



THE GRYPHON

The official newspaper of Leeds University

Image: Ed Barnes



Coronavirus Chaos at UK Universities

Ed Barnes
Editor-in-Chief

In recent weeks, Universities across the country have had to take action in order to halt the spread of the novel coronavirus, otherwise known as Covid-19 as the government has simultaneously escalated measures including a nationwide shutdown.

At the University of Leeds, this initially came with an announcement on Friday 13th March that the University would seek to transition to online teaching by 27th April, the date that students were due to return to their studies after the Easter holidays. In a statement on this website at the time, the University said that "the health and wellbeing of our staff, students and visitors are our priority".

This was then followed by further announcements on 16th March that all lectures and non-practical classes, and later that all laboratory classes, would transition to online teaching by 6pm on Wednesday 18th March. It was then announced on 17th March that all University libraries had closed until they had assessed the government's advice with the exception of Laidlaw library. As of Tuesday 24th March after the government announced a nationwide lockdown on Monday 23rd, all library buildings are closed until further notice.

Examinations have been cancelled for all undergraduate students not in their final years and for final year students, examinations and dissertations will be completed online. Leeds University

Union announced that the building was closing until further notice transitioning all its services to online. On Tuesday 17th March, venues Old Bar and Terrace closed after St. Patrick's Day celebrations.

On Monday 23rd, it was announced by the government further extreme measures were needed to stop the spread of the virus after there were reports of large gatherings in public spaces over the weekend. This included restrictions on outdoor exercise to one per day to increased powers for the police including fines for gatherings of more than two people.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson has described the outbreak of coronavirus as the "worst public health crisis for a generation".

Since the government's announcement on Monday, according to data from the London Underground, passenger numbers have decreased by 90% with bus journeys decreasing by 20%. Incredibly, it has reported that by 11pm on 25th March, 150,000 people had signed up in less than 24 hours to volunteer to help the NHS.

On Wednesday, Professor Neil Ferguson, director of the MRC Centre for Global Infectious Disease Analysis at Imperial College London, has said he believes the NHS will now be able to cope under the government's new strategy though intensive care units would get "very close to capacity" but were not likely to be breached as "national level".

Ferguson has previously published a

study arguing that the National Health Service would likely be overwhelmed. The earlier study found that the UK's "herd immunity" strategy at the time could lead to 80% of the country infected and over half a million deaths and was quickly scrapped as a result.

It was reported in the Sunday Times that Dominic Cummings, the Prime Minister's Chief Adviser, was one of the proponents of this strategy and the paper claimed that he had said at an event in February "herd immunity, protect the economy, and if that means some pensioners die, too bad". Downing Street and Mr Cummings have denied these claims however and have described the account as "highly defamatory fabrication".

Other Universities have also seen a rapid transition to online teaching. The University of Newcastle has postponed all summer graduation ceremonies according to The Courier and all campus teaching was suspended until the end of the year. This was after 1300 students signed a petition demanding that the University cancel all face-to-face teaching and meetings.

The University of East Anglia on Tuesday has offered "students living in University accommodation the chance to end their rent contracts early" according to Concrete. At the University of Sheffield, Varsity was cancelled and the students' Union has closed until further notice. However discussions are still ongoing according to Forge Press over examinations and assessments.

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A Nice Breath of Fresh Air

News reports on the new Clean Air Zone being introduced in Leeds from September

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Coronavirus, the Media and OCD

Features writer Olivia Surguy discusses her own experiences having OCD as the situation with coronavirus has escalated.

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Beating Eating Disorders

Society Editor Tilly Judges follows LUU's BEAT society as they held a series of events to raise money during Eating Disorders Awareness Week.

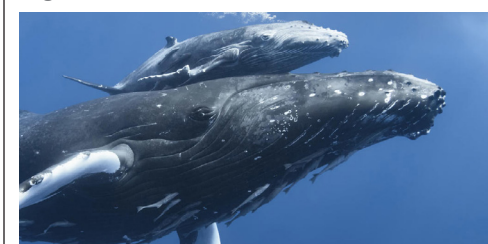
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Whale Hello There, What Brings You To This Neck of the Ocean?

Science discusses new data that shows whales head to warmer waters for a bit of pampering and self-love. Who can blame them?

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Editor of the Week *The Entire Editorial Team*

It seems a bit odd pushing ahead with an issue considering the circumstances – you know a global pandemic.

However the editorial team have still pulled out the stops whether that was venturing into the office or sending content ready online.

Quote of the Week

“We wil feed each other, re-distribute wealth, strike”

Britney Spears offers her words of wisdom in this time of global crisis. Vive la revolution and all that jazz.

Credits

Editor-In-Chief ~ Ed Barnes

Associate Editors ~ Megan Ardis
Ian White

Social Media ~ Caitlin Tilley

Website ~ Milly Martin

Marketing ~ Clare Redman

Radio ~ Freya Hillyer

News ~ Charly Loughlin, Amelia Cutting, Elliott Hodgkin, George Davis

Society ~ Tilly Judges, Jess Farmer

Features ~ Elena Sotelo, Michael Keating.

Views ~ Eloise Barry, Charlotte Abbott, Alfie Coulstock-Couceram, Michael Turnbull, Eleanor Noyce

Science ~ Michelle Heinrich, Anna Davison

Business ~ Will Southall, Chloe Pryce

Sport ~ Millie Frain, Millie Warrilow, Owen Ellicott

Treasurer ~ Abby Drew

Advertising ~ Zainab Adedeji

Secretary ~ Emma Ferguson

Equality and Diversity ~ Santia Ahmed

Editorial Letter:



Hi readers,

Before we begin, I would just like to thank the Footsteps fund for their very kind grant that has allowed us to purchase two new computers for The Gryphon. This is after we secured funding from LUU to buy two new computers after Christmas. The computers we were using before this

were incredibly slow and caused issues that meant we nearly didn't go into print on several

occasions. The new computers (despite some issues connecting to the server) have been working much more efficiently. Before it took about five minutes for you to even load up one set of pages on Indesign but now it only takes a few seconds.

While we haven't been able to purchase the new computers using the Footsteps funding just yet, the editorial team next year will be starting with a host of new equipment that will make future editors' lives much easier.

Sadly though we have come to the end. This will unexpectedly be my last editorial. Unless campus reopens, we will not be doing another issue this year. Even just two weeks ago, if you had told me that I'd be stuck at home while the entire country goes into lockdown, I would have said you were being ridiculous.

But alas here we are with campus closed, the country going into lockdown and what is now the final issue of the year (most likely) only being posted online because campus is as dead as Harambe.

This year has had its trials for many of us, particularly students, from the political chaos and uncertainty caused as a result of Brexit to two rounds of UCU strikes to the rapid closure of the University due to Covid-19.

It is a scary time for all of us but one thing we must do is remain focused on the positive things. It is easy to get sucked into the panic and feel like the whole world is imploding. We humans love to focus on the bad things in life. It might be a survival thing who knows. If you're just chilling in the forest, you're obviously going to pay more attention to the tiger approaching than the birds singing in the trees.

It came as a shock to all of us that literally in less than a week campus went from operating as normal to completely stopping all in-person teaching. This wasn't going to be the end of final year you were hoping for – I myself was looking forward to a little trip to Northern Ireland with the house and solo voyage to Berlin over the Easter break.

The worst thing is that in this scenario, we all have to separate and not see each other for what is likely months on end. However we can get through this. The times will be tough but we must also remind ourselves of the good things that have happened as a result of the challenging circumstances.

Communities that have been galvanised to help those in need from Alex Sobel's community volunteering initiative to Art Soc's amazing giveaway of art supplies to LSR's Virtual Fruity (played way too many

bops to handle on a Friday evening). The Student Exec started up a Facebook community group to allow students to stay in the loop about stuff going on in Leeds as they self-isolated.

Even my local Post Office in rural Worcestershire had to turn away volunteers who had signed up to help deliver bread, milk and eggs to those in need. Now these things certainly do not fix what is a dire situation but reminding ourselves that these things are happening shows us things aren't all awful at a time when it seems like that is the case.

The world has many challenges ahead of it and there will be many times over the next century where things will get really tough.

This issue was long-planned to be an environmentally focused one to celebrate World Meteorological and World Water Days. That's fallen by the way-side somewhat for obvious reasons. However the parallels are nevertheless are similar. Coronavirus has presented a challenge for the world's markets in a similar way global warming will. There are differences of course – one was fast-moving while the other will be slow. However the long-lasting effects both will have on the global economy will be inevitable nonetheless.

The coronavirus memes have been good for sure and I for one can't wait for some of them to appear as Source A in my grandchildren's (if I have any) A Level papers. However alongside some top notch quality memes, I hope we all look at how we responded to this unprecedented crisis, both the good and the bad, and use that to prepare us better for the many challenges that lie ahead of us. We've got a month or two to go for some self-reflection as we all are confined to our houses with nothing to do except work from home and our single daily trip to the park.

This is likely my last editorial and I would personally like to thank all of my team for being great company during the uncertain times. I would also like to thank all our great writers who have produced some truly fantastic content this year.

A big round of applause goes to Caitlin Tilley for her SPA Award nomination for the incredible work she's done online this year as well as Greg Headley and Clare Redman who both got nominated for Best Student Photographer.

Lastly I want to thank you, our readers. I hope you have enjoyed reading The Gryphon and enjoyed picking up a copy every week. It's you who keep us going week on week because if no one reads our articles, we'd have no reason to keep publishing.

Stay tuned as it's not over. We have plenty of juicy stories coming down the pipeline (all under wraps for now) and check out some wholesome content we've got coming up on our Instagrams.

Over and out,

Ed Barnes
Editor-in-Chief
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Union Affairs Officer
Lauren Huxley

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Hello lovely students!

We know that this is a really stressful and worrying time for everyone due to the outbreak of Coronavirus and we will continue to make sure you get all the information you need. Advice and guidance is changing daily and at LUU we will do our best to keep members updated on both our own services and the University's. As I said, we know it's going to be a really difficult time for everyone so please be kind to one another

and check up on those who you know may be particularly vulnerable at this time or lonely and remember to look after yourselves too!

This could be the perfect opportunity to take some time to do those things that you've not quite managed to get round to... I'm hoping to finally clean my flat and learn some sign language.

Lastly, please know that we are doing everything we can to ensure our members are safe and supported and that we will

continue to offer essential services as long as we are able to do so.



Education Officer
Abiha Khan

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Hey everyone! I hope you are all doing well – I know that for many of you things have been very difficult on campus for the past few weeks with industrial action and especially with the situation in the world at the moment.

Teaching has currently moved all to online delivery. For many of us this is all very new and I understand that many of you are really worried.

When we face global challenges it is important we have research to draw upon and the ability to come together to find solutions. Human learning and discovery is one way that we will get through this and all of our education feeds into that.

We are thinking of healthcare professionals and hope they are well in

these busy and stressful times. To our members studying to become healthcare professionals, we would like them to know that we are here to support them, whether they are on placement or not.

I will continue working hard to ensure that your academic experience is not further disrupted, ensuring that all of you are able to achieve your learning outcomes and to help you get through these last few months of University.

In this time we must all be patient with each other; we are all in this together. Be sure to check up on those around you and to look after yourself especially if you are self-isolating.

If you have any concerns around your academic experience, please don't

hesitate to get in touch with me and I will do my very best to help support you and to work with the University on this.



Equality & Diversity Officer

Chloé Elliott

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Hello lovelies,

I hope you are doing well considering the circumstances at the moment. It's an uncertain time but stay positive and look out for those around you who are vulnerable and may need some extra support.

We're doing our best to make sure that any updates get to you as soon as possible too. Be mindful of the media you consume during this time and make your own decisions as to what's best for you.

If you need to stock up on essentials, your local independent shops would likely appreciate your support in getting through this tough time and you can also avoid the panic of larger chain stores.

If you're in need of distractions while you self-isolate, now could be the time you catch up on the books you've bought but haven't had a chance to read, podcasts and your YouTube watch later folder.

You could also brush up on an old skill, or learn a new one on LinkedIn Learning.

Whatever you end up doing, I hope you're taking care of yourself and I look forward to seeing you back on campus, hopefully not before too long.



Welfare Officer
Amy Wells

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I'm currently working on the mental health research project. This is my biggest piece of work and the largest piece of mental health research LUU has ever done!

If you've ever tried to seek support for wellbeing/mental health issues from on or off campus services, please complete the survey and you'll be in with a shot of winning some fab prizes including £100 cash. This includes personal tutors, Student Counselling, Disability Services, Leeds Student Medical Practice, Forward

Leeds, Nightline, Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Services, IAPT. Link is: bit.ly/SAMHSurvey.

The findings will be used to lobby the Uni and the Government to improve our failing mental health services.

In other news – COVID-19 is probably taking over your social media feeds. Stay up to date with the University's latest guidance at coronavirus.leeds.ac.uk, and contact your School with any questions/requests for adjustments if you are self-

isolating or at risk.

Look after your mental wellbeing – I can't recommend Student Minds' guidance enough: studentminds.org.uk/coronavirus.html.

Look after yourself and others. You can always email or call LUU Advice (advice@luu.leeds.ac.uk, 0113 3801400) to find out more about emotional support at Uni or if you're worried about friends or family.



Farewell from the Gryphon Editorial Team!



Campus Watch



1 University of Liverpool University spin out company secures £300k to develop indoor air pollution technology

CageCapture, a new spin out company at the University of Liverpool has secured a total of £298,754 funding from Innovate UK to develop technology which will remove toxic pollutants from the air.

CageCapture was formed to commercialise a new case based material invented by Dr Ming Liu and Professor Andrew Cooper at the University's Materials Innovation Factory. They have designed new cage molecule solids that act as a 'cage prison' and can capture low concentration pollutants.

The patented technology has been found to capture the most common indoor air pollutant, formaldehyde, at both high and low levels, even in humid conditions.

Dr Ming Liu said: CageCapture is an exciting new spin out company which has been created to commercialise new cage materials which were developed through our research". He added: "Our technology has been proven in the lab to be more effective at capturing formaldehyde than current methods and this new funding will help us to take this forward and actively pursue collaborators to scale-up manufacturing of the new material".

2 University of Cambridge Bird netting removed from trees outside laboratory

Following fierce public criticism, the University of Cambridge has removed bird netting which was put over 20 trees beside the Whittle Laboratory on its estate.

A university spokesman said: "The University of Cambridge has decided to begin immediately removing the netting over trees on its estate and accepts that the decision to use nets to discourage nesting birds was wrong. We unreservedly apologise for any upset we have called". They added, "The netting was put in place in advance of building work during the nest season which requires the trees to be replaced or moved to another spot on our estate". Concerns regarding the nets were mainly focussed on the possibility that birds could become trapped in the netting. The decision to install nets also reduced roosting and foraging space for the birds.

Chris Packham, a conservationist and TV presenter, called the decision to install nets "absolutely outrageous". Extinction Rebellion Cambridge had already removed some of the netting and vowed that they would return every time it was put back up. Activists welcomed the university's decision to remove the bird netting.

3 University of Oxford Facilities manager given honorary degree

John Harris, a facilities manager at Oxford University, has been given an honorary degree in recognition of his 50 years of service to the Department of Pharmacology.

Harris started out as a Junior Technician in the Department of Pharmacology Workshop in 1969 and has remained in the workshop ever since. In October 2019, on his 50 year anniversary, the department held a reception for him.

In February, Harris received an honorary MA at the Sheldonian Theatre. He has said: "Everyone made me feel so special on the day".

Mr Harris' work involves managing the workshop and facilities in the building, the design and build of new labs and office spaces as well as making anything from Perspect baths for microscopes to large Faraday cages for researchers in the labs.

Mr Harris said: "I like it when I have done something and someone is satisfied. I enjoy working with my hands every day. It is an incredibly varied job. I feel very lucky because i can go to all the different labs and solve problems with professors and students- all of them".

4 University of Oxford Former Home Secretary Amber Rudd was due to speak but the event was pulled

Former Conservative Home Secretary, Amber Rudd, was invited to speak about the UN Women's 'Draw A Line' campaign by the UN Women Oxford UK society early this month. The society, however, pulled out half an hour before she was due to appear.

The invitation was pulled following a vote by the society's committee. The decision is thought to have been made due to her role in the Windrush scandal.

Rudd has since said that her treatment was "badly judged and rude".

The UN Women Oxford UK society wrote on their official Facebook page: "Following a majority vote in committee, tonight's event with speaker Amber Rudd has been cancelled". They added that they were "deeply sorry for all and any hurt caused".

The charity UN Women UK distanced itself from the row and announced the student group involved had changed its name to 'United Women Oxford Student Society'. The charity then added that it would no longer be associated with the student society.

5 University of Sussex All exams and assessments cancelled due to coronavirus

An email sent to students at the University of Sussex has confirmed that no exams or assessments will take place on campus for the rest of the academic year.

Students were informed that the university will "find ways to ensure you are assessed appropriately but also fairly considering the exceptional circumstances".

The email states: "To take into account the changes this week now that we have suspended teaching on campus, almost all deadlines for submitting coursework/assignments and examinations this week will be postponed. There won't be any exams and assessments on campus for the rest of the academic year, instead assessments will be made using remote means." They went on to say: "We are very conscious that you should not be impacted by this unprecedented global event and we will find ways to ensure you are assessed appropriately".

This decision follows the University's announcement that all teaching was suspended and online teaching would begin on the 23rd March. The campus is expected to remain open with essential services still being provided.

Leeds University Study Finds Six-Fold Increase in Polar Ice Loss



Jian Feng

It is estimated that the sea levels will have risen an extra 17 centimetres by 2100 as a result of Greenland and Antarctica losing ice faster than in the 1990's.

Findings, published in *Nature*, show that Greenland and Antarctica lost 6.4 trillion tonnes of ice between 1992 and 2017 – pushing global sea levels up by 17.8 millimetres. Of the total sea level increase, 10.6 millimetres (60%) was due to the Greenland ice losses, and 7.2 millimetres (40%) was due to Antarctica.

The Ice Sheet Mass Balance Intercomparison Exercise (IMBIE) team has combined 26 different surveys to figure the ice sheet of Greenland and Antarctica between 1992 and 2018. There is also a team of 89 polar scientists with 11 satellites that are contributing to the investigation.

Nearly all of the ice lost from Antarctica, together

with half of that from Greenland – has been triggered by oceans melting their outlet glaciers, which causes them to speed up. The remainder of Greenland's ice losses are caused by rising air temperature, which has melted the ice sheet at its surface.

Based on the Fifth Assessment Report, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimated that around 360 million people will face the risk of annual coastal flooding, as a result of global sea level that is expected to rise 53 centimeters by 2100.

However, the IMBIE Team's studies shows the losses of ice from both Antarctica and Greenland are rising faster than expected.

In fact, the combined rate of ice loss has risen nearly six times from 81 billion tonnes per year in the 1990's to 475 billion tonnes per year in the 2010's, while during the heatwave in the summer of 2019 set a new

record for polar ice sheet loss, resulting in five times and seven times faster than they were in the 1990s, respectively.

Professor Andrew Shepherd at the University of Leeds, who led the assessment with Dr Erik Ivins, said: "Every centimetre of sea level rise leads to coastal flooding and coastal erosion, disrupting people's lives around the planet.

This would mean 400 million people are at risk of annual coastal flooding by 2100. Meanwhile, these are not unlikely events with small impacts, they are already underway and will be devastating for coastal communities."

More information can be found at https://www.leeds.ac.uk/news/article/4561/six-fold_increase_in_polar_ice_losses_since_the_1990s?fbclid=IwAR1FCOKOCTmxkarXohEJXTVoOuiw73anzb3cpEjdezULq4-4LJdoHjwrKY8.

Complete UK University Shutdown due to Covid-19 Described as 'Impossible'

Anna Brownbridge

Vice-chancellors of UK universities have said to the government they are not able to completely shut down if the coronavirus outbreak worsens. This is due to the thousands of students who would be left with nowhere to go.

The Office for Students (OfS), the higher education regulator for England requested information from all universities on Monday 9th March. It asked for information regarding the number of confirmed and suspected cases of the coronavirus on campus, as well as details on how each institution is responding to these cases.

We understand that any decisions regarding instructions for universities to close would be taken by the Department for Education (DfE). A spokesperson for the OfS said universities should "continue to follow advice from DfE and Public Health England." However, vice-chancellors cautioned that the makeup of universities made their complete shutdown impossible.

Prof Steve West, the vice-chancellor of the University of the West of England (UWE) in Bristol, said: "My

bottom line back to government has been that they can't treat universities like big schools because we aren't. I've got 4,500 students living on campus: some of them are care leavers or estranged from their families and many are international students. We can't just shut down as they would have nowhere to go."

The vice-chancellor of a Russell Group university, who asked not to be named, agreed, saying: "We couldn't fully close. What do you do with thousands of international students who can't go home?" The vice-chancellor also stated that their university would be sure to provide free accommodation for international students who were stranded, even if the government told them to shut.

Oxford University said it would remain open despite a second student testing positive for coronavirus. In a statement it said: "Public Health England has advised the university that the risk to other students and staff is very low and that university and college activities can continue as normal."

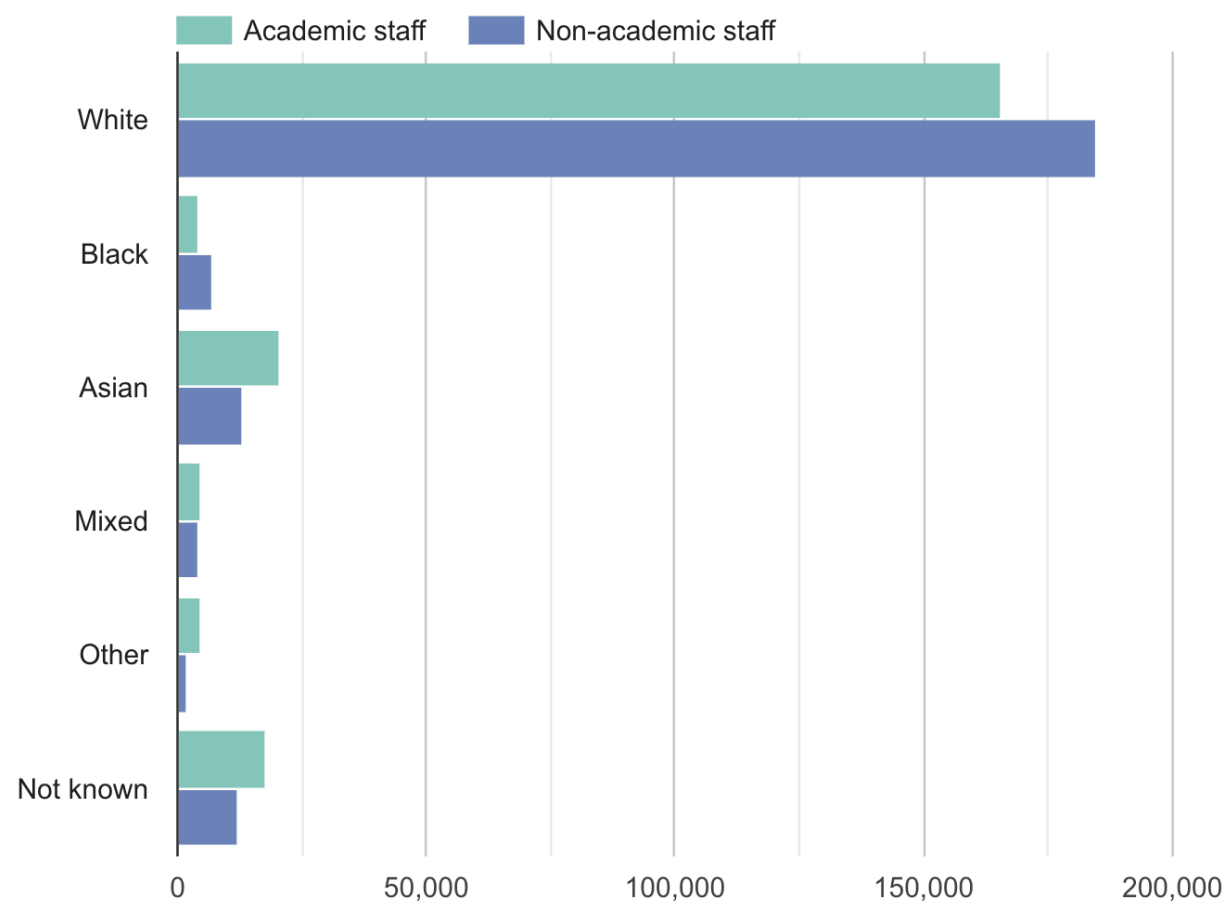
Simon Marginson, a professor of higher education at Oxford, said the volume of people in universities represented a real challenge to containment: "Only

transport and inner urban streets clearly exceed the level of people-traffic that we can see in large universities. The end of term cannot come too soon." University of the West of England, in Bristol, has set up an emergency helpline for concerned students and parents. West said: "We would operate something like a Christmas shutdown. The things you can shut down you do, such as lectures and sports. But you also have to provide vital support services for the students still here, including security, catering, wellbeing support and emergency phone lines."

He added that universities may need to mobilise students who are training as nurses, doctors and other health professionals to help bolster overstretched NHS services. "We need the flexibility to do that, and to support those students," said West.

Harvard University in the US told students on Tuesday that they must move out of their houses and student residences by no later than Sunday and that all classes would be conducted online after the spring holiday, in an attempt to contain the spread of the infection. No cases have yet been detected at the university.

Figures Show A Lack of Black Professors at UK Universities



A graph based on HESA data showing the low numbers of BAME employees across the Higher Education sector compared to White employees in 2018-19.

Kerisa Carlin

Recent Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) figures show fewer than 1% of UK university professors are black. Despite an increase in universities employing both academic and non-academic staff to record levels, generally growth in employing more staff from ethnic backgrounds remains slow. Only 140 academic staff at professional level identify

as black. This equates to 0.7% out of more than 21,000 professionals, whilst nearly 18,000 (85%) identified as white. Asian professors make up around 1,360 of people in the UK, whilst more than 2,000 identified as being from other ethnic backgrounds. These statistics imply that the vast majority of universities employ between 0-2 black professionals. Oxford, Sussex, Manchester and Warwick are the universities that employ more black professors on average in comparison to other universities.

Male professors continue to outnumber females, whilst previous research has found that UK universities employed just 25 black women as professors. This is despite the number of females in the industry increasing to 1,200 in five years from 2014-15. Overall black academics make up just 2% of the total working at UK universities. Hensa data published in January suggested that no black staff were employed at the most senior levels of British universities. Ministers have gone on to describe this as ‘unacceptable’. These figures also show that out of 3,600 UK university governors, only 75 labelled themselves as black. The data included governors throughout all of the UK, including England, Scotland and Wales. The HESA statistics also highlighted the rise in the non-continuation figures among mature students, as well as first year students. England had the highest non continuation rate, with 6.9% in 2017 -18 of first years dropping out of higher education institutions. Office for Students described this increase as ‘concerning’. Nicola Dandridge, the chief executive of the Office for Students, said: “English higher education enjoys internationally high completion rates, but an increase in the proportion of students dropping out is a concern.” Mainstream universities generally had non-continuation rates of between 15% and 26%, whereas alternative providers had very high dropout rates. Including the UK College of Business and Computing, which had 80 of its 165 graduates unable to continue after their first year. University Minister for England Michelle Donelan commented on the recently published statistics saying: “With high numbers of students continuing to drop out, this data shows progress is slow from some institutions to tackle the issue. I want universities to step up and take action as we cannot let these students down and let talent go to waste.”

	White ↑	Black ↑	Asian ↑	Mixed ↑	Other ↑	Not known ↑	Total ↑
Leeds Arts University	260	10	5	5	0	5	285
Leeds Beckett University	2,535	85	135	55	15	65	2,890
Leeds College of Music	285	10	5	5	5	20	330
The University of Leeds	5,805	175	525	135	85	1,715	8,440
Leeds Trinity University	395	5	10	5	5	30	445

Data showing the number of Black, Asian, White, Mixed and Other employees amongst all staff at all five universities in Leeds in 2018-19.

	White ↑	Black ↑	Asian ↑	Mixed ↑	Other ↑	Not known ↑	Total
Leeds Arts University	160	5	0	0	0	5	17
Leeds Beckett University	1,130	45	60	20	15	30	1,300
Leeds College of Music	160	0	0	5	5	15	18
The University of Leeds	2,355	40	310	50	75	955	3,785
Leeds Trinity University	140	0	5	5	5	15	17

Data showing the number of Black, Asian, White, Mixed and Other employees amongst academic staff at all five universities in Leeds in 2018-19.

Clean Air Zone to be Launched in Leeds City Centre by September



Image Credit: Leeds City Council, LinkedIn.

Lucy Slater

From 28th September, a Clean Air Zone (CAZ) is to be implemented by Leeds City Council, which will see daily charges apply to heavily polluting vehicles for entry into the city centre. The zone is intended “to reduce air pollution and protect the health of everyone in Leeds”, according to the City Council’s CAZ website.

Initially meant to be launched in January 2020, the zone was postponed due to “government delays”. A similar zone in Birmingham is also to be established later in the year, following similar delays. The original proposal, back in October 2016, was that zones would also cover Nottingham, Derby and Southampton.

Regarding how the zone will work, there will be a daily charge of £50 will apply to all non-scheduled buses, coaches, and HGVs. While taxis and private hire vehicles will be charged £12.50 a day entering the zone, which covers most of the inner city. Privately owned cars, LGVs, motorcycles, and any smaller vehicles will not be charged for entry to the CAZ.

The zone will also not apply to First Leeds buses, which have made a separate pledge to reduce emissions and use greener vehicles by the end of this year.

A £6 million camera system is being installed with over 300 cameras to enforce the zone. Funding of £29 million, according to the BBC, was granted by the government for the establishment of the policy, with £23 million to assist those affected in transitioning. In order to support local businesses, the council have announced a few different options to help. Firstly, there is a scheme offering free short-term use of low-emission vehicles for small businesses and charities.

This will be run for 2 years and, according to the City Council, 250 organisations have already expressed interest.

They are also offering different loans and grants to help the transition to greener vehicles. According to the Council, the money brought in by the zone will be used to maintain the scheme, helping businesses and charities to adapt, and to fund other clean air initiatives in the city.

Leeds has long had a history of having some of the poorest air quality conditions in Europe. In February 2019, Friends of the Earth reported that parts of Neville Street had a NO₂ level of 99 ug/m³, the highest level recorded outside of London. The City Council’s CAZ page states that without the zone, they expect that Leeds will fail the legal limits for air pollution this year. A Committee on Climate Change report

stated that, as the highest individual sector, transport accounts for 23% of air pollution. The hope, therefore, is that the zone will keep Leeds’s pollution levels at legal levels and promote the use of greener vehicles by business in metropolitan areas. According to the BBC, in January 2020 it was noted that the number of electric and hybrid vehicles registered in the region had doubled since 2017, it is hoped the zone may therefore be another step in the right direction.

Whether the zone will increase the price of services frequently used by students is not yet clear. Although, it might at least make students reconsider getting a taxi instead of the bus back from a night out or that last minute Uber to make a lecture on time. Although the zone is broadly considered a step in the right direction, Friends of the Earth have stated that more could be done.

In particular, they suggest that charges should be extended to diesel and petrol vehicles of all kinds using the city centre, which would encourage more people to use public transport whenever possible.

However, for the time being, only heavily-polluting vehicles will be charged for access to the city centre and, with the zone yet to be implemented, its impact on pollution levels can only be estimated.

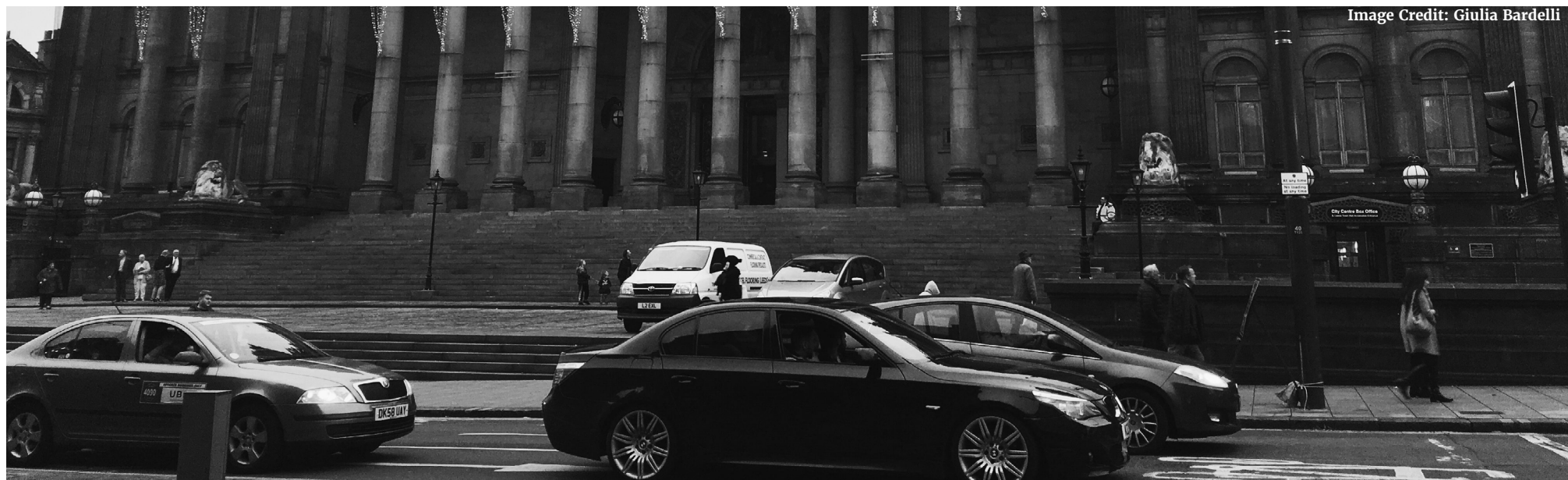


Image Credit: Giulia Bardelli



Coronavirus, the Media and OCD

The COVID-19 outbreak has rapidly changed the way we are living our lives. People around the world have been quarantined, and entire countries are on lockdown. For people like Olivia Surguy, who struggle with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, the over-information provided by the media can worsen their condition.

Olivia Surguy

Coronavirus has sparked an almost-apocalyptic public response. The media's coverage has contributed to people bulk buying certain items in a state of panic, making supermarkets look like a post-apocalyptic wasteland.

Furthermore, the mainstream media has covered the disease so heavily that it is leading people to believe this is the worst pandemic ever. This response has had a very negative effect on the mental health of many. Anxiety is evident in the act of panic buying, but for people with pre-existing anxiety disorders the current situation is almost unbearable.

Whilst necessary to scare people into being more responsible and performing better methods of personal hygiene, it is problematic in many ways. It becomes even more troubling for those who, like me, suffer from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD). There are many misconceptions around this condition, as people confuse OCD with OCPD (Obsessive Compulsive Personality Disorder): while OCPD makes sufferers uneasy when surrounded by mess, while people with OCD can struggle with the idea of certain things being a threat to their health and their loved ones.

As someone with OCD, I have experienced a fear of germs since I was very young. It is essentially an over-protective voice in your head, finding threats that appear ridiculous to others. One of the most common intrusive thoughts experienced by patients is the idea of their families dying if they do not carry out certain rituals and obsessive behaviours. These can be paired with anxiety around germ

s, and many of us exhibit obsessive behaviour through handwashing, which usually goes along with intrusive thoughts such as "if I don't wash my hands and bring germs into the house, a loved one will die and it will be my fault".

I myself used to wash my hands at least six

times every time I washed them due to a similar intrusive thought. Having had therapy, I was able to overcome this particular behaviour, although the urge never really goes away. Although I still struggle with some behaviours, o

ther people are not so lucky. The most common therapies for OCD is normally Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), which work by exposing the patient to their intrusive thoughts in order for them to understand that these are not real threats. Behaviours are usually performed to avoid feeling stressed or guilty, which is why it is so important for patients to accept anxiety as a normal feeling.

Seeing the public become obsessed with health can prove scary for people with OCD. We have worked to sit through our uncomfortable feelings, and this appears to be undone by the coronavirus outbreak and the media coverage it's being given. We are being told to stay clean all the time, to wash our hands, to take extreme care. For people with no such mental health conditions this is great, however there is a dark reality for OCD sufferers which is not being acknowledged.

Public encouragement to wash our hands is one of the least threats to those attempting to manage their OCD. I myself was terrified (and partially still am) of going home, contracting the virus on the way and passing it on to someone I love. Considering the majority of intrusive thoughts people with OCD struggle with are related to harm coming to loved ones or themselves, the Coronavirus pandemic is a terrible scenario in which their struggle can only worsen.

The media's current saturation of Coronavirus-related news and it being a conversation piece seemingly everywhere is not allowing people to distance themselves from their intrusive thoughts. Instead, our fears are being reaffirmed externally with everyone telling us that we must act on these thoughts as if they were a real threat.

Whilst this virus is indeed a serious public health

crisis – with potentially thousands of lives at risk –, we have survived far worse epidemics. The media is covering the virus as though we are in a war, with the shortage of essentials in supermarkets also fitting this narrative.

Furthermore, the physical effects of OCD can also dramatically worsen in this situation. Obsessive behaviours such as hand washing are on the rise due to the spread of Coronavirus. The shortage of hand sanitiser means that people with OCD are forced to resort to hand washing more frequently, which can turn into long rituals.

This hand washing can lead to chapped, dry skin that needs steroid cream – not to mention the low mood and self-esteem one experiences after performing a behaviour. This dryness can force sufferers to go to the doctor, which can be terrifying in the current climate, in order to have a cream prescribed. If the skin becomes chapped and bleeds, it then creates more entrances for the virus and therefore worsens the cycle of intrusive thoughts.

During these hard and stressful times for all, please be particularly mindful of people who are struggling with OCD and other anxiety disorders. Try and become aware of how your actions and words can impact people around you; try to refrain from bombarding people with the media coverage that has been bombarded to you.

My advice for people who, like me, are struggling during this COVID-19 outbreak, is to limit your media exposure and tell the people you are surrounded with to not share with you their horror stories. You are not alone, and you will get through this; you have done so every time before.



Security, Data and the Future of Elections

“It began with a dream of a connected world. A space where everyone can share experiences and feel less alone. It wasn’t long before this world became our matchmaker, fact-checker, personal entertainer, photo book, even our therapist” – Professor David Carol

Connor Ohalloran

The data from our online activity isn’t disappearing, but instead being mined into a multi-million pound industry. What’s worse, the masses are not aware this is happening, and with the lack of public concern for the security of smart devices, it’s an open playing field for the influence industry.

With the advent of social media and the emergence of smart devices, eyes and ears can be seen in your kitchen, outside on your doorbell and in your pocket. Your every move supposedly recorded including your location, your opinions, your spending patterns and even your heart rate.

As social primitives, we are constantly uploading our lives online, from baby photos to political opinions. Meanwhile, Governments and marketing agencies are creating bespoke messaging campaigns designed to influence based from the information available from their target audiences.

The key ingredient: your data.

What started out as a clever method to keep you on social platforms for longer, tailored algorithms capitalise on our activities in more ways than one. Social platforms are monitoring every online interaction from spending patterns, locations, likes, dislikes and even personal messages. Private companies are able to harness this data and take your emotional pulse, using the data to personalise algorithms for maximum content exposure. Feeding us content that we know we like. Which is why when you ‘liked’ that post on internships abroad in February, your feed began to fill up with similar content and suggest like-minded ‘friends you may know’. Drawing like-minded peers together and creating stronger divisions against those that do not agree where prejudices and hatred for the opposition are inflamed, creating an echo chamber of bias.

This data misuse is not limited to social media and digital activity. Personal data is collected from your mobile phone, social media, GoogleHome Hub, Alexa, Ring Doorbell cameras and just about any other device

that connects to the internet. Some experts argue that the general public aren’t necessarily bothered about how these devices work but rather just that they do work. This is highlighted in the Guardian’s recent piece on the security flaws with smart devices.

Interestingly, Amazon’s Alexa works by always listening for its name to be called, much like a human is always inadvertently listening to its surroundings. The difference is, outside its name being called, the device listens and captures everything else for ‘market research’. This data is used to supposedly create advertising patterns for their users and create a better Amazon experience. The same can easily be sold to third parties for political or financial gain.

This may seem like wild conspiratorial speculation but investigative journalists such as Carole Cadwalladr uncovered the Cambridge Analytica scandal in 2018 with the help of whistleblowers Christopher Wylie and Britney Kaiser. The trio exposed the illegal collection and manipulation of public data for developing political campaign strategies and surgical, psychological profiling.

One popular method of profiling used by Cambridge Analytica is known as psychographics, a detailed map of a users personality. Ultimately it is personality that drives behaviour and private companies break your personality down into five, exploitable personality traits: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism. Using an aggregate measure of these traits, private advertising companies are designing specific campaign material aligned with your thoughts and opinions.

With this level of data intrusion, it is no surprise of mass public suspicion in foreign involvement in Brexit and surveillance powers being held to account for apparently unlawful monitoring of its citizens.

If current attitudes towards social media and smart devices continue, elections will be a question of data science to the extent where common practice will be companies finding and isolating particular characteristics of key voters and pulling their emotional strings to control voting habits using any

technological resource available.

However, since the Cambridge Analytica scandal, Facebook are now taking active measures to identify and take down rogue accounts showing co-ordinated inauthentic behaviour. Twitter are now implementing a misinformation identification strategy, notifying users to use caution when sharing.

This plethora of messaging and available information is rapidly being falsified and malign in nature. This includes faking video content.

DeepFake videos are described as video footage of a person that has been doctored to falsify the speakers words, face and behaviour – a complete fabrication of a video. Mouths can be animated to fake speech with an impressionist or machine-learning technology to reproduce the targets voice. This could be and is increasingly likely to be used to create or fabricate speeches of political candidates that never even took place.

There are countless ways by which we are exposed to advertising and messaging, in both online and the physical environment. One technology expert, Jamie Bartlett, described how the novel smart fridge can be weaponized.

‘If companies can access your fridge data, they will know that at about 7pm is when you eat and at 6.30pm, you are hungry because your social posts are written with charged, emotional language. We know those that are emotional are marginally more open to messages of influence. So at 6.30pm, Jacob Rees Mogg is probably going to pop up on your smart fridge screen with a personalised message to you and you alone, knowing you are more susceptible in your current state of mind’.

The future of elections looks primed to be a war of disinformation and data manipulation. In an era of constant competition, protecting our cognitive security appears to be a losing battle. Technology looks set to be constantly evolving, and institutions across the globe appear to be on the back foot with data policy and platform misuse. This must not be ignored.

Image: Shutterstock



Tensions Rise at Greek-Turkish Border

The latest developments in the refugee crisis have led to the Turkish government taking a bold decision: opening their border with Greece and allowing refugees to freely enter the EU. Ted Omre-Claye discusses the context and implications of Erdogan's decision.

Ted Omre-Claye

The situation on the border between Turkey and Greece is rapidly escalating out of control, as migrants attempting to reach a new home and safe haven in Europe have engaged in violent clashes with riot police. It has been reported that a small army of around 1,000 Greek police, including special operations officers, has been deployed to the border region, and they have been accused of using live ammunition and of killing at least three migrants by the Turkish government. However, there is no evidence to support these claims and they are strongly denied by the government in Athens. It was estimated that between 1st March and 5th March alone 35,000 migrants were prevented from crossing, and they have been deporting any who have been found to have made it across the border.

It seems like the clashes will only get worse, as Turkey's government has claimed up to 76,000 more migrants are on their way. The mass migration itself is a result of the decision by Turkey's controversial president Recep Tayyip Erdogan to open Turkey's side of the border, encouraging the movement of tens of thousands of hopeful people, the majority of whom allegedly have come from Afghanistan but also significant numbers claiming to be from Syrian.

The motive of the Syrian refugees is of course to escape the ongoing war in their home country, which on Sunday 15th March will mark its bloody nine year anniversary. It is important to note that Turkish intervention has also further escalated the conflict since October. Turkish troops are continuing their invasion of north-eastern Syria and have clashed with both Kurdish forces – who have been fighting against Al-Assad and Islamic extremist

groups – and more worryingly with Russian-backed President al-Assad's forces. One air strike by Syria forces recently killed 33 Turkish soldiers last week, an event which could lead to further escalation and possibly all out war between the two governments.

Erdogan has two primary motives for opening the Greek border. The first is that Turkey is already home to around four million Syrian refugees, many of whom are becoming settled and accustomed to their new home in Turkey. The escalation of conflict in Syria will likely result in another exodus of civilians desperate to escape the violence, many of whom will head to Turkey as the easiest destination. The fact that much of the fighting between Turkish and Kurdish forces is around the border regions as a result of Erdogan's invasion makes this even more likely. As a result, Erdogan is likely keen to make sure even more refugees don't settle in Turkey and hopefully encourage some of the four million already in his country to move on to Europe as well.

Secondly, Turkey has become caught up in a tricky international situation. Russia is one of Turkey's primary defence suppliers, but is also the key supporter of the al-Assad regime Erdogan is fighting in Syria. This has left Erdogan, whose government has faced accusations of increased authoritarianism and corruption, in need of new supporters. As a result he has been attempting to gain support from the 27 European Union countries to support his military campaign. However, no EU member has agreed to do so, and so Turkey claimed that they have been "forced to open the doors" as a result of the lack of support they have received from the EU.

It could be argued that Erdogan is attempting to use the refugee crisis to hold Europe hostage in order to gain support for his military operations

in Syria. However, if this is the case it has been extremely unsuccessful. When speaking to Erdogan personally, European council president Charles Michel stated that, "the EU is actively engaged to uphold the EU-Treaty statement to support Greece and Bulgaria to protect the EU's external borders." Europe has made it clear that it expects Turkey to comply with a deal struck in 2016, in which Turkey agreed to halt the flow of refugees in exchange for billions of euros in funding, and European commission president Ursula von der Leyen has gone as far as describing Greece as a "European aspid", meaning "shield." As well as this verbal support, the EU has pledged 700 million euros in aid to Greece, of which 350 million is specifically intended to upgrade infrastructure on the border with Turkey. If Erdogan is hoping to gain EU support for his operations in Syria through the political use of refugees, he will be facing a much tougher fight than he may have anticipated.

Overall, it is understandable why Greece and the EU as a whole does not want to accept these refugees. The issue of immigration has been a highly contentious one in European politics over the past few years, and European leaders do not want to ignite further tensions in their own countries. Greece is still struggling with the aftermath of years of economic woes, and a sudden influx of refugees, especially given the current spread of the COVID-19 virus, will only have further negative consequences for their country. However, it is of course important to remember the dire situation of the tens of thousands of people, many of whom are families with children, who are attempting to cross the border into Europe in hopes of a new and better life.

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LUU's BEAT Society: Supporting Eating Disorder Awareness Week



Society Editor Tilly Judges speaks to LUU's BEAT Society following their week-long series of events in support of Eating Disorder Awareness Week.

Tilly Judges

Last week LUU BEAT Society held various events to raise awareness for eating disorders, and the support that is available for those suffering, as part of Eating Disorder Awareness Week. There are 1.25 million people in the UK living with an eating disorder right now and BEAT Society represents the charity BEAT to support and recognise those who suffer with eating disorders and those who support them.

LUU BEAT Society started their events with a stall in the LUU foyer on Thursday. They handed out free tea and coffee and discussed some of the key elements of eating disorders and the charity that they represent, BEAT. The volunteers thoroughly enjoyed speaking to students and some staff about the work that BEAT charity does. The charity works to help people with eating disorders, in addition to providing information and supporting both sufferers and carers. Some volunteers from the society were shocked at how little people knew about eating disorders – they loved providing information to help educate and raise awareness of the types of eating disorders which many people suffer with at university and throughout the UK.

On the Friday of Eating Disorder Awareness Week, 4 girls from BEAT society stood at their stall in the union foyer in their sports bras and shorts. This was an exciting, empowering and scary moment for the girls, some of whom have overcome the challenge of eating disorders themselves. The girls asked members of the society and other students to write body positive messages on their bodies to celebrate all body types and to raise awareness of some of the issues associated with eating disorders. They also took over LUU Instagram to show off their confidence and body positivity. This was a bold and controversial step taken by the girls but they were overwhelmed with the support and publicity they received, ultimately achieving their

aim to raise awareness of eating disorders and the amazing work of BEAT charity.

BEAT society members also worked hard alongside other societies during Eating Disorder Awareness Week. The society took part in various 'Sock It to Eating Disorders' campaigns. This campaign asks people to dig out their brightest socks to wear during Eating Disorders Awareness Week and donate to BEAT. The society worked with cheerleading, ballet, vertical fitness, rugby league and American football societies to help raise money and awareness of eating disorders and BEAT.

Considering the society is brand new this academic year, the members and committee have done an amazing job at supporting BEAT. They have raised over £340 this semester so far and they plan to expand their memberships, collaborations and involvement in upcoming events throughout university. LUU BEAT Society have lots of plans for the rest of the semester. They are currently working on collaborations with gymnastics, trampolining and vertical fitness society in their 'love your leotard' campaigns which will be celebrating body positivity.

They are also currently undergoing various meetings with staff and academics at the University of Leeds to raise awareness of sensitive content in modules; this is particularly prevalent in modules in psychology and biology where topics such as BMI and calories are discussed. Moreover, they are hoping to undergo meetings with academic staff from the medical school. Medical students only receive 4 hours of education on eating disorders, which is insufficient considering the increasing numbers of those suffering with eating disorders throughout the UK.

LUU BEAT society are also working hard to grow their membership. Membership is completely free and there is absolutely no pressure to show extreme commitment. Even if you just volunteer at one of their events for an hour this semester, you are still

contributing to their aim to raise money for BEAT and awareness of eating disorders. Moreover, the society also aims to be more inclusive and hopes to see some male volunteers soon as eating disorders are common in both men and women in the UK. The society are also currently looking for new committee members to continue their great work next year and they hope to hold an AGM later in the semester.

They want to emphasise that the society is a no pressure environment. Some members have suffered with eating disorders themselves and the committee members are very aware of the struggles of balancing university work and life, so this is a great society to get involved in if you just want a new way of making friends and growing your volunteering skills without having to commit too much time and stress! The society has worked so hard to grow this year and they hope to continue to develop through new members and a new committee in the next academic year.

LUU BEAT society want to emphasise that this society is not all about discussing eating disorders, it is about raising money for BEAT, making life-long friends, raising awareness of eating disorders and informing students about the help available for those suffering at university. The society aims to hold more socials this year and an ice-skating social is currently being organised.

If you would like to get involved in volunteering, apply for a committee role or learn more about eating disorders and some of the amazing support available in Leeds then head over to the LUU BEAT Society members Facebook page where you can find more information about the meetings, events and support available. The society have done some amazing things during Eating Disorders Awareness Week and I am sure that they will continue to grow and develop with the help of more students at the University of Leeds!

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THE SHOW MUST GO ON

A \$26 Billion global events industry waits with bated breath as public gatherings worldwide continue to be cancelled. George Cooke explores different festival statements to see which plan to go forward and which don't, and looks to the future of live music in the wake of pandemic.

Austin's music festival SXSW made headlines last week after being cancelled for the first time in their 34 year history. Co-founder Nick Barbaro told The Austin Chronicle that the festival, which brought an estimated \$350 million to Austin last year, was not insured for cancellation by pandemics or communicable disease and, as a result, organizers are being forced to lay off a third of their full-time staff.

Though sudden, the music and tech festival's cancellation was preceded by many of their largest exhibitors with Apple, Amazon, Twitter and Facebook (to name a few) pulling out, as well as a petition carrying 55 thousand signatures in favour of calling the event off. For the last two weeks, the continuing spread of coronavirus has been causing problems all across the music industry.

Events promotion business AEG Live (owned by Philip Anschutz, billionaire climate change denier, anti-gay and anti-transgender initiative donor and oil tycoon, just saying) announced that they would be postponing Coachella and its estimated \$704 million dollar revenue

until October. Other big festivals to be postponed thus far include Treefort Music Fest, Lollapalooza Argentina and Ultra Music Festival.

In British music, the name on everybody's lips was Glastonbury. In her (wonderfully gender-balanced) lineup announcement Instagram post, Emily Eavis said: "No one has a crystal ball to see exactly where we will all be 15 weeks from now, but we are keeping our fingers firmly crossed that it will be here at Worthy Farm". The festival has now been cancelled for the first time in history. This was the year Glastonbury was due to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

Even music high society is facing Covid-19 catastrophe; in New York, the Metropolitan Opera, the New York Philharmonic and Carnegie Hall Insitute have cancelled performances until at least the end of the month. Other big names include Live Nation, the world's largest events promoters, who have called a halt to touring until April at the earliest, and Madonna, whose highly anticipated Madame X tour has been postponed indefinitely. Yet

the pandemic's ramifications regarding music, though reverberating through every echelon of the industry, are most serious for small names.

Although it is sad for hundreds of the thousands of fans who have had their tickets cancelled, most big name artists will probably still be millionaires after the crisis has calmed down. Before coronavirus affects the topline, it will be the small labels who can't promote their artists, independent musicians who can't get gigs and little venues with no audiences that suffer the most. A 2018 survey by the Music Industry Research Association and the Princeton University Survey Research Center found that live music was "the most common income source for musicians" according to Rolling Stone. In short, no performance means no paycheck.

Although it is important to keep in perspective that this is a pandemic and lives are being lost every day, it is still having an impact on all small businesses, and those in music are no exception.



Image Credit: Sophie Harbinson



Image Credit: Community Festival

While this is not the time to rush out and go to every independent show you can (social distancing please folks), now more than ever, that person from secondary school who's been hassling you on Facebook to like their band's page would really love it if you bought their t-shirt. Groups like MusicVenueTrust and Musicares (The Grammy Awards' own foundation) are working hard to help those small names, and I highly recommend showing some love to your local artists and venues.

For music though, hopefully, it is not all doom and gloom; if you are stuck in self-isolation maybe now is the time to finally practice the guitar that's been collecting dust in the corner of your bedroom. In my first year, I spent a great deal of time in one room instead of in lectures and making music on Fruity Loops Studio on my laptop helped me through a lot. Alternatively, I can recommend iKaossilator - Korg Synthesizers' £17 app which they have

made temporarily free for anyone who is struggling to pass the time trapped inside. Here at university, Art Society made a lovely post in Leeds Uni Tickets offering free art kits to anyone in self-isolation, expressing how hard it can be being confined to the house while struggling with mental health.

It is sad that big summer festivals and tours are being cancelled, and the music industry will continue to feel the effects of Covid-19 for the foreseeable future. But do what you can to help each other out, and hopefully, a self-isolation spent learning a new creative skill and listening to some good tunes won't feel too much like time wasted.

GEORGE COOKE

GIG REVIEWS

BEABA DOOBEE

Venue
First Direct

Being the support act for a band such as The 1975 is every up and coming artists dream. However, for the 19-year-old Filipino-British singer-songwriter Beabadoobee, this dream has become a reality, as she joins the Manchester band on their February UK tour. An artist described by Matty Healy as "the most exciting thing in rock music," Beabadoobee seemed to be the perfect act to support The 1975 as they looked to take the Leeds First Direct Arena by storm.

Beabadoobee kicked off their set with an almost grungy sound by opening with 'Are You Sure', the first track on her EP, Space Cadet. Throughout their 35-minute set Beabadoobee performed an array of different songs ranging from slower indie-rock ones to more upbeat pop-rock sounding songs. However, despite

playing to an almost full crowd, it was clear that the audience were not there to see Beabadoobee. The 1975 was unmistakably what the crowd had come for, resulting in not many people knowing Beabadoobee's songs. With the exception of when the audience lit up the arena with their phone torches during 'Disappear', the overall atmosphere for Beabadoobee's set was rather disappointing. However, this should not come as a surprise. Beabadoobee was performing as a support act, and thus it would be unfair to have expected her to gain the same enthusiastic reaction that she usually receives at her own shows.

By taking this into consideration it is hard to flaw Beabadoobee's set. It was clear that the production team had put a lot of work into this set, as both the levels and lighting

choreography were done to an extremely high standard. As well as this, Beabadoobee seemed confident and looked as if she was enjoying her time on stage. Despite the crowd not being the most enthusiastic, the fact that she still managed to get them to hold up lights during even one song is quite an achievement for a support act in any case. Beabadoobee finished her set off with the single 'She Plays Bass' before passing the stage over to the much-anticipated Manchester band. Overall, I believe Beabadoobee gave an incredibly professional performance and warmed up the stage nicely for The 1975.

SAM WINSTANLEY



Image Credit: Gondwanarecords

NOYA RAO

Venue
Brudenell

On Tuesday night, local Leeds quartet Noya Rao took to the Brudenell's Community Room to enchant with an evening of soultronic bliss.

Long Legged Creatures, a fellow rising talent on the Leeds scene, launched the night with an eclectic, spacey soundscape, taking us through an orbit of ominous electronica. The band introduced a special guest for their last couple of songs – 'a right little scallywag', Joshua Zero – for a finale of melodramatic spoken word, which steadily metamorphosed into a performative hysteria.

After an arresting if slightly unsettling start to the evening, it was time for Noya Rao to take to the stage and soothe the crowd with soulful rhythms. The band strode through some initial technical difficulties with a calm collectedness that set the tone for the rest of their assured performance, with vocalist Olivia Bhattacharjee playfully checking: 'Is this mic too hot, Trev? I mean, it's always hot, but...'

Noya Rao exude a captivating charm as they play to their hometown, expertly shifting

between their 2017 debut album Icaros and 2019 EP Owls, as well as bringing some unreleased tunes into the mix. The band are shrouded amid the shadows of the slowly-revolving stage lights as they play, with the established, ethereal nature of Olivia's vocals recalling those of Little Dragon's Yukimi Nagano.

They take languid transitions through fan-favourite 'I Feel' and the interlude-esque 'Dreaming Pt. 1' before playing a tune co-written by Beth of Long Legged Creatures. Olivia takes this moment to thank their support for starting the night and introduces the track as 'another new tune with another shit name' – and so begins 'Smooth Groove'.

Despite their misgivings over its title the song goes down as well as a treasured favourite with the crowd, and the band continue into the night with reverberating synths and angelic vocals, which rise together in an otherworldly crescendo like a melodic call to prayer. Their harmonious spell is prematurely broken by an accidental

tap of a particularly comic-sounding synth, received with laughter by both band and audience: 'love a synth fart', a member of the crowd proclaims. Noya Rao continue with their set unperturbed, moving into the allure of 'Owls' and foreboding bass of 'Golden Claw' as they approach the end of the evening.

They exit the stage briefly before returning for a two-song finale. 'It's quite exciting having an encore,' Olivia says, 'we don't usually have enough songs.' The searing synth of their most successful tune, 'Talk', announces itself to welcoming cheers, and content smiles flicker across the band's faces as some of the lyrics of final song 'Fly' are sung back to them by the crowd.

Noya Rao finish the night on a high, having effortlessly enthralled their audience with their sumptuous soultronica and affirmed themselves as one of the most exciting bands on the Leeds scene.

HOLLIE GRISS



Image Credit: Ella Jones

GEORGIA

Venue
Brudenell

Reaching the mid-point of her 2020 UK tour, Londoner and synth pop inspired Georgia, focused all eyes onto her futuristic stage set-up. Her pink hexagonally shaped drum kit formed the basis for her one-woman show. As the lights dimmed in the sold-out Brudenell venue, only faint fairy lights strung from the ceiling and a neon light - hexagonal again - encapsulated eyes towards the front. A deep telephone ringing noise spurred confusion amongst the audience, followed by many asking "hello?" A distant voice over proceeded, "have you seen this new craze? Some kind of dance."

Georgia steps out onto stage and initiates her drum-led set with 24 hours. This warm-up beat introduced the crowd into Georgia's long history of drumming. Strong beats and impressive rhythmic skill dominates the room, her light vocals topping off the 80s dance vibe. Never Let You Go kicked the crowd into action, the irresistible pulsing bass drum pushed a dance flow into the room. The backdrop

lights flickered and shimmered off the gold background with every hit.

Shifting effortlessly into Ray Guns, a reggae spirited number with symmetrical rhythmic and a slower, deeper vocal from Georgia. The mellow upbeat integrated a wave-like sway into the crowd. Demonstrating a shuffled setlist of her new album Seeking Thrills, Georgia takes us through her self-produced work in a build up to the hits.

Falling back into the euphonious sigh of Honey Dripping Sky, the repetition of Georgia's angelic tone, "for you, I'll bleed inside" formed an ambience of relaxation. This poured into an instrumental of impressive drumming, the dark red lights moulding her fast-paced percussion into one free movement. An extensive low bass tone, mimicking the suspense created prior to Georgia's entrance, charged the room. Again, a distant voiceover commenced, "I said do you like to dance? Does it make you feel good?" Then dropping swiftly into About Work the Dancefloor, her song

that received a nomination for NME's 'Best Song in the World' 2020.

Midway through her 80s-club synth track, she stepped out to dance amongst those in the front row, clearly enjoying the bounce of the music as much as her front-row fans. Shifting into Started Out - the more widely-recognised track within the crowd - a further singing along and arms flowing with the music continued.

Of course the set finished with a classic encore, 'you can't get rid of me yet' said Georgia driving into the clockwork of her drumsticks against the snare. Concluding with a cover of Kate Bush's Running up That Hill, she created a nostalgic close to her performance. Georgia sparked the local crowd back to life, before leaving them on a high of her recreated 80s dance beat.

ELLA JONES

MUSH

Venue
Brudenell

Mush definitely turned heads at their album launch gig at Brudenell last Saturday. 3D Routine, which debuted on Valentine's Day, holds a certain vitality that only imaginatively experimental sound can achieve. The intimate venue of Brudenell Social Club captures this sound perfectly, reconnecting the Leeds based group with their Yorkshire roots. All band members stood unashamed in coordinating suits and the constant dialogue with the crowd, portrayed Mush's genuine gratitude and awe at their expanding fanbase. With casual remarks from lead singer, Daniel Hyndman, "yeah, we just wrote this one this morning" you know the sound is as fresh as it gets. The atmosphere was, as is always the case in my experience of Brudenell, extremely invigorating and the main floor backing up to the bar was respectably full.

The sound of Mush has the feel of Omni meets Parquet Courts but also fully holds its own in the alternative scene. 'Revising my fee' gives an interesting social commentary on the financial stability of the younger generation ("always in debt, we're always in debt" is clearly a relatable lyric for all the students out there) but the iconic twanging guitar is what I feel gives this song true standing.

Also, undeniably worth a mention- the supports Yard Act and Roxy Girls. Yard Act wowed with the smooth integration of a spoken poem in new song Peanuts. I feel like few could make this transition without it being at least a tiny bit awkward, so they are worthy of a listen, especially if you're a fan of Shame or Fontaines DC. Closely following were Roxy Girls, Sunderland

based with the style of The Futureheads. They gave classic Northern charm and were left unfazed by technical difficulties, swiftly descending into self-deprecating banter when their hi-hat stand broke.

Mush tease their new album 3D Routine, "peel back the tunnel, dimensionally challenged 2D suckers. This is the next step!". They are a band that screams 'watch this space!' and their fresh sound is bound to captivate the imaginations of many an indie rocker.

MEGAN JOHNSON

UML'S SELF-ISOLATION SOUNDTRACK

The Union Music Library is a society based around sharing music. Though its physical base takes the form of a library on Level 2 of the Union, it's reach stretches much further, forming a community of like-minded people across the city.

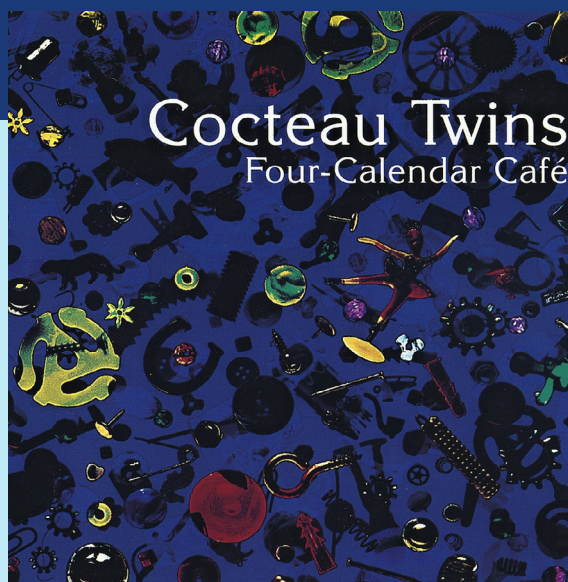
In response to the recent COVID-19 outbreak, we hit up Leeds' biggest music nerds to collate a list of calming albums to ease the minds of those self-isolating or simply in need of some support during this period.



KALI UCHIS - ISOLATION

Titular puns notwithstanding, Uchis' smooth and soulful debut flits from jazz to bossa nova to hip hop seamlessly. It is the perfect soundtrack for long days in a sun-streamed bedroom.

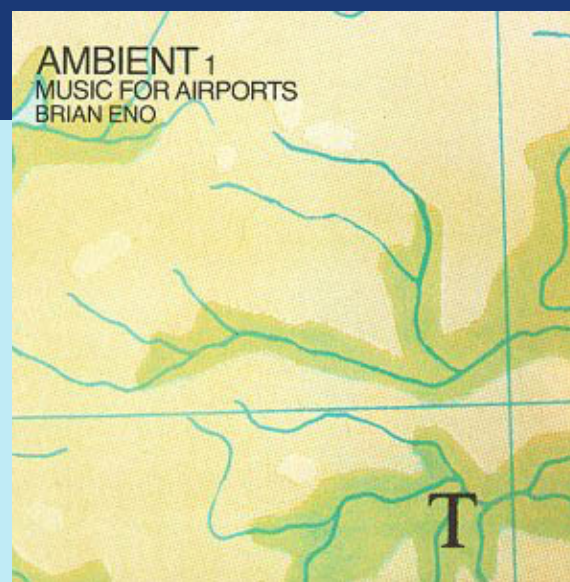
ALEX GIBBON



COCTEAU TWINS - FOUR-CALENDAR CAFE

Wonderfully spacey and meditative, as well as soothing vocals.

QUEENIE QURESHI-WALES



BRIAN ENO - AMBIENT 1/ MUSIC FOR AIRPORTS

Gentle synth, tender harmonies, and haunting piano softly weave together in this era-defining ambient record.

EUAN RIDLEY



TAYLOR DEUPREE - SHOALS

This album is almost beyond music, it's like it's breathing.

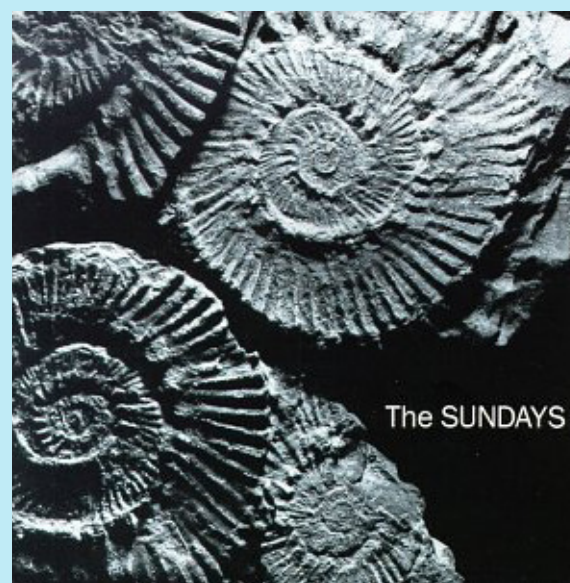
FRANK GODDARD



RAGE AGAINST THE MACHINE - SELF-TITLED

Music to help plan how to take down the government to.

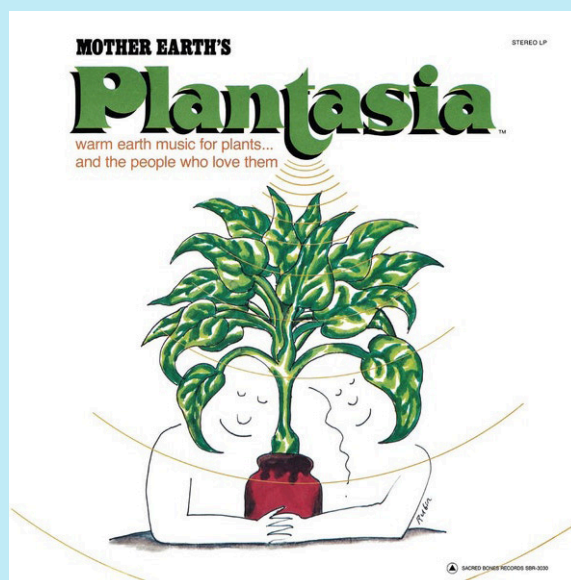
OWAIN JOHNSON



THE SUNDAYS - READING, WRITING AND ARITHMETIC

Soothing, sweet indie pop/ 90s alternative, with soft vocals for ultimate relaxation.

JESSA KIDNER



MORT GARSON • MOTHER EARTH'S PLANTASIA

A UML classic, this LP is a treat for all moods. Sometimes uplifting, sometimes melancholy, this collection of beautifully arranged songs can hold your hand through a trying and lonely time like this.

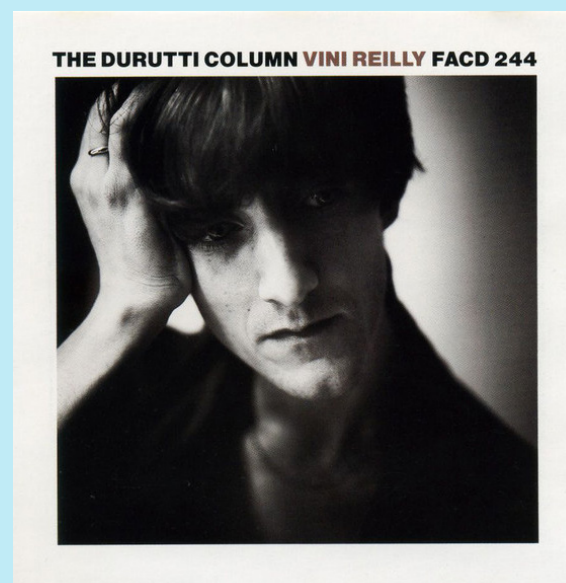
SAFI BUGEL



BJORK • POST

Perhaps the Icelandic visionary's most iconic work, Post is an album ripe for rediscovery time and time again. Lose yourself in whimsy and electronic experimentation as Bjork's ethereally angelic vocals trill and thrill through iconic tracks such as 'Hyper-Ballad' and 'Army of Me'.

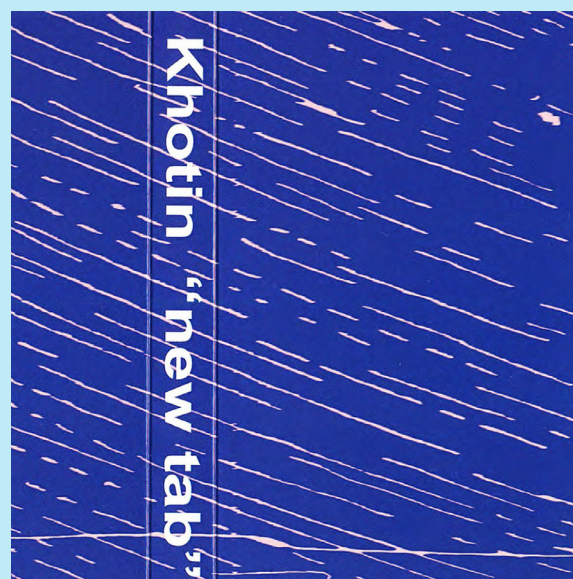
ALEX GIBBON



THE DURUTTI COLUMN • VINI REILLY

There's something about being stuck inside a Durutti Column guitar riff that makes you feel like you're inside a giant slinky made of wood, gently slinking down grassy steps in the sun.

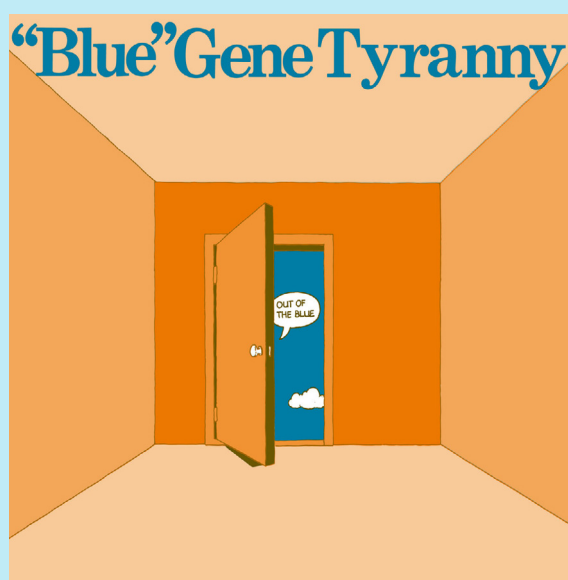
AMELIA CRIPPS



KHOTIN • NEW TAB

This makes me feel like I'm sitting by a pond, especially the Frog Fractions song. Good water sounds, and rainy.

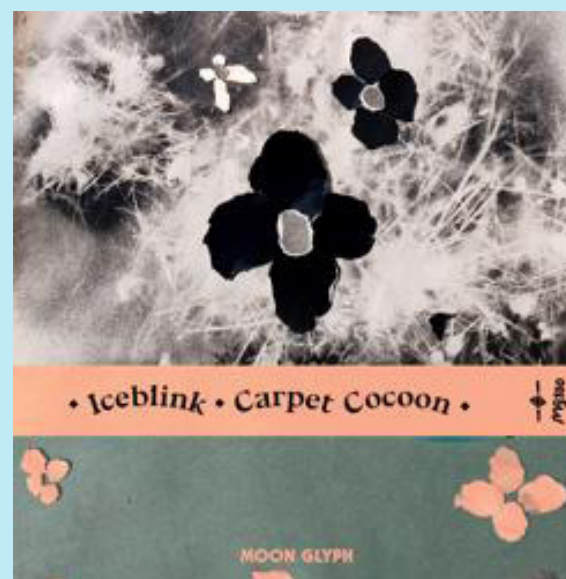
FREYA SMITH



BLUE GENE TYRANNY • OUT OF THE BLUE

The perfect album to get lost in, made up of 4 long tracks and avoiding any homogenous genre. 'The Next Time Might be Your Time' echoes positive vibes for the coming troubling times!

EMMA KHAN



ICEBLINK • CARPET COCOON

Favourite album recently, intimate feeling and incredibly cozy, loads of sax and delay. Feels like an incredibly well put together 'bedroom record'. Elements of ambient, drone, free jazz but in a controlled way that makes it not feel wild and free but enclosed in a way fitting of the name Carpet Cocoon.

THOMAS CARROLL

A MISSGUIDED GESTURE FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

Many fashion brands incorporate International Women's Day into their lines, and slogan t-shirts seem to be the preferred medium of communicating female solidarity. Stella McCartney's is emblazoned with "Female Rebellion", Net-a-Porter x Ninety Percent's reads "Incredible Women" and Bella Freud opted for "She Said".

Whether brands produce specialist IWD fashion, or just generally promote the event through their online media, most fashion companies align themselves somehow with this annual event. They'd be foolish not to. When it comes to supporting women's rights, the fashion industry has been there, done that, got the t-shirt.

The industry has been slammed from a variety of angles for these efforts. Some claim the profits donated to women's foundations are too slim, some highlight the inconsistency of this message when the industries high-power positions continue to be male-dominated. Regardless of my overall opinion on fashion's testimonies to IWD, one brand's tribute stuck out as particularly hypocritical and blatantly manipulative.

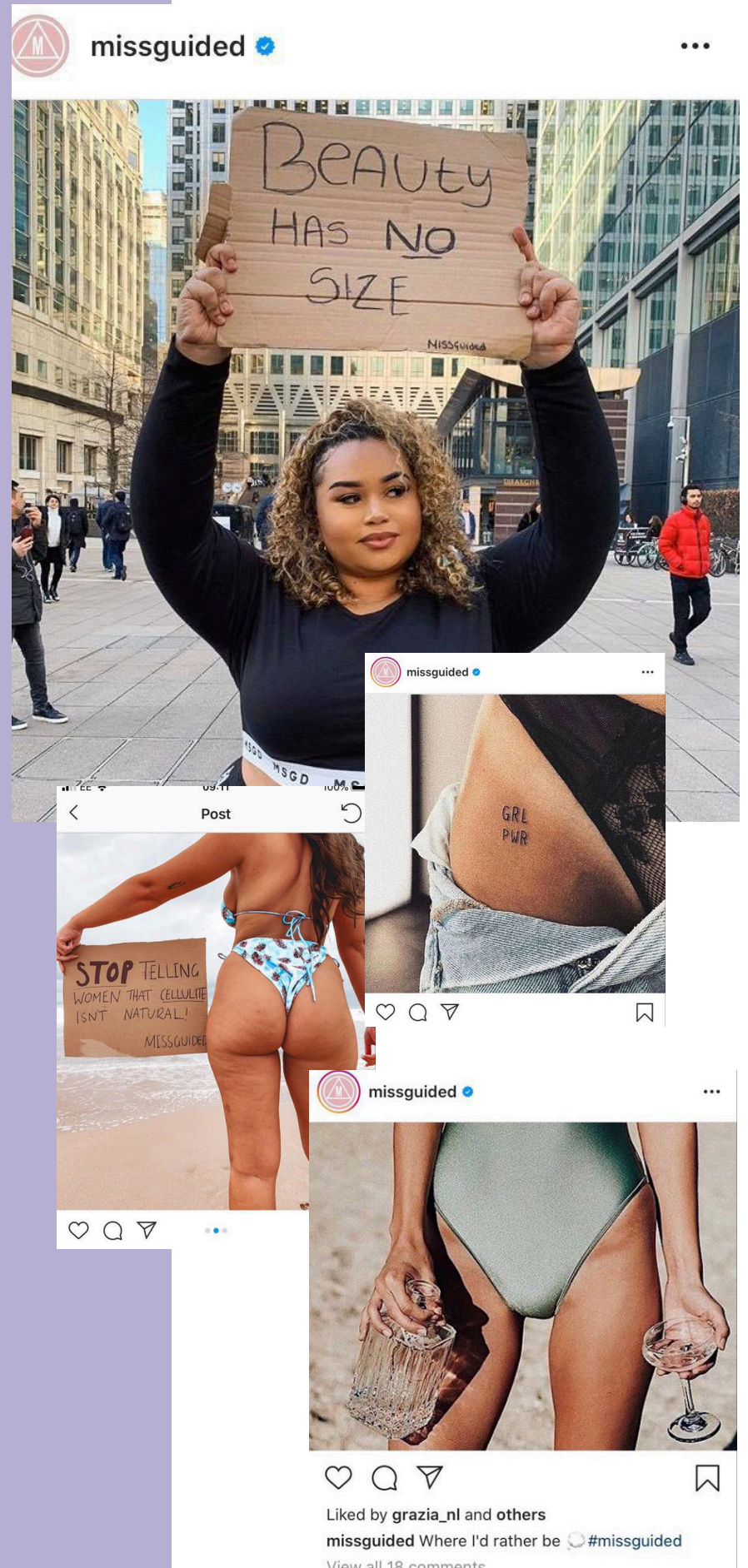
Missguided launched their "Babe with a Sign" campaign, teaming up with influencers and staff-members who posted images of themselves on Instagram holding empowering signs. This aimed to "celebrate women and everything we stand for". The posts themselves seemed a simple and effective attempt at conveying bite-size messages of self-acceptance, however, on closer inspection, their messages rang hollow.

The campaign caught my eye when one 'influencer' posted an image of her body alongside the sign "stop telling women that cellulite isn't natural". She makes an important point, and I clicked on the tagged Missguided account, wondering what other empowering, diverse representations of women their feed might offer. I scrolled and scrolled, but cellulite is celebrated nowhere, it is in fact completely evaded; despite being celebrated on IWD, every other day of the year, to Missguided, it does not exist.

The company provides themselves ample opportunity to show cellulite. Their account features plenty of up-close, scantily clad skin shots to show that their clothes can be worn by bodies possessing cellulite. These shots also present slim, toned figures in a volume that is unrepresentative of female bodies. It is not that Missguided's account does not feature other body shapes, but that the overwhelming message is that 'slim' is the optimum ideal. This is certainly a contrast to their repost of one smiling influencer and her sign "beauty has no size".

So in the words of the 'babes of Missguided', I ask the brand "stop telling women that cellulite isn't natural" and also start telling women that "beauty has no size". Whether it's on a sign or a t-shirt, if fashion brands cannot truly live up to the messages they communicate, their association with IWD should be decried as nothing more than a marketing ploy. Missguided were particularly foolish in so blatantly contradicting the values they tried to align themselves with, but they were surely not the only brand making false promises this International Women's Day.

SARAH MORTIMORE



STEP INTO SPRING



Credit: Russell and Bromley

Millie Cross picks out the best shoes for injecting colour and vibrancy into your wardrobe this spring.



Credit: Veja



Credit: Arket



Credit: Other Stories



Credit: Converse



Credit: Boden



Credit: Boden



Credit: Zara

THESE SHOES

EXTINCTION REBELLION: SHOWING SECOND-HAND CLOTHES ARE BEAUTIFUL

The Leeds Extinction Rebellion Fashion organisers Eliza and Grace sat down with ashion editor Iona Tompkins to discuss their recent shoot.

HIYA, TELL ME A LITTLE BIT ABOUT YOURSELVES AND INTRODUCE YOURSELVES?

Hi, my name's Eliza, I'm at University of Leeds in my second year studying Classics and French and I'm in a couple of societies. I enjoy XR as it's different to anything else I do and feels bigger and more important than my studies in some senses. I became a coordinator a few months ago after seeing a callout on Facebook, so I thought I'd give it a go.

I'm Grace and I graduated with an English Literature and Film degree from Leeds University last July, I'm currently working in Opposite Café which is really lovely. And I've been involved in XR since about November last year when it was really small everywhere, but especially in Leeds. In that sense it's been really nice to watch it grow. This is my first role as a co-ordinator, and I found out the same way Eliza did about the role.

WHAT INTERESTED YOU IN JOINING THE FASHION BRANCH OF XR SPECIFICALLY?

G: I've always been interested in charity shopping - I was brought up in charity shops. I've always found it amazing how you can walk into a charity shop and feel like you could find anything there. You don't go in looking for anything specific, but you come out with really beautiful clothes most of the time. You find such unique items in charity shops, and the whole sustainable aspect came after that for me, as I just grew up thinking it was completely normal to shop in charity shops. It was sort of an afterthought that I realised it was really good for the environment and to boycott the whole fashion industry.

E: I'm very similar in that charity shopping has always been an intrinsic part of my life, and I started volunteering when I was about fourteen in my local charity shop. I found what you could find at vintage sales, charity shopping or even clothes swapping much more exciting than what was on the high street. It just seems boring that you can get twenty or thirty of exactly the same item on the high street. So I think one of the huge draws for me is how unique the pieces you find are. With all the environmental disasters that have occurred recently, it's nice to do something creative with XR related to fashion, whilst showing your support for the environment.

WHAT HAVE YOU GUYS DONE SO FAR AS COORDINATORS AND WHAT ARE YOUR UPCOMING PROJECTS?

G: We've had a lot of meetings, still working to get things off the ground with XR fashion in Leeds. In London there's a lot going on at the moment, such as their big action to 'End Fashion Week'. I'd like to clarify that we don't want to end fashion week, we just want to make it much more sustainable. When we think about what actually goes into fashion week there's just so much waste - all the water, fabric, people and planes make a huge impact. This photo shoot we're doing right now is one of our first actions, and we've got a clothes swap coming up on Sunday at Wharf Chambers with XR Leeds and also non-binary Leeds. They're holding a discussion with trans and non-binary people to discuss any climate issues they might have.

E: We're working towards a bigger fashion show in the summer which would be held in June, so we're in discussion with the XR media group and some sustainable Leeds based brands. We've got the vision for it, it's just about getting them on board and turning that vision into a reality.

YOU'VE BRIEFLY TOUCHED ON THE SHOOT TODAY ALREADY BUT I'M CURIOUS AS TO WHAT INSPIRED THIS PARTICULAR ACTION?

G: The wider XR fashion group did a shoot similar to this with people wearing their own second-hand clothes and holding a sign explaining why they're boycotting the fashion industry. I saw it and thought that it was something really simple we could also do to encourage people to boycott fast fashion in Leeds and get more members in Leeds for our working group. People just love dressing up and showing off their second-hand finds!

E: We've discussed how a lot of people think second hand shopping and XR in general has a very particular aesthetic. We wanted to show that that's not the case, as there's such a range of clothes in charity shops it's so easy to create your own style and tailor it to your own needs. We want to shake off this idea of there only being one aesthetic.

G: I think one of our aims with this is to make it look somewhat like high fashion. We want the reputation of using second-hand fabrics and repairing your clothes to be much more high-end than it is now.

E: Thrift shopping in its very nature can be seen as almost couture, all about finding one of a kind garments that no one else has.



Credit: XR Fashion Leeds



AS A FASHION EDITOR, I SPEND A LOT OF TIME WRITING AND LEARNING ABOUT SUSTAINABLE BRANDS. SO, I'M WONDERING WHY THE DECISION TO COMPLETELY BOYCOTT NEW FASHION, RATHER THAN ENCOURAGING PEOPLE TO SWITCH TO MORE SUSTAINABLE BRANDS AND LESS FAST FASHION?

G: My issue with sustainable brands is that it's such a wide encompassing term, there is a tendency to greenwash. An example would be using paper packaging instead of plastic, but still using materials in the clothing itself which are harmful to the environment. A lot of brands aren't as sustainable as they say, so personally I think we need to shake up the whole fashion industry and start from scratch. If we stop buying huge amounts of new clothes, we can reset and start from there. I also think we just have enough clothes and there is no need to be buying and making loads of new clothes constantly.

E: Going back to greenwashing, I think that's a huge issue. H&M has a 'conscious' collection, which advertises itself as environmentally friendly and organic, but H&M still burns nineteen tonnes of clothing every year, which is the equivalent of 50,000 pairs of jeans. Many other companies are also guilty of acts like this. Whilst it's true they are taking steps and this does have a positive effect on the average fast fashion consumer, people should be aware that there is a better alternative that doesn't waste millions of tonnes of clothing each year. There's some statistics which show that we buy 300% more clothing each year now than we did thirty years ago, which I think says a lot about our current perceptions of what we need, which is to go back to style rather than trends.

G: We love fashion, we don't want to get rid of it we just want to change it. There's no fashion on a dead planet.



"RATHER THAN JUST DOING MORE NEWS, GIVE PEOPLE BETTER NEWS"

David Sillito is the current Arts and Media Correspondent for the BBC.

Arts and Culture Editor Alex Gibbon sat down with the University of Leeds alumnus to talk about the ever-changing media landscape and top tips for students who are thinking of getting into the journalism industry.

When I first meet David Sillito, BBC News' Arts and Media Correspondent, he appears to be the prime example of a journalist on-the-go. Earlier in the day, broadcasting stalwart Nicholas Parsons passed away and, hunched over a laptop while sat on miscellaneous stairway in Clothworkers central, Sillito is rapidly finishing an edit of the story to be broadcast on the 6 o'clock news in a couple of hours time. He generously gives me a few minutes to ask him about returning to Leeds as an alumnus prior to his talk for Media Futures.

"The thing that has brought me back here today is a thing that happened here at Leeds 32 years ago." Sillito recounts an anecdote about a trip to The Fenton with his History tutor, Phil Taylor, who revealed that he was leaving the department to set up the Institute of Communications, now the School of Media and Communications which Sillito is about to address. "He said the future is going to be teaching people about the media, understanding it theoretically and practically. He said that's where jobs will be and he said that's going to be the future. I told him he was mad but he said he was going to do it anyway. And I have come back here and I am blown away!

A member of staff interjects, informing us that there is now a lecture theatre (Philip Taylor Cinema LT) in the enlightened tutor's namesake. Sillito beams, "Oh, he would have loved that; he would have been so chuffed!"

Clearly, Taylor's words planted a seed in Sillito's mind as, once he graduated, he landed a job on a local news desk and gradually worked his way up from there in a career spanning more than 30 years with around 11,000 news items to his credit. With no signs of slowing down, there must be

something keeping him in the media industry.

"I have no idea what each day will bring," he enthuses, "you can end up in a different country within an hour. And every day you are making something and you cannot underestimate how important it is to have an end product each day."

Nevertheless, Sillito cannot deny how much the media landscape has changed during his career. "[Digitisation of the media] has been happening slowly," he explains, "what has really changed is that there is now a deluge, an utter deluge, of news. It is so easy to go online, say something, and make news. And essentially what the world has got is far too much information."

For any budding student journalist this reality is unsettling. How do you make your voice heard in a press that is drowning in layman's opinions? Amid the torrent of click bait and fake news, where anyone can publish anything on the internet and call it a story, why bother refining your writing or broadcasting skills just to have them lost at sea among the flotsam and jetsam?

"What we need is intelligence, we need guides, we need people telling us what's important, what's really happening in the world. I think that's the next step forwards," predicts Sillito. "Rather than just doing more news, give people better news that really does explain what is going on; that is the big challenge of the future."

This aside, it is almost always the first rung of the media ladder that hopeful graduates fail to grasp. With the field being so London-centric, nepotistic and ridden with financial

barriers, finding a way into one of the country's most competitive industries is certainly not getting any easier. Yet, Sillito is optimistic about the journalism's future in terms of accessibility. "I got my foot in the door at a local radio station," he recalls, "they are still there, they are still fantastic groundings. Channel 4 coming to Leeds is absolutely amazing! I think things are beginning to change."

However, Sillito also notes that traditional forms of media are not the only option. "The other thing is that everyone always thinks that the media is ITV, Channel 4, Sky and the BBC. Actually, the media is massive. The number of companies producing videos, dealing directly with the public, missing out the middle man of what you might call the media, is growing. I think there are so many more opportunities out there but I think it requires a lot of research and a bit of luck."

Seemingly, the latter is often the most elusive element to obtain but also arguably the most crucial. So, how much of Sillito's 30-year career does he owe to good fortune? "I've had a bit of luck," he admits, "I arrived on the right day when they needed someone for two weeks and I managed to prove myself. Some people fell by the wayside for no good reason so don't be discouraged. It's difficult to get your first foot in the door but after that, if you've got the talents, you'll survive."

ALEX GIBBON

Image Credit: @DavidSillitoBBC, Twitter

'BEAUTIFULLY STAGED AND EMOTIONALLY CHARGED': THEATRE GROUP'S 'TWO'

First impressions can make or break any production, especially an amateur one. Often a fantastic show can be somewhat undermined by a weak first impression and conversely, shows with lacklustre openings are often saved by strong first impressions.

Knowledge of this fact was clearly reflected in the staging of Theatre Group's production of Jim Cartwright's one act play as the atmosphere of a northern pub was perfectly encapsulated in Pyramid's spacious theatre. This effect was achieved by a deconstruction of the fourth wall as raked seating gave way to pub tables on which the audience became simultaneously spectators and part of the show's scenery. By the time everyone had taken their seats and the lights began to dim, the audience had unwillingly helped the production team set a strong atmosphere without the need for a single actor.

As Dec Kelly and Chloe Robinson took centre stage as the play's main characters (a Landlord and Landlady respectively) and hit their stride towards the end of the show as the cracks in their marriage were laid bare. It was in these moments of Dec's faltering charismatic yet distant facade as the Landlord and Chloe's heart-wrenching portrayal of a woman so singularly torn apart by tragedy that the audience was moved to the verge of tears by two incredibly emotive performances.



The original production of *Two* was originally performed with only two actors, playing every role between them. In this format the more disparate elements of the play's separate narratives are redeemed by the familiarity of the faces linking the characters together and making the play's dramatic conclusion feel more thematically earned.

However this production used a bigger cast and as a result even though the cast and crew had done a wonderful job at building the play effectively towards its conclusion, I couldn't help but feel they were fighting an uphill battle against the text itself.

Despite this, the show's casting remained superb. Ollie Mackenzie made for a particularly amusing and captivating unfaithful womaniser who, along with Amy Kaye and Charlie Crozier, did a great job of cutting through the play's tension and bringing comedic relief. The pairing of Luke Holland and Jenny Wilkinson was also strong, with both performers bringing great talent and care to the portrayal of an abusive relationship, made particularly harrowing by the contrast of Luke's calm yet aggressive body language with Jenny's tense and submissive own acting.

Two's biggest triumph was in the way it handled tone. From strong direction to energetic and engaging performances from the cast, it pushed and pulled the audience between laughter and tears effortlessly. Ollie's scene as a little boy handled this tone change most effectively when the audience's chuckling at seeing a fully grown actor play a small child got cut short by beautifully nuanced acting from Chloe who managed to convey an entire history of maternal pain and loss in one look. Whether we were laughing or crying, we were all on the edge of our seats.

REVIEW

MATTHEW JEFFERY



HBO'S THE LAST OF US: THE LAST CHANCE FOR A GOOD VIDEO GAME ADAPTATION?

It's almost a given that video-game films struggle with both audiences and critics. Yet with the announcement that HBO are adapting the immensely popular *The Last of Us* into a show, there is now hope that this trend will be well and truly broken. The game has endured great success following its original release on Playstation 3 in June 2013, and a subsequent re-release for Playstation 4 in July 2014. It won numerous 'Game of the Year' awards, and still ranks among the 50 best-selling games of all time. With its acclaimed narrative, characters and world-building, it stands the best chance of having a successful adaptation.

In the past, video-game adaptations have severely struggled to the point where a serious stigma existed whenever one was announced. Part of the stigma stemmed from the belief that fan admiration for the games was being exploited for money. For example, among early adaptations were the likes of *Mortal Kombat* (1995), stemming from a game that didn't actually have any real narrative. Films such as *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* (2001) and Paul W.S. Anderson's *Resident Evil* franchise have achieved something of a cult following, but not necessarily for the right reasons.

However, games that have transitioned onto the big screen of late have begun to have more success. *Pokémon Detective Pikachu* (2019) and *Sonic the Hedgehog* (2020), while still not exactly adored, have received more positive responses. You could also

argue that Netflix's *The Witcher* has become the first successful example, but to nit-pick it's more an adaptation of the novels. However, I will concede that the success of the game did have some role in the property's popularity.

From what's already been announced of HBO's *The Last of Us*, the signs point towards success. HBO's *Chernobyl* creator Craig Mazin is taking a lead on the show, and he'll be working with the game's original writer and director Neil Druckmann. To further extend its connection to the game, composer Gustavo Santaolalla is also on board. These ties indicate attempts to remain loyal to the aspects of the game that live long in the memory of fans. Not paying respect to source material is where past adaptations, such as 2005's *Doom*, have fallen down.

The game naturally builds itself up for success. The narrative is relatively simple: in a future devastated by a virus that turns the infected into fungus-based zombies, smuggler Joel and young girl Ellie must travel across what's left of the United States. Multiple genres are encompassed such as horror, survival, action and even adventure, while tackling themes of family, parenthood and loss. But its greatest strength lies in its characters; they are two of the greatest game protagonists ever created. Joel is the perfect leading character for any storytelling platform, he's a gruff, flawed but sympathetic and vulnerable character put

in some of the toughest and nightmarish scenarios imaginable. Ellie is his perfect foil, and the audience's perfect outlet into their morally grey and unforgiving world. These characters work in perfect harmony with the narrative, giving the scenes their weight which in return builds their journey. If anything, the characters are on a level that whoever takes up their roles will have a tough job of matching the performances of Ashley Johnson and the legendary Troy Baker. Anyone who's played the game will tell you the difficulty of emotionally recovering from just the opening segment, both shocking and heartbreaking in equal measure. Then there's the game's ending, which holds a special place in gaming history and fans' memories for its immense emotional impact.

Ultimately, all of these factors line *The Last of Us* up to not only be a satisfying and rare video-game adaptation, but a wonderful show in its own right. Indeed, perhaps an early indicator of its prospects is the reaction of fans; whilst a lot of the time the announcement of a video game getting a film or series is greeted with skepticism, this time around the atmosphere is ranging from cautiously optimistic to excited. It's a promising opportunity for video-games.

MATTHEW MOOREY

GEISHA: A COMPELLING START TO NORTHERN BALLET'S NEW SEASON

Geisha (also known as geiko or geigi) means "arts person". They arose in mid-eighteenth-century Japan, trained to entertain important men through dance, music and singing. The artistic nature of the geisha makes them a prime subject for a ballet, and Kenneth Tindall has done a brilliant job of exploring Japan's cultural history through movement, music and costume.

The production follows the journey of Aiko, a trainee geisha who develops a sisterly bond with experienced geisha Okichi. The girl's playful, sisterly chemistry is well communicated, and Aiko's admiration for her trainer really comes through as she keeps a watchful eye on Aiko throughout their duets in Act I. Their duet which closes scene two is particularly memorable; a scene of purity and innocence, as intricate choreography is enhanced by the blue-toned costumes and lighting.

After the US Navy arrives (supposedly a nod to the Perry Expedition as the story is set in the 1850s) the geishas are assigned to the US Consul-General and his assistant as a goodwill gesture. This scene was wonderfully enacted. The officer's dance was tightly performed, their military-style movements sharp like soldier toys, and full of bounce and vigour. While Okichi quickly becomes close with her US officer, Aiko is unable to endear the Consul-General she is assigned to. Frustrated and ashamed, she flees the geisha house and ends her life.

Act II opens into the darkness of the spirit world, and follows Aiko, now a ghostly character as she comes to terms with the fact she is dead. In this transition from the exquisiteness of the Geisha House in Act I, to the darkness and turmoil of the spirit world in Act II, Tindall has created a production of brilliantly juxtaposing moods. However, this transition was not awkward or jarring, and did not make the ballet one of two halves. Despite being transformed into a ghostly spirit, Aiko's character remains familiar, and although Act II takes on a darker mood, it does not lose the beauty and brilliance of the first half. Light and lanterns became a major feature in this act, and the swirling choreography of the spirits of the dead was eerie and stirring.

Alexandra Harwood's composition provides a rhythmic melody for the performance. Japanese drumming and flute playing interlace the score, providing a driving, percussive soundtrack which carries the choreography and conveys the narrative well. In one instance, the movement and music really come together as three dancers enact a taiko drumming performance.

Christopher Oram's costumes were fairly well-executed. The costumes of the dead were simple and consistent, which enhanced the beauty of the use of lanterns. The geisha girl's dresses were opulent, however, the numerous slits in the skirts was problematic for me. From the outset, the movement of these skirts detracted from the intricacy of the geisha choreography and perhaps something with a cleaner line would have been better suited, to create a more uniform aesthetic across the stage.

Upon the entrance of the US navy half way through Act I, I could not help but watch the performance with a post-colonial tinge. The story does not set out to make a typical postcolonial political statement - after all, Okichi falls in love with the US officer she is assigned to, and the audience feels pain with her when he is killed. However, given the state of contemporary global affairs, the production subtly left me thinking about the implications of the West's long-running history of domination.

Northern Ballet are renowned for their unique storytelling. With their pieces focused around narratives as opposed to following the rigidity of classical productions, they always offer something entirely new. This refreshing approach makes their performances appealing to not only existing dance fans, but also (more importantly in an age of waning arts engagement) to non-ballet-goers who might typically be put off by the classic 'girls in pink tutus' expectation.

Geisha is far from this stereotype, and the audience are transported convincingly to 1850s Japan. My biggest pre-concern was that the ballet could be at risk of conveying an essentialised, caricaturist depiction of Japanese culture. Though, created with the help of historical consultant Lesley Downer, the production felt sensitive and well-informed, and entirely disproved by pretensions that it might cartoonise its characters.

SARAH MORTIMORE



DISQUALIFIED: SHERRY PIE REMOVED FROM DRAG RACE SEASON 12



Credit: Newsweek

Season 12 of the US reality TV show *RuPaul's Drag Race* only kicked off a week ago, but has already been rife with controversy due to New York City based drag queen Sherry Pie (Joey Gugliemelli), who has been accused of catfishing and predatory behavior by five men.

The victims, all aspiring young actors, were all duped by Gugliemelli, who posed as a female casting director in order to convince them to send videos of themselves, often in compromising or embarrassing situations, under the guise of auditioning for parts which never materialized. The first to speak out about his experience, Ben Shimkus, posted in a Facebook status that later went viral how Gugliemelli had a clear history of recommending people to their female alias 'Allison Mossey'. Others had vastly similar experiences, with one victim going so far as to masturbate on camera for 'Mossey' in the hopes of gaining a part in a prestigious Broadway production. After calls for their disqualification from the competition, Gugliemelli posted what was meant to be a form of apology on their personal Facebook:

'This is Joey, I want to start by saying how sorry I am that I caused such trauma and pain and how horribly embarrassed and disgusted I am with myself. I know that the pain and hurt that I have caused will never go away and I know that what I did was wrong and truly cruel. Until being on *RuPaul's Drag Race*, I never really understood how much my mental health and taking care of

things meant. I learned on that show how important "loving yourself" is and I don't think I have ever loved myself. I have been seeking help and receiving treatment since coming back to NYC. I truly apologize to everyone I have hurt with my actions. I also want to say how sorry I am to my sisters of season 12 and honestly the whole network and production company. All I can do is change the behavior and that starts with me and doing that work.'

Their presumption that they will be allowed the chance to 'change the behavior' comes too late. We should not, and cannot, allow sexual abusers a second chance, especially in an industry such as drag, where the vulnerability of the LGBTQ+ community is at times fragile. With the increasing power that drag queens are gaining in the success of *RuPaul's Drag Race*, it also means that predators have a platform from which to take advantage of fans, and even their peers. The Sherry Pie situation highlights how the #MeToo movement spans more than gender or sexuality. In the wake of the guilty verdict in the Harvey Weinstein trial, it's time we stand up to those who attempt to use their power over others.

There were some concerns that *Drag Race* producers at VH1 would merely ignore the controversy. However, with accusations as extreme as they are it would have been an unwise step, with previous winners Bob the Drag Queen and Aquaria voicing their disgust at the situation on Twitter. Merely blaming your lack of self-love is not, and never will be, justification for abusing others. It is clear that Gugliemelli

is relying on this crutch in an attempt to make a comeback from a situation that in 2020 will almost certainly see them 'cancelled'. VH1 made the decision Friday night to announce Gugliemelli's disqualification, saying:

"In light of recent developments and Sherry Pie's statement, Sherry Pie has been disqualified from *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Out of respect for the hard work of the other queens, VH1 will air the season as planned."

Gugliemelli is only the second *Drag Race* contestant ever to be disqualified from the competition, after Season 4 contestant Willam Belli who was disqualified after receiving visits from their husband during filming (despite contestants being banned from outside contact). With their disqualification coming after the season had already been filmed, Sherry Pie will continue to feature in the season. Gugliemelli will not appear in the still-to-be-taped finale and reunion, regardless of their overall placement in the competition. The decision by *RuPaul's Drag Race* to disqualify a contestant before the show has fully begun was clearly difficult. This was, however, undeniably the right choice, and a show of support for victims of abusers of power everywhere.

LIZZIE WRIGHT

FREEDOM: RELEASE DISSIDENT DIRECTOR MOHAMMAD RASOULOF



Image: Hollywood Reporter

Mohammad Rasoulof, director of the recent film *There Is No Evil*, who was recently incarcerated in Iran, has gained international attention from many filmmakers and organisations due to his Iranian jail sentence. Institutions such as European Film Academy (EFA), the Deutsche Filmakademie, Accademia del cinema Italiano-Premi David di Donatello, the Cannes Film Festival, the International Film Festival Rotterdam (IFFR) and many others have all issued statements expressing their deepest concerns.

Rasoulof was recently imprisoned for a one-year sentence according to his lawyer for allegedly “attacking the security of the state” following the “propaganda” content in *There Is No Evil*. The sentence also demanded he stop making films for two years. However, it is time for more filmmakers and directors to stand up against the Iranian government’s blatant censorship and punishment of dissident art.

Rasoulof was unable to attend the February Berlin International Film Festival ceremony to collect his prize for *There Is No Evil*, a film connecting four stories about involvement in the death penalty in Iran. Executive producer Kaveh Farnam claims that the wave of political executions in 1988 was what ultimately inspired the film. Rasoulof’s own experience of a suppression of freedom of expression has also been noted in the film’s message of freedom and humanity under despotic regimes.

Indeed, *There Is No Evil* is openly critical of the Iranian

justice system and its use of the death penalty. Iran has been described by international human rights scholar Javaid Rehman in his 2018 UN General Assembly address as having “one of the highest death penalty rates in the world”. According to Amnesty International, it is still behind China as the world’s leading state executioner and leads the way in terms of the execution of minors. Homosexuality is still considered as an offence punishable by death in Iran.

The stakes were extremely high for Mohammad Rasoulof and crew, and all involved knew the risk that they were taking in defying the authoritarian regime. The film was made under complete secrecy and producer Farzad Pak thanked “the amazing cast and crew who put their lives in danger to be on this film”. The creative ways in which Rasoulof clandestinely defied the regime are astounding, with Rasoulof giving direction to scenes shot in an airport through an assistant, not having his name appear on any official documentation and shooting many scenes in remote regions of Iran.

However, in a recent statement, Rasoulof wanted the outcry to not only affect successful directors such as himself and Panahi but also to extend to the younger independent filmmaking generation who have not got the same resources to circumvent Iran’s intrusive activities. Farnam claims that many independent filmmakers have even turned to work on the Iranian government’s own film projects due to the lack of funds at their disposal. The

resourcing gap is evident: the Iranian government have the helicopters and unlimited logistical and financial systems to shut down a whole street, as opposed to independent filmmakers where this is purely “impossible”.

This is not the first time that Iran has used its authoritarian powers to ban film directors from creating dissident films. In November 2019, action from over 200 Iranian film industry members came when Kianoush Ayari’s film *The Paternal House* was banned a week after its opening weekend in Iran. Well-known Iranian director Jafar Panahi back in 2011 was also convicted of making “propaganda films” and sentenced to 20 years film-free.

Rasoulof and other Iranian directors continue to make films under increasingly unfair sanctions. In his powerful Berlinale Skype speech broadcasted to the world from his daughter’s phone, he highlights that everyone “can actually say no, and that’s their strength.” It is imperative not to forget about the crucial films of Rasoulof and others which lobby unfair regimes across the world. We must join the outspoken film institutions in support of these oppressed directors who rightfully express their freedom of expression through art.

OWEN FROST

MEET THE INFLUENCERS IN OUR MIDST

Blogs & Lifestyle writer Ella Jones sat down with Lydia Violeta and Megan Short. You might not know them but they are both student influencers on Youtube with thousands of followers.

We discussed the realities of being a student in Leeds whilst also being a Youtuber. Is University life through the filter of Instagram and Youtube the real deal?

DOES YOUR SCHEDULE AS A YOUTUBER CLASH WITH UNI LIFE AND SOCIALISING?

Not really as for me, as a studytuber, uni and YouTube are very much intertwined. A lot of my videos are me filming uni life, so I just get on with life like I normally would, but then film it too. It can sometimes be awkward trying to subtly film in public or in lectures. The only thing I have to balance is editing, because I have to take out time to do it, though it depends on the video on how long it takes to edit.

WHAT ABOUT SOCIALISING, DO YOU FIND THAT SOMETIMES PEOPLE WILL ASK IF YOU WANT TO GO OUT, BUT YOU HAVE THINGS TO DO, A SCHEDULE TO WORK TO?

I'm not very well disciplined in that sense. I will normally go out instead of doing what I need to do. I don't find that it really clashes that much - of course it does take a lot of time, but I am managing it. If I know that I need to edit something, I will edit it as soon as possible to get it out the way.

DO YOU THINK YOU ACCURATELY SHOW WHAT LIFE AS A STUDENT IN LEEDS IS LIKE?

Yes, it's accurately showing what it's like from my personal experience, but at the end of the day everyone's is different. I know some people go out more than I do. Every course is different as well, I think contact hours make a massive difference to your experience. My course isn't that contact hour heavy compared to others. I can't show what it's like for a student studying Maths or English, but I can somewhat accurately show what it's like if you were studying Business Management. As well as what it is like to study at the uni, I show the campus, library and living here - only as far as my experience goes myself.

DO YOU FEEL LIKE SHARING YOUR LIFE ONLINE COMES WITH CONCERNS AROUND PRIVACY AND PERSONAL SAFETY, WHAT KIND OF THINGS DO YOU TRY TO DO TO STOP ANYTHING HAPPENING?

I do have to be careful, for example I haven't shared what 1st year accommodation I'm at. Yes, I'm at Uni of Leeds, and that does narrow it down a bit, but sharing my accommodation would be irresponsible. A lot of viewers ask me about accommodation and I'm happy to reply to people individually, if they DM me. I don't mind replying to people then, but I wouldn't state it to 1000s of people on the internet. Apart from that, I just sort of have to live my life to be honest.



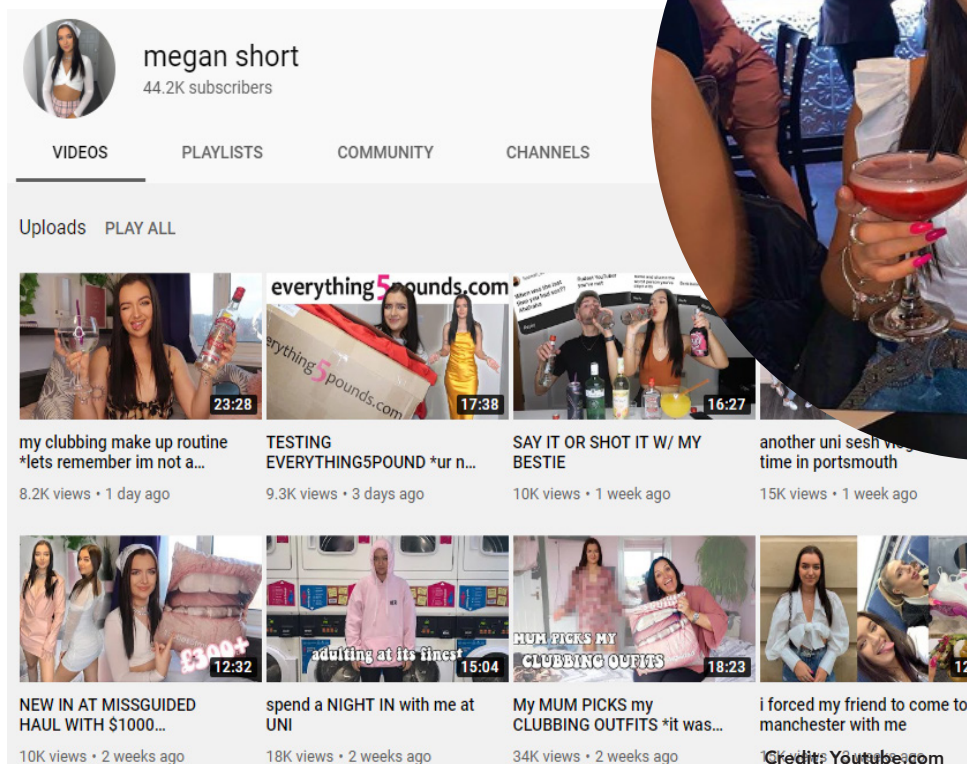
DO YOU EVER EDIT OUT CONTENT THAT MIGHT BE PERCEIVED AS BORING, BUT WOULD BE ACCURATE OF WHAT STUDENT LIFE IS LIKE?

I feel like I do put most things in, because obviously that's kind of my content. People like that its accurate and authentic, but I do trim some bits out. I try to incorporate showing my social life somewhat but it's hard to find the line, I am a studytuber, so people are here for certain content, they are not here for a sesh vlog. I'm sure people would probably still enjoy that. Also, this is my job and business, so I have to keep it PG friendly, not for my audience, but for working with brands. I work with a lot of education-based brands, and they are looking for more academic content rather than the social side of uni.

DOES YOUTUBE IMPACT YOUR UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE? E.G. MAKING FRIENDS, VLOGGING

Yes, it made the experience different for me in Freshers, because so many people that I met, to me were complete strangers and then later I found that they knew exactly who I was. Obviously, I introduce myself as a person, I won't go up to people and say, "Hi I'm a YouTuber nice to meet you". So, for some people I didn't tell them until it came up in conversation. Now it's getting to that point in the year where lots of people know. Some people on my course and in my accommodation definitely know. There's been cases in lectures where we have done a Kahoot on the board and people will put things up there about me as a joke e.g. my channel name or something about me. Also trying to go about your day and subtly filming it is a bit weird and it definitely does alter the uni experience. It's going to be on your mind all the time, so if I'm in a lecture, I have to get a clip of the lecture, no one else is sitting there thinking that.

MEGAN



Images: Pinterest.com

DO YOU FEEL LIKE SHARING YOUR LIFE ONLINE COMES WITH CONCERNS AROUND PRIVACY AND PERSONAL SAFETY, WHAT KIND OF THINGS DO YOU TRY TO DO TO STOP ANYTHING HAPPENING?

I'm not that big on YouTube, so I'm not super concerned yet. Once I had a weird thing in Mission where someone asked my flatmates where we lived, but we obviously didn't say. I've never said which accommodation I live in, plus I don't think anyone would ever do anything. Next year, even my housemates might have to be careful, e.g. posting the outside of our house on their stories. I've had people going through my social media, finding my friends and messaging them. It's easily done. People know what uni I go to, so I'm not too fussed about filming on campus.

DOES YOUR SCHEDULE AS A YOUTUBER CLASH WITH UNI LIFE AND SOCIALISING?

I feel it doesn't, obviously it's not a set shift job, so it's ideal because if I have something on in the morning and I'm doing something in the night, I can fit it in wherever I want. Like tonight I'm going out, but I was thinking I might not be able to because I have a video due tomorrow, but that is my bad planning. I can do it whenever I want, because I'm working for myself at home.

WHAT ABOUT SOCIALISING, DO YOU FIND THAT SOMETIMES PEOPLE WILL ASK IF YOU WANT TO GO OUT, BUT YOU HAVE THINGS TO DO, SCHEDULE TO WORK TO?

I've never not been to something because I have work to do. I'm the kind of person that I will happily stay up late or get up earlier to be able to get it all done. I don't post that much, maybe twice a week so I never find that I'm running out of time and can't do it.

DO YOU EVER EDIT OUT CONTENT THAT MIGHT BE PERCEIVED AS BORING, BUT WOULD BE ACCURATE OF WHAT STUDENT LIFE IS LIKE?

I think my uni vlogs are boring, I've filmed time lapses before of me doing work, but I won't put them in my video because I'm like there's no point, it's just watching me type away. I don't really, at first I thought there's no way people want to watch this. It's just a normal life, I'm going to uni, I'm going home, I'm eating my dinner, and then everyone loved them. Even when I'm editing them thinking 'why you would want to watch this?' I think it's boring, but other people don't so I always just leave everything in now.

DOES YOUTUBE IMPACT YOUR UNIVERSITY EXPERIENCE? E.G. MAKING FRIENDS, VLOGGING

I thought it might, but all my friends lowkey love it, they are like "ohh she's vlogging today". If I forget to vlog, all my friends prompt me saying 'you haven't vlogged in an hour' and I'm like 'oh yeah let me get my camera out.' I was scared to begin with especially in my room, of people maybe being able to hear me film. Everyone's been really lovely about it and it hasn't really impacted it, it's just added to it. It was definitely an ice breaker in Fresher's week, filming, making it fun and bringing people together more. I've not really had any bad experiences - probably because my channel isn't that big. I think... or at least I hope no one has ever thought badly of it, if they have, I don't know about it.

DO YOU THINK YOU ACCURATELY SHOW WHAT LIFE AS A STUDENT IN LEEDS IS LIKE?

Yes, I think my videos are accurate to student life in Leeds. I've always been honest, for example I've talked about how in the beginning how lonely it was and have showed the ups and downs. I did a whole Q&A at the end of the first term on the truths of what uni is like. Also, I filmed all of Fresher's week and didn't hide that we literally didn't go out every night, some nights were bad some nights were good. I'm not trying to push that uni life is the best life or whatever. I feel like the way I show it is quite accurate.

WORKING FROM HOME: A GRYPHON GUIDE

With this semesters teaching coming to an abrupt close, many of us have approaching coursework deadlines and the thought of exams is once again beginning to rear its ugly head. It's often hard to get our heads down and focus at home, especially when there are so many distractions around us – but it is possible! Read ahead for some tried and tested advice on how to get the most out of working and revising from home.

MAKE A DESIGNATED WORK SPACE

Working from your bed is always a bad idea, not only for whatever work you are trying to do but also for when you take a step back from your work and try to relax. Doing work in place you normally use to sleep doesn't help you to get in the 'work mindset', and vice versa when you try and relax after doing work you might find you struggle to. Instead, it is much better to separate the two – have a designated space such as your desk for work and bed for anything else.

Credit: [pinterest.com](https://www.pinterest.com)

PLAN AHEAD

Once you've got your list of tasks, try and plan when you're going to carry out these tasks based off of their deadlines and how long you might need to do it. Make sure you plan in some time off too – there's nothing worse than feeling burnt out because you aren't giving yourself breaks from working.

MAKE A LIST OF ALL THE TASKS YOU NEED TO GET DONE

Having what seems like a mountain of tasks to do spiralling around in your head can be very overwhelming. Writing a list of everything you need to do helps to reduce this a lot, it also allows you to plan how long something might take and the time you have available to do it. Breaking each big task down into smaller tasks also makes it seem a lot more manageable, and you'll feel much more productive as a result!

TAKE REGULAR BREAKS

No-one can work for 8 hours straight. The general advice is to have a 5-minute break per 30 minutes of work, but I find this can sometimes disjoint workflow. Instead, you may want to have a 10-minute break per hour of work, or a 5-15-minute break at the end of each task depending on the length of each assignment.

PLAY SOME BACKGROUND MUSIC

Lots of people prefer not to work in complete silence, in which case having music on quietly in the background works perfectly. Try not to let it become a distraction though – you don't want to end up singing along to your favourite songs instead of doing any work. Instrumental music is the best way to go, and if you're not sure where to find any, Spotify has some great study playlists to suit most tastes.

TURN OFF YOUR PHONE

It's so easy to pick up your phone to check one message only to find yourself scrolling through Instagram hours later. Whilst it's fair to say that turning off your phone whilst you're working is potentially the last you want to do, it's a huge help in removing any possible distractions, even if it's only off for an hour. Apps such as Flipd which lock your phone for a set period of time are also great if you really struggle with getting distracted by your phone.

There is of course no one-size-fits-all when it comes to what helps enhance your productivity, so keep trialling a variety of approaches until you find what works best for you.

BON VOYAGE TAMPON TAX!

After the end of the tampon tax, Beanna ruminates on the implications that this will have for people with periods in their day to day life.

There has long been a highly contested and wrongful tax on tampons. Up until recently, tampons and other sanitary products were dubbed as "non-essential, luxury items" in contrast to things like razors that weren't. Now this tax has finally being removed, as announced on this years' 2020 budget. That's right ladies, no longer will we be financially punished for bleeding out of our vaginas every month... or will we? An article in The Guardian revealed that the removal of the 5% VAT will save those who have periods an average total of £40 in their lifetime - that's about 7p per pack of 20 tampons.

I mean, I don't know about you, but that doesn't feel like a great deal of change. Sure, this is a huge win for the much aggrieved two-decade long campaign against the tampon tax, and it's certainly a move in the right direction, particularly in the case of those who are seriously struggling financially, but is it enough?

In 2017, the BBC released a "tampon tax calculator". I popped in my age, 20, and when my menstruation began, aged 13, and let the magic machine tot up the rest. £309.91 - that's around how much I've spent on sanitation products so far in my short 20 years. £1,472.07 - that's how much I'm predicted to spend in my lifetime. For someone as fortunate and privileged as myself, this doesn't make too big a dent in my monthly budget. But I've got a maintenance loan, a weekly wage with some occasional tips, and a little something coming from the parents. I've also only got myself to look after. What about those with less? What things do they have to sacrifice in order to purchase such a basic sanitation essential?

The other night, lying in bed after a particularly heavy day of boozing, I cried to myself as I read Ethiopia's statistics on how many young girls drop out of school when their menstruation arrives, unable to cope without the necessary sanitation products. You best believe I depleted a fair portion of my bank account repeatedly donating money to their cause. And I hear you; we're talking about the UK, not a developing country, the problem is far less severe. But there's still a great deal of relative poverty in the UK,

still those who have no choice but to use foodbanks to feed themselves and their families.

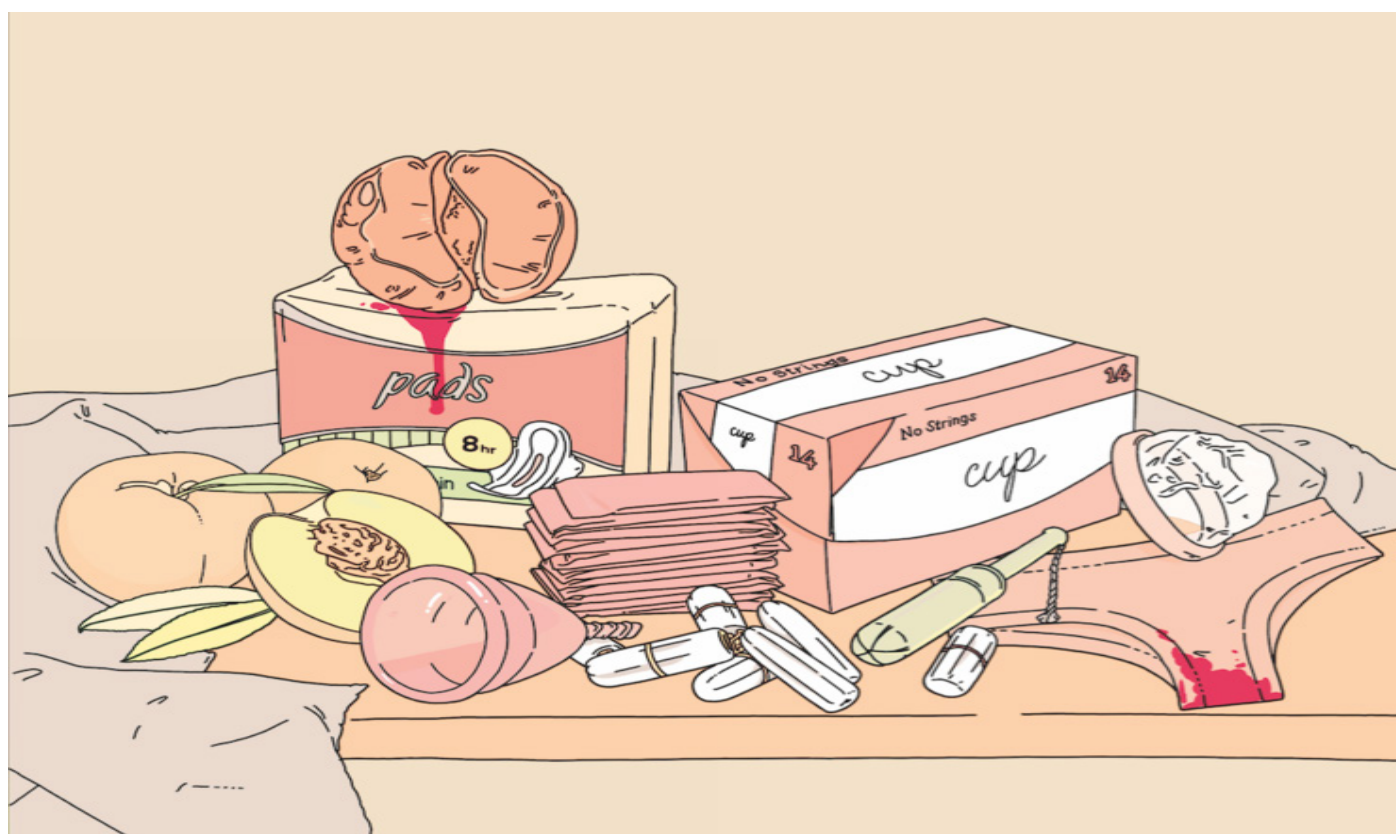
But what about other basic hygiene products? We don't expect free toilet roll, toothpaste or shampoo, so why are so many women now demanding free sanitation products? I side with Jessica Valenti on this one; in an article she wrote for The Guardian, she says, "this is less an issue of costliness than it is of principle: menstrual care is health care, and should be treated as such."

So, here's the solution I propose. Menstrual cups. Ladies, I'm sure most of you know about these by now. Gents, a menstrual cup is a reusable silicone cup that's placed inside the vagina, it can be emptied out, washed, and used again many times over. Not only does this greatly reduce the financial burden on the government of numerous free tampons and pads, it's also the right move in terms of single-use materials and the disastrous effect they have on the environment. This is no shade on those of you who use single-use period sanitation; most of us still do and it's absolutely our prerogative to do so if it means your comfort at a time of the month that is far from comfortable.

It's time to end the lifelong stigma against a completely natural biological occurrence that can, and is in many places, destroying the lives of young girls by forcing them out of education or compromising their health, hygiene and safety. It's time to stop prisoners who have no access to sanitation products from having to resort to unhygienic solutions every month. It's time for the government to step up and say, "Menstrual care is health care because we support women".

It's time to end period poverty.

BEANNA OLDING



Credit: fayeorlove.com

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Seasons of hope.

And so our necks droop,
like the trunk of a weary willow.
Desperate for embraces just out of arm's reach,
a saline patch spreading onto our pillow.

But this trunk houses hundreds of stories,
rippling rings running deep to the core.
Of the glorious kin who have conquered,
seen the sunrise beyond violent shores.

Leaf through pages of lives led before you,
cherish spaces you've filled in your heart.
Breathe in colour, seek sweet sonic shelter,
fill the moments that keep us apart.

Though the branch of our tree may well splinter,
and our frayed roots are torn from the earth.
Remember blossoms can't survive the Winter,
but by Spring woodlands welcome their birth.

Stay.

And we sit, and wait and mourn and breathe
And we think of who we long to see
If we had the chance to roam the streets
If we had the chance to share our sheets
As our plans drop off like falling leaves
As our Summer slips to autumn breeze
Cherish the four walls that let you sleep
Cherish those for whom you fear you'd weep
We must wait beneath our bare brick covers
Stay apart as if some star crossed lovers
We must hail the healers, the men on the ground
Stay at home, stay safe, we want you around.

By Andrea Loftus





The 2020 Government Budget: A Beacon of Hope

Image: The Sun



Matthew Whiteley

The first budget of any new government is bound to attract wide attention from all communities, and the 2020 budget was no exception. Despite a murky economic canvas emerging from the coronavirus challenge, Rishi Sunak rose to the occasion with great modesty, and a message of confidence.

Mr. Sunak's underlying budget theme was one of pride. Pride in our communities, pride in our economy, pride in our country. It is a message we can all be reassured by. We are, after all, a nation of Shakespeare and Stephenson, Turing and Turner, Pankhurst and Potter.

The budget not only resisted the Cromwellian siege of populism that characterised the election campaign, but in fact it succeeded in deploying a legion of fiscal firepower to unclog the economic arteries of the north. Once the budget measures are enacted, the Chancellor will be able to observe the end of the patronising economic hegemony of London and the South-East, and he will know that the battle for regional renewal has been won, but that the war for an economic legacy is far from over.

The government's budget was truly a one-nation budget. "Tax cuts, loans, and grants" was Mr. Sunak's message as he announced a £30 billion fiscal stimulus to support all sectors in all the country's regions in the wake of the coronavirus threat. The budget also constituted: National Insurance tax cuts for 31 million people, leaving

those on the minimum wage roughly £5200 better off than before; easier access to benefits for the self-employed; the abolition, and in over 50% of cases in the hospitality sector, reduction, of business rates; £22 billion per year of funding for scientific research and development; increased taxes on pollution and plastic packaging, and a £1 billion investment into green transport.

The budget ended the European Union's excessively interventionist tax rules, such as the so called "reading tax" levied on books, newspapers and journals, both digital and printed. Mr. Sunak quipped that historical fiction, textbooks and "fantasy books such as John McDonnell's 'economics for the many'" would now be free of EU regulation.

The budget loosened the spending taps and struck a conciliatory tone, but at the same time Mr Sunak gave the public a palpable reminder of why Gordon Brown's economic mismanagement necessitated tight fiscal rules in the first place. The budget deficit is now down to less than 2% per year – below the Office for Budget Responsibility's recommended cap of 3%, and well below the 11% bequeathed to the Conservatives by the last Labour government.

In short, the budget promised rising environmental standards, but lowering emissions; incentives to work, but no cap on economic potential via a vitriolic tax on ambition; responsible borrowing, but sustained spending; support for those in hard times, but gratitude for everyone's success. The budget was an incontestable victory for free market

liberty and individual accountability over the historically and globally unsuccessful alternatives. British capitalism is not only strong, it is thriving.

It was the measures for the north and devolved regions that garnered the most anticipation. Once again, the budget did not disappoint. Each area of the United Kingdom was promised its own treasury office and a share of the 22,000 Treasury civil servants that are to be moved out of London to focus on northern regeneration. West Yorkshire received a devolution settlement and the commitment to the Northern Powerhouse was shored up. For the first time in generations, counties and communities north of Birmingham have repatriated their economic fate from the city that governs them, and no longer shall the taxes of the many northern communities fund the private sector projects for the few in London – as they did under Tony Blair.

The scale of Mr. Sunak's spending plans is surprisingly large and practising the responsible fiscal policies that the Conservatives preach will soon become much more necessitated if excessive spending becomes a theme of his budgets. For now, however, the government has made a promising start and the budget will doubtless go down as one of the great restructuring budgets next to those that established the NHS and supply-side reforms in the 1940s and 1980s respectively.

Is The Chinese Government Harvesting Organs From Prisoners?



Amy Ramswell

China has dominated the headlines in recent months, as the first country to be affected by the coronavirus. Yet, this overriding narrative has not inhibited another sinister story from reemerging, albeit in trickles. An independent tribunal concluded that it is 'certain' China has been forcibly harvesting the organs of prisoners, for use in transplants. Evidence suggests that victims include members of the Falun Gong movement, who have been the subject of persecution since 1999.

These are not new allegations. Yet, at the moment, they seem to have been forgotten, as China is credited for its radical response to the coronavirus. Reports of doctors performing the world's first double lung transplant on a coronavirus patient at Wuxi People's Hospital were reported with amazement.

Yet some people have treated this pioneering surgery dubiously, pondering how it took just a few days for a matching, "consenting", brain dead donor to be found, just a seven hours train journey from the operating theatre.

Suspicion is compounded by incredibly short waiting times to find a donor

This news coincides with the damning final judgment of the London Tribunal into Forced Organ Harvesting in China. After hearing evidence from medical experts, human rights experts and prisoners themselves, the report concludes that widespread forced organ harvesting is occurring, with religious prisoners a 'certain' and sizable source.

The tribunal heard that investigators, covering

as prospective transplant receivers, have been told by hospitals that the source of some organs were Falun Gong prisoners. These detainees also reported extensive internal examinations, concordant with assessment for organ suitability.

The disparity between the number of transplant operations occurring and the number of known sources of organs is also unexplained. Suspicion is compounded by incredibly short wait times to find a donor suggesting an 'on demand' schedule of harvesting.

Yet where is the international response? Where is the widespread press coverage? Are we all too focussed on the Coronavirus to hear the gravitas of the independent tribunal's conclusions? They allege grievous, ongoing human rights violations against prisoners detained for their religious beliefs. I, for one, am baffled that the Daily Mail seems to be carrying this story (in the UK), with only a brief passing comment by the BBC.

I don't think this detracts from the magnitude, nor the validity of the allegations, I think it points to more pressing internal concerns, namely the coronavirus.

Falun Gong are a large religious group in China which are seen to threaten the atheism of the Communist Party.

After a rapid growth in numbers in the 1990s, the Communist Party launched a campaign to "eradicate" this religious sect. There have been multiple allegations of torture and abuse, sometimes resulting in death. Falun Gong comprises a shocking percentage of the Chinese prison population, and in 2008, the US Department of State estimated that half of the 250,000 people in China's labour camps were Falun Gong practitioners.

The independent tribunal was initiated by the International Coalition to End Transplant Abuse in China (ETAC) and its members were not paid. The Tribunal's damning reports span hundreds of pages, with testimony from a huge range of sources.

The evidence summarised below suggests organ harvesting has been occurring.

This is still an egregious, horrific issue which is not being controlled

In 2005, it was reported by Chinese officials that up to 95% of organ transplants are sourced from executed prisoners. Even then, it was found that there weren't enough legal executions occurring to provide organs for all the transplants that are performed, and voluntary donations are very rare (just 130 people registered as donors between 2003 and 2009).

Then, in 2015, China announced that it would no longer source organs from executed prisoners. This was previously its main source of organs.

With the tribunal estimating 90,000 transplants per year, reports conclude that the immense void between voluntary donations and required numbers of organs is being filled by organ harvesting from prisoners.

Reporter Ruth Ingham found that there is evidence that all prisoners are now classified as voluntary donors, and the London tribunal described "contradictory" and "implausible" misclassifications.

The tribunal noted extraordinary low waiting times to find viable organs. As the double lung transplant case shows, it took just 5 days to source a matching pair of lungs for the patient.

A 2006 post on the China International Transplantation Assistance Center website says "it may take only one month to receive a liver transplantation, the maximum waiting time being two months. As for the kidney transplantation, it may take one week to find a suitable donor, the maximum time being one month." This is a great contrast to the

UK where the average time a person must wait for a kidney transplant is 2 and a half to 3 years.

The tribunal said that investigators had phoned hospitals to inquire about transplants. Some report being told that the source of some organs were from Falun Gong practitioners. In one shocking call to a detention centre in Mishan City, the investigator was told that they had five to eight potential Falun Gong organ suppliers.

Former Falun Gong inmates said they had undergone repeated medical tests in Chinese prisons. Jennifer Zeng said “On the third occasion in the camp, they were drawing blood from us. We were all told to line up in the corridor and the tests were given.”

Investigator Ethan Guttman recounted the experiences of prisoner Qu Yangyao: There was “no hammer on the knee, no feeling for lymph nodes, no examination of ears or mouth or genitals—the doctor checked her retail organs and nothing else,”.

The response to these horrific allegations has been minimal. As Professor Rogers from Macquarie University, Sydney said, “Everyone seems to say, ‘It’s not our job’. The world’s silence on this barbaric issue must stop.”

In 2013, the EU issued a resolution which expressed “deep concern” over the matter. Yet seven years have passed since then, and, if the claims are deemed to be true as the independent tribunal has found, then this is still an egregious, horrific issue, which is not being controlled.

In the House of Lords this week, questions to ministers asked whether the UK’s protocol of applying sanctions for human rights violations will apply to people engaged in illegal organ trafficking. They were responding to reports that 7,000 medics in China are involved in illegal forced organ-harvesting trade, and claims that thousands of Falun Gong prisoners of conscience have been killed for their organs. The US

has imposed sanctions. But fear of losing trade from an extremely powerful state may well be behind the UK’s reluctance to act.

A study published in the British Medical Journal called for more than 400 scientific papers on organ transplantation to be withdrawn. Clinicians who used research obtained from unethically procured organs were deemed complicit in “barbaric” methods of organ procurement. They found the reluctance to take responsibility and uphold ethical research standards to be troubling.

China dismisses these claims as politically-motivated and untrue, and mere ‘rumours’. Yet they have not contested specific points of evidence or explained the source of organs used in transplants.

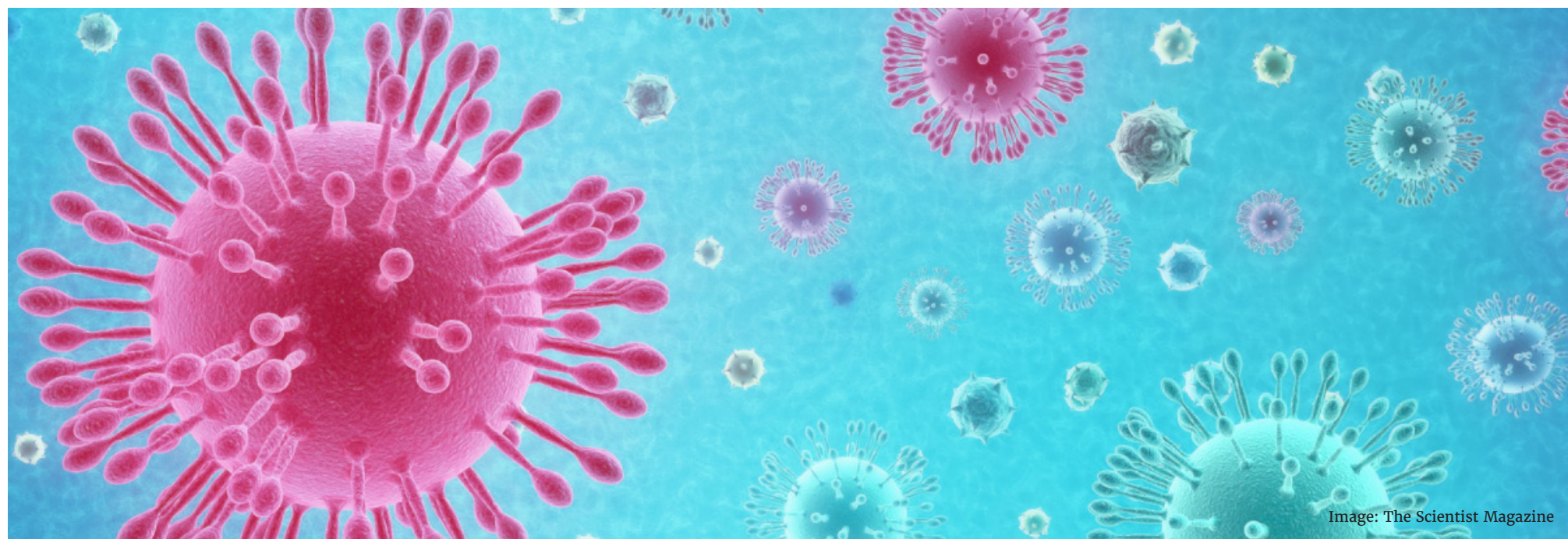


Image: The Scientist Magazine

Coronavirus: An Opportunity for Social Change

Anna May

Before I talk about the opportunity that comes with a crisis, I want to be clear that I’m not negating the detrimental effects of coronavirus. I’m also aware I make some sweeping statements without touching on the complexities and how the possibility of reform will differ massively across the globe. So this isn’t a perfect argument, but I hope that it prompts some thoughts and brings at least a little light into the doom and gloom.

Coronavirus has come about in a context of stress and hostility. Capitalism has permeated all corners of our lives, from ridiculous working pressures to unattainable expectations of success. And this ‘success’ is often measured superficially by appearances and possessions, rather than genuine experiences and the quality of our relationships.

I wonder if Covid-19 could be an opportunity for re-evaluation and change

Austerity has pushed huge numbers of people into poverty. Public services, from schools to transport to healthcare are under immense strain. The news seems to play on a constant loop of

negativity (dare I mention the word Brexit?). In the face of these stresses, hostilities have arisen between and within communities, mental health issues are skyrocketing, and we’re also facing huge ecological challenges.

I wonder if Covid-19 could be an opportunity for re-evaluation and change.

In the face of mortality, we start to think more seriously about the way that we live our lives. Rather than stressing over the latest fast fashion, we realise the importance of the basic necessities, and perhaps begin to truly empathise with the scarcities some people have been living through their whole lives. We consider how we can be less wasteful, how we can make the most of what we have. How we can provide for ourselves, be self-sufficient in our communities, rather than rely on poorly paid labourers living halfway across the world.

We think about how much time we spend with our loved ones, rather than at work or mindlessly on our phones. We recognise the value of all those working hard to keep society running on a day-to-day basis, from nurses to bus drivers to those working on the tills at the supermarkets. We see how interconnected everything is, how much we need each other to get by.

My worry is that fear and panic will prompt an each-for-their-own mentality. It’s understandable that people want the best for those closest to them – we all do. But I think that this lies in the coming

together of communities. Getting through this difficult time will involve talking to each other with respect and understanding, sharing information and resources, and supporting each other with love and care when morale is down. This is an opening to reconnect to what it means to live as human beings in a human community.

This is an opening to reconnect to what it means to live as human beings in a human community

These are big changes, and I’m not suggesting they’ll come about easily. It’s going to challenge us as individuals, as communities, as a global society. Stocks have tumbled, businesses are losing trade, school lessons are being put on hold, borders are closing, health services are being stretched.

But as the structures of our society are shaken, we have the opportunity to reflect, and to carefully consider how we will build ourselves back up. What will we prioritise? What really matters to us?

These are crucial questions for the future, not just in the face of the virus, but to address climate change, tackle social inequality, and to enrich the quality of the lives we lead.

The Grey Area of Assisted Dying



Image: The Sun

Lauren Woodley

Assisted dying rules are inconsistent and perplexing. Whilst one country may support euthanasia and assisted dying, other nations are completely against it. Yet, surely all humans deserve the same treatment. Dignity in death is certainly an issue that as we grow older, we will start to consider more and more.

So, it is no wonder that in 2016 Canada introduced laws that meant eligible Canadian adults may be allowed to be assisted in voluntary death. This came under an act called Maid (medical assistance in dying). However, this law does have many terms, making it less straightforward. This includes a condition that a person must be within the mental capacity to be able to give informed consent on the day of their chosen death.

Whilst many may see this as extremely permissive, in February of this year the Canadian parliament brought in a proposal to decrease the eligibility rules of those who request assisted dying, and help people pursue euthanasia whether their death is imminent or not. This allows greater autonomy for the Canadians. For those who suffer with deteriorating illnesses such as Dementia and Alzheimer's (when one cannot predict the downfall of their health), this proposal means a great deal to them.

Previously, the law meant those with illnesses such as Dementia would have to die before their

time is up, as they would have to be in a sound state of mind to give their informed consent. Now, if the proposed law is accepted, then those suffering will have enough time to say goodbye to their loved ones in a sound state of mind. This amendment could allow for death with dignity, rather than endless suffering of both the patient and their family, who would otherwise have to watch the mental capacity of their loved one falter or lose them before they're ready to go.

On the other hand, countries such as the UK are still completely against both euthanasia and assisted dying. Both are illegal and have been since the 1961 Suicide Act. According to the charity Dignity in Dying, a campaign group whose goal is to make it legal for terminally ill adults to have access to assisted dying in the UK, over 84% of the public support the campaign for the introduction of assisted dying in the UK.

However, the group states that they believe only those of sound mind with 6 months or less to live should be allowed access to the law, and no further. This still puts the UK behind Canada. However, the acknowledgment for change is still widely accepted by the British public.

Yet still so many British people seek peace in places like Switzerland and the Netherlands, where it is completely legal to undertake euthanasia and assisted death. Most well known in Switzerland is Dignitas, an organisation which allows its members to peacefully end their lives, and also

allows the request of assisted suicide. According to Dignity in Dying, every 8 days a Briton travels abroad to end their life. Families are also allowed to travel with the person, but at the risk of getting arrested when getting back into the UK.

The extent that Britons are going to is surely a sign to the British government that banning assisted dying is cruel and unfair and almost takes away a human right.

If a family member can provide written proof from when the patient was of sound mind before their health began to weaken, that they wish to end their own life, then how can this be argued with? Why keep anyone suffering longer than they have to?

On the other hand, suicide is never something to encourage, and the effects of those around the sufferer should always be considered. Also, if we legalise assisted death, then it could become common practice, or even seen as an 'easy way out'. Vulnerable people in unstable states of minds may take advantage of the law if it was passed. Therefore, there should always be checks and conditions in place, making sure the patient is truly eligible.

Ultimately though, assisted dying laws around the world need to be more consistent and fairer. No matter your stance on assisted suicide, if someone is clearly increasingly suffering then they deserve their right to peace.

South Korea's Great Response to COVID-19



Image: Business Insider

Sophie Denham

Despite the number of the coronavirus cases skyrocketing in South Korea, the country has managed to obtain a low fatality rate, as well as seeing a decrease in their daily rise in the past week. Whilst many European countries, specifically Italy, are now facing escalating rates and national grief, former coronavirus hotbeds China and South Korea are starting to stabilise. How is it that South Korea managed to cope effectively without the need to implement a national lockdown?

South Korea has been efficient in their methods to contain the virus and other countries should follow suit to minimise the spread. Their most effective weapon has been rapidly testing. They have been testing around 15,000 to 20,000 people per day. The government has estimated nearly 300,000 people have been tested in South Korea since 3rd January. Whilst in the UK, only around 37,746 people have been tested so far.

The Korean government has deployed 53 drive-through sample collection stations, which means no physical contact with anyone, protecting the patient and healthcare workers. The process takes about 10 minutes and they receive the results within 24 hours. As well as this, most public

places such as airports, hotels and bars check your temperature on arrival.

South Korea received some backlash for some of their measures being too invasive. They have devised a system whereby they can track anyone who has been confirmed to have COVID-19. It uses a GPS and informs people of the individual's every movement. I have received several emergency alerts since being here, telling me how the person contracted the virus and which area they are situated in. The BBC wrote an article last week commenting on how explicit some of the reports were, but, it does seem to be working, with the daily rise steadily declining, from 686 on 2nd March to 131 on the 10th March.

How does the UK's approach to COVID-19 differ to South Korea? For starters, the UK, like many other countries, seemed quite complicit in the early stages of the virus, assuming that they will not be as badly affected. But with something like a new virus, ignorance is not bliss. Although the British government is following measures supported by scientific research, they are lacking transparency and accountability. In many ways, Britain's current stance is appropriate for the time being. It would be easy to implement stricter methods, but for now, it would be unwise to use every restriction at their disposal immediately.

In time, more drastic measures do need to be taken, but first and foremost, they need to test more people. The current figure is not a true representation of the situation. As they have now entered the 'delay' phase (as of the 15th March) in the four stage plan, with the hope that this will buy some more time before the situation rapidly worsens, checks and tests need to be a priority. Although the current advice is to self-isolate if you are displaying symptoms, the government should encourage people to get tested, before we see more and more of these people in a critical condition. As the number of fatalities doubled in 24 hours, any signs or symptoms should be taken seriously and acted upon before more lives are lost that could have been avoided.

By no means are South Korea in the clear, with a recent outbreak in the city's capital, Seoul, where over half the population live, there is still a lot of fear surrounding the potential spread. But their measures and methods cannot go unnoticed. The UK and other countries should prepare and increase their efforts to counter this pandemic in the most effective way possible. As a lot of papers are now acknowledging, this could be just the beginning. Time to be united in our efforts and do our utmost to protect those that are most vulnerable.



Image Credit: Pikisuperstar

Can I Just Buy It Now, And Pay Later?

This year has seen the rise of companies like Klarna who allow customers to purchase products and then pay them back in installements. Is it all that its cracked out to me?

Will Southall
Business Editor

The next time you go to pay for something online, take a look at the payment options you are given. You may notice that amongst the regular Visa, Mastercard and Paypal methods of payment, there is a new way of ordering. 'Buy now pay later'.

If you're a student then this may not be news to you, young people being the biggest users of such zero-interest credit options.

Swedish brand Klarna claim to have over 7 million customers in the UK alone, growing rapidly with an additional 55,000 joining every week. So for those of us who don't already use the 'pay later' service, how does it work exactly?

When you purchase something with Klarna, you are given to option to pay for it in 30 days' time, or to split the cost across three equal instalments. There is no fee and currently the company do not use debt collectors if you happen to miss a payment. Instead, missing a payment can result in your account being shut down or could badly affect your credit score.

The company launched in the UK back in

2014, but has recently seen a large increase in the number of its users, particularly among young people. Students tend to have bad credit scores as most of us have very low income and have had little chance to build up the financial proof that we are reliable and trustworthy borrowers. As a result, students will sometimes find it difficult to have a high enough credit score to get a credit card. Klarna, however, set the bar much lower, meaning most students will be able to get an account without a problem.

This has worried consumer groups, who fear that young people in particular are at danger or racking up debts without realising, or without fulling paying attention to the fact that with Klarna, you can easily spend money you simply do not have.

Whilst falling behind on payments would not cost you in the short term, as it would with most credit cards, it could have a detrimental effect on a person's ability to access finance in the future. The knowledge that you have been late on making a payment is likely to translate into a bad credit score, which could make it hard when applying for more traditional credit in the future.

And whilst it is great for online clothes shopping before your student loan comes in, you cannot get a mortgage with Klarna.

There are also environmental concerns over the impact of the growth in 'buy now pay later' payments. Some of the companies where Klarna has been the most successful linclude online fashion retailers ASOS and Misguided, where customers are often using Klarna as a way of ordering more clothes than they need, in different colours and sizes, of which they have no intention of keeping.

High street clothing brands are known to be notoriously bad for throwing out clothes that have been sent back by consumers, and so 'buy now pay later' may not be a technological and social progress that the industry is looking for.



Image Credit: brgfx

New York's Total Ban on Plastic is Fantastic, Even for Business. Should the UK Follow Suit?

Serena Gagliardi

New Yorkers use approximately 23bn disposable plastic bags each year the vast majority of which end up in landfill or polluting streets, green spaces, water courses, and in the worst cases, killing wildlife. To address the issue, a plastic bag ban in the city has come into force on the 1st of March.

With the implementation of the new law stores will be required to sell paper bags at five cents each or offer reusable bags that can be used at least 125 times.

Stores still giving out single-use plastic bags will be warned, then hit with a \$250 fine for a first violation and \$500 for any further violations.

Peter Iwanowicz, executive director of Environmental Advocates of New York, stated "It has taken New York longer than you would expect, but it's better late than never. There is broad public support for plastic bag bans."

Some small store owners said they are not fully ready for the ban, claiming it will hurt their businesses and place an unfair cost burden on low-income people, as Frank Garcia of the National Association of the

Latino State Chambers pointed out at a recent protest at City Hall.

While handing out free tote bags in Manhattan, New York mayor Bill de Blasio told New Yorkers: "We only have one chance to save our planet."

Mark Chambers, director of the New York city mayor's office of sustainability, said: "The paper bag fee coupled with the bag ban encourages a deeper culture shift in New York City towards reusable habits. This is a critical shift we need to cultivate if we are to meet our zero waste goals."

New York state is also considering a ban on single-use styrofoam containers.

Dianna Cohen, chief executive and co-founder of non-profit Plastic Pollution Coalition, said: "It's just a way of helping people open their eyes to begin to see the plastic pollution problem ... I look at these laws as ways for people to get started in the right direction."

In recent weeks, signs have appeared in shops alerting customers to the changes supported also by the social media campaign #BYOBAGNY - Bring Your Own Bag.

Similar bans have already been implemented in California, Oregon and Hawaii as well as in the United Kingdom and European countries: in the UK, a law which imposes a 5p charge on plastic bags was introduced in 2015, reducing their distribution by large retailers by 37% in 2018/2019. However, disposable, non-degradable plastic bags are still widely distributed by supermarkets and shops throughout the nation.

Italy was the first country in 2011 to introduce a ban on non-biodegradable shopping bags for all retail stores, while in spring 2019, the EU approved a ban which requires countries to adopt mandatory pricing schemes, or to take measures to reduce average bag use per person to 90 by 2019 and 40 by 2025.

Hopefully New York's successful model will serve as an example to other countries in order to tackle rising plastic pollution issues, and as a way for consumers to become increasingly aware of eco-friendly behaviours.



Image: Boeing

Why Musk You Do This?

Katherine Graves

Starlink is Elon Musk's latest venture. It is a part of SpaceX and aims to create a megaconstellation of broadband internet satellites that will globally provide users with high-speed internet. Sounds great, right? Let me try and change your mind.

The U.S. Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has granted permission to launch 12,000 Starlink satellites into low Earth orbit, but applications have been made to an international radio-frequency regulator to launch a further 30,000 Starlink satellites, meaning a total of 42,000 satellites. The scale of this operation is difficult to comprehend, so let me give a bit of perspective: the UN Office of Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA) estimates that, at the start of 2019, there were approximately 5,000 satellites in orbit, of which only 40% (around 2,000) were actually operational.

This means that Musk wants to launch 8 times as many satellites as there are currently in orbit, giving him a monopoly over the skies.

You might be thinking, so what? Who cares? Well, one community is very concerned: astronomers. As of March 15th 2020, there are over 300 Starlink satellites in orbit, which have already had a negative global impact on ground-based astronomy. „What surprised everyone — the astronomy community and SpaceX — was how bright their satellites are,” said Patrick Seitzer, an astronomy professor emeritus at the University of Michigan. The impact of the brightness, speed and number of satellites is that they pollute astronomers' observations by leaving trails within images. Considering that 400 satellites are needed for minor internet coverage, and 800 for moderate coverage, the effect will only get more severe. One possible solution is to reduce the brightness of the

satellites by a factor of 10, which would add extra cost and require new technology.

During his keynote speech at the Satellite 2020 conference in Washington, DC, Musk stated “I am confident that we will not cause any impact whatsoever in astronomical discoveries. Zero. ... We'll take corrective action if it [the impact] is above zero.” This claim will be hard to disprove, as how can we know if it's having an impact on discoveries if they haven't yet been discovered?

Whilst Musk has said that he is willing to take corrective action, he hasn't given detailed information as to what this may involve. It's a scary thought that one of the oldest sciences is at the mercy of a billionaire with seemingly little regard for the destructive impacts of his latest foray.

Over the Moon About the New Moon



Morwenna Davies

Astronomers have identified a new “mini moon” which is currently orbiting the Earth, and may have been doing so for a while now without any of us realising. The mysterious mass was first identified on the 15th February by astronomers from the Catalina Sky Survey in Arizona; a project funded by NASA which is looking for Near-Earth Objects (NEOs) which may be a collision threat.

The object is somewhere between 1.9 and 3.5 m in diameter – that's roughly the size of a car – and apparently entered the Earth's orbit as long as three years ago. It takes roughly 47 days for it to complete a full orbit of the Earth: that's just shy of double the time it takes for the moon to complete a cycle.

As the identification of the mini moon is so novel, little is known so far as to what the object actually is. The general consensus is that the mini moon is an asteroid that has been caught by the Earth's gravitational field. The object does not respond to solar radiation pressure in the same way that human-made debris would, and it also has a low albedo similar to C-type asteroids which are carbon-rich rocks that make up 75% of all known asteroids.

However, Grigori Fedorets from Queen's University in Belfast suggested “there's a chance that this mystery rock may not be a rock after all, but a giant hunk of space junk.” This could mean the mini moon is an out of use satellite or simply just unidentified space trash, and rightly points out that we really don't know very much about our new mini moon, especially

as it has only been observed a handful of times and is only visible through large professional telescopes.

This is the second mini moon to be discovered in Earth's orbit, as the first was a mass named 2006 RH120 which circled the Earth between September 2006 and June 2007. These moons don't tend to hang around for very long due to the instability of their orbit, which makes it easy for them to drift away and out of the Earth's gravitational pull. According to NASA there are over 200 moons that we know of in our solar system, most of which orbit Saturn (82) and Jupiter (79).

Unfortunately, our new tiny moon probably won't hang around for very long, as scientists have noticed the moon already drifting further away and expect it to leave the Earth's orbit around April time.



Whale Whale Whale, What Do We Have Here?

New data reveals that moulting is one of the main reasons whales migrate to warmer waters. Sounds like they've cracked the code for the ultimate ocean skin care routine.

Eleanor King

Whales can be split into two main categories: toothed and baleen. Toothed whales include sperm and killer whales while baleen whales (which have plates of keratin based whalebone in their mouths required for feeding) include blue and humpback whales. Both types venture on the longest-known migrations every year of any mammal, travelling between 15,000 and 25,000 kilometers each; that's almost twenty times the length of Russia and back again.

Whales can be found in all the world's oceans, but their prodigious journey often first begins in high latitude feeding grounds. This could be in Antarctica in the southern hemisphere during the warmer summer months, or in the Pacific near northern Japan or California during the summer, on the opposite side of the year in temperate-cold waters. As temperatures drop, the time approaches for the whales to voyage to warmer waters and lower latitudes. The whales will often travel to areas near Central America, like Hawaii, Costa Rica, as well as Taiwan and the Philippines. Whales in the southern hemisphere travel northwards towards these areas and northern hemisphere whales will travel southwards at different times due to reversal seasons in the hemispheres.

For over a century it has been a worldly notion that the purpose of such mileage to reach lower latitudes during the winter months has been for breeding and calving far away from usual predators in warmer seas; certainly not for food, as feeding possibilities are sparse in these areas during the winter months.

However, the feeding/breeding paradigm has been argued with evidence of bowhead whales migration, or lack thereof, in the Arctic. These whales along with many other much smaller species and odontocetes live year round in the Arctic and sub-Arctic, calving and raising their young here.

This demonstrated that there is no such impediment by polar latitudes on thermoregulatory systems in whales, restricting growth and development of newborn calves. x

This has led to the research of scientists from Oregon State University, investigating the real reason behind these migration patterns. Following 62 satellite tagged Antarctic killer whales across their migration courses they found that the whales could conserve their body heat to -1.9°C in subfreezing waters.

This is achieved by decreasing blood flow to their skin, thereby reducing normal and continuous epidermal molting. Molting among cetaceans is both

continuous and periodic, a much more respected physiological process than when you or I remember to exfoliate now and again. Shedding, repair and renewal of the whales' hard integument takes place to remove dead skin and a thick yellow film that often builds-up on the whales' skin made of microscopic diatoms which can harbour harmful bacteria. Research found that the travel to warmer temperatures allowed for the heat loss which is required for the whales to molt. The feeding/molting hypothesis was then proposed.

As researchers quoted an expert Inuit hunter who said, "Belugas go to the rivers for warmth. And like seals they moult their skins. They moult in the warm water," it was originally thought that beluga whales may be the only species of whale to migrate for self-cleaning purposes, based on evidence of their migration to river estuaries in Alaska and Canada.

However, this new evidence implies that killer whales and potentially more species of whale migrate for the same reasons. This suggests migration is an act of ancestral habit for quite possibly the longest skin care routine ever, meaning that our notion of whales as polar species who venture to the tropics for molting and breeding should actually be reversed to creatures of warm-water who migrate northward toward the poles for feeding.





England Tour of Sri Lanka Postponed

The England Cricket Board have announced that the test series against Sri Lanka, due to commence on the 19th of March in Galle, has been postponed in light of the growing worldwide threat of coronavirus. This has been one in a long series of cancellations or postponements in sport, most notably the 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo.

Jonty Logan
Cricket

The England Cricket Board have announced that the test series against Sri Lanka, due to commence on the 19th of March in Galle, has been postponed in light of the growing worldwide threat of coronavirus.

The news broke early on the 13th of March, cutting short the final warm up game in Colombo, following ongoing discussions between the ECB and the Sri Lankan and British High Commissions.

An ECB statement read: "Due to the Covid- 19 pandemic worsening globally, and after

discussion with Sri Lanka Cricket, we have today made the decision to return our players to the U.K. and postpone the forthcoming Test series between Sri Lanka and England".

This followed just a day after the ECB insisted that "the series is planned to continue", but

warned that "circumstances are changing rapidly".

Sri Lanka remains largely unaffected by the virus with only a handful of national cases. The government has already closed schools and introduced mandatory 14-day quarantine under medical supervision for travellers arriving from Italy, South Korea and Iran. With the list of countries subject to quarantine under constant review there were concerns that travelling England fans, unknowingly carrying the virus, could initiate an outbreak.

As of yet, no changes have been announced regarding visa or quarantine requirements for travellers to and from Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom. Nevertheless, the ECB were not willing to take any chances.

The Chief Executive of the Professional Cricketers Association has said "any situation in which the players might be prevented from returning home to the UK would be disastrous".

The England team had introduced precautionary measures for the tour by banning all

handshakes, to be replaced by fist bumps. They then initiated a 2 metre 'exclusion zone' with the media, while also prohibiting interaction with supporters, including autographs and selfies.

This series is not the first cricketing event to be affected by the pandemic. A day after England's announcement, New Zealand also cancelled the rest of their tour of Australia and returned home.

While the current ODI series in India is being played without spectators in a bid to contain the virus. The Indian Premier League, the world's most watched cricket tournament, is also

expected to follow this trend. The BCCI have also decided to delay the start of the tournament as a "precautionary measure". Initially due to commence on the 29th March, it has now been pushed back to the 15th April.

A number of England's stars are expected to feature in the tournament, including Ben Stokes, Jos Buttler and Sam Curran. They had been informed that they had to be back in the U.K. for the 26th May in order to prepare for the test series against West Indies which is scheduled to begin on the 6th June. With the IPL final originally meant to be on the 24th May this would have allowed the English players to compete in the whole tournament.

However, with new scheduling yet to be released, it is likely they will now have their time in competition being cut short. This is of course all circumstantial as decisions will be made closer to the time as and when there is more information on the spread of the virus.

England players will no doubt be disappointed. However, with reports from the media in Sri

Lanka saying that players had expressed concerns for their health, they will also be relieved. As highlighted in the statement made by the ECB, "these

are completely unprecedented times, and decisions like this go beyond cricket".

England had looked to be in a good place moving into the first test match. Zak Crawley stood out as the pick of the batsmen in the warmups and has done himself a big favour going into the English summer, scoring 43 and 91 in the first game.

Captain Joe Root also scored a hundred in the second game, while Ollie Pope contributed 95 as he continues to impress in an England shirt.

Joe Denly once again frustrated with the bat, getting into double figures in each of his three innings without converting it into a score of substance. With Rory Burns due to make a return to the side against the West Indies in June and Crawley in good form, Denly's place in the side will be under intense scrutiny.

The health and safety of players, staff, home and travelling supporters must always be at the forefront of any decision made on sporting events. However, do spare a thought for the 3,000 travelling fans who were expecting to watch England in Sri Lanka this month. They are unlikely to be covered by insurance for their trip and so far the ECB have released little information, with some supporters already in the country.

The Barmy Army, England Cricket's main support group company, released a statement saying "We are extremely disappointed that the tour has been called off but we are not surprised by the decision. The question will now be how do the thousands of travelling fans recoup all of their money spent on this tour?"

England's next scheduled international fixture will now be at the Oval on the 6th June against the West Indies in the first match of the three game test series.

Image Credit: The Sun

Six Bad Sports for the Environment

Whilst sport is hugely beneficial for both physical and mental health, some sporting activities can be harmful to the environment. Here’s a roundup of the Gryphon’s top six sports that have some of the worst enviromental impacts:



Skydiving.

Whilst this is a sport that people rarely participate in more than once or twice in their lifetime, skydiving means that each plane requires constant refuelling. In some countries there is an activity such as professional skydiving, and flying a plane itself takes a lot of energy, which means releasing a lot of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.



Football.

Arguably the most popular sport in the world, at least certainly in the United Kingdom, people travel all over the globe to watch their famous football stars in action. This burns plenty of fossil fuels, alongside increasing the carbon dioxide produced weekly when the squad, reserves, medical staff and management team have to travel to their fixtures. This ties to the spectator wastage. Let’s take the largest stadium in the UK as an example, Wembley Stadium. If every spectator here left a cup, packet or wrapper, this would be over 90,000 items of rubbish in the stands alone, and less than half of it may not be recyclable. Therefore, with this being almost impossible to monitor, the wastage contributes to the damaging environment.



Formula 1.

The idea of 20 powerful cars going around a racetrack at a high speed for at least 20 times per year suggests this isn’t environmentally friendly. The drivers have to participate in practice sessions and test runs, never mind the actual race days. In addition, the environmental cost of shipping cars and the staff to maintain them too increases the output of pollution.



Skiing.

As the population of the world grows, it seems inevitable the more the environment feels the effects of pollution. The actual sport isn’t as dangerous for the environment, however the increase in demand for skiing holidays/ chalets has an impact. This correlates to the use of fossil fuels, which are being used to generate electricity for ski lifts. Perhaps the most alarming aspect is the fact that a ski lift uses the same amount of energy per month as a house would use in a year, thus making it non-sustainable.



Golf.

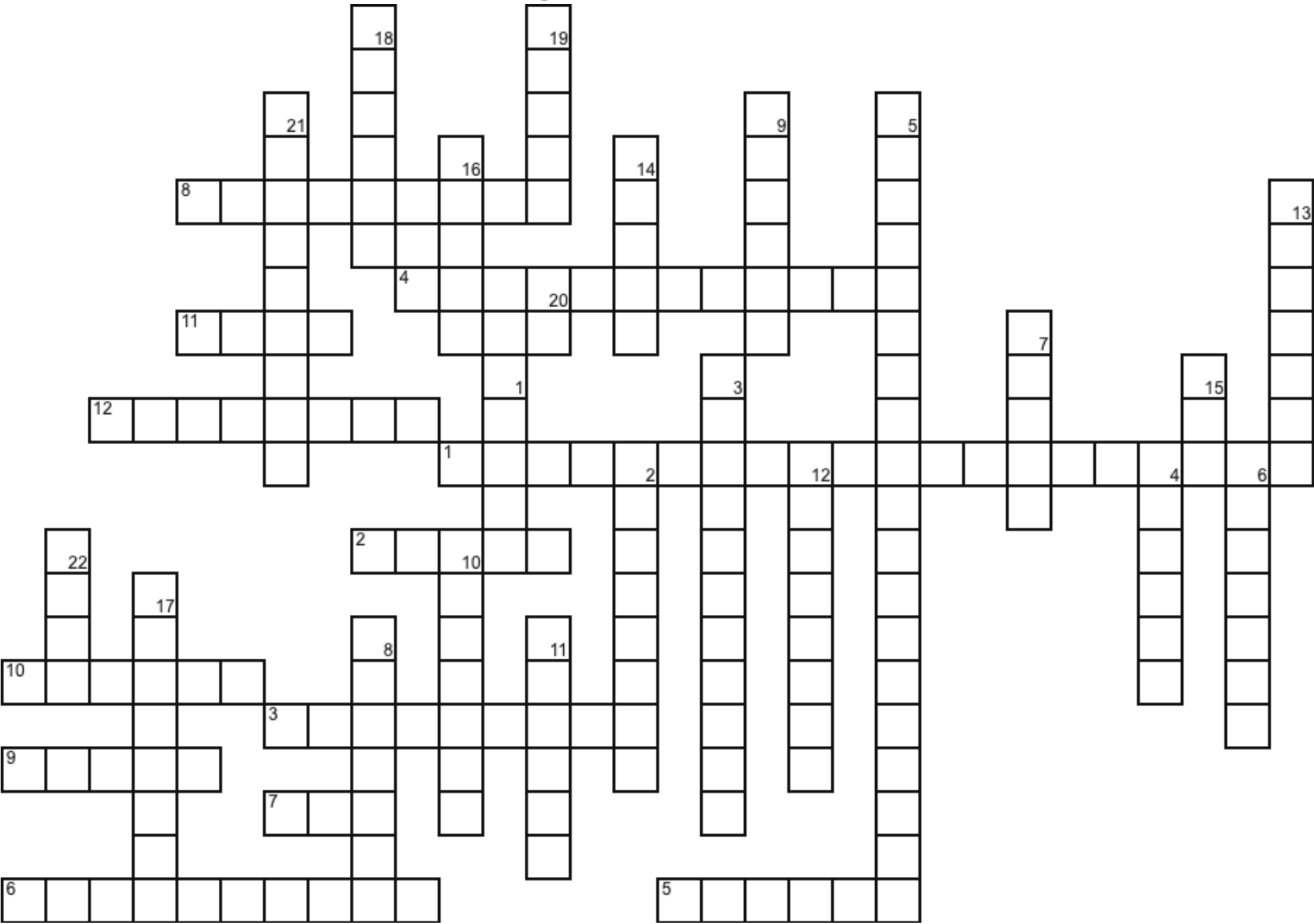
A sport that I admittedly didn’t initially consider, yet the construction and maintenance of golf courses is harmful to fragile ecosystems. With a survey being conducted that shows in Las Vegas alone, golf courses account for 28 of the top 100 water users, the worrying statistic shows golf as a sport need to rethink their water use, especially in times of drought. A slightly more specific figure shows that golf courses use 4 billion gallons of water every day for irrigation, (the application of controlled amounts of water to plants.) Perhaps a solution could be the industry introducing new types of grass, and new layouts that are easier on the environment.



Boating.

Similarly to golf, the environmental impacts of recreational boating shows that the main issue is the management of waste water. The sewage and grey water from the recreational craft contains a wide range of chemicals, often being released into the sea. Not only this, the increase in noise disturbance from the boats aggravates neighbouring areas, thus increasing noise pollution.

The Great Gryphon Crossword 2



ACROSS

- 1. The expansion of this is being protested against in Leeds (5,8,7).
- 2. What cannot be recycled curbside in Leeds (5).
- 3. Until recently what could not be recycled curbside in Leeds (5,4).
- 4. Leeds is the third worst city in the UK for this (3,9).
- 5. Incorrectly given name of Greta Thunberg on a game show (6).
- 6. The biggest one absorbs 20% of the world's oxygen (10).
- 7. A University study found this disappearing had increased six-fold (3).
- 8. These have increased in intensity in recent years due to global warming (9).
- 9. Recent storm to hit the UK. Caused the Burley Park Co-op roof to collapse (5).
- 10. Tropical phenomena reported in places like the Galapagos. Causes mass death of marine life (2,4).
- 11. River in Leeds (4).
- 12. Comes from dead animals that died during the Cretaceous period (5,3).

DOWN

- 1. These removed 2000 tonnes of CO2 on campus (5).
- 2. Captures carbon 35 times faster than tropical rainforests (3,5).
- 3. Responsible for emissions falling across the globe (11).
- 4. Can be responsible for making you feel a bit sneezy. Also plant sperm (6).
- 5. The name of a group of climate activists (10,9).
- 6. This isn't done for 8 out of 10 bins in Hyde Park. Students are wheely rubbish at this (8).
- 7. Someone who doesn't eat animal-related products (5).
- 8. Which furry animal enjoyed our leftover papers from last year (7).
- 9. Produces over 200,000 items of plastic every year (6).
- 10. A favourite treat of millenials (7).
- 11. Unfortunate victims of the Australian bushfires (6).
- 12. Actor, environmental activist (2,6).
- 13. Place related to an industry that emits about 860 million metric tonnes of carbon dioxide every year (7).
- 14. Go on holiday to warmer waters to exfoliate (5).
- 15. Prefix with freak or warrior (3).
- 16. Site of a landmark environmental agreement in the last decade (5).
- 17. CO2 makes this acidic (4,4).
- 18. One of the most intense extratropical cyclones ever recorded (6).
- 19. Sister to the oxygen we breathe. Deodorants used to be its foe (5).
- 20. A scale for acidic and alkaline substances (2).
- 21. The largest of these has lost half of its cover in the last thirty years (5,4).
- 22. Comes from trees that died during the Cretaceous period (4).