



THE GRYPHON

The official newspaper of Leeds University



Image Credit: Ed Barnes

Drop-Out Rates Higher for Minority Students

Statistics published by both The Gryphon and the University reveal that certain groups of students face a far greater likelihood of dropping out of university.

Megan Ardis
Newspaper Associate

Between the academic years in 2018/19, statistics reveal that University of Leeds students from various minority groups – including disabled students, BAME students, LGBT+ students, mature students and students who had undertaken BTEC courses before university – dropped out of university at a distinctively higher rate than their peers.

Almost a quarter of students who studied a BTEC course rather than A Levels prior to enrolling at the University of Leeds did not continue beyond their first year of study, statistics obtained by *The Gryphon* can reveal. Students whose only further education qualification was a BTEC diploma had a non-continuation rate of 24.9% last year.

These statistics reveal a very large gap in non-continuation rates between students who studied BTEC courses and those who did not. Those with solely BTEC qualifications were almost five times more likely to drop out than those without BTEC qualifications, including those who

studied A Levels or other qualifications who had a non-continuation rate of 5.1% for the same period.

Non-continuation rates for Black and Asian students were 9.6% and 10.4% respectively in 2018/19, while during the same period only 5.4% of White students dropped out. In other words, Asian students were 93% more likely to drop out than White students, and Black students were 78% more likely. Students who identified as 'Other', which includes mixed-race students, had a non-continuation rate of 8.1%.

This disparity in the University of Leeds' non-continuation rates mirrors *The Gryphon's* findings earlier this year, revealing the large awarding gap between Black and White students at the University of Leeds. Last year, Black students were four times less likely to be awarded a First Class degree than their white counterparts.

The Gryphon also revealed a 12.7% gap between the proportions of BAME and White students achieving a 2:1 or First in 2017/2018.

Statistics from the University of

Leeds' Access and Participation Plan for the 2020/21 – 2024/25 period reveal that the non-continuation gap between students from the lowest and highest income backgrounds has grown in recent years. Between the 2015/16 and 2016/17 academic periods, the continuation gap between Q1 (lowest income quintile) and Q5 (highest income quintile) students widened from 1.7% to 3.8%. The five-year average continuation gap between Q1 and Q5 students at the University of Leeds was reported to be 2.5%.

LGBTQ+ and disabled students also showed higher non-continuation rates than their non-LGBT and non-disabled peers. In 2018/19, 7.6% of LGBTQ+ students beginning their courses in September 2017 dropped out, compared to 6.2% of their non-LGBTQ+ peers. The University does not have figures for those who identify as transgender.

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14/02/20

LGBT+ History Month in Leeds

Features writer Giovana Chiconelli travelled down to Leeds City Museum to see an exhibition to celebrate LGBTQ+ History Month

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Is it time for a Female Doctor?

Arts and Culture Editor Alex Gibbon interviews Dr. Rosena Allin-Khan, one of the candidates on the ballot for the Labour Deputy Leadership contest about what she'll do for students.

Boris Johnson UN Fact-Check

Science writer Morwenna Davies goes all the way back to September to fact-check a bizarre speech by the Prime Minister. Pink-eyed terminators?

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Is Sport a place for the LGBTQ+ community?

Sports Editor Owen Ellicott looks at the impacts of homophobia in sports

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Editor of the Week
Alex Gibbon

Alex did a fabulous job this week organising the content for Art and Culture’s LGBTQ+ History Month content.

On top of this, he also interviewed Rosena Allin-Khan (check it out in Views).

Quote of the Week

“He is too sexy for me. He is very sexy and it is very upsetting”

Georgie Fuhri makes a grand return after some time being less quotable. Faced with the hardship of going on a date with a hot guy, she was considering cancelling.

The date had to be rearranged due to a cold sore in the end.

The story will be continued.

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~ Santia Ahmed

Editorial Letter:



Hooray, it is LGBTQ+ History Month. This is held every year up and down the country to recognise the history and progress that has been made for LGBTQ+ rights since the Stonewall Riots in 1969. It is celebrated around the world, in June in the US (when the Stonewall Riots occurred), and in February in the UK to mark the repeal of Section 28 in 2003 (more on that later). To celebrate this month, we have made this issue EXTRA GAY just for you.

The Stonewall riots are considered by many to be the foundation of the modern day fight for the rights of queer people. The Stonewall Inn based in Greenwich Village in Manhattan, New York was raided by the police in the early hours of June 28th.

Police raids occurred frequently as a way to antagonise queer people who were open. However this time a group of queer people, led by transgender women-of-colour Sylvia Rivera and Marsha P. Johnson, fought back. Bricks were thrown, police cars turned over. Eventually a crowd of 500-600 people faced off against an armed police force.

The incident, which made the news, made queer people realise that if they refused to hide, the media would have no choice but to cover them. These led to the first pride marches in New York the following year and London in 1972 continuing theme of protest over the years.

Since then, rights have slowly been won from the decriminalisation of homosexual acts in Scotland and Northern Ireland in the 1980s to the right to serve openly in the armed forces, adopt, marry, have civil partnerships, making the age of consent equal and the introduction of LGBT+ inclusive education across the country.

There were periods of regression, principally the introduction of Section 28 introduced under Margaret Thatcher and Thatcher’s inaction over the AIDS crisis that led to the deaths of thousands of LGBT+ individuals. There is also progress still to be made with fewer than 200 people pardoned for convictions that would now be classed as discriminatory, and the Gender Recognition Act, groundbreaking for its time under the Blair government, is in dire need of reform.

Our concepts of gender and sexuality are forever changing as we move further into the 21st century. Binaries that once seemed rigid are not becoming ever more blurred as we continue to change the way we think about the roles of men and women. Now some are certainly buckling down and argue there are only two genders.

However there’s a slight crux in trans-exclusionary arguments. By arguing that women and men are polar opposites with no in-betweens, they ignore the reality that the world has shifted over the last century from women in the domestic and men in the workplace. Some women now work, some men now stay at home.

There’s over 7 billion people in the world and it would be odd too if they all fitted into two clear camps. To argue they do ignores the fact that intersex people very much do exist and any procreational arguments to exclude transwomen will also exclude any women who

are infertile.

Even arguing chromosomes are an indicator of sex is faulty because genetics tells us only certain genes are activated and some lack a chromosome or have an extra one. As Anne Fausto-Sterling, a leading biology and gender studies professor said in the New York Times:

“What matters, then, is not the presence or absence of a particular gene but the balance of power among gene networks acting together or in a particular sequence. This undermines the possibility of using a simple genetic test to determine ‘true’ sex.”

Science tells us that there are several stages when it comes to defining sex and therefore things get messy along the way. If sex is messy, then that must also mean gender is messy too.

I’ve been on a personal journey the last few months and it’s definitely one for the better. It’s something I’ve struggled with for years I think but in a similar way to my acceptance of my sexuality, I blocked out any contemplation that I might be somewhere in-between male and female. Struggling to write something for once feels weird. People never talk about coming out as physically hard but it really is. You’ve spent so long keeping it inside you that it’s hard to finally state words that to others might seem so easy to say.

I wasn’t even conscious of it at the time and only now think about it in retrospect. I realise I continued to insist I was just an effeminate man even though the idea of being ‘a man’ was something I never truly felt comfortable with. It’s a weird one to be honest because for all intents and purposes, I appear to be male. If I usually dress in more masculine clothes, then surely by default I must also identify with the masculine.

However whenever I’d be at family events or with family friends and they’d comment on how I am a “handsome man” (I’m not trying to big myself up I promise), I’d always feel a sense of unease even though it is just a harmless compliment. At those social events, I’m not wearing a crop-top, I’m not wearing make-up. I’m not acting effeminate. The side I present there is only one side of me.

It was strangely through studying for my dissertation and analysing the elements of queerness in Janelle Monae and Beyoncé’s music, particularly the queering of genders, that my eyes were open to the fact I may be something other than a man. Here you had two artists who embodied aspects of both the masculine and feminine and advocated for a radical freedom of gender expression.

Just six years ago, it would be inconceivable that I’d be out and proud, accepted by my family and friends. It would have been even more inconceivable that I would no longer identify as a man. Heck I probably hadn’t even heard of the term ‘non-binary’.

Not much has changed since I started identifying this way except the relationship I have with myself. I came out as gay five years ago and today I publicly announce I’m also non-binary. This is what I am and I’m not ashamed to say it. I’ve probably sunk my dating prospects for the near future (gay guys have a weird thing when it comes to masculinity).

But you know what, identify however the fuck you want. At the end of the day, it doesn’t do any harm to anyone else and you’ve only got one life to live so you might as well as enjoy the best you can – by being yourself.

Oh and if anyone is wondering what my pronouns are, they’re still he/him – for now at least.

Ed Barnes
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Exec Columns:



Union Affairs Officer
Lauren Huxley

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What a busy few weeks it's been! I've barely sat still between meetings and chatting to lots of lovely students who want to run to be your next Exec.

Nominations close this Friday and we will be meeting all of your amazing candidates at the briefing event on Friday evening.

Over the next 3 weeks keep an eye out for them round campus, chat to them, ask them questions and please show your support by voting between

2nd-5th March for your next student leaders.

It's also been Working Class Awareness Week, Student Volunteering Week, and I've been working with Amy (Welfare Officer) to plan the next Give and Take which is taking place on Tuesday 18th Feb 5.30-7 in Parkinson SR (1.08) and will focus on Student Mental Health so please come along and get in touch if you would like to ask a question.

We also met with representatives from UCU on Monday to discuss the upcoming strike action and we'll be publishing more information about this shortly.

Hope you all have a wonderful few weeks, remember if you need support with anything at all, our Help and Support team in the foyer are there to help.



Education Officer
Abiha Khan

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Hi everyone, been a super busy few weeks for me as I've been busy working on my biggest project so far as Education Officer at LUU. Since I started working on it in August, we've been looking at the different reasons BAME Awarding Gaps exist at the University of Leeds.

As a culmination of months of work working with students and members of staff at the Union and University, I held a panel presentation for University staff with panellists across the country.

This was attended by Professors Tom Ward, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor for Student Education at the University of Leeds, and Hai-Sui Yu, the International Deputy Vice-Chancellor.

I've also been with the rest of the Exec down to London to meet local MPs Alex Sobel and Hilary Benn. Benn showed us around the Houses of Parliament and we went for a delicious lunch with Alex.

This allowed us to ask them and challenge them on what they'll do for students as their representatives in

Westminster for Leeds North West and Leeds Central.

I also went to the Student Success Forum, a big meeting where we discussed BAME Awarding Gaps and student drop-out rates as well as the Education Assembly.

This was hosted with all of the School Representatives with Dr Christina Edgar, the Director of Student Opportunity. Here we did with on the University strategic plan.

All in all, a very busy but very satisfactory few weeks!



Community Officer
Cat Fairbairn

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Hi everyone! Hope you're well and settling into second semester of University!

This last week I've been super busy organising Leeds University Union's first ever Working Class Awareness Week. This has been a big undertaking with coffee hours, a Give-And-Take that was really successful and last

night we had a Feminist Society x Working Class discussion.

I've also been meeting with LUU's new Community Engagement manager who will be helping out organising big events like #LeaveLeedsTidy that will be happening again at the end of the year.

As I'm sure you've heard from

everyone else, we went off down to Parliament last week to speak to Alex Sobel and Hilary Benn.

One thing that I think would be really good the next time we visit is also meeting with someone in the government or Conservative Party too to discuss student issues with them.



Activities Officer
Lydia Evans

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This week we've been to Parliament! We chatted to the two Leeds MPs Alex Sobel and Hilary Benn and, in honesty, they were a little disappointing.

I asked Alex how he felt about his constituents being made up of lots of students, to which he replied 'I would have won without them'.

Whilst not incorrect, it felt a bit of an odd response to six student exec officers. Hilary spoke at length about

prisons and rehabilitation, but we struggled to find much tangibility amongst his words.

For me, the day demonstrated the need for political action outside the constraints of our democratic system. In the days after the general election, solidarity messages encouraging community action provided hope and comfort amongst a lot of bleakness.

Community organising and

mobilising in all its different ways is so important, whether that's through volunteering with a local sports group, donating to a foodbank or campaigning about something you really care about - it's all good stuff.

On that note, its Student Volunteering Week next week and I'm really looking forward to celebrating all of you lovely lot who give up your time to do good things!



Equality & Diversity Officer
Chloé Elliott

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Hello lovelies, I hope you're all settling into the second semester and that you've been enjoying the LGBTQ+ History Month celebrations so far.

This month is following suit with our previous history history months with the theme "LGBTQ+ &". All month long we will be exploring different dimensions of LGBTQ+ identity from

ethnicity to culture.

So far, we have had a panel event with the Nursing Society looking at the ways people from the LGBTQ+ community are affected when interacting with healthcare services and another hosted by the QTIPOC Society focusing on their experiences on campus.

Don't worry if you haven't had a chance to attend an event yet, there's

still more to come!

There's a pub quiz, art exhibition, film showing and more to get involved with. You can find more details for the upcoming events on the LUU website.

If you want to find out more information about LGBTQ+ groups and spaces on and off campus, you can also pick up a copy of our LGBTQ+ Guide in the union building too!



Welfare Officer
Amy Wells

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Happy LGBTQ+ History Month! I'm a bit stuck at the moment with how I label myself. I really like the fact that there's a movement to reclaim the word "queer", and I use it often to describe myself.

I find it less limiting than "bisexual", which can sometimes feel like it's backing up the existence of a gender binary - one that I don't believe actually exists.

However, I know there are mixed feelings in the community about the term, and I'm genuinely interested to hear anyone's thoughts if you're also a member of the community and have a strong (or not so strong!) opinion on it.

Drop me an email if anyone wants to chat further, as we had some difficulty deciding whether to use the term in any of our history month comms.

Anyway - check out the programme of

events over at luu.org.uk. There are so many amazing events, co-produced with some amazing societies like QTIPOC.

Also go grab a copy of our revamped LGBTQ+ guide to Leeds from LUU, and I'd be very happy if you'd also pick up a pronoun badge from the foyer - a little thing to help normalise the practice of not assuming gender!

Big love x



Campus Watch

1 University of Oklahoma Professor compares 'Ok, boomer' to the 'n-word'

A professor at the University of Oklahoma has apologised after stating that the popular putdown, 'OK, boomer', was comparable to a racial slur.

In the journalism class, a student argued that journalists must keep up with younger generations, the professor replied saying that this was "the equivalent of saying 'OK, boomer' to him". He then added: "Calling someone a boomer is like calling someone a n---".

The professor later apologised in an email to students later that evening. He said: "I realize the word was hurtful and infuses the racial divisions of our country, past and present".

The university's interim president, Joseph Harroz Jr., condemned the comparisons and said: "While the

professor's comments are protected by the First Amendment and academic freedom, his comment and word choice are fundamentally offensive and wrong".

He added: "The use of the most offensive word, by a person in a position of authority, hurt and minimized those in the classroom and beyond".

The term 'Ok, boomer' for the post-WWII generation is comparable to the way 'snowflake' is used to patronise younger generations. A student at the University stated: "It's a funny way the younger people can laugh off the entitlement of some baby boomers. It is a humorous way to say 'Ok, whatever' and move on with our lives".

Charly Loughlin
News Editor

2 University of Edinburgh Students vote to reject ban of beef products from campus food outlets

Voting on a motion called 'cease sale of beef from Students' Association cafes and restaurants', nearly 6,000 students participated in a referendum last week.

However, the students rejected the proposed ban, meaning that beef products, including burgers and sandwiches will still be sold on Edinburgh University's campus.

Those who voted against it won with 58% of the vote. The Edinburgh University Student's Association (EUSA) statement said: "we are pleased that nearly 6,000 of you students voted, showing a highly engaged student membership who want to have their say."

The motion follows moves from Universities including Cambridge and Goldsmiths in London to stop the sale of beef, also highlighting claims that a reduction in the consumption of beef can help to tackle an individual's carbon footprint.

It also pointed at a petition which received more than 530 signatures.

Amelia Cutting
News Editor

3 University of Oxford Museum of Natural History gives exhibits a fresh look

As part of a plan to change the displays in the museum for the first time in 20 years, the specimens are being removed temporarily as new conservation cabinets are fitted.

The museum was founded in 1860 and attracts more than 750,000 visitors every year.

The new display, which will include presentations of "the diversity of life and address the importance of biodiversity and human impact on the environment", will be constructed this year.

The Oxford Dodo is the most iconic specimen in the museum, and it is the only surviving dodo soft tissue remains in the world.

The museum now also holds the university's internationally significant collections of entomological, geological and zoological specimens.

Museum director Professor Paul Smith said a grant meant they were able to buy cabinets which "meet today's conservation and display standards" and will give their exhibitions a new lease of life.

Amelia Cutting
News Editor

4 SRM Andhra University, India University built in just 5 months

A university in South East India has been built from scratch in 5 months. The SRM Andhra University, surrounded by green fields and the odd goat, is located in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh.

The science and technology focused campus features all the modern trappings of technological advancement: a state-of-the-art water catchment system, solar panels as well as air-conditioned dormitories.

This is part of a national drive to educate the 650 million Indians under the age of 25. A 2018 report predicted that 10,000 new universities as well as 50,000 technical colleges will need to be built in the next 10 years to match the astronomical demand for higher education institutions.

Elliott Hodgkin
News Editor

5 Colorado State University University course created dedicated to studying cannabis

Professor Kent Hutchinson has launched an online educational programme dedicated to analysing the health impacts of cannabis. The aim of the project is to develop evidence-based knowledge regarding the effects of consuming the class B drug.

The course will cover specific topics, for example, the risks and side effects of cannabis as well as whether it is an effective approach to relieving pain. 'The ultimate objective of the research is to provide empirical data that will improve lives, in particular the lives of those who suffer from disease states that may be alleviated by cannabis.' Such diseases include HIV, multiple sclerosis and epilepsy. Hutchinson was driven to conduct research into marijuana after noticing increased demand for the drug from sufferers of epilepsy after it was legalised in Colorado in 2013.

'Families started moving to Colorado so that their children with epilepsy could get extractions from high-CBD strains of cannabis. I found those stories to be both moving and compelling in terms of the need to study the plant regarding the potential benefits as well as potential risks', the professor said.

Kit Chambers

Non-Continuation Rates Higher for Minority Students



Image Credit: Ed Barnes

Continued from front page.

Disabled students experienced non-continuation rates of 8.2% during the same period, compared to 5.9% of students who did not declare a disability.

Mature students at the University of Leeds – those over the age of 21 when beginning their undergraduate degree – were over three times more likely to drop out during their first year than their younger peers. In 2018/19, the non-continuation rate for mature students at the university was 16.9%, 213% higher than their younger peers, only 5.4% of whom dropped out during the same period.

Various factors may contribute to the higher rates of non-continuation for students from minority backgrounds, including: financial difficulties, imposter syndrome, experiencing prejudice, family commitments, and mental health issues.

Statistics released by the Office for Students reveal that, for the 2016/17–2017/18 academic period, only 86.8% of students who reported having a mental health condition continued their studies beyond their first year, compared to 90.3% of students with no reported disability. Additionally, statistics released by the Higher Education Statistics Agency in 2017 revealed that, between the 2009–10 and 2014–15 academic periods, there was a 210% increase in students leaving their course early due to poor mental health.

The University of Leeds does not have data on the proportion of students who dropped out of university due to mental health reasons. Instead, this would likely fall under the very broad categories of either ‘Health Reasons’ or ‘Other Personal Reasons’.

This raises the question that without more specific data, how can the University target the key issues that lead to higher non-continuation rates amongst certain groups of students if it cannot identify them?

It is worth noting that, while it is very important to understand the factors that influence non-continuation, the University of Leeds must be mindful of the privacy of students. Some students may not wish to declare more detailed personal information if they drop out of University. Students who choose not to continue after their first year can self-declare the reason, but it might not be appropriate for the University to insist on obtaining this information.

Abiha Khan, Education Officer at Leeds University Union, said:

“A huge priority for me this year has been shining a light on the issues around the BAME awarding gap, both at the University of Leeds and nationally.

“Research shows that there are a wide range of reasons for non-continuation which disproportionately affect students from BAME and other more minority backgrounds, and LUU is working hard to ensure that the University of Leeds recognises this fact and works towards improving continuation and decreasing the gap in award for these students.

“In the case of black students, they are 4 times as likely to be impacted by barriers to continuation as their white counterparts.”

Over the last year, non-continuation rates for minority students at the University of Leeds were consistently higher than that of their peers. This same trend is seen in universities across the country.

Commenting on non-continuation data published by Higher Education Student Data in March 2019,

Chris Millward, the Director for Fair Access and Participation at the Office for Students, said:

“We should not let a positive national picture mask the situation at some universities and other higher education providers where non-continuation rates are higher than students deserve. We know that students from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to complete their studies than their more advantaged peers.”

Citing the Office for Students’ role, and approach, in closing the non-continuation gap for minority students, he said:

“The Office for Students’ new approach requires universities to ensure that all students are given the support they need, not just to access higher education but also to complete and succeed in their studies. Where universities are not making enough progress in this area, we will expect them to turn the situation around to ensure that higher education’s life-changing benefits can be realised.”

A spokesperson from the University of Leeds said:

“Attracting and retaining a diverse cohort of students is extremely important to us, and there are many, varied and complex reasons why students may not continue their studies after their first year.

“We undertake detailed research to understand the factors that influence non-continuation in specific groups, and this has informed the targeted interventions that are detailed in our Access and Participation Plan.

“In common with many Russell Group universities, we know that there is always room for improvement, and we will continue to work to provide support to students at every stage and in all aspects of their journey, from application to graduation.”

NHS Installs Sleep Pods for Staff



Oliver Murphy

NHS workers faced with long, gruelling shifts are being given the chance to take a power nap as a growing number of hospitals are bringing in sleep pods for staff.

The pods have been installed permanently or are being trialled in a dozen hospitals across England.

The pods were first tested By Royal Wolverhampton NHS trust in June 2018.

Professor Steve Field, the trust's chair said, "Too many staff end up exhausted because they have long, busy, sometimes stressful shifts, often with little chance to grab a break because pressure on the NHS is so intense".

Royal Wolverhampton has put a pod in the A&E unit, the doctor's mess and the maternity department at New Cross hospital and another in Cannock Chase hospital, which it also runs. The trust has also put a recliner chair in the 850-bed New Cross hospital to offer staff another option for a quick nap.

Field, a former GP praised the pods saying: "We

know that doctors provide better, safer care when they are fresh and alert. We have found [the pods] to be very popular with staff and also very effective in helping them get more rest".

The pods are available to any staff in need of a break, which means doctors, nurses, radiographers, physiotherapists and midwives can all use them. Field said: "Staff now have places to go to get the rest they need on a 24/7 basis".

Trust research shows that the pods are used most between midnight and 4am, but also between noon and 4pm. The research shows the average person uses the pods for between 17 and 24 minutes, although some staff have used them for up to 79 minutes. They can be particularly handy for staff who want to get some rest before they drive home after an arduous night shift.

Dr Mike Farquahar, a sleep consultant at the Evelina Children's hospital in London, who has put pressure on the NHS to take sleep more seriously, has said: "Air traffic controllers are only allowed to work for two hours and then they must take a 30 minute break,

because if they were tired and made a mistake, bad things could happen".

He added, "but in the NHS, where the pressure is often high and sustained, the problem is that people delivering will usually choose to prioritise everything else- especially patients- over themselves and sacrifice things like breaks and sleep."

The development has come about in part owing to the Fight Fatigue campaign, which was launched in 2018 as a joint initiative of the Association of Anaesthetists, the Royal College of Anaesthetists and the Faculty of intensive Care Medicine.

Association of Anaesthetists president and consultant anaesthetist at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary, Dr Kathleen Ferguson has said: "We want to change attitudes across the NHS to ensure everyone understands the risks of fatigue and how to mitigate against them.

We hope that by taking responsibility collectively for making changes to working practice, we can improve working conditions for all staff which will in turn benefit patient care".

Coronavirus Sparks Claims of Discrimination Against Chinese Students

Jian Feng

The outbreak of coronavirus has led to claims of racial abuse in the UK after a Chinese student at Newcastle University complained that a student on campus screamed and ran away from him. According to the Guardian, one British-Chinese journalist in London witnessed a man quickly moving seats away from him when he sat down on a bus.

Since last December when the first Coronavirus patient was diagnosed in Wuhan, a city with a population over 11 million in China, the amount of sufferers has escalated dramatically.

The number of deaths has surpassed 900. There have been more than 40,000 cases of the virus globally.

Although the Chinese government has locked down Wuhan, the city where the coronavirus started, it has spread to 27 countries.

On the 24th January, Chinese New Years Eve, instead of celebrating the upcoming year of the dragon, over 3000 workers gathered in Huoshenshan hospital in Wuhan, an emergency medical centre built in 10 days especially for the purposes of treating coronavirus patients. With a total construction area of over 30,000 square meters, nearly 2,000 box-type board rooms have been set up.

On the 30th of January, the WHO finally declared the outbreak of pneumonia in Wuhan as a global emergency. The United States announced a temporary quarantine-proof entry rule starting on the second of

February. Non - US citizens who have visited China within the last 14 days will be denied entry into the country.

The Australian government has announced a similar ban, any of its citizens arriving from China will be quarantined for two weeks. Countries including Russia, Japan, Pakistan and Italy have announced similar travel restrictions.

Dr Li, the first person that highlighted the threat of Coronavirus, died on 7th February. This triggered an outburst of anger on social media platforms. The Chinese government has been accused by many of that it arrested Dr Li in a bid to stop him causing panic by alerting the population of the threat of the virus.

Leeds-Bradford Airport Expansion: 7 Million Passengers by 2030

Grace Partington

In a move seemingly at odds with Leeds' status as the first UK city to declare a climate emergency, Leeds-Bradford Airport's expansion plans intend to accommodate 7,000,000 passengers by 2030; an increase of 3,000,000 from current figures.

The plans were officially unveiled to the public for the first time at the Community Consultation at the Mercure Leeds Parkway on Saturday. Representatives from the airport mingled with residents and protestors alike at the event which laid out clearly the proposed £150,000,000 expansion plans.

They include aims to create 5,900 more jobs by 2030, improve public transportation links with the city centre and to bring Leeds-Bradford in line with other regional airports by reducing the night flying restriction to between 11.30pm and 6am (it is currently between 11pm and 7am).

In response to concerns raised about increased noise pollution affecting local residents, it was pointed out by Charles Johnson of Planning and Development at the airport that Leeds-Bradford is one of the quietest airports in the UK with a night-

time noise-scale maximum of 0.5-1 (in comparison with other airports at which it is 4). He also indicated that the new terminal would attract airlines with more technologically-advanced planes such as the A320neo which is claimed by Airbus to be the world's most advanced and fuel-efficient single aisle aircraft.

There was much optimism about the plans for the new three-floor carbon neutral terminal which has been awarded with the BREEAM rating, indicating its high level of sustainability (one of only two airport terminals in the UK).

Many residents highlighted the inefficient layout of the current terminal and its rundown condition. Stuart Hodge, who works in ground operations at Jet 2 at the airport, said that Leeds-Bradford had been "shackled for too long" and, amongst other things, cited his regular commute to Manchester airport as a key reason for his dissatisfaction with Leeds-Bradford's current state.

He stated that "Extinction Rebellion needed to get it into perspective" as it paled in comparison with Manchester Airport's £1 billion pound investment. A PR representative from the airport affirmed that

the expansion and renovation would attract more business flights and mop up the "leakage" from other regional airports such as Manchester or Liverpool, thus serving an already existing demand from local residents and businesses.

Members of Extinction Rebellion and other local environmental groups were, however, in complete opposition to the expansion plans. Representatives from Extinction Rebellion claimed the airport's sustainability claims were "green washing" and that the carbon output of the increased number of flights would render the carbon-neutral status of the terminal "absolutely irrelevant".

They claimed that to offset the carbon output of the extra flights, the airport would need to plant a forest bigger than the entire city of Leeds and viewed its planned expansion as a fatal flaw in Leeds City Council's carbon-neutral plan.

The proposed plans for the new terminal and expansion will be submitted for approval in spring 2020 upon which they will be subject to review by Leeds City Council.

Government Gives HS2 the Green Light



Image Credit: Metro

George Solano Davis
News Editor

After an internal review, the government has given the go-ahead for construction of the High Speed 2 rail network (HS2) to continue. The project has sparked controversy due to its spiralling costs and delays.

Stage 1 will see the creation of a new line connecting London to Birmingham which should be completed between 2028-31. As for stage 2, which will connect Birmingham to the North including Manchester and Leeds is set to be completed between 2035-40.

1,100 seat-trains reaching 250 mph will run along the lines as often as 14 times an hour in each direction.

Supporters of HS2 say it will improve transport times, increase capacity to match rising demand as well as create new jobs for the economy.

According to the Department for Transport, the journey time from London to Birmingham will be cut from 1 hour 21 minutes to 52 minutes and 1 hour 25 minutes to Leeds, down from 2 hours and 10 minutes.

The government hopes that by improving transport connections between London and the North, HS2 will 'level up' the UK economy by boosting growth and encouraging investment, something the region has been severely deprived of at the hands of the government in recent years.

Indeed, leader of Leeds City Council Justin Blake predicts the project "will be transformational for the North."

However, not everyone is happy with the government's announcement. Criticism of the scheme has been vociferous. The projected costs have spiralled from £32.2 billion in 2011 to £106 billion in the latest review.

Mismanagement has been blamed for this, something Prime Minister Boris Johnson readily admitted during Prime Ministers' questions, "I cannot say that HS2 limited has distinguished itself in the handling of local communities. The cost forecasts have exploded."

Further criticism has come from environmental

groups which have voiced concern over the impact on local wildlife from their habitats being destroyed to make way for the new rail lines.

It's not just animals who are at risk of being displaced, residents in areas where the lines will dissect are resigned to losing their homes. The village of Burton Green in Warwickshire, home to 640 people, is one such area.

Head of the village's residents' association Rona Taylor voiced her consternation with the government's decision, "it's a very frustrating day because we have opposed this for 10 years."

For all the controversy Johnson is committed to HS2 which he asserts, "has fundamental value." It seems ditching the project would prove politically toxic as the government has already spent around £7.5 billion on it.

Furthermore, after Johnson's election promise to boost government investment into the North, ditching HS2 would undermine his bold promises.



Leeds Museum LGBTQ+ History Month Festival Unites Generations

Giovana Chiconelli

When I saw a girl with two glittery rainbows painted on her cheeks and a rainbow flag wrapped around her body entering through a door, I knew exactly where to go to find OUTing The Past's Festival of LGBTQ+ History at Leeds City Museum, in celebration of LGBTQ+ History Month. It was the second year that the festival happened, in partnership with West Yorkshire's Queer Stories, a website that gathers stories from queer people from all walks of life, older and younger, for the purpose of diversifying museum collections and archives.

Inside the museum, there was face painting, young people chatting about queer issues with older ones, kids walking hand in hand with their parents and asking questions, film festivals stands, choir groups, a fetish table, and right in the centre of the space there was colourful box: a time capsule. It was being decorated with stickers by the organisers of the project, while they talked to two teenagers about their different experiences inside the LGBTQ+ community through the years.

Kelly Bentley-Simon, 37, is one of the people responsible for the capsule. A youth worker for Bradford Youth Service, she was asked to help with the Queer Youth Time Capsule, and jumped at the chance. "It is a way to record history as it is happening," she told me. "We'll look back 5 years from now and see what it was like back then, but the back then is now". The box will stay at the museum for some years until it is time to open it, after which Leeds City Museum plans on making an exhibition with its contents.

She let me have a look inside: there were cards, bracelets, pamphlets, badges, all donated by young people. She pulled out a huge rainbow flag and showed it to me. "This was an activity organized by a teacher in one of the schools here in Leeds," she explained. "They have this LGBTQ+ club called The Umbrella Group and members wrote a little message on this flag and they donated it to us".

Examining the flag, phrases like "Be who you are and don't care what anyone else says" and "If it's not about you why do you care?" jumped out at me. According to Kelly, this wouldn't have been possible when she was in high school.

"I graduated in 1998: back then, teachers couldn't speak freely about these issues. It was considered propaganda, like they were pushing the LGBTQ+ agenda forward and influencing the students' minds," she remembered. Section 28 was abolished in 2003, having previously forbidding teachers from teaching and speaking about LGBTQ+ issues since 1988. It was censorship of awareness of queer people's stories, the opposite goal to that of LGBTQ+ History Month. "But today you have this," Kelly said as she smiled at all the positive material donated by teachers and students alike that piled up on the table.

This kind of openness was something one of the members of Leeds Gay Community Patrick Hall, 70, would never have imagined in his youth. He saw male homosexuality decriminalised in '67, and all the progress that has been made since then, but still remembers the danger and the fear. LGC has existed for about 50 years, and looks to provide a safe space where gay and bisexual men, usually from older generations, can meet and socialize.

Patrick has been a member for most of his life. His table stand is covered with old LGBT books, fliers and magazines, all in perfect condition, and his voice remains in the same calm and friendly tone throughout our whole conversation.

"I think queer people today have different worries, different fights", Patrick observed. "We are worried about bullying in schools, we are talking about gender, labels and trans rights. That wasn't the conversation 20 years ago."

The simple act of talking about LGBTQ+ history inside the museum would have been impossible two decades ago, but now that it is a right, Ross Horsley, 41, a West Yorkshire Queer Stories employee, considers it activism. He walked around the festival

looking to help anyone that might have a question, or just want to chat. Since his job is to talk to different people of different ages and backgrounds, he notices the changes in what older and younger generations of queer people worry about.

"I think representation is the main difference," he said. "20 years ago you never saw yourself on TV, and today there is so many queer people and queer characters around, but we have to know there can be wrong types of representation".

I can see the meaning behind his words; there has been progress, but we need to be careful to not settle. Trans characters are still being played by straight people in many TV shows and movies, while actual transgender actors can't find a job.

Labels that define the sexuality and gender spectrum have also changed. "We use queer as an umbrella term in our organization but we understand that lot of older people are used to it being used against them on the streets as a slur," Ross said. "We understand if they don't want to use it, even though it is so accepted nowadays among younger generations."

I spent the rest of my time looking at the stands, talking to people, signing up for mailing lists and buying badges. I saw a little girl pull her dad's hand in the direction of the face painting table, asking for rainbow-themed makeup. Two teenagers with purple hair were deep in conversation with two older women, pride pins on their shirts. The time capsule was almost completely covered with stickers.

As letters in the LGBTQ+ initialism keep being added, and more people find themselves in nonbinary genders and more specific sexualities, the reappropriation of the word queer to define the entire community has grown.

I can't help but think that LGBTQ+ people have come a long way, and it is important that we don't forget anyone's struggle, but also that we learn to live in the moment and appreciate what we have now, in this rainbow decorated happy little room in the centre of Leeds.



Fame as the Family Business

The Kardashians are one of the most famous families in the world with multiple reality shows, make-up lines and fashion brands with a collective networth entering the billions. What happens when the family is also a business? Sinead O’Riordan investigates.

Sinead O’Riordan

If my existence was nothing but lying in bed, watching the light above me flicker with no contact with the outside world, I would still somehow find out Stormi Webster turned two years old. It’s something that happens to me fairly regularly now, finding out about such events in the lives of celebrities and their children.

This could be a symptom of three things: I have an extraordinary memory and my brain banks every small bit of information I come across, I am actually quite invested in the lives of celebrity families and am in deep denial, or I’m overexposed to their every move. I would like to opt for the latter, for my dignity’s sake.

Exposure and its consequences are of primary concern. These celebrity dynasties such as the Kardashian-Jenners secure their future influence by exposing their children to the world from birth. I would make the claim that Kylie giving birth to her daughter was itself born out of a meeting with her agent, but I wouldn’t want to be taken off from the potential Kylie Cosmetics PR list.

Screaming ‘think of the children!’ is not a phrase usually thought of when the children are born into immense fortune, but you can’t help but feel pity for them.

Perhaps the only time they see their parents happy and together is when they’re promoting a new diet tea or taking press photographs, and the only time they’ll have playmates outside their family is for a celebrity networking event.

These children, although lucky, have already sacrificed something they didn’t even know existed: privacy. Last year there was a resounding shock on the internet as people were already comparing the looks of Kim, Khloe and Kylie’s daughters.

This level of criticism will inevitably follow them into adulthood, alongside the psychological damage

done by such intense fame. We have to look only to the “Disney Curse” to understand the effects of international fame on a young person’s mind.

Another question to ask in this regard is ‘do we really care?’. We register these children’s existence for a few seconds (if that) as we scroll Instagram, the post being sandwiched between a girl from primary school’s holiday throwback and something else irrelevant. Does the perpetuation of abnormality for one child bother us so much that we’d do away with these dynasties?

No, probably not. There is an intimacy between ‘reality’ celebrities and their audience; as we see their wallets and faces get filled year on year, a bond is created. The reason your grandmother hasn’t missed an episode of Coronation Street in 25 years is the same as why you follow every family member of the Kardashian-Jenners.

Branding families like the Kardashian-Jenners as ‘dynasties’ is the only appropriate description. The longer they have stayed in the public eye, the more like royalty they become: their marriages seem to be based on a traditional ‘best suitor’ concept, their participation in philanthropy, their reliance on the public for their status.

As much as we might like to think the adoration of the public for the traditional monarchy is waning, it is in fact being redirected to reality TV stars. When the rule of the Kardashians is officially recognised and the Windsors abdicate, life as we know it will change. The essential lessons in school will no longer be Maths or English but ‘Avoiding Scandal 101’, with school trips being diverted from Thorpe Park to the nearest surgeon.

It’s not fair of me to focus only on one family. Having fame as the family business is applicable to many other celebrities. It’s almost as if ‘celebrity’ is a new social class, with a certain lifestyle being available only to them and their children.

Admittedly, I haven’t done the research, but I would bet a hefty sum that the child of a celebrity is predominantly destined to become one of two things: a photographer or model.

The children of the Gallaghers and Beckhams are perfect evidence of this. I’m sure at many parties in South West London, the classic question of ‘what school did you go to?’ is replaced by ‘so, who’s your mum and dad?’.

The old adage goes: you have to give some to get some. The ‘some’ in the cases of celebrity dynasties is actually quite a lot, giving up total privacy and normality for unprecedented access to a lifestyle of ease and fulfilment.

I’ve offered some half-baked visions of what’s to come throughout this article, but I’d like to now share my full prophecy.

I envision a future in which the most-liked picture of all time will be a sonogram of Kylie Jenner’s next unborn child.

That picture will show the foetus with a UV teeth whitener in one just-formed hand. That child will be born a girl and christened as #ad. #ad will be denied her payments for appearances on the never-ending seasons on Keeping Up With the Kardashians and various press releases until she gets her first cosmetic procedure. By the age of 14, #ad will be looking back at baby pictures and wonder if it was ethical for her mother to dress her in Fashionnova bum-sculpting diapers.

This question will lead to many more. Shouldn’t she be able to explore her interests without pressure to adhere to ‘The Family Brand’? Shouldn’t she be able to wear what she wants, rather than constantly promoting Yeezy?

Maybe with the birth of #ad, the end of the Kardashian dynasty will come to its timely end, and the acceptance of fame as the family business will be overturned. Well, we live in hope.

Image: New York Post



‘Bernie Blindness’: Criticism as Iowa Caucus Fails to Deliver Promised Clarity

Aino Lappalainen

The Democrat candidate race has sparked widespread criticism of the media’s treatment of Bernie Sanders.

In a Reddit thread titled ‘Covering the Bernie Blackout’, members of the public criticise leading media outlets around the world for understating the prominence and support Sanders has as one of the leading candidates in the race. In the light of the Iowa Caucus that originally failed in providing any sort of clarity to the increasingly complicated situation, media both in the US and abroad have been called out for their branding of Sanders as a revolutionary.

Before the messy delivery of results that ultimately narrowly placed him second in the race after Pete Buttigieg, the media had seemed to be deeming Sanders as a moderate quality candidate despite strong results in recent polls. According to the New York Times, he sits second in the national polls behind Joe Biden with an average support of 24%. Why is a prominent candidate like Sanders pushed aside by the media and what could this mean for the outcome of the race?

Reddit users are sharing screen captures and videos of him being omitted from lists of candidates and introduced second in poll results and statistics despite having the largest percentage out of all candidates. These considerations extend well beyond the US mainstream media, with The Guardian listing Sanders as one of the projected losers in the Iowa caucus while also acknowledging the threat he has been to Biden’s early support.

What seems to be the reason for some of this media

ignorance is Sanders’s more left-leaning stance on politics compared to his more centrist competition. However, despite the media attitudes against him, his support base has steadily grown, especially among voters of colour, as reported by a New York Times poll watch article at the end of January.

The widespread claim of unfair media bias is not unfounded. Reddit users cite Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, both among the highly respected scholars of media and mass communication, and their propaganda model of political communication as the basis for their claims. The page introduces the book *Manufacturing Consent*, which argues that unconventional political figures are more likely to receive critical media coverage due to their opposition to existing power structures.

What the critics mean by ‘Bernie Blindness’ is not the lack of coverage given to Sanders but the way he is rather subtly presented as the inferior choice in the race. With all the previous suspicious media activity, it’s no wonder that accusations of rigged polls and deliberate manipulation of the results process is heard from the public in response to the delay at Iowa.

What this whole ordeal seems to signal to the public is the chaos inside the Democratic Party. With no clear direction for the future or unity in the face of Trump’s uncontested place as the Republican candidate of choice, many sceptics question the possibility of any Democrat rising to the occasion.

Cracks within the Democratic Party don’t only stem from the competition between candidates with differently viewed policies and standpoints – specifically the more centrist ones that oppose

Sanders’s left-leaning views – but also from the legacy of the 2016 election and the bitter defeat against Trump.

Everyone from high-profile Democrats to the media are highlighting that the candidate of choice must unify support in order to beat Trump, but no one seems willing to define who that might be. In a recent interview, Hillary Clinton referenced, although somewhat implicitly, her opinion of Sanders’s inability and inadequacy in uniting or representing the Democrats.

Although she stresses her support for the chosen candidate, regardless of their identity, her words reveal a deep distrust towards the man with slightly different views. However you might feel about the whole ordeal of the Democratic power battle and each candidate, the fact that the US political sphere has remained a field of ‘everyone for themselves’ is undeniable.

Ranging from early declarations of winning before the release of the results in Iowa to a subtle casting aside of political actors that do not fit into the existing power relations, the presidential election process exhibits the idea of paving your own way to victory despite everything that opposes you.

The issue is, paradoxically, that revolutionary ideas have always had trouble penetrating the traditions of the presented consensus shared by leaders and the media in the US. So, whether the public could unify under a candidate like Sanders, who differs from other candidates in his values, is not the issue: rather, the question remains whether the Democratic Party would be willing to unite under the leadership of a figure like him.



Are We Overlooking Male Suicide?

This article includes references to male suicide rates across the United Kingdom. If you are affected by the issues discussed in this article, help is available from Leeds University Union's Help and Support team, the University and organisations like Leeds Mind.

Hannah Mather

With mental health and wellbeing an ever-increasing concern in today's world, what often gets overlooked is the effect it is having on men. Not only is male suicide the single biggest cause of deaths for men under 50 in the UK, but its prevalence begs the question of its underlying causes.

The Office for National Statistics finds that 75% of deaths by suicide in 2018 were men, and in fact this has been the case as far back as the 1990s, providing truly harrowing food for thought. Surely this is conclusive proof that this is an issue which only continues to intensify.

In the past year, male suicide has been brought glaringly to light under the context of reality television. A prime example being Love Island star Mike Thalassitis. Thalassitis was found hanged in his home in March 2019; he had reportedly been struggling with the death of his grandmother coupled with financial issues. Friends had spoken to Mike in the lead up to his death and say there was no indication of his intentions. Once the scene was examined, documents and letters were discovered revealing that he had clearly set out for his life to end. Unfortunately, it is a sad truth that it is impossible to conclusively foresee events of this nature; even friends and family can remain unaware.

We can only contemplate what drives some men to the extreme of taking their own life. Many mental health charities have reported based on findings a multitude of overarching risk factors, ranging from work stress and financial pressures to living alone/social isolation, use of drugs or alcohol to cope with emotions and relationship breakdowns. There are other factors that often go un-noticed and fail to be considered, such as history of physical or sexual abuse, imprisonment and bullying at school college or work. Someone we know could well be dealing with serious issues such as these alongside the stressors

of day to day life at any time, all of which can have detrimental impacts.

It is found that there is also often a weighty expectation for men to be less emotional and maintain a stance of stoicism even in times of hardship or emotional turmoil. Historically, men have been far less likely to speak up and discuss the topic of their own mental health along with worries or concerns that they may be having. Even when men come forward, a neglect towards men's mental health by professionals is doing them a major injustice. Currently GPs take over three weeks to arrange verbal treatment methods according to the British Medical Association.

Patients who are referred for cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) or dialectical behavioural therapy (DBT) as a result of diagnosed mental health illness can expect waiting list times exceeding several weeks. In the meantime, problems can be exacerbated as individual's are left to the mercy of their conditions. Devastatingly, there have been many instances of death by suicide in the waiting time between initially being referred for help and being seen by a professional. The current measures in practice by the NHS are simply not good enough. In fact, BMA research has found 3700 patients waited more than six months for talking therapies last year and 1500 longer than a year.

Statistically, far fewer male students have sought help from universities when experiencing issues. Of counselling and well-being services offered by 100 universities across the UK, only 31% was accessed by men, a Freedom of Information request by the BBC recently unearthed. On top of that, official figures illustrate that well over twice as many male as female students end their own life. Why then is there a lack of public awareness regarding male suicide, especially within the sphere of higher education institutions, when it is such a prevalent issue?

One university to take this matter seriously is Birkbeck University in London. The university has

been monumental in making effective male student support a viable reality. Following carefully conducted research by the university students expressed that they felt unable to take the first step in asking for help, despite struggling with their mental health.

Primarily, many believed their problems were not serious enough to warrant support. In response to this the university's counsellor Jo Myddleton sought for "images of masculinity to be challenged". Students proposed "They wanted male role models – men who could talk about mental health and be visible in the university." The outreach team began to introduce a new range of tools to help give men the confidence to come forward – working closely with students at each stage. A targeted poster campaign was launched, with images of men challenging traditional mindsets. An approach that could perhaps benefit from being integrated at other universities.

Furthering this notion, Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM) is a leading charity movement against suicide in the UK. Offering numerous services tailored to men in need of help, it seeks to establish opportunities for other forms of therapy (art, music, sport), as well as an open space without fear of judgement. There exist many campaigns and organisations in place for suicide prevention, but few that offer a direct male orientated approach as CALM does. It aims to set the precedent for an honest and alternate approach to dealing with male stereotypes pertaining to mental health.

It is evident institutional and procedural change is required of governing bodies including universities and the NHS in order to really begin to understand and assist men in need. Though we can never truly estimate or understand an individual's own emotions, stressors or mental space, hopefully as a society we can begin to alleviate some of the barriers to stigma. We must initiate a change toward providing adequate assistance that is so deservedly necessary for all men.



Driving Motorsports into the Twenty-First Century



Society Editor Tilly Judges speaks to Motorsports Society President Alex Megginson about the society's plans to get more girls into the driving seat!

Tilly Judges

President Alex Megginson's interest in motorsports started as a child who liked to watch Formula One with his family, this interest grew and led him to join Motorsports Society in his first year of university.

Despite not getting fully involved in the society until second year, Alex says that once he attended the events that Motorsports Society organised, he realised that the society was "full of people [he] identified with and enjoyed spending time with". Motorsports Society gives students at Leeds the opportunity to take part in motorsport no matter their previous experience and can give students the opportunity to live life in the fast lane whilst they have fun and make friends.

Alex's story of an interest in motorsports from a young age is one that many boys can relate to, as they grew up wanting to be Lewis Hamilton or Michael Schumacher. The extremely male-dominated sport leaves little space for inspiring young girls to get involved, and this creates a vicious cycle of exclusion for women within motorsports.



Alex Megginson has recognised the lack of female participants in his society, with only 4 of the 67 members being female, and has promised to do something about it. Motorsports Society can arguably

boast about 6% of their members being women, as only 3% of those who hold race licenses, and can therefore compete in Motorsport UK car events, are women. Although they have double the proportion of women in their society as those who can race in the UK, Motorsports Society are not happy with these low ratios, and Alex aims to increase the gender diversity within the society during his time as President.

This problem has been identified in the professional motorsports community and there have been various attempts to involve women across the sport, breaking the cycle of women being excluded from motorsports. In 2009 the Women in Motorsport Commission was created to demonstrate a recognition of the imbalance in the sport and to encourage women to participate.

Since its creation in 2009 it has been involved in multiple seminars to discuss the issue, however it has taken ten years until its first major milestone of opening the FIA Women Drivers Academy. There are various difficulties that surround women involvement in motorsports, including the main debate of whether men and women should race together.

This commission will hopefully be able to solve the various factors that result in less women getting involved in motorsports professionally and for fun. The Motorsports Society at Leeds believe that the factors that stop women from getting involved are the sport being dominated by men, the lack of support at a grassroots level to encourage women to get involved in the sport and the newness of organisations such as the Women in Motorsport Commission. They believe that given time, these organisations will be able to have the impact that they aim to and will help girls to get involved in motorsports.

In the meantime, they believe that you should get involved in their society. They describe their society as "fast, fun and friendly" and offer a chance for women to get involved in motorsports for the first time. Following feedback from their female members, the society has organised a Women's Only Karting event to encourage girls to get involved. Although the society can't solve the lack of grassroots support for female involvement in the sport, the Women's Only Karting event is an opportunity to give young women at the university the opportunity to try karting in an environment that can remove any worries over lack

of experience or the sport being too male-dominated.

No female members of Motorsports Society have been involved in motorsports before university, so there's no need to be worried if you haven't tried karting before. This event gives women interested in the sport a chance to try something new without feeling like they're starting on the back foot.

If you're interested in attending Motorsports Society's Women's Only Karting event at 3pm on the **19th February**, head to their Facebook page **Leeds University Motorsport**. Tickets are only £19 and include both racing and transport to and from the event, leaving from the Parkinson Building.

No matter your gender, get involved in the fastest society at the university – the cheapest way to get involved in competitive motorsport. With opportunities to take part in the Tour De Yorkshire or the national British Universities Karting Championship and attend fun socials, Motorsports Society is the best way to mix your love of racing with making new friends. Join Motorsports Society by visiting their Facebook page **Leeds University Motorsport** for more details.



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LGBTQ+ ARTIST SPOTLIGHT

To celebrate LGBTQ+ history month our team of writers share their favourite and most notable music artists.

MUNA

Three-piece dark pop powerhouse MUNA were thrown into the spotlight back in 2017, the year they released their debut album *About U* and the year they supported Harry Styles on tour. MUNA are a self-proclaimed protest band, and much of their music stems from and centres around their identities as members of the LGBTQ+ community. For me, their most notable piece of LGBTQ+ activism is the song 'I Know A Place'. Written about LGBTQ+ safe spaces, its meaning significantly changed after the Pulse nightclub shooting in 2016 into a song about hopes for protection, even if it's in their dreams, MUNA made an extremely poignant banger out of a very dark time for their community.

SARAH JEWERS

PATRICK COWLEY

A true pioneer of electronic dance music, Patrick Cowley's influence in the scene and beyond remains unparalleled. From his soft and seedy soundtracks to gay pornographic films to his funkier, Italo-disco-flecked material more suited for the dance floor, Cowley created hits on hits. The San Francisco label Dark Entries have worked to share his legacy by reissuing his homoerotic film scores, while his work can also be heard all over mainstream club culture, most notably his Hi-NRG mix of Donna Summer's classic 'I Feel Love'. Expect robotic and searing synths, cowbells and some modest sleaze.

SAFI BUGEL

OCTA OCTA

House producer whose trademark beats are infused with overwhelming surges of emotion. Maya Bouldry-Morrison, better known as Octa Octa, has been on the scene since 2011, coming out as transgender in the midst of her rise to success in 2016. Her introspective, understated album *Between Two Selves* (2013) voiced her self-uncertainty for the first time, acting as a transition itself between her original, more anonymous works and the vibrant, distinctive brand of house she now produces. Her latest album *Resonant Body* (2019) breathes life and love through a diverse array of incredible tracks, from the rave-reminiscent 'Imminent Spirit Arrival' to the scattered, sample-saturated beats of 'Can You See Me?'. For first-time listeners, this album is the place to start.

HOLLIE GRISS



Image Credit: Michael Loccisano

LYNKS AFRIKKA

Lynks Afrikka: producer, queer performance artist and dance extraordinaire. Now a mainstay on the South London and Bristol underground scenes, heralded recently by Elton John, and a Guardian Music 'One To Watch' in 2020, Afrikka's music is a cheeky mishmash of bubblegum, experimental europop and industrial horror, with lyrics lending a millennial absurdity to current affairs and heteronormativity. Their shows are sardonic and uncanny, seemingly unwavering in their ability to bring hot, straight boys and girls to their feet (check out the song 'Str8 Acting' for reference). Afrikka's most recent track, 'How To Make a Béchamel Sauce in 10 Steps' (out on Slow Dance's most recent V/A compilation), is a recipe for fun and rapture, against an era of unsauced humorlessness in dance music. They're playing everywhere from Birmingham, London and Sheffield this year, so don't sleep.

JUDE IAGO JAMES



Image Credit: Ashlan Grey

KEVIN ABSTRACT

Kevin Abstract has asserted himself as a fresh LGBT+ icon by penetrating the typically heteronormative and often homophobic territory of hip hop and rap. His honest, emboldened and sometimes hysterical lyrics about his experiences as a black gay man are energising to hear, accompanied by his unique sound that hops from soft and poignant lo-fi guitar ballads to aggressive, heartfelt solo rapping. His work in both his individual albums and *BROCKHAMPTON* dare to grandstand a emotional vulnerability that an entire generation of gay people can take comfort in and relate to.

JOHN O'CALLAGHAN

SUBCULTURE & MUSIC



COACHELLA CONTROVERSY

The festival Coachella is being headlined by queer artist Frank Ocean. As the owner of Coachella has repeatedly expressed homophobic viewpoints, editor Neive McCarthy explores the question of why LGBTQ+ artists attend.

Coachella is for many music lovers a far-away vision of paradise. However many also see it as long being synonymous with the height of white privilege and there are numerous instances of uncomfortably problematic on-goings. From the abundance of rich white-kids with a vile penchant for cultural appropriation, the rampant elitism, to the fact it glorifies and exploits a district which is actually incredibly impoverished, there’s no avoiding that more often than not, the renowned festival has found itself in hot water.

Undoubtedly the crux of this, however, came when it was revealed that, Phillip Anschutz, the head of major conglomerate AEG whose Live division owns the festival, was known to be funding aggressive anti-LGBTQ+ organisations, and donating \$1 million to Republican members of the US Senate who are notably anti-LGBTQ+, anti-abortion, and/or anti-gun control. It goes without saying then that Anschutz’s morals are largely in question; for such an enormous festival, this of course raises a major issue when it comes to supporting the festival, and what Anschutz stands for. Initially, it seemed that the call to boycott Coachella fell more to festival-goers, implored to forego the star-studded weekend of their influencer dreams. Of course, there was little impact, with Anschutz and Coachella having persisted relatively unfazed by their criticisms.

The question, however, lies in how exactly thousands and thousands of artists and fans alike can so blatantly ignore the issues embedded in the very nature and conception of the festival. More and more over recent years, it has become apparent that these problems have been completely blindsided, and although mostly frustrating, it’s absolutely baffling too.

The appeal of Coachella 2020 is starkly apparent. Just one look and your mind is already wandering to how magical it would be, should you have that spare \$429 in your bank (at least). Hearing the opening notes of Frank Ocean’s ‘Nikes’, surrounded by your friends, with the backdrop of Californian pink-tinged skies sounds like pure, unadulterated bliss.

At least until you remember that your money is funding the exact antithesis of what you, and the artists playing, appear to support. Enter the baffling part of this entire situation: Frank Ocean, set to close the festival with a rare headline set, is an openly queer man, so why exactly is he playing at a festival that the funding of which could eventually go to organisations that would inhibit him loving who he wants?

Of course, for Anschutz to sign Ocean for a headline set makes perfect sense – illusive and almost impossible to catch live, just the mere mention of ‘Frank Ocean’ would have even more people flocking to the Coachella Valley. Yet, does this not only further testify how Ocean doesn’t need to play here? One of the most in demand artists of our times, it’s safe to say there are very few festivals who wouldn’t jump at the chance to have him on their line-up. Why, then, of all festivals, would such an artist choose to tie his brand so closely to an organisation that opposes his freedom?

The closer you look at the Coachella line-up, the more acts you notice who, usually, will sing for equality until the cows come home, but suddenly find themselves mute when it comes to signing the contract to play Coachella. To an extent, it makes sense: Coachella is one of the biggest festivals in the world, and to play it is a major accolade, and for many artists, is incredibly career defining. In a sense, it seems hard to turn down. But is the prestige and honour

the festival provides really enough to justify ignoring your usual moral values?

Politically fused, riotous artists like IDLES and Slowthai, who are renowned for being outspoken about many of these issues, still find themselves on the bill, suddenly silent. An abundance of queer icons, from MIKA, Kim Petras, Charli XCX, Marina and Carly Rae Jepsen, all find themselves on there too. Is Coachella just excusable from its inherently uncomfortable roots? After Ariana Grande’s headline set last year, she left the stage with a projected rainbow on screen.

Some might argue that this is an attempt at using the unignorably major platform that Coachella provides to try and balance its problems. Waving one flag will not inhibit the money that will go straight to Anschutz and these organisations in the slightest, so surely to truly make a statement, boycotting Coachella would be much more effective?

To continue ignoring the undercurrents of homophobia and elitism that Coachella harbours allows them to proceed – it may be one of the biggest festivals in the world, but that doesn’t mean we can suddenly condone what it stands for, and some of the most popular artists in the world shouldn’t be condoning this either.

NEIVE MCCARTHY

THE PRESENCE OF QUEER IN MODERN MUSIC

Lizzie Wright voices her take on the topic of queer-baiting within modern music. Do artists have the right to remain ambiguous or should we require artists to index their sexuality in their music?

QUEER-BAITING DEFINITION

A marketing technique used in the entertainment industry to appeal to an LGBTQ+ audience. It involves straight celebrities making their sexuality ambiguous to avoid alienating audiences.

It's no secret that those who identify under the LGBTQ+ spectrum still face significant societal-based issues, from parental rejection to mental health problems. In 2020, we're lucky to have a large queer presence in the music world, encompassing all genres. However, with the queer experience being such a unique one, should we expect these artists to write songs about their own experience?

When an artist releases a track about their identity, it's them reaching out to their fans and saying you aren't alone. To those who don't see themselves represented as much in mainstream media compared to their straight/cis peers, it's about their identity feeling recognised and validated by the wider world. Songs like Janelle Monáe's 'Make Me Feel' and Lady Gaga's 'Born This Way' have been marked as gay anthems for their discussion of queer relationships and their advocacy for equality. This makes for commercial success too, with 'Born This Way' becoming the fastest single ever to sell a million copies just five days after its release. Artists gain from writing about the queer experience just as much as the fans do.

But should we require queer artists to write about their experiences in the same way that straight people do? Some relief from the endless Ed Sheeran tracks aside, it's important to remember that celebrity does not mean celebrated. Those who identify as queer have likely faced the same difficulties as those out of the limelight, and it can be hard to then make such a public statement about something that they've been previously put down for. What we can do is work to make sure that the world is a safe environment for acts to come out publicly in, by supporting their careers and their decision to choose when they announce their queerness.

Sadly, some celebrities remain closeted for a significant portion of their time in the spotlight, due to discrimination still affecting the LGBTQ+ community today. Fans have long speculated, for example, on whether Harry Styles is simply straight (or indeed whether he was in a relationship with One Direction bandmate Louis Tomlinson). The investigation of such rumours was so rampant that it affected Styles's life and relationship with his male friends.

However, in the same vein Styles has never refuted the rumours, choosing to stay silent as is his right. But some would say that he has been queer-baiting, using the rumours that he is LGBTQ+ to his advantage and never confirming or denying them in order to be considered a 'gay icon'. In an interview with the Guardian, he said:

“Am I sprinkling in nuggets of sexual ambiguity to try and be more interesting? No. [...] I want things to look a certain way. Not because it makes me look gay, or it makes me look straight, or it makes me look bisexual, but because I think it looks cool. And more than that, I dunno, I just think sexuality's something that's fun. Honestly? I can't say I've given it any more thought than that.”

It's all well and good that Styles is privileged enough to not have to care about his sexuality, but safe to say his queer fans are continuously let down by his avoidance of the subject, particularly when he's potentially a straight man who knows full well what the influence his position as a potential queer icon has.

Regardless of whether his sexuality is our business, the exploitation of the LGBTQ+ community by queer-baiting is a pressing issue that Styles shouldn't just let slide. Madonna and Britney fans will remember when, at the 2003 VMAs, the two shared a surprise kiss. The camera then cut to Spears' boyfriend at the time, Justin Timberlake, who looked less than comfortable at the exchange. While many saw it as an iconic moment of lesbian visibility, the exploitation of the queer experience by two straight women, and the use of Timberlake's reaction as a humorous reaction shows that this was actually just a cheap gag intended for shock factor. Ariana Grande performed the same move in her music video for 'break up with your girlfriend, I'm bored'. Whilst allyship from megastars such as these is incredibly important, homosexual interactions are clearly being used to take advantage of those they're trying to support, with it only serving to further push stereotypes rather than lifting up some of their most vulnerable, and most supportive fans.

LIZZIE WRIGHT



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A GUIDE TO ALTERNATIVE QUEER CLUB NIGHTS

London is a melting pot of alternative, DIY, queer club nights. From Aphrodyki (an Ancient Greece themed party for queer women), and BBZ (a collective hosting parties for queer, female-identifying, trans, and non-binary people of colour) to the various LGBTQ+ centered nights Dalston uperstore hosts, with an eclectic and diverse queer nightlife bubbling away beneath the capital's surface. But what if you don't live in London? Where can you go away from the mainstream gay haunts dominated by touristy straight clubbers? Here is a list of just some of the best queer nights out from around the UK, perfect for some alternative LGBTQ+ history month celebrations.



HOT MESS (GLASGOW & EDINBURGH)

Founded back in 2010 by DJ Simontron (who's played alongside the likes of Horse Meat Disco), *Hot Mess* is an inclusive queer club night, with events held in both Glasgow and Edinburgh. The music is as eclectic as its clientele, with Simon spinning everything from pop classics to weird synth-wave, as well as house, techno and disco, all on vinyl.

DYKE CHAMBERS (LEEDS)

Taking place in Wharf Chambers, *Dyke Chambers* was founded in reaction to the limited number of club nights catered towards LGBT+ womxn. A safe space for LGBT+ womxn, non-binary folk and their allies, *Dyke Chambers* mixes drag performances with queer DJs, and have even hosted an 'open dyke night'. Their outdoor party for Pride was hugely fun, and you can expect more of the same from their future events.

WHAT SHE SAID (MANCHESTER)

Originally created to make up for the lack of events specifically for queer women, Manchester's *What She Said* has evolved into more than just a club night. As well as hosting house parties, they also put on gigs and even comedy nights, with an emphasis on making like-minded new friends.

Next event: Wednesday 18th March at YES

BABYCAKES (SHEFFIELD)

Named after arguably the worst UKG song of all time by 3 Of A Kind, *Babycakes* is Sheffield's newest DIY queer night. Organised by partners Zoran and Blu, the night, which takes place at an undisclosed, limited capacity venue, is created by queer people for queer people. With an aim to celebrate Sheffield's queer community, anything goes at *Babycakes*, as long as there is a queer person behind the decks. You can expect anything including UKG, dancehall, techno, club and more. The first event, which featured sets from DJ Soyboi, Diessa and Grove, was a huge success, quickly selling out. Zoran and Blu have big plans for *Babycakes*, as well as other queer projects on the horizon, so stay tuned.

QUEER NOISE CLUB (NOTTINGHAM)

As the name would suggest, Nottingham's *Queer Noise Club* provides a platform for queer, non-binary and female experimental noise musicians. Founded by the multi-talented artist, musician and designer Aja, *Queer Noise Club*'s goal is to push boundaries, whether it be through punishing live sets, immersive visuals or drag performances. Previous events have played hosted to NTS' Ifeoluwa, grime producer Iceboy Violent and the interestingly-named Godspeed You Peter Andre.

HEY MARY (CARDIFF)

Described as the best alternative LGBTQ+ night out in Cardiff, *Hey Mary* is part queer disco, part drag show. DJ Sissy Boy Tears provides the former, whilst drag residents Cressida Wolf and Electra Complex, frequently accompanied by a revolving line up of special guests, lipsync 'til the early hours.

GAL PALS (BRIGHTON)

Gal Pals is a monthly queer club night split between Brighton and London which centres around womxn, trans and non-binary folk. It was co-founded by partners Scarlett and Xandice (Xandice also DJs at their events under the name Jumaau), who started *Gal Pals* shortly after getting together just over four years ago. The music is a melting pot of genres, encompassing everything from pop, hip-hop, R&B and PC music, as well as some obligatory queer bangers – the only criteria is that it must be by womxn.

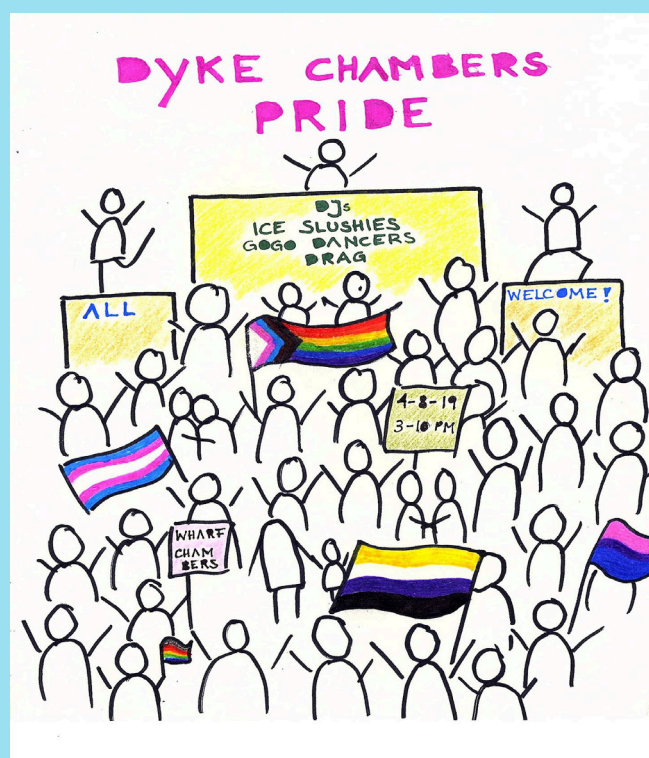


Image: Dyke Chambers Facebook page



Image: Babycakes Facebook page

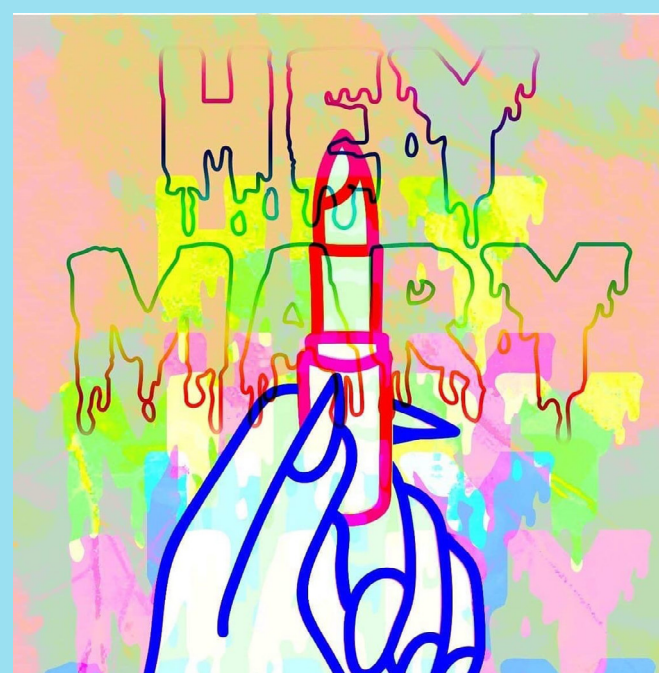


Image: Hey Mary Facebook page



Credit: Asos



Credit: H&M



Credit: Urban Outfitters

RAINBOW CAPITALISM?

Is your favourite high street chain exploiting pride for their own financial gain? Faye Clayton investigates.

It's February 2020, the first LGBTQ+ History month of the decade. With this topic at the forefront, the question of 'rainbow capitalism' has once again been raised as we question the faith behind multi-coloured marketing. The presence of rainbow-clad advertisement inevitably sparks conversations surrounding the LGBTQ+ community and allows them rightful visibility in society. However, are these just shallow attempts at cashing in on a group of people who have just recently gained acceptance in mainstream media? How can commercialisation be a form of support?

Big business has exploited the pride atmosphere, and this can be seen explicitly within the fashion industry. More and more brands have mindlessly attempted pride celebration. For example, fast-fashion brand Boohoo created the #LoveWithoutLimits campaign in 2019 which featured various colourful T-shirts, bumbags, sequin skirts and more. The company contributed 10% of the profits to LGBTQ+ charities. Whilst obviously still positively contributing to charity, it being just 10% shows it was a clear marketing tactic to masquerade as championing the community whilst still amassing a huge profit. The brand also created a low-effort attempt at activism for the consumer, which in reality doesn't achieve much, particularly when this same activism is deserted by these businesses for the remainder of the year. **Even worse, it was reported by Reboot Online that in 2019, two in five companies with Pride campaigns donated no proceeds to LGBTQ+ causes.**

This rainbow-washing (basically sticking a rainbow on a piece of clothing and calling it a day) allows brands to capitalise off of a marginalised community, one that has only just gained greater acceptance. Reducing queer history into colourful commodities ignores issues that pride aims to challenge.

These issues may include but aren't limited to: transphobia, violence against LGBTQ+ people, workplace and housing discrimination, the difficulties of same-sex adoption and much more.

Another recognisable concern lies in many of these brands previously being a part of or collaborating with notoriously anti-LGBTQ+ companies. It has been reported in the U.S that Former Senator Rick Santorum, who once openly compared homosexuality to incest and bestiality, received thousands of dollars worth of political donations from the CEO of Urban Outfitters, Richard Hayne. This creates an uncomfortable paradox when Urban Outfitters attempt to celebrate Pride, and even partner with GLSEN in support of LGBTQ+ youth. There is a duality here that is inherently ingenuine and in bad faith.

So, how can this be changed in a capitalist society? More can be done. This could include the hiring of LGBTQ+ employees, making sure that they are partnered with allies and the guarantee that companies donate all their proceedings to a reputable charity. There have been positive examples of this, such as the ASOS x GLAAD 2019 collaboration in which 100% of the proceeds were given to LGBTQ+ causes. Therefore, active steps towards inclusivity must be taken for campaigns to gain legitimacy.

Ultimately, the celebration of pride is far greater than just purchasing a sequin skirt or rainbow sliders online. As the inclusion of the LGBTQ+ community becomes standard, companies need to work harder in ensuring they are creating inclusive environments every month of the year.

FAYE CLAYTON

PINWHEEL OF PRIDE

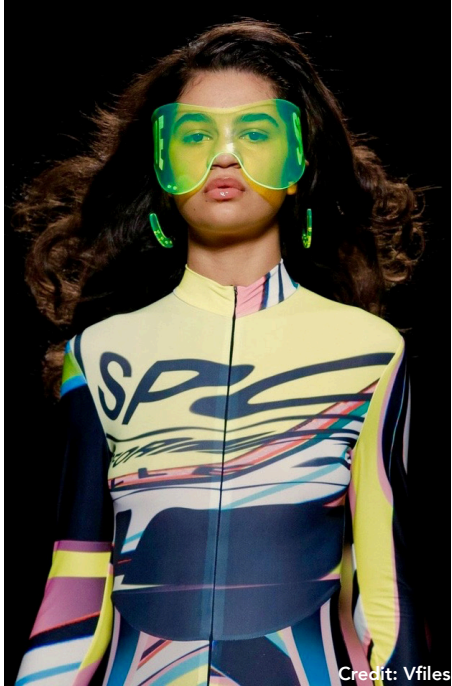
Lucy Abbott showcases the incredible diversity of LGBTQ+ talent in the fashion industry



Credit: Gogo Graham

GOGO GRAHAM

Her work features upcycled clothes donated to charity shops, and she has also led the way in featuring trans models in her collections.



Credit: Vfiles

GEORGIA FALLON-DYKE SPORT

By reclaiming a traditionally offensive term for lesbians, Georgia aims to celebrate Lesbian culture through her sportswear brand.



Credit: Vogue

CHRISTOPHER JOHN ROGERS

Christopher aims to explore the constant fluctuation of queerness, introducing the concept into high fashion.



Credit: Vogue

ALEXANDRE HERCHCOVITCH

This Brazilian gay designer is famous for his trademark skulls which became immensely popular in the 1990s.



Credit: No Sesso

NO SESSO

As the first brand founded by a trans person to ever show at the official New York Fashion Week, No Sesso casts exclusively people of colour.



Credit: Rich Mnisi

RICH MNISI

Mnisi addresses South African pre-conceived ideas about gender and race through his pieces.



Credit: Kevin Alexander Photo

MONDO GUERRA

Mondo won the first season of *Project Runway All Stars* and became a spokesperson for HIV campaigns after coming out as HIV positive on the show.



Credit: Wikipedia

BEN COOPERWHEAT

Ben combines iconic British symbols with queer focused fashion shows, exploring why more queer visibility is needed in and outside of the industry.

NEXT IN FASHION REVIEW: LGBTQ+ DESIGNERS STAND TALL AND PROUD

Next in Fashion is best described as a new and improved *Project Runway*. 18 designers battle to win the competition, securing a prize of \$250,000 and a chance to have their collection sold on premium fashion retailer Net-A-Porter. Thanks to the show airing on Netflix, the contestants are of international origin and this allows for a wide range of different design aesthetics and sensibilities. Presented by Queer Eye's Tan France and model/designer Alexa Chung, the show is irresistibly addictive.

Many of the contestants identify as LGBTQ+ and the show takes a strong interest in each individual's background. Designers Ashton Hirota and Marco Morante's clothes are often inspired by various subcultures within the LGBTQ+ community, and Carli Pearson also talks candidly about the support her partner gives her, and how fundamental it has been to her success as a designer. Furthermore, one of the most touching moments in the show is when designer Julian Woodhouse discusses his relationship with his family. Born into an army household, Julian served in Korea as an army sergeant, which is where he met his future husband. After marrying, Julian's relationship with his family completely broke down despite attempts from both sides to salvage the situation. His story serves as an important reminder of how much some of these designers have sacrificed in order to be authentic to themselves.

Whilst the fashion industry is commonly viewed as an accepting space for gay men, this does not mean their relationships with their families are as simple.

Next in Fashion is a finely conceived piece of reality TV. It allows each of the contestants to express their own ethos, without having to conform to any mould. This being said, it is a shame the narrow, western category of 'suits' and 'lingerie' where chosen for two of the weeks. The former is problematic as it is a western standard of formal dress, thus giving a distinct advantage to competitors from countries where a suit is the formal garment of choice. Perhaps a more inclusive theme for the episode could have been 'formal wear', which would have allowed contestants to design the traditional formal attire from around the globe, should they have wished to do so.

Lingerie poses an issue due to its lack of suitability for any contestants for whom modesty is a religious or personal preference. The challenge also raised questions of how well the show was catering for contestants for whom English was not their first language, when Chinese contestant Angel Chen asked the presenters mid-way through the challenge: 'what is lingerie?'. Despite these two minor issues *Next in Fashion* is a fabulous show that celebrates talent, irrespective of where it comes from or how it identifies.

IONA TOMPKINS



Credit: i-D magazine



Credit: Decider.com



Credit: holrmagazine

CELEBRATE LGBTQ+ HISTORY MONTH WITH THE GREATEST QUEER POETS OF ALL TIME

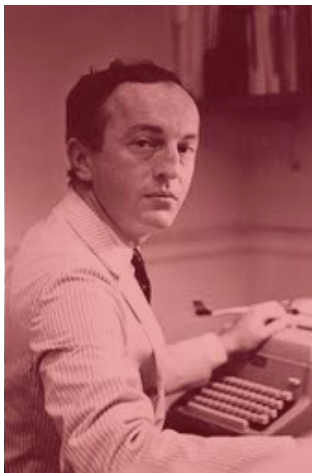


Image: Amazon

FRANK O'HARA
Choice Poem:
Une Journee de Juillet

Often considered one of the leading figures of the 1950s and 60s 'New York School', O'Hara remains a hugely influential poetic voice despite his tragically short life. During his prolific fifteen years in the Big Apple, he often wrote several poems a day, many of which are still regarded as integral to the canon of 20th century American literature. His work is conversational, personal and witty while still retaining an element of shock value. Lines like "I suck off/ every man in the Manhattan Storage & Warehouse Co" display a wonderfully unabashed expression of queerness even by today's standards and mark him as a seminal voice for exploring sexuality in the modern age.



Image: Amazon

CAROL ANN DUFFY
Choice Poem:
After Orlando: Gay Love

It's not unusual for a poetry listicle to include Duffy one way or another, but, as the first ever LGBTQ+ poet laureate and one of our country's most admired poets, it would be almost sacrilegious to omit her here. After being inspired to write by one of her teachers, her accessible writing style has led to Duffy being an established fixture of the National Curriculum and is often part of many people's first foray into the world of poetry. However, that is not to say her work lacks sophistication as her nuance effortlessly conveys depth and profundity, whether she is writing about love, loss or the lives of history's obscured women.



Image: Amazon

SAPPHO
Choice Poem: If Not, Winter

Although little is known about much of her life, Ancient Greek poet Sappho is renowned as the greatest lyric poet of her era and, with the word 'lesbian' deriving from her home island of Lesbos, she has become an immortal symbol for the love and desire between women. Unfortunately, out of around 10,000 lines of poetry that she likely wrote, only about 650 have survived. Yet, her use of sharply-drawn imagery, word play and hyperbole imbue her verse with a charm that has helped her poetry stand the test of time.



Image: BloggingWoolf

WALT WHITMAN
Choice Poem: If Not, Winter

Despite receiving little public acclaim during his lifetime, Whitman is retrospectively seen as the voice of 19th century American poetry. The father of free verse draws from humanist philosophy and pastoral imagery to deal with themes as wide-ranging as wounding, healing, death and sexuality. Some critics still debate the poet's sexual orientation but for playwright Oscar Wilde it was beyond question; he was recorded saying "I have the kiss of Walt Whitman still on my lips".



Image: OtherPress

EDWIN MORGAN
Choice Poem:
One Cigarette

Before being named the Scots Makar, Scotland's national poet, in 2004, Morgan had decades of inventive and dynamic poetry under his belt. His work has a deep connection to his home city of Glasgow and also explores romance, lust and unrequited love with quick intelligence and a sprightly energy. Be enraptured by the sheer tenderness of his verse this LGBTQ+ History Month.

ALEX GIBBON





AND THEN WE DANCED

Amid controversy and protests in its home country and buzz on the festival circuit, Sabrina Martins reviews the Georgian queer coming-of-age film

Directed by Levan Akin, *And Then We Danced* tells the story of Merab (Levan Gelbakhiani), a young dancer who has been training in the National Georgian Ensemble ever since he was a child. But when a new 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 surrounding him. He is inexplicably attracted to this boy, but his environment is violently conservative and homophobic. He wants to become a professional dancer to earn enough money for his family, but he is deemed too feminine for Georgian dances. Each time he tries to break free, something pushes him back into a cage.

Yet Akin's film never succumbs to miserabilism – if anything, it is an ode to freedom, a love letter to life and youth. Ardent and earnest, *And Then We Danced* celebrates the pain and beauty of growing up, the euphoria and anguish of first love, while simultaneously denouncing the rotten ideologies within Georgian society. Being the first LGBTQ+ film set in Georgia, Akin's film is simultaneously vibrant and heartbreaking. Despite the cruelty he faces, the protagonist still finds love and support, whether it is in

strangers or his childhood best friend Mary (Ana Javakishvili). Dancing is a form of expression of its own: physicality conveys much more than words can, with each movement on screen provoking a myriad of emotions in the viewer. The directing is so intimate, so raw, that you almost forget you are watching Merab through camera lenses: he feels so real that it's as if you could practically touch him. Levan Gelbakhiani is beyond phenomenal in his role: open and vulnerable, our eyes are automatically drawn to him. When he and Bachi Valishvili are together, the screen is filled with tenderness, longing and ecstasy.

There is yet a sad reality within and around this film. Akin revealed that this idea came from the violent attacks gay rights activists received from far-right groups during a pride rally in 2013 in Tbilisi. When he started his research in Georgia, he was planning on making a documentary, and his actors were only interviewees. On the movie premiere on November 8 2019 in the Georgian capital, similar attacks occurred, and several moviegoers were injured. In times like these, films as glorious and humane as *And Then We Danced* feel ever more urgent.

SABRINA MARTINS

Images: French Quarter Film



QUEERNESS SEWN INTO THE FABRIC OF THE EVERYDAY



Image: IMDb

Sex Education is now in its second season, and after the success of the first it continues to provide a new take on 'coming of age' drama along with adolescent sexuality. Laurie Nunn, the creator of *Sex Education*, has created a series with numerous complex characters, beautiful and varied relationships, with a nuanced portrayal of queerness as she writes characters whose identity doesn't centre around their sexuality.

In the first season we were introduced to Eric Effiong (Ncuti Gatwa), the unapologetic and shameless best friend of protagonist Otis Milburn (Asa Butterfield), but has avoided being reduced to the singular archetype of the gay best friend. The show has created a multi-faceted character, with his own views and opinions, showcasing his faith and his relationship with his family. Eric's Ghanaian and Nigerian descent is also important representation within queer representation on TV which is predominantly white.

In season two, Eric's story line is one as old as time, the complicated love triangle with the impossible decision of which boy to choose; a story line usually reserved for straight characters. Within this triangle are another two complex and dynamic queer boys, who couldn't be more different from one another. One love interest is new character Rahim (Sami Outalali), a very handsome and very confident transfer student from France. Rahim is very open and comfortable with his sexuality, even instructing Otis and Eric on anal douching and raising the question of anal sex during a sex education lesson. This blossoming romance between Eric and Rahim hits a bump, in the form of religious beliefs: Rahim

is an atheist as a result of his family having to leave their country of origin because of religion. This pairing of a queer relationship and religion is fairly unique as you often don't see queer characters deal with spirituality in this way.

The second love interest, final piece of the love triangle, and (spoiler) eventual endgame is Eric's former bully Adam (Connor Swindells). After a short time at a military academy, Adam returns and still has feelings for Eric after their brief romance in season one. Throughout this season, Adam has to deal with his own internalized homophobia, anger, and his strict and disapproving dad. With few bisexual male characters on screen, Adam's path of self-acceptance is incredibly important, showing that figuring out your identity might not always be easy but will eventually work out, demonstrating that accepting all aspects of yourself is always the best option. Adam's journey comes to its end in a very public and romantic display, all with the backdrop of a very phallic retelling of *Romeo and Juliet*!

Another character that comes to accept her sexuality during this season is Ola (Patricia Allison), who started the season in a relationship with Otis. Following their breakup Ola takes an online test to determine her sexuality, after having a sex dream about her friend Lilly (Tanya Reynolds). Her quick and blasé acceptance of her pansexuality, along with her confidence in wearing rainbow colours and masculine outfits is refreshing to see. Ola's character offers a very different relationship with her sexuality compared to her friend Adam - a friendship we didn't know we needed

'SEX DOESN'T MAKE US WHOLE, AND SO, HOW COULD YOU EVER BE BROKEN?'

The *Sex Education* writers also need to be congratulated for their inclusion of an asexual character. Asexuality is fundamentally underrepresented to the point of invisibility on screen. Many don't even consider it to be part of the LGBTQ+ spectrum and with the chance to represent asexual characters often cast aside for more sexually driven ones. Including a girl who feels like she's broken because she doesn't feel the same way as her peers but having her be a nuanced, funny and interesting character is such a fantastic step forward from the distinct absence of asexuality, not just in the arts but in the media and general life. It's a positive move forward and one we can only hope will continue in season three.

The queer representation in *Sex Education* doesn't stop at these characters but is a nuanced and real undercurrent throughout the show. Queerness is sewn into the fabric of the everyday and it's brilliant. This show has got queer representation right, it has shown it in all its glory and all its intricacies. *Sex Education* is a wonderful display of humour and openness, an exploration of sexuality and gender that we can only hope begins to become a part of the younger generations beginning to find out who they are.

LITTLE WOMEN OR CONFUSED MEN?

Toni Stephenson explores why Greta Gerwig's acclaimed new adaptation didn't quite appeal to male critics.



Image: Vanity Fair

The lack of diversity in this year's award season nominations has not been overlooked, receiving criticism from many of the nominated artists themselves, with the hashtag '#OscarsSoWhite' trending on social media. Just a few weeks ago at the BAFTAs, Leading Actor winner Joaquin Phoenix called out systematic racism prevalent in society. Rebel Wilson highlighted the lack of female nominees in the Best Director category, joking she couldn't match their success because she doesn't 'have the balls'.

The latest comments to spark debate on twitter have been those of an anonymous member of the Academy made to the Hollywood Foreign Press whilst shedding light on his votes for last weekend's Oscars. In discussing his Best Picture vote, he stated, "With *Little Women*, the timeline was ridiculous — I was really confused sometimes, and I know I'm not the only one. Thank God she [star Saoirse Ronan] cut her hair, because that at least gave me a bit of a reference point." He also commented on his Best Adapted Screenplay vote:

"I think Greta Gerwig is really great, but I shouldn't need a scorecard to keep track of a movie's timeline, so I ruled out *Little Women* first."

Granted, art is always subjective to individual audience members and these comments from a single Academy voter cannot be taken to reflect the institution as a whole, nor all men in general. For example, former US President Barack Obama included *Little Women* in his 2019 best films list. This Academy member, however, isn't the first man to criticise the timeline of Greta Gerwig's adaptation of the

classic novel which begins in the middle of the book and shows the March Sisters' childhoods as flashbacks during their early adult lives.

Upon hearing there was another adaptation of *Little Women* in the works a few years ago, I admit I questioned whether it was needed. The 1994 version starring Winona Ryder has stood the test of time, and if this wasn't enough, Call the Midwife's Heidi Thomas adapted the novel for a four-part BBC series in 2017, starring *Stranger Things*' Maya Hawke. A minute into the film, however, Gerwig convinced me she had brought something new to the table as we were hurled straight into following Jo run through the busy streets of postbellum New York to offer a piece of her writing for publication instead of the book's starting point: the young March sisters as children during the Civil War. Speaking with female friends and family, it seemed we all agreed with this fresh adaptation using flashbacks and flashforwards, which served to draw together themes and parallels in the narrative that heightened emotion and allowed for new interpretations of characters to be made.

It's worth considering, therefore, the basis of these comments and why so many male critics were confused by the timeline. The Academy voter demographic, which in 2019 was 77 per cent male, had no trouble awarding Tarantino's notoriously non-chronological *Pulp Fiction* Best Original Screenplay at the 1995 Oscars and Christopher Nolan's *Inception* received critical acclaim for its complex narrative. Although film comparisons aren't always the most effective when illustrating a point since there are numerous elements contributing to particular films gaining recognition, in this case and plenty others, it does appear

that, the majority male Academy membership find it easier to engage with films that feature men, are about men and are made by men.

In some ways it makes sense, given the demographics of the Academy voters, that female filmmakers have been overlooked. Art interpretation is personal and members will likely cast their votes in favour of those they most identify with. This is where the problem lies in the film industry; whilst membership remains predominantly white and male, funding and recognition are less likely to be given to marginalised filmmakers because within this demographic, the audience for it just simply isn't large enough. This means we're missing out on the stories and art of huge sections of society simply because the industry doesn't accurately or fairly represent the population of filmgoers in terms of gender and race. Calls for a wider diversity in the industry have been a hot topic in awards season for several years now and until the Academy membership changes, it seems snubs of this kind are set to continue.

TONI STEPHENSON

THE GLAMOUR AND DRAMA OF *MISS AMERICANA*

Lizzie Wright walks us through Taylor Swift's newest endeavour in releasing a documentary that follows her life behind the music and cameras

Directed by
Lana Wilson

Starring
Taylor Swift

Released
31 January

To call Taylor Swift a megastar is a severe understatement. The 30-year-old has broken records with her success in the music industry, but stardom isn't all it seems when it comes to Swift. In *Miss Americana*, director Lana Wilson gives us a rare glimpse into what life is really like when your every move is scrutinised by the press, your peers, and even your fans.

The documentary follows Swift's development from a traditional Southern country singer to a proud, outspoken young woman. It's clear to her the two images didn't seem to fit together. It had to be one or the other, and unfortunately for her fans, the former won out. This was until 2018; when she realised she wasn't making her views obvious enough to fans who needed that support, she finally endorsed Democrat candidates in midterms across the US, and released her single 'You Need to Calm Down'. She feels the need to defend herself, the country princess, America's Sweetheart girl who seemed to grow up in the limelight.

Miss Americana starts by tracking her beginning as a singer-songwriter at the tender age of 13, then moves on to the moment she notably bursts into full-

blown stardom, when she was interrupted by Kanye West at the 2009 VMAs. This is a clear moment of victimisation for Swift; a montage plays of famous celebrities such as Dr Phil and even President at the time Barack Obama condemning West's actions. She and Wilson use this as a crucial place to point out the success of her following albums, particularly 2014's *1989*. The documentary is full of snippets that manage to tell the story Swift wants us to hear: America's Sweetheart rebuilding herself both internally and in the public eye. She always comes off well, even when discussing her flaws, however, whilst the dinners with childhood friends and the personal conversations with her mother seem intimate on the surface, it feels like a well-constructed façade.

This doesn't help the fact that a lot of *Miss Americana* focuses on Swift being repeatedly demeaned. Time and again we see the moments that Swift thinks will be her downfall, but frankly there's a failure to focus enough on how she comes back from those setbacks. Considering that one main criticism of Swift is that she plays the victim, she only seems to fuel that fire rather than put it out. The most interesting part is when, halfway through,

we make it to the development of Swift's political and feminist activism. Discussing her sexual assault lawsuit for one of the first times in such detail as well as fighting about speaking out against the Republican rhetoric with her own family, this is a Swift who clearly has a passion for women and LGBTQ+ issues. There's still a sense that it's glossed over though, with the documentary named after 'Miss Americana & the Heartbreak Prince', a political allegory set in a high school, you expect more on one of the defining moments of Swift's life.

The gist of *Miss Americana* is that there isn't enough time to discuss everything that we want to hear about Taylor Swift's wild career. Condensing it into a 85 minute documentary makes it seem rushed, and inauthentic, especially from someone who has recently been so private. The viewer always wants that extra piece of information, more insight into the small area of her life that Swift lets us into. But after seeing the documentary, full of every moment she fell to self-victimisation, who can blame the pop megastar for being so candid?

LIZZIE WRIGHT

5 ANTICIPATION

With Swift being notoriously private, any peek into her life is a thrill.

4 ENJOYMENT

While beautifully made, at times it feels a contrived effort to keep up with Taylor's image. For a documentary that shows the breakdown of her previous reputation, it fails to be fully authentic.

4 IN RETROSPECT

It was enjoyable, but just failed to fulfill all it was set up to be.



Image: Emma McIntyre/Getty

"I'M JUST DANIEL, WHO HAPPENS TO BE BLACK"

Pavandeep Khosa unpacks Daniel Kaluuya's frustrations and sentiments towards the everpresent need for more racial diversity in TV and cinema

Daniel Kaluuya has aired his frustrations with critics and interviewers who constantly - and sometimes obsessively - search for racial messages in the roles he plays. The critically acclaimed actor and writer is currently promoting his new film *Queen and Slim*, the story of a couple whose first date goes wrong when they get pulled over by a police officer. Whilst the racial undertones of the film are clear, Kaluuya states that it is the complex love story that attracted him: "Yes, it's got those moments [about race] but that's more of a catalyst." He makes it clear that he doesn't want to be known as "the race guy", an actor whose roles are determined by the racial issues they can explore. Why, then, are critics still obsessed with viewing non-white actors through their race rather than through their theatrical talents?

Kaluuya himself began his career in improvisational theatre and has gone on to star in a wide range of TV shows and films since. The films that spring to mind when we hear his name, however, are likely to be *Get Out* and *Black Panther*, both of which have racial issues at their core. Whilst it can't be denied that the films are extremely well-made and significant in highlighting racial issues, it is clear that the media have chosen to solely draw attention to his films that explore issues of race and dismiss any other of his worthy roles in films such as *Sicario* and *Widows*.

If anything, this habit of critics is a form of discrimination in itself: by trying so hard to find racial aspects in any of his roles, and prioritising these, they disregard his other work, leaving him, and many other black actors, limited in a field that should encourage their creative potential rather than restrict it.

Kaluuya even admitted to moving to America in order to escape the restrictive framework of the British film industry, hoping to gain more freedom in the roles he wants to play. By restricting black actors in this way, they are not afforded the same creative freedom as their white counterparts, so it's not surprising that Kaluuya has grown frustrated.

As well as stifling the creative freedom of actors, people of colour also face a burden of representation in an industry like the film one. Because they have successfully made it in the industry, and therefore represent the positive growth and change the industry has experienced in recent years, they are burdened with the pressure to represent their whole race.

When actors do take on important roles and are critically acclaimed for these, they are often characters that are structured to fit certain Hollywood tropes. Lupita Nyong'o's 2014 Oscar win for *12 Years a Slave*, or Viola Davis' 2012 win for *The Help*, are prime

examples: one woman portrays a slave, whilst the other plays a servant. For years, Hollywood has continued to employ black actors to fit certain roles that reinforce their racial history, forcing a narrative of race on their art, which is one that Kaluuya disputes. In 2020, it is surely only right that they are given more opportunities to embrace the creative freedom they deserve in their field of work.

Ultimately, it is still clear, of course, that race relations continue to be an issue at the forefront of the film industry, and rightly so, especially considering the recent controversies surrounding the notable lack of diversity in the Oscar nominations. Films that have these issues at their core, then, are needed now more than ever. But along with this need, there comes a restricting of creative potential for black actors, limiting them to roles that are defined by their race. This has had a direct impact on actors like Kaluuya, who are often faced with a "lack of challenging roles" compared to white actors. Thus, rather than trying to force actors into films about race in order to appear progressive and diverse, the industry should allow them the same creative freedom as their white counterparts, judged through their talent as actors and not their race.

PAVANDEEP KHOSA

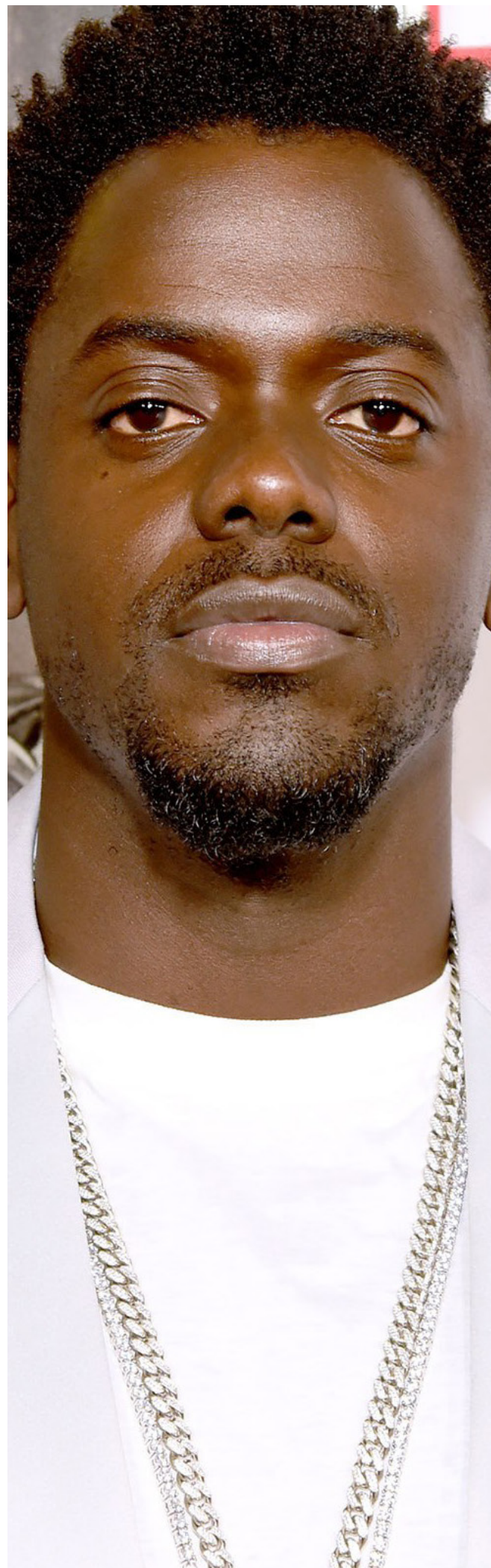


Image: Entertainment Weekly, Vanity Fair

IS 'QUEER' MEDIA A NECESSARY LABEL?

Tasha Austen discusses whether having an LGBTQ+ tag on a film is a celebration of queer existence or actually a separation from mainstream media.

Over the last decade LGBTQ+ representation in media has soared. Artists such as Kehlani, Troye Sivan, Halsey and Hayley Kiyoko top endless lists entitled 'Best Queer Artists of the Decade', 'LGBT artists you can't miss', or similar. While these lists undoubtedly increase visibility of queer people and are certainly helpful for those actively seeking out more representative and relatable media, can we question the extent to which these artists are being limited to a side group? Allowed to be successful only in their lane, and restricted from mainstream media success?

Queer Media is certainly something to be celebrated, don't get me wrong, but are we limiting these artists and ideas and teaching people who take solace in their work that they will be restricted by their orientation? These artists are certainly successful in Queer Media, but the question is: Can the gays exist outside a side group?

Outside of music, queer characters in popular TV and film often fall into tropes, with the most notable being the 'bury your gays' trope in which queer characters are almost always killed off at some point in the film or series. The extensive

list of series which follow this trope include: *The 100*, *Coronation Street*, *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, *Emmerdale*, *The Vampire Diaries*, *American Horror Story*, the list goes on. This trend seems to follow a tragedy narrative as the character's death almost always occurs suddenly and tragically, interrupting a budding romance, following a coming out or as a dramatic sacrifice.

Aside from ridiculous tropes, gay characters that are included are often incredibly stereotypical caricatures and played by straight/cis actors. The reason representation is so important is to show that these tragic ends or 'hilariously' disastrous/unhealthy dating history aren't the only futures which exist for queer people. Showing that queer people can grow up, be successful and have healthy relationships is so important and doesn't sound like a huge ask but there is a gaping hole waiting to be filled by Hollywood and other mainstream media.

It's definitely not all negative and change can be seen, with artists such as Lil Nas X, Sam Smith and Frank Ocean being evidence of increasing queer representation in mainstream media. Their success

in the mainstream – not just as queer artists - shows a growing acceptance, not just tolerance, for gay music artists.

Likewise, outside of music, we've recently seen people like Philip Schofield and NikkieTutorials come out (as gay and transgender respectively). It's interesting to consider whether they would have reached their level of success if they were out from the beginning of their careers? Nevertheless, their prevalence in the spotlight is so important for representation, allowing young LGBTQ+ people to realise that they're not alone.

This issue is a complex one, as having a separate group specifically for 'queer media' is great and inclusive and definitely needed. However, this does need to exist alongside more extensive and frequent representation within mainstream media in order to erase the divide in which queer artists are sidelined, as well as to rid the world of ridiculous tropes and bring realistic 3D queer characters into the mainstream.

TASHA AUSTEN



Credit: Logo



Credit: Ed Barnes

OLD BAR: THE MUSTS AND THE MUST NOTS

The hidden gem on the Lower Ground of LUU is Old Bar. Old Bar left a mark on me as soon as I first visited Leeds Uni. I could see myself sat in there doing pub quizzes. And now look at me, it's Thursday evening, and that's exactly what I'm doing.

Old Bar is the perfect venue at any time of the day, whether you want to chill between lectures, catch up with mates or even for a date. While of course Old Bar is known for its 'Real Ale', my personal highlight of Old Bar has got to be their legendary Potato Stacks. If you haven't tried these yet, then what are you waiting for?



As a first-year, I feel that I am now a fully-fledged member of Leeds Uni by saying that I have consumed not once but twice, those loaded stacks of heaven; for only £4.50, I could eat this as an entire meal. Choose your potato, toppings, sauce, cheese and voila. Of course, Leeds Uni is home to many budding vegans and vegetarians, so there are plenty of options available if you're looking for some meat-free munch.

Let's talk prices. My favourite page on the entire menu is the student savers section. Broke but starving? Live in Headingley or further and can't be bothered to go home back for lunch? Then this is your answer. The cheesy beans on toast for £3 is surprisingly worthy of the price. Sure, you could cook it at home, but I guarantee when you see someone else walk past with their plate flowing with beans and a mountain of cheese, you will not be able to resist. Well, I couldn't anyway.

The sandwiches, burgers and hotdogs are also incredibly reasonable, and there are so many options. I tried Old Bar's hot fish finger sandwich, a classic. It was pretty good, and for only £3.75, I can justify that. All come served with some salad too, so a healthier option than the usual McDonalds lunch.

My friends are huge fans of Old Bar's curly fries and continue to berate me for not liking curly

fries. However, I will never turn them down when the leftovers come my way, even when they're cold. So, if chips and fries is what you're after, then Old Bar is a good option. Both their fries and chips are good quality and at low prices too.

If you're looking for the authentic Yorkshire experience, then Old Bar has it, providing bangers and mash or chicken in a Yorkshire pudding soaked in gravy. I've heard great things, and all for just £6.

The atmosphere and vibe of Old Bar are perfect, the menu is varied, and they even offer desserts if you're looking to treat yourself after a laborious day at the library.

Can I fault Old Bar at all? Well, their service can sometimes mean you get your food at different times to your mates, and on the odd occasions, the food can be slightly cold. Depending on your budget, some of the food is a little pricey, but mostly my problem is that I keep coming back and spending more and more money.

Old Bar host different events too, such as quiz nights, and it's also the perfect place to catch the latest football matches. Make sure you keep an eye out for their special events, or just head down there as soon as you can and get the perfect Old Bar experience with potato stacks and a nice cold pint. You'll thank me later!

LAUREN WOODLEY

TOP PLACES FOR YOU TO EAT OUT (WITH) YOUR PARTNER

So you’ve secured a date for Valentine’s day, but where do you go for that all-important romantic meal with your partner? Whether you are prepared to splurge your student loan on a fancy meal or want something cheap but still romantic, here’s the definitive list of the top fancy and cheap and cheerful places to get those sparks flying.



Credit: TripAdvisor

THE ALCHEMIST TRINITY

(Vegetarian, Vegan and Gluten Free options)

The Alchemist is well known for its theatrical cocktails, with a range named “Chemistry and Theatre”, and cocktail prices ranging from £8-£21, this is definitely a splurge. The food is of a good variety to suit everyone, from burgers and steak to salads, as well as a nice range of options for those veggies or vegans. With starters averaging around £6, mains £12 and desserts £7, the food prices are reasonable so just watch out for those pricey cocktails!



Credit: Go Dine

KENDELLS BISTRO

(Vegetarian and Vegan options)

With a menu that changes every day, Kendells is a French bistro that prides itself on serving high quality food in an informal environment. Unfortunately, the prices do not reflect their relaxed atmosphere, with two courses costing £23.95 and three courses with half a bottle of wine costing £31.95 each. It remains that the ambience is what makes Kendells stand out, with intimate candles and free bread – how can you go wrong!



Credit: Tattu

TATTU RESTAURANT AND BAR

(Vegetarian and Vegan options)

Tattu is a beautiful restaurant in Leeds which offers a modern Chinese experience. Located around the corner from the Beckett Bank Wetherspoons, the flowers strung from the ceiling of the restaurant are perfect to set the scene of a romantic date. Small plates range from £8-£15 and large plates vary from £12 to a staggering £80 (albeit justified for Wagyu Ribeye). There are also set menus which are priced at either £45 per person or £55. This restaurant would certainly impress and would be an (expensive) experience.



CARACAS GRILL – LA TABERNA

(Vegetarian and Gluten Free options)

Serving traditional Latin food and Spanish tapas in Leeds, Caracas Grill – La Taberna are a family business who are passionate about good food. This is a perfect location for a Valentine’s date for those who love sharing and trying everything on the menu! The tapas are reasonably priced at around £5-7 per plate, with a good range of vegetarian and gluten free options.



DOUGH BOYS (BELGRAVE)

(Vegetarian options)

For an ultra-casual Valentine’s date, or even to grab a slice after eating somewhere pricey, Dough Boys in Belgrave is reliable for fresh, delicious pizza. Their slices range from £3 - £3.60, meaning that you can eat to your heart’s content, trying out all the toppings. With half-price slices until 5pm on Friday and Saturday, you better get down there quick this Friday to save some extra cash!



PATTY SMITHS (BELGRAVE)

(Vegetarian options)

Another Belgrave gem, Patty Smiths pride themselves in using local meat and ingredients, making their burgers even more delicious. Despite having only one vegetarian option, the burgers are reasonably priced, between £5.95 - £7.95. Again, this location for a Valentine’s date is for those who are looking for a more economical way to celebrate this special day without compromising on good food and an amazing atmosphere!

WHAT DO GIRLS REALLY WANT FOR VALENTINE'S?

Mass panic, frantic shopping and ill-conceived hints; this can only mean one thing. Valentine's Day is upon us again. But what are girls really after this February 14th and how the hell do you buy it?

Believe it or not, girls are actually quite easy to buy for. Yes, you did not read that wrong. This is because getting any sort of present in the first place is, in most cases, a declaration of feelings. Showing someone how much you care about them is undeniably what your girlfriend wants, both this Friday and all year round. So, whether you've spent £50 or £5, as cliché as it is, the thought is really what will count.

Much to the relief of many, presents of any type might, in fact, not be required. Cards with written messages are preferred by many and eliminate the stress of having to find a physical gift. Not only are they cheap, cards can be a very personal way to make your feelings clear. Taking your girlfriend out for dinner can also be a welcome substitute for a present. Plus, you both get to benefit from good food. It's a clear win-win situation.

The same goes for home-cooked meals and sweet-tasting presents. It's rare that any girl will turn down the gift of chocolate. Buying her specific favourite type will definitely enhance this gift, illustrating how well you know her.

If your girlfriend is a true romantic, it's likely that she'll wish for flowers, the universal symbol of love and appreciation. Luckily for you, they're inexpensive (no one will really be able to tell the difference if you got them from either M&S or Morrisons), basically sold everywhere and acting as the perfect gesture to show your feelings. Actions speak louder than words and receiving the physical gift of flowers is a lot more superior than texting a heart or flower emoji.

It's also perhaps important to note some presents that you might want to avoid. Although presents are highly subjective, one girl's dream present is likely another's nightmare, so you want to generally avoid gifts that are more beneficial to yourself than her, such as a meal out at your favourite restaurant or tickets to something

that she isn't interested in. Whilst it's good to do things together, it's important to get the timing right on suggestions such as this. Also, don't think that you have to be completely over the top, such as buying matching slogan t-shirts with each other's faces on, just because this is the historical day of love.

My final advice is to ignore all of this. Every girl will have individual opinions and tastes, and therefore grouping them together into one easily purchasable gift is pretty inconceivable. Instead, for this Valentine's, show your girlfriend that you appreciate her, and this doesn't require an expensive price tag. Overall, what girls really want on February the 14th (and preferably throughout the entirety of the time you spend together) is simply to feel special.

MEGAN JOHNSON

A SINGLE PERSON'S SURVIVAL GUIDE TO VALENTINE'S DAY

Opeyemi provides a comedic and comprehensive guide on how to survive Valentine's Day this year.

It's the 14th January. You're home alone Netflixing and chilling by yourself, like you've done for a while. No partner in sight- only a box of Dominoes to keep you going whilst you get through this movie. It's a Romcom but more comedy than it is romantic. Life is good. You're single but it's not the end of the world. You're using this time to reconnect with yourself and enjoy your own company.

14th February.

You're home alone Netflixing and chilling. By Yourself.

Like you've always done. But today it does not feel right to do so.

No partner in sight, instead only a box of tissues to get you through as you bemoan your single status and think 'Why me?'. The movie is a romcom except that today it is more romantic than it is comic. The characters in the movie have more going on in their love life than you do. You're single and it is the end of the world. You're using this time to think of how you should've just taken up that guys offer on Tinder. At least you would have had a 'date' for Valentine's day. No time to reconnect with yourself today, you must connect with someone by all means necessary.

Cut.

How not to survive Valentine's Day as a Single.

Better still, why survive it? Why not enjoy it. Why not smile as you walk down the aisle of overpriced chocolates and roses that will be on offer come the morning? Because, let's face it, even if you want to run away from Valentine's day, the reminders are there, everywhere you turn. Valentine's day won't go away, just because you're single, so you don't need to be the archetypal bitter singleton that the world may want you to be.

So, the question is: How do you survive Valentine's day as a single person?

You rewrite the script.

It's the 14th February. Valentine's Day. You're single. Very single. But that's fine.

Nothing was going to dramatically change overnight between the 13th and today and that's ok. You're home alone, Netflixing and chilling. No partner in sight, instead only a box of Dominoes to keep you going whilst you get through this movie. No romcom movie either, as you decide to settle on a comedy instead. Life is good. You're single, but it's not the end of the world. You're using this time to reconnect with yourself and enjoy your own company. Because whether you are single, or in a relationship it's important to love who you see in the mirror. You're not surviving Valentine's Day, you're living through it, just like you would any other day.



OPEYEMI ADEYEMO
Blogs & Lifestyle Writer

I often feel stared at in queer spaces.
Let's be real, I don't look like the typical 'dyke'.
I often get mistaken for a straight girl,
my identity is overlooked or am branded as an imposter.
Men are a big part of me, but women make me whole.
I realise as I grow,
I may not be touched solely by the scent of a woman
but what is my life without them?
Who has the right to dictate who I am
or what I am or who I love or where I'm allowed to go
or what category I must bend backwards and mould myself
to fit into?
When really, I am my own category.
I am my own sexuality, my own sensuality,
my own identity, my own woman with
my own desires.
So, break down these barriers
and let my love in.

Nivetha Tilakkumar

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THE
GRYPHON



Dr Rosena Allin-Khan MP: “Now is one of the Hardest Times to be a Student”

Alex Gibbon
Arts and Culture Editor

As we sit in the upstairs bar of The Pack Horse, after a lively, packed-out talk, I ask Rosena Allin-Khan if the pub is her natural habitat. “Well, it’s certainly one of them; I have many,” she replies. “I do love a dance floor but obviously it would be a bit loud in there.”

At first, I put barriers over what I thought I could achieve

Perhaps it’s not a typical response from an MP, but then again, Allin-Khan is not your typical politician. She is a keen boxer, worked for many years as a humanitarian aid doctor and still does shifts in A&E. Born in Tooting to a Polish mother and Pakistani father, growing up her family suffered great economic hardship under the Thatcher and Major governments. “I know what it’s like to live in extreme poverty, to be cold and hungry, to have all hope lost, to feel like there is no purpose to your life and to have it all turned around by a Labour government. I have lived that reality”.

What’s more, Allin-Khan expresses a real sense of fear for those in a similar circumstance who face another five years of Conservative rule. “On 12th December a door closed on a generation of young people,” she explains regretfully, “I have to be part of that fight back”. She sums up the parallels she can draw between her upbringing and the people she meets across the country whose lives have been wrecked by austerity: “It’s about shared experiences, just a generation later.”

The event she has held tonight precedes tomorrow’s hustings in Leeds, where Allin-Khan will debate the other candidates who are also running to be Labour’s next deputy leader. Currently, the polls have shown Shadow Education Secretary Angela Rayner as the clear frontrunner yet, despite being conscious of her underdog status, the Tooting MP seems unfazed. “People have told me ‘you’ve only been in parliament for three and a half years, you are so fresh to this’ and I’m like yes, but the problem is now. So I am going to throw my hat in this race and I am going to go for it and get my messages out there.” I wonder: has Allin-Khan always had this unwavering drive?

The burden on students is astronomical!

Candidly, she tells me of her past issues with self-belief. “At first, I put barriers over what I thought I could achieve”, she admits, “because when you grow up having people make you believe that you are worthless and you’ll amount to nothing, it’s a hard thing to shake. A lot of young

people I know can really relate to that because when I go in to schools or universities and talk about this they come up to me afterwards and say I get, I know how that feels, it’s a very lonely place.”

Throughout our conversation, it is Allin-Khan’s earnest understanding of the current problems facing these same ‘young people’ that strikes me most. Though, hearing her remarkable journey to higher education sheds light on the origin of her solidarity with students. After failing her A-levels, she managed to get a place studying medicine at Cambridge at the age of 24, during the era of Blair’s education reforms. However, her finances were a constant source of worry throughout every stage of the process.

“I had to turn up to my interview showing I had access to a certain amount of money that I didn’t have,” she recalls, “and because it was Cambridge you not allowed to have part-time job because of Saturday lectures and there were extra college fees.

“My mum borrowed £50-£100 from each of her friends, photocopied a bank statement, gave the money back to her mates and I went to the interview pretending I had the money. Then I always had to work part-time jobs anyway and not tell anyone. It was a real strain. I also know what it’s like to be a student who is crippled with so much debt that you have to choose between shampoo and food. That’s not a decision people should have to make”

Nevertheless, in spite of her own ordeal, Allin-Khan is ceaselessly empathetic to the plight of today’s students. “Now it is so much worse because at that time I didn’t have to pay tuition fees. Now, people have tuition fees, living expenses, and plus the cost of living has gone up.

The burden on students is astronomical!”

Considering her medical background, I feel it important to ask the doctor about her take on the student mental health crisis, with levels of depression, self-harm and substance abuse in UK universities alarmingly high. “Well, I still do shifts in A&E and I see it all of the time. I campaign tirelessly for more mental health provision and in health questions I am there

There is so much pressure now to conform to what society wants you to be

challenging Matt Hancock all of the time and I will champion mental health issues.”

Yes, it is a strong answer from an assured politician, but Allin-Khan is not afraid to open up on a more personal level, admitting that “some of my best friends at university tried to take their own lives.” It’s refreshing to hear an MP be this frank.

“There is so much pressure now to conform to what society wants you to be or your perception of what society wants you to be. Now more than ever, particularly with the rise of social media and influencers, I believe now is one of the hardest times to be a student”

She pauses and takes a deep breath. “I want any young person, any student, to know that in me they have a friend and an ally. I understand. I get it. Regardless of the deputy leadership, as an MP, as a doctor, as a human, I am going to go in and champion the cause for them, all day every day.”



Image: Talkradio

Don't Lock Up Terrorists... Deradicalise Them Instead

Natasha Peters

On Monday of last week Sudesh Amman appallingly stabbed two people in Streatham, South London before he was shot dead by the police. It was quickly announced to be a terrorist attack of an Islamic extremist after controversy arose over his previous prison sentence.

Sudesh Amman was previously sentenced at the Old Bailey and had spent 3 years and 4 months in prison, charged with terror conviction. The concern of the public in the following days was this: how had the judiciary allowed a man to be released after half his time? Blame also fell on the security services; he was living under a curfew, with a GPS tag and limited access to the internet, therefore, how was this attack able to happen? In a time like this, the public wanted someone to blame and perhaps it is our government.

Unfortunately, this event does not stand alone; in 2017 it was estimated that 26,445 people died as a result of a terror incident globally. This statistic does not include those who were injured for life, let alone the emotional scarring. Facts such as these begs the question: what is our government doing in response?

In the aftermath of the Streatham attack, the administration swore to end automatic early release, if they can legally do this. Arguably, shoving people in prison for a few extra years won't turn them from a terrorist to a valued member of society. Perhaps government spending should be spent on

rehabilitation. I agree, people that have killed people's daughters, sons, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, friends should serve their time, if not to reassure the public, but for the comfort of bereaved loved ones. However, to prevent other unnecessary deaths the government should be working on psychological routes to change people's mindsets and reduce the risk of re-engagement.

There needs to be more pressure from the public who don't want to see these attacks continuing

Deradicalisation. This is no novel idea, there are 15 known deradicalisation projects worldwide including in Denmark. 15 seems a small number in comparison to the amount of people affected by terrorism. Denmark faced a dilemma when several Danish Jihadists who had left to go to Syria wanted to come home. Denmark now has a large deradicalisation programme, which focuses on integrating extremists back into society through acts such as getting them a job.

These programmes work on an individual level, considering what is important to that person and what makes them most at risk of re-engagement. If we do not intervene then it is estimated that 30% of terrorists reoffend. The UK government works all day, every day to track potential attacks and tragically

cannot always spot them. However, while having watch lists, keeping an eye on extremist websites, physical barriers and training teachers to recognise an at-risk child, are good, it is not enough. Some argue that rehabilitation programs are expensive, and they are, but is human life not worth more? We have over £100 billion to spend on the HS2 route, which only the elite will be able to get tickets for. Therefore, for something as important as this – the government really should splash the cash.

There needs to be more pressure from the public who don't want to see these attacks continuing, to persuade the government that their current technique is just not working.



Left-Wing Media “Left for Dust”

Maddy Sherratt

The Freedom of the Press was compromised last week when a group of journalists from news outlets such as The Daily Mirror, HuffPost, The Independent and the i newspaper were excluded from a Downing Street briefing.

Despite the government insisting it is “committed to being open” with the press amid a row over the official system for briefing journalists, they failed to invite key reporters from the UK’s national left-wing media outlets.

Fellow comrades took the move to boycott the briefing after discovering that other journalists – who hadn’t been invited – were turned away.

The refusal of access to information to the left-wing press reflects the governments “sinister” (SNP) strategy to avoid left and centrist media scrutiny.

Shadow culture secretary Tracy Brabin suggested it was “not an isolated incident” and there was indeed a trend for the government to decide who had access to information.

The decision to run-away from the left also falls in line with the idea that the right-wing press has grown to dominate the UK media landscape.

In a 2017 poll, YouGov asked the public “How left or right-wing are the UK’s newspapers?”.

The graph demonstrates a clear dominance from the right and just before Christmas the Murdoch Empire acquired ownership of the i newspaper. Mathew Smith, data journalist at the Times commented, “The results show that collective circulation of right-wing papers is leaving that of the left-wing papers for dust (Smith, Mathew, 2017).”

So, do you know what you’re reading? This incident raises several questions regarding ideological influence and the potentiality of the public being ‘brainwashed’ by the right.

We all have tailored media preferences on our electronic devices, and you may not realise but what you read is channelling certain political attitudes. Importantly, the government’s actions

completely disregarded the Freedom of the Press Act, an inherent part of our democracy.

Attitudes like this correspond with the likes of Orwell’s 1984.

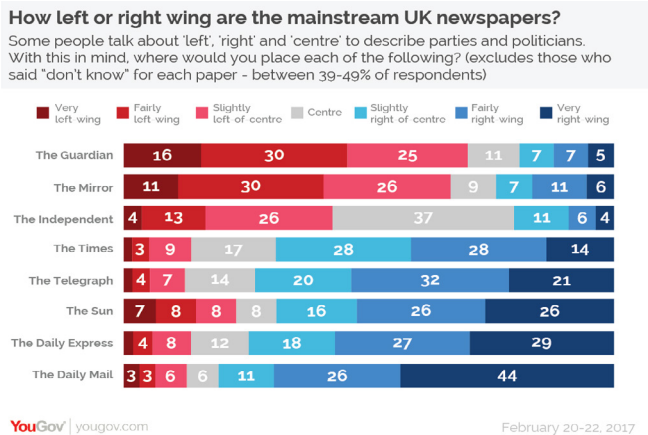
Can you imagine a censored UK media landscape? Checks and balances from the press are necessary – who knows what ministers get up to behind closed doors?

However, the government continued to defend their decision. Chloe Smith, cabinet office minister said there was nothing unusual about this and the government will always support a free and open press.

“No journalists are barred from official media briefings hosted by the prime minister’s official spokesman. It is entirely standard practice for the government to host additional specialist or technical briefings as was the case yesterday.”

Conservative MP Damian Green said while “better arrangements” were needed for such lobby briefings he detected “the faint air of fake outrage”, while his colleague Sir Peter Bottomley said under the last Labour government certain editors had been banned from briefings.

The government must be held accountable for the media must not be stripped of their right to scrutinise the ruling political party.



Students: Use Your Collective Agency

Joseph Carter

Thursday 20th of February will mark the first in fourteen days of strike action spread over four weeks taken by the country's largest Higher-Education union, University and College Union (UCU). UCU will be calling on its members in 74 UK universities to walk out and protest over the issues of pay, working conditions and pensions.

If this all feels like déjà vu to you, it's because it is – these are the same disputes which sparked the industrial action taken in November and December of last year. In fact, if you are a student in your third year at Leeds, you or one of your housemates are likely to have witnessed strikes in two years of study.

The fresh round of strikes come in spite of negotiations with Universities UK (of which Leeds is one of over 130 universities), which have been described as productive by both sides. However, the UCU argues that Universities UK has not moved far enough, making only vague commitments on working conditions as well as refusing to commit to any further pay rises or aiding the rising cost of pension contributions.

Converseley, the Universities and Colleges Employment Association (UCEA), argues that its 'without prejudice modified offer' makes 'significant positive proposals' on work load, zero hours' contracts and gender/ethnicity pay gaps. For UCEA, this represents a national employer going 'a great deal further than ever before' to satisfy UCU's demands.

Moreover, the association claims that employers cannot afford to cover the cost of pension contribution rises or satisfy calls for further wage increases, two of the primary sticking points of the last round of

industrial action. While the 1.8% increase in pay agreed by previous talks is above the current rate of inflation (by 0.1%), UCU argues that it is not sufficient to keep up with the rising cost of living.

However, the purpose of this article is not to contest the validity of both sides' claims. The issues are clearly not straightforward. What is clear though is the detrimental toll that the continuing legacy of strikes is having on students and staff. It is astounding to me how a top ranking Russell Group university can maintain such a position while at the same time squeezing its educators and neglecting those who pay £9,250+ per year for the privilege of attending.

What is even more disheartening is the fact that LUU, the body entrusted with championing our interests, has failed to take on the fight. Again, I appreciate that LUU's student executives are caught between a rock and a hard place – that to take a side could alienate a large portion of their student base. But if they are truly 'committed to representing the best interests of students', then they should be taking steps to extract concessions for students from the University.

This would not be out of step with actions that have already been taken nationally. In May 2019, for example, the Office of the Independent Adjudicator called upon some universities to refund up to half of tuition fees for failing to make up teaching time during 14 days of strikes that took place in the previous year. Compensation does not have to be strictly monetary – everything from extending dissertation deadlines to reflective consideration in the of grading assignments should be considered appropriate.

While LUU has taken some positive steps in

directing students to information about how to support the strikes or to question the University's Vice Chancellor, they should be doing far more to channel students' dissatisfaction into concrete political change.

The student body can also use its collective agency to ensure that there is some price to pay for the persistent disruption to our education. Along with students contacting their MP and school rep, answering the National Students Survey honestly about the effects of the strikes could have a significant impact on the University's position.

The NSS is highly influential for both the reputations of Universities and the choices made by prospective students. The prospect of putting the University's internationally renowned reputation on the line through low satisfaction scores on the NSS may cause the University to re-evaluate its position on the strikes, as well as the level of compensation given to students.

It is clear that the staff going without pay and the students going without teaching are the ones who will suffer. It is time for students and their representatives to make their voices heard.

A spokesperson from the University of Leeds said:

"We are disappointed that UCU is planning this industrial action. While in reality it will be a minority of staff that are likely to strike, our priority will be to minimise disruption to students and to ensure that we continue to communicate with colleagues about the issues at the heart of this action."

We will do all that we can to recover missed learning opportunities, and each School is taking steps to ensure that students are assessed based on the learning activities that have been delivered."

Pensions Shouldn't Be the Focus of Strikes

Anonymous

UCU has announced another wave of strikes this semester. The key issues – pay, equality, casualisation, and workloads – have not changed.

Whilst the November strikes led to some concessions, the main demands have not been met. UCU wants universities to spend more money on staff, UUK (the organisation representing the universities) says they cannot afford this.

The pension scheme is a 'defined benefit' scheme: when a member retires, they have a guaranteed income for life. The money that the member and employer put into the pension scheme over the course of the member's career does not have a direct bearing on the size of pension they receive. Instead it is based on factors such as their final salary and amount of time paid into the scheme.

This scheme contrasts with a 'defined contribution' scheme, the main type of scheme used in the private sector. In such a scheme the money the member and employer put into the pension over the course of the member's career is the pot of money that forms the member's pension. Defined benefit schemes are

generally better for members, both in the amount of money they receive and the security of income, as their pension cannot run out.

In contrast, for defined contribution schemes your pension is a pot of money that can run out. Converseley, defined benefit schemes are more expensive to run, and need more money contributed to ensure the pension fund will always have enough money to pay its members.

Applying this to the current situation, there is a 6.6 billion pound deficit in the USS. There is not currently enough money to pay everyone's pensions. To close this, more money needs to be contributed. UUK proposed that both members and universities should increase their contributions.

Members would increase their contributions by 1.6%, while universities would increase their contributions by 2.6% per person. UCU says that the universities should cover all necessary increases in contributions; UUK responded that universities cannot afford this.

In the current UUK offer, employers would be contributing the equivalent of 23.7% of employees' salaries towards pensions. This is a huge amount,

nearly five times more than most workers; in most defined contribution schemes employers contribute 3–5% of employee salary.

The USS is a better scheme for employees than the alternative defined contribution scheme. Since there is a deficit that needs to be closed in order to keep the scheme running, there is no alternative other than someone having to pay more. The current offer, where universities increase their contributions more than members, is fair considering the deteriorations in pay and conditions university staff have suffered.

Given this, UCU should focus on the other demands, where there is more room for negotiations. Since universities are struggling to pay for existing employees and their pensions, the use of zero-hour contracts is only going to increase unless there is some give in UCU's demands.

Casualisation of the workforce is a more pressing issue than pensions. Not wanting to pay more money for the same thing is an understandable point of view for those with USS pensions, but for the members of staff on zero-hours contracts with no pension or security of income now, let alone in the future, it is hard to say that the two issues are of equal urgency.

Pension contribution agreements and annual pay increases apply to all Universities involved in Universities UK across the country, not just Leeds. Higher Education Pay increases this year were at least 1.8% for all staff with 45% receiving pay increases of 4.8%. This is according to the University of Leeds For Staff page on Pay 2019–20. Student support teams will be available for students from the LUU Advice Team, Schools and student counselling. Libraries and other services will still be available. Check individual websites for opening times during the strike period.

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The Future of Bitcoin: The Case for a New Monetary System



Image: Singularity Hub

Bitcoin can be confusing. What role does it play in society now? And perhaps more importantly, what role will it play in the future of the global economy? Emmanuel Young investigates.

Emmanuel Young

The impression of Bitcoin in the media is a multifaceted one. It was firstly a new technology, secondly a billionaire maker, and thirdly an alternative asset; having been created as a direct result of the 2008 global financial crisis.

The question is, can there be added a fourth and fifth impression of Bitcoin? That of a store of value and potentially a currency respectfully?

I believe, not only can there be, but these are already the case, and this article will explain why. But first, one must define both a currency and a store of value. Luckily, they are in practice, the same thing.

The Ancient World

The precise point in time at which the first currency (as we would recognise it today) was established is disputable. Moreover, humans tend to have good ideas simultaneously which would mean the location is equally as indeterminate.

However, we do know that, in the ancient world, gold was seen as valuable and used as a store of value (some of the earliest coins have been fabricated from the material). Why? Well gold has a number of qualities that make it perfect for storing value.

Defining a Store of Value and a Currency

1. It is scarce, there isn't much around. If we filled Wimbledon's Centre Court with all the gold that has been mined in the world, it would only reach 9.8m above ground level if exactly covering Wimbledon Centre Court.

2. Its supply is extremely inelastic. That is to say,

the process of producing more gold (mining), is extremely complex and burdensome and therefore, the worldwide stock of it grows at a snail's pace – quite literally (more on this later). Those are the two qualities a store of value needs, and gold has both.

A currency needs three additional qualities: 1. Fungibility, the ability for it to be divisible (paying for a £3 Tesco meal deal with a gold bar and expecting change might be a bit tricky. 2. Liquidity, there needs to be enough in circulation so that people can spend it easily. 3 The backing of the right authority. As an example, compare the trust in the US dollar to the Zimbabwean dollar.

These qualities were manifest in the gold standard approach in which the majority of countries created currencies backed by gold. This was useful because instead of lumping around tonnes of gold, people could instead transact with claims to the gold stored in safe locations. And paper, well it's much easier to carry in one's wallet.

The Case for Bitcoin

But, does Bitcoin satisfy these definitions? Yes, more so than gold. Bitcoin is scarce. According to the stock-to-flow model – which measures scarcity using the ratio of current stock of a material to its supply rate – Bitcoin has the same ratio as gold and silver, with the potential (following The Halvening and once the number of Bitcoins in circulation reaches the magic 21,000,000) to become even more scarce. Bitcoin has inelastic supply.

The procedure of producing Bitcoin (mining) is reliant upon huge amounts of energy which means only the resourceful few have the capability to produce

it. Further, its mathematically limited to produce a very small amount each time new Bitcoin is 'mined'. If one were to calculate the velocity of the supply of Bitcoin and compare it to the pace of a snail, Bitcoin could never beat a snail in a race.

Bitcoin is fungible. Each Bitcoin can be split into 100,000,000 units. One could probably achieve this with gold but good luck using a microscope to count your change.

Bitcoin is liquid. It literally is magic internet money in that there is the potentiality of having as much as you want of it printed onto a screen (this is what the central bankers do with our money anyway). And, finally, it IS backed by authority. What do I mean here? Surely a thing that lacks a centralised commander cannot be backed by authority? Well, that is incorrect.

There is authority in the principles that define the aforementioned qualities of a store of value and currency. And, being unchangeable, surely these are the sources of ultimate authority?

The Future

It is my opinion that that will be tested in the not too distant future. The next financial crisis (and yes there will be another as we are definitely more exposed than in 2007; nobody has learnt anything), will provoke a paradigm change in the financial industry, which will lead to a complete shift away from fiat currency and the centralised authority it invokes.

People are smarter now. People are understanding what is necessary for a successful monetary system. The days of central bank control are almost over; the future is a Bitcoin based monetary system.

Coronavirus Crisis for Businesses: Oil, Tourism and the Chinese Economy

Alba Goskova

The Year of the Rat, the first in the Chinese zodiac cycle, is supposed to bring new, fresh beginnings. This year, however, a deadly virus emerging in the city of Wuhan has prompted a national and global crisis.

While the human aspect is largely discussed in the media, the information on the economic impact of the virus is not as abundant.

According to Bloomberg, the virus has driven down China's demand for crude oil by 20%.

The fall in the demand for oil comes primarily as a result of the recent travel restrictions within China and the reduced manufacturing activity in Chinese factories.

Following Apple and Ford, several other tech and automobile companies which build hardware in China have ceased production until further notice.

The halt in the production process suggests that the world's largest oil importer is in need of 3 million barrels less than normally required in a day, therefore raising concerns on the global demand for crude oil.

Domestic travel is not the only type of travel to face restrictions. International airlines such as American Airlines, British Airways and Air Canada have suspended or cancelled the majority of upcoming

flights to and from mainland China.

A study by the World Tourism Organization indicates that Chinese tourists are the biggest spenders, with total expenditures reaching \$277 billion in 2018. By controlling the flow of tourists from China, countries such as Thailand or Indonesia which rely heavily on tourism and are popular destinations amongst Chinese travellers could experience slower economic growth.

The virus has driven down China's demand for crude oil by 20%

The economy of other countries in the region may also be affected by the spread of the virus.

Trinh Nguyen, a senior economist, has said for CNBC that the health crisis has taken a toll on the Thai baht.

Due to the reduced number of Chinese tourists and exports to China, which amount for 2.7% and 6% of Thailand's gross domestic production (GDP) respectively, the country's currency has depreciated

by 3.7% against the US dollar, according to ING Think.

Since 2010, China has been experiencing a sustained decrease in GDP growth. Statistics from

The World Bank show that China's economy grew only by 6.567% in 2018, as opposed to a growth of 10.636% a decade ago.

While the possibility that the virus may lead to a recession remains low, certain industries are already experiencing damage.

With an epidemic in the picture, one question remains: will China's position as an economic superpower suffer?



Image: Sky News

LGBTQ+ Role Models in Business

Will Southall
Business Editor

February is LGBTQ+ History Month and at the Gryphon we want to shine a light on some of the exceptional people and movements that have made, and are continuing to make, strides to stamp out discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender. In the UK, the month is celebrated in February to coincide with the 2003 abolition of legislation, known as Section 28, which stated that local authorities should not promote the acceptability of homosexuality.

This month is all about reflecting on gay rights and related civil rights movements, but also provides an opportunity to put forward role models, who have championed LGBTQ+ rights and have been a voice for positive societal change. In the business world, there are a growing number of influential CEOs and leaders who are doing incredible work to increase diversity and acceptance of all genders and sexual orientations in the workplace.

Peter Arvai

The first-openly gay CEO in Hungary, Peter Arvai has gone on to be one of the most vocal business leaders of our time, championing gay rights from his platform as a successful entrepreneur. Arvai is most well known for co-founding the presentation software Prezi and not only does he work tirelessly to create a inclusive company which celebrates its diversity, but he has gone on to co-found WeAreOpen, a non-profit aimed at showing companies how valuable diversity is to their businesses. An alliance of over 1000

companies, WeAreOpen has had a major influence on Hungarian businesses' approach towards increasing diversity in the workplace and has started to expand throughout central Europe.



Image: Forbes

Robyn Streisand-Luppino

The Mixx is a New York based marketing company set up and managed by Robyn, whose recent advertising campaigns have included H&M Pride and Mercedes-Benz. In these campaigns, as well as across all of Robyn's work, she has made sure to create a diverse team, using the very best LGBTQ+ talent that the industry has to offer, across all aspects of the marketing campaign, from social media influencers to advert directors. Aside from The Mixx, Robyn has made many other notable contributions to increasing LGBTQ+ diversity in the business world, being an original investor in the first ever retail store dedicated to gender-fluidity and non-binary clothing, called the

Phluid Project, as well as supporting several diversity-based events and non-profits.

Pips Bunce

Pips is the Director and Head of Global Market Technology Strategic Programmes at Credit Suisse and identifies as gender fluid and non-binary. Pips has not only been the driving force behind many of Credit Suisse's diversity and inclusion initiatives, through regularly writing articles, making videos and speeches about the trans community, but she has also worked with schools and the government equalities office, promoting LGBTQ+ inclusion and diversity. Pips is the co-chair of Credit Suisse's EMEA LGBT and Ally network and draws upon her own experience and challenges she has faced, in order to convey the importance of support for the LGBTQ+ community.



Image: Evening Standard



LGBTQ+ Legends in STEM

Image: Cambridge News

Emily Bird

Since it began in 1994, LGBT history month has been an opportunity for us to celebrate the contributions and remember the sacrifices of queer individuals. STEM subjects at Universities in the UK are on an incredible trajectory towards inclusion, with the representation of those in the LGBTQ+ community improving year on year, but it hasn't always been this way and there is still a long way to go. Many great scientists in recent history have been forced to hide their identity in order to be accepted and many still feel the need to do so. Here we take a look at some of the contributions and hardships of LGBTQ+ scientists.

One of the most well-known LGBT scientists is Alan Turing, who lived between 1912–1954 and is widely considered the founding father of theoretical computer science. Turing was famously instrumental to the allied forces' decoding of Nazi communications, but also made significant contributions to the coding of early computer programmes including a chess playing programme considered to be the precursor to the Artificial intelligence we see today.

Though recognised in the modern age as a hero, with a Hollywood biopic released in 2014 and the new £50 note set to feature his face, Turing suffered enormous prejudice and hardship in his lifetime as a result of his sexuality. When Turing's relationship with another man was discovered in 1952, homosexuality was illegal in the UK and he only avoided imprisonment by agreeing to submit to life-altering hormone treatment and give up his government roles. The hormones left

Turing impotent and feminised his body. Two years later Turing committed suicide.

It's difficult to believe that this cruelty happened in such recent history but in reality, whilst homosexuality was decriminalised in 1967, the LGBTQ+ community is still struggling for equal rights in the UK and homosexuality is still criminalised in 72 countries. The recent pardon of Turing is a huge step for LGBT celebration in the UK and paves the way for the next generation of LGBT scientists, but we cannot forget the suffering of those who came before us and those in other parts of the world who continue to have their voice silenced.

Sally Ride achieved a great number of firsts in her life; she was the first American woman and remains the youngest person, at 32, to travel in space. She was also the first known LGBT astronaut. As well as her momentous achievements as an astronaut and physicist with NASA, she co-wrote seven children's books that encouraged an interest in space.

Only after Ride's death in 2012 was it revealed that she had been in a 27 year relationship with her co-author and childhood friend Tam O'Shaunessy. Sally's sister confirmed this and explained that Ride's desire for personal privacy had motivated her not to talk about her relationship publicly. Ride's passion for educating children about science was her cause in life and she believed that her sexuality would be a distraction.

Sally Ride's desire to be appreciated for her work and contribution to science rather than for her sexuality is not a difficult one to understand and shows us

that, though views were changing, those in the LGBT community still felt they needed to hide who they were for their gifts to be valued the scientific community.

Ben Barres was an American neurologist who made huge contributions to the study of Microglia (supporting cells in the brain), he also became the first openly transgender member of the National Academy of Sciences in 2013. Barres spoke openly about his experience of the academic world before and after his transition in 1997, noting that those of his peers who were not aware of his transition respected his research more when he presented as male.

Barres also struggled with the lack of role models in science 'I thought that I had to decide between identity and career. I changed sex thinking my career might be over.' Barres continued to contribute to neuroscientific research and wrote on sexism in science as well as speaking out as a transgender role model for others in STEM.

These inspiring individuals represent a fraction of the broad scope of what it means to be LGBTQ+ in STEM. They give us the hope that today's aspiring scientists have a more diverse range of role models. It's important to remember that many more brilliant minds and world changing ideas were never appreciated due to the world's failure to accept who they were and who they loved. This LGBTQ+ history month let's be thankful for the amazing contributions of LGBTQ+ individuals in STEM and the progression of the scientific community to a kinder and more accepting place.

Risky Relaxation: How a Cute Candle

Eleanor King

It's Self Care Sunday – maybe you draw yourself a bath surrounded by a six pack of vanilla scented tealights, or you play some Lo-fi beats accompanied by burning a stick of incense as you embark on work for your next deadline. Whichever way you're spending your Sundays it turns out that if you're doing it alongside burning a scented candle or incense, you may be harming yourself and the environment.

Traditionally incense is made from natural aromatic materials such as sage, wood, oils and resins. However, more materials are added to enhance the fragrance and to increase their ability to combust, which aren't quite as clean. Most candles are made of paraffin wax,

which is derived from crude oil.

Apart from coming from a non-renewable source, when these candles or incense are burned, they emit volumes of pollutants which are detrimental to the environment. Carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, nitric oxide and sulphur dioxide are all prime examples of emissions found in the smoke.

Whilst the amount of these chemicals emitted is small during an hour or two of burning time, they are sufficient to result in indoor concentrations exceeding maximum outdoor concentrations of these pollutants deemed by the US Environmental Protection Agency's National Ambient Air Quality Standards.

Fine particulate matter is also emitted in great quantities from candle and incense burning, enough

that it poses a health risk from inhalation of these particles.

Very long-term exposure to inhalation of these particulates and pollutants can cause wheezing, coughing and eventually respiratory or cardiovascular diseases. They can be especially harmful for people with pre-existing respiratory conditions like asthma.

Studies have identified volatile organic compounds such as benzene as well as formaldehyde in the smoke released from candles and incense. The International Agency for Research on Cancer classifies these compounds as carcinogens which are linked to forms of leukemia, multiple myeloma, and non-Hodgkin lymphoma. Arguably though, the conclusions are dubious due to scarce research.

Pessimistic or Just Plain Preposterous?

Limbless chickens, Star Wars armadas and pink-eyed terminators: A throwback to the future of modern technology according to Boris Johnson

Morwenna Davies

The UK's Prime Minister delivered a thought-provoking speech at the United Nations General Assembly in September 2019 on modern advances in technology. While the speech featured some important themes and delivered an ultimately powerful message on humanity's increasing reliance on machines, Boris Johnson also made some rather bizarre comments on the future of modern technology. Here, we fact check the highlights from Johnson's speech and provide an insight into how technology may actually impact our futures.

"Your mattress will monitor your nightmares, your fridge will beep for more cheese, your front door will sweep wide the moment you approach like some silent Butler."

One of the first of many horrifying statements made in his speech came when Johnson told us the very bed we lie on will start monitoring our dreams. Unless the Government has struck some freaky deal with Bensons for Beds, a future involving robotic mind-reading mattresses is thankfully a long, long way off. The cutting edge of bedtime technology currently ends at memory foam mattresses and heated blankets.

That said, Johnson wasn't actually too far off when he made that odd comment about beeping fridges, although the reality is slightly less intrusive. British firm 'Smarter' unveiled a series of new devices in 2016 which included the Smarter Mat which measures the weight of the food or drink placed on top of it and lets you know how much is left, and a Fridge Cam which relates live footage from inside the fridge to a

smartphone app. There's also a webpage entitled 'Stop Notifications from a Samsung Fridge'. Those exist?

"Nanotechnology revolutionising medicine by designing robots the size of a red blood cell capable of swimming through our bodies dispensing medicine and attacking malignant cells like some Star Wars armada."

In May 2018, scientists from the University of California San Diego published promising developments for modern medicine in which they had managed to design tiny robots encased in natural cell membranes which could be capable of combating rogue pathogens and ridding the body of toxins. Meanwhile, researchers at China's National Centre for Nanoscience and Technology in cooperation with Arizona State University have developed similar robots which are capable of shrinking cancerous tumours in the body. While this doesn't resemble some lightsaber-fuelled Death Star duel, the future for nanorobots in medicine is looking at a more positive fate than Anakin Skywalker's.

"Pink-eyed terminators sent back from the future to cull the human race."

In this glorious demonstration of the English language, Johnson demonises some of the most exceptional advances in modern technology by suggesting they may in fact be leading us towards our sci-fi influenced downfall. He also juxtaposes the image of arguably the most famous fictional mercenaries with the idea of robots becoming household Samaritans by prefacing this comment with the concept that robots could be "washing and caring for an aging population". This is probably more

likely than Earth becoming over-run with walking tanks, as aforementioned advances in healthcare technology mean that robots could one day be at the forefront of modern medicine.

"What will synthetic biology stand for? Restoring our livers in our eyes with miracle regeneration of the tissues like some fantastic hangover cure or will it bring terrifying limbless chickens to our tables?"

First of all, restoring our livers in our eyes? It sounds like Johnson might have mixed up his speech notes with the script for next season's Black Mirror here. The liver was an interesting choice of organ to comment on as the liver is actually the only organ that is able to naturally regenerate damaged or lost tissue, as long as at least 25% of the original mass is still available.

However, if we take out the completely unnecessary reference to growing body parts in our eyes, future technological advances may mean scientists could actually grow organs in laboratories within the next 10 years. A team of medical scientists at the University of Texas have been able to grow and implant pig organs such as lungs which have been accepted by the body and function normally. Could Johnson have predicted the future or is he just capable of using a search engine?

The bizarre mention of terrifying limbless chickens has been widely featured as one of the highlights from the speech. Whether Johnson was referencing the standard Sunday roast where many British families dig in to a store-bought chicken breast, or whether this was a weird depiction of chicken limbs growing out of our eyes, we may never know.

Display Might Not be the Best Idea

instead of buying paraffin candles you could opt for soy-based candles which are much cleaner and emit a tenth of the pollutants associated with paraffin wax.

Candles which have a short wick made from cotton, and without a core will produce less soot too. Also, try to buy and burn incense made from only natural materials which are only one or two pounds more expensive.

With candles that you already have, try to remember to extinguish them by snuffing them out as opposed to blowing them out.

This prevents the unwanted incomplete combustion in the brief afterglow phase which is when most of the pollutants are emitted.

When a candle is put in a draught and has

insufficient oxygen supply it may also be seen to have a flickering flame and more soot is produced because of incomplete combustion again. Alternatively, we can use plants!

There is a vast array of air purifying plants out there which are great in helping to remove pollutants produced by candles and incense from the air. The colourful barberton daisy is one example which is effective in detoxifying the air, removing benzene and formaldehyde compounds.

Aloe vera, spider and snake plants and the red-edged dracaena or dragon tree are other examples. The snake plant is supposedly the hardest to kill, as it only needs low levels of light and watering once a month, sounds ideal for the busy student.



Leeds Dancers Dazzle Nottingham



Millie Frain
Sports Editor

The Ballet Society, the Modern Dance Society and the Irish dancing society from the University of Leeds proved they were a force to be reckoned with this weekend, bringing home trophies in an annual University competition.

The event took place at Nottingham Trent University, where over 8 Universities competed in different categories such as ballet, tap, jazz, lyrical, contemporary and street. With over 500 dancers there, it was expected to be a tough competition.

Previous title holders Manchester University were

also in attendance. However, the students showed off Leeds in style.

Firstly, the Ballerinas took to the stage who entered two teams, an Intermediate and an advanced team. Despite the pressures of the Intermediate team being the first act to perform of the entire day, their routine, entitled 'Check Mate' came second, narrowly missing out on first place Manchester.

The Advanced Team's entry however, did not run as smoothly. With the wrong music being played, the pressure was on the team to cope with the demands of adapting the choreography to the slower music. However, a clean and polished performance earned them first place with excellent scores, causing the captain Ellen Martin to burst into tears in pure shock at Leeds Ballet's first ever first place score.

Leeds Modern Dance society had similar success. A quirky Advanced Tap number, inspired by members of the dance world's favourite show, Ru Paul's drag race, earned them a well-deserved second place. Their intermediate team also came first, which was in fact choreographed by students Maddie Gilbert and Alicia Baron, rather than other entries who had an external teacher.

Not only does this demonstrate how talented the students in Leeds are, but also the dedication from the dancers to ensure their teams' success.

Following the lunch break, tensions began to rise as the competitiveness between the teams accelerated. This was evident when both the Leeds lyrical team and the Manchester team had the same costumes and were in fact performing to the same song. In an almost identical routine that deemed impossible to judge, Leeds came second, beating the 'home team' Nottingham Trent.

A routine inspired by the struggles a woman faces in the workplace, the advanced contemporary team from Leeds portrayed the narrative excellently. In what was arguably the toughest category of the day, the girls managed to secure a third-place victory, as well as 'best costume' for their suit attire.

However, I must not neglect what was the most important trophy of the day; the "Team Spirit Award". On a day filled with chants, screaming and clapping, it proved tough to out cheer the other universities.

Yet this is where we must mention the supportive Irish dancing society, who bought pom-poms not just for their routine, but to wave on their fellow students as well.

After nearly seven hours of screaming and watching dozens of dance routines, it seems the patience was worth it, with the University of Leeds making a stamp on the competition world and putting themselves in great stead for the upcoming weeks.

Transfer Window Top Seven Signings

Sam Lawrence
Football

During the transfer window, Premier League teams were hard at work looking to bolster their squads for the remaining few months of the season. The title race is all but over with Liverpool boasting a twenty-two point lead with just thirteen games remaining.

So, with plenty still on the table, who did the best business? Here are our picks for the top 10 Premier League signings of the January 2020 transfer window.

7. Daniel Podence to Wolves (£16.6m transfer from Olympiakos)

Yes, Wolves have signed yet another Portuguese player. That's nine they now have in their ranks under boss Nuno Espirito Santo. An exciting attacker who can play on either wing, Podence scored in Olympiakos' 2-2 draw against Tottenham in the Champions League back in September, with three goals and two assists for the unbeaten Greek Super League leaders so far this season. Wolves, who have already played over 40 games, will be hoping some fresh attacking talent will provide a valuable boost as they hunt down a European spot for next season.

6. Takumi Minamino to Liverpool (£7.25m transfer from RB Salzburg)

Impressing boss Jurgen Klopp during RB Salzburg's Champions League games with Liverpool earlier this season, Minamino's release clause of £7.25m was swiftly paid by the Reds. A bit of a bargain for a player with plenty of pace and ability. Minamino won't walk into Liverpool's starting eleven, but with the club only just emerging from an incredibly busy festive period of games, he'll provide excellent cover

with Klopp's side competing on multiple fronts. Also, if it doesn't work out, Liverpool will likely sell the Japanese international for more than double the initial fee. Great business all round.

5. Danny Rose to Newcastle United (Six month loan from Tottenham)

There was a time when Danny Rose was considered one of the best left-backs in the country. However, he has since found himself falling down the pecking order under Jose Mourinho at Spurs. Newcastle will hope a return to the north, where he began his career with Doncaster and Leeds, will reinvigorate the player. An established international who was part of Gareth Southgate's England side that reached the semi-final of the World Cup, Rose will provide Newcastle with plenty of talent and experience both in defensive and attacking terms.

4. Mbwana Samatta to Aston Villa (£10m transfer from KRC Genk)

Villa desperately needed to strengthen their attacking options this month. Summer signing. Wesley, who looks to be out for around nine months with injury, has scored just 5 goals so far, not a great return for a player that set them back £22m. Samatta arrives at Villa Park with plenty of expectation and a big job on his hands. With ten goals in all competitions for Genk so far this season, Villa will be hoping he can continue to find the net as they look to lift themselves out of the bottom three.

3. Sander Berge to Sheffield United (£22m transfer from KRC Genk)

Sander Berge arrives at Bramhall Lane with the pressure of being Sheffield United's record signing.

The Norwegian was also linked with a move to Manchester United throughout the window before signing for Chris Wilder's Blades. A talented twenty-one year old centre-midfielder, Berge joins a Sheffield United side currently flying in the Premier League and could become a key figure for the side in the years to come.

2. Steven Bergwijn to Tottenham (£27m transfer from PSV Eindhoven)

Spurs endured a tricky start to the Premier League season, losing manager Mauricio Pochettino in the process, but things quickly got worse when starman Harry Kane was side-lined with a hamstring injury. Therefore, it was crucial that Jose Mourinho brought in some attacking firepower and he may just have a star in Steven Bergwijn. Managing fourteen goals and twelve assists in the Eredivisie last season, primarily from the wing, Bergwijn will bring plenty of energy to Spurs already talented attacking outfit.

1. Bruno Fernandes to Manchester United (£47m transfer from Sporting Lisbon)

This was the only transfer to provide us with any kind of 'saga' as both United and Sporting appeared to be in a standoff over a fee for the majority of the window. A compromise involving add-ons was eventually met and United got their man who they so desperately need.

With Paul Pogba injured and Jesse Lingard and Andreas Pereira not performing to the required standard, United badly needed someone with the ability to create chances. With fifteen goals and assists in just seventeen matches so far this season, Fernandes may just be the missing ingredient as United look to claw back some ground on the top four.

Ighalo's Dream Move Comes True

Kelan Sarson
Football

Many Premier League fans will know of Ighalo's name from his fruitful spell with Watford, with 39 goals in 99 appearances for The Hornets. None, however, would've expected the Nigerian striker to return by signing for such an illustrious club as Manchester United. It is apparently a 'dream move' for the Nigerian, who swaps China for Old Trafford on a loan deal.

Not only is it shocking due to the fact Manchester United could attract a greater quality player, Ighalo was on big bucks in the Chinese Super League with both Changchun Yatai and Shanghai Shenhua. For the latter, he had 36 goals in only 55 appearances which led to him narrowly missing out on a golden boot and signing for Shanghai subsequently.

His goal record attracted Manchester United, and with an opportunity to play for his dream boyhood club, his wages dropping significantly wasn't too much of an issue. In a day and age where players go out onto the pitch primarily for monetary gain, Ighalo might warm himself to the Old Trafford faithful by genuinely wanting to give his all in that red shirt.

Speaking in interviews about this bizarre loan switch, Odion is 30 and from a perceived lower league, he has expressed his admiration of Manchester United

strikers of years gone past – the likes of Andy Cole and Dwight Yorke lighting up his TV in his native Nigeria.

Fans of The Red Devils might be slightly bemused that they haven't gone for someone younger, or someone slightly more exciting, but, it can't be faulted that Odion wants to succeed and isn't going to be a prima donna under Solskjaer. Not only at club level has Ighalo prospered, he too has plenty of goals at an international level. He finished as top scorer in the last African Cup of Nations for The Super Eagles, with 16 goals in 35 caps for his nation.

However, it hasn't always been so smooth sailing on an international stage for Odion. At the World Cup a year prior, after going goalless throughout Nigeria's short time out in Russia, he stated that he'd received death threats against himself and his family.

Taking into account the criticism some footballers have faced at Manchester United, notably Paul Pogba from fans and pundits alike, Odion will want to hit the ground running when he's called upon. With a fanbase that can border on being toxic, hopefully Ighalo will be able to look back on his dream loan move fondly and not because he was jeered at by his own supporters.

Dreaming of such a move as a child, his wildest thoughts couldn't have anticipated this – dreams will soon become reality when he walks out at the aptly named Theatre of Dreams.



Kicking Homophobia Out of Football



Image Credit: Mirror

Callum Pinches
Football

The lack of openly gay players in professional football is an issue that cannot be explained by one single factor. It's a subject raising many questions not only about the sport itself, but about society in general.

Currently, across England's top four divisions, there is not one openly gay player. The odds of this being true are extremely small, but still the issue remains a taboo, often swept under the carpet.

It's certainly true that football can't claim to be tolerant. Increases in racial abuse, a saddening revival of hooliganism, along with general fan abuse often categorised as 'banter' can make it a hostile

place for lovers of the beautiful game.

Research by the Football v Homophobia campaign in 2018 found 63% of LGBT+ supporters had experienced or witnessed abuse at matches over sexuality or gender identity.

These combining factors means that it may come as no surprise that no player has made the courageous leap into the unknown. It is very probable they are scared of the reaction from fans, the press, and possibly even their teammates.

But there must be room for positive thought. Megan Rapinoe, who captained the USA to their 4th Women's World Cup title last year, is a great example of an openly gay professional at the pinnacle of the sport. As is FA Women's Super League top scorer Vivianne Miedema, who is in a relationship with

teammate Lisa Evans.

Miedema's belief that "homosexuality in football will not be fully accepted until an elite men's player comes out as gay" is one which rings true profoundly.

It seems the Men's game could learn a significant amount from the Women's. Thomas Hitzlsperger, who played Premiership football for Aston Villa, West Ham and Everton, capped 52 times for Germany, came out in 2014 a year after his retirement.

Arguably the most prominent openly gay male in football, he states "the important thing for me is to show that being homosexual and a professional football player is something that is normal. The perceived contradiction between playing football, the man's game, and being homosexual is nonsense".

Nicknamed 'The Hammer', famous for his tough-tackling and no-nonsense attitude, he believes a lack of role models has hindered progress. He stated, 'what holds us back is that there aren't many openly gay athletes, particularly footballers. And being the number one sport in the world, that means there aren't any role models. There aren't any 'out' gay footballers to look up to.'

The attitude exemplified by Liverpool fan favourite James Milner is one we should take note of. He argued "I don't think there would be even the slightest issue in the dressing room. Do people honestly think a player would be picked on because he was gay?" Whilst the issue remains, the desire for an inclusive and diverse game is widespread.

Hopefully, the aspiration for football to be an accepting, open and tolerant sport is one which is just over the horizon.



Can We Make Sports a Safe Space for LGBTQ+ Folks?

Justin Fashanu, a British footballer came out as gay in 1990. The young starlet killed himself, stating he didn't want to 'cause any more embarrassment to his family and friends.'

Owen Ellicott
Sports Editor

Last April, the high profile Australian rugby league player Israel Folau, posted on Instagram a poster saying "WARNING Drunks, Homosexuals, Adulterers, Liars, Fornicators, Thieves, Atheists, Idolaters - HELL AWAITS YOU! Repent."

He was promptly sacked by Australian Rugby, with Cheika, Australian Rugby Union coach, stating it is unlikely he will ever play for Australia again. What followed was a very long and very expensive legal case for Australian Rugby, with Folau raising a \$2 million in a crowd-funding page, to pay for legal fees, in his attempts to sue Australian Rugby for \$14 Million on the grounds of freedom of speech and religious discrimination. The eventual result was an out of court settlement between the two parties.

Despite criticism and warning it was announced last week that, less than ten months on from the original post, Super League's Catalans Dragons would be signing the much discussed full-back in a controversial move. Robert Elstone, Chief Executive of the Super League, said that he deplored Folau previous comments and that it was a hard decision to allow him to join the competition - stating if comments are repeated an immediate ban will follow, along with a substantial fine to Catalans Dragons.

Many within the rugby community have been fast to lambast Catalans Dragons for signing him, with Keegan Hirst - Britain's first rugby league player to come out as gay - posting on Twitter that he was shocked and disappointed by the deal. Wigan Warriors have, in a humorous protest, declared a 'Pride Day' for the day of their match with the Dragons - their players will also be wearing rainbow laces as a sign of support for the LGBT community.

The whole case of Folau is quite symbolic of LGBT in sport, many institutions, teams and players actively showing their support and vehemently expressing their displeasure at those exhibiting homophobic comments; meanwhile, a minority continue to show lack of awareness or acceptance.

This is nothing new, and it shows the lack of progress in sport compared to the other expressive

arts. LGBT discrimination occurs from grassroots to the highest level in sport.

A 2015 study, Out on the Fields, found 84% of participants had heard homophobic jokes within sport, and a Stonewall study found that 72% of participants had heard homophobic abuse at a ground. I think part of the only reason that they are not higher is that many don't even see the jokes as homophobic.

While some may argue that these jokes bear no meaning behind them, and that they are simply just 'jokes'. There is a massive knock-on effect, besides the unfriendly environment it creates for children, it can lead to many from the LGBT community being put off sport for life.

According to NUS study 46.8% of LGBT university students do not participate in sports at university because of the unwelcoming, alienating culture. Furthermore, with those who do participate in sport 37.8% don't feel comfortable being open about their sexuality with their teammates. The results are even more deafening when you get to the elite level, where no male professional footballer has ever come out as gay while playing in the Premier League. It must be added that the women's game has made greater strides in its acceptance of the LGBT community with several high-profile players coming out - such as England internationals Casey Stoney, Kelly Smith, and Fara Williams.

Ex-Chelsea and Brazil manager Luiz Felipe Scolari is on record saying that he would have thrown out any player whom he found to be gay. Grahme Le Saux often had to endure much homophobic abuse, because he enjoyed collecting art and antiques.

Much of the fear is sadly understandable, especially after the story of Justin Fashanu Britain's first black £1 million player, and the first player to in English football to come out as gay in 1990.

Justin Fashanu when deciding to expose his story made the mistake of choosing to do an exclusive interview with The Sun who reportedly made Fashanu embellish and exaggerate any stories he had - and running the particularly crass headline '£1m Football Star: I AM GAY'.

It is not only the tabloids which can be blamed though as in 1996 the BBC removed Fashanu as a

candidate for BBC Sports Personality of the Year when they opened polling to email for the first time - after students had organised a campaign to help him win.

In 1998, Fashanu was accused of sexually assaulting a seventeen year-old after a night out drinking in the States - where Fashanu resided. Fashanu fled back to the UK, before his arrest, and hung himself in a deserted garage in Shoreditch.

In his suicide note he pleaded his innocence, argued that he would not have been given a fair trial in the U.S. because of his sexuality, he ended the note saying that he didn't want to cause any more embarrassment to his friends and family.

The coroner, on his evaluation, said that the culmination of prejudices he had experienced, combined with the sexual assault case, probably overwhelmed him. It must be remembered that Justin Fashanu was the first and only English male footballer to come out as gay.

Football, and sport as a whole, has traditionally let down the LGBT community, but there is no reason why that has to continue. There are some fantastic campaigns going on throughout sport, like that of the Rainbow Laces campaign, a joint-venture between LGBT charity Stonewall and the Premier League, where between the 3rd and 9th of December awareness is made through various events at different clubs while also changing colours of the Premier League to that of the Pride flag. Then there are ex-Rugby players like Gareth Thomas, who was recently diagnosed with HIV, has been doing brilliant charity work to reduce the stigma about HIV.

Sport doesn't need to continue to be such a harmful environment for those from the LGBT community, perceptions can change.

Football banned women from playing the game in 1921, and this ban was not lifted for 50 years, let's hope the same mistakes are not repeated with the LGBT community.

Everyone within sport, from the average pub watcher to those playing at the highest level must continue to challenge those who continue to bring homophobic abuse, and must champion those brave enough to stand-up.