



THE GRYPHON



The official newspaper of Leeds University



Image Credit: Megan Ardis

89 Sexual Offence Crimes Committed in Hyde Park and Headingley This Year

Statistics revealed in a Freedom of Information request show that 89 offences were committed in the Hyde Park and Headingley area, with 78 victims being women.

Elena Sotelo
Features Editor

A Freedom of Information request to the West Yorkshire Police carried out by *The Gryphon* reveal sexual offences are significantly more likely to be committed against women in Hyde Park and Headingley.

According to the released figures, women made up 78 of the 84 victims of sexual offences against men and women reported in 2018/19. The latest England and Wales Crime Survey shows that women in the UK are three times more likely to be victims of sexual assault than men.

The number of victims stating to be students has stayed relatively low, with an increase of 11 to 13 in the last five years while the number of reported sexual offences overall has more than doubled, increasing from 41 to 89.

It should however be noted that sexual offences continue to be a seriously under-reported crime, which can have a considerable impact on the above-mentioned statistics. According

to the Office of National Statistics, 80% of victims do not report these episodes of sexual violence to relevant authorities on a national level.

Greater awareness has been raised around issues of consent and sexual harassment as a result of campaigns like #MeToo and SurvivorsUK as well as high-profile allegations against high-profile celebrities, politicians and businessmen. This could explain a dramatic increase in figures in recent years, particularly in 2017/18. It must also be noted that these statistics include both on-street and domestic offences and that they do not necessarily suggest an increased risk of sexual offences in the area.

According to the Crown Prosecution Service, sexual offences include “non-consensual crimes such as rape or sexual assault, crimes against children including child sexual abuse or grooming, and crimes that exploit others for a sexual purpose, whether in person or online”.

Amy Wells, Welfare Officer, and Catheryne Fairbairn, Community

Officer, at Leeds University Union said in a statement:

“Student safety in the community is a key issue for LUU, we know many students have concerns over crime – specifically sexual assault – in these areas. We work with the local council and the police to keep students informed and increase our data from crime reporting through the University of Leeds Secretariat “report and support” system.

We know there is always more work to do. This year, we’re working with Feminist Society on a Reclaim the Night march, supporting women and anyone who experiences sexual violence and/or harassment because of the way their gender is perceived.

We want people to feel confident in their neighbourhood as well as bringing profile to the ongoing issue of assault and violence. We want to look into funding for a project on sexual harassment in the City/clubs and we’re planning some campaign work around sexual assault with the national organisation Not On My Campus.”

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29/11/19

Uncertainty at the Christmas Market

News looks at concerns at the Christmas market in Millenium Square over Brexit

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We Shag Too: Disability and Sex

Features sits down with Liberation Co-ordinator Leo Adams to discuss the issues disabled people face when it comes to sex

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“It can feel like we’re a ticked box”

Blogs and Lifestyle editor Georgie Fuhri challenges the University in Views to provide more support for disabled students

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Koalas Can’t Bear the Heat

Science covers the recent bushfires in Australia and the current denial from the government that the fires are made worse by global warming.

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Editors of the Week
**Megan Ardis and
Ian White**

These two have put up with me on a Thursday so far this term and that alone is reason enough to nominate them for this prestigious award. Ian’s newfound love for Cupcakke has certainly been one of the highlights so far this year. He is a man of the people.

Quote of the Week

*Everybody
makes mistakes.
Everybody has
those days.*

Megan Ardis citing
inspirational
philosopher and
deep thinker Hannah
Montana.

Credits

Editor-In-Chief ~
Ed Barnes

Associate Editors ~
Megan Ardis
Ian White

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

Science ~ Michelle
Heinrich, Anna Davison

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Chloe Pryce

Sport ~ Millie Frain,
Millie Warrilow, Owen
Ellicott

Treasurer ~ Abby Drew

Secretary ~ Emma
Ferguson

Equality and Diversity
~ Santia Ahmed

Editorial Letter:



Hey readers,
So we are now reaching the end of Semester One and the end of 2010s. This means it is time for some good old reflection.

What a wild ride the last ten years have been. Way back in 2010, I was still in Year 7. I had my Fame Monster and Whitney Houston

CDs. David Cameron was a fresh face in Downing Street and most of us hadn’t heard of

Adele. Moving forward, the world didn’t end in 2012, much to the disappointment of everyone. Gay marriage got legalised in England, Scotland and Wales. Taylor Swift and Kanye West’s feud reached new heights. We voted to leave the EU. Elon Musk became a meme. Donald Trump got elected. We entered the era of fake news.

I’m already halfway through this year and six issues down so I guess it’s time to reflect on what’s happened this year so far. One little pearl of wisdom I’ve certainly learnt is that campus politics is really no different from national politics. It’s easy to think nothing happens but as soon as you scratch beneath the surface, the same things happen but just on a smaller scale.

Unlike the US where the Washington Post and the New York Times have entire departments focused on investigative journalism, the press in this country have failed to hold those in power to account in recent years. Mostly because most of them are owned by billionaires with ulterior motives. This means though without a constant critique of those with power, what’s to stop them from throwing certain people under the bus?

In the era of fake news and questions over what is true and what is not, it is vital that journalists, however small, continue to pursue the truth – no matter what cost or pushback. Complex issues are often boiled to sound bites in the world of 24-hour news but it’s important that press at all levels are constantly critiquing those in positions of influence and power. If we don’t, then a democracy fails to be a democracy.

With that in mind, where does that leave the role of an independent student newspaper? Last year, I was elected on a platform to make sure the paper holds the University, the Union and the Council to account.

So far this year, we talked to multiple employees at LUU’s Co-Op about a recent restriction on drinking water while on shift. We published statistics that revealed the extent of the BAME Awarding gap at the University of Leeds, including that White students are awarded first-class degrees at four times the rate of Black students. We revealed large quantities of plastic waste are produced by the club night Fruity every week, raising questions about the Union’s pledge to go single-use plastic free in just four years. This week,

we have revealed worrying statistics about sexual offences in Hyde Park and Headingley.

The reaction I’ve had to these stories has been interesting to say the least. People love to say they support the independence of a free press but they’ll not always be appreciative if they’re the ones being critiqued. They might even suggest that an entire story you publish was fabricated.

People love soundbites too and will leave out information that doesn’t fit with that. We’ve seen this happen even on campus with the recent UCU strikes have illustrating this perfectly. The issue is complicated but it has been boiled down into a simple us-and-them narrative.

Accessibility issues caused by UCU’s instruction to members to stop recording lectures have been completely swept under the rug. There is little acknowledgement that any deal struck between UUK (the organization that represents the University of Leeds and over 130 other Universities) and UCU will still need to be approved by the Pensions Regulator – a government body who will not approve any deal that poses the slightest risk of the pension fund collapsing.

There is also little acknowledgement there are other forms of strike action UCU can take that would have less of an impact on students. However, these aren’t as effective as striking on teaching.

Additionally, despite UCU’s insistence that UUK has ignored the Joint-Expert Panel that was established at the end of the last bout of striking, UUK has not. The report is extensive and presents a variety of options for UUK and UCU to agree on. It didn’t come to a single conclusion.

There is also little mention on campus of the offer made by UUK to UCU for an employee contribution of 9.1% towards the Pension Fund that was rejected before being put to members. I can support strikes but I can’t support the misinformation and the misrepresentation of the truth on campus.

Not letting universities off either, they need to address serious issues surrounding the race and gender pay gaps as well as the increased use of zero-hour contracts. Reporting we did last year showed Black employees’ average salary was £13,500 less than White employees illustrating significant inequalities at the University of Leeds.

The lines between who is in the wrong and who is in the right are always more blurred than they might initially seem. It’s easy to see one side as the villain and one as the hero.

This is why we need to ensure that we in the press are constantly looking beneath the surface because how else will we know what decisions those above us are making. As for the public, we need to constantly play Devil’s Advocate instead of immediately jumping to the first conclusion. It’s nice to believe in a story that confirms what we believe but sooner or later we’ll have to face up to the harsh truth.

Ed Barnes
Editor-in-Chief
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Exec Columns:



Union Affairs Officer
Lauren Huxley
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I'm sure everyone has noticed that we have a huge amount going on around campus over the next few weeks...

It's the lead up to the General Election on the 12th and the brilliant LSTV and LSR will be hosting a Hustings with your local candidates this Thursday the 28th so you can hear what they have to say on the issues that are most important to you.

There is also industrial action taking place on campus by some academic and support staff until 4th December and we will be working really hard to mitigate the impact this has on students.

We will continue to work with any students who come to us and want to express their views on the current UCU action and want to assure every student that we are here to support them.

If you want to find out more about the strikes then head to our website or get in touch with our political engagement team.

Abiha and I will also be attending University Council this Thursday where we'll be discussing many things, including the development of the new University Strategy.



Education Officer
Abiha Khan
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Hey everyone,

So I've been super busy to make sure I support all of you as much as possible to do with your studies in the lead up to the Christmas break!

Last week we had our Better Union and University forums. Here students voted on potential new policies for the Union. I put forward two motions for Better University.

Amazingly both of them passed and become Union policy. Now we will put pressure on the University to implement

strategies to help close the BAME Awarding Gap as well as work with the University to create more postgraduate study spaces.

We've also been having strikes on campus this week. I have been busy making sure students are directed to the best people to deal with any issues that have arisen as a result of missed lectures and seminars.

There was also a Q+A held with the Vice-Chancellor in the Riley Smith theatre which went really well.

Students asked the VC questions about the effects of Brexit on the erasmus scheme, issues relating to postgraduate researchers and the current industrial action being taken by UCU.

An international student also asked about possible compensation as a result of strikes.

To prepare for January exams, please keep an eye out for updates from schools. Help and Support in LUU and the Academic Representation Team are always around to help too.



Community Officer
Cat Fairbairn
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Not having had a second to sit and process my thoughts from the last hectic couple of weeks, I am taking this opportunity to run through what I got up to with you, and hoping it makes sense!

Anyone who follows what I'm up to will know how close feminist activism is to my heart, and having spent an evening last week training up stewards for Reclaim the Night 2019, I am now feeling as empowered as ever to take on Leeds City Centre on December 7th! If you're a woman passionate about protesting

sexual violence, please join us for an evening of marching, meeting other feminists, supporting local women's groups and listening to performers and speakers.

I also had the rather unique chance to attend ShockSoc's Robot Fighting League, watching handmade robots battle it out to find a winner. Not my usual Wednesday night but an incredible display of talent. Other events and workshops I have had the opportunity to drop in on include the first student

citizenship training session ran by the university, and the Co-Op's big payout, supporting local community initiatives through the purchases made by members of the Co-op.

My Great Winter Exchange is this Wednesday 27th, so the coming week will be spent putting the final pieces together for what will hopefully be a relaxed day raising money for charity all while having fun!



Activities Officer
Lydia Evans
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This week I've been working on a brand new initiative with the Activities Team that seeks to recognise and celebrate the great stuff all of our groups do.

Keep a look out in the new year for its launch! I've also been over in The Edge working closely with the team in Sport and Physical Activity to kick off a project

that tells the story of sport at Leeds.

I want everyone to see how great it is to be active on campus and how it helps students mental and physical wellbeing.

We had a round of Forums last week, which were the first ones I've been to. I really enjoyed listening to the debates, and they were such a clear example of

how LUU can be changed by students.

The new policies that passed that I'm now working on include one relating to how Volunteering societies are funded, which is really exciting to see cemented into policy. Watch this space for updates!



Equality & Diversity Officer
Chloé Elliott
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Hello lovelies,

I hope that you're doing well. It's been a long first semester but the end is near and hopefully it will bring a chance for rest and relaxation with it. I know I'm looking forward to unwinding during the holiday season and coming back renewed in the New Year.

A key focus of mine this semester has been to create a sense of belonging for minority groups on campus and I would like to continue the momentum next

semester of representing, supporting and celebrating these groups in meaningful ways all year long.

This semester we've seen a whole host of Black History Month and Disability History Month events and campaigns. These include The Decolonising Gender and Sexuality panel talk and the Disruptions campaign respectively, in addition to whole host of events that took place during BAME Creative Week.

In the new year I would like to explore

more areas for representation outside of the Union, such as Climate Justice and Study Abroad programmes.

I want both of these areas in particular to feel more open, welcoming and accessible to students from all backgrounds and circumstances. So, if either of them interest you, do feel free to reach out. I'd love to hear from you. Take care over the holidays!



Welfare Officer
Amy Wells
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This is the last time you'll hear from us before the winter break, so I hope you have a good chunk of time off, whatever you're up to and whatever you do or don't celebrate.

If you're staying in Leeds, visit students.leeds.ac.uk/outofterm to find the Christmas in Leeds 2019 guide. If you have a load of Uni work to do over the holidays, try to spread it out to save

yourself stress as it mounts up towards the end of the break – try scheduling in a strict hour or two each day.

The only other top tip I have for this time of year is please please don't worry about signing for a house just yet!

Landlords and estate agents love trying to tell you that all of the houses will be gone by July!!!! However that's a massive lie and there are still so many

great houses around and they will still be added for the next few months at least. If it makes you feel better, I didn't sign for my current house til May!

You also then reduce the risk of accidentally signing for a house with people who you'll end up disliking by early next year, which is always a positive.

Campus Watch



1 University of Huddersfield Prince Andrew Steps Down as Chancellor

Prince Andrew has been chancellor of the University of Huddersfield since 2015, though following backlash after a BBC interview about his friendship with US financier Jeffrey Epstein, he has decided to step down.

He said he would step back from royal duties for the “foreseeable future”, a decision that was described by Buckingham Palace as “personal” and was taken following discussions with the Queen and Prince Charles.

Earlier this week, students at the University of Huddersfield called for the prince to be sacked as their chancellor.

In a statement, the University said:

“Due to the circumstances and in discussion with the university, he has decided to step down immediately to allow the university to appoint a successor...the university would like to thank the Duke for his work during his period as chancellor.”

Other organisations have also announced that they are cutting ties with the prince, including ‘The Outward Bound Trust’ and ‘The Association of Leading Visitor Attractions’.

Amelia Cutting
News Editor

2 University of Oxford Blind student forcefully removed from university debate

On the 17th October, blind postgraduate student Ebenezer Azamati was forcefully removed from an Oxford debate.

The 25 year old from Ghana had reserved a seat before the debate, but when he returned to his seat he was dragged away “by his ankles” by the campus security guards in an unnecessarily forceful manner.

Security claimed that there was no space left in the union for Mr. Azamati. Yet, the way he was manhandled has left him feeling “unwelcome in the union, Oxford and even the country.”

The president of the union, Brendon McGrath has resigned after a petition for his impeachment reached the needed 150 signatures for a vote to be taken amongst union members. McGrath initially accused Mr. Azamati of acting in a violent manner, but has since retracted this statement, instead saying he “failed to ensure that every member feels welcome at the Oxford Union”.

Lucy Abbott

3 University of Glasgow String of sex attacks leads to tighter Security measures

In the west end of Glasgow there have been four recent sexual assaults, all of which have taken place near the university campus.

As a result, the university has increased security patrols and has improved lighting on campus in an attempt to reduce safety concerns amongst students and staff alike.

The University of Glasgow posted on Twitter that: “Incidents like this are rare and student and staff safety is of the utmost importance to the university”.

The university added: “We work extremely close with Police Scotland and we have increased security patrols and improved lighting on campus”.

A 34 year old man, known as Parvinder Singh, was arrested and charged in connection with three sexual assaults that took place on the 17th, 24th and 31st October this year. Singh is expected to appear in court in due course.

A spokesperson for the university has said: “If you have any concerns or information to report, please contact our security team on 01413304282 or Police Scotland 101”.

Charly Loughlin
News Editor

4 North West Regional College Irish student graduates at 71 years old

A 71-year-old former teacher has graduated from North West Regional College. The College was established in 2007 and contains five campuses in Northern Ireland.

Mrs. Anne Loveday has attended the Londonderry campus, where she studied for a diploma in textile design. This is Mrs. Loveday’s second qualification in four years, having previously received a diploma in fine art.

After losing her husband Colin seven years ago, the graduate said that it was “about having a goal and somewhere to go”.

Her mature age meant that many students would come to her for advice and she would organise a ‘tea club’ in between lectures.

The mother-of-two from Inishowen, County Donegal did not let her age deter her from gaining an education and believes that “If you’re interested in something go for it, go along to the open days and see what there is on offer.”

Even after achieving two diplomas, Mrs. Loveday still keeps herself busy by attending a pottery class on Tuesdays.

Kinga Glasek

5 Queen’s University Belfast university picks up royal honour

Queen’s University in Belfast has been awarded a major academic honour for its work on shared education. Their ‘Centre for Shared Education’ was given the Queen’s Anniversary Prize for further and higher education.

Shared education is where pupils from separate schools who are from different backgrounds take part in joint classes and activities. According to the Department of Education, the purpose of shared education is to promote equality of opportunity, promote respect for identity, diversity and community cohesion and deliver educational benefits to children and young persons.

Education and Training Inspectorate (ETI) published a review in 2018 which found that almost 60,000 pupils and approximately 580 schools take part in shared education projects.

Their achievement was officially announced last week and will be presented at Buckingham Palace in February 2020.

The award is presented every two years by the Queen to honour outstanding academic work and is part of the UK’s national honours system.

Charly Loughlin
News Editor



Image Credit: The Gryphon

Brexit Uncertainty Threatens Leeds German Christmas Market

Anna Brownbridge

In Leeds, the Christkindelmarkt in Millennium Square remains one of the staples of Christmas time in the city. The market is one of the largest and longest-running Christmas markets in the UK. It is organised by the city of Frankfurt Am Main in Germany each year.

However, stall organisers and traders at the market in Millennium Square have concerns that the results of the UK voting to leave the European Union, as well as the ongoing political confusion, will negatively impact the number of customers.

Sabrina, a trader from Spain, has worked at a hat and wool store in the market for seven years and confirmed that she has experienced a more hostile environment at the market since the EU Referendum.

She told the Yorkshire Evening Post in an interview about her poor treatment from the public: “Last year we had some harassment, [with] people saying – “get out from here, you are not welcome. They were

laughing and leaving their leaflets on the stall”.

Not only has treatment of the traders been an issue recently, visitors at the event are less inclined to spend their money at the stalls, many of which are selling items from all over Europe and run by people from the EU, rather than the UK.

The owner of the same stall, originally from Germany, closed two of his stalls at Birmingham Christmas Market, due to a recent fall in sales.

Sabrina explains that this is surely down to uncertainty around Brexit in the UK, adding: “We were a bit worried and last year some of the sales were not as good. [We were not] selling as much, [at] the Leeds market, but for the moment it’s going okay.”

University of Leeds student Honey Butterworth, 19, continued to enjoy the market as it opened earlier in November this year. She hopes that the situation between the UK and the EU won’t stop the market returning in 2020.

She said: “I would hope [it would not have an effect] but I don’t know if it would have an impact on people

here. I’m assuming that a lot of [the items at the market] are from all over Europe and there might be a potential impact on how much they can bring into the country, or it might slow down exports.”

By contrast, Joanne Taylor, a visitor to the Christkindelmarkt from Sheffield, talking to the Yorkshire Evening Post, was unfazed: “I don’t think Brexit will impact the market. People are still going to spend [money] for Christmas.”

Director of the market Kurt Stroscher, based in Frankfurt am Main, says that whatever happens in the coming months with the Brexit situation, the German Market in Leeds will continue to return in the coming years.

He assured those worried about the situation, and said:

“I am confident that we will be able to deal with any challenges that might arise so that the Christkindelmarkt can continue to be part of the Leeds Christmas experience for many years to come.”

UK’s Regional Divides Only Widening, Report Claims

Elliott Hodgkin
News Editor

Regional divides in the UK are among the worst of all developed countries, recent research has revealed.

In a report entitled ‘Divided and Connected’ published November 27th, British think tank IPPR North revealed enormous disparities across the nation, particularly between the North and South, highlighting the harmful effects of a centralised government on the economy.

The government’s economic focus on London and the South East has left other areas of UK dealing with significant struggles with productivity, income and health. Employment opportunities also vary drastically from town to city.

In terms of mortality rates, northern cities such as Blackpool, Hull and Manchester fared far worse than regional cities in Poland and Turkey.

The situation is reportedly only worsening and has been provoked by the 3-year period of increasing uncertainty surrounding Brexit, which continues to dominate the government’s primary focus.

The regional disparity is also thought to have been a significant factor that led to 52% of the population voting for the UK to leave the European Union in 2016 with a significant proportion of those votes coming from the poorest towns in the country.

Luke Raikes, one of the researchers behind the report, commented:

‘Both political and economic power are hoarded by a handful of people in London and the south-east

and this has damaged all parts of the country, from Newcastle to Newham.’

The report claims that restricting the majority of development initiatives to the capital has disadvantaged the potential of northern England, which has an economy greater than many entire nations in the EU.

As the general election looms, the think tank has urged politicians to increase funding and provide a greater degree of autonomy across the country to start bridging these significant gaps.

However, the lack of clear strategies laid out by the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrats parties indicates that, regardless of the election’s outcome, Brexit and the capital will remain the UK’s top priorities.



Credit: Cancer Research

Race for Life: Leeds Schools Encouraged to Win Race Against Cancer

Lea-Sophie Montjoie

Charity 'Cancer Research UK' is inviting primary and secondary schools in Leeds to take part in the Race for Life.

This racing event helps to fund much needed cancer research with the intention of trying to save lives. While the event is only held once annually in Leeds for the public, the charity is now urging schools to start their own races all year round.

We're calling on parents, pupils and staff in Leeds to unite and help make a real difference in the fight against the disease.

Schools can pick any day that suits their academic calendar, any location that is accessible to them and any distance that suits their students. After signing up, schools receive a free package to help with the

planning and execution of the event. The package includes sponsorship sheets for all participants, check-lists for the event-organisers, back signs so every student can decide who they are running for, and medals for everyone.

Some schools could also be aided by Cancer Research UK representatives on the day of the event and throughout the fundraising process.

Kay Patchett, event organiser of Race for Life in Leeds said "By taking part in Race for Life Schools they could help to turn discoveries made in the lab into new, better treatments for patients in the city and throughout the UK."

In the UK one in every two people will be diagnosed with cancer at some point in their lives and one person gets diagnosed with cancer every day in Yorkshire alone. It therefore comes as no surprise that cancer is the leading cause of death amongst UK citizens.

Cancer Research is actively trying to combat the disease and the charity is the world leader in the research they do. They research all 200 types of cancer

and survival rates have doubled since the 1970s.

Much of this success can be attributed to the work of Cancer Research UK. The charity receives no funds from the government and relies on events like the Race for Life to fund research about how to prevent, diagnose and treat cancer.

Kay Patchett from Race for Life further commented that "sadly, most of us know someone whose life has been touched by cancer. That's why we're calling on parents, pupils and staff in Leeds to unite and help make a real difference in the fight against the disease."

Norris Bank Primary School has taken part in the scheme before and a spokesperson from the school adds that "Cancer has hit our school hard in the last few years with pupils, close family members and staff being affected. Our free kit arrived and the medals were a big hit with the children. The messages some of them wore on their backs for the day goes to show why Cancer Research UK is such a great cause to raise money for."

Experts Claim Flooding is the Biggest Generational Betrayal since World War II

Jian Feng

Whilst the nation's gaze is locked onto the upcoming general election, the worst sets of floods since 2007 have been causing chaos in northern England. The most severely affected areas have been Yorkshire and the Humber, the Midlands and parts of South East England.

Those unfortunate enough to live in areas particularly affected by the floods over the last month have faced significant disruptions.

A case in point is in Doncaster where a large number of people were stranded in a shopping centre because it was not safe to leave the building. Also, the majority of public transport has been suspended in the city.

Environment experts blame the Conservative government for their lack of effective action on

tackling global warming which is the reason behind such significant flooding. Dr Hugh Ellis, the director of policy at the Town and Country Planning Association, has said that more action must be taken by government, new laws and a new department especially dedicated to lessening the impacts of the crisis should be established.

He argued that the government's failure to deal with climate change is the "greatest political betrayal by politicians for the future generation".

This will only add to the mounting public pressure for politicians to finally act to reduce the UK's emissions. Students in various cities across the UK have held climate change protests over the past months.

Besides Brexit and the future of the NHS, it is one of the key topics which has dominated the agenda of the

general election.

The environment agency has and continues to invest over £600m on more than 220 flood defence projects in the UK between 2015 and 2021. Over 9,004 homes will be better protected from flooding through this round of funding.

However, critics question whether or not this is enough to protect communities from the effects of flooding.

For the upcoming week forecasters have warned of further flooding and disruption in south Wales with heavy downpours expected. Flooding is not going to go away.

To minimise the impacts of it and of other natural hazards caused by climate change, the government should invest more in reducing carbon emissions and make sure they do not betray the future generation.



Credit: Leeds Language Centre

Leeds City Council Proposes New School for Special-Needs Kids in Leeds

Yasmine Moro Virion

Leeds Council is planning to launch a special, fee-free school in Headingley. The new establishment would be called the Specialist Inclusive Learning Centre (SILC) and it would substitute the current Grammar School at Rose Court, located in North Leeds.

If the Council is able to negotiate a deal with the landlord of the current school buildings, the new education centre for children with special needs could be open from September 2021. The demand for education in the area has increased and the number of young people with special needs in Leeds has grown as well.

The new school will provide 150 children with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) the opportunity to learn in an environment where specialists and adequately trained staff can give them the necessary support they need, along with other individuals of the same age.

SILC would collaborate with a bigger school, therefore creating a further 50 places for children with special needs so that they can receive a good education in the right environment.

It was announced that the public can participate in

an online survey and two public meetings to express any opinions about the future establishment. The gatherings will be held on the 3rd of December at Rose Court and on the 11th of December at the Merrion House.

The executive member for Learning, Skills and Employment, Councillor Jonathan Pryor, suggested attending the drop-in sessions and completing the online survey to let the Council know what residents' opinions are about the new project.

The proposal comes amid criticism in August due to the falling percentage of pupils with special needs attending mainstream schools in Leeds and the subsequent rise of their presence in special schools. The Yorkshire Evening Post has highlighted this through a statement by the Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) directly blaming the government for its lack of action to solve this discriminatory issue.

Children who have special needs usually get SEN support in schools with different objectives depending on the age of the pupil. On the government's website it is subdivided into 'Children under 5', 'Children between 5 and 15' and 'Young people aged 16 or over' sections.

If a child needs additional support from teachers

and experts then parents can request an Education, Health and Care (EHC) assessment from their local government.

Leeds City Council actively promotes the charity Scope to provide support for families with special needs thanks to a free helpline and online community. Everyone can donate to help them as well as contribute to create a society where "all disabled people enjoy equality and fairness".

Leeds City Council further provides support for families and provides short descriptions which explains the roles of the Child Health and Disability team (CHAD), the occupational therapy team and the regional specialist paediatric team. Furthermore, the website also provides a helpline and a live chat for anyone needing immediate help.

According to a statistical study by the government, as of January 2019 over 14% of students have 'SEND'. The most demanded support for them would be for Speech, Language and Communications Needs.

Over the last decade more than half of pupils in State-funded primary school across England have special needs. It is clear that the need for support within educational establishments is increasingly called for.

West Yorkshire Has Third-Highest Rates of Sexual Offences In Country

Elena Sotelo
Features Editor

Continued from front page...

Data published by the Office of National Statistics in 2018 shows West Yorkshire to be one of the counties in England and Wales with one of the highest figures for recorded sexual offences, coming third to London and Greater Manchester. A crime map provided by police services

for Leeds North West shows the student-dominated wards of Hyde Park and Headingley have high numbers of cases of 'violent crimes and sexual offences'. In October 2019, 134 crimes of this nature were recorded by the police forces in these neighbourhoods. It must be noted here too that these figures will include crimes that are not sexual offences.

Concerns have long been raised by students regarding safety in the area, with a petition posted online this year

calling for more street lighting to be installed around Woodhouse Moor.

Several local initiatives have also been launched to promote street safety for the residents of Leeds, particularly women. Amongst them, it is worth highlighting Reclaim the Night.

This is a female-led demonstration that will take place on the 7th of December in order to protest the dangers for women can face at night. The demonstration was started in the city after the Yorkshire Ripper murders

from 1969 to 1980. It is now held in multiple cities across the UK.

If you have experienced a sexual offence, call 999 to report the incident. In case you do not want to contact the authorities.

There is a Sexual Assault Support Line at 01708 765200 or the Leeds Nightline at 01133801285. Groups such as Survivors West Yorkshire and Support after Rape and Sexual Assault also provide support locally.



Image: Sofia Stuart Leeson

Not A Typical Year Abroad in Hong Kong

Over the last 6 months, Hong Kong protests have paralysed the city and severely impacted the lives of those living there. Sofia Stuart Leeson talked to 3 European exchange students in Hong Kong to find out how their year abroad has been affected by civil unrest and police clashes.

Sofia Stuart Leeson

Hong Kong is a popular destination for exchange students around the globe. Recently, though, the political situation has put a lot of pressure on both them and the universities they come from to decide whether or not it is safe to remain there.

Some students have even been offered flight tickets to return immediately, regardless of the duration of their exchange program. Others, however, have not had the same experience.

"I contacted my uni many times since the beginning because I felt unsafe and couldn't study at all and even couldn't get back from uni sometimes," explains Stella. "They told me that if I wanted to go back I had to redo my exchange the year after and I would lose everything because the situation wasn't dangerous."

Stella, 22, is an Italian student who lives in Prince Edward, an area where civilians are constantly exposed to violent clashes between protesters and the police force.

"The protests in Prince Edward have been very very violent since the beginning due to what happened in the MTR at the end of August," Stella says, in reference to Hong Kong's Prince Edward metro train line (MTR), where videos caught police using brutal force on protesters and civilians alike.

Stella has also experienced the protests head-on. "Once I was coming back from the beach in central and the bus just stopped driving because there were clashes in Causeway Bay and we had to walk all the way over the bridge," she says. "We wanted to take the MTR, but it was full of police throwing tear gas and we started coughing and our eyes started burning so we had to run."

Metro stations (MTR) in Hong Kong have been subjected to many clashes between protesters and the police, with Prince Edward station being one of the main ones. Stella is one of the many people who have witnessed what occurs there and says, "the exits of Prince Edward were completely closed off and people pray outside the station."

Stories like this are frequent amongst students. Rhys, 21, is a student from the University of Leeds, and he feels that the university has been very supportive towards his studies and safety.

"I have been in contact with the University of Leeds throughout this time, and they have listened and responded to how I feel about the situation," says Rhys. "My decision to stay in Hong Kong until my pre planned flight home has been respected, though they have also offered me the option of returning home if I so wanted."

Rhys recalls how he used to joke about the situation in Hong Kong before arriving. "Before coming to Hong Kong, my friends and I would regularly make jokes about the protests and how my exchange was definitely going to be cut short. It was only a few days ago that I have come to accept that we might be right," he recalls. "It started with gatherings in the streets, and then the MTR began closing early, disrupting the regular flow of city life."

"I was in Mongkok a few weeks ago with some friends when protests were happening," Rhys explains. "It was kind of crazy because people were continually running away and then coming back as the police moved around the streets and used their water cannons." A few hours later, police vans showed up and protesters dispersed.

Rhys also recalls the way in which protests were organized. "There were layers to the protesters, with the hardcore all in black with masks at the front standing

off with police then as you got further away it was more just general locals that were interested," he explains and adds that, in addition to the protesters, there was "of course the odd foreigner like us."

Many of them have decided to leave on their own accord. Stella, for example, says she will "leave Hong Kong ASAP now and I will do my exams online from Indonesia". She plans to return to Europe in January.

"We find ourselves with classes cancelled for the semester and the student residence occupied and barricaded by student protesters in preparation for attacks by police," says Rhys. "Seeing the university campus vandalized and destroyed, windows shattered and walls covered in paint conjures some kind of indeterminate emotion in me."

The protesters have also been conscious of the way they have been tackling the situation. Nora, a 22 year old student, notices that they have "tried different tactics and when they realized that what they did wasn't helping or caused greater harm, they apologized and then they tried to make it better."

Many students still find the positives in the experience of going abroad. "I don't regret coming to Hong Kong, but I can't deny this has been one of the most challenging experiences I had so far," explains Stella.

Rhys has similar sentiments, saying he feels "incredible sympathy for the protesters here in Hong Kong." He recalls how "friends that I have made, bonded with, and experienced so much with have disappeared seemingly overnight."

Civilians in Hong Kong are still out there protesting and risking their lives for less control from Mainland China. Rhys added: "I can now only wish the protesters the best in their continued struggle and that the brutality they are experiencing comes to a peaceful end soon."



Social Media's Division Over Political Ads

Facebook stands increasingly alone in the debate over political ads, with Twitter's banning of ads showing a clear divide between two social media giants on modern democracy's most pertinent problem.

Dom Friel

In October, Facebook refused to take down an advert containing false information about Joe Biden, who is running for the Democratic nomination for President. The post, funded by a pro-Trump super-PAC, claimed Joe Biden gave the Ukrainian attorney-general a billion dollars to not investigate his son.

The advert was clearly inflammatory, untrue and prompted new questions about Facebook's commitment to the truth. Rival candidate Elizabeth Warren's campaign ran a similarly false advert claiming that Facebook CEO Zuckerberg endorsed Donald Trump for President, in order to expose how easy it was to spread false claims on the platform. Democratic Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez followed these concerns up, grilling Zuckerberg over whether a Democrat could publish false adverts to which Zuckerberg admitted they "probably" could.

Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey announced his company's intention to ban all political advertising from November 22nd. The announcement intensified debate around big tech's responsibility to prevent misinformation, but also on the future of online political ads entirely. In explanation, Dorsey tweeted:

"Internet political ads present entirely new challenges to civic discourse: machine learning-based optimization of messaging and micro-targeting, unchecked misleading information, and deep fakes. All at increasing velocity, sophistication, and overwhelming scale."

Twitter later clarified the details of the ban – some forms of political ads will still be allowed on the platform. These will be adverts either funded by non-profit organisations or adverts designed to highlight social issues such as encouraging people to vote. The motivations behind Twitter's policy exchange do appear to be based in the ethical implications that continuing to carry political ads would entail. The CEO's ended his thread by highlighting that wealthier groups are able to buy more reach compared to competitors with lower budgets:

"A final note. This isn't about free expression. This is

about paying for reach. And paying to increase the reach of political speech has significant ramifications that today's democratic infrastructure may not be prepared to handle. It's worth stepping back in order to address."

The issue of targeted, political ads has become a hot topic in media circles and pop culture alike. Documentaries such as Netflix's 'The Great Hack' have helped us learn what the problem is, but little so far has been done to tackle it. Many see this move by Twitter as the first significant attempt to do so. Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg was quick to respond to the announcement and offered an opposing view of the role of political advertisement during a speech in Georgetown:

"Given the sensitivity around political ads, I've considered whether we should stop allowing them altogether... But political ads are an important part of voice – especially for local candidates, up-and-coming challengers and advocacy groups that may not get much media attention otherwise. Banning political ads favours incumbents and whoever the media covers."

Zuckerberg's argument that political ads are an important element of free speech and democracy is an interesting one. Political ads in their entirety are nothing new, and have long been part of western democracies. There is, however, no formal regulation of online political ads. This means there is nothing to prevent the dissemination of false information, and Facebook's decision to exempt political ads from their own policy of banning false statement in paid advertisements does nothing to counter the problem. Not only this, but Facebook uses third party fact checkers to test the validity of high-profile posts, and yet again, Facebook has given politicians an exemption from this scrutiny.

It is also difficult to see how banning online political ads is anti-democratic. In Zuckerberg's own words, the success of social media is rooted in its ability to connect people and provide a platform for people to share their voice. Posts traditionally gain traction organically because their content gains a reaction from people who see it. This can mean that absolute new-comers will take time to increase their reach, but that is natural of all forms of campaigning. Political advertisements can

therefore be seen as a distortion in the online market for political voice and reach, as explained by Dorsey.

It is worth considering criticisms for Twitter's policy change. Cornell University Professor of Communications J Nathan Matias has spoken of potential unintended consequences of the policy. He believes there will be more use of bots and 'hybrid human-software' in order to increase the reach of posts artificially without the use of ads. Matias also warned that Twitter need to have an effective policy for judging what constitutes political content, otherwise they could do damage to the health of public discourse.

Last week, Google announced it will crack down on political advertising by limiting advertisers' ability to target voters by affiliation and demographic, and also tighten a ban on 'demonstrably false claims' and 'deepfakes.' Similarly, Snapchat will begin to fact check any political ads on their platform, whereas TikTok will ban them all together.

As more and more companies change their code of conduct, the calls for Facebook to follow will grow. As a company, their stance on the issue is increasingly placing themselves alone in the online environment. This may well mean that we see a U-turn from the company sometime soon. However, no one can predict that is the likely course of action. After all, Facebook have no legal requirement to join the rest of big tech over this issue, and although Zuckerberg rejects any notion that their decision is financially motivated, their share price continues to rise. Twitter, on the other hand, saw a slight dip in their value after their initial announcement.

It is generally agreed big tech companies need a code of conduct regarding political ads, but that still leaves a lot of unknowns for online spaces. The current debate highlights the need for formal regulation. Democratic societies need suitable checks and balances, and until now social media has been a free for all for political advertising. As our societies evolve, it is becoming more imperative that regulatory systems do too. A move to outline what is acceptable would likely be welcomed by most CEO's, as it could help remove themselves from controversy as ultimately, they are not law makers.



Image: Peter Macdiarmid

Second Arab Spring, Second Arab Winter

A worldwide spark of civil uprising has taken governments for surprise this year, both in the East and West. Ted-Orme Claye explores the re-emergence to the Arab Spring movement and its consequences.

Ted Orme-Claye

As the UK prepares for a potential change of government via yet another election, many other countries have been witnessing movements aiming to bring about political change through street protesting. From Latin America to Hong Kong to France, people have been pouring out into the streets to protest for a variety of causes, all of them aimed against their respective governments. A region which has seen extensive street protests has been the Middle East. Anti-establishment protests have taken place in Lebanon, Egypt and Iraq, and outside of the Arab-world Iran has also seen large street demonstrations. In Tunisia, one of the few countries to emerge from the 2011 Arab spring in a state of stability, elections have brought a popular anti-government candidate into office, although some issues remain.

Based on these developments, it could certainly be argued that these protests could constitute a “Second Arab Spring,” albeit a much smaller one than the wave of rebellion which took that region by storm in 2011. As with the protests which swept the Middle East eight years ago, these new activists are demanding an end to government corruption, repression and unemployment. In Iraq, the protesters have been overwhelmingly Shia Muslims in the south of the country. Many are unhappy with the usual problems of rampant government corruption and high youth unemployment, which currently stands at 25%.

There is also resentment towards Iranian influence on the Iraqi government. In fact, many of the pro-government militias which have cracked down on the protesters have been hard-line Shia groups affiliated with the Iranian government. The crackdowns have been repeatedly violent – it has been estimated that by the

end of October roughly 200 protesters had been killed and 2,000 wounded. Interestingly, although the Shias of Iraq were largely happy with the removal of Saddam Hussein in 2003, many now feel that a return to rule by a strongman figure would actually be beneficial for the country. At least this kind of rule would be efficient they argue, as opposed to the many difficulties faced by the current administration in Iraq, which is based on a power sharing agreement between Shia Arabs, Sunni Arabs and Kurds, the country’s three main ethnic and religious divisions.

The Lebanese protesters have been demonstrating for similar reasons, in addition to other major issues such as electricity shortages and undrinkable water. The protesters are largely calling for the resignation of Prime Minister Saad Hariri, who has ignored all of their grievances. As with Iraq, much of the issues with the Lebanese government lie with its structure, which entails a power sharing agreement between Shias, Sunnis and Christians. Although the agreement helped quell ethnic and religious tensions following the end of the country’s civil war in 1990, it has allowed former warlords to make the transition into politics, leading to rampant corruption. The protests in Iraq and Lebanon clearly demonstrate that despite ongoing civil wars in the region many people are still clamouring for reform and change.

However, the possibilities of this change occurring are very slim and the country’s respective governments are very resistant. There is a real danger that the protests could lead to greater instability in the region. Following the 2011 Arab Spring the “Arab Winter” followed, in which the protests for greater democracy and reform deteriorated into bloody civil wars between the different country’s respective governments and various religious

and political factions. Libya, Syria and Iraq are three of the worst cases. With the political situation in Iraq again destabilising, many in the country are worried they will slip back into the state of civil war which dogged the country since the 2003 US-led invasion.

The events in Iraq and Lebanon are also heavily tied to the events in Syria. At its height, the so-called Islamic State group controlled a great deal of territory in Iraq as well as in Syria, and made the northern Iraqi city of Mosul its capital. With Turkey’s invasion of northern Syria in full swing, the Kurdish forces have largely abandoned the prisons they were using to hold captured IS fighters, many of whom have now escaped. Many fear this could lead to a resurgence of the group. A resurgent IS could take advantage of the deteriorating situation in Iraq to attempt to recapture its former strongholds such as Mosul and Fallujah. This could also have some negative impacts on Lebanon, as the Shia Hezbollah militant group, which is a political party in Lebanon, have been an active participant in the Syrian conflict.

The situation regarding Israel and Palestine could also potentially threaten Lebanese stability. Following the Israeli assassination of Palestinian Islamic Jihad leader Baha Abu al-Ata in Gaza tensions have been escalating, with rockets being fired at Israel from Gaza, who have responded with air strikes. So far, at least 34 Palestinians have been killed, but no Israelis. With conflicts escalating all around Lebanon, there is a major worry that the country is also at risk of destabilising. Although the protests against corruption and poverty undeniably have positive motives, the potential spill-over from the ongoing wars in Syria, Libya, Yemen and Israel-Palestine could threaten to turn this “Second Arab Spring” into a “Second Arab Winter.”



Image: Disability Arts

Disability and Sex: We Shag Too

As part of Disability History Month, Isabel Ralphs sits down with Liberation Coordinator Leo Adams to talk about all things sex, representation and disability in the mainstream culture.

Isabel Ralphs

If you've been anywhere near the Union recently, you will likely have noticed the plethora of posters adorning the walls in celebration of 'Disability History Month' which is running from this month through to next at LUU. Whether you have experience of disability first-hand, second-hand or not at all, it's a great opportunity to find out a bit more about a topic that really doesn't get spoken about enough.

As part of the many events going on around campus, earlier this month, Liberation Coordinator Leo Adams ran a frank discussion entitled 'Disability and Sex: We Shag Too'.

Through history and their own personal experiences, Leo explained how disabled people are trapped between a rock and a hard place when it comes to sex, either being fetishised and gawked at in Freak Shows or completely desexualised and trapped by legislation that makes the subject even more taboo to discuss.

I sat down with Leo to get more of an insight into the subject and dissect their thoughts on what more needs to be done to change how disability is currently perceived in the mainstream.

How do you think society currently views disabled people with regards to sex?

I think there's a very unfortunate either/or situation. Half the time, disabled people are weirdly fetishised – there are literally entire communities (called devotees) fetishising disabled people and our mobility aids and not viewing us as people. And then the other half is people being consistently very amazed that we're people who have sex and have relationships. This means that there aren't many healthy expectations for disabled people when it comes to sex.

Where do you think the responsibility for change lies?

It's probably a mix of everything. I think people just don't consider that disabled people want to have sex and relationships and I think positive media portrayal of this kind of thing is a really important way to open people's

minds.

I'd also like to see more attention devoted to telling disabled people it's ok to have sex and having those conversations to build their confidence up as well as more awareness of disability brought into sex education.

There's a really good slogan from the early days of disability activism: 'nothing about us without us'. Any legislative change needs to be made with a wide range of disabled people consulting on it rather than a group of non-disabled people deciding what they think is best for us.

Do you think big films like 'Me Before You' and 'The Fault in Our Stars' are doing positive things for disabled people?

I think any representation that isn't actually paying disabled actors is incredibly hollow representation. When you want our stories but don't want our authenticity – that's not the kind of representation I want to see but it is the kind that non-disabled audiences want to see because often it's a very stereotypical and unchallenging way of looking at the disabled experience.

The narrative that most of the films currently out there create is one where disability is the central conflict in the relationship and I just don't think that's true. For most disabled people, once we're in a relationship, the central conflict isn't about disability; it's about all the standard, weird things about being a person. Disability is just another aspect of it.

What would your ideal portrayal of disability in mainstream TV/Film look like?

My ideal portrayal might be different to my other disabled peers. So I don't want there to be one, I want there to be so many that everyone's got a different favourite film about a disabled person because there's so much to choose from. You can never go wrong with more things than we have currently.

How do laws in the UK work to help or hinder the relationship between sex and disability?

Laws like the Mental Capacity Act and the Sexual

Offences Act are put in place to try and help but actually end up making things more difficult for people who are perfectly able to give consent; just not in traditional ways.

I think the main issue with them is that they're very difficult to get to grips with. It means that for people who live in independent living centres and residential care; their carers don't address sex with them or present it as an option at all because there's a lot of confusion surrounding the laws. It's putting up so many obstacles between disabled people and the perfectly normal desire to have sex by creating an atmosphere of restriction and confusion surrounding it.

As a disabled person, do you feel like people tend to avoid talking about the topic of sex with you?

Yes and no. In medical settings, talking to professionals, there's a weird, unspoken assumption about what form my sex life does or doesn't take. But strangers I've spoken 5 words to or never met before will just stop me in the middle of talking about something else and be like 'but can you have sex though?'; as if they're somehow entitled to know all the details of my sex life.

Would you prefer that the conversation was more open and people felt comfortable asking questions or would you rather people respected your privacy and kept their questions to themselves?

It differs from person to person – I know people who hate talking about the sex that they have and I know people who don't mind talking about it, but that's not necessarily because of their disability, it might just be because of who they are as a person. For me disability isn't the be all and end all of my sex life, it's just a facet of it and I think that's what people need to understand. It's to be approached in the same way as all aspects of my personal life rather than the one thing that dominates anything.

Ultimately it's about letting disabled people form the narrative themselves about the sex that they have.

On December 3rd, the NUS Disabled Students Officer will be delivering a talk on disabled activism. This will be followed by a panel talk in the evening, run by Leo, about what the future looks like for disabled people.



BEAT-ing Eating Disorders This Christmas

Society Editor Jess Farmer discusses the work and aims of LUU BEAT Society during this festive period.



Jess Farmer

LUU BEAT society is a new society to the University of Leeds this academic year. Their primary aim is to raise awareness of eating disorders on campus, while hosting some regular fund raising and well-being events.

I decided to write about this society as BEAT is a charity which raises money for those suffering with eating disorders, an illness which I have a personal connection with and want to educate people about. Furthermore, Christmas can be an incredibly difficult time for those suffering with eating disorders with lots of pressures emerging around family and food therefore, I feel this article is really important in this Christmas issue.

Around this difficult time of the year BEAT has a helpline which will be open from 4-8pm from December 24th to the 1st of January for anyone struggling over the Christmas period.

As a relatively new society they are really eager to encourage more students to volunteer and get involved.

You can get involved by attending weekly meetings, as they hold meetings every two weeks and you can join the society for free via the LUU societies page under the volunteering section. You should

also go over to the 'LUU BEAT society' Facebook page to receive regular updates and get involved. As a new society, the volunteers and committee members have achieved some great things in their first semester. They have already collaborated with LUU Mind Matters and completed a five mile hike to raise money for BEAT and Papyrus.

Furthermore, they collaborated with Ballet Society and held a pub quiz where they successfully raised £157.20.

The society is also working with the School of Psychology to help with the delivery of sensitive topics surrounding eating disorders and food. Alongside all of this, the society have been working alongside personal trainers at The Edge gym to help others notice signs of eating disorders and develop healthy relationships with exercise.

LUU BEAT society have some really exciting events coming up this year too. On the 4th of December they are hosting a mindfulness activity which will include some fun stocking decorating. They will also be involved in a charity event at The Edge on the 6th of December where personal trainers will be doing a 12 hour cycle for Mind charity and LUU BEAT society will have a stall. If you would like to volunteer for this event please send a message to the Facebook page for LUU BEAT society.

The society will also be involved in an upcoming panel event. BEAT are part of a campaign to increase training and awareness of eating disorders in health-related degrees as Undergraduate Medical students currently receive less than two hours of eating disorder training during their degree. LUU BEAT society would love to hear from any medicine, nursing, dentistry and psychology students to discuss their opinions on this issue and gain their support in the campaign.

The society also has big plans for Eating Disorder Awareness Week, which falls in March 2020. LUU BEAT society would love to collaborate with other societies during this week, last year many societies

wore colourful socks to raise awareness for the week as part of a 'sock it to eating disorders' campaign. The society would love people to volunteer to help fundraise or collaborate as part of this important week for BEAT charity.

The society is also working to raise awareness of available treatment and resources to those who may be suffering with an eating disorder. BEAT have a free dedicated student line (0808 801 0811) which is open 365 days a year from 12pm-8pm during the week and 4pm-8pm on the weekends and bank holidays. This is an anonymous opportunity to discuss your feelings with someone with some understanding of eating disorders.

Nevertheless, if you feel you are suffering with an eating disorder it is recommended to speak to a GP.

BEAT helplines can offer support and guidance during this process. If you would like to understand more information about eating disorder please visit, <https://www.beateatingdisorders.org.uk/>

This society is doing so many great things to raise awareness and make changes to help those with eating disorders and reduce the number of those affected by this ever increasing illness which is particularly prevalent amongst the student population.

If you would like to get involved in the society please visit the LUU BEAT Facebook page or contact leedsunibeat@gmail.com!

Fancy A Christmas Show This December?

Christmas time is the perfect time to go to see a show with friends when the nights are cold and dark. Brighten up your winter by going to see LUU Music Theatre Society's first semester production.

Watch their performance of the hilarious musical Avenue Q, with four performances from Thursday 5th December to Saturday 7th December at Pyramid. Save your money for Christmas presents with tickets for just £7. They boast a history of professional standard and high-quality shows, so don't miss out on this semester's production.

Enjoy the show and get inspired for next semester, with their second show taking place in the summer.



In the Middle



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

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My Beautiful Dark Twisted Fantasy - Kanye West (2010)

Opening the decade, a cultivated rap album, with each beat on every track meticulously placed to take the listener on a journey at the hands of West's genius. Not his first album to receive mainstream success but arguably the one that marks Kanye's transition from a rapper to an artist who displayed immense talent in areas surrounding production. The level of production displayed throughout the album is thought out to an extent that cannot be rivalled by other big players in the genre, who can usually match his lyricism. In this way, standing out by marking a shift in the rap genre. This album paved the way for the last decade of rap music; more intrinsic concepts with a shift on focus to the production, pushing the boundaries of what rap music is. The album blends techniques that are unexpected on a record like this, especially for the time. This lifts the themes by exuding their meaning not only through words but through emotions evoked by often simple melodies and techniques found in genres usually far from this one. An album to be enjoyed by listeners who appreciate music with deep themes and heavy beats that take you from feeling unstoppable with tracks 'Power' and 'Monster', to contemplating your own downfalls in 'Runaway' and the downfall of society 'Who will survive in America?'. Kanye tackles a variety of subjects while still being introspective and personal; no track here is wasted. Kanye has never shied away from vulnerability in his works, but this album contains a rawness, displaying a deep understanding and dissatisfaction with oneself, but also the acknowledgment that to be human is to be flawed; you can't change everything about yourself when those flaws are also your biggest attributes. Kanye transcends the decade, with an album that's relevance is still felt today.

Jessica McCarrick



Born this Way - Lady Gaga (2011)

Coming straight off the success of *The Fame* and *The Fame Monster*, it was time for an image change for Lady Gaga. At this point, she was still early in her career and who knew if she'd be able to cultivate a legacy that would extend beyond her sophomore album? In comes *Born This Way* where Gaga turned the weird up 5000 and embraced discussions of religion, freedom, sexuality and feminism. The eponymous single when it was released became No.1 in over 25 countries. Since then, it has become the unofficial anthem of every Pride and has since become one of the best selling-singles of all time. Four of the album's singles debuted in the Top 10 in the US Billboard 100. When the album itself was released, it charted in the top 5 of every music chart in the entire world and sold more than a million copies in its first week - the highest in five years. *Born This Way* is bold for its embrace of American patriotism whilst simultaneously critiquing its lack of inclusiveness. Now it is unlikely you'll find any pop star who doesn't embrace the LGBT+ community in some way but Gaga was one of the first. Gaga's explicit embrace of the political turned off many in the religious and conservative right in America but set a precedent for recent pop music's embrace of counter-cultures, in particular the queer cultures of drag and ballroom culture.

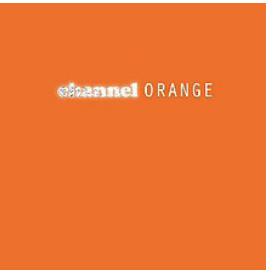
Ed Barnes



Channel ORANGE - Frank Ocean (2012)

Frank Ocean released his debut studio album *Channel ORANGE* in July of 2012. Before this album Frank Ocean was known for his part of the rap collective, Odd Future, along with those such as Tyler, the Creator and Earl Sweatshirt. The album won the Grammy award for Urban Contemporary Album, as well as being nominated for the overall album of the year. The album also includes the hit 'Thinkin Bout You', which was additionally nominated for the Grammy record of the year. However, the awards it was nominated for are not why this album will be remembered. *Channel ORANGE* is a bid for the album of the decade as it was the basis of the major cult following that Frank Ocean has accumulated throughout this decade. While there is a debate between Frank Ocean fans over which of his two albums are better, *Channel ORANGE* or *Blonde* (released in 2016), for me *Channel ORANGE* is what is considered R&B. This is because the album is packed full eccentric, jazzy, R&B records with standout features from Earl Sweatshirt and André 3000. Seeing as Frank Ocean has been one of the most celebrated and impactful artist of this decade alone, *Channel ORANGE* must be considered for not only the best album of 2012, but for the best album of the decade.

Matthew Scates



Cupid Deluxe - Blood Orange (2013)

Blood Orange's first album came out in 2011, but it was the release of *Cupid Deluxe* in 2013 that was most pivotal for Dev Hynes' latest project, documenting the transition from indie-pop name to all-round artist. From the cheeky guitar work and pop-y synths on 'You're Not Good Enough' to the slinky percussion on 'It Is What It Is', *Cupid Deluxe* layers hit on hit, groove on groove. The record flirts with different styles and moods, tainting buoyant melodies with aching lyrics and forlorn saxophone solos, with Hynes' vocals effortlessly gliding from shimmer to snappy. There's a whole lot packed into 51 minutes. The album sees the sensual yet playful sound of Blood Orange refined with elaborate, noodley guitar work and strong vocal performances. Hynes is not just striking in the album's production, vocals and instrumentation, but also in his overall performance, with his presence in the accompanying music videos reinforcing this flair. *Cupid Deluxe* was formative for Hynes as an artist as well as for his audience: whilst it soundtracked an entire Tumblr generation's teenage years, it also marked an important turning point in his trajectory as a musician, laying the foundations for the two seminal albums he would deliver later in the decade.

Safi Bugel



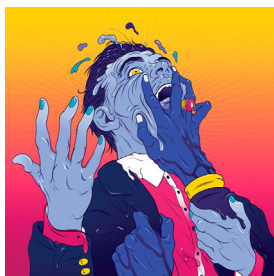
So Long, See You Tomorrow - Bombay Bicycle Club (2014)

Bombay are back in our lives and we couldn't be happier, but with the new year bringing a new release I think it's time to acknowledge the golden days of 2014. The London Indie rock band's fourth album *So Long See You Tomorrow*, named after the William Maxwell novel, is a euphoric and vivacious electronic-pop dream, and one that cannot be rivalled. Jack Steadman's iconic humanised vocals are elevated by distinct melodies and pulsing percussive progressions in the tracks like 'Overdone', and shoved to the sidelines as the band explore the marvels of electronica in iconic numbers like 'Carry Me.' Their endearing and enduring melancholic musings made the cut still, with 'Home By Now' a piano laden dream and 'Whenever Wherever' a polychoral masterpiece. Bombay have given us some belters, and the distinct 4-beat succession in 'Luna' and the oriental melodies of 'Feel' are known and loved by everyone born at the turn of the century, it's a fact. The titular track 'So Long See You Tomorrow' ties in everything the band do so beautifully, from subtle sweet vocals to building bass rhythms and it does so in style. This album is iconic for the cover art alone, but all in all I don't think you'll find a finer ten tracks all in one place.

Matthew Scates



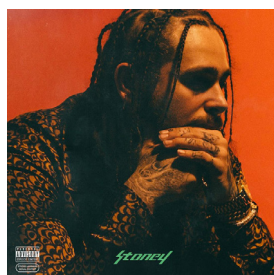
Get to Heaven - Everything Everything (2015)



Everything Everything, a quirky four piece from Manchester, have flown under the radar somewhat within the indie scene. Their unique falsettos and ravenous use of a variety of genres, merge within *Get to Heaven*. What results is a conceptual record that displays courage in tackling progressive subject matter, without the sacrifice of the sound fans have come to love. This album culminates what the band does best, a refreshing wave of complex sounds and spoken word-like lyrics that stop a listener in their tracks. The album certainly doesn't lack variety, with recognisable tracks 'Distant Past' and 'Spring/Sun/Winter/Dread' capturing bubblyness with undertones of a more serious distinction than most danceable indie tracks. Heavy hitters 'No Reptiles' and opener 'To the Blade' create a sense of determination whilst revelling in a nihilistic nature leaving interpretation to listeners who are left with ideologies questioned. The album in this way is determined a lot by the listener; switching off and enjoying the sound can leave you feeling uplifted, but analysing the more complexities scattered throughout the run time helps create a rather existential ponderance. An album that can give you different things at different times is hard to curate as masterfully as it is done here. While lead singer Jonathan Higgs was inspired by topics of extremism, this is not blatantly obvious when listening, and most songs carefully tread the line between metaphor and reality, making it accessible to all whilst still maintaining the band's integrity to openly discuss taboo subjects that are often left untouched by mainstream artists. In this way the album is one that doesn't have direct comparisons, not only pushing the boundaries in terms of musicality but also tone, a welcome deviation from other music that falls into this genre and a massively distinctive album for the history books.

Jessica McCarrick

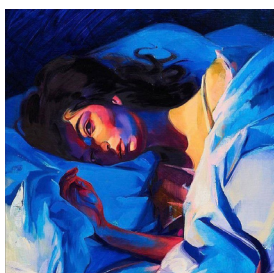
Stoney - Post Malone (2016)



Bursting onto the scene with *Stoney* left the world in awe at Malone's ability to craft music for the mainstream that was inspired by so many of the greats; not the standard hip-hop album you'd expect from a tattooed youngster when you compare it to others on the scene. This album contains an eclectic assortment of rock infused trap music with catchy melodies across the board, no matter the subject. The singles from the album are strong, and you'll still find them being played in the mainstream nearly five years down the line. This album helped create a solid link between the rap genre and indie music, which demonstrates why Malone has had so much mainstream success. Malone has an endearing quality that can be felt throughout the track list; after bearing his soul on album highlight 'Feeling Whitney' it is hard to think of him as a generic rapper who can't reveal any heartfelt sentiment in songs. *Stoney* is the perfect blend of danceable beats whilst still allowing Malone's self-scathing sentiments to flow freely. Post Malone is certainly one of the biggest names of the decade, with a hold on listeners that not many others can compete with. A name that will surely go down in the history books for bringing a new audience to the genre and always putting on a good show.

Jessica McCarrick

Melodrama - Lorde (2017)



There is no contesting that Lorde's sophomore album *Melodrama* was ground-breaking. Entirely shaking up the meaning of pop, it arguably defined the transition into adulthood for an abundance of young adults; navigating the realms of partying, first love, heartbreak, growing up and everything in between, it has quickly become the perfect soundtrack for a universal coming of age. At times it can feel as though the New Zealander is chronicling your own thoughts, yet simultaneously there are elements which are so heart-wrenchingly intimate it almost feels intrusive. Swaying wildly from the love letter to party culture that is 'Perfect Places', to the hauntingly earnest 'Writer in the Dark', *Melodrama* encompasses every emotion under the sun beautifully. Numerous artists have covered these themes before, but none quite have the knack that Lorde does in crafting something so vibrantly melancholic and liberating. On 'Supercut' she sings of a love that is "wild and fluorescent", a sentiment which arguably epitomises *Melodrama* as a whole: it's completely luminous, an experiment in flashing lights and colour, and to not include it on this list would do a complete disservice to an album that has birthed a revolution in pop that we're still reaping the benefits of now.

Nieve McCarthy

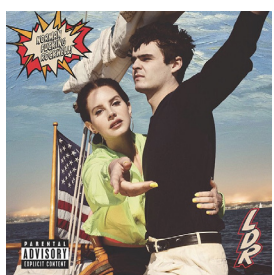
Joy as an Act of Resistance - IDLES (2018)



The release of *Joy as an Act of Resistance* in 2018 was a particularly defining moment for music – pure unadulterated, rage-filled punk, the album stands as a vital example of how politics and music can closely intertwine to carry forth a crucial message without compromising the quality of their tracks. Though finding its beginnings in a place of darkness, the album is undoubtedly a force for good, tackling issues of masculinity, immigration, grief and Brexit amongst a wealth of other topics. Blatantly outraged at the state of the world, and rightly so, frontman Joe Talbot somehow flits from inspiringly vulnerable to absolutely dripping in sarcasm – perhaps an accurate representation of the band as a whole. There's a sense of unpredictability to them; incendiary but comforting, the release of this album feels like a landmark moment in this decade. Sparking conversation and encouraging people to speak out whilst still maintaining their playful, compassionately riotous sound, *Joy as an Act of Resistance* was perfectly timed and perfectly done. Pioneering the way for more artists to embrace wearing their hearts, and their politics, on their sleeves, there is no denying that IDLES provided us with one of the most important albums of the last decade.

Nieve McCarthy

Norman Fucking Rockwell - Lana Del Rey (2019)



Norman Fucking Rockwell is the album of 2019 as it represents Lana Del Rey honing her brand of nostalgic Americana to its rawest form yet. whilst the sound is more understated and stripped back, the lyrics are taken to new extremes of poise and beauty. Make no mistake, Del Rey is unashamedly stereotypical and cliché. But this sickly sweet bad taste is what makes her unique, and this album has pushed it further than she ever has before. Obscurely long titles like 'Hope is a dangerous thing for a woman like me to have - but I have it' are so incoherent and uncommercial they make one stand up and take note of how much Del Rey is evolving. Rather than being ashamed of the tropism, *Norman Fucking Rockwell* chooses to place them front and centre. Referring to herself as '24/7 Sylvia Plath' Lana casually compares herself to arguably the greatest female poet of the modern age. No biggie. Rather than cowering in the face of the criticism of her previous albums, Del Rey has emerged victorious and proud of the sound he produces.

Iona Tompkins

Gig Round Up

Jake Bugg, 19/11/19, O2 Academy

There's no need to review the O2 Academy; it's a cornerstone of culture in Leeds and it'll stay that way for a long time. Jake Bugg's performance on Tuesday night truly showcased this fact. Since his 2011 Glastonbury performance and his 2012 self-titled debut album propelled him into the spotlight, Jake Bugg has developed a large and loyal following with his blues and folk heavy style of indie rock. In the same year his beloved Notts County FC were relegated from the football league, the Nottingham born and raised artist has started pumping out music again for the first time since 2017. He's done a collaborative single called 'Be Someone' with CamelPhat a combination I never expected to see but one that works as well as his new single 'Kiss Like the Sun'.

Coming onto stage Jake opened up with one of his classics 'Trouble Town', and soon after he sung his new track 'Kiss Like the Sun'. Jake Bugg's voice and style of music is perfect for the live performance; you can't really experience his music without seeing it live and hearing it for yourself. Still only young, his well-crafted music has earned him many dedicated fans with his gritty and sometimes touching lyrics, much of which is based on his experiences growing up on the Clifton council estate in Nottingham, once the largest public housing area in Europe.

He isn't the most charismatic character to perform on a stage but that's not the reason you go to see him. With an honest and folk style voice that makes you tear up just listening to it, it is hard not to be captivated by his rough and brooding vocals and melancholy guitar playing. One of the best things about a Jake Bugg gig is the simplicity of it. There's something a lot more emotional and captivating about watching just one man with a guitar put all his effort into entertaining a crowd, instead of a five-piece band accompanied by dizzying strobe lights and theatrics.

Having said that, his attempts at creating an old-school folk atmosphere can be ruined at times by the flashes of phone cameras, but such is the way of modern live music. He really did save the best till last playing, 'Seen It All', 'Simple Pleasures' and 'Two Fingers' back to back. It does make you wonder if he did this to make sure no one would leave early. But any true fan would be enchanted with the intimate nature of the gig. Overall, the show demonstrated that Bugg is still on form, still doing what he loves and still has bags of potential left in him.

Reis Tobolski

Ezra Collective, 19/11/19, Belgrave

The electrifying energy of Ezra Collective countered the biting cold, as the London five piece warmed the hearts of Belgrave Music Hall. With the release of their debut album *You Can't Steal My Joy* in April of this year, the jazz ensemble arrived back in Leeds following a sell-out show at The Wardrobe in 2018, yet with a wealth of new material and a slot on Glastonbury's Park Stage to boot.

Igniting their performance with 'The Philosopher', Ezra Collective saw the venue burst into life. The driving drums of Femi Koleoso, intertwined with the ever-smooth tenor sax of James Mollison, complimented new tracks including 'You Can't Steal My Joy' and 'What Am I to Do?' (no feature from Mr. Carner on this occasion unfortunately however). Yet it is difficult to not acknowledge Armon-Jones on keys, TJ Koleoso on bass and Jones on trumpet, with Femi further paying tribute to the involvement of all in the creation of the Collective's perfected sound.

Despite reeling off various influences upon the band, it is the uniqueness of Ezra Collective that perhaps makes them so enticing to watch. A performance rich in musicianship, it saw each member have their moment in the spotlight, enthralling the audience with majestic solos. Instilling constant notions of positivity throughout the performance, it was certainly a key task of Koleoso on drums to rid any atmosphere of adversity within the four walls of Belgrave.

'Juan Pablo' symbolled the end of an exhilarating, jazz-infused night. Encouraging the crowd to drop down to the floor, the eclectic audience had no hesitations in response to Koleoso's wishes. Leaping for joy, the vibrant crowd demonstrated an enjoyment no more matched than the five men on stage, who are likely to install such an emotion into crowds for years to come.

Rory Wiltshire



Fountaines D.C, 22/11/19, O2 Academy

It's always interesting to see how a band with relatively little material will tour. Fountaines DC, with only one album under their belt – Mercury prize-nominated 2019 banger *Dogrel*, which isn't a massively long album in its own right – offer a short, sour, spectacular concert experience.

Stylus is packed to burst. The Dublin lads cut in abruptly with 'Hurricane Laughter'. Behind swirling guitars there's evidently some mixing issues, but the band teeth it through in time for gig-goers to funnel down the Stylus stairs into an already packed pit, soundtracked by lead, Grian, disinterestedly telling us about his lack of available connection. It's blistering.

There's no gimmicks, stage design, or theatrics here tonight. Only a steady supply of smoke, some low lights, and the lads garbed in charity shop sweatshirts and bedhead. That isn't to say there isn't energy. A Leeds United scarf is tossed on-stage; the boys proudly parade it round, to much cheer, before tying it to a mic stand.

Around the halfway point, only some twenty-fiveish minutes in, 'The Lotts' takes a sombre tone, and the crowd catches its breath. Grian's voice is somehow both bored stupid and carrying boatloads of emotion, and the audience clearly adore it. It's smiles and moves all round here; and notably, the first safe opportunity to take photos, as suddenly up come a sea of phones.

Fountaines' stage presence and performance stands apart from the majority of their punk contemporaries – like IDLES or Shame - with such a minimalist, restrained approach and attitude. The only time the band speak – at all – during the hour is just before the final performance; the punters are told there will be no encore, and it has incredible effect. With the cutting drums of 'Big' beginning, the pit holds no energy back, and the room celebrates the final two minutes; "My childhood was small," Grian spits; "But I'm gonna be big." Judging from the success of *Dogrel*, and the number of sold-out dates – here, Europe, and the US – Fountaines D.C might just come to be.

Tom Poole

Swiftly moving on?

Lizzie Wright discusses Taylor Swift and her fight for the rights to play and use her own music freely against controlling record label - Big Machine Records.

Taylor Swift has had a hell of a year. From releasing her seventh studio album *Lover* to her role in the new *Cats* film, being crowned Artist of the Decade at the American Music Awards on November 24th is the cherry on top of the cake. It hasn't been smooth sailing however, with contractual issues arising from her previous label Big Machine Records selling the masters of Swift's music to Scooter Braun. Braun, who is known for managing some of the biggest names in the world (including Justin Bieber and Ariana Grande), was Swift's 'biggest nightmare' when it came to someone else acquiring the rights to her music, and the drama since has only proved this.

In a statement release to her social media on November 14th, Taylor announced that Scott Borchetta (who runs Big Machine Records) and Braun had blocked her from performing a medley of her previous hits at the AMAs, saying that it was considered 're-recording' the songs that Borchetta and Braun now own (everything pre-Lover). Whilst Swift is legally allowed to re-record her music from November next year, and has announced her intention to, she was not allowed to perform her own hits because the awards show is broadcast on television. Similarly, in the documentary Netflix have been developing on the past few years of Swift's life (which she announced the production of during her statement, no big deal), any music or performance footage has been declined by Borchetta and Braun for usage.

Swift has also claimed that Borchetta informed her team that she could play her music only if she agrees not to re-record her old music next year (which will allow her to own the tracks again) and to not mention him or Braun again in the media.

This attempt to silence her has been widely criticised by many public figures, from model friend Gigi Hadid to presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren. While a responding statement from Big Machine Record attempted to downplay Swift's claims, it failed to directly deny refusing to allow Taylor to play her old music.

This is part of a bigger issue between artists and distributors. Taylor Swift has consistently fought for the rights of smaller artists, in 2014 withdrawing her entire catalogue of music from Spotify because of their failure to give satisfactory pay, and then in 2015 threatening to have her hit album *1989* removed from Apple Music until they agreed to pay artists for streams during their 3 month free period. Whilst her motives may be questioned by her critics, it is undeniable that Taylor has done a lot for those that don't yet share her popularity, guaranteeing them a fairer share of streaming profits.

In the end, Big Machine Records released a final statement confirming that they had come to an agreement with Dick Clark Productions, who produce the AMAs, to allow Swift to perform her old songs on Sunday. However, it is obvious that this dispute isn't one that will be going away soon; Taylor Swift has a long fight ahead of her to claim back the music that she wrote and recorded. A win for her would set a new precedent in the music industry, and as she's no stranger to breaking glass ceilings, she's the best person to try.

Lizzie Wright



Credit: Evan Agostini

In the Middle with Kessie

Kessie is one of the most exciting DJs in the Leeds scene, bringing a blend of techno, chug and sleaze to the city's nightlife. Music and Clubs Editor Safi Bugel caught up with the Flesh in Tension and Love Muscle resident ahead of her New Year's Day slot supporting Objekt to hear about diverse parties in Yorkshire, creating a space in the scene and her favourite releases of the year.

You moved from York to Leeds - how do the music/club scenes compare?

They're significantly different! As York is a really small student city (you can get around York in one day!), the main night life is full of student bars and clubs like Fibbers and Kuda. I got super bored of it by the end of second year if I'm being honest! However, like me, there were other people who weren't satisfied by these club nights and just did their own thing at the Mansion venue — a few parties to name would be Blackbox, Animeaux and CLKWRK. When I came back from my year abroad I joined a collective called SKIN, which I'm still part of; they're a really great bunch of people focusing on drilling lots of experimental stuff but also whatever you want to play. Big silly energy basically! Henry, the founder of it, allowed me to just start playing in front of people: I was so rubbish at the time but he believed in the tunes I was playing and the moods I was trying to deliver. I have a lot of negative things to say about the York scene but it's also where I began DJing too. I would say there's a small minority of us who want something different and better than the usual student nightlife, and I can also see the thirst for more so it's promising!

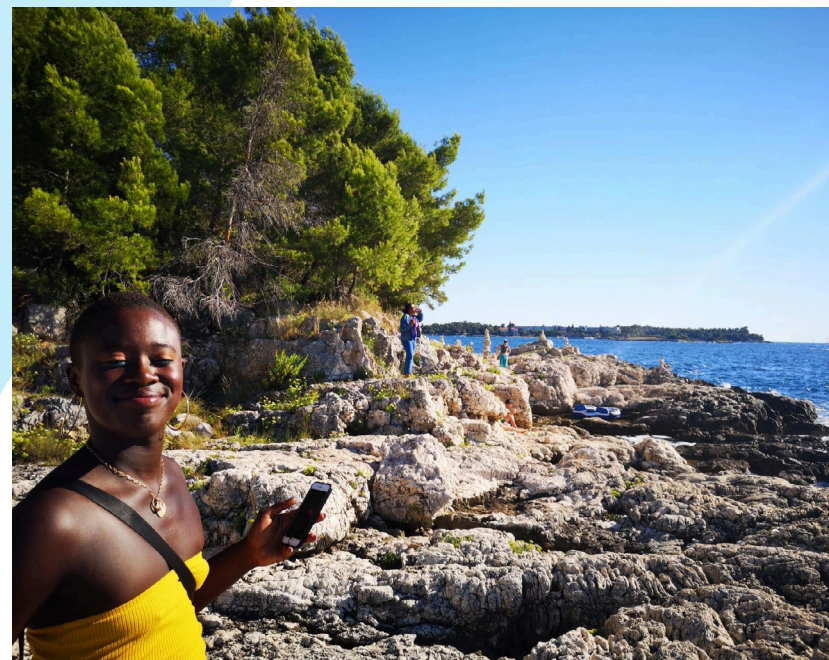
And for Leeds... wow, I've found a massive community here and I owe so many people so much. If you have an interest in any type of music there's a space for you. It's super vibrant, there's lots of venue spaces (although they need improvement with licensing) and core arts/radio stuff here too. I love Leeds for the DIY scene - something that wasn't so big in York. But yeah, there's a massive difference I think.

Its nice that you still look back on York so fondly and found room for you and likeminded people to create your own scene — do you find that Leeds is as malleable? [For putting on nights/starting groups like SKIN etc.]

Yes! Some people would argue that because there's already so many nights there is potential for competition, which could maybe be applicable for a city like Manchester, but I disagree. I look at Sable Radio and the types of people who come on the show and some of them are new or just starting out their new night. It's not easy putting on nights, but what I've seen in Leeds is that people are willing to help, be it finding venues, lending technics/CDJs, DJing for starting nights, etc.. I do feel there is a support network here for sure.

Big up Sable Radio! What other Leeds-based groups/projects do you think stand out?

Big question! Honestly, there's a lot of stuff in Leeds. I really, really love what Not Exotic (founded by plugkeisha) is about: I went to their first night at Wharf and it was amazing to see so many black and non-white people at the front doing their thing. The music slaps too; there's a sick blend of electronic, reggaeton and hip hop. I also reaaaally love Stretchy Dance Supply! I actually haven't gone to one of their nights (yet), but I've been following the stuff they do on radio and the sounds are amazing! It's all fast and techy, and I don't think you're going to get that elsewhere up North. I loved how they brought out four female DJs for their night at Sheaf Street not so long ago. Big stuff really!



Some bias here since I am a resident of this party, but Flesh in Tension too! We recently put on our last party of the year and it was amazing to see so many queer people of colour present. People say black people don't like techno, but techno is black! So bringing the roots to the forefront is so key for us. We focus highly on maintaining a safe space for people so they feel welcome to explore their freaky fetishes (we have a playroom at our parties). Kat & Gellar, the main co-founders are absolutely brilliant in everything they do; the Uber PayPal pool is one fave thing of the party that stands out to me: it finds people's travel needs so they can get to and from the venue with no issue!

I honestly have so much to say about the DIY scene here, I could write a whole book.

FLESH IN TENSION THE DUNGEON DIP



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Yep, it is bizarre seeing the pioneers of these genres and movements being underrepresented today! Have you noticed a shift in this lack of representation since starting *Flesh in Tension*/ being involved with *Love Muscle*?

I think there's definitely been an improvement. People are interested in listening to different types of music and styles and there's a thirst for deeper forms of representation too. For *Flesh in Tension*, our aim is that we book queer people and queer people of colour and so far we've had Akua and SPFDJ. We have more plans to come! I've seen that when you do the outreach people do come. *Love Muscle* does a lot of outreach; Michael, the founder and my dear friend who I have so much respect for, has done a lot of work, and has more plans to continue doing so! I think I've noticed the shift when there's effort in the outreach. If people are told "hey, this party is for you", they'll come along. *Love Muscle* recently had *Shy One* and *Afrodeutsch*, and they've also had many other queer DJs being booked too. The aim is to keep it interesting otherwise you're not going to get the representation you need in party goers!

There's definitely been a strong step in the right direction! What's your favourite party to play and why?

Maybe *SKIN* because of how silly the crowd gets and you can be so random and people will still dig it. I love *SKIN* so much because everyone has their own weirdo style and there's no restrictions on what you play. I have huge respect for all the members. I also have a lot of fond memories of *SKIN* as we throw a lot of our nights at the Crescent Community Centre in York - there's been so many fun times there!

I also really enjoyed playing at *Fifth Motif* (a techno party) in October. I was doing the opening and since then, I have really grown in confidence and sharpened my approach to playing and being cohesive with moods and themes. I was also not in a good place mentally so I was sort of forced to dig a bit deeper and find moods that would help me express that. This changed my perception on being patient and building for a long time before you go heavy, too.

Speaking of strengthening your confidence and approach — you've landed yourself a support slot with *Objekt* in January [congrats!]. How do you feel about that?

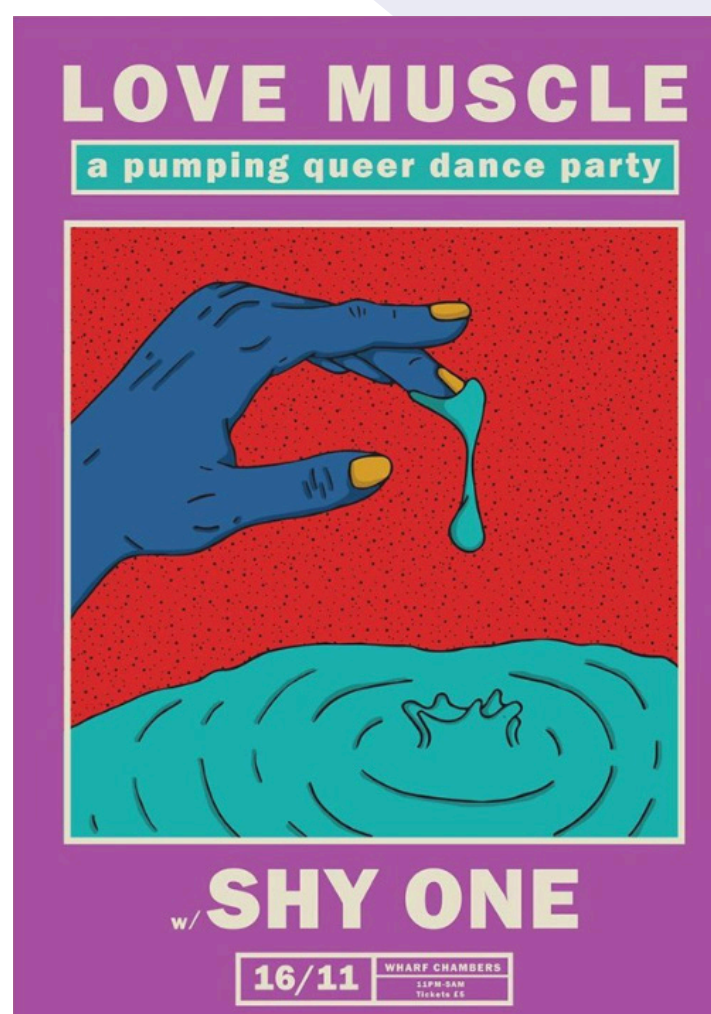
I have so many mixed feelings! I'm definitely a lot more confident since closing *Love Muscle* last weekend - I listened back to the recording and I just had to admit to myself that I can actually do this. However, I've been struggling a lot with 'imposter syndrome' and, for someone who's been playing for just over 2 years, I sort of look at the rest of the scene and think 'no way, someone else should have been asked instead!'. I think non-white people do put themselves down a lot more even when they're sick. I'm pretty sure I have had people scorning or even going like "what??" in response to being asked to play, loool! I am quite lowkey about playing though; I tend to not really make a fuss about things so it's very much a "if you know about me you know, if not then you will maybe". On a positive note though, I am very gassed I was asked, and I think it's going to be okay! I have no gigs between now and then so there's lots of time to prepare and mentally get myself ready for it, which is a key thing. I just need to not let my nerves get in the way!

If your past sets are anything to go by, I have every confidence you'll smash it! Finally, what have been your favourite releases of this year?

Thank you! I hope I do too, hehe. In terms of my favourite releases, I think the latest EP by *Blakaut* is up there. I can't actually spell it as it's in the Greek language but if you've listened to any of my sets, you'll notice that I rinse one or three tunes that have a synth/dark wave kinda vibe to it. It also has a late 80s retro feel to it too. I love the EP so much and some of them sound so good slowed down too. Check them out on *Bandcamp*, their other stuff is amazing!!!

Safi Bugel

People say Black people don't like techno, but techno is Black!



Catch Kessie supporting Objekt at Wire 01/01/20

Dear Father Christmas, Please can we have more Sustainable Presents?

The holiday season is a difficult time for even the most environmentally conscious among us. This Christmas, Millie Cross gives us four ways to make our gifting more sustainable.



According to House Beautiful (2018), the UK alone produces 300,000 tonnes of cardboard packing every Christmas. This is enough to cover the entirety of London's landmark Big Ben 260,000 times. Every year products bought as gifts are returned to stores around the country. In 2017, Forbes reported that 5 billion pounds' worth of retail returns were ending up in landfill as opposed to being resold. Are second hand Christmas presents and home-made presents acceptable? Are they really necessary? These statistics would definitely suggest they are! However, there seems to be a stigma around these sort of presents, why?

Last Christmas I decided to look in charity shops and make my own Christmas presents. At the time I wasn't necessarily doing this because of the planet but actually because my bank account was incredibly small. However, when you start to think about the statistics above and with the environment being such a topical issue, you can't help but think of the planet. My family and friends were moved more by the presents they received last year than those previously purchased from high-street chains. Below are ways you can be more sustainable this Christmas.

Charity shops:

Charity shops are great places to find gifts for people. It's amazing what people give to charity; jumpers, books, kitchenware...you name it they are all there. Charity shops sift through their donations to ensure that the quality of their products is high enough to be sold to customers. Headingley is home to so many great charity shops; Oxfam, Sue Ryder, British Heart Foundation and Mind. Finding gifts in charity shops allows you to give lovely gifts to friends and family as well as donating money to charity to help those who need it most.

Re-gifting:

Re-gifting a present often fills one with a sense of guilt. However, re-gifting does not mean you are ungrateful it simply means that the present you received may be more suited to somebody else than yourself. We've all been given something where we have thought "this doesn't suit me?" - why not gift it to someone who would suit it?! Re-gifting directly reduces the frightening number of gifts which end up in landfill each year.

Make your own:

Get creative and make your own presents! Creating your own presents through art work or photo collages can mean so much more than buying something from a high-street shop. Home-made cakes and truffles can make such lovely Christmas presents.

Buy experiences:

Often experiences can make nicer presents than purchasing actual products. Wreath making, afternoon tea, make-up classes, spa days...the list of fun is endless! While some experiences do leave an environmental footprint, this alternative helps avoid the possibility of wasted gifts ending up in landfill.

Trying at least one of these sustainable gift ideas will help to limit the amount of waste and landfill produced this Christmas. Whether your gifts are second-hand, re-gifted, or homemade, show Santa that putting slightly more thoughtful offerings under the tree can be even more exciting.

Millie Cross

THE GRYPHON
PRESENTS

GryphOn Air

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The Coats of Autumn/Winter 2019

Chilly? Millie Cross shows us why shearlings and puffas will be your favourite staples this winter with some aspirational items.



Credit: Net a Porter



Credit: farfetch



Credit: Prada



Credit: Net a Porter



Credit: Net a Porter



Credit: Net a Porter

Top line left to right: Moncler @ Net-a-porter £1,150, Ines & Marechal @ farfetch £2,863, Prada £1,390.

Bottom line left to right: Templa £1,440 @ Net-a-porter £1,440, Off White @ farfetch £1,445, Kenzo @ Net-A-Porter £510.

Are Women's Lingerie Fashion Shows Always Objectifying?

Faye Clayton considers following Bella Hadid's recent words.

Bella Hadid has recently made headlines after she admitted to Womenswear daily that she 'never felt powerful' whilst walking the Victoria Secret Fashion Show. In the candid interview, Hadid confessed that her recent stint in Rihanna's Savage X Fenty show was the first time she felt comfortable posing in her underwear. Rihanna's show sought to celebrate models of all ages, shapes and races, something not typically visible in Victoria's Secret's. However, as Hadid exposes the discomfort she felt whilst modelling as an angel, the timeless question is raised again: are women's lingerie shows inherently objectifying?

There is often two camps of thought when it comes to shows such as these. At worst they can be seen as an objectifying fantasy catwalk show, and at best can be explained as an empowering platform where women can own their sexuality. The former is rooted in the view that lingerie shows are a male curated collection of women parading their half naked bodies, as they attempt to sell lingerie to the masses. Many view this as belittling to women, as they are reduced to just their bodies.

However, this can be seen as an oversimplification of the entire genre of lingerie within fashion shows. As for Victoria's Secret, many of those who make repeated appearances on the show such as Taylor Hill and Adriana Lima, all frequently use the term 'empowerment' to describe their experiences. Modelling is one of few careers in which women earn far greater

wages than men and it undeniably takes hard work and rigorous training to gain a position walking, which showed be respectively celebrated.

However the show's inability to reflect modern ideals of diverse beauty is clearly evident in its plummeting interest. There has been a shift in desires for inclusivity, and the show's narrow conception of beauty isn't cutting it anymore. Victoria's Secret's inability to step into the 21st century, and its insistence of keeping the show to fit an apparent 'fantasy' has recently resulted in its shocking cancellation after twenty three years of running.

Positively, many brands have started to incorporate a more body diverse sample of models, helping to encourage far more women to flaunt their sexuality on their own accord and no one else's. This more modern take is evident in the Aerie and Rihanna's Savage X Fenty show, which showcase a variety of races, ages, ethnicities, abilities and more. The shows themselves are far less rigid as models are allowed to walk in the way they please. It is a more clear cut celebration of models alike as it was clearly created through the female lens rather than a platform in which they are able to be gawked at.

So, do I think lingerie fashion shows are always objectifying? No. However, the Victoria's Secret mould and its copycats are outdated. In the diverse approach taken on by Rihanna and other modern shows, all kinds of beauty are honoured. Ultimately, as shown by Hadid, it works.

Faye Clayton



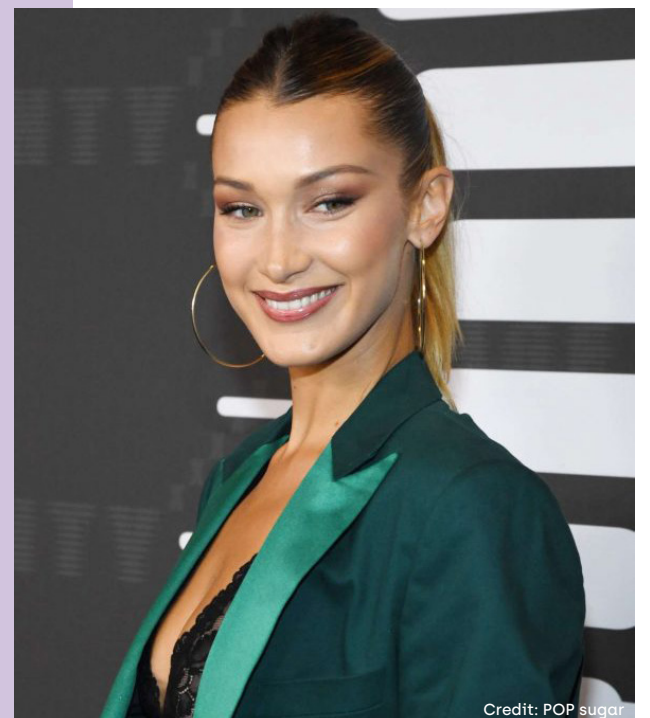
Bella Hadid at the 2018 VS fashion show



Posing at the Savage x Fenty show 2019



Hadid at the Savage x Fenty 2019 afterparty



The Lighthouse



Robert Eggers' sophomore film is a period piece that dwells in the world of folklore and superstition. Much like his debut film *The Witch*, an intense amount of research was done to portray the lifestyle of the sailors at the time (Sarah Orne Jewett's writings being one of his primary sources). The lighthouse itself, the place in which half of the movie occurs, was built from scratch. More than pure historical accuracy, each detail accumulates to create an intense and uncanny mood. The foreign setting and colloquialism of the dialect can only be alienating for its audience, yet the film manages to mysteriously draw us in. The ominous lighting, as well as the contrast between the suffocating lighthouse and the disorientating outdoors never lets us feel at ease. Instead of welcoming us with an open door, *The Lighthouse* dares us to cross that threshold without promise of being friendly or gentle.

Beasts, mermaids, tentacles, crushed seagulls, bloodied and wet bodies – this film is a dirty piece of work, in every sense of the word. As we watch it, we are constantly torn between attraction and repulsion. It manages to incorporate numerous qualities at once: a light and vulgar humour, a gut-wrenching anxiety, as well as a playful sexiness. The dialogue, written by Eggers and his brother Max,

is baffling and magnetizing. The two actors deliver each line with brilliance: Willem Dafoe's voice is as terrifying and imposing as Mark Korven's score, and Robert Pattinson is outright electrifying. The scenes between the two are terribly exquisite, visceral, and at times even erotic.

In a place with such little human presence, the sea that surrounds the two men soon becomes her own character, her own deity, in the eyes of the protagonist, Ephraim Winslow. Much like in *Alien*, the monster is constantly felt throughout the film, preying on Ephraim in every corner. And much like in *The Shining* as well as in David Lynch's films, an ungraspable force tries to take possession over his body and mind and pushes him to madness. In an interview with *Esquire*, Eggers explained how he wanted to make something that would be "maybe not scary, but tense and hallucinatory and strange and provoke more questions than it would provide answers". This movie could be analyzed through various thematic angles – masculinity, labor, the unconscious – and yet its mystery will never be solved. In its own way, *The Lighthouse* manages to haunt and horrify us without ever revealing what we are actually afraid of.

Sabrina Martins

Jojo Rabbit



Taika Waititi's self-proclaimed "anti-hate satire" delivers on its promises, a comedic, satirical war drama, that delivers a thought-provoking, and surprisingly deep and emotive cinematic narrative. There were many laughs and even a few unexpected tears shed. The story pulls no punches regarding the concealment of its subject matter and is delivered by a brilliantly cast ensemble.

Waititi's story centres around Jojo, a ten-year-old member of the Hitler Youth, who follows the Nazi's with a "blind fanaticism", evidenced by Jojo's imaginary friend taking the shape of Hitler (Waititi). The story navigates Jojo proving his loyalty to the ideology he has been brainwashed by, his close relationship with his mother, who despises the war, and promotes the film's "anti-hate" nature by reminding the audience that "love is the strongest thing in the world". *Jojo Rabbit* is a unique coming-of-age tale that depicts the regular struggles of growing up with the added complications of war, prejudice and death. This is epitomised by Jojo developing his first relationship with a girl, Elsa, who happens to be his antithesis; Elsa is a Jew who his mother has been hiding in their walls.

Waititi's brilliant script is brought to life by some of the best comedic actors, along with some new faces. Roman Griffin Davis shines as Jojo; he completely inhabits the character with surprising emotional range, and handles a very mature subject matter with ease and understanding. He makes a child who should be hated, very lovable. It is a travesty that because of his age he will probably be overlooked this awards season, as he delivers one of the best performances of the year. Scarlett Johansson delivers a brilliant comedic performance as Jojo's mum, Rosie, who is a loving ray of sunshine within dark times. Taika Waititi is brilliant as a ten-year-old's projected image of adult Hitler who is completely useless, throwing tantrums

and stomping about like a child himself.

This film takes places in one of the most atrocious periods in history and does so in a way that has never really been done within cinema, through the eyes of a child who is absolute in his support of the Nazis. Waititi demonstrates this brilliantly within Jojo and Elsa's interactions as she reiterates Nazi propaganda, where Jews are "demons", who could turn into "bats" and had "horns", and were truly uncanny to the Aryan race. The audience laughs at her recapitulation of Nazi opinions, and the gullibility of Jojo who takes these ridiculous beliefs as fact.

Waititi has taken the form he is best-known for, and elevated it to new heights, by using it not solely for laughs but the transmission of deeper messages, transmitting his desires for people to "spread more love and less hate." Waititi's script is the manifestation of everything that cinema allows directors the creative freedom to do, to take a current issue, reflect it to a period in history and show a farcical nature that makes their ideology, beliefs and leaders into objects of ridicule. Whilst this film is controversial, it is undoubtedly the most important film of the year.

Phoebe Walker





The Invisible Life of Euridice Gusmao

Set in 1950s Rio de Janeiro, this film follows two sisters, adventurous Guida and shy Euridice Gusmao, whose lives reflect reversed images of each other. Throughout the movie they seem to not only be searching for each other, but for the better life they had before they were forced to face adulthood as women in a world that exists to put them down. The cinematography is lush, warm and melancholic and with the end of the film's impactful finale, you can feel the entire theatre breathe one last sigh of relief.

Giovana Chiconelli



Olla

Clocking in at only 27 minutes, Ariane Labed's short film explores the feminine desire for sexuality and self-expression in a subtle yet grotesque manner. After responding to an online dating advert for 'Eastern women', title character Olla moves in with a Frenchman and his aging mother. However, nothing goes according to plan as the young tenant struggles to contain her unbridled sexual energy.

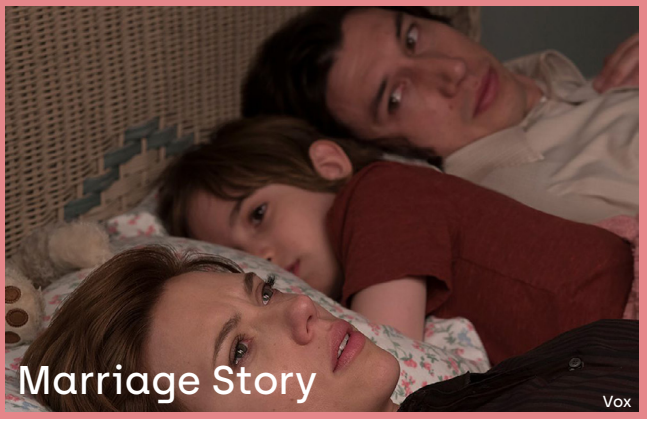
Sophie Shekhavtsova



A Hidden Life

A Hidden Life tells the true story of Franz Jägerstätter (August Diehl), an Austrian farmer who refused to fight for the Nazis during World War II. Like every man in his village, he is asked to swear his allegiance to Hitler but, unlike the rest, he refuses. Each scene, most often accompanied by an orchestral piece, develops its own language: the camera follows an esoteric choreography, spins and swoons until it falls static. It is visually impeccable, splendid and ethereal.

Sabrina Martins



Marriage Story

Marriage Story is a chimaera of multiple cinematic genres, tender drama, romance, thriller, screwball comedy and musical all combined to create an achingly beautiful narrative where the audience is made to be as bewildered as the couple it follows who are going through a difficult divorce. It is a beautifully told, a skilfully and heartbreakingly acted character study of two people experiencing raw human emotions at the worst of times, with tenderness, comedy and yes more than a few tears. Be sure to take tissues.

Phoebe Walker



And Then We Danced

The newest released from Swedish-Georgian director Levan Akin, this film tells the story of Merab (Levan Gelbakhiani), a young dancer who has been training in the National Georgian Ensemble since he was a child. As a new male student (Bachi Valishvili) joins his class, Merab starts to discover a new side of himself. More than a love story, this is the coming of age of a young man who is constantly held back by the world around him. In times like these, films as glorious and humane as *And Then We Danced* feel more than urgent.

Sabrina Martins



Watermelon Juice

This Spanish short film from Irene Moray deals with the sharp subject of sexual violence against women through the depiction of what happens to women after traumatic experiences. Moray's choice of locations with natural views are stunning and small details, like shots of the main character's smiles, make the film intimate and less hard-hitting.

Sophie Shekhavtsova



House of Hummingbird

In 1994 Seoul, Eun-hee (Park Ji-hu), is a 14-year-old middle-school girl who longs to love and be loved. She develops feelings for a boy and a girl, but it is only when she meets her new teacher, Young-ji (Kim Sae-byuk), that she finds some comfort and sense of self as the two discuss in a classroom whose shelves are filled with fiction and feminist literature.

Sabrina Martins



Portrait of a Lady on Fire

With every shot perfectly curated, this drama follows Marianne (Noémie Merlant), an artist that goes to a small island in Brittany with the intention of painting the wedding portrait of Héloïse (Adèle Haenel), a wealthy woman's daughter that is set to marry a man she has never met. With no significant male characters in the story, this version of 1770s France refuses to stray from its focus of female stories.

Giovana Chiconelli



Greener Grass

Greener Grass is the directorial debut from writing partners Jocelyn DeBoer and Dawn Luebke, and follows two suburban 'soccer moms' who find themselves constantly trying to one-up each other during the mundane affairs of their everyday lives. With a surreal path of twists and turns, and a home-invader on the loose, this experimental comedy treads along a minefield of insanity, whilst addressing the darker undertones of suburban American life. DeBoer and Luebke have a clear vision in their work that may not be to everyone's taste, but which delivers a very original comedy that leaves you with plenty to think about.

Rory Yeates

Lord Sugar, You're Fired! Why The Apprentice Should Be Cancelled

Arts and Culture editor Delphie Bond examines the BBC's *The Apprentice* and its underlying racist and sexist prejudices.

Every time I watch *The Apprentice* it becomes clear to me that what we are seeing is the materialisation of Lord Alan Sugar's patriarchal, inherently capitalist, sexual fantasy. There he stands in all his might whilst his measly candidates swarm around him, the women may as well stand with their backs to him, and the men may as well whisper 'I want to be you!'. Egocentric and growing obsolete in futility, I wonder why we've let this remain on our screens. Do the prewritten, tiresome jokes make up for the racism stitched into *The Apprentice* tapestry? I don't think so, it's time we unravel this knot of racism, misogyny and capitalist disorder.

Watching the latest series unfold has indeed seen some unravelling take place. The series has followed the gradual undoing, or erasure, of every BAME candidate on the show leaving us with a filtered mix of white, white and white contestants. *The Apprentice* has been brash, bold and confident in its firings; and of course, the show claims Lord Alan Sugar makes his judgement on mere performance. However, it seems that Lord Alan Sugar's little fantasy is an inherently white affair. Out of the eleven winners of the UK series so far (hopefully, Sugar finds something else to get him off soon as I don't know if I can stomach another series) only one winner has been Black.

However, this is more than a discussion about an annual series of weekday television. *The Apprentice* embodies something much more. Instead of projecting what business should and could be like (equal, and immune to racist bigotry), *The Apprentice* is actively playing out what it is really like in business for BAME candidates. Even under the bright lights of the studio and the gleam of the BBC, *The Apprentice* cannot escape its racist embroidery – or perhaps, it is choosing not to. The UK is a society founded upon the exploitation of

people of colour and these are the people who need investment. In a report on unconscious bias, The Guardian found that 43% of BAME people feel they have been overlooked in a job application. Not merely this, black people, especially black Muslims have to constantly protect their identity from white prejudices seeping in and destroying their chances of success.

The *Apprentice*, if anything, should be seen as a farce, light relief. However, even on this premise I would pose the question, as viewers, why are we fueling a show which instead of being entertaining, is playing an active role in the inequality of our society? There is no need for BAME contestants if the show is going to merely use them as tokens with Lord Alan Sugar's finger flicking them out week by week as they don't quite fit his white fantasy. The remaining contestants, while galloping around creating lopsided ice lollies, will seemingly be unaware of the white-washed bubble they are in because, unfortunately, this is what the majority of business looks like in the UK. *The Apprentice* has the potential to be a show rendering positive change on the way business works in the UK, although this potential is lost with Lord Alan Sugar remaining in role. Sugar himself is a despicable elite; do not let his East London accent fool you, this Lord is no Robin Hood. How can any good come from a man who compares the Senegalese World Cup team to people selling sunglasses and knockoff handbags on tourist beaches?

Lord Sugar, I believe it is time you should be fired. The fantasy is over.

Delphie Bond



Why ITV Warning Morning Show Guests about Trolling Isn't Good Enough



Image Credit: The National

ITV has announced that it will ensure that guests appearing on *Good Morning Britain* and *This Morning* must be aware of the threat of online trolling. This new ITV policy, referred to as a 'vulnerability awareness', aims to ensure that guests acknowledge the prospect of trolling they face by appearing on the programmes and ITV shall help prepare them to navigate potential social media fallout. Yet, for a network that has recently seen the suicide of a guest on *The Jeremy Kyle Show*, is this bare-minimum approach really going to mitigate future tragedies?

The new policy has been introduced following ITV's publication of a Duty of Care charter in June. ITV was strongly criticised for a lack of aftercare and have brought in this new policy as a means of alleviating concerns around the mental wellbeing of those who appear on their shows. In a statement, ITV said that "The physical and mental health of everyone we work with is our highest priority. We introduced this in line with ITV's guidelines earlier this year."

The choice to warn guests appearing on the morning programmes *Good Morning Britain* and *This Morning* is clearly a direct consequence of the death of *The Jeremy Kyle Show* guest Steve Dymond in May of this year. The guest, who was alleged to have been exposed as an unfaithful partner by the show's lie-detector test, was found to have committed suicide in the week following filming. This led to the cancellation of the long-running show as ITV finally took account for the exploitative and detrimental nature of the programme wherein guests would frequently be baited into confrontations in almost

pantomime theatrics. However, had Steve Dymond been informed of the dangers of trolling and been provided with help to navigate social media, would the situation really be any different?

While the evidently damaging *The Jeremy Kyle Show* may be off-air, ITV's morning programming is still composed of the controversial *Good Morning Britain*. The show features Piers Morgan making purposefully inflammatory comments and ridiculing guests in an attempt to provoke a furore and generate attention. After all, ITV is not oblivious to the fact that controversy is a sure-fire means of boosting ratings. This desire to be controversial and to debate guests over issues from the serious to the slapstick still maintains the legacy of Jeremy Kyle's guest-baiting approach, hoping to produce outrage that will spill out onto social media once the show has aired. This provides a clear pathway for trolling as guests, upon leaving the show, are likely to find themselves being derided on social media.

ITV's morning programming has not been unique in terms of trolling, however, as proven by the extensive online abuse levelled at contestants on *Love Island*. The show, similarly to the cancelled *The Jeremy Kyle Show*, has also seen previous contestants commit suicides. Previous contestants of the show Sophie Gradon and Mike Thalassitis both took their own lives not long after appearing on the series. ITV CEO Dame Carolyn McCall said it would be to 'simplify' their deaths by directly linking them to the show, yet Sophie Gradon's mother responded with the harrowing statement: 'In my beautiful darling

daughter's own words: "I sold my soul to ITV". While it would be inaccurate and unknowable to attribute these deaths entirely to trolling, it is highly likely that the lack of after-care guests received after leaving the programmes exacerbated their ability to navigate the volatile and potentially detrimental social media landscape.

The introduction of this policy to ensure guests are aware of the dangers of trolling, and provide help on social media, is a definite move towards minimising the detriment of abuse on guests' mental health. The policy is a step in the right direction, but it is simply a step and more must be done by the broadcaster to prevent the continuation of such tragedies. ITV has recently used its platform to encourage open mental health discussions as part of its 'Get Britain Talking' campaign, and so it is now time that the broadcaster practices what it has preached and tackles trolling in a more impactful way.

Thomas Boyd

Emilia Clarke: Opening up About Going 'Stark'

Phoebe Walker explores Emilia Clarke's recent remarks about filming nude scenes for 'Game of Thrones' and highlights the disappointing treatment actresses still frequently receive

Emilia Clarke has thrust *Game of Thrones* into the spotlight once again as she reveals how, during the first few seasons of the show, the largely patriarchal voices on-set pressured her into performing her infamous sex and nudity scenes, being essentially emotionally blackmailed with not wanting to "disappoint her fans." This presents a deeply troubling representation of behind-the-scenes conversations, and shows how even in the twenty-first century, a time when feminism and liberation supposedly reigns, women in the arts still feel fundamentally lacking in power and agency to voice their concerns or opinions. Ironically, the UK has recently become the first place in the world to set up laws for the protection of actors whilst performing scenes of this nature. The fact that these are only just being introduced highlights a disturbingly blasé attitude within the TV and film industries regarding nudity, amplifying the extent of which there was previously little to no protection for even the most adored of actresses.

Emilia Clarke was a newly graduated twenty-two-year-old actress, when she landed the starring role of Daenerys Targaryen, with almost no professional experience at that point. This was an opportunity that could not be wasted, and she couldn't risk damaging her newly founded reputation by being branded "difficult" for voicing her concerns regarding nudity. Clarke herself has said that nude scenes left her feeling "terrified" as because of her newness to the industry she was uncertain of how to communicate that she was not comfortable with the nature of the scenes. New actresses to the industry often have to do scenes that a more seasoned and respected actress would not - or they would at least feel it was their right to be included in a discussion of their own body. Clarke, who had only been on a film set "twice before then," was completely lost and felt as though she had no right to voice her discomfort because she was "not worthy of needing anything at all" due to being so grateful for this opportunity. This, whilst understandable, is highly disturbing, showing both the sheer weight of sexism within the industry and how changes need to be made.

This was back well before the TimesUp! and the #MeToo movements became worldwide campaigns, but we are well into the twenty-first century so for Clarke to feel her voice had no power to voice her concerns, leading to her "crying" before shooting these particular scenes is concerning. Many of the sex scenes in *Game of Thrones* first few seasons felt gratuitous and the nudity especially felt unneeded in certain places. To put actresses through this emotional trauma for no more than a gratuitous sex scene presents another problem, the fact that the sexualisation of women extends from not just

behind the camera, but also the viewing audience. The fact Clarke felt pressured to do these scenes in later seasons so as not to let her "fans down" shows how through the male gaze, fans feel they are entitled to her body. This then leads to the want of producers to feed an audience who they believe to want nudity, in order to keep viewing figures up, in turn creating a vicious circle wherein which the audience becomes expectant of a certain amount of sex and nudity, because of the producer's belief that the exploitation of the female body keeps a male viewing audience engaged. This emphasises the danger of females being excluded from the conversation regarding the power and control they have over the distribution of their bodies, as it becomes an example of the microcosmic bubble of Hollywood. A Hollywood that seeks to create an idealised, sexualised and damaging version of women.

Clarke's feelings have prompted other actresses to come forward about having also felt exploited, thus showing that this is not an isolated incident limited within television, but an indictment of the industry as a whole. Whether coincidence or not, the day after Clarke's revelations the UK became the first place in the world to set down laws and regulations regarding how sex and nude scenes should be conducted on set, so actresses can feel as comfortable as possible. The implementation of these laws show that the TimesUp and #MeToo movements are having a deep impact on the industry, as it has to assess its treatment of actresses. Hopefully, this is just the first step of many to breaking the chains of patriarchy that still bind the television and film industries.

Phoebe Walker



Image Credit: HBO and Cosmopolitan

Review: One Planet Seven Worlds

Ishawari Yardi praises David Attenborough's latest cinematic triumph detailing the masterpiece that is our endangered Earth.

Our natural world is undoubtedly deteriorating at unspeakable speeds only comparable to the mass annihilations found in the Cretaceous period. Climate change, habitat loss and resulting encroachment are all at the forefront of this crisis. Consistent coverage in the media, dating as far back as 2014, highlights the frightening extinction rates at which we are losing species; it is estimated that we are exterminating wildlife almost 1,000 times above the expected pace. For the first time, even we are met with the brink of extinction.

Seven Worlds, One Planet – Sir David Attenborough's new landmark series – explores the devastating impact of this mass extinction and the cumulative effect this is having not only on the natural world, but on our human world too. Staggeringly, 99% of wildlife endangerment is as a result of human activity negligence and apathy. Due to this, the series – much like the works of previous BBC Earth

docu-series – sheds light on this climate crisis and advocates for a change in both approach and attitude.

To create the series, devoted cameramen embarked on a four-year journey documenting over 2000 hours of stock footage, whilst capturing some of the most visually striking and cinematic shots ever to have been recorded within wildlife television. One of my many favourite excerpts from a recent broadcast was that from the Golden Snub-Nosed Monkey family as they huddle in the attempts to protect one another from the piercing cold storms of the Chinese mountains. The show is accompanied with archives dating back to Attenborough's first few adventures to Borneo in 1956, with scoring fitted to the visuals and the narration of the naturalist presenter. This documentary is far beyond that which has ever been seen before and far exceeds our expectations of a high-budget documentary. The BBC, consequently, does not fail us for yet



another series.

Personal favourite parts of the entire programme include the 'On Location' segment as the show draws to a close. Offering audiences an insight into the 'behind the scenes' of the programme. This short division offers the audience an opportunity to empathise with the hardworking team onsite and appreciate their filmmaking first-hand. Cameramen too participate in a presenter-styled, vlogger approach and invite us into the Seven Worlds in which the programme is shot. For the first time, we are faced with exceptional scenarios such as the tension of a Puma watching over the operator, the intimacy of a Dingo and her cubs and the reminiscence of the uncorrupted state of the planet untouched by mankind. This programme, as a reminder of the dire threat we now face, bids us a second chance to resist the climate crisis and fight for precious life forms who cannot withstand much longer. It's time to stand resolute and join our efforts to create a more sustainable planet for both ourselves, but more importantly, those who we have taken so much from already – the wildlife who stand little chance without well intentioned change.

Remarkably, 2019 has been a year of some

issues tackled within the programme – such as a change in eating habits, heightened awareness and greener lifestyles. Whilst it is true that we are making small steps towards solving an overwhelming issue, we still need to demonstrate an astute urgency, and now is the time to achieve a breakthrough! With the next 11 years being crucial in the survival of our planet, it really is 'now or never' to make bold and effective changes to the world we live in.

The programme offers us ways in which we too can revolutionise our attitude and confront the crisis we face. Supporting companies which offer less destructive measures and more eco-friendly alternatives can be a simple start. Similarly, advocating for animal rights and securing their wellbeing can alleviate the problem and help build awareness.

This list is not exhaustive and unfortunately, this is not an overnight solution. However, together we can help 'damage control' the problem and endeavour to restore the planet to its original natural splendour. Perhaps watching the documentary can be the start of the change you make.

For those of you that haven't seen it yet, I truly urge you to. It really is as poignant and mesmerising as they say.

Ishawari Yardi



Image Credit: BBC

Tackling Secret Santa Anxiety

Opeyemi gives a comprehensive guide to tackling Secret Santa nerves as the holidays come around.

It's that time of year again. You know, the time where Operation Secret Santa is in full effect and you're a part of it by hook or by crook - at least, that's how it can feel like at times right? This especially seems to be the case at work where you're given a Secret Santa, and whilst it is never fully enforced, there is that unspoken expectation of you being a part of it. After all, you don't want to look like the grinch when everyone else is passing around gifts. So, what do you do if Secret Santa really isn't your cup of tea? Here are a few suggestions that may be useful.

1. If there is no set budget, be clear on the maximum that you're willing to pay

Usually, there would be a maximum amount that people should be spending on their gifts for Secret Santa and this can range from £5 to £10 or even more. A maximum amount is set in order to make it more of a level playing field, but what happens if there is no amount mentioned? If possible, try to suggest to the person in charge to set an amount and hopefully they will consider it. If not, let them know that you are happy to participate but that you are only going to spend a specific amount on the gift. If they really are doing it in the spirit of giving, then they should not have an issue. If not, at least you know you tried.

2. Don't participate

Christmas can be financially tight for some, thus making it difficult to participate in Secret Santa. Whilst the Secret Santa itself is anonymous, it becomes glaringly obvious if you have not participated when you do not receive a gift yourself. This can be especially awkward in a group environment. Finances may not be the only reason for not participating because for some, it can be a matter of personal principles. Others may not be religious and see no need to get involved. Whatever the reason, do not feel obliged to have to provide one. If people are being guilt tripped into participating, then it really does defeat the purpose of it all. The trick is to be confident in your stance and remain firm with it. This can mean gently playing it off if someone asks why you received nothing. After all, there is only so many times that you can say that your secret Santa 'forgot' to get you a present.

3. Suggest a corporate 'Santa's Grotto'

This works better in a work environment as the aim would be to have the company hire Santa for the day and give everyone a gift. Do you remember how, as a child, your parents would pay an extortionate amount for you to go to Santa's grotto, take a photo and get a gift? A gift that he most likely gives to every other child? Yeah, it's something like that. It may not be the most amazing gift but it's the thought that counts, right? Most importantly, it gets rid of the pressures associated with Secret Santa and everyone can actually participate if they choose to. You'd be surprised at how much money businesses do have to support ideas like this, but you don't know if you don't ask. Well then, what about if it's a Secret Santa in an out-of-work setting? My next suggestion will cover this.



4. Do a potluck

Christmas is not just about the presents, it's also about the food too so why not suggest a potluck? It can take different forms, for example, it could entail asking people to pitch in with buying the ingredients and then have a designated cook to prepare dishes from it. The list can remain anonymous but if you are worried about people buying the same thing, you can still have it anonymous but leave the list open and then prepare whatever you can with what you have. This way, even if too many of one item is bought, it can be used to prepare something else but at least everyone has contributed with what they can afford. Also, who says dishes have to be prepared? It can be a big old snack fest where everyone brings whatever snack that they can afford, because at the end of the day it is the memories that matter, the people you share it with and the fellowship that is had.

Opeyemi Adeyemo

Edgar the Dragon: Innocent or Guilty?

Finally! The autumnal showers have passed, the naked branches are shivering in their frosty coats, and the John Lewis advert has snuck back onto our screens. Before the arrival of the chocolatey calendars, sparkly do's and frantic family feuds, John Lewis, partnered with Waitrose (a festive first this year), get the Christmas bauble rolling with their annual advert which promises to tug at your heart strings, albeit while capitalizing off of our feeble sentimentality.

This year's advert tells the tale of a fire-breathing, well destroying, dragon who's bulging eyes and wonky horns elate a hopeful viewership. Tumbling through a series of blazing trials and tribulations, Edgar is banished from any festivities until he uses his flaming nature to light a (Waitrose, I presume) Christmas pudding. It's a quintessentially John Lewis-esque affair, comprising of 2 minutes and 30 seconds of CGI animation and husky vocals. All well and good it would seem. Or is it?

Beneath the fogged message which presumably is to look past someone's faults in the spirit of unifying people, a few cynical scrooge's have weaved their way into the Edgar conversation. The Guardian's Stuart Heritage has suggested that actually Edgar merely

wants to see the world burn, an arsonist on the hunt... The question then stands, is Excitable Edgar an allegory for the murderous antagonists among our society, in Stuart Heritage's words, will he 'murder them and everyone they love in an orgy of unstoppable violence'? Or is the tale of Edgar a metaphor about unifying differences in this approaching period of merriment, something which is certainly needed right now.

I, myself, was taken in by Edgar's charm and the sadness in his little eyes, but even I have to inject some cynicism into the conversation. Like Edgar, everyone deserves to be accepted, and everyone deserves a gift, but perhaps John Lewis's emotional manipulation is not the way forward. As it stands, more than 14 million people in UK are trapped in a massive swathe of poverty, 4 million of those are children and 500,000 people relying on food banks. It is likely that these people won't get a gift this Christmas, it is likely that they won't be getting a Waitrose Christmas pudding, let alone a Christmas dinner. And why is this? Because our government is grotesquely ignoring the austerity and poverty plaguing the country. Unfortunately, our current leader does not believe everyone deserves a gift this Christmas, they do not believe everyone is equal, and are certainly not trying to unify us.



Image: John Lewis

John Lewis are enticing the country with their little green speckled friend, capitalizing off it massively (Edgar toys were sold at £15 before being sold out, now available for auction on eBay for significantly more) but ignoring the fact that the society at present is not like the idyllic snowy town the advert is set in, and is actually a divided and painfully poverty-stricken place.

Delphie Bond

Christmas Ads: Tacky and Overdone?

Megan Johnson discusses festive advertising. Cliché or Classic?

We've all been there. The clocks have gone back, it's pitch black and freezing cold outside and you've settled in for the night, in front of your TV. You hear the familiar jingle of a classic over-played festive song and recognise the family-friendly cheesy (yet wholesome) plotline.

The Christmas adverts are upon us.

Christmas adverts are an established part of Westernised culture. They are unavoidable, an all-encompassing flood that flow from our television screens before December has even begun. But are they becoming little more than tacky overused clichés?

It is true that Christmas is heavily commercialised. Even those who do celebrate it are likely to be exhausted with the familiar charades of 'the adorably cute character who discovers Christmas-time' and 'the family reunite, become closer and spread festive joy'. It is very overdone. There are obvious similarities both across years and across advertisements. Furthermore, many plotlines are said to be unrealistic and are criticised for having little to do with the holiday as a whole and instead having a more manipulative purpose of pulling on the nation's heartstrings.

However, maybe these adverts are iconic for a reason? Anyone who watches a sweet but lonely old man reunite with his family just in time for a perfect Christmas day is bound to have a tear in their eye. Plus, nothing makes you feel more in the mood for the festive season like quintessentially Christmas things: mince pies, nativity scenes, candy canes, tinsel, reindeer and the list goes on. These heart-warming adverts can also be argued to raise community spirits, ultimately making us feel good.

John Lewis is one of the major retailers which has become widely known for their 'iconic' Christmas adverts since their first festive themed release in 2007. The status of their commercials is undeniable as it always stands out amongst the rife competition of all the big brands striving for attention. John Lewis' Christmas adverts have given their branding and products a huge popularity boost, with audiences now actively tracking down the advertisements on YouTube. Notorious characters, such as Monty the penguin and, more recently, Edgar the dragon, are huge favourites with the public. Views on social media skyrocketed into the millions for these adverts and many conversations and opinions were generated and shared online.

Companies spend millions on their Christmas themed campaigns, determined to catch viewers' eyes and cement their brand with a positive festive vibe. The endless swarm of these specific seasonal kind of ads makes this a difficult feat. However, with many companies producing arguably stale and churned out remakes, perhaps the gap is there for businesses to branch out and differentiate.

Let's be honest, the Christmas adverts are never going to stop. Year after year, retailers will continue churning out the recycled stories of extremely corny wonder and joy. But perhaps we should be allowed to switch off the cynical voice inside of us, and once more languish in the unrealistic and overly joyful world of festive advertisement.

It is Christmas, after all.

Megan Johnson

Best Weekends Away in Europe

Asha Hipperson gives her top European weekend getaways on a budget.

Budapest, Hungary

Budapest is one of my most favourite places because it has a little bit of everything. There's amazing food, places to drink and go out, loads of things to do and a really interesting culture to explore - it's also very cheap! Budapest is most famous for its baths, and there are plenty to visit, personally, I'd recommend the Szechenyi baths. It's also technically two places; Buda and Pest, meaning there is double the amount to explore. Budapest boasts some amazing architecture, like Buda Castle and the Parliament building. The ruin bars are also super popular and a really unique drinking experience, some of them are also have a club, so you can party the night away after a day of relaxing in the baths and eating your bodyweight in Hungarian street food. Nice accommodation is really easy to get on a small budget, especially if you stay a little further out from the centre.




Image: Beyond The States




Image: Earth Trekkers

Krakow, Poland

Krakow has just been voted the best European city break for the third year in a row. This would lead me to believe there must be a good reason for it! It's definitely one of the best destinations in terms of value for money, with beer costing as little as £2 a pint! Accommodation and eating out is also very reasonably priced, so you can eat and drink to your hearts content. The salt mines are a really popular tourist attraction, as are the traditional markets.

Barcelona, Spain

Flights to Barcelona are pretty cheap and so is the city itself. Barcelona is great as it's a city break and a beach holiday all in one, so you get the best of both worlds. If you're a bit of a shopaholic, Barcelona is abundant with shops and has some seriously good ice cream and places to eat out. The Sagrada Familia is also absolutely worth a visit; it's pretty spectacular from the outside but the inside is even more so. Barcelona is also a favourite for football fans, who can do stadium tours of FC Barcelona.




Image: Lonely Planet




Image: The Independent

Amsterdam, Netherlands

Amsterdam is one of the most popular European destinations for short breaks, especially for young people. Whether it's the love lock bridge, the good food, the Fault in our Stars bench or the Anne Frank house, there are an abundance of reasons to visit this city. Lots of people choose to explore the city by bike as it's a really convenient way to get from place to place. Amsterdam is also well known for being a really good night out and if you can manage it with a hangover the next day, there is a huge array of museums to explore, such as the Van Gogh or The Rijksmuseum.

Prague, Czech Republic

Another European city also rich in architecture and fancy buildings, Prague boasts landmarks such as Prague castle and the Old Town Hall. There's even the opportunity to catch a river cruise or take an evening stroll down by the water. Food and drink is very cheap and as Christmas market season is coming up, Prague has some amazing markets over the festive period in the Old Town Square. If none of that floats your boat, you could relax in a beer spa or take on one of the many famous bar crawls as beer is a bargain here! Accommodation is often cheaper a tram ride away from the city centre and not in the peak summer season, but this could be said for anywhere.


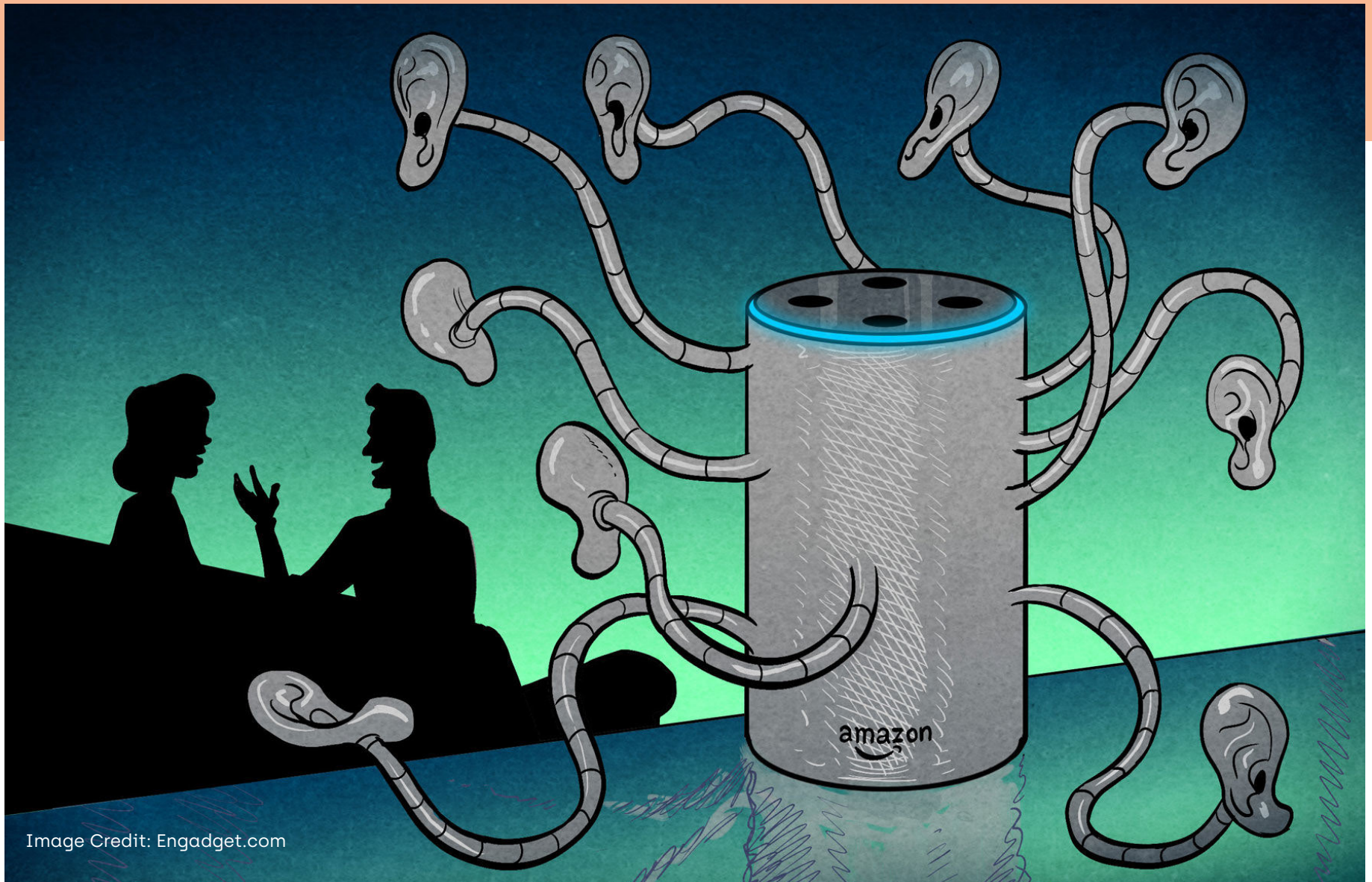


Image: Shutterstock

Hey Alexa, Are You Listening?



With programmes like *Black Mirror* and *The Great Hack* on our TV, is it any wonder that we have grown accustomed to being afraid of new technology, such as Amazon's Alexa?

Ever since Forbes released their article on the matter earlier this year, it is no secret that Alexas are always listening to their owner, even when their wake word hasn't been said. And not only this, but it isn't only Alexa who is listening when you call her name, it is potentially an Amazon worker too. Reportedly, these workers are hired to listen to conversations to help improve Alexa's language and understanding of human speech. Although owners can opt out of this in their privacy settings, this isn't explicitly stated anywhere. So, knowing all of this, the question is: do we care if Alexa is listening to us?

At the end of the day, we are aware that Alexa is listening to us; that's her job, right? But at what point do we start to get worried? Alexa can hear the things we ask of her on a daily basis, such as to play a specific genre of music, or to search the web for something of interest to you, and if this data is combined with all of our other Amazon based searches, it is scary how much this device, and Amazon, could know about us.

With all this information it creates predictions about us that can be eerily precise. When Christopher Wylie whistle blew on Cambridge Analytica in 2018, he revealed that our choices of music and clothing are a good indicator of what a person's political belief is going to be, and according to a University of Chicago study, it can tell our race, gender, and education with an accuracy of up to 90% similarly. This could help Amazon alter our search engines and let them know which

marketing emails to send out to us. With all this information being potentially gathered through Alexa's, the possibility for owners of the device to become manipulated is worrying.

The scary thing, is that we shouldn't only be cautious of what Alexa is hearing when we are directly talking to her, but what she is hearing when we're not aware. Several Amazon workers who are supposedly hired to listen through Alexa, and help her adapt, have stated that they think that they have heard sexual assaults taking place in the recordings they are given, but are not allowed to do anything about it. Not only does this seem like a huge invasion of privacy, it also seems extremely immoral to hear such an act taking place, and not being able to intervene. There are many other accounts of circumstances like this, and it, again, raises the question of whether we should care or not if Alexa is listening to us.

On the surface, Alexa looks innocent and not harmful at all, but after digging deeper, it appears that we should actually care if Alexa is listening to us, and we should even be cautious about what information she is hearing when we are allowing her to. Alexa isn't just listening to us on the surface, she is gathering information about us that could go much deeper. So, should we care if she is listening to us? Probably. Given all this information, my advice would be to be careful about what you say around your Alexa, whether she's switched on or not.

Lucy Barber



Song for Autumn by Mary Oliver

Don't you imagine the leaves dream now
how comfortable it will be to touch
the earth instead of the
nothingness of the air and the endless
freshets of wind? And don't you think
the trees, especially those with
mossy hollows, are beginning to look for

the fires that will come—six, a dozen—to sleep
inside their bodies? And don't you hear
the goldenrod whispering goodbye,
the everlasting being crowned with the first
tuffets of snow? The pond
stiffens and the white field over which
the fox runs so quickly brings out
its long blue shadows. The wind wags
its many tails. And in the evening
the piled firewood shifts a little,
longing to be on its way.

In the Middle



Stand and Support UCU Strikers

Owen Harding-Best

Staff at the University of Leeds have gone on strike this week for the second time in eighteen months, resulting in yet more disruption to students. The unresolved row between Universities UK (UUK) and the Universities and College Union (UCU) over pensions, pay and working conditions continues to take its toll on the student experience, and many of those affected have voiced their disquiet at the proceedings.

However, anger should not be directed at those carrying out industrial action, but rather at the universities themselves, and at the Conservative governments of the last decade, which have set about the rapid marketisation of higher education. It is only through unequivocal support of our striking lecturers that students can overcome these challenges, and voice support for a higher education system which puts people before profit.

Let us not forget the impact of the insecure, temporary contracts which academic staff are often shackled to

An argument often made in opposition to this strike action is that the impact on students is both disproportionate and unfair. Proponents of this viewpoint argue that the industrial action does not impact the university, which keeps tuition fees while saving money on wages, but rather on students, who

still pay their fees but are deprived of their contact hours. This argument essentially misses the point of the action – or indeed of any strike action. The withdrawal of labour is supposed to create disruption, and while this is unfortunate for students, it is a price worth paying for the maintenance of strong unions and employee bargaining power.

It is sometimes argued that the decision of lecturers not to give advance warning of their industrial action and to refuse any rescheduling of classes is indicative of an unwillingness to recognise the impact of disruption of students, but this argument once again misses the point. If academic staff spell out the details of their actions to the university, the impact of the strike will be diluted, rendering the whole process entirely pointless. Lecturers will lose out on pay, students will lose out on hours, but university leaders will be able to minimise the disruption caused by the action, thus undermining the bargaining position of the UCU.

There can be no doubt that students do lose out because of the strike, but anger at academic staff is misdirected. It should instead be aimed at university leaders, who continue to create a two-tier education system in which their own interests are protected, but academic staff are driven further towards insecure employment.

If the student experience is to be our top priority, then let us not forget the impact of the insecure, temporary contracts which academic staff are often shackled to. In a 2016 report on the issue, The Guardian found that almost 50% of Leeds staff were employed on these 'atypical' contracts, and warned

of the demoralising impact of this on academic staff. Such insecurity in the workplace, which sees many staff left afraid to speak out, inevitably affects the standard of teaching. A devalued workforce results in a devalued higher education sector, and it is students who pay the price for this.

The debate over strike action and its impact undoubtedly feeds into a wider point about the incessant marketisation of the UK higher education system. While universities attempt to cut costs by jeopardising pay, pensions and working conditions, they continue to spend millions of pounds on marketing, in an attempt to attract potential students to their institutions.

When questioned, many universities refused to divulge the amount spent on marketing, but the University of Central Lancashire spent £3.4m in 2017–18, a staggering sum of money, almost matched by the University of the West of England. As students pay more, universities spend more, but the increased investment is not seen by staff, who have faced persistent attacks on their pay and pensions.

The burden of responsibility therefore falls upon us to stand up for our striking lecturers, to defend their work rights and pensions, and to demand that our significant expenditure on tuition fees is reinvested into the university, not merely pocketed by overpaid university Vice-Chancellors and squandered on costly vanity projects. The disruption, while irksome, is a price worth paying for securing a viable future for the higher education sector, and we as students should stand in unequivocal solidarity with our striking lecturers.

Disabled Students Can Feel Like A Ticked Box

Georgie Fuhri
Blogs and Lifestyle Editor

My experience with the Leeds disability service has been a pleasant albeit brief, and slightly problematic encounter. I filled in my name, crossed the T's, dotted the I's and ran over the nature of my diagnosis and how it affects me.

As a result, I was to be given special exam arrangements: rest breaks, a separate room, extra time. However, in spite of this, I still felt like I'd been left wanting. I get support during exam periods but what about the rest of the year? I was given the option of a special chair for lectures, but I'd had enough of being separated from my colleagues because of my diagnosis. I didn't want to draw attention to myself.

Then again, I didn't realise that would mean being left to my own devices almost entirely.

Unfortunately, the nature of some disabilities means that it is hard to plan my work and social life when an episode that can strike at any time, day or night regardless of deadlines or social activities.

This time of year the cold is creeping in and unfortunately this makes living with my particular disability all the more unpleasant. Exhaustion levels increase alongside my pain levels. It feels a little like fighting a losing battle all on my own. On some days, I don't feel able to explain to my faculty that I just couldn't get out of bed. On some days, I don't feel able to explain why I hurt too much to get to my lecture and that I collapsed in my living room.

One of the nasty things about having an invisible disability is that sometimes I need someone to help me carry this weight but you're not always able to get that help. It's hard to ask for help when you feel you might be discredited or scorned because simply because you don't seem disabled enough to require it.

Believe me when I say I'm not trying to slate the excellent, hard work the University and Disability Services provide for staff and students alike. I'm merely stating that sometimes it can feel like we are a ticked-box; a precaution covered.

My question is: Where is the pastoral care for those of us that don't seem disabled? I walk these halls the same as everyone else but it just takes me a little longer to get there sometimes.

One look on Minerva can tell you of all the means the University goes to in order to help its students: accessible toilets, lift access, quiet areas, all amazing and NECESSARY requirements for any faculty.

However, it can feel like the bare minimum. The disabled experience is not something that can be alleviated easily and it needs to be ensured that there is a strong base of support to accommodate a whole breadth of needs. This is at any given time and not just when you've had a moment to preschedule what is needed to help a disabled student.

Invisible or not, all disabilities need help consistently and effectively. A simple email could never go amiss. I don't want to be forgotten between enrolment and exams.

This isn't a University exclusive experience either. This issue spans far further than academia. Accessibility is not optional. It needs to be mandatory and it needs to be now. Not having the funds/means to accommodate disabled people is unacceptable. I for one, am tired of being a second rate citizen and only being helped when an able bodied person deems me ill enough to warrant it.

A spokesperson from the University of Leeds said:

"We're sorry to hear that a student has been having difficulties. We work hard to provide a support network and do this in partnership with students themselves, including through LUU, and with service providers in the city such as Leeds Medical Health Practice.

"We urge students with any disability to contact Disability Services if they are seeking support via daily drop-in appointments, or by phone and email. Students can also access the Student Counselling and Wellbeing Service either online or through daily drop-ins, and additional online support is provided by Big White Wall. There are also student support officers in faculties and schools who can give advice and signpost to further services."

- Disability Services:
- Call on 0113 343 3927
- Email disability@leeds.ac.uk
- Visit the reception team between 9am and 5pm

Drop-in sessions are from 9:30 am to 4 pm. The Service is based in the Chemistry West Building.

Gibraltar Abortion Referendum: a Threat to Human Rights

Gabriella Chipol

Unknown to the United Kingdom's mass media supervision, the British overseas territory of Gibraltar with its small population of 30,000 conceals one of the European Union's harshest abortion laws and renunciation of human rights. The British territory has a seductive appeal about it through its bustling hive of culture, flourishing economy and radiant weather; however, its prosperity successfully masks the backward and regressive politics of Britain's own mini-dystopia.

Under section 16 of the 2011 Crime Act, abortion in Gibraltar is illegal. The act states abortion as well as the act of assisting abortion is punishable by life imprisonment. As a result, thousands of Gibraltarian women seeking abortions are forced to cross into Spain to undergo dangerous backstreet or 'coat-hanger' abortions or, alternatively, pay obscenely high sums of money in order to obtain the procedure in secret.

The oppressive nature of Gibraltar's abortion law garners resentment from Gibraltar's small community and enforces silence and fear among women: fear for one's own safety and the risk of life imprisonment. Generations of women have been dictated by an overwhelming sense of shame as a result of the illegality and criticism faced by those who seek an abortion. Often, those who do speak up to discuss their own experiences are advised to hide their faces as well as alter their voices in order to maintain anonymity and avoid the legal consequences of having sought an abortion. The Abortion Act, therefore, is a law imposed at the expense of female mental health,

as the circumstance of seeking an abortion in a foreign country under silence and fear of life imprisonment is mentally taxing, distressing and traumatising. Women are denied a platform to deal with their trauma and are unable to express themselves in fear of being criticised or caught.

The European Union declares that, 'states should ensure that health systems and services are able to meet the specific sexual and reproductive health needs of adolescents, including family planning

Notions of sex and sexuality remain completely taboo

and safe abortion services'. Instead, Gibraltar not only has one of Europe's strictest abortion bans but does not even have an official sexual health clinic in the Gibraltar Health Authority. In this respect, notions of sex and sexuality remain completely taboo as Gibraltarians are not provided with full access to education and support in regards to sexual health.

According to a poll conducted by the Gibraltar Broadcasting Corporation (GBC) in March 2018, 77% of respondents agreed that abortion should be legal in Gibraltar. Despite this large support for decriminalisation, the abortion debate has been a point of contention in Gibraltar. This is evident through the increasing polarisation between the pro-life and pro-choice movements within the microcosm of the British territory.

The Gibraltar Pro-life Movement is primarily responsible for the blocking legalisation of

abortion. Through its campaigning, the movement has been criticised for broadcasting outdated views on the role of women. This is reflected in its shamefully sexist and disrespectful propaganda, using controversial slogans such as, 'a woman bears a child, nothing else'. It is through this mode of regressive thinking that women's rights are repressed by outdated values and non-factual opinions.

The legalisation of abortion in Ireland demonstrated that decriminalisation was an imperative and not simply a democratic mandate; this providing an incentive for the March 2020 Abortion Bill Referendum in Gibraltar. However promising this move forward may be, it is irresponsible and unethical to discuss and decide on a matter of human rights through a referendum. By leaving the fate of decriminalisation to the general public, the Gibraltar government – formed almost entirely of men – highlight their incompetence and failure to meet 21st century democratic values that the United Kingdom represents. The well-being and safety of women in the British territory should be a major cause for concern in the United Kingdom.

The referendum, simply put, is an evasion of responsibility. The government's refusal to take action is an attempt to maintain support from all areas of society at the expense of women, their freedom and their autonomy.

Bodily autonomy, including safe access to abortion, is a human right. Gibraltarian women live in a dystopian Britain: never truly free to make their own choices with full ownership of their bodies.

Immigration IS an Asset to the UK

Kelly Pearson

It goes without saying that immigration is the current hot topic in international discourse. An increasing political focus on immigration has allowed politicians like Donald Trump and Viktor Orban to use immigrants as scapegoats, painting them as criminals, to further their political campaigns.

However, a new strand of research from the likes of the International Monetary Fund, has suggested that migration, no matter how politically controversial, is economically beneficial. This invites the question, if there are so many positive impacts, why are so many people opposed to immigration? The answer to this question is simple; people only perceive immigration in bigotry terms and identity politics, ignoring the growth that immigration brings.

The common suggestion that, 'migrants are stealing our jobs', unsurprisingly lacks real substance. Ironically, eighty-three percent of native-born workers benefit from immigration, and the impacts of declining wages are almost

inexistent. Studies from the 'Economist' show that immigrants tend to be harder working than native-born workers: migrant communities have lower rates of unemployment and migrants in the UK are twice as likely as native individuals to set up businesses. Similarly, in the US, migrants make up only fourteen percent of the population, but have set up thirty percent of the businesses, highlighting the vitality of immigrants to dynamic economies. However, it is not only high-skilled entrepreneurs that improve the economy; low-skilled migrants fill essential occupations for which the native-population is in short supply, thus contributing to a more efficient, dynamic economy.

The benefits of migration are shared by all; the migrants themselves and their home countries prosper. When migrants move from a poor country to a wealthier country, they typically make three to six times as much money as before. If and when migrants return to their homes, the money and skills they have earned are re-invested into the economy, thus counteracting the apparent brain drain.

Immigration is not only beneficial for host countries, but limiting it actually hobbles economic growth.

If the number of migrants in the UK remained constant since 1990, and immigration stagnated, the economy today would be nine percent smaller, amount to a decrease in GDP by £175 billion. Moreover, if Germany, one of the top five countries for immigration, froze the number of migrants, the net economic loss would be six percent. Immigrants are typically educated in their home countries, and leave the host country before retirement, thereby meaning they pay significantly more in taxes than they receive benefits.

No matter your views, the facts cannot be ignored. It is tragic in many ways that as the benefits of immigration are emerging, a 'no-deal' Brexit is on the horizon for Britain, and the prospects of free movement are looking slim. What is the future for Britain and EU citizens? Will our leaders acknowledge the economic benefits of immigration and allow the country to prosper from them?

Tenants Unite: Know Your Rights!

Annabel Bowker

Anyone who's ever rented as a student knows how stressful it can be. According to the National Student Accommodation Survey nearly 90% of students have had some form of issue with housing. High prices are the obvious issue with the average rent costing roughly £125 per week. Yet more often than not what do you get for this price? Damp, condensation, infestations and a landlord who doesn't care.

Many students feel as though they are taken advantage of by landlords who view them as clueless and naïve and do not expect students to question or challenge them. With this in mind it is easy for them to take advantage and throw in extra costs in the hope that the student will simply pay them. In my personal experience we were each charged £300 for a deposit and £100 worth of letting fees. After paying both of these and signing the contract we were then told we all owed £25 worth of guarantor administration fees which had never previously been mentioned, when I challenged this, they dropped the charge.

According to the National Student Accommodation Survey the average rental deposit currently stands at around £311 per student. This equates to roughly 3 weeks rent or a food shop at £20 a week for 15 weeks. Clearly, it's not cheap. Usually these deposits are held in a government approved scheme for the length of the contract and then reimbursed after an inspection of the property at the end. However, the NUS Homes Fit for Study report found that 'only 63 per cent of

students received evidence that their deposit had been protected by their landlord or agent, despite it being a legal requirement under the Housing Act 2004'.

Only 61% of students receive their deposit back in full at the end of the tenancy. Of course, there are some cases where deductions are fair, yet only a fifth of those who have lost some or all of their deposit are actually in agreement with their landlord and the charges. In fact, 24% said they disagreed with the deductions however had not formally challenged them. This scenario is becoming increasingly popular as students feel they either don't have the expertise to dispute the charges, don't know they are able to or simply feel there is no point in doing so.

Only 61% of students receive their deposit back in full at the end of their tenancy

Landlords are also charging hundreds of pounds for cleaning the house, when in many cases has been left in a cleaner state than when the tenants moved in. For example, when we moved in, we were faced with mould in the freezer and a pile of pots and pans outside, after contacting the letting agency a number of time nothing has been done about these issues.

So how can you make sure you get all of your deposit back? First ask for proof that your money has been put in a government approved scheme. Secondly,

make sure you take photos of the house as soon as you move in, this means you have evidence than any faults were already present when you arrived. Most universities also have a contract checking service which makes sure there's nothing in there which will catch you out. Finally, ask for an inventory, this is a list of everything in the property when you move in and again makes sure you have proof of any existing damage for when you move out.

At the moment less than half of students feel that they know their rights as tenants and able to assert them, it's time this changes. It is important that this number drastically increases so that students are able to have the best possible renting experience. If we change, landlords will have to follow.



Image: BBC News

We Are Failing Our Homeless

Esme McGowan

Crouched over in a bus stop we find him, barely able to stand due to the pain of his leg. Someone set fire to his sleeping bag, he tells us, and the result is a great, awful gash on his puffy, swollen leg. I hand over a sandwich, a measly offering for someone in such desperate need of help, but it's something, I tell myself.

"You need to go to the doctor," I urge, sure that once there he'd receive all the necessary medicine and help to not only save his leg but perhaps get himself a little more security. But then comes the shocking truth. "I've been," he says, the pain visible in his eyes, "but I can't afford the prescription... £9 for someone without benefits, and because I'm a rough sleeper I can't even apply

for them... there's no option for someone with nothing." The disbelief I feel is unreal. "How?," I think to myself, "how on earth can this happen?," yet this isn't even the end of his story. Due to the open wound, he can't even sleep at St Mark's Crypt. It's understandable due to the potential impact it could have on the health of other residents, but again all I can think is "How?!"

This is not the fault of one person, or one charity, but a systematic failing to those perhaps most in need of assistance. Despite Leeds having a much lower rough sleeper count than other major cities such as Birmingham, Manchester, Bristol and Nottingham, with 28 people being counted in 2017 in comparison to Manchester's 94, this is still a very significant number of people facing intensely difficult circumstances. Furthermore, this number has grown incredibly when compared to the six rough sleepers counted in 2010 - a 367% increase - and in the last twelve months before the publication of Leeds City Council's Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy for 2019-2022, six rough sleepers were known to have died in Leeds.

There are systems in place of course, and Leeds does have a fairly substantial number of charities looking out for those without homes, such as St Mark's Crypt, Simon on the Streets, St Anne's and Emmaus. Additionally, the Homelessness Reduction Act of 2017 put a greater responsibility on local councils to both prevent and relieve

homelessness, in conjunction with pre-existing statutory rehousing duties... but surely this is not enough if we still have people unable to afford critical treatment for open wounds. Not only that, but I would have thought that the provision of drugs to those particularly vulnerable to substance abuse would be something carefully monitored and overseen by the NHS; to ensure both a full recovery and to prevent addiction.

In the last twelve months [...] six rough sleepers were known to have died in Leeds

At the root of this is the government's systematic refusal to confront the needs of a welfare state, including proper funding for the NHS, and this is something that cannot be overlooked when the election comes around.

But there is also something to be said about small acts of kindness; for the man we spoke to, just being acknowledged, being seen as a human was so important.

He thanked us and hugged us goodbye after we helped to pay for his prescription. It was of little detriment to us, but I think sometimes compassion, and openness to what may at first scare us, can go a long way.



Image: BBC News

Will Putin Try to Steal Christmas?

Joseph Carter

In mid-November, Michael Schwartz and Gaelle Borgia of the New York Times published a report on Russia's efforts to install a President in Madagascar, who would be favourable to the Kremlin's interests. Jam-packed with espionage, trolls, rucksacks stuffed with cash, precious stones and even the courting of a cult leader, the operation was a showcase in Russia's most audacious election trickery.

At the same time, the agents undertaking the campaign were rife with comical levels of corruption and incompetence, reminiscent of the villains faced by Sean Connery in 'From Russia With Love'. The team even switched their support to a different candidate half way through the race after realising that they were betting on the wrong horse.

In the end, however, the Russians achieved what they set out to do: solidify their grip on a state owned mining company and so maintain the flow of resources and profits from Madagascar to the Kremlin.

The Russians achieved what they set out to do: solidify their grip on a state owned mining company

So, how are the experiences of a small African island, over 5500 miles from Leeds, relevant to the vulnerability of British democratic institutions in our upcoming elections? While their tactics were somewhat cumbersome, the Russian efforts to blatantly intervene in Madagascar's election demonstrate the unchecked ability of large powerful states to manipulate a smaller country's democratic institutions.

Fortunately, in the UK, bad blood and suspicions regarding Russia's role in the past two decades of our politics has led independent experts, government agencies and intelligence services to

investigate the likelihood of Russia meddling. The resulting 18-month long Intelligence and Security committee's report landed in 10 Downing Street for its final sign off on October 17th. However, Johnson has refused to release the report to the public until after the December 12th election.

Despite condemnation from MPs, the press and the public, Johnson and his supporters have been adamant that a proper procedure is being followed, claiming that the "clearance process" takes 6 weeks. However, this rather convenient bureaucratic hurdle for the PM has been challenged by the chair of the Intelligence Committee, Dominic Grieve. Grieve, an MP who was ousted from the Tory parliamentary group because of his opposition to Johnson's Brexit plan, argued that the clearance process for the report should only take 10 working days.

Critics have been quick to link the government's reluctance to release the report to the damaging revelations it may hold regarding the Tory party's own financial relationship with a wealthy, Russian-born donor class.

The allegations surrounding the influence of Russian money in the Tory party has been circling for some time now, with donations, dinners, and tennis matches being bought and paid for by Russians with fairly strange but substantial links to the Kremlin.

For example, Lubov Chernukhin, the wife of Vladimir Putin's former finance minister, has given £1,223,774 to the Tories. This included donating £300,100 this year alone, as well as paying £160,000 at an auction to play tennis with the then PM David Cameron and London Mayor Boris Johnson in 2014. Moreover, Putin's Judo partner and deputy in the Duma (the Russian parliament) was part of a posy of Russians invited to the Tory's 2013 summer party by a London Lobbyist firm with an extensive set of Russian state contacts.

The Chancellor, Sajid Javid, has been quick to reject claims that any donations to the Tory party

Image: New Delhi Times



were illegal, arguing that it is the right of British citizens to participate fully in the democratic process. Moreover, Johnson has asserted that he has not seen any evidence of Russia interfering in British politics and has characterised accusations about the way in which his administration has handled the report as "complete Bermuda Triangle stuff".

Aside from the shovelful of sugar needed in order to swallow any of the Conservatives' claims, I am conflicted about how to feel about this. On the one hand, the idea of Cameron and Johnson red in the face and gasping for air as they lumber after the same green tennis ball in tight white shorts is an amusing sight. On the

The wife of Vladimir Putin's former finance minister, has given £1,223,774 to the Tories

other, it is blood boiling the way in which wealthy individuals can so easily and 'legally' get access to our politicians, regardless of their nationality or motivations.

Whereas Russia's efforts in Madagascar were crude and explicit, their tactics in the UK have been shadowy and elusive. But both have succeeded in their own ways. Whatever the report details, Putin has already gained much from his international ventures. Rather than uniting the country against a common foe, allegations of Russian interference in the EU referendum have only made the debates surrounding its legitimacy more bitter and dividing.

Moreover, as pointed out by Tony Barber at the Financial Times, a win for either of the major parties on December 12th will likely serve the Kremlin's interests. In the Tories they have a swift Brexit; in Labour, they have a NATO sceptic at its helm; and in a hung parliament, they have more of the same mind-numbing gridlock and inaction.



Image: BBC News

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The Banking Hubs of the Future

The Boyd company reports on the future of the banking and finance industry and where the banks of the future may operate.

Chloe Pryce
Business Editor

The Boyd Company, a Princeton, New Jersey-based independent location counsel to corporations including Dell and GlaxoSmithKline, recently released a report comparing the cost of operating a banking and financial services back office in London compared with nineteen other banking hubs across the UK, Europe and North America, including Leeds.

So, which spot fares best and where does Leeds sit in the rankings?

Whilst London and New York remain the two global capitals in the banking and financial services industry, migration towards up-and-coming FS hubs is increasingly popular.

This is unsurprising considering the huge diversity in operation costs between hubs. Between the most expensive city to operate a back office (San Francisco), and the least expensive (Warsaw, Poland), there is a huge \$8.9 million per year difference in operating costs.

The operating costs can vary even between some of the main hubs with London \$2.4 million cheaper than San Francisco and 15.1% less expensive than New York.

Outside of the main hubs, popular spots include Paris, Frankfurt and Amsterdam. But what causes such variation in the costs of operating a bank across different cities?

To begin, regulatory and compliance expenses can vary across countries as can competitive pressures from upstart fintech players, making certain cities more or less attractive.

The report from The Boyd Company also considers the role of AI as a site selection driver. The Bank of England's chief economist Andy Haldane has warned of potential mass unemployment in the UK banking sector due to AI and machine learning.

However, the introduction of AI will also generate job demand for people with skills in this space. Hence, it is a huge factor when determining where to operate a back office for a financial services firm; setting up a back office where talent can be found is

increasingly important. For example, Leeds may be a favourable back office location as the University of Leeds has prominent

Where does Leeds sit? Leeds sits in a fairly sweet spot in the ranks. It would cost a bank around \$2m less per year to operate in Leeds compared with London and may be increasingly considered a favourable back office location as the University of Leeds has prominent AI academic programmes. The cost of renting an office in Leeds and the cost of corporate travel are significantly smaller than in London and for example, Paris.

According to the report, London-based banks will continue to decentralise jobs to smaller, less costly and less congested UK markets to the north such as Manchester and Leeds.

So, if you're considering a career in financial services, don't be fooled that London is the only banking hub now and forever; economic uncertainty, an increasing focus on the bottom line and the centrality of AI is pushing banks to consider setting up operations in different cities.

State of Emergency: Inequality in the UK

The Gryphon takes a look at how high inequality has led to violent protests in Chile and reflects on sustained income inequality in the UK.

Will Southall
Business Editor

Over the last few weeks intensifying protests in Chile saw 22 killed and thousands injured, as people took the streets in the name of economic equality.

For many protesters though, the real number of casualties is in the hundreds of thousands – those who are struggling to get by on an income way below the national average.

Chile was recently ranked the most unequal of the 30 richest countries in the world, a statistic that hit hard in the South American nation, fuelling rising anger amongst those who feel their problems are being ignored by the government and powerful elite.

When it was announced that public transport fares were to significantly increase, over a million people took to the streets in a stance against rising living costs.

In response to the protests the government has gone back on the metro price hike as well as increasing the minimum wage and basic pension.

In an attempt to bring an end to the protests, Chile's president Sebastian Piñera has also dissolved his cabinet and will form a new government, promising to the millions of voices calling for change, that he will listen.

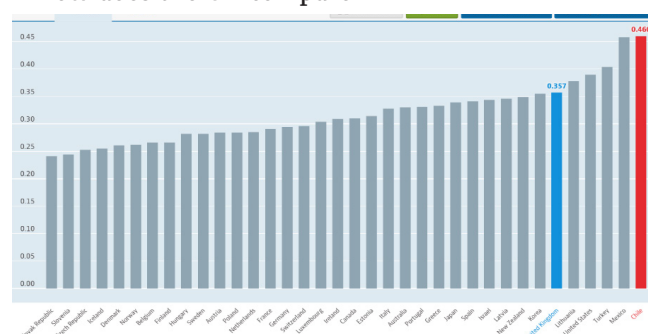
More recently, the government have agreed to calls for a referendum on the country's constitution, which will take place in April next year.

A victory for the protesters, but it will take a lot more to get Chile's level of income inequality down

to a similar level of its G7 partners. Some feel that such promises of reform are not enough and are continuing to protest, despite recent announcements from the President.

Many believe the reason behind Chile's high inequality comes down to a regressive tax system that often hits the poorest the worst and hardly taxes the rich, leaving the government with less income to spend on levelling out the playing field and alleviating those stuck in poverty.

How does the UK compare?



Sadly the UK is hardly in a position to take the moral high ground. The Gini Index is the most widely used measure of inequality and works on a scale from 0, complete inequality, to 1, complete inequality.

On the index, Chile gets a score of 0.460, whereas the UK gets a score of 0.357. Not bad on the face of it, but if we compare this to the some of the Scandinavian and central European countries, whose scores are all below 0.300, it is clear there is a long way to go for the UK.

What is perhaps more concerning, is that the UK's

level of income inequality today, is approximately equal to that of 2002. Unlike with Gross Domestic Product (GDP), a measure of the size of the economy, it seems we cannot rely on income equality to continue improving over time.

Policies will need to be put into action with the specific aim of reducing income inequality, rather than hoping that the problem will go away through solely targeting economic growth.

The countdown to the UK's general election on December 12th is well and truly on and we have already seen opposition parties using the UK's high inequality and relative poverty as a weapon against the Conservatives, whose efforts to tackle such issues have been forced to take a back-seat due to Brexit.

But whether or not such messages will be picked up by voters is yet to be seen, with many experts believing it is likely to turn into a single-issue election at the ballot boxes.



Image Credit: Reuters

An Afternoon with Hilary Benn: Leeds Economics Society Pose Questions to Labour's Candidate for Leeds Central

Hilary Benn has played a central role in the Brexit process since Theresa May set up the Select Committee for Exiting the European Union, which Benn chaired. Benn was invited by LUU Economics Society to talk to students about his experience working on Brexit and serving as an MP for over 20 years

Will Southall
Business Editor

On Wednesday 27th November, Leeds University Economics Society invited Rt. Hon Hilary Benn into the university to answer questions from students on Brexit and the state of British politics.

The event was not a rally for the Labour Party, nor was it an endorsement of their policies, but a chance to get a real insight into the key issues that have been at the heart of the Brexit debate.

Benn is standing for Labour in Leeds Central in the upcoming election on December 12th and has represented the constituency for the last 20 years.

Benn has held a number of important roles in government across these years, including serving as the Secretary of State for International Development under Tony Blair and perhaps most notably chairing the Select Committee for Exiting the European Union.

Hilary Benn was instrumental in the passing of the European Union (withdrawal) (No. 2) Act 2019 through the commons, informally known as the Benn act, which forced Boris Johnson to request a further Brexit extension.

Benn started by talking about his role chairing the select committee, which was specifically tasked with scrutinising the Brexit process.

Far from getting Brexit done. We haven't even begun Brexit. It hasn't even begun!

"An early recommendation that we made was that there would need to be a transitional period between our leaving the European Union and when a future arrangement was reached. That was very controversial at the time".

Mr Benn then went on to explain that the Benn act was a product of parliamentarians across all parties, with the primary aim of "preventing Boris Johnson from taking the UK out of the European Union without an agreement on Brexit, on the 31st October"

When asked about the dangers of a no-deal Brexit, Mr Benn had a particularly strong response:

"If you were thinking of building a manufacturing facility to make things and export them around the European Union, the one country you would not invest in is the United Kingdom. Why? Because the obvious question is, so what's our future economic relationship going to be with our biggest, newest and most important trading partners? Answer – we haven't got a clue. Far from getting Brexit done, we haven't even begun Brexit. It hasn't even begun! We haven't started negotiating what a future

relationship might be like".

Later, Mr Benn said that "I think for too long we have been a prisoner of short-termism", citing the 2008 financial crisis as an example of how one can easily focus on the benefits of the short-term and in doing so ignore the signs of danger in the long term.

Whilst there was not enough time to discuss climate change in full detail, Mr Benn said that the issue of climate change and protecting the environment "changes everything" and will make the problems that we are dealing with in politics right now seem "very small".

Benn highlighted the importance of the issue of the Irish border and the need to keep frictionless movement between the two countries after Brexit.

Whilst there are not currently any checks on the border, Benn reminded an audience, most of whom were too young to remember, that it was not always this way.

"40 years ago it would've been very different. Check points, customs posts, police station, army barracks, watch towers, murder", bringing back the importance of the Good Friday Agreement and why this issue has been such a talking point in Brexit debate.

Before the EU referendum Benn said that if the British people voted to leave, that's it, they're going.

Immediately after the referendum, Benn said that we have to accept the decision of the result and he promised to follow through on Brexit during the 2017 elections. Now Benn, and the Labour party, are calling for a second referendum on Brexit.

Mr Benn was challenged on this and was asked whether he felt that this change in position and that of other MPs has led to a distrust in politicians.

In his response, Benn argued that in 2017 the labour party set out the terms on which they would be prepared to approve a deal and these terms

involved a close relationship with the single market amongst other characteristics of a Brexit deal, rather than approving Boris Johnson's deal or risking a no-deal Brexit.

He then went on to say "let's be honest about brexit. The referendum said we were going to leave, but it was never clear about how. The truth is there are a whole different series of possible Brexits... with hindsight, was it wise that such a complex, hugely important decision was reduced to such a straight binary question when nobody knew what kind of future relationship was going to be sought?".

Benn continued ask rhetorical questions back to the audience in an attempt to defend his position.

"Do the British people have the right to change their minds?"

"To what extent does Brexit still represent the will of the British people?"

Finally, a question was raised about the spreading of disinformation and what can be do it combat the spread of fake news, to which Benn made the following remarks:

"I think that the thing we're having most difficulty with is social media, the cyber world and Facebook".

In his opinion there needed to be more regulation on the spending limit for parties to advertise on social media platforms. Benn also went on to say that he felt that children should be taught to question politics and news at an early age to improve their "political literacy", so that people can better differentiate between truth and lies.

Throughout the session, Hilary Benn wasn't shy about expressing how difficult work in politics at the highest level can be.

However, to all young people thinking about going into politics his message was clear: "go for it, please, we need good people to stand for elective office".





Our House is Literally on Fire

Sarah McInnes

When you think of Australia, the idea of near-constant bushfires is pretty standard – and you're right! Bushfires are incredibly important to the Australian ecosystem – Australian plants are adapted to thrive after a bushfire, and given the hot and dry climate of the country, bushfires are inevitable and natural.

However, since September, Australia has been plagued with fires and, whilst bushfires are normal, the size and number of these fires is completely new and deeply concerning. There are fires quite literally all over the country, with New South Wales and Queensland being the worst hit states with over 1.6 million hectares devastated by fire, a 6,000km fire front, six lives lost and over 600 homes destroyed. A week-long State of Emergency was declared last fortnight for New South Wales, with 'Catastrophic' level fire warnings – the highest possible warning – being issued and the same recently issued in Victoria and South Australia as well. As Rural Fire Chief Shane Fitzsimmons put it, 'Catastrophic' fire warnings are when "people die", and fire services have urged people to be prepared to evacuate at a moment's notice.

So why has this happened? The reasoning is twofold: natural climatic cycles and climate change. The three main natural systems behind Australian climate are the Indian Ocean Dipole, the El Niño Southern Oscillation and the Southern Annular Mode. When in El Niño conditions, a negative phase of the Southern Annular Mode and a positive Indian Ocean Dipole, the Australian climate is drier and thus more intense

bushfire conditions are generated. 2019 is just such a culmination of conditions, meaning that Australia was to expect a more intense bushfire season naturally.

However, whilst the fires are in part due to natural climate cycles, climate change has had an undeniable effect by prolonging and worsening the Australian bushfire season. Whilst more frequent and intense bushfires are not solely caused by climate change, the evidence overwhelmingly shows a clear and undeniable link between the two. The State of the Climate 2018 report for Australia showed a 10-20% reduction in rainfall across Southern Australia since the 1970s; the Bureau of Meteorology has noted a 1 °C increase in average temperature in Australia since 1910; and weekly bushfires increased 40% from 2011-2016. Droughts exacerbated by Climate Change are causing areas that traditionally do not burn, such as water courses, to literally evaporate – thus creating new fire paths. Regions of New South Wales have been in intense drought since 2017 and, unsurprisingly, are amongst the hardest hit by the fires.

Unfortunately, the response by the Australian government has been disappointing, to say the least. The current government, the Australian Liberal and National Party Coalition (LNP), alongside the second major party, the Australian Labor Party (ALP), have refused to acknowledge the link between climate change and the fires. The Australian Greens have reinvigorated their push for discussions on the climate emergency in the wake of the crisis, however this has been met with lacklustre and deeply insensitive responses. Deputy Prime Minister

Michael McCormack said the links between the fires and climate change were "the ravings of some pure enlightened and woke capital city greenies", and Barnaby Joyce, former National Party Leader and current backbencher, suggested that two victims of the fires "most likely" voted for The Greens. Prime Minister Scott Morrison has dismissed the comments, claiming that unhelpful remarks have been offered by both sides. Instead, his contribution was to offer his "thoughts and prayers" to those affected by the fire. For context, the Morrison government refused to meet with fire chiefs in April when they wanted to discuss the impact climate change presented in the upcoming fire season. Moreover, the LNP slashed \$12.9 million from Fire and Rescue NSW, while the volunteer run Office of NSW Rural Fire Services lost \$26.7 million in the 2019/20 budget. Additionally, during the Climate Strikes, Morrison was critical and urged students to go back to school – hundreds of schools across the country have now been closed due to the fires. The irony is not lost on anyone.

The fire season is only expected to worsen as summer does not officially start for another month and record temperatures have already been reached across the country. The intensity and destruction of these events is a frightening reality of climate change and to add to the apocalyptic feeling, in the midst of all this an intense hail storm with hail the size of cricket balls swept through the Gold Coast, all while Queensland was still battling fires. The time to act is now, because climate change is already here, whether we like it or not.

The Universe: Flat or Spherical?

Zahin Ali

A new paper published in Nature Astrology has bewildered cosmologists by concluding that the shape of the Universe might be a sphere, sparking a 'cosmological crisis' and forcing scientists to rethink their understanding of the Universe. This data was collected by the European Space Agency's Planck satellite between 2009 and 2013 and new analysis may be evidence that the Universe is a closed sphere. Up until now, cosmological models have been based on the assumption that the Universe is flat like a sheet of paper. Most existing data has supported this, including preliminary analysis of this Planck satellite data.

The Planck satellite observed the motion of the

cosmic microwave background radiation (CMB) – light that was produced at the time of the Big Bang and which now floats through space, faintly illuminating it. The satellite measured the amount of gravitational lensing (bending of the light due to the gravitational pull of other celestial bodies) that the light had undergone during its journey through the Universe to the satellite. A higher degree of lensing than expected suggested to the team of researchers that the Universe is denser than previously thought. There is a critical density of the Universe that, if reached, would cause the Universe to close in on itself, forming a sphere. The density published by the authors of the article exceeded this critical value, leading them to declare a 'cosmological crisis'.

The authors of the papers themselves have

commented on the need to interpret the data with caution, however. They point out that the amount of evidence pointing to a flat Universe far exceeds the evidence for a spherical one. One major anomaly is that the Planck dataset predicts a different Hubble constant (the rate of the expansion of the Universe) to the value that was calculated using data from the Hubble telescope in 2018. Other scientists in the field have attributed the findings of the paper to a 'statistical fluke' rather than hastily subscribing to the radical view that the Universe is closed. The conclusion that one of the authors draws is not that the Universe is a sphere, but to highlight that our understanding in their field is incomplete and that our models must be revised to account for this new development.

Opening the Floodgates

Record-breaking flooding continues after historical high tides hit Venice

Hayley Austin

Venice has been experiencing the worst flooding it has seen in decades this past week following the second highest tide ever recorded at 187 centimetres, leaving 85% of the city underwater. This is just short of the highest tide recorded at 194 centimetres in 1966.

This is nothing Venice has not seen before. The city frequently experiences tides of 140 centimetres in the winter months, events known as 'acqua alta' and it is not atypical to have a higher-than-average tide every 5 years or so. However, there is rising concern over these irregular high tides and extreme weather events, like the recent tide that hit Venice on the 12th of November this year, as Venice continues to subside or sink. The city is made up of 100 islands criss-crossed with canals within a lagoon in the Adriatic Sea which makes it very sensitive to flooding.



Image: The Daily Beast

flooding events. Recent studies have found that Venice could be underwater within 100 years if climate change continues at the rate it is currently going.

To equip the city with a way to deal with increasingly frequent high tides and flooding, the government of Venice has spent billions of euros on a flood-barrier system nicknamed MOSE that, once completed and operational, would encompass a steel gate system along three inlets in the lagoon that could be lifted during high tides to reduce or eliminate flooding events. The project began in 2003 and initially had a 2011 deadline but it is behind schedule and plagued by corruption and bribery. Now it is predicted the floodgates will be operational by 2021.

Two days after the flooding, Italy's Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte declared a state of emergency. He promises to accelerate the building of the city's structural defences and openly blames climate change for the intense and irregular flooding events. Five days after the initial flooding, another 'acqua alta' flooded the city, hitting records again at 1.5 metres above sea level, with 70% of the city left resubmerged.

Since records began in 1872, there has not been a single week when flood waters have reached 1.5

metres three times in the same week, at least until now. This marks the week of November 12th as the worst week of flooding the city has seen in over 50 years, with 3 of the top 10 worst floods to hit Venice occurring in the same 7-day period.

Yet Venice is not the only part of Italy to be faced with a weather emergency – the River Arno continues to surge at high levels in Pisa and Florence. From landslides derailing a train, to a snowstorm leaving 11,000 homes without power, to severe rain and winds requiring rescues of people all over the country, Italy has been experiencing widespread extreme weather events since flooding began on the 12th.

The flood waters are still yet to fully recede, damage to Venice's historical sites is predicted to amount to millions of euros and Venetians are becoming fed up with the lack of defence the city has to these waters and its increasing vulnerability due to climate change. It may come across as ironic that on the same night as the initial flooding, councillors rejected amendments related to fighting the climate crisis. A green campaigner said, "there is no more meaningful image than a chamber being flooded, causing the representatives of the Venetian people to flee."

Two days after the flooding, Italy's Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte declared a state of emergency

Scientists say that the city is sinking on an average of two millimetres per year due to shifting tectonic plates, a soft geological foundation and decades of pumping groundwater from the aquifer under the lagoon, which only stopped in the 70's.

Rising sea levels as a result of climate change only puts Venice at greater risk of more frequent extreme



Images: Getty Images

Morwenna Davies

To celebrate the release of their much anticipated new album *Everyday Life*, Coldplay, one of the world's biggest bands, has decided to travel back in time to the days when sell-out world tours were a thing of the far and distant future.

The band will instead be taking the time they would have spent entertaining their record-breaking fan base in favour of finding ways to make their gigs less detrimental to the environment.

The move follows The 1975's bold collaboration

Coldplay or Not to Play?

with Greta Thunberg to raise awareness on global environmental issues pressuring the modern age, with the band also offering to print their new tour logo on old gig t-shirts rather than churning out a whole batch of new merchandise.

Whether or not this was inspiration for Coldplay's radical move, the band has gained media attention by announcing just two gigs in Jordan on album-release day, which were broadcast for free on YouTube, rather than taking their new music on tour.

Coldplay's previous tour, *A Head Full of Dreams*, stacked up a whopping 122 shows across five continents in 2016 and 17, employed 109 crew members and had a convoy consisting of 32 trucks. The substantial tour was the fourth highest grossing tour of all time; scraping in over £400 million.

However this year, Coldplay have decided to forgo the hefty pay check in favour of the environment: a move which has been highly praised by the WWF.

According to frontman Chris Martin, the main environmental issue concerning the band is the impact of their flights, followed by single use plastics and electricity usage at the venues.

However figures from the Green Touring Network suggest the band should be focusing on audience travel which accounts for 33% of the carbon footprint of the average tour, rather than their own which only makes up 9%.

From the data, the main culprit of carbon emissions from a tour is venues, which is only slightly higher than audience travel at 34%. Measures that might help to reduce the environmental impact from venues could include playing in venues that are sustainably powered, for example those with solar panels, or using LED lights; strategies utilised by Radiohead in their 2007 tour. If the band want to completely neutralise their carbon footprint, however, they are going to have to dig deep to find more novel methods to keep emissions down in multiple aspects of their tour.

In an interview with the BBC, Martin claimed "we would be disappointed if [the tour] is not carbon neutral" and while this may be a seemingly radical optimistic requirement, it is dramatic moves such as this which may be essential for the world to move forward in the current environmental crisis."

Take Us Home: Can Leeds Finally Make it Back to the Big Time?

Jonathan Burnett
Football

The 2018-19 EFL Championship was in some ways, a season of firsts. No team who had topped the table at Christmas had failed to be promoted in the same season. Also, no team who had won a play-off semi-final first leg away from home had failed to be promoted. Step forward, Leeds United.

Marcelo Bielsa's side were a revelation in 2018-19, producing a brand of football virtually unseen before the Argentine's arrival at Elland Road. With practically the same squad that had limped to 13th place in 2017-18, Bielsa's Leeds raced to the upper echelons of the Championship table, not dropping below fourth the entire season.

Alas, promotion to the Premier League eluded them, and their collapse against Frank Lampard's Derby County at Elland Road in the second leg of the play-off semi-finals proved to be a dismal end to what was otherwise an electrifying season for Leeds.

Whilst it would be unfair to suggest that the 'wheels fell off' towards the back end of the campaign, there is a valid argument to suggest that the 'El Locomotive' did run out of steam during the latter stages of the season, with injuries playing a large part in Leeds dropping into the play-offs from the top 2.

Bielsa dismissed reports that the famous 'Bielsa Burnout' was to blame for Leeds' failure to get promoted, arguing instead that the players had 'performed to a level higher than ever before' and that they 'wouldn't be able to repeat the physical and mental efforts of this season in another.'

So, with another season, and another gruelling Bielsa pre-season under their belts, how are Leeds shaping up in their bid to finally return to the top-flight in their centenary year?

Playing almost the exact same style of fluid, attacking football in Bielsa's famous 3-3-1-3 formation, Leeds have started this season in a similar fashion to the last, creating by far the most goalscoring chances in the division, and having by far the best defence in the division, transformed by elegant Brighton centre-back Ben White.

However, last season's problems have refused to subside. One of Leeds' issues in 2017-18 was not capitalising on the vast numbers of scoring chances they created, with the efforts of Kemar Roobe and Patrick Bamford, both injured for large swathes of 2018-19, mustering only 24 goals between them.

This season, Roobe is gone, replaced by promising Arsenal loanee Eddie Nketiah, yet Bielsa has preferred starting Bamford for his industrious playing style, despite his mere 6 in 18 strike-rate. If Leeds can rectify

their goalscoring issues, they will be unstoppable. If not, failure may await them again, which could spell the end of Bielsa's tenure.

However, if any pair know failure, it's Marcelo Bielsa and Leeds United. Bielsa's last domestic title was in 1998 with Velez Sarsfield, and the Argentine hasn't won a trophy in nearly ten years of European management. Leeds' last notable 'success' was promotion to the Championship exactly ten years ago, and their fans the world over hope that a decade on, they can celebrate their centenary with a return, to where they feel, their beloved club belongs.



Image: Leeds United

Boxing Officials Banned From Tokyo



Image: Tokyo 2020

Millie Warrilow
Sports Editor

All thirty six referees which were involved in the 2016 Olympics in Brazil have been banned from officiating at the Olympics in Tokyo next year.

The IOC (International Olympic Committee) made a statement last Wednesday to rule out all those that were suspended from the last Olympics in Rio, will not be allowed to officiate for the Olympics next year due to new selection criteria which deemed them ineligible to officiate.

In Rio De Janeiro, three years ago, many judges and referees were suspended from action and sent home from Brazil due to various questionable decisions which were made during the Boxing competition in what were considered 'fixed' by an investigation

carried out by the International Boxing Association (AIBA).

Controversy was aroused as the decision was made back in 2016 that Irish boxer Michael Conlan had lost against Russian Vladimir Nikitin robbing him of a semi-final place after many seen Conlan to completely outbox him.

Alongside this, Kazakhstan heavy weight Vassiliy levit was also denied his gold medal as Russia's Evgeny Tischenko was confusingly and controversially awarded the win in the final.

AIBA addressed the matter by claiming to take immediate action and sent six referees and judges' home.

However, after the fight Conlan took to twitter to say: "Wow this says a lot about AIBA, sending judges home who ruin dream, what happens 2 the ppl whose

dreams were ruined?" Conlan vows that he will never box in an AIBA event again.

Although investigations in 2017 found that there was no interference, the IOC plan to increase transparency and integrity in the forthcoming Olympics and so therefore have changed the selection process of officiating at Tokyo.

Both referees and judges will now be picked at random from a pool of AIBA certified officials, who have been vetted prior to the event in order to ensure that they meet the selection criteria and are eligible for Tokyo 2020. This process of selection will also be conducted under supervision so that there is no space for error.

In addition to this, all scores will be publicly displayed from all Judges at the end of each and every round. These new improvements will also be implemented into the qualifying events in Tokyo as well as the games themselves representing consistency, full transparency and integrity.

Boxing task force chairman Morinari Watanabe spoke out on the matter to say: "The main objective of the IOC boxing task force is to ensure the completion of the mission of delivering events, while putting the boxers first, and with transparent and credible sporting results and fair play".

The process of pool selection is currently underway and the IOC have a long way to go in order to retain faith from their athletes before the qualifiers begin next February in Asia.

Jose's Winning Start at Spurs

Ted Orme-Claye
Football



The suddenness of Tottenham Hotspur sacking Pochettino as their manager, and the quick appointment of Jose Mourinho last week was a surprise to many.

Although Spurs have been struggling in recent months, the fact that Pochettino transformed the Tottenham team into one that consistently makes it into the top four and then become Champions League finalists convinced many he would stay in the role for at least a little longer.

Mourinho's criticisms of Manchester United for not giving him the money he wanted were also reappraised. If he had these complains at high-spending United how would he fare with the notoriously low spending Spurs?

These criticisms of Mourinho were dampened on Saturday when Spurs beat West Ham United 3-2 in the opening match of the day. This win was made

more impressive by the fact it was at West Ham's London Stadium, gifting the North London side with their first away win since 20th January.

In some ways this game was both a blessing and a curse for Mourinho, due to it being a fierce local derby. After Arsenal, most Spurs fans would likely tell you either West Ham or Chelsea are one of their most competitive rivalries.

Winning the game has likely given the Tottenham team and their fans a much needed morale boost, and has given Jose some initial popularity with fans. On the other hand, had Tottenham lost this match Jose would have lost support from fans before his career with Spurs even had a chance to start.

Thankfully for the new manager, they won. Some of the Spurs' star players were in perfect form on Saturday, with Son Heung-min and Lucas Moura bagging goals in the first half.

Four minutes into the second half, Harry Kane netted another goal for the guests. Ironically, following Mourinho's appointment as Tottenham manager, the West Ham social media team made a post highlighting the difficulties he has had with teams playing at the London Stadium before.

Mourinho's side made a mockery of these criticisms and have put even more pressure on West Ham boss Manuel Pellegrini, whose side have been noticeably struggling in recent games. In their last seven games, West Ham have only gained two points.

After conceding the two goals in the first half, the Hammers team were subjected to booing by their own fans as they retreated back into the tunnel.

The negative reception from their own fans, and perhaps a half-time "pep talk" from the manager,

seemed to invigorate the hosts for the second half.

Michail Antonio was brought on as a substitute and managed to score a late goal for West Ham, followed by another, netted by Angelo Ogbonna.

This scorecard has given the game the appearance of being a fairly even match – but clearly, Spurs were clearly the better team throughout both halves, with more possession, more shots and more shots on target.

The loss to a local rival at home who have only just been appointed a new manager has cast doubt on Pelligrini's career at West Ham. This is the East London clubs latest defeat following a 3-0 defeat away at Burnley and a 3-2 defeat at home to Newcastle United.

However, there also needs to be some reflection on what has been going on behind the scenes at Tottenham Hotspur.

The future of midfielder Christian Eriksen, who has been key to Spurs increased success over the past few years, has been put into question lately. He was put on the bench by Mourinho on Saturday, a recognition of his decline in performance this season.

Furthermore, the fact that Spurs have been struggling for much of this season until the change in management is a sign of possible back-room problems. It could be the case that Pochettino has fallen victim to poor manager-player relations, ironically similar to what happened to Mourinho at Manchester United.

There is always the possibility that after a few months in charge at Spurs Mourinho, who has always been a figure of controversy, may fall victim to this again.

Honours Even for Racing and Munster

Dom Friel
Rugby Union

The highly anticipated match of round two of the European Rugby Champions Cup ended all square as JJ Hanrahan fails at the death to oust genius of Russell and Racing 92.

Pool four of this years Champions Cup is shaping into the classic 'pool of death.' Only one of Racing 92, Saracens, Munster and Ospreys are guaranteed progression to the quarter-finals as the winner of the group.

Racing have assembled a squad of rugby galacticos who illuminated the game, at times their back play was mesmeric. Finn Russell was the first to cross the try line with a piece of individual brilliance.

The Maverick Scot is known for the sublime but his megnut of Scannell and subsequent try was pioneering in its audacity. Sure, it's unlikely Russell foresaw his grubber bisecting the defenders open gate, but that only happened because Russell plays closer to the line than anyone else and indeed identifies space better than anyone else.

It is by playing so close to the gain line that makes Russell so difficult to defend against and his dexterity of skill means he can exploit any space given to him.

If Racing's first try was individualistic, their second, scored by Teddy Thomas, showcased a frightening array of back field runners. It began with a smart

carry from ex-Munster man Zebo who managed to target soft defensive shoulders to get over the gain line and create quick ball.

Iribaren then briefly fixed the defence with a short step carry from scrum half before firing a miss pass to Thomas. The speed and accuracy of the pass cut out the Munster defensive line and Thomas was away. Perfect execution of the chip and chase saw Thomas go over for the second try.

Two JJ Hanrahan penalties kept Munster in touch in the first half before a Keith Earls try just before the break. The try rounded off some accurate, old school phase play coupled with disciplined running lines which set Earls free down the flank to touch down in the corner. The sides went into half time with the score at 11-14.

Another Hanrahan penalty early in the second brought Munster level but Racing immediately went ahead again through another breathtaking score.

Argentinian speedster Juan Imhoff ran a clever trailing line in support and had enough pace when he received the ball to round the last defender and finish under the posts. Fifty minutes gone and Racing lead by seven.

Munster were able to keep the pressure on Racing and much of the games denouement was played deep in the visitors territory. Racing's resolute defence meant it took until the 74th minute for Munster to work an opening.

Some strong forward carries left men over on the right hand side and an inch perfect pass from Hanrahan, above the blitz defence, set up Conway in the corner. Crucially, Hanrahan nailed the conversion from right on the touchline to tie the game.

After the kick-off, Munster again kept possession and were able to work themselves into a good position to steal the game.

With just a minute left, the ball was played back to Hanrahan in the pocket twenty metres out – a perfect position for the drop goal. His attempt can best be described as a snatch and missed way right of the posts.

What until then had been a polished performance form the out-half ended in disappointment. Hanrahan really should have converted and the draw will not please the Irishmen.

It is a truism of this competition that you have to win your home games. Though the sides are level on points going into the back-to-back rounds three and four, Racing will be the happier side.

Saracens were able to park the controversy surrounding their salary cap breach in despatching Ospreys at home and showed that whatever side they choose to put out they will be tough opposition for Munster. Racing on the other hand will expect to take maximum points of Ospreys both home and away which could see them through.

England Outclassed as Kiwis Exact Revenge for World Cup



Image: LatestLY

Prior to the first match in New Zealand, hopes were high for England's winter test season overseas.

Harry Tong
Cricket

Cricket's popularity in England was flourishing after an exhilarating Ashes series and glorious World Cup triumph. A new head coach, Chris Silverwood, was at the helm, ready to lead the team to success. Young talents Jofra Archer, Dom Sibley and Ollie Pope were all included in the squad, poised to make their mark.

However, this glimmer of hope, after the crushing defeat inflicted upon England last Sunday at the Bay Oval, was quickly extinguished.

Patient and effective, New Zealand dismantled England with decisive displays with both bat and ball in hand. Recurring flaws seem to have trailed England for the past 10 years. Apple Crumbles have a greater structural integrity than their batting line up. The bowling performance was once again devoid of spark and inspiration, exposed for all to see.

All the more frustratingly, England started the match strongly. Rory Burns and Sibley weathered the early overs, putting on a tenacious fifty run partnership (a feat that England have seldom achieved over the past couple of years). This was subsequently backed up with (somewhat) big scores from Joe Denly, maintaining his form from the Ashes, and the talismanic Ben Stokes, playing another sublime innings of 91 and simultaneously reinforcing his credentials for the BBC Sports Personality of the year.

England closed the first day of play with a fine score

of 241-4, but the tail end was easily burnt through by the Kiwi bowling attack on Day 2. Nevertheless, a final score of 353 appeared competitive at the time. However, it could, and probably should, have been more if Joe Root and Sam Curran and not lost their wickets so cheaply.

This promising performance initially continued into the bowling. By the end of the 2nd day, the crucial New Zealand wickets of Taylor and Williamson had fallen, and the hosts were eventually reduced to 127 for 4. England appeared firmly in control.

What followed in response was a masterclass in Test Cricket. A sublime display from the Host's middle order, in particular BJ Watling and Mitchell Santner, made England toil in the field for two days of play. Wicketkeeper Watling ended his with 205 runs, enduring a colossal 661 minutes of play and facing an incredible 473 balls.

Patience, guile and skill were wholly absent from England's bowling attack. The potent pace that had featured throughout the summer was nowhere to be seen. Archer and Stuart Broad were bystanders, unable to maintain any form of pressure on the batsmen.

When New Zealand declared on 615 runs, the game, though in favour of the hosts, was still salvageable. The wicket appeared flat and regular, not yielding swing or bounce for the pace bowler.

England's spin, Jack Leach, had managed only two wickets throughout the innings. It was entirely feasible that England could bat out a day and a half.

Or so we thought.

England's batting was the very antithesis of New Zealand's - erratic, volatile and ultimately unsuccessful, it lacked the tenacity and patience displayed by their opponents. Some of the shots played, sweeps, slogs and loose drives, would have been more at home in a fast paced 20 over match than the 5-day marathon that is test cricket.

As it was, the tourists were embarrassingly bowled out for a paltry 197 runs, 8 less than Watling alone had managed just a day before. Where England's bowlers were lethargic, their opponents were energised, relentlessly removing whatever resistance was put before them. "New Zealand have just shown England precisely how to play Test cricket" assessed the BBC's Jonathan Agnew. Indeed, the Kiwis possessed everything England lacked in droves.

There is the possibility of salvaging the 2-test series in Hamilton on the 28th, but this is an eventuality that looks increasingly remote. The prevailing optimism before the tour has dwindled to a flicker of hope. Large questions continue to loom over the head of England captain Joe Root - after a disappointing summer, he again failed to impress, mustering 13 runs between his two innings.

Earlier this year, England showed the world they could play one day cricket. They now need to prove they can do so in the gruelling test format. And if they fail to address the glaring faults that continue to plague them, they have a long, long winter ahead.