain: 7 key things I discovered*.

Blockchain technology can improve the process of managing relationships, sharing information and making entire supply chains more transparent, through one shared single source of truth that is immutable and can be viewed in real-time by all parties in the business network.





# Japanese Economy Heads for Recession



Franks Feng

Following a rise in sales tax, a major typhoon, weak global demand, and the outbreak of coronavirus, Japan’s economy slumped at an annual rate of 6.3%, across the final quarter of 2019, the fastest rate in five years.

From October to December, annual Gross Domestic Product (GDP) fell to -1.6%. Phillippe Waechter, chief economist at Ostrom Asset Management, claimed that a VAT increase and the 18 months trade war between US and China were partly to blame.

Many feel that with coronavirus still rising outside of China and rapidly increasing in Japan, the country’s economy could face a further hit in the first quarter

of 2020.

Japanese coronavirus fears made the news in the UK after a cruise ship, the Diamond Princess, had to be quarantined off the coast of Japan.

This was the country’s first case of infection, discovered on 1st February. Now there are over 400 cases of Covid 19 in Japan and the virus is thought to not yet have peaked in the country.

The yen softened by 1.4 percent on Wednesday to a near nine-month low of ¥111.4 to the dollar, from ¥110 earlier in the week. Traders said the move had been driven by non-Japanese institutions trading during London and New York hours.

It had weakened further to ¥112 by Thursday afternoon in Europe.

It is possible that due to this period of negative growth, Japan’s Central Bank may have to use further expansionary monetary policy to stimulate growth, but running the risk of pushing the value of the Yen down even lower.

Since 30th January, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has summoned meetings almost every day, and gave instructions to relevant ministers and deputies to take proactive countermeasures.

Japan will be hoping that the effects of the Coronavirus die down before their major tourism season kicks in and perhaps more crucially, before the Tokyo Olympics.

# The Future of Supermarket Shopping

Will Southall  
Business Editor

It wasn’t long ago that you had to queue up at the till every time you wanted to get something from the supermarket, no matter how much of a rush you were in, or how many items you were buying. Then the self-scanner came along and spread across stores up and down the country.

Disgruntled consumers, appalled that they had to do the scanning and packing themselves, soon got used to self-check-out system and nowadays many of us opt for machine over human interaction.

But in the history of supermarket shopping, one firm believes that self-scanners will have a short shelf life. That company is Amazon.

Last week Amazon opened its very first ‘Supermarket Go’ in Seattle, which the company are hoping will revolutionise the way we shop for our groceries. On entering the store, customers need only to scan a QR code on their phone.

To leave, simply walk right out the door – no checkouts, no scanners. Whilst Amazon have been reluctant to reveal the full details behind the technology powering their new ‘Go’ stores, they say that the supermarket uses “computer vision, deep learning algorithms and sensor fusion”, likening the technology to that of a self-driving car.

It is thought that hundreds of infra-red cameras tracking customer’s movements, combined with weight sensors on shelves will allow the supermarket to know exactly what each customer has picked up and put in their bag and will be able to track if a customer puts the item back on the shelf.

Getting here hasn’t been easy for Amazon, who had planned to open their first Go Supermarket a few years ago, but faced technological difficulties, such as the problem of accurately identifying customers with similar body types.

But the tech giant is hoping that these supermarkets based on their ‘just walk out’ technology will be more than a gimmick, with Amazon’s Chief Financial Officer Brian Olsavsky suggesting that many more of their supermarkets were on their way.

Amazon are not the only company making headlines this week in the world of supermarket shopping. Marks & Spencer have announced that they will be extending their trial of their food refill stores, where customers fill up jars in an attempt to reduce packaging.

The food and clothing company have announced that their Southampton and Manchester stores will be next to adopt the new environmentally friendly layout, where customers are encouraged to reduce their consumption of packaged products, particularly for foods where there need not be any packaging at

all, such as pasta, coffee and cereals.

Whilst the concept of reduced- or even zero-waste stores has been around for a while, major supermarkets have been slow to adopt the relatively cheap transformation into greener stores, whilst the most progress seems to be being made amongst smaller independents.

With around 75% of adults wanting to cut down on their plastic consumption according to a recent YouGov survey, it is likely that it will not be long before other supermarkets follow suit.







# STEM Women at Leeds

Image: freepik.com

**Eleanor King**

In light of celebrations for International Women's Day on the 8th March, when the phenomenal achievements made by women in the fields of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) are ever so briefly recognised and praise is rightfully awarded, it broaches the question of how seriously women today are being encouraged to pursue STEM subjects or potentially more importantly, how are women currently in STEM being supported and represented?

Looking close to home, women in STEM researching at the University of Leeds are paving the way to new futures with their groundbreaking research. For example, Dr Sunjie Ye is a physicist whose innovative work focuses on developing gold nanoparticles for use in medical devices. Newly appointed as a University Academic Fellow last year, Dr Anna Hogg's work focuses on using satellite data to observe and assess polar regions which is vital in climate change research.

Furthermore, plant biologist Dr Yoselin Benitez-Alfonso has led pioneering research which has helped aid the development of strategies to improve agricultural sustainability.

With rigorous searching of the University of Leeds' website, and endless googling, eventually pages on Women in STEM under the Faculty of Engineering

and Physical Sciences will come up. The University praises itself on its contributions to and support of women in STEM, and this is supposedly reflected in the amount of female academics and students who are a part of this faculty.

Whilst the number of female members of staff may be rising, using the University's online staff directories for each faculty, it appears that the ratio is still significantly unequal. In the faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences, just 35 professors (including research and associate professors) are women, compared to 202 men; in other words, roughly 15% of the staff in these positions are women. The Faculty of Biological Sciences is higher, with 30% of professors being women; the staff directory listed 18 women, compared to 44 men.

It must be noted the University received an award from Athena SWAN Charter, a national body which promotes equality in the higher education sector, and they have both set up and are a part of a great deal of organisations which support women in STEM, including the Women at Leeds Network (WaLN), Women of Achievement awards and the Student Women's Engineering Society.

These differences between STEM faculties is mirrored in the number of students currently studying different STEM subjects. There are increasing numbers of women choosing to study STEM subjects but the

number of those studying Biology is substantially higher than women studying Engineering or Maths for example.

This poses the question of what more can the University do? In aid of International Women's Day the School of Food Science and Nutrition are holding their annual event to discuss and present women's involvement and progression within STEM careers, with keynote speakers currently undertaking research and teaching at the University of Leeds. The event is free and will be held on the 6th March at the University, details of which are available online. However, it's arguable that this conversation needs to happen more than once a year. With what few advertisements there are for free STEM events, especially those discussing women's careers in the fields, we should be asking if Universities should be more driven and dynamic with regards to raising awareness of potential careers in STEM for everyone.

A University of Leeds spokesperson said:

*"We believe every student deserves to fulfil their potential. Informed by our excellent employer and alumni networks, the Student Careers Centre promotes work placements and career opportunities to all students, and our employability teams based in faculties organise targeted events and support individuals throughout the academic year."*

## Can We Really Offset Our Climate Guilt?

**Emily Bird**

Increasing awareness of environmental issues in recent years has meant that many of us have made changes to our lifestyles, whether that's buying a reusable water bottle, shopping second-hand or eating less meat. However, we can't ignore another feature of modern life that is for many people the biggest impact on their personal carbon footprint. Air travel.

The contribution of commercial aviation to CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is huge; UK Airports saw more than 2,230,000 flights take off or land in 2017 with well over half of passengers being holiday makers.

But with the proposed runway expansion at Heathrow airport recently being declared illegal due to incompatibility with the UK's carbon emissions commitments and 'flight guilt' increasing, public opinion is beginning to shift.

Airlines are keen to get people back on side and

several companies seem to be offering a suspiciously easy solution.

Carbon offsetting is the idea that you, or your airline, donates money to environmental projects in order to compensate for the damage of your travel. There are several tools online that allow you to calculate the cost as well as companies willing to do it all for you.

But is this too good to be true? The relatively low cost of offsetting flights calls in to question whether these schemes can meaningfully impact our emissions. Climate Care's online tool estimates that an almost 7000 mile flight from London to New York would cost as little as £12.45 to offset.

Companies such as Climate Care use carbon credits to calculate offsetting prices, 1 carbon credit represents a tonne of CO<sub>2</sub> released into the atmosphere so your London to New York flight which on average releases 7 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per passenger is worth 7 credits or £12.45.

Companies like Climate Care say that this money is then used on projects such as reforestation, distribution of more efficient cooking stoves or financing renewable energy.

However very little information is available about the actual credit impact of these actions, and recent reports from the European commission on climate action suggest that the carbon credit system itself is flawed.

Whilst it's hard to imagine that donating to charities combatting the climate crisis could be a bad thing, the danger is that the ease and low cost of donating to assuage our climate guilt could encourage more frequent air travel or more frivolous energy use.

Offsetting may not be the easy fix it's made out to be, but cutting down how much we travel by plane could make a big difference to our personal carbon footprint.





Image: Olson Kundig

# Composting, Cremation & Climate Change

Katherine Graves

Have you ever thought about what happens to you when you die? I don't mean whether there is a heaven and hell or if your spirit comes back as a Desert Locust (see my previous article), but instead what happens to your physical body, your skin bag of muscle, bone, fat and organs? Of course I hope that everyone is signed up to become an organ donor, but once all the useful bits have been harvested, what happens to the rest?

In the UK, the most common choice is cremation, with around 78% of all deaths in 2018 ending with this disposal method. There aren't actually any statistics on how the other 22% of deaths were dealt with; the Office for National Statistics said "unfortunately we do not have information about religion, burial or cremation as this is not supplied during the registration of a death." However, I would hazard a guess that most of that 22% is a traditional burial.

Cremation and a traditional burial have an enormous,

negative environmental impact. An investigation by the cremation magazine *Pharos* (yes that's a thing) estimated that one cremation produces the same amount of nitrogen oxides (NOx) as a car driving 2,280 miles – that's nearly twice the length of the UK. NOx is almost 300 times as potent a greenhouse gas than CO2. Traditional burials aren't much better. They involve preserving the body by filling it with huge amounts of toxic formaldehyde – a process known as embalming. The body is then placed into a casket, commonly adorned with cushioning and satin, before finally being lowered into the ground. This leaves huge amounts of wood and metal in the ground to slowly degrade, not to mention the embalming fluid that seeps out over time, poisoning groundwater sources.

So, are there any other choices? A new method has come into play – organic reduction, which is a fancy way of saying accelerated composting.

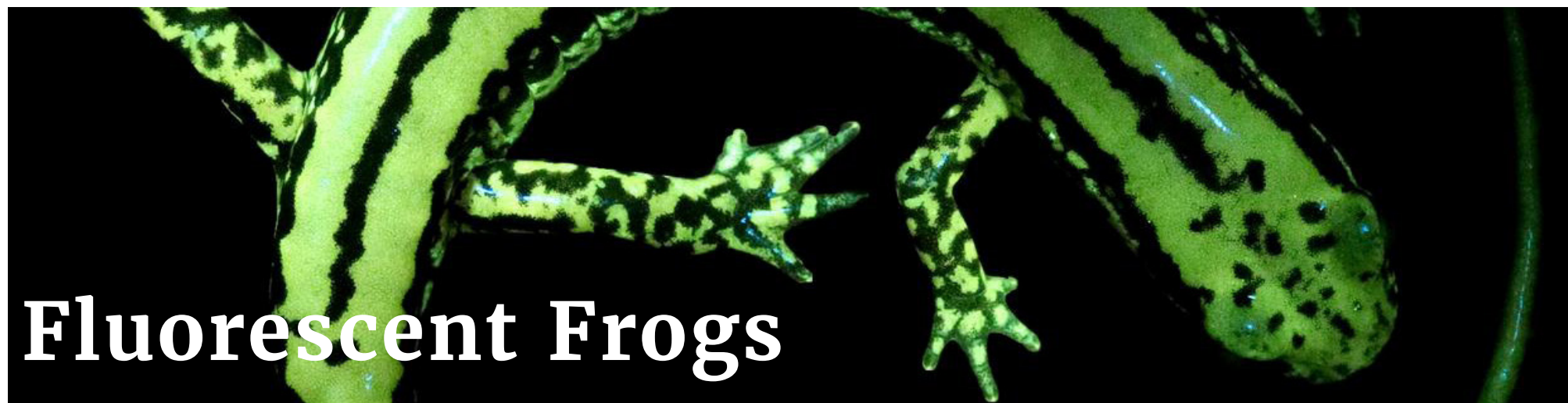
Recompose is a US based company which has

proposed a process that turns you into fertile soil in just 30 days.

They claim that their process uses "1/8th the energy of cremation" and they estimate that "a metric ton of CO2 will be saved each time someone chooses organic reduction over cremation or burial". If true, these claims could make organic reduction a truly viable option for those of us who are more environmentally conscious.

More than 750 litres of soil are produced per person, which can be taken by the family and used to grow a tree or added to your garden. Handling death by producing a useable material is in stark contrast to cremation and burials, which use up valuable resources.

I think that undergoing a rapid composting process and becoming a fertiliser to grow trees, whilst simultaneously offsetting the carbon footprint that comes with a traditional burial or cremation, sounds like a good place to end up.



## Fluorescent Frogs

Anna Davison  
Science Editor

Amphibians come in a wide range of colours, from the startling fire salamander to the many brilliant shades of dart frog, but scientists at St. Cloud State University have recently discovered a new spectrum of brilliance.

When under blue light, all of the 32 species tested glowed green or yellow in various patterns and intensities. Many land animals are known to fluoresce under ultraviolet light, including some amphibians, but it is mostly fully aquatic species, such as turtles and fish, which are fluorescent under blue light. This is because blue light is the wavelength which cuts through water most, but on land blue light is also prevalent after the sun sets which could explain why nocturnal amphibians expressed a particularly strong

glow.

The reason for this glowing is unclear with theories ranging from camouflage to communication to reproduction. As members of all the major amphibian groups were tested (salamanders, frogs and caecilians), it is likely that this trait evolved before the separation of these groups and therefore could have no function at all in some modern lineages. Some species glowed brightly around the cloaca (the multi-function genital and disposal region) and there were some differences in display between males and females which suggests that the function of this fluorescence could be related to reproduction. Potentially the light could be used by females to detect certain males out of a cacophonous crowd of hundreds of calling suitors.

However, this glowing could be a strategy to avoid predation as the brightly coloured bellies which newts reveal as a warning to predators also glow under blue

light. The question remains as to whether potential predators can see this light as, if they can, it could serve as an extra shock, giving the newt valuable seconds to escape.

Although clearly an interesting advance in our understanding of amphibians and animal communication, on the surface this study appears frivolous. On the contrary, as we know vegetation fluoresces red under blue light and amphibians bright green, this colour contrast could make locating amphibian species much easier under dim light conditions. As amphibians are known to be highly elusive and are often nocturnal, this ease of detection will be essential for conservation efforts. As 41% of amphibian species are estimated to be threatened with extinction by the IUCN Red List and deadly chytrid fungus spreading across the world, glowing frogs may be just the discovery conservation needed.



# Is Coronavirus Threatening Sport?

Sporting events across the globe are being affected due to increasing concerns of how quickly coronavirus is being spread.

**Millie Frain**  
Sports Editor

It is the illness the whole world is talking about, with it originally outbreaking in Wuhan, China. However the extremely contagious disease is now affecting hundreds of people in Europe, most notably, Italy, with the number of infected people now totalling over 400.

This has affected multiple sporting fixtures, with the worry not only the players themselves catching the disease, but also the travelling fans, coming from areas of Europe where infection is spreading rapidly.

Within the last few days, the Six Nation rugby match between Ireland and Italy has been postponed, which was due to take place in the Irish capital Dublin.

The head of the Irish Rugby Football Union, Philip Browne stated the match was not to proceed, 'due to interests of the public health'.

This therefore means England are awaiting confirmation of whether their Rugby team will travel to Italy for their game on the 14th March, meaning the tournament may not be completed for the first time in almost 50 years.

However with approximately 20,000 English supporters expected to make this trip to Rome, it comes as no surprise the health federation are increasingly concerned, stating 'they'll monitor the situation very closely.'

Airline companies such as easyJet and British Airways have said they'll start cancelling flights to Italy due to such a fall in demand, however they'll re-assess the situation in the summer holidays.

This not only triggers huge economical fear, but also places doubt on how footballing competition Euro 2020 will continue if the infection continues to spread.

The cycling governing body, the UCI have also cancelled the final stages of the UAE tour due to two 'suspected' cases of the virus. Britain's Adam Yates, who led after stage five was declared the winner, however after the race was suspended, they then discovered these two suspected cases were in fact confirmed to have the virus.

The worry also continues in the golfing world, where two Italian players have withdrawn from this week's Oman Open on the European tour. The two players, Lorenzo Gagli and Edoardo Molinari are reportedly being kept in isolation, to ensure they have not been infected by the disease.

This is concerning when considering the fact that players share meals with others and utilise the same gym and transport.

Perhaps the biggest worry is the Olympics, which is due to take place in Tokyo, 2020. The scale of the outbreak in Japan saw International Olympic committee member Dick Pound describe the disease as 'the new war', thus meaning the games could be

cancelled if the virus is still around by May.

Although it is understood the athletes have been told to continue to train, many qualification fixtures have been cancelled, due to them taking place in China, and the boxing even scheduled to take place in Wuhan itself.

Perhaps the difficulty is no-one has the power to predict how severe the virus will continue to be, yet the sporting world will definitely be affected as a result, as people prepare for a nervy few months.



## Silverware for Leeds Uni's Futsal Team

**Oliver Sanderson**  
Futsal

With a league title for the Leeds University's Second team and a runners-up finish for the First, the 2019/20 season has been a campaign of real success for the futsal club at Leeds.

In their first ever season in BUCS competition, Leeds Futsal Second Team have won the Northern 4b division. Further up the BUCS ladder, the First Team secured the highest league position of any side in the club's brief history with a second-place finish in the Northern 1a division.

The futsal calendar got off to a perfect start in September with Varsity, as Leeds fielded a new-look side that comfortably beat Beckett 7-3.

In the following league fixtures before Christmas, Leeds First Team suffered a mixed bag of results as they sought to find their feet in a new division. Highlights from the first three match days included a 4-2 victory over Newcastle and a 4-4 draw with Sheffield, as well as a 7-1 drubbing of Hallam. These accomplishments were offset by disappointing defeats, leaving Leeds precariously placed in midtable before the start of the winter break.

Meanwhile, Leeds' Second Team were finding consistency and results easier to come by.

Despite a disappointing cup exit to Durham, the team showed resilience in the league with a 6-6 draw with Beckett 3's.

This was followed by the destruction of Hull, York and Sunderland, winning 9-4, 12-3 and 9-6

respectively, which left the 2s in pole position for the title heading into the new year.

League performances for the second team were particularly pleasing given that much of the squad had never played futsal at a competitive level before. Under the guidance of second-year Jaz Barker, the team developed a technical and free-scoring approach, and several players were able to make the step-up to the first team throughout the course of the season.

After Christmas, both the First and Second team reached their peak performance levels, winning all their remaining league fixtures.

A highlight for the Firsts along this run was a 5-4 victory over the eventual league champions Manchester, coming from 3-1 down to secure the win thanks to a clever switch in tactics.

Although the Firsts would later lose 7-5 to Manchester in the cup, the fact that only two league points could separate the two sides by the end of the season shows that Leeds are not far from promotion quality.

Club President Conal Gallacher was full of praise for the First team at the season's end, "We had a slow start, but to finish in 2nd only 2 points away from playoffs to the national-league is incredible. I think our individual quality really showed through in the end".

He also hailed the captain of the second team, "real credit to Jaz for taking the 2s through an unbeaten season".

Leeds Seconds were able to secure promotion from their own division on the final day, as they did what

was required of them by winning all 3 matches, including an 8-4 destruction of rivals Beckett.

It has certainly been another year of progression for futsal at Leeds, leaving the club on an upward trajectory moving into the future. There are still things to look forward to for the current squad, however, as the Christie Cup and a team-bonding weekend in Newcastle await.





# Dom Sibley's Journey to Stardom

**Jonny Logan**  
Cricket

On the 24th November last year, Dominic Peter Sibley became the 694th player to receive an England test cap, when Ex-England captain Mike Atherton presented it to him on debut at Mount Maunganui in New Zealand.

Before the delivery he takes a big step over to off stump and as a result, he comes into contact with the ball very chest on; unusual for an opening batsman. With a dominant bottom hand, he has a strong preference towards leg side stroke play, while scoring options on the off side sometimes appear restricted.

Nevertheless, Sibley has achieved success at the highest level.

Critical to this is that, despite his unorthodox technique, he is still at the point of release, getting his head in line with the ball and playing it right underneath his eyes.

After making an indifferent start to his Test career in New Zealand, averaging just 12.66 with a top score of 22, he remained in the team for the first game against South Africa.

His poor form continued at Centurion when he was dismissed cheaply by left spinner Maharaj.

The 24-year-old may have been starting to feel the pressure as doubts about his technique began circulating.

If there had been any doubt in Sibley's mind going into the Newlands test it was not reflected in his batting. Scoring an unbeaten 133 off 311 balls in an expertly timed inning, he showed both determination and resilience.

Both of these qualities had been lacking in England's batting for some time, which made the 447 minute knock all the more enjoyable to watch. He left well, completely aware of where his off-stump was and exercised patience against the spinner, nullifying any purchase off the wicket by padding the ball away outside leg stump.

When the bowlers veered off their line he punished them through the leg side. Having gone on to finish the series as England's leading run-scorer, he has now solidified his place in the side for the near future.

From 2014 to July 2017, still a teenager, for the most part, Sibley struggled to maintain a spot in the Surrey side and would only play 25 more first-class games for them.

He turned down a new 3-year deal and instead chose to seek opportunities at Warwickshire. While Sibley has since said he has no regrets, the move did

not instantly reignite his career in the way he may have hoped it would.

In the first half of the 2018 season, he managed to get passed 30 just three times in his first 20 innings. Memories of a child prodigy were rapidly evaporating as supporters called for the 22-year-old to be left out of their side and past dreams of England recognition now appeared wishful at best.

However, Sibley was far from done in terms of breaking records. Arguably his most impressive achievement in his career so far came in 2019. Following a remarkable change in form at the back end of the previous season, he notched up six hundreds in successive first-class matches, becoming the first Warwickshire player to do so.

He went on to score 1324 runs in the Championship at an average of 69.68 and has not looked back since. This was enough to convince England selectors that he deserved his chance in the Test arena.

So far he has rewarded their faith in him with 362 runs at 40.22. In Sibley, England have not found the next technically correct Mike Atherton. Nor a hard-hitting opener like fellow Whitgiftian Jason Roy. But what they have found is a man with an appetite for scoring big hundreds, who understands the limitations of his own game and plays to his strengths.

# England Draws Opponents for UEFA Nations League Group Stage

Southgate's boys are drawn against Belgium, Iceland and Denmark for this autumn's Nations League Group Stage.

**Millie Warrilow**  
Sports Editor

England have drawn Group A2 in the UEFA Nation's League. This will see them face the likes of Belgium, Iceland and Denmark.

The Republic of Ireland and Wales were both drawn in B4 and will take on each other alongside Bulgaria and Finland. Northern Ireland were drawn in B1 where they will face Romania, Norway and Austria.

Champions Portugal will play Croatia, Sweden and France - arguably the toughest group of the competition and England will be satisfied with their draw.

England are confident that they are more than capable of performing well in the competition. Last year's Nation's League saw them just miss out on the final after they lost to The Netherlands 3-1 in the semis.

England have won against big teams in this competition before including Croatia and Spain before topping their group last year. It was always sure that they would match another difficult side this year and there are already some interesting stories between these four teams from previous affairs.

## "No. 1 in the World"

Belgium have recently been ranked by FIFA as the world's number one. They are not a team that England have come up against recently and will be a tough

fixture for the Three Lions.

During the Russia World Cup, England failed to beat Belgium twice, losing 1-0 in the group stages followed by a 2-0 defeat in the third place play off.

England are aware of the quality of players that they will be up against. Many of the England squad will even be familiar with playing alongside them. With players from Premier League sides: Manchester City, Spurs, Chelsea, Leicester and Wolves; Belgium will be a difficult side to match.

## Nightmares of 2016

England fans will best (or worst) remember Iceland for the humiliating defeat back in 2016.

England's Euro's dreams were crushed in the last 16 as they lost 2-1 to an Iceland side, who at the time were ranked 34th in the World. Manager, Roy Hodgson resigned after the sheer embarrassment.

This will be the first time these two teams meet again since their historic defeat in Nice.

## Deadly Denmark

Denmark are already set to play England later this month in a EURO 2020 preparation fixture at Wembley. England's last meet with Denmark ended with a 1-0 win at Wembley and it will be in hope that England can witness the same kind of victory again this year.

Denmark also have the likes of Premier League players, Andreas Christensen from Chelsea and Leicester City goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel. Not to

forget, Christian Eriksen who has recently joined Inter Milan to watch out for.

Despite recent results against Denmark, they will still be a difficult team to play. England Boss, Gareth Southgate is very fond of this competition and will know what to expect.

The first fixture for England will be played on the 5th of September away to Iceland. All games will be played before the 17th November, with the final being played next June.

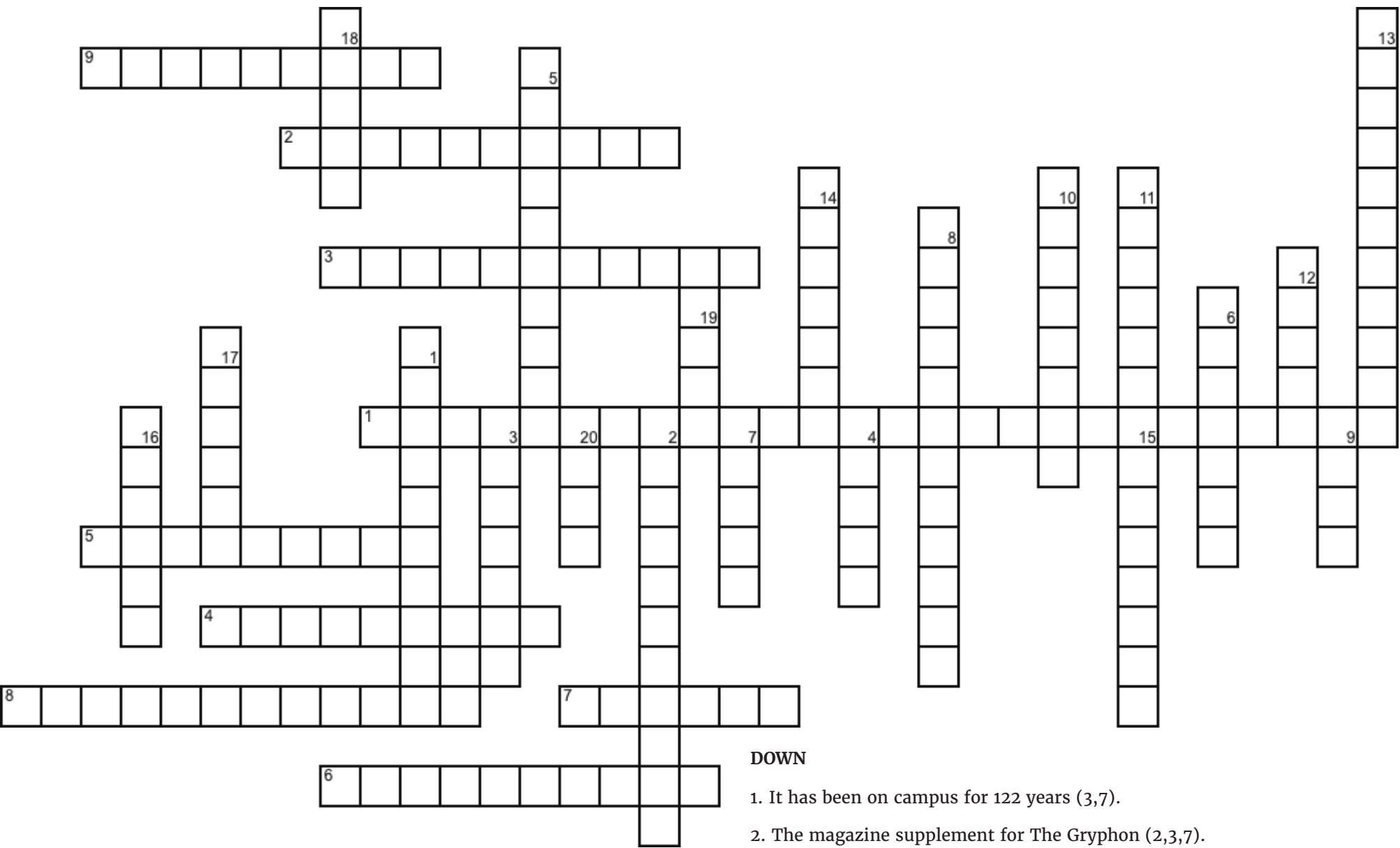


Image Credit: Getty Images



# The Great Gryphon Crossword

For the first time this year, fill in a custom crossword on life at the University of Leeds. Might be a packet of crisps as a prize who knows...



ACROSS

- 1. Overlooks St George’s Field (5,5,5,2,9)
- 2. The former site of Bongo’s Bingo (5,5).
- 3. Its roof collapsed last year. Expensive to get to by Uber (11).
- 4. Big and posh. Also an exam and graduation venue (5,4)
- 5. The Who once played here (9).
- 6. Supermarket. Oh how we miss you :( (10).
- 7. Keir Starmer’s haunt as a student. Just celebrated its 80th anniversary (3,3).
- 8. She was once featured in Leeds Student (now The Gryphon) for running naked through campus. She was on front page on June 15th 1973. An icon (4,8).
- 9. Home of TJs. Less popular than Hyde Park (9).

DOWN

- 1. It has been on campus for 122 years (3,7).
- 2. The magazine supplement for The Gryphon (2,3,7).
- 3. A drink. MP Jess Phillips did not rate this hot in 2002 (3,4).
- 4. This city is better than Manchester (5).
- 5. To go here is worth approximately £9000 a year (10).
- 6. The reason for that big crate in front of the Union (7).
- 7. Library. Also the name of your Gryphon Editor (4,1).
- 8. Anyone know what floor we are on? 7, 8 or 12? (5,7).
- 9. Sells bottled water, no thank you (2,2).
- 10. Where most of you probably live (4,4).
- 11. Summer is coming so time to have some of these in the park (7).
- 12. A day is being held to celebrate them on March 8th (5).
- 13. Wavy art (5,6).
- 14. Professor McGonagall’s first name (7).
- 15. RIP, why did you leaf us? (5,3).
- 16. Put the final nail in the coffin for Salad Box. Also a new ice cream store (6).
- 17. Colour of Leeds Student Television (6).
- 18. A fake candidate for Welfare in Charlie Steele’s LeadLUU campaign (5).
- 19. An acronym for a popular person on campus (4).
- 20. One of the hottest swimming spots on campus (4).