



MUSE: Toxic reality shows

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VC calls on all parties to find a resolution to the dispute
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Nouse



Est. 1964

No. 498

Wednesday 16 February 2022

£520k Derwent refurb

Luke Brown
NEWS EDITOR

RECENT WORKS ON Derwent Nucleus cost £520,534 in total, according to exclusive information disclosed through a *Nouse* Freedom of Information request.

The refurbishment works, which took place between March and September 2021, aimed to “address a number of long term maintenance issues and are not linked to any wider improvements to Derwent College.”

The seven-month period was split into two phases. Phase 1 of the refurbishment included renovation of Derwent Nucleus dining hall, the café seating area, JCR and three circulation areas. Phase 1 cost £324,506. Phase 2 involved work on Derwent Nucleus bar, the Costa servery, store, stairwell and walkthrough and high level ceiling. This cost £196,028.

During the maintenance works, D-Bar has only been operating as a cafeteria and is yet to reopen as a campus bar.

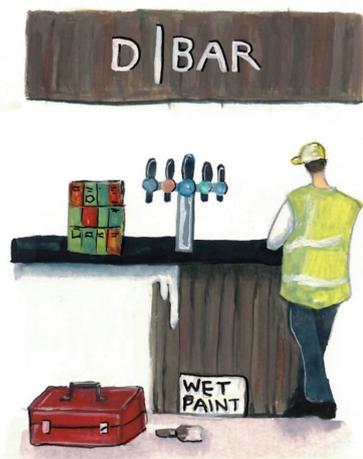
“It’s a joke,” second-year Derwent student Josh Brady told *Nouse*.

“Courtyard and D-Bar give Derwent life. Without D-Bar, it’s just a 1960s brutalist atrocity with a bar.”

One of York’s original colleges, founded in 1963, Derwent has long been overdue a full renovation.

More works are - the University said that no

Cont. 4



“D-BAR IS BACK”



UCU Strikes: University staff union members have begun up to ten days of strike action over cuts to pensions and deteriorating pay and working conditions.

YUSU commits elections branding U-turn after failure to recognise disabled prejudice

Exclusive *Nouse* investigation uncovers emails exposing YUSU's lack of awareness to a controversial elections poster

Ed Halford and Lucy Cooper
EDITOR AND DEPUTY EDITOR

THE FORMER DISABILITY Students’ Officers for YUSU dramatically resigned in an email sent to the Disabled Students’ Network on Friday 14 January, levelling serious allegations against the Student Union. Victoria Cornford and her fellow Disability Students’ Officer (Officer X), who wishes to remain anonymous, accused YUSU of 14 failings, with these including a “lack of Disability training amongst staff” and “using Disability-hate symbols in marketing and judging it was not inappropriate, despite having no disability training.”

A *Nouse* investigation has found the Student Union initially ran the 2022 YUSU elections campaign with puzzle piece branding; a symbol widely recognised by disabled students as connected to Autism Speaks. Officer X

emailed a YUSU staff member to warn them that using the symbol could be interpreted as hurtful by members of the disabled community.

Autism Speaks is a controversial autism advocacy organisation which promotes genetic testing and released an extremely offensive “I am Autism” advert in 2009. In this advert, autism is compared to working “faster than paediatric aids, cancer and diabetes combined.” The advert proceeded to suggest autistic children “will make sure your marriage fails” and “bankrupt you.” At the time of the advert’s publication, then executive vice president of Autism Speaks Peter Bell said: “We realised it did hurt a certain segment of the population, which is why we removed the video link from our website.”

The branding appeared on the YUSU website and their social media accounts before the former Disabled Students’ Officers spotted it. After mak-

ing YUSU aware of the branding mistake, Officer X emailed a YUSU staff member on 9 December 2021 demanding an explanation for why YUSU had failed to recognise the puzzle symbol’s association with Autism Speaks, an organisation which Sara Luterman, a disability advocate, told *The Washington Post* “has actively contributed to the hostility that autistic people face.”

They said to the YUSU staff member: “I accept mistakes happen and I am impressed how quickly the material was removed, but I need to make sure that a similar issue cannot happen again, after all the reputational damage to the union would be enormous.”

Officer X’s concerns were heeded, and the symbol was immediately replaced with a lego brick in the posters for YUSU’s election campaign.

However, YUSU’s initial failure to subject the logo in their first design to scrutiny through an EIA (Equality Im-

pact Assessment) was acknowledged. Responding to Officer X on the same day by email, the YUSU staff member said:

“We are going to pilot the use of the EIA on certain aspects of the election – e.g. the debate and the results night – but we didn’t specifically go through an entire EIA when considering the use of the jigsaw puzzle in the promotion.”

They added: “We discussed potential impacts and perceptions, in a less formal way, and it was decided that the jigsaw puzzle can have multiple meanings and would not be problematic when clearly linked to elections (rather than autism or autistic people).”

However, the YUSU elections involve the election of the Disabled Students’ Officer role – directly linking and exposing the entire event to disabled and autistic students. This was highlighted by the former

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A NOTE FROM THE DEPUTY EDITOR



Lucy Cooper (she/her)

Having been deputy editor for a couple of editions now, I know the drill when it comes to editor's notes. Have a stressful week in the office, working long days with the same playlist repeating four times over, and then bash out the note as everything starts to reach a crescendo and the 'theme' of the week becomes evident. This note follows the dream recipe, as I sit with square eyes after our 11pm pizza sesh, on day six of the infamous 'prod week'.

As the different teams popped in and out of the office throughout the week to lay up their sections, I began to realise the beauty of having different people around us. Whether it was a chat about where the photo should go on the page, or deeper questions about whether we support Valentine's Day (a debate that is covered in our clash of comments on page 14) my days holed up in our little Vanburgh office are punctuated by the people who were there and the chats we had. Ed and I have even started a nice little empty beer bottle collection on one of the shelves.... An iconic sign of how stressful the prod week might have been.

These memories are not made special by the changing of fonts and running photos through Photoshop. I enjoy my time editing *Nouse* because of the huge variety of people I run into. Diversity makes our world so vibrant and this edition just proves this with the scope it brings.

Our Science team have done a brilliant job writing some very high quality articles on topics even the most humanities-minded students will be interested in, like Ethan Attwood's piece looking at the likelihood of a real life 'Don't Look Up' situation.

Similarly, Politics have taken an extended look at the aftermath of Brexit, collaborating with eight writers to create a varied look, getting plenty of new writers into the section.

An article that particularly stands out is Lizzie's incredibly emotive Comment article around ableism and the prevalence of it at university. Disabled students are too often left in the lurch at university, with arrangements and plans made with

able bodied students in mind, and Lizzie articulates this perfectly. It's seen in our front page story too, where Ed Halford and I uncover how YUSU showed a lack of awareness over a symbol originally used in YUSU Election branding that could be seen as offensive to disabled students. The former YUSU Disabled Students' Officers brought the issue up and were able to fix it and stand up for disabled students' interests, showing just how essential it is to include multiple people around the table when making important decisions. Once again, diversity prevails.

Perhaps the most prevalent buzz on campus at the moment is the upcoming YUSU Elections. *Nouse* are exclusively revealing the candidates running for all positions, and you can read their manifestos in our included Elections Supplement. I have spent the past week working away on the election content, and it has been incredible to see so many different people running for so many positions. There's a diverse range of candidates, and not a role remains unfilled. In fact, I've been ribbed in the office for getting emotional at the fact not *everyone* can win.

If there is one thing that this edition should prove, it is that diversity at the top of a system is key, and when looking towards the YUSU Elections at the end of this month, I feel confident that the team of officers will help make that a reality. It's a theme which is even more prominent this month, as people up and down the country recognise LG-BTQ+ history month. In our news section we cover some of the university's key events to celebrate the month. It is truly important to remember the struggles minorities have faced before us, and to learn from the experiences of the past. Our society is so much richer for having different people around us, and we should not forget the difficulties that allowed that to happen.

I am lucky to be surrounded by such an assorted group of editors and writers within *Nouse*, and can only thank them for managing to put together such a great edition. Sure, our sleep patterns might be screwed, and our brains frazzled, but I'd say we've done a pretty good job. And of course, thanks especially to Ed, who has burst into the office every morning full of energy, supplying the team with oat milk lattes, san pelligrino and positive vibes.

The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those of the editors, writers, publishers, or advertisers. Contact editor@nouse.co.uk with letters, praise and complaints.



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SPORT

IMAGE: REUBEN HODSON

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Over £1000 raised by Boob team 17 Marathons, 17 days

Alanah Hammond
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE UNIVERSITY BOOB Team is currently competing in a varsity with lots of other university boob teams across the country.

The Universities, including York, Bristol and Southampton, are seeing who can travel and track the most distance by walking, running or cycling. The aim of the varsity is to raise money and spread awareness for the signs and symptoms of breast cancer. To get involved you can join their Strava, linked in their Instagram bio (@uoybt), and track your distance. The Strava group chat currently has 67 members and is continually growing. Students are encouraged to track any distance – from walking to their seminar, to going on a 5K run – as every distance helps.

The University boob team has set up a just giving page which has already reached its target of £1,000. They have raised £1,185 so far by 100 supporters but are continually gaining more donations. The link for this page can also be found in their Instagram bio.

The University Boob Team is fundraising for CoppaFeel!, a charity which aims to educate and remind every young person in the UK to check their breasts in order

to detect breast cancer early.

Collectively, CoppaFeel! and universities across the UK have fundraised £13,814, from more than 1,010 supporters. Their aim is to raise £50,000 by 31 August 2022 to allow their charity to target more young people with their message of the importance of checking your breasts.

The President of the University Boob Team, Alessara Fallon, said: "I believe the fundraiser is a really fun way to get everyone involved and to have some healthy competition! It's really great to get involved with CoppaFeel! as they are such a wonderful charity for a wonderful cause. Updates on the fundraiser will be posted on our Instagram all month long and everyone is welcome to join!"

Being aware of the signs for breast cancer awareness is very important. The World Health Organisation has calculated that in 2020, there were 2.3 million women diagnosed with breast cancer and 685 000 deaths globally. To help educate young people on how to check your breasts, CoppaFeel! explain:

Note anything that changes or seems unusual. For example, if one area seems thicker or if any new lumps appear

Check for a sudden change in size or shape

If you have unexplained pain and more often then check it out

Check your nipples: have they been pulled in, repositioned or changed shape? Is there any crusting or liquid coming out?

Feel everywhere where there is breast tissue – from the collarbone to under armpits, in case of any swelling

If anything seems abnormal, monitor it for a week and book an appointment with your doctor.

Kelly Balmer, YUSU Community and Wellbeing Officer, said: "In week 7 as part of the Advocate for Health campaign, I am hosting a Physical Health and Wellfair in James Hall on Tuesday. As part of this, there will be a fundraiser to raise money for CoppaFeel! as it is one of our RAG charities. For the fundraiser we are doing a raffle, but in a more exciting way than usual. I am getting students to throw darts at balloons full of paint, the colour paint that comes out of the balloon determines the prize that they win. Canvas boards will be placed behind the balloons (with tarp behind it to protect the walls and floor) to catch the paint and used for a project in the 'Advocate for Mental Health' week.

She added: "At the fundraiser, there will be information about CoppaFeel! handed out to raise awareness of the fantastic charity, and to learn more about breast cancer awareness students can check out our Uni Of York Boob Team, they have a fantastic and educational instagram and it is all designed by students!"

The University Boob Team encourages people to sign up to their monthly text reminder to check yourself. To do this, text UBT YORK to 70500.

Lucy Cooper
DEPUTY EDITOR

THE YORK SPORT running track will host a British adventurer on 17 February, as he attempts to run 17 marathons in 17 days. Louis Alexander is a 22 year old, self-proclaimed "British adventurer and endurance athlete", and is running the extreme challenge throughout the months of February and March to raise money for Alzheimer's Research UK. He aims to run a marathon everyday in several cities across the UK, and will be using York Sport's track for his second marathon.

The University of York is home to one of Alzheimer's Research UK laboratories, which makes the location even more suitable for the 26.2 miles that Louis will be running – a distance that works out at 105 laps of the running track. The challenge is inspired by his grandfather, who lost his life in 2019 after being diagnosed with dementia 17 years ago. Louis aims to raise £17,000 for the charity fighting to find a dementia cause through his consecutive 17 marathons. His grandfather served in the British Army for 38 years, exploring the world, which helped inspire Louis's attempts.

The first marathon will start at Chatsworth Grange Care Home in Sheffield, where his grandfather lived in his final years. Each day the location will vary across the country. Louis is no stranger to extreme challenges, having promised to his family at his Grandad's funeral that he would support Alzheimer's Research UK with an event "every year un-

til the day we beat Dementia together". These endeavours have included climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, completing 20 challenges in the lockdown year of 2020, and a 100km ultra marathon in November of last year. He has raised £23,000 for charity since his endurance challenges began. His mental and physical limits have been tested before, including climbing the South Wales mountain Pen y Fan ten times non-stop whilst wearing a 10kg weighted vest in under 19 hours, but has admitted that this challenge of 445.4 miles in 17 days will be his toughest yet.

Louis Alexander told *Nouse*: "A few years ago, I had the honour of speaking at my grandfather's funeral and made the promise to family and friends to support Alzheimer's Research UK every year until the day we find a cure. This year, to continue my promise, I am going to run 17 marathons in 17 consecutive days for the 17 years he suffered from dementia. Although I have run ultra marathons before, this will be my toughest challenge to date. My second marathon is going to be on the athletics track at the University of York, which is home to one of the charity's research labs.

"Whilst planning this challenge, it was important for me to highlight these research labs and remind those who are kindly donating that their money is going towards finding a cure for this cruel illness. I will be starting at 10am on Thursday 17 February, and would like to invite students from York to join, whether it be for one lap or the whole 26.2 miles. More the merrier!"



IMAGE: LUKE SNELL

Vegan options improved across campus catering outlets

Rebecca Crowther
NEWS EDITOR

VEGETARIAN OPTIONS IN campus cafeterias are being encouraged by the University in tandem with the rise of eco-consciousness and environmental sustainability globally.

The switch to veganism is becoming a growing trend, with the diet being promoted as a way to tackle climate change.

In cafeterias, catered students have the option of choosing from vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free, and meat options, with some healthier alternatives being encouraged with a 'thumbs up' sign next to it.

Alongside this, the University is promoting plant-based options by giving students a dessert and a starter with every vegan meal as a way to encourage healthier eating. This is opposed to a standard main, which will only give students the option of having a starter or

a dessert.

On the menus at Courtyard, a small section is dedicated to encouraging the uptake of vegan meals. Labeled "Why Choose Plant-Based?", the tidbit claims "We can help [climate change] by making small changes to our choices individually, which will make a difference for us all. Eating less meat & dairy is one of the easiest changes we can make to help reduce carbon emissions."

The concern for the environment was further extended to the library cafe, which promoted "Veganuary" options at the beginning of the

year.

In response to this, Chemistry student, Charlie, said: "It is very important for the University to be encouraging healthier eating; however, I think there should be less of a focus on veganism as vegan foods aren't always sustainable.

Encouraging people to eat more natural foods and less processed ones is definitely a step in the right direction."

History student, Rachel, said: "I think it is important that the University offers a wide range of vegetarian and vegan options for catered students and campus cafés and bars, but I don't think

we should be pushing too much for students to make the healthiest choice.

The whole thumbs up system to promote choosing the healthier option is all well and good, but it can also be problematic for people who have eating disorders. Sometimes people can get really obsessed with labels, and it may impact negatively on those who are more perceptible."

Alongside encouraging healthier eating, the University has started encouraging students to bring in their own reusable cups when buying hot drinks on campus by providing small discounts.

This has coincided with selling reusable YORCUPS, which has also increased awareness surrounding single-use plastics.

Despite the University's efforts at promoting sustainability, the all-vegetarian café Vedge that opened in 2019 has closed down and has now been replaced with the non-vegetarian café The Link.

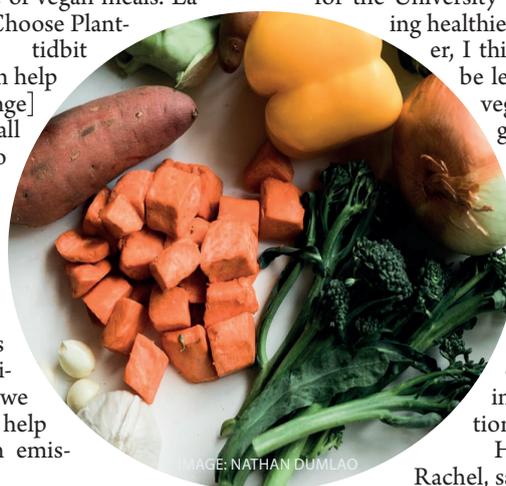


IMAGE: NATHAN DUMLAO

University Bird Watching

With Spring approaching, more students are coming onto campus to enjoy the abundance of campus wildlife. The University is famous for its diverse range of wildfowl, ranging from ducks, geese, swans, grebes, moorhens, coots, and herons. The University has even established a bird sanctuary at the end of the southern end of the lake for students to enjoy.

McIntyre in the Shire

Comedian Michael McIntyre shocked York residents when he announced that he would be holding a surprise, one-night only gig at the Grand Opera House on 28 February. The York-only event comes shortly after Valentines' Day, which McIntyre surely won't take too seriously with his usual message to his wife reading: "I still love you, see last year's card for full details..."

"Vulva nuts" hit the highstreet

Doe Bakehouse on Church Street has recently launched the "vulva nut", a doughnut crafted into the shape of a vulva. The idea stemmed from a customer who wanted a doughnut to celebrate her daughter coming out. The "Vulva nut" is the female equivalent of the popular penis shaped doughnut. They have been considered as the perfect present for Valentines Day.

Save our Bacon!

Last week, demonstrators took the street dressed as pigs to protest the state of the British pig production. Farmers from around the UK are gathering in York as representatives need to discuss the future of the industry. Recently, There's been approximately 40,000 pigs culled on farms and wasted and there are concerns around retailers not buying British.

Take Me Out to D-Bar

On Friday 18 February, D-Bar will reopen for Valentine's week. They will be collaborating with Derwent JCRC to host a Take Me Out night special. D-Bar will be open from 5pm, and the event will start at 8pm. Join them for a pint or game of darts, and just enjoy the space. D-Bar's triumphant return will last every Friday this term, at 5pm-late.

Cornford: 'YUSU still has many institutional failings'

▶▶▶ Continued from front

Disability Officers when offering their feedback, arguing that the symbol can remind disabled students of prejudice and hate towards their community. The YUSU staff member was keen to emphasise to Officer X in their response that YUSU "reflected" on their concerns "when we received your feedback." They added: "We do want to formalise our EIA process for policies, projects and events etc, and will work to embed this throughout the coming terms."

In the email, the staff member put forward the argument for only using EIAs proportionately, as they said: "It's important to remember though that EIAs have to be proportionate, effective and relevant."

The symbol can remind disabled students of prejudice and hate

"This means that not everything requires an EIA, but it also means that consultation with students and staff needs to be proportionate."

Despite knowing that the posters would be publicised across the University's campus, YUSU decided that

it wasn't "proportional" to consult the former Disability Students' Officers about the ambiguous logo in the post-

14 The number of accusations listed in the Disability Officers' resignation email

ers. Instead, Officer X reached out to YUSU, due to their concerns for YUSU's reputation and the interests of the University's disabled community.

The Disability Officers' resignation email to the Disabled Students' Network also highlighted they were protesting "Decisions to make safeguarding training optional for PTOs (Part-time Officers)."

Currently, PTO Equality and Diversity training is only available to PTOs as an optional module, while both former Disability Students' Officers informed *Nouse* that they believe the training should be compulsory instead.

In the YUSU staff member's response to Officer X's email on 9 December 2021, they said in relation to developing the EIA process that a "Key part of this is upskilling, training and developing staff."

However, if Equality and Diversity training is only optional this raises doubts as to how comprehensive the training on offer is.

The only compulsory modules as part of the Student Leader Online Training include the following: 'Introduction to YUSU', 'Events, Health and Safety', and 'Data Protection'. Safe-

guarding training is especially important for PTOs, otherwise they might not know how to raise safeguarding concerns to protect network members.

The former Disabled Students' Officers recall several times they were asked to volunteer to consult the Union across a wide range of issues in which they did not have sufficient lived experience or training to adequately do so.

A lack of compulsory training on important topics such as diversity leads to more inaccessibility within the Union, as PTOs will not have experience of every minority.

This leaves PTOs and other YUSU staff members without certain skills to ensure minority students are heard and not alienated through mistakes like the jigsaw puzzle branding.

Victoria Cornford told *Nouse*: "Having been DSO for three years, I am incredibly sad to leave the position."

"Despite our successes in this time, and even with the hard work of our disabled members, YUSU still has many institutional failings when it comes to disabled students, and meaningful actions have to be taken by YUSU

towards supporting disabled students and disabled officers if they wish to be the inclusive organisation they are meant to be."

Patrick O'Donnell, YUSU President, said: "I would like to provide reassurance that YUSU has

derpin YUSU's election campaign.

"The election campaign centres on a "are you the missing piece?" narrative; it was designed to improve and promote diversity and inclusivity, calling for students' help to ensure their Union is as representative of our community as possible.

"The context of this is different from the use of a puzzle piece as a symbol of hate. Nonetheless, the Officers' concerns regarding use of jigsaw-type imagery and connotations with offensive single puzzle piece imagery were welcomed and taken on board when they were raised.

As a result, while we had consciously avoided using colouration and patterns associated with hate imagery, we changed the visuals of the campaign to ensure that the branding did not cause any unintentional distress.

"Myself and the sabbatical team are always happy to speak directly with students and Officers should they ever have any questions or concerns.

"Equality and diversity remains a key priority for the Union, it is an area in which we continue to invest to ensure that we are both listening to and supporting students' voices and engaging students as genuine partners in YUSU's work." If you have been affected by the contents of this article, please reach out for support. See the below two links:

Open Door-opendoor@york.ac.uk

Disabled Students' Network-access@yusu.org



IMAGE: ED HALFORD

listened on these matters, and acknowledged and responded to the specific concerns raised. The Officers rightfully raised these concerns directly with us in November 2021 and, as we discussed with them at the time, our intention was never to cause offence by using a jigsaw image to un-

£293k to get to Hull and back

Luke Brown
NEWS EDITOR

THE UNIVERSITY SPENT £293,488.011 on funding the free coach service between Hull and York, a *Nouse* Freedom of Information request has revealed.

Last term, some York students had to live in Hull accommodation due to rising demand to study and live in York.

The University said: "Here at York, every year a significant number of students choose to find their own private accommodation and so every year we typically have many more students coming to York than we provide accommodation for on campus."

"[W]e are increasingly aware of a reduction in the availability of privately-let accommodation in York, which has compounded the issue."

The University offered the free coach service, alongside free gym memberships, and a

25 percent rent reduction, to support and compensate affected students.

All York students living in Hull have now been offered the opportunity to move into Anne Lister College, York's newest college on Campus East.

David Kato College, also located on Campus East, is scheduled to open to students in September.

The University says that David Kato College will provide "significant additional accommodation", hopefully preventing the need for any York students to live in Hull.

Anne Lister College has not yet fully opened, with half of the college still under construction.

Anne Lister College is set to fully open in September.

When Anne Lister College and David Kato College both open this September, there will be an extra 1480

bedrooms on Campus East.

Patrick O'Donnell, YUSU President, said:

"After lobbying from YUSU Officers, the University was right to put in a range of support for York students based in Hull during the autumn term. While the costs to the University for providing rent reductions, transport and other benefits were high, they were necessary to make sure students did not lose out on their experience, through no fault of their own."

"The high costs of renting in York, as well as the severe pressures on housing across the city, are clearer than ever before and we are working very closely with the Council and student housing charities to look at our city-wide housing stock, and how we can improve the cost of living for all York students."

The University stated that "We had a duty of care and responsibility to support our students who were temporarily accommodated in Hull, and this shuttle bus was a really important part of this. It helped students reliably and safely travel to and from campus for their studies, reduced disruption and eased the financial burden of the inconvenience."

"In order to increase capacity and choice, more rooms were made available earlier this year when Anne Lister College opened."

Derwent gets a refurb

▶▶▶ Continued from front

expected, but the University said that no plans have yet been finalised.

Last year, *Nouse* learned that the University spent an estimated £130 million on building new Campus East colleges Anne Lister and David Kato.

Many students living in Derwent College have expressed their frustration that so much was spent on building new accommodation whilst their existing accommodation is only getting maintenance works.

Emily Church, who lives in Derwent College, said: "It's not fair that the University is basically ignoring that I have to live in rubbish accommodation by throwing money at new accommodation on Campus East."

"Derwent has character, but it needs a facelift."

The University should be spending its money on improving the existing colleges that haven't seen a lick of paint since the 1960s."

A Derwent student who is also a social secretary for a society, pointed out to us that "Its a shame that D Bar has been shut for such a long time as it was a brilliant place to start a social due to its size especially when new students were

coming to their first bar crawl. Since its been closed there's been a strain on other venues."

"A lot of people signed up to Derwent accommodation with the knowledge that there was a social space on that side of campus for them to use."

Patrick O'Donnell, YUSU President, said:

"I'm not aware of the specific details of what money the University has spent in Derwent as we haven't been a part of those conversations."

I would expect a rolling program of investment, as a high footfall space, supporting catered accommodation, Derwent College students, and imminently the return of D-Bar.

"As a charity, every pound generated in our venues is put directly back into supporting our clubs, societies, events and services, so it's vital we see continued investment from the University into student spaces."

Nouse approached the University for comment and they stated:

"We're really excited by the refurbishment of Derwent College, which we believe will make a big difference to the students living and studying there."

"Improvements included work on the dining hall, cafe seating area and JCR."

"Our campus is a mixture of architectural styles and we need to balance the requirements of updating and modernising, with new designs and ideas, so we can keep developing a campus for the future."



IMAGE: YORK PULLMAN

Roman Quarter plans submitted

Elizabeth Walsh
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

A REDESIGNED PLAN has been submitted for the Rougier Street project after the initial proposal was rejected back in February 2021.

The project included a ten-storey building and an underground Roman-themed attraction which would be twice the size of the Jorvik Viking Centre. As well as the building work, a two year archaeological dig is said to be in the pipeline. The dig will be streamed online and will allow every school child in York to take part.

The project is a partnership between Rougier Street Developments, owners of the site, and York Archaeological Trust.

Councillors expressed concerns over the initial proposal, including the height of the building and the shortage of affordable housing. Councillor Andy D'Agorne said: "It proposes a bolder and brasher ugly duckling to replace a less than energy-efficient 1960s building that is there at the moment." A far cry from the vocabulary normally used to describe the picturesque city.

The newly revised plans have taken these concerns into consideration and now consist of two buildings rather than just one. Developers have promised that both will be lower than surrounding structures

to minimise their visual impact.

The proposed main building will remain at the same height as outlined in the original plans, but it will sit lower than its neighbours - the new Malmaison hotel, The Grand Hotel and the Aviva offices.

The two buildings outlined in the new plan are going to replace the existing Rougier House, Northern House and Society Bar.

Rougier Street Developments, which owns the site alongside the York Archaeological Trust (YAT), said that the redevelopment of the area will be "a major economic boost for York" as it will provide 625 new jobs and £315m over the course of 30 years.

North Star, which is working with the applicant, said that they have worked with City of York Council to "ensure that the new proposals offer as many benefits as possible and address the reasons for refusal".

The development

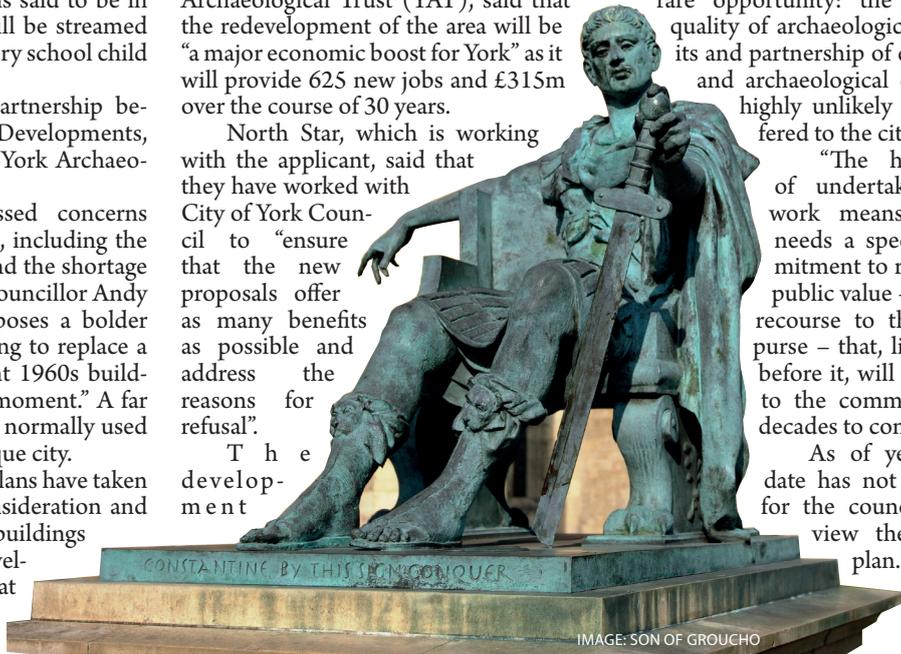
is also set to include an 88-room hotel, 153 apartments and 25,000 sq ft (2,322 sq metres) of space that will be used for offices. The Roman attraction will be called Eboracum, the Roman name for York.

YAT's chief executive, David Jennings, explained that the Jorvik Centre was not initially approved and took two rounds of applications. He hopes councillors can get behind the new plan.

He noted: "What is also important to recognise is that this is an incredibly rare opportunity: the location, quality of archaeological deposits and partnership of developer and archaeological charity is highly unlikely to be offered to the city again."

"The high cost of undertaking this work means that it needs a special commitment to realise the public value - without recourse to the public purse - that, like Jorvik before it, will give back to the community for decades to come."

As of yet a new date has not been set for the council to review the revised plan.



New Flares Thursday

Alanah Hammond
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

UNIVERSITY OF YORK societies can look forward to a brand new club night out in the city.

In weeks 4, 6, 8 and 10, societies will now have a club night in Flares, a popular student club in York.

The night will occur every other Thursday, making it distinct from sports socials, and will be taking place in addition to York Parties' regular night at Ziggy's.

The new plans are in response to society students asking for their own regular club night. On Wednesday's, as everyone knows, the sports societies are in Salvos. As a result other societies and students have been missing out from their own dedicated club night.

The launch night in Week 4 was themed as 'Dress as your society' and pre's were held at the Vanbrugh Arms from 8pm. It is likely that these nights will continue to start in this venue - another opportunity to use the often overlooked YUSU bar.

One Society who is taking up the offer is the Cocktail Society. The presidents Carla Dixon and Abi Holyland have stated "We usually hold our socials on a Thursday so it's great to see that societies have a venue to use. We will definitely be taking advantage of Thursday societies night in the future and hope it continues next term and beyond".

Sophie Kelly, YUSU Activities Officer, said:

"I'm absolutely thrilled that we've been able to launch our brand new societies night at Flares! Sports have their own night on a Wednesday, but societies have missed out for too long."

"I'm just delighted that it's finally happening, and where better than Flares to host the night! It's been received really positively by societies, with lots heading down for the first night. Can't wait to see everyone there on Thursday of week 6- 17th Feb!"

This summer, Sophie Kelly will be stepping down in her role as the Activities Officer for YUSU, as the new Sabbatical Officer gets voted in later this month. The new society night is a great way to end her term, in a role which looked after 240 student groups.

Alongside signing the York Parties contract which secured Ziggy's as the new Thursday night venue, Kelly has also introduced new club nights on campus, including 'Jukebox' in Courtyard, where students can vote for the genre of music on the aux, as reported previously in *Nouse*.

For the next edition of the new societies club night, you can attend a Valentine's Day themed night at Flares. On Thursday 17 February, tickets will be £2 to join Langwith, James and Vanbrugh Colleges at 10pm. The event will be 'Traffic Light' themed, so wear green if you're single, amber if it's complicated and red if you're unavailable.

Charlie Jeffery: 'I've stuck my neck out as Vice-Chancellor'

Ed Halford and Kristina Wemyss
EDITOR AND SENIOR
CORRESPONDENT

Over 50,000 university staff started their industrial action nationwide this week and the University of York's Vice Chancellor Charlie Jeffery used the opportunity to speak with *Nouse* to call on all parties to put forward a "set of ideas onto the table so they can be discussed."

Recently, the UCU (University and College Union) shared proposals which have sought to avert the strikes, suggesting that Jeffery's opinion that all sides need to be aware of "the distance which needs to be bridged" has resonated. Unless the dispute is resolved, staff will be participating in strikes from Monday 14 to Friday 18 February, on Monday 21 and Tuesday 22 February and on Monday 28 February, Tuesday 1 and Wednesday 2 March.

Jeffery said he "recognised that students have had a really tough time" but insisted that his approach has always "been to do what we can to minimise the impact."

As a Vice Chancellor who wishes to be perceived as "pretty invisible to students", behind closed doors Jeffery wants students to know that he is fighting their corner.

Jeffery recalled: "I've at times stuck my neck out as Vice-Chancellor which other Vice-Chancellors haven't been happy with, particularly by criticising the approach of the pension fund." Going forward, the VC said: "I am encouraging USU locally to get a proposal into the mix - I heard some ideas about 10

days ago but these have not yet been put into the formal process."

The UCU put forward new pension proposals on 26 January as part of efforts to prevent industrial action and on 10 February the USS trustee confirmed the union's proposals were "viable and implementable." The trustee therefore reported that there is "no impediment to implementation of alternative compromise proposals put forward by UCU." The likelihood of a resolution bringing the forthcoming strikes to an early end is unclear.

Nouse pressed the VC to guarantee students that their summer examinations would not include content affected by the strikes.

Jeffery was unable to promise students that disruption will not compromise their ability to complete assessments, although he did assert that "If something is not taught it can't be examined." Expanding further on this point, the VC suggested that decisions relating to examinations remain at the discretion of the Exceptional Circumstances Committees.

Jeffery said the necessary steps to judge whether content should be examined include asking "Can the material be delivered in another way" and "Can an alternative way of learning be delivered for that subject."

A major responsibility of the Vice-Chancellor is setting and reviewing the University's Covid-19 precautions and *Nouse* therefore asked why the University had not followed the government's lead in lifting the 'Plan B' restrictions.

Jeffery said: "We have been careful to weigh things up on the basis of our own evidence and analysis." The restrictions were extended because of the "local circumstances", with student cases peaking at 238 on 25 January.

The current measures will continue to stay in place until Friday 11 February, although the VC hinted these could soon be relaxed due to the number of cases dropping to below 20.

In the past, the Vice-Chancellor has argued students received "a good experience" in terms of their online education during the last academic year. Jeffery was not willing to accept the suggestion that he was out of touch with students' experience of education during the lockdowns and heaped praise on his colleagues for their "wonderful examples of being innovative."

As the government has gradually eased restrictions, Jeffery highlights that "We have offered more in person than many universities have."

"We have been at the forefront of delivering as much in person as we possibly could."

Students

forced to self-isolate last year became familiar with the 'brown paper bag food parcels' which were neither nutritious nor value for money.

When asked for an explanation as to why students in isolation were offered unhealthy and inadequate meals the VC said: "We were thrust into a situation nobody has ever been in before."

"We had to improvise very quickly and at that first stage perhaps we weren't providing the nutritional depths we should have been."

However, the VC pointed to the University's existing deal with Morrisons as evidence that provisions for those isolating on and off campus has improved.

Jeffery said: "One of the really remarkable things was doing a deal with Morrisons. It was difficult at that moment to get supermarket deliveries, but we persuaded Morrisons to set up a special system for students in York." Inspired by the University of York, the scheme has since been rolled out nationwide.

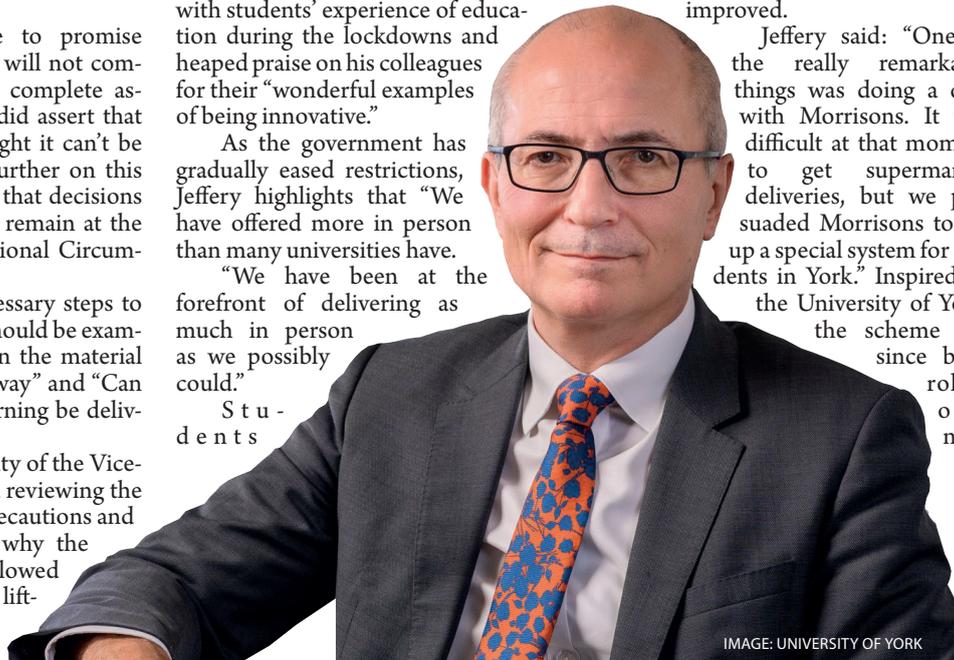


IMAGE: UNIVERSITY OF YORK

tionwide.

The University of York has recently promoted the education it provides as existing for "public good." The University of York's website boasts of the institution's founders having a "strong social purpose", and Jeffery drew on how the University's "collaborative approach" to the pandemic demonstrated this.

Jeffery revealed: "From the first cases in York, we were in the meeting rooms with public health officials from the council and the city leader." Everyone involved from the council to the University had a "shared purpose" and "trusted each other."

The Vice-Chancellor was proud the University was home to "one of the big community centres in the city" and the opening of a PCR testing centre on Wentworth Way can be explained by "working Collaboratively from the very outset."

The Vice-Chancellor emphasised that giving back to residents in York was a "very obvious thing in the end, we had a big sports hall."

Part of the "collaborative approach" was inviting local schools such as Fulford school to take advantage of the University's testing centre on West Campus.

Nouse asked Charlie Jeffery whether there was a main message he would like to communicate to students and he said the following:

"We will do what we can to minimise the effects of industrial action" and "I would like to call on all parties in the dispute to find a resolution."

Norman Rea Gallery launch sustainability exhibition

Rebecca Crowther
NEWS EDITOR

NOUSE HAS INTERVIEWED Beth Jones and Sophie Norton, the minds behind the Norman Rea Gallery's latest exhibition, Resuscitate.

They explain the process behind their art and their encouragement of sustainability by reusing the things we already have.

"Resuscitate emerges from the collaborative and beautiful process of turning waste into art.

"We hoped that by creating a space for people to artistically repurpose discarded objects perceived as 'waste', this exhibition would challenge conventional ideas about what art is and what counts as art.

"Our use of neglected objects in this exhibition demonstrates the power and utility of non-conventional canvases, against the fragile backdrop of the current pressing need for sustainability.

"In this sense, Resuscitate reimagines traditional spheres of living by critically questioning twenty-first century lifestyles, domestic interiors, mindsets and fast-paced consumerism by creating a striking intersection between 'waste' and 'beauty'."

To open up the creative space of Resuscitate, Jones and Norton allowed students to participate in the exhibition's artwork, giving the piece a space for community and shared experience.

"We both strongly felt that the nature of this exhibition lent itself to interactivity and collaboration.

"Unlike the conventional 'us' versus 'them' dynamic of galleries and museums that we are all used to, Resuscitate uniquely provided an opportunity for anyone to be involved in the creation of the exhibition's artwork.

"We therefore chose to hold two art-making sessions in our gallery space the week prior to the exhibition's official 'opening night' in order to facilitate the shared artistic resuscitation of discarded objects."

Continuing with the theme of sustainably, Jones and Norton decided to repurpose old items that would have originally gone to landfill, including discarded objects from within the University's grounds depot and D-Bar cellar.

"Alongside the rest of the NRG committee and our dedicated members, we collected loads of discarded objects, including lots from the University's grounds depot and D-Bar cellar.

"For the opening night, we pinned up black and white images of these objects from where we found them next to the corresponding 'resuscitated' object so that people could easily see the transformations and revitalisations."

Alongside the community aspect of the project, Resuscitate's inspiration is grounded in the consumerist lifestyle of the modern world. Nouse asked what inspired the process behind the exhibition.

"Both of us are inspired by surrealism and conceptualism, so I think these styles definitely influenced the nature of Resuscitate.

"Along these lines, we have been inspired by other exhibitions such as the Tate's Mega Please Draw Freely, itself inspired by the Gutai group's artistic processes.

"We are also both inspired by the world around us: consumerism, twenty-first-century life, everyday objects, the climate crisis, and so on."

One of the exhibition's main purposes was to highlight the negative impact consumerism has on the planet. Jones and Norton spoke about the sustainability efforts the Norman Rea Gallery are pushing and how Resuscitate exposes the dangers behind mindless consumerism.

"We are both conscious about our impact on the environment. Before Christmas we collaborated on a piece of artwork that was part of the gallery's Dreamland exhibition in November, which involved us repurposing a large mirror we found in a second-hand shop.

"While forming ideas for Resuscitate we considered how to involve the community on a large-scale project that would not require large amounts of material to go to waste.

"We noticed lots of discarded materials on the streets near our own student homes, from fridges to bike wheels and broken toasters.

"Repurposing these materials as

artistic canvases for Resuscitate saved them from immediately going to landfill and cleaned up York's streets a little."

As a non-profit student organisation, the Norman Rea Gallery aims to promote sustainable artistic practice. For the exhibition, Jones and Norton partnered with local charities St Nicks and The Recycle Project to extend this objective into the wider community.

"We are of the opinion that people can express themselves without creating unnecessary waste or damage to the environment.

"With constant pressure being put on the world's resources we think that it is important to use what we've got instead of manufacturing something new to then create something new.

"Individuals are directly exploited when it comes to the production of goods. Whether it is child labour, sweatshops, Amazon workers, or animals, globalisation of the

manufacturing industry has come at a cost.

"Spending time or money at places like St Nicks and The Recycle Project in York benefits local communities, and you can witness the direct impact you have on these kinds of charities.

"Next time you see an abandoned fridge on the pavement, maybe take it home and decorate it. Use it as a bookshelf. Who cares? You might get a few funny looks in the process but it's worth it."

Volume II of the exhibition was presented on Monday 31 January; it had a very warm and enthusiastic reception.

Jones and Norton said: "people embraced the completely different layout of the gallery and interactivity of some of the objects. Someone even told me that it was 'the best [he'd] seen the Norman Rea Gallery space'."

All objects from the exhibition will be put on sale for £5 each at the Resuscitate Object Sale and

Clothes Swap on 12 February.

All proceeds will be going to the local charities St Nicks and The Recycle Project.



IMAGE COURTESY OF BETH JONES

Cost of living soars for students

Gracie Daw
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

MANY STUDENTS HAVE been affected by the ongoing cost of living crisis, receiving little support from the Government despite rising rent prices and higher utility bills.

However, they may be able to access support from the University of York with their pre-existing Student Support Fund.

Throughout the pandemic, rent prices did not increase dramatically, maintaining a nationwide average of approximately 1.4 percent according to the Index of Private Housing Rental Prices. Since October 2021, however, rent prices have been rising dramatically. This will affect students given that most second and third year students live in private accommodation.

One student remarked that their rent, including bills, would increase by £26 per person per week next academic

year. This is a 21.6 percent increase on their rent for the 2021-2022 academic year. Another student who is entering the third year of their tenancy noted that their rent would increase by £20 per person per week.

However, they were able to negotiate with their landlord to reduce the increase to £10 per person per week.

Students who live in houses without bills included will already be feeling the cost of living crisis given that gas and energy prices have been rising since October.

This is the result of a range of factors including higher demand after lockdown, cold winters, and less wind over the summer meaning a lower reliance on renewable sources.

This only looks to get worse as the energy price cap will increase in April by £693. This is a 54 percent increase. Current predictions suggest it could rise by another £400 this October. Coupled with rising rent and utility bill costs, inflation is already hitting the UK meaning that prices of goods are also increasing. According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS), inflation on food for the 12 months to December 2021 was 4.2 percent and is set to increase further.

The Government has announced some support for those affected by the cost of living crisis, specifically for rising energy bills. From October, domestic electricity customers will receive £200 off their energy bill. This will then be repaid over the next five years, at £40 a year.

This has received a mixed response. Although it will help many with their finances, however, given that the price

cap is increasing by £693 in April and looks set to increase further in October, many have criticised the support as being 'too little too late'.

The Government has also announced a £150 council tax rebate (refund) for 80 percent of households (those living in A to D banded properties) from April.

Whilst this appears to offer further support, it will not help students who are facing the same rising prices. This is because students have a council tax exemption and therefore are also ineligible to receive a rebate.

Student loans look unlikely to increase significantly. The interest rate on student loans is linked to inflation. This means that the increase in inflation will lead to an increase in loan repayments for graduates.

The University of York is continuing to offer support to students who are struggling financially through the Student Support Fund. Applications to the Fund are open until 6 May 2022, meaning that students will have continuing access to the fund.

Full-time undergraduate students are able to claim a maximum award of £3000 from the fund.

The University admits that students may have to wait up to 4 weeks to hear the outcome of their application.

Although the fund remains open until May, the money allocated to the fund has already been decided. This means that funds are awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Once all the money allocated to the fund has been awarded, the fund is unable to offer any further support.

Railway HQ to York?

Marti Stelling
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

NEW PUBLIC BODY in charge of the UK's train services, Great British Railways (GBR), are looking for a central headquarters. A competition opened on Saturday with a public vote to help make the decision, and York is a top contender.

In line with the government's levelling up programme, an online vote will help determine the location of the new HQ - so long as it is outside London. In creating a new headquarters that is located outside of the capital, the government intends to reduce regional inequalities and provide employment opportunities across the country. Great British Railways will absorb Network Rail, as well as taking on many responsibilities of the Department for Transport. GBR will manage the country's rail infrastructure, as well as setting timetables and ticket prices.

According to the Transport Secretary, Grant Shapps, the new hub will focus on "bringing everything together and running a much more efficient ser-

vice for passengers." Alongside the central HQ, regional headquarters will also be built across the country. The new public body aims to begin operating in early 2024.

The Transport Secretary stated that the new headquarters could be "anywhere in the country". The new location should best represent history and future of rail travel, including connectivity to the network and railway heritage.

The government has encouraged local authorities, MPs, and business groups representing towns and cities across the country to make a bid to host the new headquarters. Alongside York, the railway town of Crewe and the major city of Birmingham have been identified as potential contenders.

The city of York plans to submit a bid to host GBR's central headquarters, with the Liberal Democrat councillor stating that "it absolutely has to be York". Located behind the railway station, York has one of the largest city-centre brownfield sites in the UK, making it an ideal location.

The Victorian station in York opened in 1877 and was the biggest station in the country at the time. York is also home to the National Railway Museum and train operators, LNER, Northern and Grand Central are all based in the city. Network Rail is a major employer in the city, with a training hub also based in York.

Secretary of State for Transport, Grant Shapps, has said the winner will receive a "great boost" with many high-skilled jobs created in their area. The decision will be announced following a public vote in the summer.

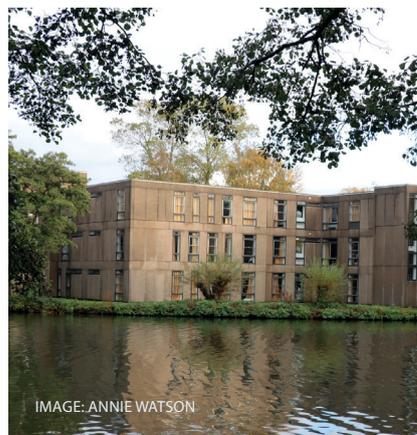


IMAGE: ANNIE WATSON



IMAGE: HUGH LLEWELYN

Nouse talks to University's Fundraising head Tom Piercy

Emily Hewat
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

RECENTLY, NOUSE SAT down with Tom Piercy, the head of Fundraising Programmes at the Office of Philanthropic Partnerships and Alumni here at the University of York. Hundreds of students benefit from this fundraising every year. The Office run YuCall programmes biannually to contact alumni for their support.

Why is it important for the University to have the Yucall scheme?

"YuCall, York's bi-annual student fundraising campaign was established over a decade ago to help bring together our alumni community in order to make a difference to the lives of students studying at the University of York. YuCall provides our alumni with the opportunity to extend more opportunities to students from less advantaged backgrounds by making a generous donation or by volunteering to become a mentor.

"Whilst this work has always been of the utmost importance, it might not come as a surprise to hear that since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have seen more students than ever before applying for financial assistance at York.

Thankfully, we have an incredibly

generous alumni community who have rallied together throughout this period to provide financial support for more scholarship opportunities in 20/21 and 21/22 than in any previous year in York's history."

How have students benefitted from the flagship funds which alumni donate to?

"Thanks to the incredible generosity of our alumni, staff, and student communities, we are able to raise funds for five charitable causes that have been established by the University to enable every student at York to shine, and to transform mental health at York and beyond."

These are the following: York Opportunity scholarship, York Futures scholarship, Mentally Fit York, Equal Access Scholarship and YuFund.

"During my time at York, it's become clear that for many students, financial stability and security can be a key determinant of their mental health and wellbeing. Time and time again, students talk about how a scholarship alleviates stress and anxiety and gives them one less thing to worry about in a world where the odds are increasingly stacked against them. During the pandemic this has proved itself to be more important than ever before.

"Our team of student fundraisers at YuCall have continued to pro-

vide our alumni community with the opportunity to support our students and provide more scholarships so that more students can feel safer and more secure as they study.

Do you think the alumni are aware of the current difficulties students face and more likely to donate?

"There is no doubt in my mind that York's global alumni community is very aware of the challenges that our current students face. In fact we have seen a staggering 50 percent increase in the annual number of donors giving to the University's charitable funds since before the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Applying to university can be a difficult decision for anyone and I strongly believe that finances should never be a barrier to someone's education. During the past two years this decision has become even more challenging but thankfully our alumni community have come together to show support for our students in a way that we've never seen before.

"It's very clear to me and the team at YuCall, who have had thousands of conversations with our alumni over the past two years, that our alumni community consider their support to be a real investment in the future lives of those young people currently following in their footsteps and studying at York."

What are your hopes for the future of fundraising at the University of York?

"In June 2019, the University launched its very first institutional philanthropic campaign known as York Unlimited. The campaign was a rallying cry to anyone who believed in 'opportunity for all' and it set out to create new ways to tackle inequalities, provide new ways for science and technology to help society, and generate new ways to help every student to

York's alumni community is very aware of the challenges that our current students face

succeed.

"Thanks to the support of our alumni, staff, students and friends, our campaign has now reached an incredible milestone on its journey – that of receiving £100 million in donations and 100,000 hours of volunteer time.

"Our camping goal is to raise a total of £120 million and 120,000 volunteer hours, but our work will never stop even after we reach this target. We continue to strive to be a university that exists for public good and with the continued support of York's global alumni community and our ever committed student fundraisers, I believe that we'll be able to hit our target in the next one to two years.

The five flagship funds that OPPA focuss on are: York Opportunity Scholarship, to help welcome more students from less advantaged backgrounds than ever before.

York Futures Scholarship, to help give students the chance to seize career and volunteering opportunities regardless of their socio-economic circumstances to boost their overall employability

Mentally Fit York, to help transform mental health on a local, national and international scale by supporting on the ground initiatives and ground breaking research.

Equal Access Scholarship, to help give people caught up in conflict equal access to an education at York. This fund specifically focuses on supporting asylum seekers and the University is consequently a University of Sanctuary.

YuFund, to help support student projects which enhance the student experience at York.

Parkrun's birthday

Molli Tyldesley
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

10 JANUARY 2022 saw Heslington parkrun, the University of York's local parkrun, celebrate its fourth anniversary. Heslington parkrun takes place at 9am every Saturday on the outdoor cycling track at York Sports Village on Campus East.

Since parkrun was founded at Bushy Park in London in 2004 by Paul Sinton-Hewitt, the initiative has grown rapidly and now exists in over 600 locations in the UK. It is one of the largest and most successful public health initiatives in modern history.

Heslington's course consists of five one kilometre laps. Since the event first began in 2018, the fastest time recorded yet is 15 minutes and 17 seconds for men and 16 minutes and 51 seconds for women.

Rob Hunt, Co-Event Director of Heslington parkrun, told *Nouse* about the event's origin: "A handful of regulars at York parkrun (including me) realised that we needed an additional parkrun event in the city to cope with increasing attendances – and the University of York seemed like an obvious place to host the new event.

"And so Heslington parkrun came into being in early 2018 on Campus East, with many students, staff and members of the local community as regular runners, walkers and volunteers."

Rob added: "as one of the instigators and an employee of the University, I became one of the Event Directors, responsible for the overall operation and safety of the event." Heslington parkrun has now "firmly established itself as a friendly and inclusive parkrun event for the University and wider community," Hunt said. "Average weekly attendance is now over 300. Long may it continue!"

The philosophy of parkrun maintains that the events will always be free and inclusive to all. Whether an elite runner, member of a local running club or a complete beginner, parkrun does not discriminate.

The initiative is completely run by volunteers, working on the basis that those who go regularly should volunteer occasionally in order to keep the roster full. Heslington shares its birthday with York parkrun, which turned ten this year.

York parkrun takes place each Saturday morning at the Knavesmire, the home of York races. This event regularly gets almost 400 runners each week, indicating how vital the setting up of Heslington parkrun was to make the size of the event more manageable.

The York and Heslington parkruns are easily accessible by bus and by foot for students living in and around the University of York. Running or volunteering at these events is a great way to get involved with the local community in York beyond the student body.



IMAGE: GRAHAM HOGG

Music venue bid for Fibbers club

Gracie Daw
SENIOR CORRESPONDENT

York City Council has received an application for the site of former nightclub Fibbers to become a music venue. Fibbers closed in 2020 and has been derelict since, with the site being squatted in for a short time.

The application was submitted by George and Jimmy Craig, former members of the band One Night Only. They are also the operators of Jimmy's Bar and Restaurant on Petergate in York as well as music venues in Liverpool and Manchester.

The Freshers Festival is an example of a live music event on campus. However, this was only a one-off event and many prefer a variety of music styles available.

The two hope to change the site into a 500-capacity music venue which could host touring bands and place York on the touring map. The site would also have offices above the music venue, according to the proposals.

After the success of their venues in Manchester and Liverpool, they hope to replicate it in York.

The original plans only included office space, yet there were concerns over the loss of Fibbers in the consultation which means that the music venue was added to recent proposals. York City Council will now process the application.

The former Fibbers site has been a source of a lot of local tensions since its closure. The site has been derelict for approximately two years and was adopted by squatters. They attempted

to turn the site into a community centre which was used as a homeless shelter, providing hot meals and reportedly contained a small library. However after a court case, the squatters were evicted.

Students at the University have often complained about the lack of York nightlife in comparison to other university cities, so the introduction of a new venue, although not a nightclub, could be welcome.

Fibbers closed in January 2020 promising that it would reopen at a new venue in York, with much speculation over where this might be. However, since this announcement the venue has not reopened. Students hoped that an announcement would come once nightclubs were able to reopen since Covid-19 restrictions eased in July 2021, but there has been none as yet.

The former Thursday night Fibbers club night was replaced for the 2021-2022 academic year with a Ziggy's club night. Ziggy's is a newly opened club, replacing Mansion after it closed

in January 2020 because it failed to renew its tenancy. Before opening, Ziggy invested in the following renovations: a new sound system, bar area and toilets.

The fact that the Fibbers club night has been replaced has led to suggestions that Fibbers will not in fact reopen at a new location, despite promises to do so. There

were previously fears that York's nightlife would be

hit by the closure of more nightclubs.

During the pandemic, there was speculation that Club Salvation would be

converted into apartments but this never materialised.

Since re-opening, Kuda has been under the management of Rekom UK after Deltic Group went into administration. The new manager of Kuda Henry Glennan told *The York Press* back in July 2021 "We have vacancies across the board from cashiers to cleaners and from bar staff to hosts."

He added: "We are always recruiting and look for bright new people to join our company."



Uni wins gold hedgehog award

Emily Quli and James Clay
NEWS CORRESPONDENT AND
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE UNIVERSITY OF York has been awarded The Gold Hedgehog Friendly Award by the British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) in recognition of its constant efforts to look after campus hedgehogs and environment.

York is one of 13 universities which have managed to achieve this award.

It has been achieved through certain milestones such as regular litter pick-ups, setting up trail cams on campus and monitoring hedgehog shelters around campus. The volunteering project Hedgehogs on Campus has had a major role in achieving the University's gold status.

With their aim to make the University of York an ideal release site for hedgehogs, they have been committed to improving the biodiversity of campus. Hedgehog numbers have declined by up to a half since the year 2000, making it more important than ever to instigate change in our campuses to help the hedgehogs.

Along with their efforts to protect the livelihoods of hedgehogs on campus, the University is doing a number of environmental things. This reflects a national effort by universities to become more conscious of the need to tackle the challenges that climate

change is already causing.

The various science departments at the university are conducting ground breaking research into how to best cope with the now inevitable consequences of climate change. For example, the Department of Biology is working alongside Yorkshire Water to develop anaerobic digestion. Scientists believe this process will help to effectively recover resources from waste.

The Centre for Excellence for Anaerobic Digestion, the official name of the partnership with Yorkshire Water, is focused on expanding knowledge and understanding behind anaerobic digestion. CEAD's current budget is a huge £1.2 million showing the university's commitment towards finding new environmentally friendly processes.

Another environmental project that the University is involved in is BioYorkshire. This ten year project is designed to unite scientists from

the University of York, Askham Bryan College and Fera Science Ltd in order to make the region carbon negative. It involves driving innovation in bio-based fuels, chemicals and materials. Working with farmers and other individuals in the agricultural sector, the project is also enabling more productive and sustainable crop production and land use.

In January of this year, these environmental schemes were inspected by Tamara Finkelstein, the permanent secretary at the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

During her visit, she said: "I've been really interested in anaerobic digestion research and wanted to find out more about some of the partnerships and incentives around this area. It's been absolutely fantastic and completely fascinating, and I'm grateful for everybody's time today."

All around the world, the University of York is working collaboratively with many other educational institutions to generate sustainable solutions in the face of climate change and global warming.

The York Environmental Sustainability Institute continues to produce inter-disciplinary research combining the efforts of social, physical and life scientists.

For more information about Hedgehogs On Campus, contact hedgehogson-campus@yusu.org. Their activities are

weather dependent. Membership is free.



IMAGE: MAX PIXEL

LGBTQ+ History month starts

Emily Hewat
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF York has already announced that the name of the newest college on Heslington East will be David Kato, after the LGBT activist and Protective Fellow on the Human Rights Defenders Programme at the Centre of Applied Human Rights.

A competition amongst students to design the new emblem for the college is underway.

This follows the naming of the Anne Lister college, named after the 'first' modern lesbian in the UK whose secret diaries have revealed her life. Anne resided in Shibden Hall, in Halifax but made frequent visits to York throughout her life. Anne Lister walking tours are available in York throughout the month which take a look at 19th century York through the words of Anne's coded diary.

Anne Lister has also recently become the inspiration for the BBC Show Gentleman Jack

This February's specific national theme is Politics in Art with the LGBTQIA community's history, lives and experiences in culture being the main focus. The tagline for this month is "the Arc is long" taken from a quote by Dr Martin Luther King to express how the journey to justice is long but progress is continually being made. Stonewall is also fundraising to support LGBTQ+ communities

17 February York St John's.

Reverend Jarel Robinson-Brown and Professor Esther McIntosh will be holding an audience to discuss Jarel's book "Black, Gay, British, Christian, Queer: The Church and the Famine of Grace." The book focuses on the link between Christian places of worship and the Black Queer body and the contradiction of the experiences of Black British LGBTQIA Christians and the Church's teaching on the grace of God.

18 February New Earswick Folk Hall

The Hall will be hosting a unique screening of 'Naked Civil Servant'; a biopic based on Quentin Crisp's published memoirs. Crisp was a campaigner for gay visibility throughout the 20th century, dating back to the 1920's.

23 February The Log Books Podcast

Producers of The Log Books podcast, Tash Walker and Adam Zmith, use the archives at Switchboard – the LGBTQIA Helpline – and individual stories to explore the theme of family in LGBTQIA History Month. Discussion topics will include gay adoption, sperm donations to lesbian couples in the 90's and how families can support their LGBTQIA kids. The theme of 'chosen family' will be prevalent throughout.

23 February Escaping persecution: LGBTQ+ stories of asylum, past and present

A talk discussing the stories of LGBTQIA asylum seekers and refugees. The talk will be led by Time to be Out, a York based charity whose work specifically focuses on supporting LGBTQIA asylum seekers and refugees to allow them to live freely. Topics will include some of the barriers facing these individuals and how people can support them.

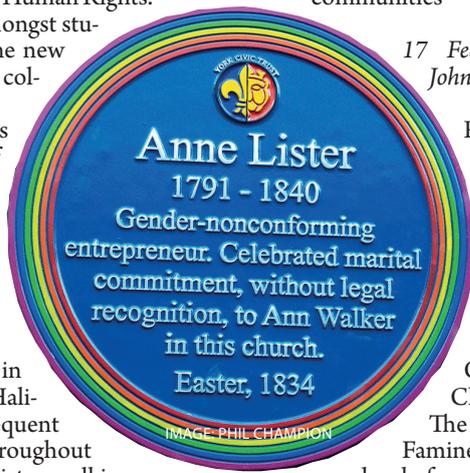


IMAGE: PHIL CHAMPION

Women's health care

Emily Hewat
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF York and several other Russell Group universities along with the King's Fund have conducted research into women's access to health care in the UK.

The focus group collected a range of women's stories concerning their experience with the health system in order to shape the Women's Health Strategy for England.

This comes after the government has chosen to create a new strategy to address how the UK health care system currently benefits men.

It has been noted that women, particularly older women, feel they are suffering in silence and receive a lack of empathy around problems relating to menstruation, fertility, childbirth and menopause. The report reveals some women have described themselves as feeling 'invisible' to the health care system.

Aside from physiology concerns, issues around women's mental health were also raised as it is difficult for women to access the information and support needed. There is currently a widely held perception that there is a lack of counselling, support and services for women who have experienced problems with their mental health.

As one 36 year-old participant of the focus groups stated: "I think mental health... just being a woman in general and having kids and working. There's a lot, just basic stuff that we could be going through that we end up suffering in silence."

In terms of what women would like to see in the new strategy, they advo-

cated an overall increase in NHS investment and greater support for mental health.

An improvement of education and explanations surrounding cervical and breast screening was also needed, with a greater focus of preventative care being advocated for in general. An increased awareness of women's health from all age groups, starting in primary school, was also an issue raised by the focus groups.

Education around women's health is something women of all ages felt was lacking from a lack of sexual education focused on women's bodies in schools and a lack of education for older women concerning the menopause. The menopause is an area of women's mental health that women often feel is a dark area.

The menopause is an area of women's mental health that women often feel is a dark area as there is a lot of uncertainty within medical research. Equally around 10 per cent of women receive an early diagnosis of the menopause.

Co-author Professor Karen Bloor, from the University of York explained "our study revealed women's uncertainties about and struggles with many aspects of their health and access to health services.

We hope that the government's Women's Health Strategy will hear these women's voices and act upon them."

Dr Holly Essex, lead author, from the Department of Health Sciences at the University of York, said: "Our report allows women's voices to be heard in a way that enables the government to embed their priorities in a health service that is more responsive to their needs."

York economy booms

James Clay
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE CITY OF York Council has recently published their Quarterly Economic Update which shows that York's economic growth coming out of the pandemic is particularly strong. During 2021, the York economy grew by 9.8 percent compared to the national average of 6.6 percent.

This strong growth rate is a result of more business activity reacting to the high consumer demand experienced within the city.

Despite Plan B restrictions to reduce the spread of the Omicron Variant, York attracted roughly 2.1 million visitors between the months of October and December. This figure was unsurprisingly lower than pre-pandemic levels.

By this point, even most young people had been vaccinated so shops

and businesses benefited from people's desire to live without fear of the virus.

Alongside the Business Growth Voucher Scheme, York Council has also provided additional financial support to small businesses including the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant.

Since the start of the pandemic, York City Council, with the aid of government support, has given out over 25,000 grants worth over £113 million.

The latest round of grants was announced in December 2021 for businesses severely impacted by the continued coronavirus restrictions. York has received £300,786 from these Additional Restrictions Grants.

As the Quarterly Update shows, the additional support has had a positive impact allowing businesses to stay open and survive during uncertain times.

Going into the future, York's recent economic growth is a positive sign of the city's ability to cope throughout difficult times.

That being said, York still faces challenges. For example, the number of job vacancies within a five mile radius of York rose to 3,240 in December of last year.

Furthermore, office vacancy is still higher than pre-pandemic levels as many employees see working from home as safer. This represents a general trend throughout the whole country.



IMAGE: PETER K BURIAN



COMMENT



IMAGE:CHONGKIAN

The A word: why we shouldn't shy away from it

Ableism is a form of discrimination that is prevalent, but it's often forgotten about in universities

Lizzie Knowles
(she/her)



Disabled people are known within inclusivity and diversity discourse as “the forgotten minority”. This is relatively easy to demonstrate: next time you hear anyone listing minority groups (for example in class or on the news), count the number of times disability is omitted from that list.

It is not our bodies that disable us but instead a society that has been constructed to systemically exclude and discriminate against people with disabilities through centring solely able-bodied needs.

Ableism is discrimination in favour of able-bodied people. Inclusivity strengthens with practice and use. As we are very much still in the infancy stages of acknowledging the discrimination against disabled people, allyship will require an intentional effort to relearn how we perceive the world. Using the word ableism actively, as with muscles, will engage it more instinctively, more effectively, more confidently and more powerfully. We don't expect our muscles to strengthen through merely

coincidental use – we actively seek out time and opportunity to train them. This must be the approach to combatting ableism. This is why I want students to use the A word.

As a student with multiple disabilities, ableism is prevalent in how I exist within university. It varies from needing to question assessment and teaching practice, trying to live independently, through to enduring ableist conversations. Last year, like many of us, I had a 24 hour exam. University policy offered disabled students 25 percent extra time. However, only five days before the exam, disabled students received an email reducing their extra time from six to only two hours based on the thought that able students might not use all of their total 24hrs. Disabled accessibility was dictated by centring able behaviours. While able students were free within their 24 hours to exercise judgement of their own needs, disabled students had this option removed.

Thankfully, my particular department in my experience has been very committed to addressing ableism. After contacting them to highlight the inequalities – including lack of notice, additional stress and revision time wasted needing to address the situation in comparison to the revision environment for able students – the depart-

ment fully rectified the situation and many able-bodied students demonstrated solidarity. However, I know other departments and students may not have had such support. It really demonstrates the importance of cultivating a university relationship between staff and disabled students where students feel able to raise issues of ableism without fear of negative consequences or gaslighting and also the importance of flexibility and openness to discussions around ableism.

There is something ironic about the academic culture of students, who possess various levels of privilege, being rewarded for being able to identify patterns of injustice in essays or seminars, if we don't also ask ourselves to apply this critical lens to our lived world and our support of those in it.

I'm an English Literature student, and one of our core outcomes from our degree is the ability to understand and interpret language and to use it accurately to convey our intentions. I remember in early conversations about Covid-19, being in a flat kitchen where students reassured each other “don't worry it's only the disabled that are dying from it” and then realising my disabled self was in that moment totally invisible to them. There is absolutely a trauma to disabled people having lived

through a period of such overt ableism and devaluation of their lives – where their existence and safety is a topic of constant debate in all settings (on the news, class, home) and usually contrasted to able inconvenience such as mask wearing or nightclubs.

Though ableism has always existed in universities, I think the pandemic has made it easier to contrast able and disabled student experiences. When a Covid positive student isolates for up to ten days, they are provided with £40 from the University, as well as the offer of mental health support. In contrast, during health flare ups I have gone as long as three weeks living off powder porridge made using the bathroom tap because I couldn't manage the stairs. When the health crisis of the pandemic affected able students, online learning suddenly became possible and an expected right. Yet, already such provisions have disappeared again for disabled students now that able students no longer need them.

Disabled students enter university from a less privileged background, often where education should have been that gap is replaced with ableism traumas. We then try to keep up with a degree centred around able abilities whilst juggling enough health admin to constitute a second job – health flare ups,

inaccessible living conditions, additional financial burdens, and casual and overt ableism. By the time I graduate, I will have had well over 200 doctors appointments, seven procedures, endometriosis surgery, a critical care stay and hopefully heart ablation surgery – NHS waiting lists willing! Everyday it takes hours to build up enough pain medication to even move to go brush my teeth. I am in severe pain constantly and try to study despite experiencing memory issues and heart episodes. It isn't a level playing field, but the difference it would make to just feel that the ableism is noticed, acknowledged and called out by able students and staff would go such a long way.

So I'm hoping we can start with students using the A word. When you identify ableism you make it visible and therefore hold it accountable. It helps disabled students to feel that their experience of the world is being seen, and that people care about seeing it. I have an Instagram page @lizzie_etc which is a safe space for disabled people and any allies to empower, encourage and educate each other. It is okay to get it wrong sometimes. We are all learning and we need to cultivate an environment where we feel safe to tell each other when we have got it wrong. I do fully believe that with practice comes progression.



EDITOR'S OPINION

"Work hard, play hard"

Molli Tyldesley
(she/her)

It's spring term at university, which means things are getting serious. With summative essays and dissertation deadlines looming, it can feel like we need to spend every waking hour working on our degrees.

But at times, I'm inclined to agree with Jeremy from Peep Show when he proclaims "I didn't go to university to get a degree". As a third year, it's hard to face the reality that my final weeks at university will be spent in the library writing essays, as much as I do enjoy the subject I study. A big part of me simply wants to spend my final weeks socialising as much as possible before everyone moves around the country.

I do think it is possible, however, to find the balance between working hard, and playing hard. There are so many bars and restaurants around York I am yet to try. There are so many friends I have made over the past three years that I want to catch up with. And of course, there are a whole host of 21sts to attend (who decided to put the biggest birthday in the most important academic year?) And who says these things aren't important?

My housemates and I recently decided that life is about finding this balance.

We may use it to excuse things like getting drunk and sleeping through seminars, but I do think it's a pretty good philosophy to have. Realistically, as much as we say to ourselves "yes, next week I'll eat fruit and vegetables, get eight hours of sleep per night and do all my uni work well before the deadline" most of the time, it just isn't going to happen.

Okay, I admit that taking advice off Jez from Peep Show is probably not the best idea. We did come to university to get a degree, obviously, and I think

working hard for that degree is a worthwhile endeavour. But I do think Jez has a point: in my view, there is much more to be gained from living away from home, with friends, in a city as beautiful as York, than just a degree. If having time away from studying means making the most of it, then I think we should embrace that!

And, as Molly's article on Dry January points out, despite the drinking culture at university, this does not just have to be about going out drinking. Many of my favourite times at university have been spent running with friends or trying out new coffee shops. This print edition's Comment section has definitely adhered to my philosophy on balance. We have addressed some very serious issues, such as the pressing concern of women's safety in the UK and beyond, but we've also included some more lighthearted debates. This includes Abi and Ally's article on Valentine's Day, which has become one of my favourite Clash of Comments to date.

Furthermore, we've had some experienced and regular writers – like our very own editor Ed, with his article on Michael Gove – and some brand new writers like Lizzie, who has built upon her own personal experience as a disabled student at York to draw attention to ableism, the often forgotten form of discrimination. What I love about Comment is that although we often tackle some very serious and upsetting issues, and are often criticising government or university policy, I think the articles in this section always offer hope. They point to a better way of doing things. In this sense, the whole section is committed to finding the balance between condemning the status quo and offering solutions to create an improved future.

I'd like to give thanks to everyone who wrote for this edition. All of the pieces were excellent, making our job as editors much easier (and more enjoyable). Finally, I'd like to thank Michael, Ben and Sonny for their hard work – the Comment section wouldn't be the same without them!



IMAGE: MOLLITYLDESLEY

Dry January isn't the solution

A month off alcohol won't solve UK's drinking problem

Molly Duffy
(she/her)

With many wanting to start the new year right, annually thousands of people plan to undertake 'Dry January', a month without drinking any alcohol. Alcohol Change estimated that 7.9 million UK adults will have attempted the challenge this January.

With many experiencing health benefits, such as better nights sleep and more energy, the challenge of going alcohol free for January perhaps sets the outlook for a healthier 2022. Following the festive period, where no doubt large amounts of alcohol are consumed, Dry January can be seen to give a clean sheet and make up for the over indulgence that comes with the festivities.

But what does the fact that this is considered to be a challenge, to give up alcohol for 31 days, say about British drinking culture? It is not considered to be any easy accomplishment with many taking to the Dry January app, Twitter, and the Alcohol Change blogs for encouragement and guidance to make the month go just that little bit quicker. The reality of Dry January being a challenge highlights a greater social issue concerning alcohol in the UK.

There is such a large drinking culture in Britain as a whole, more so than other European countries such as France and Spain, binge drinking in Britain is a lot more common.

Research conducted by the charity behind Dry January, Alcohol Change, have recognised that around a quarter of drinkers in Britain partake in binge drinking – this is defined as being eight units for men and six for women in a single drinking session.

It has been recognised that in Britain, the tendency is to drink for the feeling that comes from drinking alcohol, rather than drinking for the taste. By encouraging people to participate in Dry January, Alcohol Change hopes that it can reduce alcohol consumption for the rest of the year.

However, there has been much debate about the success and long lasting impacts of Dry January.

Firstly, it has been recognised that it is not the people who are in the problem groups concerning alcohol consumption that participate in the challenge.

Ultimately, alcoholics are not likely to be tempted by the Dry January challenge, their problem is much too severe to just give up alcohol for a month and go 'cold turkey', thus the people that the challenge should be targeting are not likely to sign up for a month off of alcohol.

Furthermore, the aim behind a month off drinking alcohol is to decrease the amount drunk throughout the rest of the year, however, many reverse these effects immediately by bringing in February with a drink to reward completing the challenge.

Essentially, Dry January contributes to this all or nothing approach and encourages the continued culture of extremism that surrounds alcohol consumption in the UK.

To appropriately address the social issue of drinking in Britain, alcohol in moderation needs to be promoted rather than just a challenge which only lasts for one month of the year.

Alcohol is such a central part of British society. Even coronavirus lockdowns did not prevent regulars from going down to their local pubs to get their much needed takeaway pint.

The drinking of alcohol is very much normalised when really the health risks that surround its consumption are incredibly dangerous

and can be life threatening, especially if this culture is maintained for a long period of time.

Within society, cigarettes and recreational drugs are considered with somewhat negative connotations, however, alcohol is prevalent in all aspects of social life and therefore the drinking of which is fundamental to British identity. As a result, the negative impacts of alcohol on physical and mental health are much less frequently highlighted.

From a student perspective, university can be surrounded by an intense drinking culture. Alcohol can be such a large factor of socialising with friends. Every day seems like the weekend, and therefore, any night of the week can involve drinking large amounts. Whether it's catching up with friends for a drink, going to a pub quiz or going out clubbing, alcohol is an element of many aspects of being a student.

With unlimited freedoms, binge drinking is common in UK university culture, with 79 percent of students agreeing that drinking is a huge part of the university experience in the 2018 NUS students and alcohol national survey.

The extent to which drinking alcohol to excess whilst at university is normalised encourages this binge drinking culture further, NUS finding that 23 percent of students drink two to three nights a week whilst at university.

This is not to say that enjoying a drink every now and again is a bad thing, but the risks of alcohol need to be emphasised more and drinking in moderation rather than binge drinking should be encouraged.

Rather than promoting initiatives such as 'Dry January' challenging people to a month off alcohol, there should be initiatives that promote a moderate form of drinking and not drinking to get drunk.

Cartoon by Emily Waldock



Government right to scrap vaccination mandate

NHS staff deserve the right to choose whether they get the vaccine or not, just like the rest of us

Arun Kohli
(he/him)



We live in a crazy, unpredictable and scary world. Two years ago I was in Leeds for the weekend, trying to cram in as many bars as possible across two days, when I found out that the first case of Covid-19 had been reported in York.

Since then, we have seen stay at home orders, mask mandates, vaccine mandates for health care workers, a national campaign to get vaccinated, and yet coronavirus still lives on and everyday infects thousands of people. Has it all been worth it?

Well the short answer is, yes, of course it has! Tragically, in this country, we have lost thousands of people to this virus but if it hadn't been for the work of our government, MPs, the World Health Organisation (WHO) and leaders across the globe, we could have been in a more dire and concerning situation than the one we find ourselves in now, almost two years after the first lockdown.

Unsurprisingly, since the creation of the Covid-19 vaccine in late 2020, there has been an international effort to get as many people vaccinated as

possible in order to slow the spread of the virus and enable us to return to our normal pre-Covid lives.

But has the world gone completely vaccine-crazy? For clarity, I completely support the Covid-19 vaccination. I had Covid in June last year, and I am now a sufferer of Long Covid, which subsequently led to a diagnosis of asthma. I personally felt the vaccine was important for me and my family to get. But how can we live in a world where we champion free speech and a society where you are free to make any choices that affect you personally, and yet still crucify an international tennis star for not having a vaccine?

Further still, despite the govern-

We cannot deny the right of thousands of NHS workers to choose

ment u-turn, how can it be right to have a planned mandate for all NHS workers to have the Covid-19 vaccine or lose their jobs?

Figures published by NHS England showed that 127,515 NHS and

care staff had not had the first dose of a Covid-19 vaccination.

In an already understaffed institution, this is a lot of people that the government risked losing if they chose not to get the vaccine. Thankfully, the government saw sense and decided to reverse its decision on mandating the vaccination for NHS staff as well as the already mandated care workers with the sector losing around 40,000 workers since the mandate took effect in November last year.

It is fully understandable that these NHS staff and care workers have a duty to protect their patients and potentially passing on Covid-19 to vulnerable people could result in fatal consequences.

And we as a country do, for our NHS workers, routinely immunise staff who work with patients against diseases such as Hepatitis B and Tuberculosis as well as other infectious diseases.

And yet, whilst I myself decided to get vaccinated against Covid-19, we cannot deny the right of thousands of NHS workers and care workers to choose whether or not to have a vaccine against a virus that in reality is fairly new.

The vaccination mandate would cost our healthcare system thousands of workers and

potentially cause more problems.

My argument here isn't that people shouldn't get vaccinated against Covid-19, I fully and wholeheartedly think that they should. Yet when we have an institution, that we have for the last two years introduced measures to protect – remember the first lockdown was to ensure the stability and prevent the overwhelming of our NHS – how can we risk the loss of thousands of staff over a policy that could lead to the potential of our healthcare system becoming overwhelmed?



This is something we were trying to prevent in the first place. Now that the vaccination mandate has been revoked, the NHS can continue to provide and maintain the excellent care it does without the risk of losing many staff across a range of different sectors.

Uptake of the vaccine in this country is high, and that is something we should be proud of, but mandating people to take a vaccine when the risks could potentially outweigh the benefits is highly questionable.

The care sector, as mentioned above, has lost thousands of staff over this

policy, and whilst many might agree that it was the right course of action, ultimately the people that suffered the

The NHS can now continue to provide and maintain excellent care

most were the patients who relied on these staff everyday to provide them with care.

Businesses, care homes, real-life people all relied on these workers, and our government made a drastic decision which impacted all of those mentioned above.

I welcome the statement from the Department of Health and Social Care who maintained that the uptake of the vaccine was no longer a legal requirement, but it was a professional responsibility.

We have every right to encourage people to get vaccinated, this is something we have done effectively over the last year, but mandating it had the potential to be a very costly move and one that I believe the government would have come to regret.

We need a more compassionate form of politics

The UK's current immigration policies do not help vulnerable asylum seekers, but simply divide us more

Hannah Boyle
(she/her)



The photo of the child found dead on a Turkish beach in 2015 is one which is burned into the memory of many – myself included. Sparking an international outpouring of emotion, the story of the little boy on the beach is just one of many which have been told, with undoubtedly even more horrors unknown.

Immigration has become a topic of huge debate over recent years, with political rhetoric becoming even more divisive as politicians promise to 'crack down' on movement between states, as was one of the defining points of the Brexit campaign. After all, who can forget that infamous 'breaking point' advert which (somehow) both constructed new and confirmed old racialised stereotypes.

If you believe the rhetoric of such figures as Nigel Farage and Priti Patel, who seem to take pleasure in demonising people for fleeing extreme states of violence, you would think that they were doing so purely for access to the welfare state and our NHS.

People who are making the crossing to have a shot at a different life, take enormous risks in doing so, and the benefits are never automatic. Those crossing the Channel rarely have imme-

diated access to the welfare state we take for granted.

Instead they are subject to No Recourse to Public Funds controls unless they are granted refugee status or other forms of eligible immigration status. Immigration is only going to become more challenging with new reforms suggested by the Conservative Government.

Not only do they have to make the dangerous journey to reach British shores, they are then subject to further challenges from the Home Office to prove their backstory – but that isn't the narrative pushed by the press or the Government when it comes down to the wire. Instead, they focus on 'safe routes' which fail to be accessible on the average person's income.

Following the 2021 evacuation of Afghanistan, when the Taliban took control of Kabul, Home Secretary Priti Patel said that the UK would be open to anyone who entered the country through "safe and legal routes". While the intention

to stop smugglers from bringing people into the country is almost admirable, the attempt to deter people from using these dangerous methods of transportation is one that hasn't been overly successful.

The availability of smuggling routes, coupled with the challenge for people who do not fit the criteria for an immigration status provided by the Home Office, means the UK has left thousands of people without support or the opportunity for safe crossing into the country, who are now at considerable risk following the withdrawal of US and UK forces.

There has been little put in place to support people in this position, and with the Afghan Resettlement scheme only just being announced, there is little help on offer for those determined to leave the state. Instead of being proactive and offering further safe, government-supported routes to the UK, officials would

rather sit in Whitehall and brand human beings as 'illegal' for wanting a safer life for their children.

Western states seem to have lost sight of the big picture. The actions we have taken and imposed over time play a small part in why bodies wash up on the shores of Turkey, Greece, and the UK.

We are not entirely responsible; however it seems almost foolish to turn a blind eye to Afghanistan, and other states which have now fallen into civil conflict, often after being subject to Western intervention.

Perhaps it is well intentioned, however intervention is something rarely considered to be a success, with states often being left to deal with domestic,

Why are we so desperate to alienate those who ask for help?

economic or military challenges when a conflict is no longer the apple of the Western eye.

Fundamentally, we have lost the unparalleled human ability to be compassionate. As people, as a species, we can be sympathetic, and be empathetic, with those who have different experi-

ences and circumstances to our own.

Yet, that seems to melt away the moment people in desperate need of help attempt to step an inch over our borders. Why are we so desperate to alienate those who simply come and ask for help?

When 27 people died attempting to cross the Channel in November 2021, the press simply branded them 'immigrants' or 'migrants'.

Should they no, first and foremost, be considered as people who are in such danger that they are willing to risk their own lives and the lives of their children for a chance of being free from assault, persecution or physical harm?

This may not fit the dialogue of the elite, focused on how they can secure our borders against all but those privileged enough to be working within academia or a 'skilled' profession- but it remains the reality.

The UK is an incredibly diverse country, and I know that the public can rise to the challenge of welcoming refugees and those who need help the most. As someone who has spent a considerable amount of time canvassing and working with local communities in Yorkshire, I know it is possible for us to be welcoming and help those who need it most.

Instead of generating anger towards those who need help, we should be focusing on who is pointing the finger, and demand a more humane, kinder, form of politics.



IMAGE: NUMBER 10



Issue of women's safety more pressing than ever

More needs to be done to make women feel safe on our streets - and the responsibility falls upon all of us

Katy Leverett (she/her) and **Molli Tyldesley** (she/her)



After the murder of Sarah Everard almost a year ago in March 2021, many hoped that what has been deemed a 'growing epidemic' of violence against women would stop. Torrents of social media posts were re-shared and across the country people called for better education on women's safety, for all genders.

Yet since Sarah's murder in March 2021, the government returned to business-as-usual and soon the social media posts about women's safety were no longer trending. Sarah Everard, for most, faded into the background of a whirlwind of information on Covid-19 and Brexit.

However, more attention has been brought back to the subject of women's safety since the murder of Ashling Murphy at the beginning of January 2022. Whilst out running, the 23 year old was brutally attacked and murdered, bringing the issue of sexual violence against women into the national spotlight once more.

Posts began to circulate social media that read: "she was going for a run". The purpose of this post was to illustrate the severity of this issue: women cannot even safely exercise outside in the daytime. However, it is also important to point out that no matter what women are doing, they do not deserve

to be victims of violence. Ashling Murphy was completely innocent, but so are women who are murdered while using drugs, or participating in sex work. No woman is deserving of harassment or violence. And yet, it still happens.

Following Ashling Murphy's murder, communities have once again been reflecting on why, almost a year after the murder of Sarah Everard, nothing appears to have changed. Instead, these horrific attacks and murders continue

We may be tempted to view those who attack women as outsiders... this is clearly not the case

to take place. Another example came when, on 30 January, Manchester United forward Mason Greenwood was accused by his girlfriend, Harriet Robson, of domestic abuse and sexual coercion. Greenwood was subsequently arrested on these charges. As a 20-year-old millionaire, playing for one of the most successful football teams in the world, was Greenwood reassured by our society that he would never suffer the consequences of his actions? Did he think that his wealth and power made him

untouchable?

Perhaps this is an uncomfortable truth to consider. Yet in January, convicted rapist David Goodwillie was allowed to sign for Scottish club Raith Rovers. He was only released after public backlash. What message does this give to younger generations who look up to footballers?

We may be tempted to view those who attack women as outsiders, people on the fringes of society. However, this is clearly not the case; some of these men are very much socially accepted, and this is the problem.

Shockingly, according to the World Health Organisation, one in three women across the globe will be victims of violence at some point in their lives. Beyond this, according to The Guardian, in the past year sexual assault cases in England and Wales have risen to an all-time high, with rape accounting for 37 percent of all sexual offences reported to the police.

Even in York, a city known for its relatively low crime rates, sexual offences are on the rise. Of 1,164 crimes reported in December 2021, 435 were violent

or sexual offences.

It just so happens that Sarah Everard, Ashling Murphy, and Harriet Robson are the names that we have heard: there are countless victims of sexual violence and assault and the number of cases just keeps increasing. For example, according to HRC's website, more than half of people from LG-BTQ+ communities will experience violence, most likely sexual, against them at some point in their lifetime.

How can this be addressed? The government has initiated schemes such as StreetSafe, a social research app that collects data about areas where people feel unsafe. In fact, a number of apps have been developed to help improve women's safety, including WalkSafe and bSafe. While it is fantastic to see technological innovation being used for a good cause, we must ask whether relying too much on technology is an easy way for the government to cover up their incompetence on this issue.

What is the solution to this problem, then? According to an article on Education, improving sex education within schools

would create a 'culture of consent' and help to reduce cases of sexual violence and assault. It states there are three key areas in sex education to improve: greater discussion of consent beyond "yes means yes" and "no means no", explaining sexual agency and subjectivity, and increasing understanding of what it means to be in a healthy relationship.

When you consider these three suggestions, it is surprising how little they do arise in sex education, particularly sexual agency and subjectivity.

Whilst the University offers its compulsory 'Consent Matters' module for all first year students, there is nothing beyond this to further educate students. School education too is limited, with PSHE lessons on sex education focusing more on 'what' and less on 'how'.

It is also difficult to think of any time during school when sexual agency and subjectivity were mentioned, let alone explained. If these changes were implemented, would there be a reduction in sexual assault cases in the future.

Our education system has a responsibility to educate children on sexual relationships and consent. If we can have healthy conversations around sex in our formative years, whether this be with parents or teachers, this should correspond to people participating in healthy sexual relationships once they are adults.

There is hope for a brighter future, especially in our generation, where social media can be used as a force for good to educate one another. The onus is on all of us to ensure women can be safe on our streets.



Julian Assange should undoubtedly be a free man

Despite what the Americans may say, Julian Assange is a champion of accountability and freedom

James Clay (he/him)



On 24 January 2022, Julian Assange was granted permission to appeal to the Supreme Court after the High Court ruled in favour of the USA's attempts to extradite him. The granting of this appeal is both a victory for him as an individual and a victory for anybody that values free press and accountability.

If Assange is extradited to the USA, it would be a sad day for democracy and a sad day for Britain's pride as a sovereign nation. Such an event would take away the ability of journalists to expose government secrecy without the fear of prosecution. Between 2006 and 2009, Wikileaks, the non-profit organization set up by Assange, published numerous documents which revealed damning evidence of atrocities carried out by the United States' army in both Iraq and Afghanistan. This top secret military intelligence highly embarrassed the western governments which actively engaged in those conflicts.

Amongst deeply conservative groups in America, Assange is seen as an associate of the Kremlin seeking to

undermine the West.

In reality though, his actions have been solely motivated by a desire to end injustice and cruelty.

Some prominent political leaders in the USA have claimed that the First Amendment, granting freedom of the press, does not stretch to him as he is not an American citizen.

This frankly is a pathetic legal attempt to paint Assange as a villain when in reality, the real villains walk free. They are strolling the corridors of power without a care in the world.

Perhaps the most shocking part of this whole saga was when Yahoo News reported that in 2017 Mike Pompeo and other CIA officials discussed potential assassination or kidnap options of Assange.

One wouldn't be at all surprised to see such gangster state activity in Mos-

cow or Pyongyang but in the USA it is simply unacceptable.

The fact that the CIA even contemplated such a move is both despicable and seriously undermines the rule of law. America must be kidding itself when it claims to be the land of the free.

To co-opt a quote from George Orwell's Animal Farm, all animals are free but some are freer than others. One would have thought that the inauguration of Joe Biden as President would perhaps bring about a shift in the stance held by Washington. Biden has on many occasions lauded the USA as a beacon of democracy, in a world constantly teetering on the age of authoritarianism

and tyranny.

Unfortunately, his self-proclaimed love of a free press clearly only goes so far as he has failed to halt attempts to extradite Assange. If this isn't hypocrisy then I don't know what is.

Assange's treatment not only reflects badly on the government of the USA but also on that of the United Kingdom. Our government should stop acting in this weak and febrile manner when dealing with the USA.

This so-called 'special relationship' should be one of reciprocity, not one in which the UK has to bend over backwards to accommodate every whim and wish coming out of Washington.

Whether it is because they genuinely think Assange is a criminal or whether they are too craven to do anything about it, the British government should pull its finger out and act.

Imagine if the USA handed over one of their citizens who had been accused of leaking British secret intelligence. It just wouldn't happen.

If the Supreme Court, being the highest court in the United Kingdom, were to reject Assange's appeal then his only hope would be if the Home Secretary overruled this. I hope to god that Priti Patel has the backbone and the respect for democracy to stand up to the USA and say no.

Lord Goldsmith, as Attorney Gen-

eral for England and Wales, initially deemed any potential invasion of Iraq to be unlawful without further action from the UN. Despite this, Goldsmith ultimately U-turned, his final advice to Tony Blair was that invading Iraq was lawful. Priti Patel should learn from his mistakes.

Bending one's principles and giving into the demands of the USA can have catastrophic consequences. Somehow though I reckon that if Lord Goldsmith crumbled when his country needed him the most, so too will Priti Patel.

That is purely a hypothetical. But, the reality at the moment is just as alarming. Following his arrest in April 2019, Assange has been kept in Belmarsh high security prison, suffering conditions which are deserving only to mass murderers and rapists. Here is a man who exposed information about a government which, without proper justification, launched the invasion of Iraq.

As a consequence, the country has been destabilised, hundreds of thousands have died and terrorist forces have grown in strength.

Assange is a champion of accountability and freedom, two qualities which are vital for any functioning democracy. If Assange is in prison, so too should be George W. Bush and the rest of the crooks who got us into this mess.



IMAGE: GARRY KNIGHT

IMAGE: LUCY COOPER



We can combat January blues

The bluest month is behind us, but mental health still matters

Meadow Lewis
(she/her)



In the new age of increased access to social media and thus a more intense exertion of pressure to achieve, be happy or appear attractive, mental health has significantly plummeted in the UK. Studies have shown that around one in six children from the ages of 6-16 had at least one probable mental health problem in 2021, which has risen from the statistics of one in nine in 2017. Strengthening this, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) monitored mental health during the pandemic, which of course has not ceased yet. Their findings were that “the prevalence of moderate or severe depressive symptoms among adults in Great Britain rose after the start of the pandemic. In surveys taken between July 2019 and March 2020, the proportion was 10 percent, but this rose to 19 percent by June 2020 and 21 percent by January-March 2021”.

Though January is now over (hooray!), the topic of ‘January Blues’ remains discussed amongst peers and wider society, and will likely remain so in the years to come. How is our mental health across society in the month of January? With it being a month of pressurised “new beginnings” and invasive diet culture adverts, suffering from the infamous “January blues” is entirely fathomable. Alongside January blues is the recent coining of “blue Monday”, supposedly the most depressing day of the year, falling on the third Monday of January. Looking into the potential causes of January blues may provide us comfort through comprehension of why it would have been a difficult

month for many, but equally may aid us in the months to come once we discuss the steps which can be taken to lessen any societal pressures we may feel.

Arguably, such a decline in our mental health during the month of January is lineated with the consequential burden thrust upon us regarding New Year’s resolutions. January is a time in which we are expected to make incredibly rapid personal growth, and when we don’t fulfil that expectation it is natural to feel disappointed or as if we have “ruined” our year before it has truly commenced. Undoubtedly, our increased access to social media heightens such a pressure to become new and improved versions of ourselves as soon as the clock strikes midnight on 31 December. The extent of almost toxic ambition, with capitalist ideology permeating various “motivational” posts, is truly astounding. Absurd ideas about how it’s lazy of us to unwind and do nothing when our working day comes to an end are continuously perpetuated online, creating an environment where the incredibly human concept of rest feels unproductive. Yet, the ultimate version of us should not be subject to feeling burnt out or pressurised. We should feel happy and aim to adopt the Swedish concept of “Lagom”, simply meaning living your life in a balanced manner.

Moreover, with regards to life as a university student, this term is often the most challenging concerning our workloads. Students may also find it challenging returning to campus after having spent a prolonged period at home with family, specifically those in their first year. Adding to this is the accompaniment of shorter days, in many cases translating to less motivation to complete tasks.

Thus, how can one aim to combat the January blues, or any blues caused

by external pressure for that matter?

My tips on coping with such issues are as follows. Don’t spend too much of your energy externally with social engagements, allow for your own “down time” and don’t feel like other people are entitled to full access to you. Equally, and perhaps confusingly, don’t self isolate too heavily, particularly after the past two years of living through a pandemic. Furthermore, limit your screen time on social media. Remember, success isn’t merely a material achievement. Success can be what you decide it means for yourself and your own personal goals.

As a student, although it may often feel like it, you are not expected to work constantly. It can be so easy to fall into the trap of depriving yourself from breaks and days off in order to complete tasks at a faster pace. However, a multitude of studies have demonstrated that the best way to maintain focus is to allow yourself to step away from it. Glancing at or pondering upon something with a set of fresh eyes and a refreshed mind allows for one to view things in a new light, and enables further improvements.

Regarding organisation, check lists can be a great help. I often tend to make mine as aesthetically stimulating as possible to convince my mind that it enjoys the tasks at hand. Check lists also ensure that you receive mental gratification from even the smallest of tasks, and this self appreciation and gratitude is a great habit to build upon.

A simple step away from the expectations of society on what happiness or the New Year or ambition should look like. Overall, we each have the power as individuals to construct our own narratives and apply our own ideologies and definitions to our goals. Be sure to schedule in some low-pressure time for yourself and take care!

Michael Gove: the relentless reformer

The politician “tired of experts” is now the establishment’s only hope for Tory survival

Ed Halford
(he/him)



The 2016 Brexit referendum campaign was reaching its final stages. The uber conscious environmentalists were already warning their relatives and friends of the catastrophe which would beset Britain if people decided to defy the political consensus of the metropolitan suburbs. They “are too thick and uneducated” or “they don’t understand basic economics” are some of the murmurs uttered in cafes across London and Manchester. Understandably, if you decide to write two newspaper articles, one arguing to Remain and another advocating leave, the electorate are going to start questioning whether you are genuinely behind a cause. *Cough* Boris Johnson. However, what is often overlooked is that the Leave Campaign wasn’t won because of Boris’ creative bombast. No, it was the intellectual maestro Michael Gove who provided the Leave campaign with its credibility and substance.

You know you are living through strange political times when a Conservative politician presents himself as siding with the people against ‘the establishment’. Though this is exactly what Gove did, he affiliated himself effectively with the people’s frustrations and anxieties. When Sky’s Faisal Islam was questioning Gove during his ‘head-to-head’ with David Cameron (not sure if Gove’s godson was rooting for his father or Godfather), Islam looked startled and taken back when the cabinet minister bemoaned “I think the people have had enough of experts.” Today, the irony is that Gove is an expert in surviving the turnover of Prime Ministers. Having served under Cameron, Theresa May and now Boris Johnson, you couldn’t find a figure with more experience of serving in the ‘establishment’. What makes Gove stand out and largely explains his political survival in many Conservative administrations is his drive to push through radical changes, no matter how deeply unpopular they may be. Those who have served under his leadership mention his habit of sketching out the policy goals of Departments as soon as he arrives.

While Education Secretary, Gove was not afraid to provoke controversy or become the subject of teachers’ wrath to raise educational standards. A-levels and GCSEs were made more challenging, much to the disdain of students. Steering clear of unpopular reforms because they receive a hostile public reaction has become characteristic of Boris Johnson’s government. This shouldn’t be the approach our leaders choose to take. If politicians are too wary of appearing divisive and always pander to opinion polls, then we end up with the political conundrum our electorate is paying the political price for today. A state of politics which is devoid of talented, inspirational, and respect-

ful leaders. By no means am I suggesting Gove was not guilty of riding the populism ‘wave’, although his appeal to popular sentiment has not coincided with him offering policies which are shallow or lack intellectual rigour.

It is therefore no surprise that Johnson has tasked Gove with transforming the Levelling Up agenda into more than a soundbite. In the House of Commons, Gove spoke of the Levelling Up white paper encompassing 12 ‘missions’. Your guess is as good as mine as to why the number twelve was arbitrarily picked. Maybe it was the number of drinks a government advisor downed before they mistakenly broke the swing in the No10 garden.

However, if I was forced to select which government minister were to be responsible for levelling up, I definitely would have supported the PM’s decision to stray away from appointing the beachgoer Dominic Raab or the force of nature Priti Patel.

At first glance, the Levelling Up white paper sounds comprehensive. The plan to rollout nationwide gigabit-capable broadband and 4G coverage nationwide eerily reminds you of Jeremy Corbyn’s pledge to deliver free broadband, the same pledge Johnson insulted as a “crazed communist scheme.” Beyond the promises of eradicating illiteracy, upgrading transport networks, and improving people’s welfare (deliberately vague right?), does Gove have the energy and tenacity to ensure levelling up is successful in shifting “both money and power into the hands of working people.”

Given the opportunity, Gove is always very keen to flout his working class credentials and grounds his Euroscepticism in the troubles his father’s fishing business experienced while the UK was a member of the EU. Speaking to the media, Gove has expressed his belief that further devolution in England’s regions is the solution to closing the prosperity chasm between London and the North. Currently, the median pay in London is £728 which is substantially greater than the North East’s median pay of £547. The major issue with Gove’s vision for levelling up is the lack of firm backing from his own party, with Steve Baker describing the white paper as “socialist.” The white paper also suffers from a lack of ambition, as the powers redistributed to metro mayors could be more extensive.

Ben Houchen, the first directly elected Mayor of Tees Valley, has voiced his frustration that there was no inclusion of devolving business rates, as he told Conservative Home that doing so would have been “as revolutionary as Margaret Thatcher’s ‘big bang’ reforms to the city of London in 1986.” The white paper has been left wanting Theresa May’s “money trees” and the usual reforming zeal Gove brings to his work.

For Michael Gove, the purpose of levelling up is ‘making opportunity more equal’. Unfortunately, the £11 billion set aside by the government is unlikely to make a worthy start at putting Gove’s idealism into practice.

CLASH OF COMMENTS

Has Valentine's Day actually got any sentimental value?

NO.

Ally Bell
(he/him)



Love is in the air. Or so I'm told by this nauseating shop window. Quite why this is the case evades me. Freezing temperatures and impatient shoppers don't scream romance. I imagine people are only holding hands to avoid numb fingers.

For whom do we perform this eye-rolling ritual of Valentine's day? The answer lies in ancient Rome... Enter Emperor Claudius II, who, projecting his voice over with a supernatural authority begins to speak.

"We are at war", he says, "if our men are to fight, they must be willing to lay down their lives. But too many hesitate, with spear in hand, thinking their wives are reason to carry on living. Therefore, I decree marriage outlawed. May your hearts go into battle pumping the blood of war". Emperor Claudius II was a charming man.

The heads below all bow in solemn unison. But one head remained forward-facing, lit mysteriously. That head was of St. Valentine.

Love was not to be sacrificed in the name of colonial greed. The young priest placed the sanctity of marriage on his shoulders. Valentine conducted marriage ceremonies in the secret of his own home. A haven for lovers and love alike.

But Claudius was not to be deceived. Annoyed that his men still seemed to have something to live for aside from uniting the lost territories of the old empire, Claudius had Valentine put to death. Just before the dramatic end, Valentine, turned and spoke.

"May my name live on forever. May people from this day forth remember how I fought for love to be made instead of war" (maybe Valentine was the original 60s hippie). "May my legacy be cemented in panic-bought Pandora charms and hurried trips to M&S. 14 February will become a ritual of romance".

Thank you for indulging me this far. As a quick aside to any keen historian, I know that Valentine's day began with Chaucer, but I didn't want to read all of 'The Parliament of Fowls'. Nevertheless, that was the enthusiastically-told tale of the martyred St. Valentine, where we see how far we can dilute the meaning of both 'cultural event' and 'loving relationship'. I can't help but think that our saint would raise an eyebrow if he were to

walk along a high-street and see his name being used as an excuse to shift repurposed Christmas chocolate. That beheading was really worth it. It's almost as bad as the resurrection of Christ being tied to a bunny that hides eggs in the woods.

Although I'm meant to be taking Valentine's day down, really, I'm completely indifferent to the whole performance (a sentence my girlfriend will be thrilled to read). That's why I've spent half this article dramatising the story of a saint. Couples holding hands over a home-cooked meal that tastes of desperation and YouTube tutorials. Petrol station flower stands suspiciously empty. Two 14 year-olds that got together in January professing their undying love. Not for me.

O f course, it's a bit

of a capitalist invention, kept alive each year by the personalised-chocolate industry. But name me a Western tradition that isn't. The problem isn't that it makes singletons depressed. The reason Valentine's day needs to be left behind is because it's a sad reminder of our poor excuse for a culture. Love in a heart-shaped keyring? Really?

We've held this story up by the ankles and shaken all the loose-change and meaning from

Abi Ramsay
(She/her)



St. Valentine, Eros and Cupid – the original love icons. Now we look at A\$AP Rocky and Rihanna having a baby, or Zendaya and Tom Holland buying a house. Like the cheesy *Love Actually* quote, celebrity gossip reminds us that "love actually is all around us" – but why has that become a bad thing?

Whether it's the messy and intangible love shown on *Euphoria*, or the "POV" trends on TikTok

where the algorithm somehow manages to present you with 25 edits of your favourite celebrity (hi, Sebastian Stan), or even Instagram, where your peers post photos with their loved ones – we are constantly exposed to love. And, what better way to celebrate it, than with a day designed around cheesy, outrageous and overzealous declarations of adoration?

Valentine's Day. The day either makes your heart sing, or makes you shudder with dread. For

some, Valentine's Day has lost all value, with a few viewing it as a commercialised scam to make you feel lonely, or spend money. I however, don't agree with this evaluation, with Valentine's Day acting as a day to spread love – something we can't take for granted, especially in our modern world.

Last year, Valentine's Day was marred by nationwide restrictions, with the UK being placed in a third lockdown. This meant that many couples were separated across the nation, with virtual dates becoming the new norm, and stay-at-home plans becoming necessary. These restrictions made it difficult for those in relationships, which means the lack of restrictions for this Valentine's Day is a cause for celebration. However, the restrictions did allow a rise in 'Galentine's Day' and celebrating with your housemates; something my house did in fashion with far too many homemade cocktails and karaoke.

One of the wonderful things about Valentine's Day is that it is universal. There is no denying it is cheesy, but from a young age you are encouraged to get your crush a card and a present – perhaps allowing future generations to be in tune with their emotional vulnerability. Past Valentine's Days can also become great anecdotes to look back on, with the primary school romances usually involving a marriage or two. No matter what age, Valentine's stories can be heard, with some couples celebrating their seventieth year in a relationship, and others celebrating a budding romance.

But it also isn't a day reserved for relationships. Although advertised as such, it doesn't mean those of us who are single can't have fun and enjoy the day of cheesy celebrations. It can act as a day which allows you to celebrate all those you love in your life; whether that be family, friends, a partner, or even a pet.

So is Valentine's day cheesy and commercialised? Without a doubt. But that isn't necessarily a bad thing! The constant advertisements for meals, cards, chocolates and flowers, means there are heavy discounts available for most things you like. Food delivery services usually have special discounts, and even the fanciest of restaurants will have a special price on a meal out (which aren't just reserved for couples!). What's not to like?

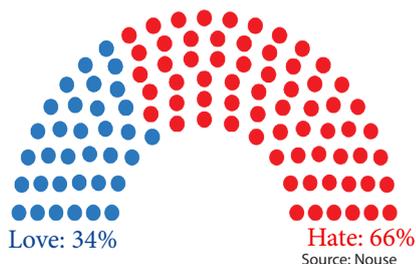
So can we see Valentine's Day as a celebration of St. Valentine? No. But does it allow you to have a bit of fun regardless of your relationship status? Absolutely – and there is nothing wrong with that.



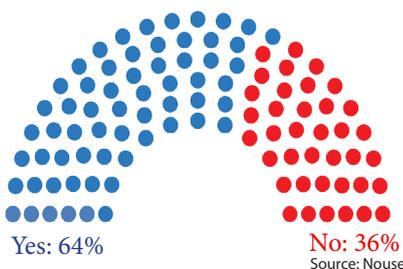
IMAGE: PUBLICDO-MAINPICTURES / 17902

According to the polls

Do you love or hate Valentine's Day?



Do you think NHS staff should legally have to be vaccinated?



Comment in brief...

"ITS OK TO RISK LOOKING DUMB"

University is full of clever people and imposter syndrome gets us all at some point, but this can be remedied with a little 2nd Century stoicism, à la Epictetus. He said, "if you wish to improve, be content to look clueless". After more than a year of online classes where many felt they weren't getting good value for money, we might as well make the most of our return to normality.



(he/him)
Ben Wilson

The moment you stop letting things outside of your control dictate the way you feel, you'll improve not only your uni experience but your sense of self-worth too.

"CHRISTMAS LIGHT BLIGHT"

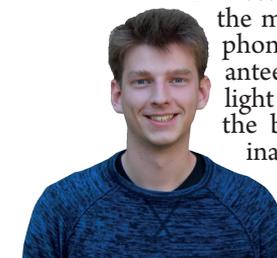
I joined student media to tackle the big issues. It is for this reason that I've decided it's my journalistic responsibility to highlight the fact that it is February and yet Christmas lights are still on show in York. What in the frankincense is going on? With impending climate catastrophe, I find this a flagrant waste of electricity. The one upside of February Christmas lights is they are a useful navigation tool on the stagger home from Salvos. Can whoever manages the lights please just switch them off!



(he/him)
Jack Bleksley

"WHERE HAVE THE BEEPS GONE?"

It's the simple things in life. Therefore, you might understand my frustration that traffic lights don't beep anymore. When was the last time when you crossed at the traffic lights and you were greeted by the beep as well as the green man? I can't believe such a crucial feature of the traffic light system's identity has disappeared without a sound. Whether



(he/him)
Michael Athey

I'm lost in my daydreams, or the music from my headphones, I can't be guaranteed to catch the green light alone. Please bring the beeps back before I inadvertently walk into oncoming traffic.

MUSE.



**FENCER TURNED
R&B SENSATION:
MUSE SPEAKS TO
ALEX BANIN**

FEATURES

M4

Lilli Bagnall shares the story of a York student raising awareness about early menopause

M8

Delyth Michael looks at the importance of LGBT+ History Month in York and beyond

M16

Sophie Burton explores the toxic ideologies in our favourite dating shows



ARTS

6

M6

Cara Lee discusses some of the biggest scandals in the history of art, literature and publishing

M7

Charis Horsley reviews the latest Sally Rooney novel: *Beautiful World, Where are You?*

Maya Bewley and **Jack Barton** debate the role of NFTs in the art industry

FASHION & SHOOT

9

M9

Amelia Forman remembers the life and legacy of Thierry Mugler

Kendra Williams looks at the Twee fashion revival

M10

Shoot: In the Trenches by **Reuben Hodson**

MUSIC

M12

Jack Barton interviews up and coming R&B artist Alex Banin about her debut EP

M13

Kyle Boulton recommends the best albums to accompany your studies

Ryan Sinclair reviews *Three Dimensions Deep* by Amber Mark



FILM & TV

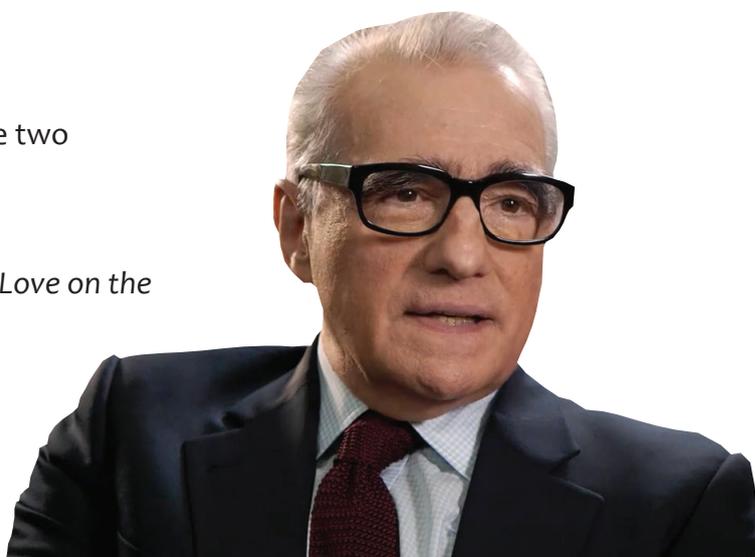
M14

Lawrence Mason examines the careers of the two juggernaut directors

M15

Marti Stelling looks at the hits and misses of *Love on the Spectrum*

Sophia Ash reviews *Memoria*



GAMING

17

M17

Kyle Boulton reviews Arkane's newest stealth-simulator against the older releases

Adam Frost asks why you still can't buy an Xbox Series X or PS5 a year after release

TRAVEL

18

M18

Tabitha Kaye reflects on ethical travel journaling

Emily Warner looks at some iconic locations in Japanese literature

FOOD & DRINK

M19

Tabitha Kaye reconsiders the central role that nutrition plays in New Years' Resolutions and damaging dietary myths

Sophie Burton Sophie Burton offers her advice on ending your affair with ubereats and how to battle those takeaway temptations



“IT REALLY SPOKE TO US BECAUSE OF THE FACT IT BREAKS DOWN STEREOTYPES”



HANNAH CARLEY SPEAKS TO HANNAH BRAGMAN AND LAUREN MAXEY, PRODUCER AND DIRECTOR OF CHMS'S FEBRUARY PRODUCTION OF 9 TO 5

Due to the Covid - 19 pandemic, 9 to 5 is CHMS's first February show since Chicago in 2020. How excited are you to get back on the stage at the Joseph Rowntree Theatre?

So excited! I think it is also really exciting because a lot of the people involved in the show, such as myself, have not been involved in a February show with CHMS before because of Covid. The fact that we're able to put this on again, in the Joseph Rowntree Theatre, is great not just because it is the first for CHMS but the first time a lot of our cast and crew have done anything theatre-related for the past two years. So everyone is so motivated to make the show as amazing as possible. We've got such an enthusiastic team with us who are enjoying every single moment and we're loving every single moment too.

CHMS's February show always provides an amazing opportunity for the talent we have here at the University of York to be prominently showcased. What does it mean to both of you to be able to have the opportunity to direct and produce a production on this kind of scale?

It means quite a lot to me. The great thing about York is that the student media and the student arts are incredible! So the fact that we have the opportunity to do this is just exceptional. For me personally, it was a very daunting message I was sent back in May saying, "you don't know me, I know you, do you want to produce the show?" and I didn't really understand how much work it would be and how big a process it is. Obviously, I do not regret it at all and it's been the best thing that has happened during my uni life so far. I'm just grateful more than anything for being given this opportunity. So I am just feeling very grateful and very blessed.

As a show 9 to 5 puts significant emphasis on both the themes of workplace sexism and female empowerment. Do you think amongst the backdrop of the debate sur-

rounding women's safety and sexualisation, the show takes on greater significance?

Definitely. The main reason that we wanted to put on the show – particularly with Covid-19, Sarah Everard and all these things that have happened – was that it really spoke to us because of the fact it breaks down stereotypes, it challenges the status quo. It is very empowering for both our cast and crew, and I think it's empowering for the audience to watch. I don't think another show – at least one that I know of – could have filled the space of 9 to 5. It is the perfect show for this

period of time; it has a lot more meaning than it would have done potentially ten years ago because people are more aware of the issues it explores. The show is a lighthearted comedy, but it does have this subtext behind it, and now is the right time to put it on.

Do you feel a responsibility to reflect these themes accurately and prominently in your take on the show?

Absolutely. I am a politics student, I've studied feminism and post-colonialism modules and I am very big particularly on challenging stereotypes. That is again why I really wanted to do this show. I know particularly our three female leads are very keen on demonstrating that too, and the cast themselves are, with the discussions we've had. I found particularly within the show the main antagonist Mr Franklin Hart, the actor playing him found it hard to engage in that sexist and misogynistic behaviour because they were like "I don't want to do that" and then it led to so many conversations within the cast. I remember one rehearsal where it was really prominent and all of us were then discussing that it's okay because in the end, if we do it well, it will show what's wrong with the world. The one key thing we have done through this process as well is to make sure the cast members within those scenes where the sexism and the misogyny

really come out do feel comfortable to be able to do it and do understand what is happening within each scene that their characters are involved in. That is crucial in order for them to be able to do it comfortably and do it well. So we've really thought about that.

The music and lyrics for 9 to 5 were worked on by Dolly Parton, who also appeared in the original film. What challenges come from performing a score developed by such a musical icon, and in what ways has this influenced your production?

I think wanting to do it justice is probably something Aidan Dixon [musical director] would definitely say. I know he probably feels under pressure to make sure it is as phenomenal as the music itself is written, particularly the opening number 9 to 5. I know Aidan will say that he has so much respect for Dolly Parton and the music as well, all the thought that has gone into the lyrics and the score. I definitely think we feel a pressure to perform them well, but the cast is phenomenal and the teaching of the music by Aidan has been phenomenal. So I don't have any concerns that it will be less than fantastic.

Is there a reason that people should be seeing the CHMS show even if they've already seen the stage production or the film?

Absolutely! We actually went to go and see 9 to 5 and I remember sitting there thinking I would come out of this feeling one of two ways; proud of our production or worried that we had not hit the same level as the show. But I am really proud to say I think we have done a fantastic job, with a very different take. Our opening number for instance is not just about people going into the office, but about all of people's lives in the 1970s and '80s and the classical stereotypes that were demonstrated throughout that era. Because the point of our show is to break down those stereotypes, it was important for me to show that in the number. I would say that the dance style, the music, the direction, is all very different so don't worry if you've seen it before. I think you'll truly be amazed when you come to see ours.

CHMS's production of 9 to 5 is playing at the Joseph Rowntree Theatre from 24 to 26 February. Tickets can be purchased directly from the theatre's website, with student discounts available.

EDITOR'S NOTE



KRISTINA WEMYSS 'TO JOURNO OR NOT TO JOURNO?'

Whenever you tell someone that you're part of a student newspaper, their response is normally the half question-half statement: "so you want to be a journalist". I can confirm that while *Nouse* has produced many talented writers and editors over the years who have gone on to do great things, the majority of our team actually go into careers other than journalism.

I first started to think about writing as a career during sixth form, taken in by the glamorous role model of Rory Gilmore from the hit show *Gilmore Girls*. (See *Nouse* alumni Jenna Luxon's final editor's note - apparently, it's a common inspiration for many female 'wannabe' journalists).

Now, as I approach graduation, I'm starting to think more broadly about my options. While journalism still appeals greatly, I realise that the skills that *Nouse* has given me has opened up a whole range of possibilities beyond this field.

The more I speak to people from *Nouse*, the more surprised I am to discover how few of them actually intend to go into journalism after university. That's not to say that *Nouse* has scarred them for life. Instead, their time in the office has given them an incredible set of skills that they will take forwards into any career path that they choose.

Being shamefully technically-inabled myself, I was always in awe of the graphics and spreads that I saw produced by the old *Muse* and *Nouse* teams. The *Muse* covers are such a staple on campus, and I never imagined that I would be able to create one myself. Now though, I've been involved in creating three. While I still don't feel like my covers have lived up to those of some of the past editors, I'm very proud to have copies of each pinned on my bedroom wall.

Don't get me wrong, we still have regular Adobe-induced heart attacks in the office every time something new goes wrong with the software. But I've been amazed this prod week to see how well the team have got to grips with things, despite the fact that virtually none of us had ever set foot in the office until this academic year due to the pandemic.

Speedy by-line writing, careful cutouts and confident pitching are talents that you come to develop naturally once you're a part of *Nouse*. Aside from these kind of skills, you make friends for life in our office. We're able to have a laugh, even when things go wrong and also to support each other when we feel out of our depths. On that note, I'd like to thank Deputy *Muse* Editor, Zara, for all of her hard work on this prod. With this being my first issue as Editor, it has been fantastic to have such a hardworking and supportive Deputy Editor. Without her calming presence, ability to pick things up quickly (and level of organisation that is far superior to my own) we wouldn't have been able to create this wonderful issue of *Muse*.

Ultimately, whether we decide to pursue journalism full time after university or not, the skills, confidence and friendships that *Nouse* brings make all of the InDesign disasters worth it.

IMAGE CREDITS

Cover: Amanda How
Left (top to bottom) : IMDB, Emily Cardona, IMBD, Anna Pelzer
Right: Sagar Patel

LIFE OF POI: RAISING AWARENESS OF THE EARLY MENOPAUSE

LILLI BAGNALL SHARES THE STORY OF A YORK STUDENT WHO IS USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO EDUCATE OTHERS

Upon meeting Sheree, you'll be instantly struck by her ability to find the positive in every situation and her innate power in always embracing the good. Her beautiful energy has a way of instantly making you feel at ease as if you've been her friend for a decade. Studying a BA in Philosophy and Sociology here at the University of York, Sheree's using her modules in feminism and women's health to spread awareness of POI, a condition she has been living with since the age of 15.

Menopause is a natural part of a woman's life that signifies the end of her reproductive years, typically taking place between the ages of 47 and 53. But when Sheree was told she had POI and had already gone through menopause at just 15 years old she was devastated, her dreams of becoming a mum were crushed while she was still just a child herself. Premature ovarian insufficiency, more widely referred to as POI, is a condition that means the loss of ovarian function before the age of 40. Affecting just one in 10,000 women under the age of 20, POI means a woman's ovaries aren't working properly and her body is unable to sufficiently produce the hormones oestrogen and progesterone, which play vital roles in the health and wellbeing of all women.

The signs and symptoms of premature ovarian insufficiency are varied and can present themselves differently from person to person, with one key difficulty being that many symptoms are common complaints and can be attributed to life events, stress or other factors. Irregular menstrual cycles and missed periods are common during a woman's early adolescent years, often meaning medical professionals will not initially be alarmed by this symptom being reported by a young, female patient. Diagnosis of long-term conditions within the female population is often further complicated by implicit sex biases within the medical community, with research suggesting that misdiagnosis or failure to receive a diagnosis at all is common for women with a variety of disorders, including heart disease, diabetes and cancer. For decades, the male body has been the standard for health and disease in most medical education and research, leading to a clear lack of understanding of how diseases affect and present in women. POI is no exception.

Following long investigations by various doctors after complaining that she hadn't started her periods or developed in the same way as her peers, Sheree was diagnosed with POI in the midst of

to push it to one side to focus on my exams, not really processing or accepting it at the time, and having reality hit at a much later date was really difficult to deal with". But Sheree got through her GCSEs, then through her A-Levels and is now in her final year at university, with plans to complete a Gender Studies Master's in London next year before going on to work in a professional role that enables her to use her voice (and charming Lancashire accent) to empower other women like her.

Despite the undeniable impact the condition can have on women's futures, medication in the form of hormone replacement therapy (HRT) is available to mitigate long-term health conditions and to help with the difficult symptoms caused by POI. For young women with the condition, the main aim of treatment is to replace the hormones that the ovaries would ordinarily be producing before the

down in 2020 reflecting on how she could take control of her POI and use her experiences in a way that would benefit other young women going through the same or similar things: "It made me want to discuss it more openly because when I was 15 I would have loved to have heard someone spread awareness about early menopause and make it seem like it's a bit more normal than I thought it was". It was then, that Life of POI was born. Sheree created a public Instagram account (@lifeofpoi_) dedicated to sharing her personal experiences and spreading positivity to women who feel silenced by a medical system that is instead supposed to help them. Now boasting over 1,500 followers, the account

has caught the attention of several major publications in the UK and further afield, with articles

immense support from people she doesn't even know has helped Sheree view her diagnosis of POI as something that doesn't have to define her or become her whole identity. This highlights the necessity of increased awareness of medical conditions that are specific to women, with greater

“ Dealing with these symptoms in your twenties can feel isolating and lonely

publicity meaning the wider population would require less explanation of certain disorders when they meet an individual experiencing them, empowering sufferers to feel less restricted by their conditions. Greater awareness would help to reduce the stigma of rare conditions and break down the existing divisive barriers that can stand between an individual from building a connection with a partner. There may not be a definitive 'right' way to respond when someone tells you they have an incurable condition, but the right people will make you feel heard, understood and supported; these are invaluable qualities that Sheree now appreciates and acknowledges when sharing this information.

As her housemate, I'm unbelievably proud of Sheree but do still regularly remind her not to let her newfound fame go to her head and I also take responsibility for making sure she doesn't accidentally drunk dial the ITV producers she has saved in her contacts after a big night in Salvos. Sheree's 'grandma days' when she's struggling with POI symptoms present a welcome break from drinking and see us adopt cosy pyjamas and a facemask in front of a film in our little York home, and when she's feeling better you can always count on her to be the absolute life of any party she's at. Sheree has taught her friends the real meaning of resilience and the importance of female empowerment within a society designed to break us; the impact Sheree has had on all of our lives is truly profound, and I can only hope that this life blesses her with as much joy as she freely gives to other people.

To learn more about Sheree's story and to add a little dose of positivity to your day, follow @lifeofpoi_ on Instagram (you won't regret it!). If you or somebody you know is in need of support or advice relating to early menopause and POI, Sheree recommends following The Daisy Network (@thedaisynetwork), a UK based charity for women with POI that provides a true sense of community while also being a great source of information.



IMAGE: KAROLINA GRABOWSKA

age of men-

opause, making the treatment different from that of menopause which typically focuses solely on the treatment of everyday symptoms. Sheree comments on the irony of taking her hormone medication, which was the contraceptive pill, knowing that the reason she takes it isn't for contraception, but because she can't have her own children. Similarly, HRT can come in the form of a patch which people may wrongly mistake for the contraceptive patch, despite clearly having a very different purpose. Finding the right balance of hormone doses is a long and often turbulent process, leaving young women with debilitating and persistent symptoms such as headaches, mood swings and joint pains. Dealing with these symptoms in your twenties can feel isolating and lonely for many young women, with this vulnerability being further emphasised within the highly pressured and demanding environment that is university life. It's taken Sheree a number of years to find the right balance with her medications, trying a wide range of pills, gels and patches. She has now finally found a treatment regime that works for her and enables her to enjoy being in her early twenties, giving her the ability to grab every possible opportunity that life throws her way.

Having previously kept the gravity of her diagnosis quiet, Sheree spent the first Covid lock-

about Sheree and what it's like living with POI appearing in print editions of

The Daily Mail and *The Sun* (and now *Nouse*). What followed was the incredible opportunity to be interviewed live on ITV's breakfast show *This Morning*, which Sheree fully embraced, appearing on TV in August 2020. When first creating her account, Sheree never anticipated she would be chatting with Ruth and Eamonn on primetime TV from her university bedroom – a life lesson to always expect the unexpected.

These experiences have helped Sheree accept her diagnosis and have given her the confidence to open up to potential partners about what POI will mean for both of them in the future and how they can approach any obstacles together as a team. The thought of discussing her condition with a partner once seemed impossible and too daunting to even consider but having shared her story on Instagram and receiving

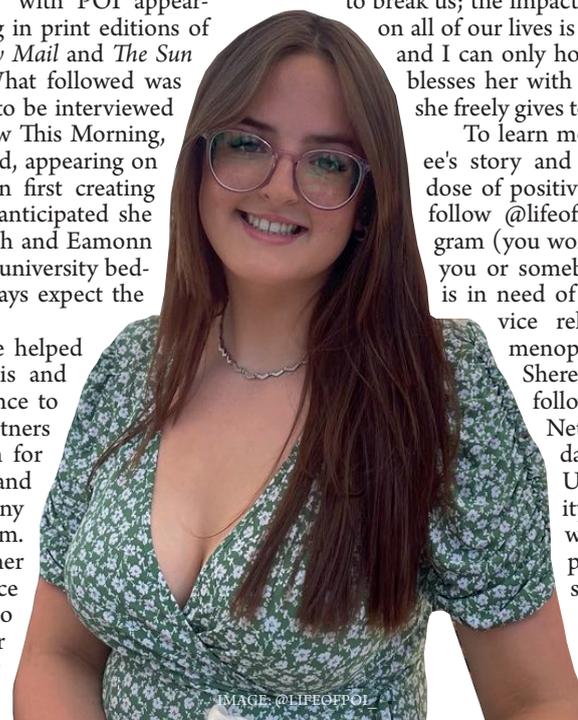


IMAGE: @LIFEOPPOI

“ For decades, the male body has been the standard for health and disease

her GCSEs. This meant that she had to navigate the already complicated teenage years whilst also grappling with countless medical appointments, frequent hot flushes (or as Sheree likes to call them, 'hot flourishes') and extreme fatigue as a result of her hormone imbalances. The timing of her diagnosis impacted Sheree's capacity to process and understand what it meant for her: "I had

ECOTOK: SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVISM WITH A SIDE OF PRIVILEGE

ZARA OSAKO EXAMINES HOW ECO INFLUENCERS REINFORCE THE INEQUALITIES OF ACCESS TO SUSTAINABLE LIVING

Sustainability. Carbon neutral. Greenwashing; the sustainable Instagram influencer equivalent of “Hands. Face. Space”. Sustainability has inevitably become the buzzword of the past decade, only heightened by the Instagram girl aesthetic that shames you for your one off single use coffee cup purchase. An act so deviant, it can't even be redeemed by choosing Soy milk over Cow's, because somehow all non-dairy milks cause some degree of controversy. Yet, despite the much debated discourse of sustainable lifestyles, the trend has come about rightly so, with our planet under pressure, our daily consciousness is the least we can do as individuals. However, how achievable are these lifestyles that are pushed on us?

At one end of the spectrum lies your typical 20-something university student. Reusable Yorcup in hand, they're more than aware of the imminent threat of climate change; they've tried Veganuary at least once before, their housemates are tired of being nagged for disobeying the recycling, and they rarely forget their tote bag. But this still won't stop them from Ubering home when the bus is ten minutes late. It is me, I am her. On the other end, we have the newest wave of Instagram culture: the zero-waste lifestyle, vegan blogger who uses their platform to inspire lifestyle changes in favour of the environment. Meatless Mondays are something of a distant past to them.

I've personally accounted for most of the latter on TikTok, one of the fastest growing and most influential social media platforms and it's a good idea. TikTok users can gain mass following and attention from posting just one video, due to the app's algorithm. If you want to get a message out there, TikTok is a great place to start. Just overnight, sub-communities of the app are formed and followed. The most notable in this example being 'EcoTok': a subsection of TikTok in which users share their sustainable lifestyles. However, the message to educate and inspire is often lost in translation, with many viewers interpreting the message as patronising and judgemental. And for some creators, the content is downright discriminatory and ignorant.

Sustainability is a privilege. For many of us, it's relatively accessible and easy to make simple alterations to our daily lifestyles; cutting down on meat consumption, reducing food waste or carsharing. But for many people, complete sustainability is not always achievable. Sustainable lifestyle alternatives are often much more expensive than their non-eco counterparts. Vegan diets can be expensive and inaccessible, and often fail

sustainability changes in the past few years is the 'plastic straw ban' which saw restaurants and bars forced to stop offering plastic straws to customers, in a government effort to reduce plastic waste. Alternatives such as paper and metal were encouraged, instead. But this change saw a great expression of disappointment from those with disabilities that could simply not adjust their lifestyle to fit this nationally acclaimed swap, whether that be due to the inflexibility of paper and metal straws, the textures, or the ingredients. Nowadays, the paper straw is the new norm, and most of us now gasp at the unheard of sight of a plastic straw. But this has left those who rely on plastic straws feeling judged and looked down upon. Zero-waste simply is not feasible for their lifestyle, and that is ok.

Fast fashion is another colloquation that has dominated social media forums in recent years, with “fuck fast fashion” having become a widely shared exclamation

thing above this low threshold set by fast fashion giants seems unreasonable. And for some customers, simply seems impossible. For people with little disposable income, spending £80 or so on one garment is literally bank-breaking. Alternatives such as 'thrifting' or buying from charity shops or vintage stores are usually used to counter this argument, however this is not always an accessible option. People with disabilities or mobility issues may find this difficult or impossible, those who struggle to shop in physical stores may not find as many second hand options available online, and many secondhand sellers refuse returns, leaving buyers out of pocket if the item does not fit or isn't suitable. Overall, simply claiming that we all should and can drop fast fashion is an ignorant comment. Yet, those who do rely on fast fashion clothing are often left shamed by social media creators whose content revolves around this slogan

unprompted judgements of those who eat meat or animal produce. For those that can healthily and conveniently follow a vegan lifestyle, this content may be encouraging or inspiring and may trigger positive lifestyle changes. However, drastic alterations such as diet changes are not feasible for many people for numerous reasons. Those that have or still experience eating disorders or conflicting relationships with food may struggle

Claiming that we all should and can drop fast fashion is an ignorant comment



IMAGE: AMAR PRECIADO

of disapproval across the internet. Again, this statement is proclaimed in privilege. And if the cutesy, aesthetically pleasing Instagram graphic was not patronising enough, the message is ignorant to individual circumstances. Sustainable clothing is a fast emerging section of the fashion industry and has not only come about as a result of consumer demand, but necessity. And the majority of us have become more conscious about our shopping habits over the past few years. Whilst most of us have not completely cut ties with fast fashion, there has been an obvious shift in consumer behaviour; whether that be buying from sustainable brands, opting for second hand clothing, or just buying less. However, these options are not always suitable alternatives for everybody. Fast fashion companies dominate the high street and the industry, therefore allowing them to set their prices low and provide size inclusive ranges for customers. Yet, sustainable businesses are emerging and still growing, they don't have the profits to offer extensive size ranges and their eco-friendly production process means their prices are inevitably higher than high street competitors. It unintentionally isolates many shoppers. We have become too used to the idea of a £5 t-shirt or a £15 dress and therefore any-

of “fuck fast fashion”; it essentially says, fuck people who buy from fast fashion. The patronising TikToks titled “Fast Fashion Brands I would Never Wear” and “Why You Should Stop Shopping at [insert popular and accessible clothing brand name here]” are condescending and induce guilt in those who rely on these brands. Viewers feel left with no feasible, guilt-free options and ultimately the intended message is lost.

The last type of content creator that concerns me is those that judge our eating habits and diet choices, most of whom live a vegan lifestyle. Veganism receives a vast amount of undeserved criticism and judgement, with the word often being received by an eyeroll or two. Those that choose to eat a plant-based diet and follow a vegan lifestyle are not the problem here by any means, and I appreciate and follow many vegan creators. But those that overstep the line and shame others' lifestyles are problematic. Late night binge scrolls through TikTok have delivered many

with this particular form of sustainability, something that is repeatedly overlooked in this conversation. This content can be harmful in their recovery. Allergens and disabilities may also prevent people from switching diets and these people should not be shamed for it. Yet, there are several creators who imply that those that eat meat and dairy are inherently bad people, without question. Educating viewers on the realities of the meat and dairy industries is important, but can be done so in sensitivity and understanding.

Personally, I can only pass comment on many these issues, most of which do not affect me to such an extent as they do others. But it does frustrate me to see such content creators ignorantly pushing these changes on others. Their content is unintentionally patronising and simply unhelpful in the strive for a more eco-friendly world. Failing to acknowledge individual circumstances and limitations is a sense of privilege that should not be disguised in a 30 second video accompanied by a catchy tune. Privilege has been a much discussed issue in response to numerous recent events, and this conversation is no exception. We must also be just as keen to welcome minor changes and alterations to people's lifestyles; sustainability is a journey that does not just take place overnight. Time, finance and health are all considerable factors that manifest in people's journeys differently.

There is also the debate of corporation vs individual responsibility in this conversation. As individuals are we wholly responsible for our actions, or are these manifestations of the society we are a part of? The conversation around sustainability is vast, and eco-friendly content and education should by no means be discouraged or alienated from it. Social media is a powerful tool, it would be careless and stupid not to utilise it. But creators must be more conscious in recognising individual circumstances and privilege; all changes are valued and important in the stride for sustainability.

The newest wave of Instagram culture: the zero-waste lifestyle, vegan blogger

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to acknowledge people's disabilities or dietary requirements. Sustainable and eco-friendly clothing is usually marked at a much higher price point and often are not size inclusive. And consciously choosing and opting for zero-waste choices can be time-consuming, a privilege that many people do not have.

One of the most prominent and talked about



IMAGE: HANNAH CARLEY

“THIS IS A ROBBERY”: THE DARKER SIDE OF THE ART WORLD

CARA LEE DISCUSSES SOME OF THE BIGGEST SCANDALS IN THE HISTORY OF ART, LITERATURE AND PUBLISHING

It's undeniable, that excitement you feel when waiting to read the next upcoming bestseller. We've all experienced it. Sometimes, it feels like you'll do anything to know whether Offred escapes, or to indulge in the next Sally Rooney novel, or to discover a new debut author. The anticipation to be one of the first people to know what happens next in a book series is sometimes borderline frustrating, but nevertheless, very few people act upon this excitement.

Recently, however, it emerged that this is not the case for Filippo Bernardini, who, in early January, was stopped by the FBI at New York's JFK airport and arrested for stealing numerous manuscripts of novels and impersonating staff members of publishing houses.

Bernardini is an Italian citizen employed by publishers Simon and Schuster, who are known for their wide range of publishing interests and whose recent books have included *The Seven Husbands of Evelyn Hugo* by Taylor Jenkins Reid, *The Sun and Her Flowers* by Rupi Kaur, and *They Both Die At The End* by Adam Silvera. Bernardini has been accused of pilfering manuscripts from publishers, with his indictment alleging that he has “impersonated, defrauded, and attempted to defraud, hundreds of individuals”.

According to the FBI's Assistant Director-in-Charge, Michael J. Driscoll, “Mr. Bernardini used his insider knowledge of the industry to get authors to send him their unpublished books and texts by posing as agents, publishing houses, and literary scouts. Mr. Bernardini was allegedly trying to steal other people's literary ideas for himself, but in the end he wasn't creative enough to get away with it.”

Bernardini's scheming behaviour is now believed to have been taking place since August 2016, and since then over 160 fake online domains have been created, which used tiny typographical errors to trick editors and publishers into providing information. Perhaps I'm naïve – or have watched too many James Bond films – but I always imagined hacking and phishing scams to involve hundreds of screens with constant monitoring and beeping, and people running around keeping tabs on different contacts and locations. Bernardini's scams, however, appear to have relied more heavily on a human error, of sorts.

The tricks in typography that Bernardini used enabled his scams, as the human eye skims over

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Over 160 fake online domains have been created, which used tiny typographical errors to trick editors

incorrect spellings, if they looked how we would expect them to. Bernardini slyly manipulated letters in the email addresses and domains he established, switching “g” for “q” and “t” for “f”, emailing from the @penguinrandornhouse address to show his authority. You might think these tricks would, in practice, be very easy to spot, but have you ever noticed that an “r” and an “n” together look very similar to an “m”?

On top of this, the indictment against Bernardini also alleges that he created a website impersonating an American scouting company,

based in New York. Through positioning himself as a scout – who helps to read manuscripts, sifting through submissions and ultimately deciding what would be good to take forward to publishing and translating – Bernardini was able to access unreleased manuscripts. The indictment also alleges that in September 2020, he created another fraudulent email address to correspond with a Pulitzer Prize-winning author, requesting they send their most recent manuscript to him. The author, unassumingly, did so.

Reportedly, authors such as Margaret Atwood, Stieg Larsson, Sally Rooney, and Ethan Hawke have all fallen victim to such phishing scams. In 2019, the BBC disclosed that there had been “concerted efforts to steal” the manuscript of Atwood's *The Testaments*, the long-awaited sequel to *The Handmaid's Tale*. To mitigate the risks and try to prevent further scams, publishers put contingency plans into place: advanced copies of *The Testaments* were issued to readers with a different title, and judges of the Booker Prize (which Atwood went on to jointly win, along with Bernardine Evaristo, in 2019) were required to sign non-disclosure agreements before reading the manuscripts, which were then hidden and locked away overnight.



IMAGE: JEAN LOUIS MAZIERES

Perhaps the most interesting part of this puzzle is the motive – or more accurately maybe, the seeming lack of. None of the stolen works have ever been leaked online before publication, and no blackmail demands or ransoms have come to fruition either, leading some to assume the thief was trying to obtain knowledge of potential TV and film rights ahead of others. Others, however, suggest the motive is arguably more sinister, being a psychological mind game of sorts, where Bernardini was trying to gain some power and leverage in a highly competitive industry.

Bernardini was charged on counts of wire fraud and aggravated identity theft, but has pleaded not guilty with bail set at £221, 556. Though the saga has spanned several years, and surely will itself become a bestselling novel and TV series soon enough, it is by no means the only phishing story in the publishing industry. In 2018, *The Bookseller* reported that scouting agency Eccles Fisher was struggling with a scam, where emails sent from a seemingly genuine Eccles Fisher account were then redirected when replied to, allowing the scammer to access manuscripts, typecripts, and official passwords.

The publishing industry is not the only sector in the arts to suffer recently from large thefts. Though art heists are not a new phenomenon – the first documented heist was in 1473, when pirates stole Hans Memling's *The Last Judgement*

whilst it was travelling to France – in the height of the pandemic, thieves were finding the closure of museums and galleries the perfect time to loot. In early 2020, Van Gogh's 1884 painting *Spring Garden* was stolen from the Singer Laren Museum in the Netherlands, and was later believed to be held to ransom, with a photograph appearing of the painting alongside a copy of the *New York Times*, dated 30 May.

A few months later, a Frans Hals painting, *Two Laughing Boys with a Mug of Beer*, was stolen from the Hofje van Aerden Museum in Leerdam, near Utrecht. The painting, with an estimated value of £13.4m, has been stolen twice before too, and in 1988 when it was stolen, thieves also took Jacob van Ruisdael's *Forest View with Flowering Elderberry*, though returned it later. Currently, some of van Ruisdael's other works are on display at York Art Gallery in their *Lost Gainsborough* exhibition, which is open until 13th February.

Given that these thefts were close in proximity to each other, in terms of both time and location, police arrested an unnamed 58-year-old man in connection with both. However, as of 2021, neither painting has yet been found.

Despite this, throughout art history, numerous stolen paintings have eventually been located.

works (valued at an estimated \$500m) stolen from the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, Boston, in 1990 have never been found.

The heist took place during the night of 18 March, and works by some of the world's most prolific artists were stolen, including Rem-

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Perhaps the most interesting part of this puzzle is the motive – or more accurately, the seeming lack of

brandt, Degas, Vermeer, and Manet. Witnesses said that two men in police uniforms were sitting in a car outside the museum. The seeming-police-men used the intercom system to request access, saying they were the response to reports of disturbances. They then handcuffed, blindfolded, and bound the security guard.

Suspicious about the thief or thieves have abounded ever since. Some say the guard must be to blame, and that the theft was an inside job, whereas others suggest it was a mafia job, with the thieves not necessarily keeping the artworks afterwards. The FBI believes the works travelled throughout the crime networks spreading across Connecticut and Philadelphia but this is uncertain, and the last alleged sighting of any of the works was the Rembrandt seascape, seen in 2003. Since then, there have been no sightings.

As with the story of Bernardini, art heists prove the perfect fodder for literary and filmic endeavours. Last year, Netflix released *This Is a Robbery: The World's Biggest Art Heist*, directed by Colin Barnicle, a four-part series exploring the night of the heist and discussing possibilities for the thieves and whereabouts of the works.

Barnicle said his primary intention for creating the series was to raise awareness, stating “I think there's a possibility that some small pieces are still out there somewhere on somebody's wall – they just don't know they have them because it wasn't as widely spread as the Vermeer and the few Rembrandts”.

For many, the arts are an escape, and this has become particularly prominent in the last two years.

Though most give the arts the respect they deserve, stories such as the Isabella Stewart Gardner heist and Filippo Bernardini's manipulation and betrayal of individual creativity are astounding, and show the enduring importance of art, even, as with these cases, in their absence.

The *Mona Lisa*, stolen from the Louvre in 1911, was found after the thief, Vincenzo Peruggia (a member of staff at the Louvre) tried to donate the painting to an Italian museum. In 1913, the *Mona Lisa* was restored in the Louvre.

Renoir's *Young Parisian* and *Conversation* and a Rembrandt self-portrait were all stolen in 2000 from the National Museum of Fine Arts in Stockholm, and despite their escape on a speedboat, by 2005 all three works had been returned.

The *Madonna of the Yarnwinder*, attributed to Da Vinci (although the extent of his involvement with the painting is debated) was stolen from Drumlanrig Castle in Scotland in 2003 by two tourists, but was eventually recovered after a raid at a law firm in Glasgow in 2007. It now hangs in the National Gallery of Scotland in Edinburgh.

Though lots are answered, some still prove elusive and unsolvable: the world's biggest art heist remains unsolved, as the 13



IMAGE: KING OF HEARTS

REVIEW: SALLY ROONEY'S 'BEAUTIFUL WORLD, WHERE ARE YOU?'

CHARIS HORSLEY DISCUSSES THE LATEST SALLY ROONEY NOVEL, EXAMINING BEAUTY AND THE MODERN WORLD

Sally Rooney reaches down to the very foundations of human interaction; her novels are concerned with relating a blunt form of reality. *Beautiful World, Where Are You* grapples with the mundane struggles of existence: earning money, hating your job, and worrying about the compatibility between you and your partner. The narrative orbits around two main characters, Eileen and Alice, who find themselves estranged from society, yet are brought together in friendship through the shared experience of being alone. The success of the story blossoms from the sheer relatability of Sally Rooney's subjects.

The title, *Beautiful World, Where Are You* has multiple meanings. It speaks of the wonderful vastness of the natural world, discussing huge flaws of the human race, like consumerism, climate change, and the superficiality of popular culture. Yet simultaneously, it speaks of the beauty of finding happiness within the everyday: watching a film, having sex, feeding the dog. High literature never used to involve trips to the supermarket for dried apples and tea bags; we don't ever catch Mr Darcy in the vegetable aisle (or market for that matter). Yet, in the realm of literature, we forget that these events are the essential make-up of our lives.

This is largely what makes Rooney's writing so relevant. Her characters understand the importance of finding pleasure in the everyday, growing ever more imperative as the novel's setting reaches the Covid-19 pandemic, something which has changed every single one of our lifestyles. The Beautiful World is experienced through

snippets of pleasure, documented daily by Eileen and in emails exchanged between the girls. 'Dried sycamore leaves, buttered popcorn...and being rained on' are but a few of the minute, luxurious pleasures. When we are so consumed by the busy white-noise of each day, we feel caught up like a broken record player; each 24-hours on repeat. Every one of us is guilty of losing sight of the Beautiful World. I believe that finding this perspective of pleasure is the answering call to the novel's overarching Where Are You?

A hundred years on from Virginia Woolf, Rooney's writing is a new kind of modern in her rejection of speech marks and constant internalised thought. Each page is a continuous commentary of events. Looking back for a second on her novel *Normal People*, there is something direct and slightly unnerving about the present continuous tense, which makes us feel as though the narrative were simultaneously in and completely out of our hands. The urgency of the present moment allows us to feel for a second that what is inevitable is not. We wish that Connell will drive after her, Marianne will ask him to move in, and Connell

will break up with Helen. Such is the nature of literature, when we realise, we do not have control. Instead, he sits in the motionless driver's seat, the plea goes unnoticed, and Helen makes Connell happy. Both *Normal People* and *Beautiful World* pinpoint this frustrating imperfection of reality.

Normal People questions the value of social acceptance and popularity – what makes someone desire your friendship, your popularity or your personality? *Beautiful World*, on the other hand, questions the possibility of happiness in a constantly adapting world. Rooney explores what it is that people need to be happy, and Eileen and Alice spend the novel attempting to figure it out. Perhaps the answer to the rhetorical title is not that it's hiding; but that it is instead us, who fail to see what is before our eyes.

Alice points out the modern-day obsession with filling blank spaces, saying 'It makes me wonder whether celebrity culture has sort of metastasised to fill the emptiness left by religion. Like a malignant growth where the sacred used to be.' We feel the need to constantly immerse ourselves in the 'other': meaningless celebrities, TikTok, the gossip of somebody else's life. Through being estranged from society's popular

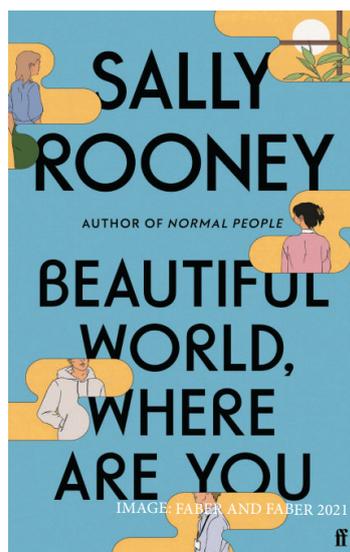
culture, Sally Rooney's characters are able to pause to consider the beauty of the everyday, something many struggle to achieve.

With fifty book shops opening early on the 7 September and selling over 40,000 copies in the first 5 days, *Beautiful World* continues and extends Rooney's best-selling reputation. Although her previous novels, *Conversations with Friends* and *Normal People* are hugely accessible to audiences,

It questions the possibility of happiness in a constantly adapting world

Beautiful World strikes a chord with so many more readers, due mainly to its sheer relevance to everything we do.

The title of the book interestingly doesn't have a question mark, leaving the implied question open-ended. Perhaps Rooney is not looking for her novel to be the answer to the title, instead imploring readers to stop and consider the where within their own lives. Where is it that we fail to locate the beauty of the world? Avoiding the impulse for spoilers, I will say only that Rooney's ending follows this trend. 'It's not the life I used to imagine for myself either', Alice writes to Eileen, finding contentment in the imperfect, yet *Beautiful World*.



NFTS: THE FUTURE OF ART TODAY OR JUST ANOTHER CASH GRAB?

MAYA BEWLEY AND JACK BARTON DEBATE WHETHER NFTS PUT ARTISTS BACK IN POWER OR EXPLOIT THEM

It's near impossible to have avoided the digital footprint of NFTs over the past year. From headlines to timelines, they've circulated the internet and found their fair share of controversy in the process. Auction house Christie's has dubbed them "The next chapter in art history," while artist David Hockney labels them "silly little things," "for crooks and swindlers." But before we enter our own debate, what exactly are NFTs?

NFT stands for non-fungible token. In this case, it refers to a unique set of data stored on a blockchain – a digital record of financial transactions. This unique set of data can then be used to verify that you own a file. Like collecting physical artworks, NFTs are sold to show that you own a digital piece of art – such as a photo or video. Sounds respectable enough, right? Except, this is also where most of the controversy surrounding NFTs lies. If you buy an NFT, you're only really buying proof of ownership. It doesn't stop any humble internet-user from simply screen-shotting the same piece of art. NFTs have also been critiqued for the colossal amounts of energy taken to produce them.

On the other hand, NFTs can drastically increase or decrease in value. And as it turns out, there's a lot of money to be made. Famously, artist Beeple sold their NFT *Everydays* in 2021 for \$69.3 million dollars. Hence, the NFT craze we're experiencing at the moment. From John Lennon's son to Paris Hilton herself, everyone wants a (non-fungible) piece of the pie.

Since NFTs remain a hot topic, we decided to have our own debate on whether or not they are beneficial for the art world.

NFTs: Putting The Artist Back in Power? - Jack Barton

Firstly, to address the carbon sized elephant in the room, NFTs won't be as bad for the environment as we think. The vast majority of NFTs are built off of Ethereum, the second biggest cryptocurrency, and therefore over the next year or so NFTs energy usage will drastically decline.

The massive amount of energy used by cryptocurrency is through 'mining', where vastly powerful computers have to put in a large amount of

From John Lennon's son to Paris Hilton herself, everyone wants a (non-fungible) piece of the pie.

'work' for a chance of receiving a chunk of crypto. Ethereum is now moving away from mining towards 'staking', where people lock away little bits of Ethereum for interest, in order to run the network. This move will reduce energy usage by 99.95 percent, making it use only 11 percent of the energy of Visa for the same number of transactions.

Like what Soundcloud did for musicians, digitalising art significantly lowers the barriers for entry. The art is not gatekept, and they can avoid the hassle and upfront investment to physically shift

thousands of pieces. I could make a lovely piece of art on my laptop in the morning, and have it sold by the afternoon without any extra fuss. This immediately opens your work to a global market where anyone can see your art, not just those in your area. NFTs therefore provide a secure, transparent avenue for original creators to get a fair price for their art.

I think the best implementation is having an NFT be tied to a physical piece, giving a further layer of security, but also providing financial clarity that would greatly reduce fraud. This would ensure all artists get resale royalties and would know who owned their work and how much it sold for; creating an art world led by transparency and fair use.

NFTs: Is This The Best We've Got? - Maya Bewley

Look, I don't believe in ten years time we'll all be paying for our mortgages and meal deals with the money made from some kitted photos we sold online. But what NFTs do reveal is an ugly truth about the art world: that it has always revolved around money.

Take a look at the highest seven day sales for NFTs on non-fungible.com and you'll start to notice a trend. The most popular collections aren't exactly intricate works of art. They're usually relatively simple iterations of the same formula: some kind of character with randomised traits. For ex-

ample, NFTs by the Bored Ape Yacht Club are literally just thousands of cartoon monkeys decked out in party poppers and sailor hats. But due to their extreme monetary value, they're being bought by the likes of Justin Bieber for millions of dollars. CryptoPunks, Cyberkongz, LazyLions galore all share the same, dismally predictable format.

Of course, there are many artists who use the tokens to sell ownership to more complex work, and art is, after all, subjective. But my point is that the kind of art being produced by the current NFT fever are pieces where simplistic aesthetic value acts as a barely stable affront for the colossal amounts of money it intends to generate. Why else would fine art auction houses Christie's and Sotheby's sell NFTs that are more Moshi Monsters than Monet?

The contemporary art market has been critiqued as a way for the uber-rich to consolidate their wealth by spending ridiculously large sums of money on artwork as an investment. And although anyone can technically buy them, the digital world of NFTs is no different. The supposed future of art actually just reshapes the same problems as before – the irony being that you don't get anything physical to show for it.



REMEMBERING THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF THIERRY MUGLER

AMELIA FORMAN REMEMBERS THE LIFE OF THIERRY MUGLER, HIS WORK, AND HIS LONGLASTING IMPACT ON THE FASHION INDUSTRY

Manfred Thierry Mugler recently passed away on 23 January 2022. The French fashion designer was a true visionary, creating some of the most exciting and original works in recent decades. He was not only a designer, but a former ballet dancer, perfumer, and director. His perfumes, namely Angel, are some of the best-selling of all time, and certainly helped to solidify him as a household name.

Inspired by cinema and dance, performance was at the heart of the House of Mugler. Manfred spent his childhood in Strasbourg watching old Hollywood films. His collections therefore consistently referenced the hyper-feminine silhouettes of 1940s and 1950s, albeit with his signature futuristic twists. Dance was integral to the expression of the clothing on stage. Mugler combined these influences to create shows that were both theatrical and elegant, enhancing the features and potential of the feminine body.

Inclusivity was another key to the success of Mugler. His shows were ground-breaking in a time where the modelling industry was almost exclusively young, heterosexual, white women. He featured people of colour such as Naomi Campbell, her mother Valerie Morris, and transgender model, Connie Fleming. David Bowie and George Michael are amongst the big names he worked with during the rise and height of the brand. He designed Bowie's wedding suit and even directed a music video for George Michael.

The 1995 fall/winter show was the epitome of Mugler. The Birth of Venus dress is one of Mugler's most iconic pieces. The skirt opens up from the hips to display the upper body and the pink satin gloves bring attention to the arms. The model's movement in the show, clearly inspired by Mugler's background in ballet, accentuated the lines

of the gown. Gracefully lifting her arms and turning showed how movement and theatre worked with the clothes to show the potential of feminine expression.

Despite his continuing presence in fashion, he retired from the House of Mugler in 2002, and



IMAGE: LUIS RIBES MATEU

had since worked only on limited collections and one-off pieces. Beyoncé wore a gold armour bodysuit and gloves from the 1995 show for the Sweet Dreams music video. She subsequently worked with Mugler on the wardrobe for the I Am... World Tour in 2008-2009.

The last few years have seen a resurgence in fame for Mugler felt throughout Gen Z. A long-standing partnership with Cardi B saw the rap-

per wearing the Birth of Venus gown on the 2019 Grammys red carpet. She wore another vintage gown to the Mugler Paris Fashion Week Exhibit in 2021. Adorned with red feathers and jewels, the dress was a showstopper and demonstrated Mugler's keen eye for styling. Accompanying the

Mugler and many dangling crystals that looked like dripping water. Combining Mugler's take on hyper-femininity with one of the most iconic female bodies of our time was an impactful decision from both parties.

The House of Mugler remained influenced by their founder's work after his full-time involvement ceased. Most recently, the sheer black bodysuits from the ready-to-wear collections have been worn by the likes of Dua Lipa and Miley Cyrus. The bodysuits were expertly crafted to draw attention to and lengthen the lines of the body while maintaining free movement. Performativity was once again central to the designs. Many performers wore the bodysuits, spreading Mugler's name to huge audiences of adoring young fans. Such audiences also recently saw Euphoria's Alexa Demie wear a 1991 Mugler Vampire dress in the TV show, similar to the black dress below.

Manfred Thierry Mugler's work will continue to be appreciated well beyond his life. Celebrations of his work such as the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts' exhibition, Thierry Mugler: Couturissime, will remain a point of reference for up-and-coming designers. Hopefully one day we will see what he was working on leading up to his unfortunate passing. His legacy will continue to be celebrated in fashion and pop culture, and his presence in the world of design will truly never be forgotten.



IMAGE: ELLENMI

'TWEET' FASHION IS BACK, HOW TO DO IT BETTER THIS TIME

KENDRA WILLIAMS LOOKS AT THE 'TWEET' FASHION REVIVAL AND THE LESSONS WE CAN LEARN WHEN BRINGING BACK TRENDS.

If you are anything like me, you will have heard the term 'twee fashion' everywhere on TikTok for the last couple of weeks, but what actually is it and why is it important. The word 'twee' is meant to sound like the word 'sweet' in an adorable baby voice, so if that sounds too sickly sweet, then this might not be the era for you. But if you're still with me, twee fashion is a term that refers to the 'adorkable', hipster fashion of the 2014 era. Think collars, sweaters, moustaches, fake glasses, ballet flats, cardigans and lots of bold patterns. If you're feeling like you need a poster girl to really picture this era of fashion, then you're in luck. Jess Day (played by Zooey Deschanel in the sitcom *New Girl*) has become very much the monument to everything that twee fashion stands for. This twee fashion is very much central to her super sweet, quirky character. She happily professes to wear ribbon hats, high waisted shorts and yeah, she rocks a lot of polka dots.

There are some really exciting things about the Twee fashion trend coming back. The tidal wave of the Y2K revival resulted in an influx of

tiny tops and low-rise jeans flooding fast fashion websites and seeping into high street stores. However, with the new wave of twee fashion we might hope to see the nexus shifting towards second-hand vintage shopping. Among patterned tights and ballet flats, Vogue centres vintage pieces as one of their essentials for the revival of twee fashion. With this emphasis on pre-loved pieces and unique quirks we might hope that the nexus of this new fashion trend will shift to sustainable second-hand shopping and vintage restoration.

However, as you may have noticed from our twee fashion figure-head Miss Jessica Day, twee fashion centres a very specific body type and type of person. Hipster fashion was often defined by heteronormative, white, thin bodily ideals. The playground of the twee fashion, Tumblr, has been linked by more and more studies to an incredibly dangerous eating disorder culture. Historians have even linked 'hipster' culture with gentrification and oppressive economic models. Thus, the return 'adorkable' fashion of 2014, which crowned a small homogenous few as

its aspirational figureheads, has led many people to worry about what this fashion revival might involve.

To this day, fashion trends are often judged more by the model's appearance than what they are wearing. Off-duty model chic and French girl aesthetics are just a few examples in which basic clothing staples have been elevated to trends largely because of their association with thin white physiques. There has been a growing awareness of this, with some TikTokers creating series' asking "is it a fit or is she just skinny?". Within this toxic culture of fat-phobia, a delicate challenge is created in reviving trends that already centre problematic bodily ideals.

Also, many people have linked this trend to the problematic 'Manic Pixie Dream Girl' trope. The term was coined by film critic Nathan Rabin, who said that "The Manic Pixie Dream Girl exists solely in the fevered imaginations of sensitive writer-directors to teach broodingly soulful young men to embrace life and its infinite mysteries and adventures." She is a quirky, eccentric love interest, but with no deeper inner life, and solely a function to advance the male protagonist. Worse still, the 'manic pixie dream girl' trope also centres the idea that being 'quirky' and 'different' to other women,

somehow makes you better, even though she still exists entirely in a male fantasy. The 'twee' trend therefore might promote modesty and quirkiness as a form of competitive advantage over other women, and a strange pride in being 'not like other girls'.

Yet, we have an opportunity here to spearhead a new version of this trend. As adorkable moustaches and hipster glasses scale up to twee tights and quirky sweat-shirts, I urge that we all find a way for this trend to be more inclusive. Shopping second-hand stores for pre-loved vintage items, we can make this trend more palatable for our planet. Following body positive and socially aware Instagram creators is another great way to diversify who leads and represents evolving fashion trends. Purchasing from smaller, diverse creators is also a great way to stem the tide of fast fashion and help redistribute the profits of this trend more evenly.



IMAGE: IMDB



IMAGE: IMDB

IN THE TRENCHES



Trench Coat

Noun

A loose belted, double breasted raincoat in a military style.

:A derivative of military garb dating back to the 1820's.

:Lately, worn as a suave statement

Models: Arçin Celikesmer, Loveday Mosley, Veronica Reed

Thanks to: Photography Society, Imogen Heald



IN CONVERSATION WITH LA BASED R&B MUSICIAN ALEX BANIN

JACK BARTON TALKS TO THE FENCER TURNED SINGER ABOUT COLLABORATION, DECLUTTERING AND HER NEW EP

Spotify is a wonderful place, and its recommended playlists have guided me to some great artists that I still listen to. 'Fresh finds' is a playlist dedicated to showcasing the very best sounds that independent artists have to offer. One such artist is Alex Banin, a London born, New York raised, Chicago based singer who recently moved to LA to become a full-time musician. Her hit 'Hawthorne' is a powerful R&B infused reflection on the complex parallels between drugs and the collapse of a relationship. Banin's voice effortlessly cuts across excellent production (often by Vlush) to deliver a well packaged sound that surpasses her age of just 23.



IMAGE: MICHAEL DEL ROSA

Alex would describe her sound as "Introspective, nostalgic, chill." Her sound has not gone unnoticed, as she has worked with a host of powerful lyricists such as 'femdot' and shared Kota the Friends 'EVERYTHING with Joey Bada\$\$, tobi lou and bas and KYLE. I had the pleasure of catching up with the rising star over Zoom across time zones to chat about collaboration, fencing and her debut EP featuring the critically acclaimed 'Saba'.

I caught Alex at the beginning of a usual workday, having moved to LA a few months ago; "I am just working on finishing stuff, I'll usually have a session or two, either for my own stuff or another

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I didn't tell people I had the verse, because it didn't feel real

artist or producer. And now I am starting to do live shows again...". Banin chose to make the move as "it felt like things were moving there for me, I was taking trips between Chicago and LA. And Chicago winters really put you through it. And it's warm in LA." While Covid has had a big impact on us all, organically meeting new people is something Banin enjoyed as "navigating the online sphere is new for me".

Having been born in London, raised in New York and then moved to Chicago and LA, Alex "is comfortable with moving", but "a lot of my personality and style comes from New York, London I was pretty young but I am sure stuff came from there... (chuckles)...I spent a summer with my dad, so I did meet a lot of people in London for music but it was like way before I even started thinking about music."

After moving to LA a few months ago she noted, "I don't know if I'm going to be here forever. I can't see myself more than five years here, but the whole industry is here and it's so easy to meet people and have a session. There are so many working musicians and creatives here, if I want to do a music video it's so easy to do it in LA... there's definitely more that I can do in terms of

spaces I want to explore, but I think I am always going to have that."

Discussion then shifted to Alex's love of fencing, the focus of the brilliantly made 'Hawthorne' music video: "I've always wanted to do a music video with it, it's a super strong visual so I have always had it in the back of my mind. Putting fencing next to massive brutalist architecture was a great contrast. As you can imagine, fencing was her 'entire life' before music... "and when music came into the picture I was like 'wow I really love this'. And then at some point you've got to pick one or the other when things get serious... and it's not like I am going to fence into my 30s." Whilst music is Banin's focus, she would still like to do it once or twice a year.

Music videos and visuals clearly play an important role in Alex's creative life, noting how music is more than just sounds she said "There are so many facets of visual art, you have your personal style, music videos, cover art, performance visuals. It's really cool you get to do all these things as an artist."

Whilst Covid has impacted us all, Alex notes

noted as a 'master of his craft' following the critically acclaimed 'CARE FOR ME'. "He had set such a precedent for other people; he had a sound that shaped what Chicago music is now." The song titled 'Rolling', Alex agreed with producer 'Vlush' needed a feature, "Saba was one of the first people we both thought of, so I asked my manager 'could you get Sab on here?', he said yes. It was sick."

"It was cool to work with someone who I had such a respect for such a long time... I didn't tell people until I had the verse, because it didn't feel real..."

Whilst there are other artists such as Frank Ocean who "would be a dream to work with, I would start crying!", for Alex, the "best collaborations are natural" and this has certainly proved true. However most newfound partners have often fallen on the production end "as a writer most of my sessions are with producers", with her EP produced by "all different people." Whilst she 'does not want to speak things in', her dream list features the likes of Dijon, Phoebe Bridges, Omar Apollo. However, ultimately "the best things happen with no expectations, it's about getting into a room and

ing songs such for me... like I can come out with a great hook or verse and that's the best part".

Whilst Alex does not always follow it, she notes the best advice she has been given is about 'decluttering your space'. More about tidying her room, Banin notes it is "promoting having stuff around you that is essential, and not just extra clutter". That said, "I don't follow it at all, but when I

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Once you start putting pressure on yourself that's when the problems come



IMAGE: NATHAN VALENCIA

the shift away from the organic way of meeting people has made it difficult, both for travelling and how 'online touring is a little more iffy'. With that said, since the pandemic began a whole host of material has been released with various artists like Kota the Friend, femdot, and The O'My's.

Since collaborating with a whole range of incredible artists, on reflection she stated that "It's cool that people in Chicago who I knew of way before they knew me are reaching out and wanting to work on projects with them has been an incredible experience... Things happen quickly in Chicago, there's only going to be one or two shows a night, so everyone gets gassed up for the same thing. It's organic, it's friends of friends, like a community."

Alex notes that since moving to LA, "there's a lot more going on, there's so much to do, it's much more about meeting people again." She's clearly excited with the direction she's heading in: "a lot of these people are new, or people that I've always wanted to work with, it's all new."

On the note of collaboration, Alex's debut EP *DID I IMAGINE* featured 27-year-old 'Saba',

having a really good time."

Clearly then, for the LA based artist, her music is going through "constant evolution". Whilst her earlier music was slower, she's excited for the upbeat and dancey tracks that are coming out. "I'll think they are really upbeat and dancey, and everyone's like 'oh this is really mellow.'" Alex clearly possesses the ability to move and experiment with sound, something she is excited for moving forward. Looking into 2022, the singer doesn't want to get too hopeful with shows however she is hopeful musically "I feel so much better about creating and having time with it, and that's what's really important."

Starting songs are Banin's favourite part, noting how they 'just happen', "which is why finish-

do I feel really good about only having things that benefit me around me... not extra, extra fluff...". On the topic of advice, the singer would advise new artists to "Have fun and meet as many people as you can, once you start putting pressure on yourself that's when problems come."

Alex's work ethic is clearly paying off, as she is doubling tenfold in listeners each year, "it just goes to show if you keep working at it and responding to what's working, it pays off..." On advice for herself, looking into 2022 the singer wants to "stay happy, healthy and grateful. If I can keep all of that up, everything else is extra."

Moving to LA has clearly given the musician a sense of excitement, noting how it is easy to wake up and write music. However, she acknowledges that "burnout is real, losing your love for music is as real as it is for anything... I don't ever want to sell out, I know it's a popular word, but I don't ever want to make music I don't like just for the purpose of it."



IMAGE: AMANDA HOW

MUSE RECOMMENDS: THE STUDY SOUNDTRACK

FROM BREAKBEAT TO CHORAL NEW AGE, **KYLE BOULTON** OFFERS HIS TOP ALBUMS



For those sick of listening to lofi study beats, you're in luck. While studying – essay writing especially – can be an intimidating chore at the best of times, there are ways of alleviating the pressure that an impending deadline brings. In the midst of recent essays, I found solace in listening to bodies of work that I usually don't have the attention span to absorb.

Apex Twin – Selected Ambient Works Volume II (1994) Truthfully, this windowlicking iconoclast has several LPs deserving of your attention. SAW II, however, is Richard D. James' most explicit venture into the world of ambient music, comprising 166 minutes of abstract sounds split into numbered segments. From the spectral '#5', to the sinister '#24', it's understandable why RDJ infamously likened the listening experience to "standing in a power station on acid". In keeping with this imagery, SAW II is best played in the dead of night when there's nothing but yourself and a few hundred words to be written.

Julianna Barwick – Nepenthe (2013) In Homer's Odyssey, "nepenthe" is a drug-like potion used to alleviate feelings of "sorrow or trouble". When the writing gets tough, I'm sure we could all use something similar. Barwick's album provides a sonic equivalent, placing choral vocals

within soothing ambient soundscapes to ethereal effect. Like SAW II, it brings its audience into an alien world where time comes to a halt. In the process, the listener is able to decide what's superfluous to their current task, and what's not.

Rival Consoles – Persona (2018) Inspired by Ingmar Bergman's 1966 arthouse classic of the same name, Persona beautifully emulates the psychosomatic anxieties permeating its core influence. Like the previous albums, each song blends into the next, immersing the listener into a carefully crafted psychoscape. As with Bergman's film, however, the icy facade throughout is interrupted by momentary glimpses of warmth that never come into fruition – see standout track 'Sun's Abandon' for a sonic example.

Susumu Yokota – Symbol (2004) Although Acid Mt. Fuji (1994) and Sakura (2000) are worthy contenders, Symbol holds up as Susumu Yokota's most accomplished work. Developing upon Sakura's ambient sensibilities, the album fuses fragments of classical music with cosy electronic backdrops. In what could easily become a gimmick, Yokota succeeds in balancing familiar compositions – such as 'Clair De Lune' and 'The Nutcracker' – with spacey production. For those who find classical music too heavy for background listening, Symbol repackages some of its greatest qualities into something far more digestible.

The Field – From Here We Go Sublime (2007) Despite ambient production lending particularly well to studying, there are strains of electronic music that are just as effective. In his 2007 debut, Swedish producer The Field offers ten unforgettable tracks of minimal techno that

set a foundation for his later releases. The result is a rhythmic, trance-like experience that burrows its way into the subconscious in such a way that helps retain focus. For those who "dig repetition", as Mark E. Smith once put it, this is an essential companion to your studies.

Amon Tobin – Permutation (1998) Partly inspired by the films of David Lynch, Amon Tobin's 1998 classic combines the seductive jazz of Angelo Badalamenti's score for Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me (1992) with the frantic drum sequencing of a Squarepusher tune. The unlikely combination of the two works incredibly well, forming a collection of breakbeat tracks that are uncompromising in their meshing of oppositional sounds.

Madlib – Sound Ancestors (2021) And finally, I've saved the best till last. Kickstarting 2021 with a bang, Madlib returned with a solo project that further fortified his position as one of hip-hop's greatest producers. While collaborative efforts with Freddie Gibbs and the late MF Doom have constituted much of his popular image, Sound Ancestors demonstrates why Madlib is not to be underestimated as a solo artist (albeit, in this case, with the editing support of Four Tet). Even after three decades of quality output, the iconic producer treats the listener to a collection of intricately detailed and sonically inventive tracks which rank among some of his best thus far. From the earworm vocals of 'The Call', to the otherworldly 'Loose Goose' that samples I'm not sure what, Sound Ancestors is bound to have you bobbing your head back and forth – enjoying your studies in a way you never thought possible.

REVIEW

AMBER MARK THREE DIMENSIONS DEEP RYAN SINCLAIR



Three Dimensions Deep is the long-awaited debut album of New York-based singer, songwriter and producer Amber Mark. It's been nearly four years since the release of her breakthrough EP *Conexão*, a melting pot of pop, soul, house and bossa nova which established her as one of R&B's most versatile songwriters. Mark's wide range of inspirations were on full display in her 2020 "Covered-19" series, a string of covers which included a soulful reimagination of Nirvana's 'Heart-Shaped Box' and a house-infused spin on Sisqó's 'Thong Song'.

Mark builds upon this platform on *Three Dimensions Deep*, taking her genre-splicing approach to songwriting to a whole new level as she effortlessly jumps between styles. On the hip-hop adjacent opener 'One' she directly addresses her late mother, singing over a smooth, chopped-up soul sample. 'What It Is' features a groovy synth-funk beat and harmonies reminiscent of the Bee Gees, culminating in an explosive guitar solo. 'Bubbles' and 'Softly' introduce dancehall elements, the latter sampling the Craig David classic 'Rendezvous'. Utilising such an eclectic

palette of sounds and styles runs the risk of creating a muddled finished product, particularly on an album running at 17 tracks long. However, Mark successfully threads these ideas together into an ambitious, three-part journey of self-discovery (the titular "three dimensions"). The first and second parts of the album are infused with existential yearning as she reflects upon her

insecurities and self-doubt. 'Healing Hurts' describes the pain of getting over a breakup, with Mark urging herself to "trust the process". 'On & On' mournfully reflects upon her loss of confidence as she struggles to find meaning in her life: "I can't seem to find the light, feeling like there's more to life". She's at her most desperate in her search for meaning on

'What It Is', where her despair can be heard vividly as she cries out "what is the point of it all?"

This quest for meaning eventually takes us into the stars in the album's third act. Mark has spoken about her interest in astrophysics, and this has seeped its way into the album. Theories of black holes and celestial bodies are not merely

something "out of this world".

On 'Cosmic', she elevates the touch of her lover to a cosmic level – "Your breathing on my neck, It takes me to another planet". This imagery continues on the Prince-inspired 'Darkside' – "Your astronomical kiss, Constellations shoot sensations through me to the sky". The beats of these tracks mimic the otherworldliness of the lyrics, particularly the floaty and ethereal 'Out Of This World'. The final stretch of tracks feels like the comedown from this out-of-body experience, bringing us back down to earth with a newfound perspective. The dream-like 'Event Horizon' serves as the perfect album closer. The title likely refers to the boundary of a black hole, the point beyond which nothing can escape. As she heads towards the future, Mark continues to ask existential questions: "What is the end when there's no time? Will it be alright without light?"

Three Dimensions Deep is overall a deeply engaging work that draws in the listener with its multi-dimensional sound, inviting us to join Mark in her healing process. The album chronicles Mark's growth as a person, but it's clear that she's grown a lot as an artist in the years since her last EP. On the opening track she mused "don't know if I'll move up, am I good enough?" With the positive reception her full-length debut has generated so far, it's safe to say that Mark is more than talented enough to go right to the top.



JENA KEATING

CORK BORN GENRE SHIFTER

BORN IN IRELAND, LIVING IN LONDON, KEATING BURST ONTO THE SCENE LAST JANUARY WITH A SOOTHING BLEND OF R&B, JAZZ, SOUL AND RAP.

IMAGE: EMILY CARDONA



'FALLING IN LOVE WITH THEIR DEMONS CAUSE I THINK I'LL FREE THEM'

JENA'S FAVOURITE SONG TO LISTEN IN THE CAR WHEN HAPPY IS 'BROWN ANGELS', BY TAMARAEBI

describe your sound in 3 emojis?

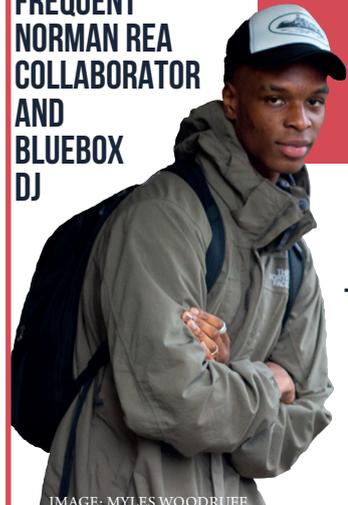


VUSI.

MUSICAL INSPIRATION?

J DILLA, SADE, ROSS FROM FRIENDS, PHARRELL, SKEPTA

FREQUENT NORMAN REA COLLABORATOR AND BLUEBOX DJ



THE BRUMMIE PRODUCER HAS A MIX-TAPE TITLED 'OBI' COMING OUT 14 FEB

IMAGE: MYLES WOODRUFF

**EDITOR'S PICKS:
FAVOURITE FILMS OF 2021**

PETITE MAMAN

Céline Sciamme channels the magic of Studio Ghibli into a childhood tale focusing on two girls with an unexpected connection - *Kyle Boulton*



IMAGE: IMDB

CRUELLA

The soundtrack was excellent and the fashion moments iconic, featuring enjoyable performances by Emma Stone and Emma Thompson - *Gracie Daw*



IMAGE: IMDB

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Medieval England works as the backdrop of an ambiguous tale of honour - *Lawrence Mason*



IMAGE: IMDB

IN THE HEIGHTS

The portrayal of the characters' identity really resonated with me, and I just simply haven't stopped singing the songs since! - *Zara Osako*



IMAGE: IMDB

THE FRENCH DISPATCH

In three vignettes, Wes Anderson's latest is an absurd 'love letter to journalism' that reaffirmed everything I love about cinema - *Martha Pollard*



IMAGE: IMDB

THE PARALLEL RISE OF SCORSESE AND SPIELBERG

LAWRENCE MASON EXAMINES THE CAREERS OF THE TWO FAMOUS JUGGERNAUT DIRECTORS

In the early 90s, both Scorsese and Spielberg released a film that helped reinvent their image. *Cape Fear* – a psychological thriller that got the blood pumping – marked the high-water mark in terms of profit for Scorsese at the time, proving that he could do more than prestigious adult films. For the first time, Scorsese made a splash with mainstream audiences, demonstrating to studios that he can attract larger scale profits. This sowed the seeds for subsequent higher budget projects such as *Casino* and *Gangs of New York*. While Scorsese was stepping away from lower budget art films, Spielberg was moving in the opposite direction. The 1994 release of *Schindler's List* saw Spielberg step back from high-octane box-office hits to make a slower, more sombre film. However, not many people know that the directors swapped these films; with Spielberg originally supposed to direct *Cape Fear*, until he traded it for *Schindler's List* with Scorsese. This 'crossing of the streams' between the two directors is an interesting footnote on two distinguished careers. Such careers form a fascinating contrast when compared.

The pair both rose to prominence in the 70s amidst the New Hollywood movement; Scorsese's first feature film was *Who's That Knocking at My Door* in 1968, an indie film made with fellow students: editor Thelma Schoonmaker and actor Harvey Keitel. But it wasn't until 1976 that he skyrocketed to fame with the release of *Taxi Driver*, a film which needs no introduction. *Taxi Driver* established Scorsese as a filmmaker with a truly original vision, his films having an edgy in-your-face style. He proved to be a very talented director, but often failed to reach mainstream appeal, making little impact at the box office. In contrast to this, when Spielberg arrived in the public consciousness he broke through the ceiling, instantly asserting himself as a profitable filmmaker.

While Spielberg began filmmaking in the New Hollywood era, he is also partially responsible for ending it; the release of *Jaws* in 1975 set a new box office record. Unprecedented commercial success eventually led to the return of studio dominance, thus ending the New Hollywood movement. Despite being the king of the box office, critics were reluctant to view his films as prestigious or adult; instead, Spielberg's work was received primarily as family friendly blockbusters, which made few waves in arthouse circles.

Both suffered their biggest setback following their breakthrough in the 70s; Spielberg's little known 1941, and Scorsese's jazz musical *New York, New York*, failed to live up to their previous work. Hot off the press from *Taxi Driver's* success *New York, New York* was a financial failure, making a measly \$16.4 million at the box office, in contrast to the former film which made almost double. Scorsese intended the picture to be a break from the gritty realism he had become known for, relating it more to Classical than New Hollywood. In doing so, he designed the film's sets to be artificial looking and the storyline

cleaner cut. The film received a mixed critical response; a review for *Time* states: "If this movie were a big-band arrangement, it would be a duet for a sax man and a girl singer, but with the soloists in a different key from the band." As a result, it's fair to suggest Scorsese's follow up to the film that kickstarted his career fell short of what he would have anticipated.

Two years later in 1979, Spielberg joined Scorsese with the lacklustre 1941, a comedy set in LA during the wake of the Pearl Harbour attack. Despite earning \$90 million worldwide, a respectable profit for any other director, it was referred to as a box office disaster as it didn't earn nearly as much as *Jaws*. The film also received a poor critical response; Roger Ebert gave it 1 1/2 stars, arguing that the film "reduces itself to an assault on our eyes and ears, a nonstop series of climaxes, screams, explosions, double-takes, sight gags, and ethnic jokes that's finally just not very funny." Ultimately, Spielberg states that he doesn't dislike the movie, it just wasn't funny enough; this remains his only venture into comedy. However, the film saw the beginning of his work with miniature sequences, a staple that would be fully realised in his next film, *Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark* (1981).

If there was any doubt of Spielberg's place in the industry following 1941, they were put to rest by the beginning of the *Indiana Jones* franchise; *Raiders of the Lost Ark* grossed \$354 million worldwide, making it the biggest film of 1981. Critics praised it as a return to form, demonstrating a directorial competence not seen since *Jaws*. While certainly a fan favourite, Spielberg's reputation as a box office king but less popular within arthouse circles began to crystallise here, with critics pointing out his overreliance on spectacle to the detriment of characterization and plot. Spielberg would go on to direct *E.T.* (1982) and *Indiana Jones* sequels that received a similar response. In an era before superhero films, Spielberg was at the forefront of blockbuster filmmaking. This trend continued, with the director releasing family favourites until the 1993 release of *Schindler's List*.

On the other side of the coin, after the lacklustre response to *New York, New York*, Scorsese released a black and white biopic about a self-destructive boxer – *Raging Bull* (1980). This project embraced what Scorsese had become known for – a gritty tone and mature themes. The film introduced Joe Pesci, who had previously retired from acting in favour of working at an Italian restaurant, earning him an Oscar nomination, alongside De Niro. Many still regard *Raging Bull* to be Scorsese's finest work, lauding it as a searing character study about an unsympathetic hero. Despite intense acclaim, the film had a lukewarm box office take of \$23 million. At this point in time, it seemed like a Spielberg film and a Scorsese film could not be more different, the intimate *Raging Bull* appearing almost antithetical to the action spectacle of *Raiders of the Lost Ark*.

Throughout the 80s Scorsese continued to release

more character driven films, and certainly found a locus for his gritty subjects in New York City, in contrast to Spielberg's global settings. These films continued the same trend of Scorsese's previous work, whereby strong critical reception was let down by a lack of mainstream appeal. *Goodfellas* (1990) was a notable release during this period and saw the director inject a slicker style into his work. The 80s also saw him venture into the religious realm with *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), which would be further developed in 2016's *Silence*.

By the end of the 80s both directors had firmly established themselves as mainstays within the American film industry. But with the release of *Cape Fear* (1991) and *Schindler's List* (1993), their reputation began to change. Scorsese returned to the experiment he started with in *New York, New York*, and re-introduced some Classic Hollywood influences, using the work of Hitchcock as a key reference point. Although *Goodfellas* saw Scorsese begin to pick up steam at the box office, it was *Cape Fear* that finally cemented him as a profitable director. Subsequently, studios were not afraid to grant him a higher budget, allowing more expensive films like *Casino* (1995) or *Gangs of New York* (2002) to be made.

Their individual filmographies after the early to mid 90s saw a patchwork of different film types. Spielberg did not abandon the blockbuster and would release *The Lost World: Jurassic Park* in 1997, a family friendly box office hit, and then *Saving Private Ryan* in 1998, a hybrid between the adult orientated prestige cinema and the action orientated blockbuster. This trend would continue to the present day, with Spielberg releasing family friendly driven films like *Ready Player One* (2018) and *Catch Me If You Can* (2002), while also making dramas such as *Lincoln* (2012) and *The Post* (2017).

Scorsese would continue to release gritty character driven films such as *Bringing Out the Dead* (1999) and *Shutter Island* (2010), while occasionally creating gangster epics. Such works often had a narrative that spans many years and a large cast of characters; *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013) and *The Irishman* (2019). He has begun to move away from New York City as a default setting, setting his films in other American cities, or even exotic locations such as Japan and the Himalayas.

It's clear that both directors have had a distinguished career, from humble film students to juggernauts in the industry. While a watershed moment in film history, the impact of the New Hollywood movement has been somewhat lost over the years, with studio dominance returning, and blockbusters becoming the norm again in mainstream cinema. However, Scorsese and Spielberg stand as two of the most successful and influential directors from the period, and both seem to be immune to demands of modern studios, making films because of their passion for the art-form rather than profit driven motives.

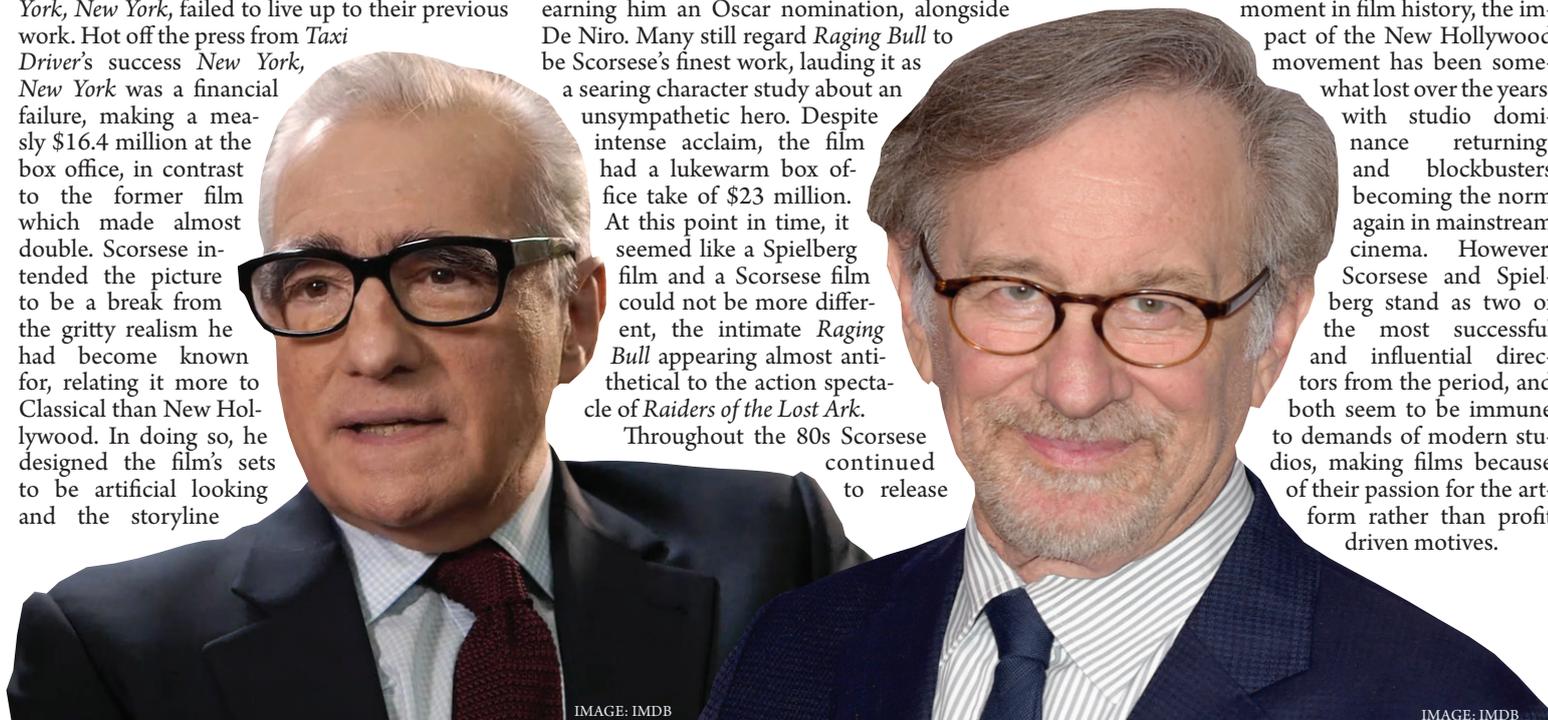


IMAGE: IMDB

IMAGE: IMDB

LOVE ON THE SPECTRUM: A FRESH TAKE ON REALITY DATING TV

MARTI STELLING LOOKS AT THE HITS AND MISSES OF NETFLIX'S TRENDING SHOW ON NEURODIVERGENT DATING

"I've had to learn masking: pretending and hiding the parts of me that don't fit neurotypical society."

Australian dating show *Love on the Spectrum* dropped on Netflix in July 2020 and has held a place in the hearts of UK viewers ever since. The first season left us with questions such as: did Michael ever find love, and what happened after Jimmy proposed to Sharna?

In essence, the show is a more affectionately named, Aussie version of *The Undateables*. Series one followed the lives of 11 adults on the autistic spectrum who were looking for love. Guided by relationship coach and expert Jodi Rogers, the cast navigate their way through romance, love, and relationships. In series two, we catch up with Michael, Chloe, Mark, Jimmy and Sharna, as well as introducing four new cast members.

The premise of the show is on the verge of being perfect, but it does not quite make it. Instead of cutting out the awkward silences and times when things don't go quite to plan, we are left with a raw and honest depiction of dating on the spectrum—the good, the bad, and the just plain heart warm-

ing. As well as shining a light on love and autism, the series also depicts underrepresented LGBTQIA relationships.

However, the show has received mixed critical responses with one viewer calling it "autism through a neurotypical lens". We watch painful encounters between the cast and the people they encounter, and at times it seems that their lines are being played for laughs. The parents and families of the cast often feature in the episodes, sharing their experiences of having a child on the spectrum looking for love. Some of the negative reviews of the show refer to the parents speaking on behalf of the cast, reinforcing the damaging misconception that people with disabilities need to be mediated through neurotypical voices.

Despite this, the show allows time for the cast to speak about their special interests and doesn't cut out the characters' neurodivergent behaviours, such as stimming (repetitive movements that can help autistic people manage strong emotions). These behaviours are often seen as 'taboo' and uncomfortable for neurotypical viewers, making their depiction in the media even more important.

One of the most poignant moments of the series for me is when Cassandra opens up about her experience with masking. Masking refers to when a neurodiverse individual hides their typically autistic traits in order to fit in with neurotypical society. She admitted to being told that she "doesn't look autistic" and therefore finding it challenging to seek out the help she needed. Talking about her love for cosplay, collections of stuffed toys, and human teeth, Cassandra reveals her true self and doesn't hold back on account of causing discomfort. Honest conversations about masking are so important in the media as they open up wider discussions surrounding why autistic people are expected to change and hide parts of their personalities in order to make others comfortable. Cassandra comments on her late diagnosis, and how women and girls often miss out on a diagnosis due to the prevalence of masking.

Sharna and Jimmy travel abroad for a pool tournament, providing lots of challenges for the young couple. We watch Sharna in particular deal with emotions in ways that may seem unusual or difficult to understand. Sharna speaks loudly and makes repetitive movements to regulate these feelings. Similarly, taking breaks and time away from loud or over-stimulating environments is normalised, creating an autism-friendly environment. Unedited, raw, and honest depictions of autism are so important in removing the stigma and shame from the

lives of those on the spectrum.

Early in the series, we watch Michael enter the world of speed dating—a situation daunting and uncertain for anybody. We encounter some hard to watch conversations, one notably in which a date likens Michael's special interest in trains to her brother's love of *Thomas the Tank Engine*. However, we watch some moments of real connection between Michael and the dates, proving that autistic people can do anything neurotypical people can.

Each cast member meets with the relationship coach to discuss their dating progress. The tips they are provided with, such as using open questions, are specifically curated for the individual and their experience with dating. There is an environment of respect, mutual understanding, and safety in these sessions, which is really lovely to watch.

Love on the Spectrum gives audiences a wonderful glimpse into the highs and lows of finding love as an autistic person. If you are looking for a down-to-earth dating show that does not gloss over the parts that are uncomfortable, this is the one for you. While I am excited to see where the show goes next, I would love to see the show take a less neurotypical perspective and give more screen



IMAGE:IMDB



IMAGE:IMDB

MEMORIA, A SENSORY EXPERIENCE HAUNTED BY REMEMBRANCE

SOPHIA ASH EXPLORES THE MEDITATIVE INTROSPECTION OF WEERASETHAKUL'S ODE TO UNEARTHLINESS

Subtly haunting, meditative sequence, *Memoria* is a film that explores our sensory engagement with the world which we are bound to and yet seem to understand so little about. It reels us into the psychic journey of a woman troubled by an incessant sound in her mind which she cannot shake. She clutches at the words to describe it, articulating it as some kind of rumble emanating from the core of the earth, a collision of metal and water, a sound that is round and then shrinking.

The languidly strung sequence of *Memoria* unfolds against the haunting beauty of the Colombian landscape. Here, we are arrested in an inarticulable earthly beauty, made achingly aware of human corruptive influence within this un-touchable world. As Jessica treads the lands in her search for answers, we are made conscious of how everything is interconnected in ceaseless harmony, a rhythm permeating the entire cosmos and our consciousness. Humankind becomes an agonising disruption, breaching this elemental harmony, stretching its psychic and physical boundaries out into a world it has no right to invade.

And so the sound which pursues Jessica can be seen to reflect this rupture of harmony and the conflicted relation between earth and humankind. The film is entrenched in a visceral soundscape – we are pursued constantly by noise – jangling, harsh, scraping, rattling, then dissolving into softer sounds

of the natural world. Moans of the rain conflict and subside into the blaring of car alarms. This calls into being the idea of memories as a vibration of sound— inexplicable, emanating from nowhere, and from everywhere. Jessica's memories – both ancestral and rooted in the present – pursue her in a way that is disturbing in its inaccessibility.

Is it her or is it the world that is so tragically out of balance? "I think I'm going crazy", she observes. Yet there is no vivid indication of insanity, no outward hysteria or crazed flutterings - the words are uttered mildly, unaffectedly.

Whatever kind of insanity she may be tumbling into is one that engulfs her in a sense of searching, of haunting, grappling to quell the power of the psychic over the concrete. In her searches, she finds herself at the desk of an archaeologist, scrutinising with unnerving intensity the disembodied limbs strewn on the wooden surface. With a kind of haunted rapture, she runs her fingers over and into a hole drilled into a skull to release bad spirits.

As she continues in her disoriented strivings to understand this phantasmic phenomenon, she connects with two men – both named Hernán. One, a sound engineer, helps her to reconstruct the sound in her mind using sonic technology, calling into being the jolting

emanations that haunt her.

The other is an older fish-scaler – a solemn, solitary figure who has crafted a simple existence for himself, an existence contained within the same rivers and mountains he has grown up in. He spends the days scaling fish, working the land. For him, to experience too much in excess, to feel things that surpass the repetitive simplicity of manual labour and basic practicalities, would be to dislodge the serenity he has found for himself. He is a man hyper sensitive to what passes around him, as though to feel too much at once would rupture the precious harmony he seeks with the natural world. Though alone, seemingly cut off from society, he is happy, able to rest. Jessica looks on, fascinated as he sleeps among the fronds, eyes fluttering slightly open, face slackened in utter tranquillity. There, in his dreams, he is engulfed in complete emptiness. And she envies him for it, shackled as she is by unshakable insomnia, thrown into a restless disharmony dictated by the clanging in her mind.

Throughout the film, there is a pervasive sense of another world, the world of the spirits, existing both above and beneath our waking existence. It is a film preoccupied with thresholds - of reality into

dream, psychic into concrete. We hang in suspension, in a kind of sluggish liminality. Jessica cannot succumb to the clutches of sleep, forever bound to the waking world, forever trailed by that incessant sound without explanation. Is it some kind of ancestral intuition or trauma which afflicts her that is struggling to make itself known?

Memoria's world, though intimately earth-bound, simultaneously exudes a profound unearthliness. There is a sense of restraint, as though it cannot reveal itself too quickly, for fear of dislodging that precious harmony that, once found, is impossible to sustain. It is at once both a dream and a nightmare. Haunting and phantasmagoric, *Memoria* is a film refusing to explain itself, to give itself over to the delusive privileges of the perceiver. It is crafted to be felt, to engulf you, not needing to explain, not allowing itself to yield to the viewer's incessant demands to know.

Editor's note: This film was screened at City Screen York



IMAGE:IMDB

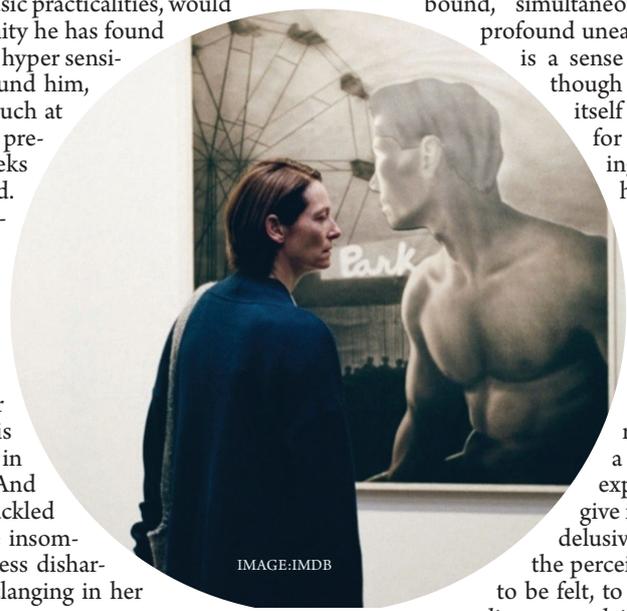


IMAGE:IMDB

“HE’S JUST NOT WHAT I ORDERED”: ON NETFLIX, LOVE IS UNKIND

SOPHIE BURTON EXPLORES HOW OUR FAVOURITE DATING SHOWS CAN BECOME VEHICLES FOR TOXIC IDEOLOGIES

As Brits, we love nothing more than a night in front of the telly. Whether it’s a classic film or the latest tantalising drama, we’re a nation of avid viewers. It would seem that the reality dating show is no exception to this rule, with evermore shows making their way to our screens, their rising popularity continues to grow. However, as we continue to tune in to these shows, what exactly is it that we are engaging with?

As our relationship with technology develops, many have raised important questions about the impact it has on our attitudes and behaviour. There has been copious amounts of research over the years into whether exposure to video games and films that depict graphic violence can encourage resonant patterns in real life.

Though dating culture has naturally evolved a long way from what our grandparents may remember, social media often encourages a shift from relationships being an element of our private life to becoming a much more public affair. It’s interesting to unpick some of these changes and interrogate the correlation between what we digest about love in the media, and how it impacts our attitudes towards relationships, specifically the impact of dating shows.

“ We live in a world where people are judged primarily on their appearance, and these shows only encourage this further.

Though clearly popular enough amongst viewers to warrant their production, the reality dating show category is growing rapidly, with more and more being created every year. Each show has a different premise and format, but it would seem the ideas they promote all stem from the same problematic tropes. As with most reality shows, each new season or show tends to bring a new twist, but as viewing figures rise, more and more issues begin to emerge.

Whilst physical attraction and chemistry are undoubtedly important in any romantic relationship, it should be balanced with other elements; things like trust, communication and respect. Yet, many dating shows promote a hypersexual culture which borders dangerously on objectification. The current hypersexual atmosphere that we live in is highlighted through shows like *Too Hot to Handle* on Netflix. Though on the surface it claims to encourage meaningful connection by prohibiting physical contact and punishing rulebreakers by reducing the prize money, the ‘entertainment factor’ of the show is the contestant’s inability to put aside sexual desire for more than five minutes. All this so called ‘experiment’ presents is the idea that sexual gratification is so integral to today that it is a burden to give up - is this a message we should really be sending?

Particularly in the media, sex is everywhere, and at the centre of everything. You only need to look at the age old catchphrase ‘sex sells’ to work out where these shows make their money... (I think the producers of *Naked Attraction* may have taken

this idea a bit too literally though!) Though sex shouldn’t be something we are ashamed of, the problematic elements come from the hyper-sexualisation of the female body, but particularly in dating shows, men can also be subject to this too. On *Love Island* for example, the contestants’ first impressions of each other are when they each enter in skimpy swimwear – think Joey and Chandler watching *Baywatch* in *Friends*... And as the show goes on, things don’t get any better. The questionable nature of the challenges often make tabloid headlines, with tasks such as sucking each other’s fingers and licking someone’s neck or giving your best sexy dance. Being ‘sexy’ is often the aspiration and the focus at the heart of these shows, for men and for women, but what does it mean to be ‘sexy’? Therein lies another problem.

Not only do these shows promote this hypersexualised culture and the concept that sexiness equals success, but in the process of doing so lies a reinforcement of stereotypes of what it means to be beautiful in the modern age. It’s no coincidence that most of the contestants from *Love Island* become influencers on social media. A standard is set around what makes someone physically beautiful. The majority of these

time for the women this is made out to be blonde hair and large cleavage, and for men, tall, toned and tanned. Dating shows aren’t the creators of these stereotypes – in fact, if you

read Naomi Woolf’s book *The Beauty Myth* she argues that the concept of beauty has evolved as a hoop for women to jump through, a new social barrier for them. As they are no longer under the same strict oppression politically or by law, society prescribes they must be beautiful. Social media is a gold mine for these ridiculous stereotypes, every few months there’s a new trend or ‘look’ that is needed to make the cut and they don’t just affect women. Men are also subjected to the same harsh standards of judgement. On a platform where we’re encouraged to be our authentic

sleeves, we’re judged against the highest standards that are impossible to reach.

Personally I believe these stereotypes play a large role in the way that modern dating culture has become so cutthroat. On dating apps we’re encouraged to swipe through people’s profiles as though they’re a deck of cards and judge based on how they look in a photo. Though some dating shows claim to encourage people to look beyond physical appearance, in every one I’ve seen, you’ll hear someone asked about ‘what they’re looking for’ and nine times out of ten the response given begins with a physical description.

Stereotypes and ideals regarding weight, height, hair and generic looks are pushed upon us from every angle of the media, therefore it’s not a coincidence that the most popular shows select people who are stereotypically ‘beautiful’ as stars, positing that to be successful in love, you must conform to these standards. Very rarely there’ll be someone who is different in some way, but often that becomes a point of discussion or a focus surrounding them, which is where shows

such as *The Undateables* were born from. We live in a world where people are judged primarily on their appearance, and these shows only en-

tion, and in some other shows, contestants are asked to pick a partner from a lineup of options. I’m all for knowing what you want in life and standing by your values, but there’s a line between having confidence in what you want and an insensitive culture of judgement

“ Beauty comes in all shapes and sizes, it is not defined by Instagram followers or Tinder matches

and selectivity. It’s important to remember that the people on these shows are humans with feelings and not just pawns in a game or one option out of a hundred for someone to consider and discard.

Though these shows always advertise themselves around the concept of helping people find love, I counter that love is certainly not what motivates the makers and the contestants of these shows - the ideals promoted are not loving. Physical attraction is merely one element of a relationship and chemistry comes in many forms. Beauty comes in all shapes and sizes, it is not defined by Instagram followers or Tinder matches. It is concerning how widespread some of these beliefs have become and when watching these shows, I fear that love is being reduced to these trivial matters, especially as more and more people tune in.

Is it a coincidence that as the influence of the media continues to grow, more and more people struggle to form meaningful long-term relationships? The rise of ‘hook-up’ culture amongst young people mirrors the disposable and reckless attitudes people bring towards dating in these shows and ‘swiping’ habits are beginning to move from apps to the real world. Breakups and short-lived romances are part of life, most will encounter them at some point, unless they’re lucky enough to find ‘the one’ at 16, but the frequent exposure to cheating and heartbreak in such a flippant manner along with casual objectification and sexualisation of contestants’ bodies, makes us emotionally removed from such things and believe that there is no need to think twice about the way we treat ourselves and others.

Though there is no harm in engaging with entertainment, it’s important to remember that behind every contestant on these shows, there is a real person with real feelings, as with every hinge or bumble profile you swipe through. If you find yourself on a date anytime soon, even if it isn’t working out, remember to treat the other party with basic levels of respect.

You may be able to customise your perfect takeaway, but you can’t build a human being to order in the same way.



IMAGE:IMDB



IMAGE:IMDB

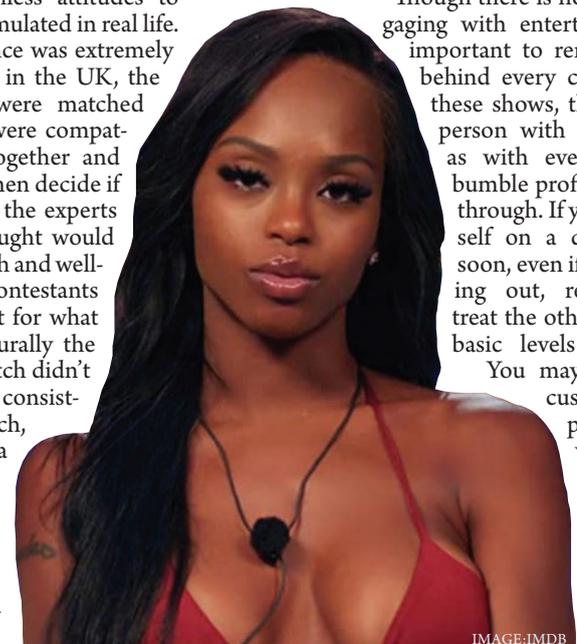


IMAGE:IMDB

THE DISAPPOINTING EXECUTION OF ARKANE'S DEATHLOOP

KYLE BOULTON REVIEWS ARKANE'S NEWEST STEALTH-SIMULATOR AGAINST THE OLDER RELEASES

Warning: The following article will contain spoilers for *Deathloop*. It is intended to help viewers decide whether to buy the game or not but will discuss details about the game in the process. Given their past success in the stealth-simulator genre, Arkane's newest release looked to be another hit. Set on the island of Blackreef, *Deathloop* tells the story of assassin Colt, in contention with rival assassin Julianna, who remains stuck in a time loop where the same day repeats without change. When the player takes control, Colt has been stuck in this loop for an unknown amount of time – twenty years is suggested, but it could just as easily be an eternity. To destabilise and end the cycle for good, all nine 'visionaries' who created the loop must be killed in one day.

As the marketing made clear, the concept of *Deathloop* is its greatest strength. In contrast to the current abundance of time-bending, high concept science fiction - with Netflix's *Dark* (2017-2020) and Housemarque's *Returnal* (2021) coming to mind – the game navigates its temporal conundrums with flamboyance. The final product doesn't take itself too seriously, combining the campy espionage of classic James Bond with the philosophical framework of a Christopher Nolan film.

It's a fascinating new direction for the developers of critically-acclaimed titles such as the *Dishonored* series (2012-2017) and 2016's *Prey* reboot. Staples of Arkane's design persist – sandbox levels, player agency, complex mechanics – but are developed in accordance with the game's unique setting. The gameplay, in particular, is where *Deathloop* finds strength; learning from past mistakes, Arkane does not deter the player from taking a violent approach, allowing you to go all guns (and bombs) blazing without the risk of a 'bad ending'. All weapon builds are viable, creating a multifaceted experience that rewards player

creativity.

With that being said, the variety of weapons is somewhat limited compared to past Arkane releases, restricting the core inventory to four choices – a handgun, assault rifle, sniper, and a knife. Although Colt possesses supernatural powers harking back to *Dishonored* and *Prey*, there is ultimately a small range of tools. Instead, variety is constituted through weapon upgrades obtained from defeated enemies and the game's environments. The sheer amount of upgrades, however, means they quickly become negligible in the long run, the player soon discovering that some work better than others.

More disappointing is the constrictive world design. While the emphasis on quality over quantity is a welcome change from the bloated levels of *Prey*, Arkane fails to explore the full potential of this realisation. The playable areas of Blackreef are split into four domains – Updaam, Karl's Bay, Frisad Rock, and The Complex. The thing that brings these locales to life is not so much their biodiversity, but the way in which they transform depending on what time of the day Colt visits. Hence, the player has no choice but to retreat familiar territory, creating a fitting parallel to the spatiotemporally frustrated protagonist who perpetually navigates the world. Rather than building upon the organic level design found in the *Metroidvania* genre, however, this dynamic quickly becomes repetitive, working far better in theory than execution.



IMAGE: IGDB DEATHLOOP PRESSKIT

Furthermore, there is a lack of player agency in contrast to *Dishonored*, or even the recent *Hitman* series (2016-2021). Although the visionaries can be assassinated according to individual playing style, the loop can only be ended by killing them in a specific order. What appears to be a mind-blowing premise is subsequently let down by linear execution. In conjunction with the lack of map and weapon variety, *Deathloop* begins to promise more than it can deliver.

Despite these faults, the game still has a lot going for it. Playing on the PlayStation 5, Blackreef's diverse colour palette is a welcome change from the visual realism found in most contemporary AAA games. In addition, the Souls franchise's invasion system is successfully integrated within its core gameplay dynamics, whereby Julianna invades Colt's world to (further) complicate his time in the loop. Real-life players occupy the role of Julianna in what makes for a thrilling game of cat and mouse.

What has the potential to be an enthralling experience is ultimately let down by a surprising lack of depth. The concept behind *Deathloop* is strong, but the end result is more of a learning experience for Arkane than a grand culmination of their past efforts. Regardless, it's hard to deny the craft which goes into a project like this, and the risks taken will undoubtedly lead to a greater sequel.

THE CAUSE OF CONSOLE SHORTAGES A YEAR AFTER RELEASE

ADAM FROST LOOKS INTO WHY IT IS STILL NOT POSSIBLE TO BUY AN XBOX SERIES X OR A PS5

Have you ever begged your parents for a new release? Looked at that new pair of shoes or coat then realised you can't afford it? We have all been there. But what about when the product isn't on the shelf? When a popular new product gets released, not everyone will be able to get one on release day. The dreaded words 'out of stock' will be seen on websites and in stores for days, weeks, maybe even months after the initial release. However, increased demand for consoles, Covid and flippers have all ensured that both the Xbox series X and PS5 have remained out of stock for over a year after their release. From time to time there will be drip feeds of the consoles into stores. However, any available stock is quickly bought up within the hour. Here are the main reasons why...

Firstly, the impact of Covid has been far reaching. The loss of life has been devastating and the economic impact crippling for supply chains. The console market hasn't been protected from this hit. Both Sony and Microsoft have experienced a low supply of console components such as chips. Meaning they can't supply enough consoles.

Furthermore, Phil Spencer (CEO of Microsoft Gaming) said that it isn't just the supply stop-

ping consumers from getting new consoles. Covid has caused everyone to isolate at some point over the last two years, through lockdowns and self-isolation measures. This has meant that people haven't been able to see their family or access outdoor entertainment. As a result, many people under lockdown measures have resorted to gaming. Therefore, the demand for new Xbox, PS5 and more recently the OLED Nintendo Switch, has soared. So, while the current level of supply might have been able to service gamers ten years ago, the market currently has a massive excess demand.

Another factor increasing the demand for these consoles are flippers. When any product is released, there will be people looking to turn a quick buck. By either manually buying up stock or using programs to do so. With the aim of reselling anything they buy at a higher price because first party retailers are out of stock.

The problem with all these factors mean that over a year on from release both consoles are still

out of stock.

Stock checking services such as Stock Former have made it easier for gamers trying to get their hands on either console. Their website and discord update whenever there is new stock of either. Although, unless gamers are checking websites like these constantly, they are likely to miss out. Since stock of both is usually gone within an hour.

This is where some flippers have an advantage. If they can devote more time to searching for stock of the consoles or have programs which buy stock for them, regular consumers cannot compete.

This doesn't bode well for developers either. For developers who want to release games for the Xbox one X or PS5 specs they suffer from a smaller target audience.

So, what is the solution? For the time being it seems like gamers can either wait or buy the Xbox series S. Originally marketed as the cheaper version of the Xbox series X the series S boasts remarkably similar specs to the Xbox series X. Gamers have been picking up the Series S with the intention to upgrade to the Series X when it is available.

The expectation is that this shortage will continue through 2022 with no end in sight. However, as the international spread of Covid slows hopefully there will be an upturn in stock.

For now, this writer will continue to check the stock of the Xbox Series X. Hopefully they start to appear on shop shelves more frequently over the coming year. Best of luck if you are trying to pick one up.



IMAGE: BILLY FREEMAN FROM UNSPLASH

GAMING TEAM RECOMMENDS:

GAMES WE ALMOST FORGOT



IMG: SISULAK FROM UNSPLASH

When you first buy a new title your excited. Every other game takes a back seat. Some games even get forgotten about and start gathering dust. In this edition we will look at games that you forgot. Titles in your collection that have started gathering dust and deserve some love. Here are our top picks for titles you need to revisit.

MEET THE ROBINSONS



IMG: IGDB PRESS KIT ONLINE

While I'm always shocked at how few people watched *Meet the Robinsons* as a child, for me it remains one of my all time favourite films. This title is backwards compatible on xbox, but available on both platforms and deserves some love. Even if you haven't watched the movie everything is quickly explained. You play as Wilbur travelling through time. Even though you've just been told not to. And subsequently getting into trouble that almost dystroys the world!

BATTLEFRONT 1

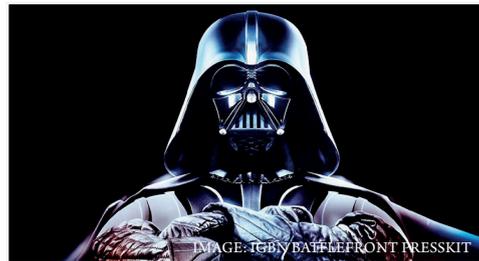


IMAGE: IGDB BATTLEFRONT PRESSKIT

Any fan of starwars will have played hours on this game. From the moment it came out fans of the older starwars game KOTOR as well as younger starwars fans flocked to it. The idea of playing as your favourite darkside or light-side hero and wielding a lightsaber on a jetpack speaks to every gamer. The PC version of the game has been rendered basically unplayable by hackers. However, you can pick it up for a reasonable price on either xbox or playstation.

POKEMON PLATINUM

Often considered one of the greatest pokemon games of all time. Pokemon Platinum increased the difficulty of both Pokemon Diamond and Pearl and changed the legendary pokemon you would eventually encounter after victory road and the elite 4. Not only is the design of this legendary one the best to have ever been created it remains a fan favourite to this day. The popularity of this game is however shown in the price. Depending when you try and pick up a copy you could be paying up to £60 for one NDS cartridge. Although if you do manage to get your hands on a copy it should be well worth it. Just remember you need a NDS to play.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS AND ETHICS OF TRAVEL JOURNALLING

TABITHA KAYE REFLECTS ON THE GROWTH OF TRAVEL JOURNALS AND THE ETHICS OF JOURNALING HISTORICALLY SENSITIVE SUBJECTS

It could be argued that the travel journal began life as the humble travel blog. In the early 2010s, travel blogs were popping up everywhere and were duly bound to include a profile picture of a windswept yet earnest traveller set to a backdrop of cascading mountains and vales. All jokes aside, travel blogs became an essential companion for many travellers, providing both practical and money saving tips as a way of making people's travel goals a reality.

We may see this type of traveller as one who 'travels to journal'. From the moment they step into the airport, they are primed to collect various souvenirs from their experience: ripped tickets, polaroids – even something as trivial as a paper tea bag casing which is unique to their host country. Whilst nothing can match the exciting exhilaration of exploring a new city, a memento such as small as a photograph can help remind us of that feeling when the trip has come to an end. In doing so, the traveller may then reflect on their experiences and, with their many points of reference, produce a form of guide, whether this be written formally or as a series of tokens presented to anyone interested in their journey (the scrapbook is an old-school favourite!).

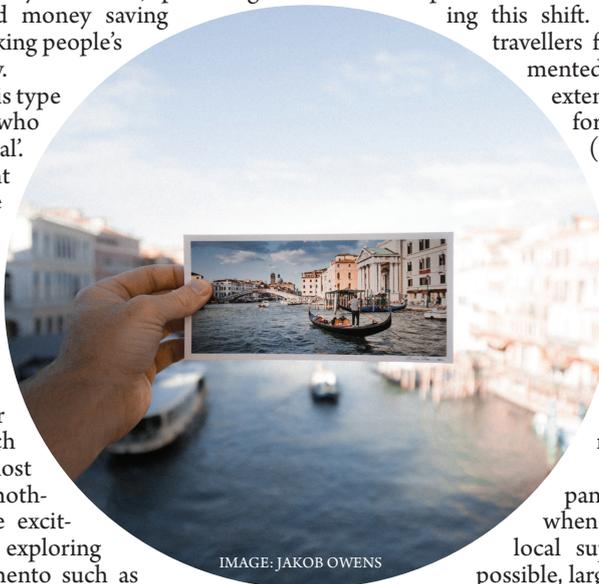


IMAGE: JAKOB OWENS

Inevitably, such pragmatic foundations were infiltrated slowly by a yearning for the aesthetic side of travel. While the backpacker was always a key audience of the travel blog, it was now imperative that they should undergo a journey punctuated by 'Instagram-worthy' pictures. The large uptake of intertravelling in the mid-

2010s proved to be a key catalyst in causing this shift. Particularly, young travellers from the UK documented their explorations extensively, often in the form of a video diary ('vlog'). Cut scenes of train journeys to a soundtrack of lofi beats became a desirable form of escapism at a time when the freedom of travel in Europe was being threatened by impending Brexit negotiations.

Then came the pandemic. In a time when embarking to the local supermarket felt impossible, larger travel plans were pushed firmly out of the equation. Yet, curiously, the popularity of the travel blog continued to grow. With nowhere to go, the population took to transforming the travel vlog into a hopeful endeavour. Bucket lists were revisited and postcards were printed. From this emerged aspirations and theoretical plans for visits to far-away places in bullet journals as a way of feeling

productive among the chaos.

We can consider this type of traveller as one who 'journals to travel' – a not so distant cousin of the traditional blogger, for it is likely that the bug for travelling had been ignited through lived experience. For those stuck in a global pandemic, or who do not have the means to travel due to personal circumstances, one may find a lifeline in the joy of planning. Unlike traditional travel logging, this form of journaling is not confined to physical movement: one journaler may choose to travel to the other side of the world in an aesthetically calming mirage of Pinterest pictures, while another may choose to reflect on a fantasy novel and cite their ideal getaway as something more abstract.

In this sense, our traditional notion of travel blogging is dispelled completely. Among the strange array of approaches to travel blogging, sentimentality and joy prevail as common themes. But what happens when we encounter more historically sensitive experiences on our travels? In 2018, I was lucky enough to visit a place on my travel bucket list: Kraków, Poland. Beneath the joyful display of fine art and culture lay a deeply contested history of Nazi occupation and inhuman persecution – marks of which were still laid bare in the form of graffiti, particularly in the historic Jewish quarter of Kazimierz.

As part of our trip, we visited the site of Auschwitz Birkenau, which pulled the undertones of the city into a sharp focus. I remember wanting to record my journey but always being undecided as to how to reflect on my trip respectfully and appropriately. In this light, the aesthetical framework of travel journaling falters, and the need for more earnest and informative blog posts gains reverence. Is it appropriate to 'jour-

nal' such travels, and in what way? Many travellers have turned to framing their experiences with historical detail, which implies the need for journaling to be self-informed and show an awareness of how the traveller's reflections may be used to educate on sensitive subjects.

At the end of the day, travel journaling should be a reflection of what the traveller or prospective traveller wishes to gain from their experience. Whether you're planning to stop off at Hogwarts or want to interrail, there's a form of travel journaling in which everyone can find solace.



IMAGE: BLOG CUBE

TAKING A TOUR THROUGH THE ICONIC LITERARY PAST OF JAPAN

EMILY WARNER TAKES READERS ON A JOURNEY THROUGH SOME OF THE MOST WELL KNOWN LOCATIONS IN JAPANESE LITERATURE

Our journey begins in 11th century Japan, amidst the ancient courts of the Heian Period. This interesting period of history saw a flourishing of culture, manifesting in the creation of art, poetry and literature. Notably, during this time, the renowned *Tale of Genji* was written by Murasaki Shikibu, a text which proudly claims to be the first novel ever written. After this, the literary output of Japan in subsequent centuries has been vast and diverse, offering a vibrant portrait of the country, more enriching than any history textbook. Where facts can only draw an outline of this chequered past, literature provides the light which illuminates depth, casts grainy shadows and encompasses the whole beautiful past of the Land of the Rising Sun.

I invite you to join me on a journey through the labyrinthine alleyways of Japan's literary past, traversing not just geographical distance but also climbing the peaks of Japanese traditions and stumbling through the valleys of time.

Uji

If *The Tale of Genji* is a whirlwind tale of romance, love affairs and courtly intrigue, the small city of Uji (South of Kyoto) is its grand stage. The last ten chapters of the classic story are set in Uji, and meandering the streets takes you past many sites associated with the tale. You can learn about these in The Tale of Genji Museum, which boasts historical dioramas and immersive depictions of scenes in the novel. On the far side of Uji-bashi Bridge, there is a statue of Murasaki Shikibu, the world's first novelist. Serenely perched in front of the city backdrop, Shikibu's real life as a lady-in-waiting in the Imperial

Court is animated; this blends with the fiction she wrote, making her legacy almost tangible. In this city the influence of such a pioneering text is more palpable than anywhere else in the world, completely immersing visitors in a rich world of literary history.

Tono

Tono is a rural town, located in the hills of central Iwate Prefecture. Today, the location is a place of rustic landscapes and farming culture, but woven into the fabric of the hills is a rich oral tradition that tells tales of magic, spirits and the supernatural. Stepping into Tono is like walking into a fictional land, and its folklore will augment your imagination and appreciation for Japanese literature. In the early Meiji Period, a collaboration between Yanagita Kunio and Sasaki Kizen led to these Japanese tales being published in *Legends of Tono*. Within the town, you can quite literally watch them come alive in storytelling performances, or wander the surrounding mountains in search of the mysterious beings described in the stories. The tales range from mystical water sprites with a penchant for



children and cucumbers, to mothers who transform into serpents. Yet, beneath all this is a human appreciation for wit, eloquence, simplicity and a past which feels increasingly discernable.

Yuzawa

Another classic of Japanese literature is *Snow Country* by Yasunari Kawabata, a beautiful novel written in clear, crisp prose, which is reminiscent of the snow which recurs as a motif throughout. Kawabata elegantly conjures the visceral landscape of Yuzawa where the story unravels, as he describes a love affair between a Tokyo dilettante and a haunted geisha. The hot spring town is located in Niigata Prefecture, and is a popular ski area due to its deep snow and long winter season. Words cannot do justice to the beauty of Kawabata's writing and therefore, I will transcribe for you this quote from the book, in which he captures the landscape with unrivalled nuance:

"It was a stern night landscape. The sound of the freezing of snow over the land seemed to roar deep into the earth. There was no moon. The stars, almost too many of them to be true, came forward so brightly that it was as if they

were falling with the swiftness of the void."

Shikoku

Perhaps one of the most famous Japanese authors is Haruki Murakami, whose audience is not limited to the country of his birth but spans the entire globe. To trace the footsteps of Murakami's quirky, often mystical characters would require an article of its own for he is both prolific and dedicated to superimposing magical tales onto real locations. However, his novel *Kafka On The Shore*, winner of the World Fantasy Award for Novels in 2006, is where I will focus my attention as it is a personal favourite of mine. The majority of the novel occurs in Takamatsu, the smallest prefecture of the island Shikoku, where you can peruse the city streets and glimpse the locus of Murakami's inspiration. Here, it is also worth stopping to sample the local delicacy of 'sanuki udon' – it is said that some people travel across Japan just to try it. A short 15 minute journey from Takamatsu is the Kamanda Museum, which was the inspiration for Murakami's fictional Komura Memorial Library, another place to visit if you want to encounter the true essence of the novel.

We must now conclude our tour of Japan's literary locations, but the densely woven tapestry of Japanese culture has merely been glossed over. Japan's streets are crowded with echoes of literary figures who I haven't had a chance to mention; Mishima, Basho, Soeski, Sei Shonagon and many more. Following the characters in these texts through the real country of Japan and seeing the places that inspired them offers an experience no travel guide can rival.

'AN APPLE A DAY': NUTRITION FOR THE NEW YEAR - MYTHS DEBUNKED

TABITHA KAYE RECONSIDERS THE CENTRAL ROLE THAT NUTRITION PLAYS IN NEW YEARS' RESOLUTIONS AND DAMAGING DIETARY MYTHS

Over the Christmas season, it is inevitable that many of us find ourselves digressing into 'weight gain memes' in the spirit of festive indulgence. When Christmas is all about desserts and sugary delights, this food-orientated period is, ironically, only the 'entrée'; the descent into January marks another momentous shift as we look to New Year weight loss and healthy eating resolutions.

Even though this generally relates to the scales, the January 'shred' period is not exclusive to simple weight loss statistics. The belief in 'new beginnings' also links to unhealthy habits which cannot be quantified as easily as a scale reading. However, in a society underpinned by regressive diet culture and aesthetic shreds we are habitually encouraged to look over the most important element of a 'healthy' constitution: nutrition.

We are no strangers to the notion of 'you are what you eat.' It hangs over us like a solemn, disapproving figure as we reach for the first sugary treat of the new year – probably the very vice you vowed to renounce in the pursuit of an idealised 'healthy' body. While a whole packet of donuts is likely to exceed your recommended daily intake of sugars, it shouldn't stand for a sharp binary between 'bad' and 'good'. Any food group in excess will hinder a 'healthy' lifestyle, so why is it that we choose to

fixate on certain food types? Sadly, this is due to the warped notion of health which lives in our collective memory.

Too often, 'health' is reinforced as synonymous with a singular body image. Type 'healthy body' into Google and watch images of slim, chiselled physiques outway images of alternative body compositions. YouTube 'transformation' videos are possibly the most culpable as dramatic 'before and after' pictures are pitted against each other, often alluding to losing 'x' amount of weight in a small time frame. While this is not always the case, more often than not a healthy body is epitomised by the process of losing weight by whatever means possible, including fasting and crash dieting.

Recently, body confidence influencer Alex Light (@alexlight_ldn) shared a recreation of an old picture, contrasting her 'best' body type, as defined by society, alongside her current body type. The caption read: "when you looked your 'BEST', were you treating your body the 'WORST'?" Here, 'worst' is defined by Light as her experiences with restrictive eating and non-nutrient dense meals. This is not an attempt to villainise smaller body types or to suggest they are inherently a product of nutrition-

malpractice. However, Light's post does raise questions about the integral role of nutrition and why many are happy to neglect the importance of fuelling their body in order to function day-to-day, let alone to achieve aesthetic goals.

Why is nutrition important? Alongside everyone's individual basal metabolic rate (the lowest amount of calories one needs to consume in order to live), a nutrient-dense diet is an integral aspect of maintaining base level body functions. Unfortunately, restricting caloric intake, as is recommended with many popular diet plans, often means forfeiting this essential fuel in the process. Carbohydrates are at the forefront of diet culture myths as they tend to be perceived as more calorie dense than other food groups, especially in popular culture (Lizzy McGuire springs to mind: "Kate, you don't eat carbs.").

In accordance with the Harvard School of Public Health, it is recommended that certain types of carbohydrates, such as whole grains, should constitute a fourth of your plate every mealtime. By cutting these out, we are risking not consuming enough fibre to maintain healthy digestion.

Leading nutritionist Rob Hobson has partnered with British Apples and Pears in an attempt to debunk these misconceptions and promote a return to a nutrition-led approach to both weight loss and maintain-

ing a healthy lifestyle. Hobson cites that in a recent Onken Yoghurt Poll, the majority of people still believed food myths, such as celery's 'ability' to burn more calories than you gain from eating it. As an alternative to metabolic damaging diets, Hobson promotes a simple daily routine: eating one apple a day before a meal to boost overall fibre content. The physiological benefits of apples are immense: they help to reduce oxidative stress (excess can contribute towards inflammation and disease) as well as increasing 'friendly bacteria' for gut health.

For Hobson, 'an apple a day' stands alone from classic dietary myths and sayings. Although, it is important to remember that this is still a mere suggestion and only constitutes one element of a healthy body. The World Health Organisation reaffirms this approach by defining health as 'complete physical, mental and social well-being', which prompts us to pair nutrition with mentally fulfilling tasks and a good support network. Ultimately, we should all endeavour to be the healthiest version of ourselves on these terms and not bow to damaging diet fads which try to dictate our perceptions of health. Whatever your goals, ensuring our body is able to function at a basic level is vital and reinforces the fact that the basics of nutrition is a good place to start. However, it is important to recognise that not all issues can be solved by counting macros; if you are struggling with any of the issues raised, please consult professional medical advice.

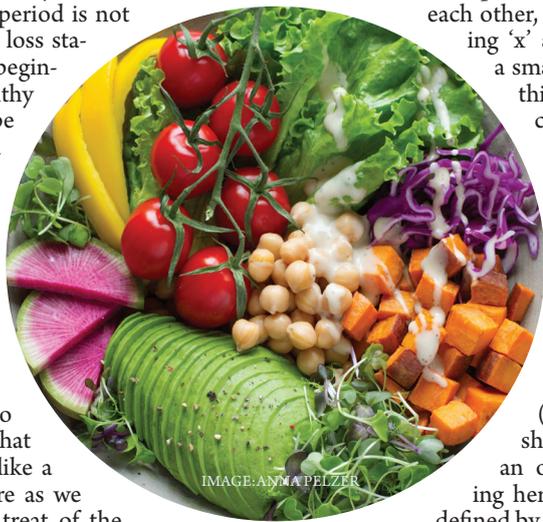


IMAGE: ANNA PELZER



IMAGE: JENNIFER BURKE

RECONNECTING WITH YOUR KITCHEN: 'FAKEAWAYS' AND OTHER TIPS

SOPHIE BURTON OFFERS HER ADVICE ON ENDING YOUR AFFAIR WITH UBEREATS AND HOW TO BATTLE THOSE TAKEAWAY TEMPTATIONS

Whether it's that niggling hunger after a night out, those mid-work-day cravings or even a motivating snack – we've all found ourselves gazing desperately into the fridge after a long day, hoping that something will jump out.

One moment you're scrolling through the 'just to look' section on Just Eat or Deliveroo and, before you know it, you're typing in your card details and listening out for the door (seriously, you've never been more acute to sounds on the street than when you are praying that this time it will be followed by the doorbell). As deadlines creep up, the weather gets colder and our lives get busier, we all fall victim to this temptation as the convenience of a takeaway becomes all the more appealing. Even though it's nice to treat ourselves every once in a while, we may want to reconsider our takeaway vice when it becomes too much of a habit – if not for the sake of our health, but for our bank balance!

I concede, however, that it's not always easy to muster up the energy or the inspiration to cook. Our relationship with food isn't always about fuelling our bodies. Often, especially during times of stress, it becomes more emotional. Have you ever had a craving for a specific food, and the thought of anything else forces you to near tears... or is

that just me? Either way, when you're feeling tired and are looking for a pick-me-up in your next meal, it can be tough to see the potential in any of the options you might have in your cupboard or your freezer. Most of the time your raw ingredients look nothing like the tasty meal you're thinking of and the thought of getting them to that point feels like too much effort.

In most articles on this sort of topic, this is the point where writers enthusiastically sign post the importance of meal prepping; while meal prep is a useful habit, it does have its limitations for students, as many live with shared kitchens and have limited fridge/freezer space. Sometimes it's not too bad but when you've only got the one freezer drawer, storing these prepped meals can be more challenging. So whilst I do believe that meal prep is a really effective way of keeping yourself organised, I'm not going to frame my advice to you around batch cooking being the key to unlocking your happy stress-free future, because I don't believe that it is. So what do we do, when we are stuck in this food rut? How do we find the strength to put down the phone and pick up the utensils?

Personally, I've found the first step to refreshing my relationship with cooking often comes with reconnecting with that emotional side of food. It can help to think of your favourite childhood meal,

something you know and love and get yourself excited about being in the kitchen. When the end goal is desirable, you'll actually want to put the effort into making it. Another way to approach this is to run with those cravings. If you were to get a takeaway or go for a meal out, what would you order? There's nothing to stop you trying to make this at home. A 'fakeaway' is usually cheaper than forking out for delivery and allows you to incorporate your own tastes – plus, it's usually a lot healthier in terms of reducing fat and salt content. All it takes is a quick google: put the words 'quick' and 'easy' before the name of the dish you wish to cook and you're guaranteed to find a beginner-friendly method. The first time you make something is always a learning curve, but rather than letting the unknown make you nervous, put on some music and throw yourself in. I remember a couple of years ago I found a Katsu Curry recipe online and over time I've adapted it to become my own... and dare I say, it's even better than Wagamama's!

Another trick to stop yourself from splashing out is to take these moods into consideration when you're shopping. The feeling of seeing a fridge full of vegetables and ingredients for scratch cooking is fabulous, but when you're feeling overwhelmed,

it becomes quite a daunting sight. When I do my food shop, I try to consider my work commitments for the week ahead and plan ahead. This can be as simple as picking up an oven pizza which is quicker to prepare than waiting for a takeaway. An amazing hack I've discovered this year is that Iceland offers 'meals in a bag' which you can heat up either on the hob or in the microwave. They're only about £3 to buy and you can get a variety of meals from biryani to pasta. These meals are packed full of vegetables and flavour so you feel like you're getting a home cooked meal without the effort of preparing it!

Finally, something to remind yourself is that it's sometimes easier to battle temptation when you're not alone. If you do live in a house with others, sometimes sharing meals can be cost-effective and a fun way to prepare a meal. And who knows how to cook the right amount for one person anyway? Dividing the work, as well as the cost, can be a good way to reduce the dread of summoning the energy to cook. This is also a good opportunity to bond as a house (and have the excuse of distributing the washing up!)

So next time you're feeling the urge to turn to your beloved UberEats, try reconnecting with your kitchen and give one of these ideas a go!



IMAGE: KEVIN MCCUTCHEON

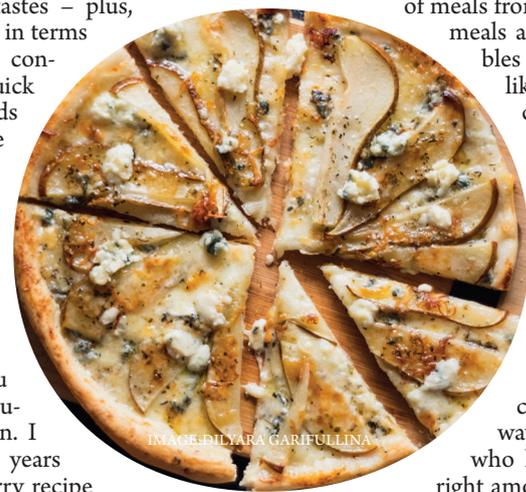


IMAGE: DILYARA GARIFULLINA

ZARA'S FINAL THOUGHTS



BEATING IMPOSTER SYNDROME

My first print edition as deputy *Muse* editor has come about swiftly, and with many contradicting feelings of anticipation and excitement. Despite joining *Muse* as a writer in my first year and being a part of the editorial team for nearly a year now, I still felt like a newbie around here. I didn't know people in the team well and I hadn't been to as many of the socials as others. Whilst lockdown was to blame for a lot of this, to tell the truth, come the last election, I felt undeserving of the role.

But despite my nerves and fear of unacceptance, I still entered the office this production week with much excitement. As a fellow section editor, I had always stood by in awe of the creativity and range we are lucky to have in this team. And this edition has been no exception to this. As cliché as it may sound, I have truly felt honoured to be amongst such talent in the office this week. Between Cara's fascinating piece on *The Darker Side of the Arts*, Jack's interview with an up and coming artist, and Lili's coverage of a student battling early menopause, I have non-stop felt inspired and impressed by the talent we are privileged enough to showcase.

Beside the sneak preview at all of the incredible content our writers have shared with us, I was also much looking forward to getting to know the team better. If there is one thing I have taken away from this week, it is the inevitable bonding that accompanies endless hours of fighting with the frustrations of InDesign and Photoshop. And despite my constant complaints of the lack of campus food outlets open on a weekend, I have thoroughly enjoyed mine and Kristina's intermittent mad dashes to Courtyard between sections (sorry to those we left waiting outside the office whilst we finished our chips). She has not only been a fountain of InDesign knowledge, but also support this week, casting away my doubts when I felt unequipped for this role. I must also note

her admirable patience with Adobe, a strength I can only one day wish to possess.

Nevertheless, I have learnt the importance and reward of being a part of a team, and such a fantastic one at that (no bias, of course). The laughs and screams I have heard in this office are unmatched. And whether it was simply a result of my attempt to bribe them all with an abundance of chocolate and snacks, I confidently say that I am finishing this week with much closer friendships and a sense of purpose at university that I have so long lacked. I have heard student journalism be mocked before, with the question always raised, "who actually reads it?" And whilst the answer to that question may often be limited to ourselves and on the odd occasion our parents, student media serves a purpose far beyond its readership; *Nouse* has given more to my university experience than I ever expected. It's a sense of achievement, motivation and connection that other societies just cannot offer; where else on campus would you find five students hunched around one computer trying to figure out why their text won't wrap around a cut out of a Yorcup? It's an incredibly tedious niche that I am proud to slot into; a sentiment I would like to think is held by the rest of the team.

I can only hope you enjoy reading this edition of *Muse*, just as much as we have enjoyed putting it together. Over in Arts, Jack Barton and Maya Bewley debate the latest craze of NFTs, and although I still don't 100 percent know what they are, I thoroughly enjoyed reading about their pros and cons. Dating shows have also been a hot topic this print, with Film and TV reviewing *Love on the Spectrum*, and Sophie Burton discussing the culture of reality dating shows in Features. Finally, Food and Drink offer their top tips on ditching takeaways; a piece that my bank account most definitely needs after this very long and rather unhealthy prod week.

ASK THE EDITORS



UNDERATED TV SHOWS: THE MUSE TEAM'S FAVOURITE UNDERDOGS OF NETFLIX

"Mindhunter - While audiences and critics know *Mindhunter's* brilliance, executive producer David Fincher and Netflix clearly don't. Hopefully we get the much anticipated third season sooner rather than later" Kyle, Film and TV

"Flowers - it's a darkly funny exploration of family and mental illness, with great performances from Olivia Colman and Julian Barrett. Definitely a hidden gem!" Martha, Film and TV

"Who Do You Think You Are?" - Who doesn't want to watch to see whether Olivia Coleman has a Danish great great great great great uncle or Judy Dench has a distant relative who ran a mill in Russia? I do. Obviously." Dom, Sports

"Schitt's Creek - mainly for Moira Rose's absolutely iconic outfits, and David's sassy one liners, but also because the characters are just as dramatic as I am" Zara, Deputy Muse Editor

"Glee - it's an international inside joke but people forget that *Glee* was a trailblazer for so many topics. Also, great songs" Lucy, Deputy Editor

"Love, Death, and Robots - an anthology of animated 20 minute long episodes based around the titular themes. A mixed bag of funny, upsetting, vulgar and heartfelt moments with more hits than misses. Worth a look!" Reuben, Photography and Shoot Editor

"Outer Banks - I know this has a bit of a core following, but I always feel like (compared to other Netflix-own shows that is) that it hasn't been as widely received. The treasure hunt storyline, the character development and the shock twists make it an easily addictive show to watch, that also makes you want to travel to North Carolina for a holiday!" Abi, Chief Sub-Editor

"Please Like Me - it's a dramedy (drama-comedy) created by Aussie comedian, Josh Thomas. It's a lovely, awkward, moving, funny coming of age show that deserves heaps more recognition. Go watch it!" Matilda, Business

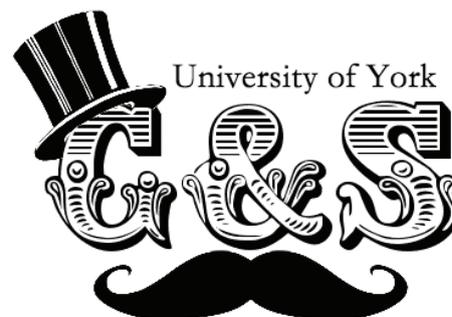
"Would I Lie to You?" - It's easy watching and guaranteed to make me laugh. Lee Mack's dad jokes and quick wit balance perfectly with David Mitchell's cynicism and intellectual banter." Kristina, Muse Editor



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Brexit two years on: has the UK 'taken back control'?

Collaborative piece
POLITICS CORRESPONDENTS

TWO YEARS ON from the U.K.'s official exit from the European Union, the ripple effect continues to be influential across the country. With the added complications created by Covid-19, we explore the lasting legacy of Brexit in our key sectors.

NHS

Despite two years passing since the UK's break with the EU, Brexit still causes uncertainty for the NHS and social care sectors. There continues to be a general concern that there has been no improvement to health care as promised, including the £350 million promised by Vote Leave's Brexit bus, with the most challenging being staffing. Leaving the EU's single market has brought a halt to the free movement of workers between the EU and UK.

This has led to large numbers of non-British workers leaving the NHS as a result of new laws requiring all workers from EEA nations to declare their right to work in the UK through the EU Settlement Scheme, therefore there is now a huge shortfall in NHS staffing.

According to Kingsfund, despite a pledge to hire 5000 more NHS nurses in the next few years, the new immigration laws place difficult barriers when hiring from EEA countries. Whilst it is still relatively easy for the NHS to hire staff from non-EEA countries, the new laws have definitely made the UK a less attractive place to international health workers seeking employment and make it more difficult than before to hire staff to resolve the growing workforce crisis - *Katy Leverett*

Northern Ireland

The Northern Ireland Protocol following the UK's withdrawal from the EU has created significant trading implications, with checks implemented on goods crossing the Irish Sea. Long delays at the port, particularly for animal and plant-based products, has added around four hours to the turnaround time per lorry since the Protocol came into effect. As a result, compliance costs for businesses have noticeably increased too.

Despite this, Northern Ireland has enjoyed free access to twin markets during the transition period, spearheading a 60 percent increase in trade between Northern Ireland and the Republic in the first nine months of last year. Labour shortages have been one barrier though as 18,000 EU migrants have left Northern Ireland since 2016. The pandemic has exacerbated this by halting the usual flow of European workers leading to job vacancy rates of up to 15 percent in industries like the

meat processing sector.

Yet, a more sobering concern is the aggravation of tensions in Northern Ireland, with inspection duties temporarily suspended at Larne and Belfast ports last year after staff faced death threats. DUP minister Edwin Poots ordered checks to be suspended again during February this year, as his colleague first minister Paul Givan resigned in protest over the Protocol. This is likely to cause serious problems for Britain's relationship with the EU, particularly after the resignation of Lord Frost as Brexit minister. There are indications Northern Ireland could see its first Sinn Fein first minister in the May elections too, evoking fears that political conflict may return to Northern Ireland if separationist policies continue - *Josh Rutland*

Erasmus

Erasmus has been seen as an unexpected casualty of the Brexit process, with the United Kingdom leaving the EU and declining to take part in the scheme as an associated third country. Replaced by the 'Turing Scheme', designed by the British Government to allow up to 35,000 students to work and travel internationally during their education. While the Erasmus scheme was limited to travel based in European states, the Turing Scheme aims to expand the network of travel further internationally and offers varying amounts of funding to match the destination chosen.

However, the Turing Scheme has not been without complication, it is available currently for organisations to access, without students being able to access it on an individual basis.

Funding is not available for teaching staff or college staff which would have previously been accepted under Erasmus. While the Turing Scheme has approved 372 projects for funding and has been guaranteed for further funding for the next three years, lack of publicity and barriers to individual applications continue to challenge students accessing international academic opportunities. Ultimately, the scheme risks becoming a symbol of patriotism, which just misses the mark - *Hannah Boyle*

International Trade

Brexit has undoubtedly complicated the ability of UK businesses to import and export easily. Businesses now have to prove that goods exported to the EU meet strict requirements which state that a certain percentage of the product has to be made within the UK or EU. Such complex rules has made it more difficult for the UK to recover from the effects of Covid-19, as the UK's flow of trade relative to GDP is at its lowest level since 2009, whilst EU countries have largely recovered from

where they were in March 2020.

Ministers have sought to leverage the opportunity of no longer being in the single market by striking trade deals across emerging economies, in Asia Pacific especially. However, the 64 deals signed so far are roll over deals that replicate pre-Brexit conditions and deliver no new benefits. Even the genuinely new deals with Australia and New Zealand, centre-pieces of the Conservative's election campaign, are estimated to grow UK GDP by only 0.08 percent over the next ten years. Nonetheless, the UK witnessed in 2021 the share of its international trade with non-EU countries become greater than those in the EU for the first time; leaving open the possibility that, for all of the dislocation suffered, the UK is now taking advantage of new markets - *Josh Cole*

Travel Abroad

It is fair to say that in regards to post-Brexit holiday plans, uncertainty over travelling abroad has not dissipated. The many grievances people once had regarding the severity of visa requirements when travelling to countries in Europe have been partially eased but questions still need to be answered on how the post-Brexit plan will affect our everyday lives.

Britons travelling abroad to EU countries within the 'Schengen Zone' for more than 90 days will soon require a form of travel authorisation pass in the form of ETIAS, an EU-based scheme. ETIAS is essentially a system that British passport holders will pay into regularly in order to gain travel access to all 26 EU countries. The same travel authorisation will apply to EU visitors to the UK too and the government have said they will have this set up over the course of this year.

By 2025, electronic passes will be needed even just for short business trips and holidays. Visas, however, will soon be needed on a long-term basis. It remains to be seen what the longer term future will look like for travelling abroad but one thing is clear - sacrifices will have to be made by everyone - *Max Abdulgani*

Fishing

You'd be hard-pushed to find an industry more impacted by Brexit than fishing. The 2021 post-Brexit trade deal has stipulated that licences are needed on both sides in order for fisheries to function on the right side of EU law. Boats from EU member states must have licences to fish in UK waters, with the same being true for UK boats looking to fish in the EU.

This has become the latest in a long line of micro-rows between France and the UK since the latter voted to leave the European Union almost six years ago. The UK and Jersey refused licences to a number of French boats last October. The situation soured and led to French fishermen blocking the entry of UK boats to French ports. French President, Emmanuel Macron, addressed the press in November, saying: "We have not got what we wanted [and] we will not yield."

And he was right. The Europe minister for France, Clement Beaune, announced two days before Christmas that the French would be relaying their complaints to the specially set-up tribunal for Brexit (dis)agreements.

So Brexit's impact on fishing has thus far been to further complicate an industry already swimming in red tape - *Dom Smith*

Immigration

Immigration is one of the issues that initially characterised Brexit. Now, two years after the UK officially left the European Union, it could be argued that immigration has become less predominant in our discussions of Brexit despite having a profound impact. Since leaving the EU, the British government has introduced a new points-based immigration system which it says will allow more skilled workers to enter the UK and begin working here.

Before January 2021, EU citizens were free to move and work within the UK; since then, any EU citizen coming to live or work in the UK will need to apply for a visa. This shows the real impact Brexit has had on migrants and the desire of the British government to have a tighter grip on its borders.

However, with the combined negative effects of Covid-19 as well as the complications people have experienced applying for settled status in the UK following Brexit, employers have found it increasingly hard to retain foreign staff who left the UK and are now trying to return. Furthermore, the restrictions on low-skilled workers entering the UK after Brexit has meant that employers, for example in the fruit-picking sector, have struggled to maintain enough workers to meet financial targets while continuing to operate in the same way as before Brexit - *Arun Kohli*

Sovereignty

A huge portion of the support for Brexit - and significant roadblocks in the following negotiation process - stemmed from a desire for the UK to reclaim its national sovereignty and have more control over its own legislation.

In the two years since the UK's withdrawal, we have seen many changes to British legislation in comparison to our EU counterparts, including the particularly notable abolishment of the so-called 'tampon tax' on sanitary products, which the EU requires to be set at 5 percent VAT.

Such a divergence highlights the ways in which Brexit Britain has arguably had the ability to change for the better since 2020.

However, with data protection laws remaining consistent and economic reliance forcing our major trade industries such as agriculture to remain aligned with the EU in order to compete, we can begin to question how effective Brexit has been in "taking back control" after all - *Hannah Carley*



IMAGE: JENNY GOODFELLOW

GLOBAL



POLITICS

France bans conversion therapy

France's National Assembly voted unanimously to pass a law criminalising the use of 'conversion therapy' to change a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. The change was also overwhelmingly backed in the French Senate, with only conservative Republicans in opposition. France joins a small group of nations with such legislation in place. - *Hannah Carley*

Ecuadorian landslide

On 31 January a landslide engulfed Ecuador's capital city, Quito. It was caused by a hillside collapsing under the weight of the heaviest rainfall recorded for almost 20 years. A recreation ground, eight houses and a number of cars were completely submerged. 22 people are reported to be dead, 47 injured and 20 missing. Rescue crews are continuing their search. - *Yelena Jurkenas*

Amnesty International condemns Israel

Amnesty International recently released a condemning report claiming that Israel has maintained 'a system of oppression and domination' in its treatment of Palestinians, alleging the system reflects 'apartheid'. In suggesting that Israel is operating institutionalised racial segregation and domination, Amnesty has opened itself up to harsh criticism. - *Lilli Bagnall*

Burkina Faso coup

Burkina Faso has become the site of West Africa's third military coup in the past year. The army's deposition of president Roch Kaboré, suspension of parliament and constitution comes in the wake of instability including a jihadist insurgency that has left thousands dead. Of a population of 20 million, 1.6 million people have been displaced. - *Iwan Roberts*

Wales on the cusp of trialling Universal Basic Income

James Clay
POLITICS CORRESPONDENT

FOLLOWING NUMEROUS international experiments, the Welsh government is set to announce a national trial of Universal Basic Income (UBI) with the aim of examining whether it could work to alleviate poverty. UBI is a system in which the government gives every citizen a guaranteed monthly income with the aim of ensuring a safety net for those who are trying to enter the world of work. Beginning in April for a three year period, 250 care leavers will receive an additional income regardless of the wage.

Proponents of UBI see it as an ideal means of alleviating poverty as it will be substantially simpler to understand which, as a result, will make social security more accessible to those that require it. Currently in the UK, the benefit system is seen by many as too complex and hard to navigate due to the fact that it is means-tested. It can be difficult to assess who is eligible for financial support from the state so some miss out on much needed income, while others receive support unnecessarily. There is

a general feeling that UBI could be a more egalitarian approach to social security.

Although it has certainly grown in popularity, many people are still reluctant to even trial UBI believing it to be a doomed policy decision. Certain UBI supporters have argued that it could end up being financially cheaper as it would replace other forms of social security and welfare spending. Many who value fiscal responsibility and minimal state interference in the lives of ordinary citizens still see it as too much of a drain on the taxpayer. Furthermore, UBI would involve the state giving financial support to those who don't necessarily need it, which some believe to be unnecessary and in the extreme immoral.

As an alternative, the Commission on Social Security has recently announced a proposal which would involve scrapping Universal Credit and replacing it with a minimum guaranteed income of £163.50 per week but only for those that are financially not well-off. This would be a yearly wage of £8476 being paid fully by the government. The Commission believes this would be fairer and a better way of alle-

viating poverty without becoming too financially burdensome.

Numerous international trials have occurred over the last couple of decades with varying degrees of success. One trial that has been seen as largely successful occurred in India between 2011 and 2013. Six thousand inhabitants of rural villages in the Madhya Pradesh region received a basic unconditional income. Over the trial period, the vast majority of recipients invested much of this additional income in generating opportunities for future growth such as livestock, more accessible clean water and electricity. A similar scheme is also successfully underway in Kenya which could suggest that UBI is an appropriate means to alleviating poverty in developing countries.

UBI has also been trialled in wealthy western nations such as Italy and the Netherlands. A particularly prominent example is Finland which, between January 2017 and December 2018, gave two thousand unemployed individuals \$650 per month. The aim of this trial was to see whether UBI would help people in the process

of finding jobs. As a result, recipients reported that they felt much happier and less stressed. That being said, Finland failed to see a rise in employment rates which suggests the trial did not have the success that many hoped it would.

In the USA, the Republican Party is still very much opposed to UBI but certain prominent individuals on the progressive side of politics have offered their support. Many tech CEOs such as Bill Gates, Elon Musk, Jack Dorsey, and even Jeff Bezos have spoken out in favour of it. During the 2020 Democratic Party presidential primaries, Andrew Yang promised a "Freedom Dividend" which would have involved every American citizen receiving \$1000 per month, showing that the idea is catching on across the world.

The demand for UBI also remains fairly strong amongst those keen on alleviating poverty within the UK. Since 2015, the Green Party has advocated a form of UBI which

they believe would be a fairer alternative to Universal Credit. As leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn also lent his support towards UBI as a radical alternative to alleviating poverty in the UK. Keir Starmer, the current leader of the Labour Party, has rejected calls for UBI, alongside Chancellor of the exchequer Rishi Sunak. This is part of an attempt by the current Labour leadership to make the Labour Party trusted on the economy once again which requires financial prudence and a rejection of policy proposals that could be seen as too disruptive of the status quo. A view not shared by Mark Drakeford, Labour's First Minister of Wales.

If the upcoming trial in Wales has a reasonable degree of success then the UK could well see UBI become a serious policy for discussion within mainstream political discourse. This would particularly be the case if recipients in the trial not only found jobs but also required less help from other forms of social security. Other devolved governments, particularly in Scotland, might also experiment with UBI as an alternative to Universal Credit when it comes to tackling inequality and poverty within society.



IMAGE: GAGE SKIDMORE

The effect of India's health diplomacy on the world

Krishnan Srinivas
POLITICS CORRESPONDENT

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC has offered states the unexpected opportunity to expand their geopolitical influence, including India who have been able to dominate using its well established pharmaceutical industry, known for supplying affordable vaccines and medicines. As the sixth largest and fastest growing economy in the world, it needed to expand its soft power. Being known as the "pharmacy of the world", India donated masks, PPE kits and certain medicines such as paracetamol and hydroxychloroquine early on in the pandemic to many developing and developed countries.

In January 2021, India started exporting vaccines starting with its South Asian neighbours such as Maldives, Nepal, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka, before expanding to Africa, South East Asia, and Latin America. Along with exports, the Indian government had also gifted vaccines as part of their own "Vaccine Maitri" (Vaccine Friendship) initiative as well as the COVAX initiative as a way to expand their soft power. Arguably, India was using their large vaccine manufacturing capability of cheap and affordable vaccines to act

as a leader to fellow developing countries during this time and therefore was expanding influence across the world, which could become valuable given the increasing importance of rising states in international discussions and agreements.

India's growing influence in the sphere of vaccine diplomacy had ripple effects, so much so that even China joined the race in competing for vaccine soft power, donating home-made Sinopharm and Sinovac vaccines to developing countries. Ultimately, this provided some relief to the developing world with supplies, especially when many Western developed nations were being accused of vaccine hoarding, with some even halting vaccine exports and related raw materials for vaccine manufacturing. Many people in India's ruling party and its supporters patted themselves on the back, through government advertisements and on social media as a proud moment for the country being able to share vaccines and medicines to other countries.

As April 2021 arrived, India's Covid cases exploded, meaning international support was required to cushion the shortage of equipment and the government was pushed to delay vaccine exports. As of 14 April 2021, the day when India reported a record of

over 200,000 daily cases, only 1 percent of its 1.3 billion people had been fully vaccinated and only 7 percent of the population had received a first dose. At that point, neither the central nor state governments anticipated an explosion of cases. There were many reports then of herd immunity, since India's cases had declined and election rallies, weddings, religious festivals and other crowded gatherings were going on in full swing, and in complete violation of covid norms.

The slow vaccination rate also resulted in high numbers of hospitalisations, with many people frantically looking for beds and some sections turning to social media to see if a bed was spare, leading to criticism of Indian attempts to vaccinate internationally before achieving domestic goals. The catastrophic situation had resulted in the government's policy turning inward and focusing more on curbing the domestic outbreak. This included transporting oxygen to states, adding more hospital capacity, using medical school students to help in the staff shortage and opening up vaccina-

tion to over-18s, despite a lack of vaccines. Part of this decision was likely an image makeover as until April there was also no incentive to scale up the health-care system and rather they focused on an economic recovery.

While India's delay in exporting vaccines eventually gave China a larger share of power in the vaccine soft power race, a more real consequence was that there was a significant delay in vaccines that many developing countries had signed contracts for. Though the US had decided to share vaccines around the end of April to many developing nations which could make up the shortfall, it was not as much as India's manufacturing and eventual donating capability.

India reached a peak on May 4 2021 with around 414,000 daily cases, a world record at that time. While cases had then reduced in India, most Indian states during the entirety of May were still in strict lockdowns. The vaccination pace then started gathering a lot more steam and the situation started to stabilise, albeit small outbreaks in different parts of the country.

India had resumed bilateral exports of vaccines in October 2021, with the Serum Institute resuming supply to the COVAX scheme in November. This is also the time in which the WHO had

approved one of India's indigenous Covaxin vaccines, after months of delays. At this time, many Western nations were administering booster shots (or third doses) for their adult populations, and many developing nations in South East Asia and South America were ramping up vaccination numbers. However, African countries were and are still left out with a majority of them with fully vaccinated populations not having reached even 30 percent.

India, being a manufacturer of a large share of affordable vaccines around the world, with high safety standards, planned on using this as a means to expand diplomatic soft power and help developing countries. However, its second wave casted criticisms and questions as to the reason behind this at the cost of its domestic population. As a result, India is now balancing its act between sharing vaccines and preventing its domestic population from facing a shortfall. Meanwhile many developed countries have been accused and criticised of vaccine hoarding, as a means of prioritising their domestic population. This scenario offers a case study of sharing too much at the cost of their domestic population and how one must balance between sharing with others as well as taking care of its own population.

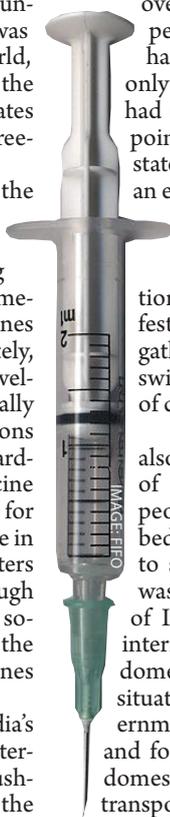


IMAGE: FLO

their aims.

Australia choosing to deport Djokovic drew attention to their strict vaccine policy and made the world watch, something which wouldn't have happened otherwise. This is a rare use of sport as a political weapon because it is unplanned, and relies on a strict set of somewhat unpredictable circumstances.

More traditionally governments choose to partake in a diplomatic boy-

cott, such as that of the US and UK at the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics. It can be planned beforehand and sends a clear message that the US and UK oppose the human rights abuses of China.

Many governments see sport as a fairly harmless weapon to wield. It has very few casualties: a diplomatic boycott, deporting someone or boycotting altogether, whilst different measures and each drastic, only affect a small group of individuals. Therefore there is

a low casualty count in the eyes of governments, something which is dearly sought after in international relations.

The impact can be massive though, the use of sport as a political weapon often makes the world watch. This was exemplified by how the Djokovic visa drama was covered daily on the news around the world for two weeks, or how the 1980 boycott is still remembered. When sport is used in politics, the impact is felt around the world.



**LEFT WING
RIGHT WING**

Thoughts from the Politics Editor
Gracie Daw

Sport is often thought to be a relaxing past-time, yet it can also be used as a political tool by governments to draw attention to their own policies, or their opposition to the policies of the opposing team.

The most famous political use of sport was probably the 1980 US and allied boycott of the Moscow Olympic games and whilst nothing quite as large has happened since, sport continues to be used by governments to achieve

The victims of China's uber-harsh regulation

Matilda Seddon
BUSINESS EDITOR

On a very cold Beijing night in 2012, a man failed to book a taxi and subsequently built China's largest ride-hailing company, which has grown to hold 90 percent of the domestic market share. To put Didi Chuxing's immense size into perspective, Uber holds a meagre 75 percent of the UK market.

Another Chinese tech giant, Ant Group, services over a billion users, making it the world's largest fintech (financial technology) company. Recently, these tech behemoths have both been knocked for six by China's recent regulatory crackdowns, panicking many investors and entrepreneurs, and dramatically shrinking the market.

Many are claiming that Big Tech will meet its breaking point in 2022. As we endeavour to resolve this as a society, it might prove valuable to contemplate the downfalls of these two monopolies and their government's brazen attempts to regulate them.

The pace of tech developments in the 21st century has been unprecedented, with lucrative services such as ride-hailing, food delivery, and online microlending (OM) establishing themselves as major industries in just under a decade. While this expansion has been a godsend for innovators and entrepreneurs alike, it seems that states have

now decided, to varying extents: what has gone up, must now come down.

Many governments have attempted to dampen growth in the tech industry, reducing risks and discouraging anti-competitive behaviour. Arguably, none of these regulators have hit the target with as much precision and force as China's.

Didi Chuxing, China's largest ride hailing company, holds 90% of the domestic market

These sweeping crackdowns have come following a 15-year period of relatively unfettered growth. During this time, Chinese tech companies were able to innovate in areas that could not yet be properly regulated due to their newness and the government's lack of familiarity with them. This era is, unfortunately for some, all but over.

Incredibly lucrative tech companies like Didi and Ant Group, which have previously been afforded the liberty of exponential expansion, are now having to exist in a quasi-regulatory limbo as the government dictates how

they can and cannot operate.

The end of 2020 saw Ant Group, an Alibaba subsidiary, disastrously fail to go public on both the Hong Kong Stock Exchange (HKSE) and the Shanghai Stock Exchange (SSE). Investors expected the public offering to confirm the company's status as one of the world's largest.

Valued at more than USD\$310bn (£229.3bn), it is difficult to convey the sheer size and scope of these tech conglomerates. Headed by CEO, Jack Ma, Alibaba houses China's answer to Amazon, PayPal, Google, and an eBay-Instagram hybrid to boot.

At the minute to midnight of the biggest IPO (Initial Public Offering) in history, regulators pulled the rug out from under Ma's company by altering the fintech regulatory environment drastically. They mandated that Alipay, the company's payment platform, be delineated from its riskier OM service. Led by the government, the company has since made laboured advances in restructuring over the past year, and Ma has, for the most part, disappeared from the public view.

Flash-forward to mid 2021. Ride-hailing company, Didi, is now aspiring to a public listing on the HKSE but faces many obstacles that have been strategically placed by Chinese regulators, who were also responsible for sabotaging their public offering at the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE). Sound familiar?

To describe Didi's US IPO as unfortunate would be a vast understatement. The company rerouted their IPO to the NYSE to avoid the regulatory restrictions posed by their own government, prompting Chinese regulators to crash their business by mandating that all apps be deleted from stores as well as launching investigations into its data handling, just days after the listing. Didi's shares have plummeted more than USD\$40bn (£29.5bn) since then.

The investigations into Didi remain unresolved as it stands. Jean Liu, the company's current president, has made attempts to bring in state-supported groups. These kinds of politically-motivated strategies have

become a new normal for Chinese tech companies.

From the myopic western perspective, it is easy to criticise China's regulatory crackdown on the basis that, economically, they've cut off their nose to spite their face. While limiting the activities of their most valuable companies has, without question, been harmful for the second-largest economy in the world, there is a valuable lesson to be gained here: governments will no longer be able to argue that no regulation is good regulation.

To avoid being regulated too heavily in the past, western tech giants have leveraged the fact that Chinese companies pose a major threat to Big Tech in the west due to their government's full support.

In light of global calls for increased antitrust regulation, the crackdowns in Beijing serve as a potential pivot point, providing concrete evidence that these companies do not need their government's active support to survive.

Encouraging smarter and more conscious regulation might prevent companies like Meta (formerly Facebook) from profiting from the spread of disinformation and hateful content in the future.

Maybe we should start asking ourselves what it is that we are sacrificing when we fail to regulate, and whether we're willing to wait long enough to see the consequences.

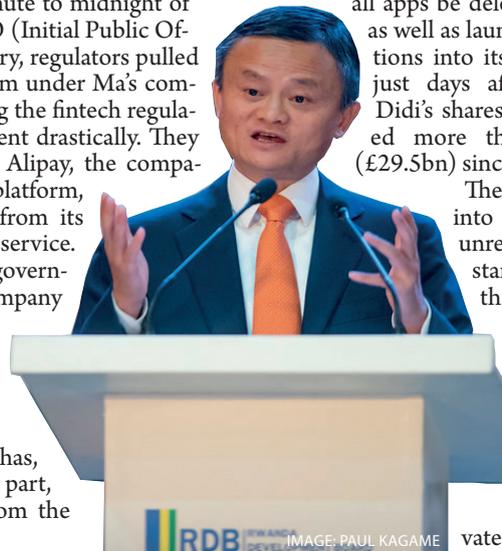


IMAGE: PAUL KAGAME

Kazakhstan kleptocracy finds a home in London

Mayowa Oni-Williams
BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

To an unassuming reader, a connection between London and Kazakhstan may be looked at sceptically, with the mention of kleptocracy and money laundering evoking further confusion. However, after the break-up of the Soviet Union in the 1990s, opportuni-

ties for the upper class in independent successor states to individually profit from the newly-transferred Soviet-era assets grew. Such individuals sought a destination perfect for facilitating illicit high-value wealth transfers. London, the world's finance capital, was considered more than appropriate.

The UK's Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) indirectly defines kleptocracy as "a political economy domi-

nated by a small number of people/entities with close links to the state". Throughout the 1990s until the recent Kazakh fallout, this small group of elites have been valuable clients for financial and professional services in the UK. With an influx of illicit assets available to these individuals post-Soviet independence, there was an increased demand for wealth management services in the lightly regulated UK. This was the beginning of the many dubious relationships that now exist between London's financial centre and the elites from ex-Soviet states.

Throughout the existence of independent Kazakhstan, under the rule of ex-president Nursultan Nazarbayev for 30 years, the opportunity for kleptocracy has been ripe. The abundance of natural resources in the nation combined with the authoritarian nature of the government (following their 1991 declaration for independence) has almost fostered a pipeline from the natural reserves to the pockets of the closely-connected people in power.

As of December 2021, offshore accounts of Nazarbayev family members were estimated to hold as much as \$10 billion with \$785 million of foreign real estate holdings owned by the family. And in a country "where there's no open political system" as stated by Paul Stronski, former director for Russia and Central Asia and in the U.S. National Security Council, there proves to be very little opportunity for the wider population in the nation to challenge these practises.

Despite this, one cannot solely focus on the intentions of these indi-

viduals and their ill-gotten gains. The enabling environment created by the UK has provided the platform for kleptocrats to continue exploiting their behaviour. Some have described this as negligent, whilst others have labelled it blatant corruption.

Kazakhstan's wealthy elite have acquired property worth hundreds of millions of pounds. Despite David Cameron's promise at an anti-corruption summit in 2016, the proposed changes to bring an end to property purchasing with illicit funds have not been introduced. The thinktank Chatham House has identified 34 properties purchased by the powerful Kazakh ruling circle from 1998 to 2002, with the value of these purchases sitting at around £530 million. Relationships held with British elites such as former Prime Minister Tony Blair, and shady royal Prince Andrew, have only encouraged such suspicious acquisitions of property. Oliver Bullough, author of *Moneyland*, succinctly summarised the political and economic state by saying "Kazakhstan's elite has been able to extract a vast amount of wealth and leave ordinary people with very little. And the primary enabler of that extraction has been the UK".

According to a KPMG report, 162 people control about half of Kazakhstan's total wealth. By the turn of the year it became increasingly evident that unrest in the nation was reaching fever pitch.

As almost a direct consequence of such political structures, the series of political protests in 2022 – now known as the 2022 Kazakh Unrest – finally

addressed the public's dissatisfaction with the government and the nation's economic inequality. Beginning as a response to the lifting of a government-enforced price cap on liquefied gas prices, the week-long unrest led to 227 deaths. This was after a 'shoot to kill' order by current President Tokayev against the protesters was used to 'destroy' the uprising.

A positive effect of these tragic events has been that the focus on Kazakhstan and their corrupt practises has directly impacted the fortunes of the few billionaires responsible for the unfair operation of the country. Forbes reported four Kazakh billionaires losing roughly \$3 billion during the protests. The direct family of Nazarbayev also lost \$200 million, a loss particularly profound as the couple controls the country's largest bank in terms of assets.

With the loss of fortune among these elite few being celebrated, inevitably pressure has also been placed on the UK government. They are being compelled to further introduce action to curb the influence of the kleptocratic government in the financial centre and to combat money laundering.

A UK government spokesperson has stated 'the government will establish a new beneficial ownership register of overseas entities that own UK property'. Whether such initiatives will decrease illicit activity between Kazakhstan and London's financial centre is yet to be seen. That being said, it would not be unreasonable to expect that we will see movement towards dispelling the kleptocracy and money laundering activities in the capital.



IMAGE: ESETOK

Food delivery services struggle post-Covid

Finnious Wilson
BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

An opinion piece, examining the need for food delivery services post-Covid-19, following their initial boom.



IMAGE: THE YORK PRESS

businesses being affected, regardless of their size, or the products they offered.

It became apparent that to survive or remain successful, businesses required an online presence, both to serve consumers by transporting their goods and to ensure their services were accessible online.

In exploring how businesses survived during Covid-19, food delivery service companies provide an excellent case study. An industry that grew exponentially during the pandemic capitalised on the necessity of food, despite the government mandate to remain at home.

Whilst many major stores like Asda and Morrisons already had an online presence allowing customers to shop from home, the true value of food delivery apps came to the fore at the start of the pandemic. This was because they were initially cheaper for independent stores to operate than developing their own applications while still providing what consumers wanted.

Qualitative research indicates that the public did not want to risk venturing from their homes to shops, seeing them as hubs for the virus. People drastically changed their behaviour to reduce exposure by avoiding physical contact in the stores, instead converting to the likes of Deliveroo, JustEat, and UberEats.

Surveys show 43 percent of consumers said that during the pandemic, the cleanliness and sanitisation of the items was their most important consideration when obtaining their groceries. When using food delivery services, the items are often freshly picked, are rarely on the shelves for very long and are provided by couriers who followed Covid-19 safety guidelines by using sanitiser and wearing masks.

Such rules led to the popularity of these apps increasing dramatically, and many well-known chains capitalised on this. Deliveroo partnered with major retailers to deliver groceries to households. The popularity of food delivery apps only grew as a result of this, with Google Searches immediately doubling in the pandemic and maintaining such levels throughout 2020 and into 2021.

Whilst this article concerns the survivability of food delivery services in the future, post-Covid-19, my opinion draws on previous trends in the industry. I stress that it has been, and will remain the case that the public uses food delivery service companies for their own personal safety, as an alternative to going to shops.

When examining consumer behaviours, the simplicity of ordering on these apps provides further reasoning as to why these companies will con-

tinue to thrive. All consumers admire convenience, and these applications provide it. A few clicks of buttons, and the consumer's shopping arrives without complication. With this in mind, I'm baffled as to why any person would refrain from using them.

That being said, German supermarket chain, Aldi, recently made the choice to abandon their partnership with Deliveroo. Representatives of the store have stated the decision was made 'to focus on their click-and-collect service'. The move can be viewed as an aim at profitability: consumers may come in and then decide to also buy other items whilst at the store. Employing couriers and paying charges to facilitate applications like Deliveroo also led to Aldi's profits decreasing. They naturally sought to prevent this.

I question whether the choice to end their partnership with Deliveroo was sensible. Consumers are now opting for simplicity more than ever, and hesitating to enter stores is something they are likely to continue doing. Therefore, I anticipate that consumers will simply shop from other stores that provide delivery via the typical applications. After all, no apparent shift has been made by other companies, Aldi's competitors, to prevent couriers or external transporters from delivering to consumers.

All things considered, I don't believe that food delivery service companies will erode from public use. Delivery services will continue to be critical to small chain takeaways. However, companies like Aldi, who abandoned delivery services should see a decrease in revenue going forward.

Inflation and energy costs squeeze budgets

Jack Langton
BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

Inflation, as many will be aware, is a term used to describe how, over a year, the prices of most items go up. Strictly speaking, controlled inflation is a sign that the economy is healthy provided that it's kept in line with minimum wage. If this is the case, it means that people like you and I (who may have little disposable income) can continue to live.

Ordinarily the Bank of England sets an annual target of 2 percent inflation each year. But with inflation being at its highest rate for 30 years, at 5.4 per-

18 million UK households will see a £693 increase on their energy bills



cent as of February 2022, many of us are asking how it got so out of control, affecting not only low income households, but having similar effects for the wealthier amongst us too.

In recent times, increasing energy prices have had the most profound impact on interest rates. With the price of gas having gone up by an average of 28.1 percent for suppliers between the period of December and February, the 18 million UK households currently

on a 'standard tariff' will see an average increase of £693 on their energy bills. Alternatively, those 4.5 million households on a prepayment plan will see an average increase of up to £708. This is in order to foot the bill for the higher costs faced by energy suppliers after the energy price cap is removed in April.

There are many factors contributing to this enormous increase in cost. In fact, there are too many factors to discuss in this article alone, but here is a brief outline of why costs have surged so much.

A cold European winter in 2020/21 caused consumption of gas to go up and the amount stored by energy suppliers to decrease; and a 'windless' summer in 2021 made it difficult to generate alternative ways of powering households; and finally, an increase in demand from countries in Asia, such as China, put even more strain on already pressured gas supplies.

With 85 percent of UK households relying on gas to heat their homes, and a third of our country's energy being generated by gas, many households are expected to succumb to 'fuel poverty'. This means when they spend the required amount to heat their home, they are left with a residual income below the official poverty line. Now, with tensions between the majority of the western world and Russia the world's largest exporter of natural and liquefied gas at breaking point, it is almost impossible to say whether the prices of gas will continue to rise or will begin to stabilise.

Another factor that has had a noticeable effect on the UK's inflation rate is the labour shortage affecting almost all sectors of the economy. The most notorious being the lack of workers in restaurants and other high street food suppliers as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as the dramatic decline in the amount of lorry drivers importing and exporting goods as a result of Brexit.

Employers in these sectors, such

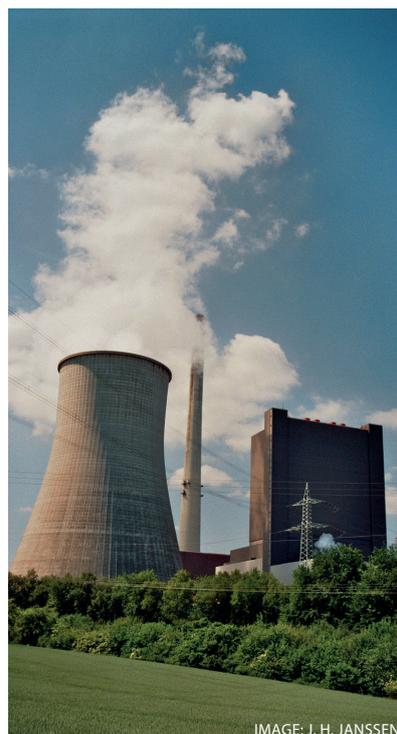


IMAGE: J. H. JANSSEN

as Pret a Manger and Sainsbury's, have faced increased costs in running their businesses, and have had to increase wages to up to £10 per hour for their workers because of the problems many of them face. The increase in costs of labour and goods is once again shouldered by the customer, who will face higher prices, contributing to inflation akin to that seen in the energy sector.

Inflation is typically tackled by the Bank of England through increasing interest rates. The theory behind this being that once the cost of borrowing is higher, people have less to spend, causing prices to stabilise as a result. Only recently has the Bank of England announced that it will be increasing the interest rates from 0.25 percent to 0.5 percent in order to tackle inflation and reduce it to its usual target of 2 percent within two years. But many question whether this is the right response to tackle inflation due to it being caused by more external factors such as increases in the global price of energy. The government may instead choose to cut tax for people and introduce measures to help reduce costs of energy.

With Rishi Sunak recently announcing that there will be a government scheme paying back £200 on people's energy bills, as well as a council tax rebate of up to 80 percent for people with houses in band A to D, it is clear this may be the approach they are taking. The effect of this approach remains to be seen, and much uncertainty as to its success remains.

Russia and Ukraine

The economic and business stats contextualising the conflict:



78%

The amount Ukraine reduced exports of goods to Russia from 2013 to 2019, and increased exports to the EU.



6%

The amount that the Russian rouble has fallen against the dollar since January to this week.



1.7bn.

The loan package provided by the UK to enable Ukraine upgrade its fleet with British weapons systems.



174.9bn.

The potential size, in cubic metres, of Russian gas exports to Europe if Nord Stream 2 is completed.

Science in Short
A new, more detailed map of the universe

A radio map of the universe has been created with astonishing detail thanks to research published in *Nature Astronomy* by Leiden University Ph.D. student Frits Sweijen and colleagues. Maps of space are created using radio waves from the International LOFAR telescope, however the ionosphere disturbs radio waves before they can reach our detectors. Using specialist software and supercomputers in Leiden and Amsterdam, the researchers have solved this blurring effect which is caused by UV radiation, resulting in exquisite detail.

Researchers create synthetic enamel mimicking our natural teeth

The discovery was published in the journal *Science* by a team of researchers from Beihang University, the Peking University School and Hospital of Stomatology and the Michigan Institute of Translational Nanotechnology. Previously, research in preventing tooth decay has been limited by the lack of a replacement for enamel once it has been damaged or worn away. Human enamel is strong but also elastic due to small tightly packed rods of calcium. This new synthetic enamel was produced using parallel AIP-coated hydroxyapatite nanowires, frozen by applying polyvinyl alcohol.

Robots with flapping wings?

A team from the University of Bristol has produced a miniature flying robot which imitates the flapping wings of an insect. Previous research has shown that insects use two different mechanisms for flying – direct and indirect. Direct involves using the muscles that attach the wings to their bodies to move the wings up and down; indirect changes the shape of the thorax to move the wings. Rather than using conventional spinning motors and gears, the team used a mechanism driven by electrical charges in the metal plates at the wing roots. Inspired by nature, the innovative system is called a liquid-amplified zipping actuator (LAZA).

Should humans hibernate during winter?

LOUISE MACGREGOR
DEPUTY SCIENCE EDITOR

We've all felt the 'winter blues' before. I've felt many times that we as a species just aren't built to exist during these cold months. So I've been looking into the option of hibernation.

Why should we stay conscious for those cold, miserable days? Why can't we hibernate like other mammals; bears, lemurs, and many others which are almost equally as energy-demanding as humans, saving our energy for those summer months when you feel like you're just meant to be alive?

Studies are currently looking into whether humans could hibernate (funded by the European Space Agency to look into hibernation as a way to cope with long-distance space travel). Animals that do hibernate achieve a

state known as 'torpor' spontaneously and safely, where their body initiates a reduced rate of metabolism. This means that the chemical reactions in the body that convert food to useful energy are slowed down, along with the heart rate (to about 3 percent of its usual resting rate) and breathing rate (by 50-100 percent). The body temperature is also reduced, in some cases below freezing.

It is not yet entirely understood how this state is initiated. It is brought on in different ways – whether the state is entered daily, during winter months, or even during the heat of summer (known as estivation by some species of mice, fish and snails). Drugs are used during cardiac surgery to lower the heart rate and metabolism artificially to protect tissues from damage. Though this is the same physical result as the hibernation state, it can lead to hypothermia due to the reduced body tempera-

ture, so is not a safe initiation.

The 'torpor' state is drastically different to being asleep, which is primarily to do with changes in brain activity. It is actually closer to sleep deprivation as the brain remains almost fully stimulated during hibernation, and animals after coming out of their hibernated state fall immediately into an extended sleep to recover the brain.

Moreover, studies on bats have shown that synaptic connections in the brain (connections that form memories) are reduced and reorganised during periods of hibernation, which could lead to memory loss. Therefore, there is a call for further understanding on the formation of memories before safe hibernation could be possible. So have humans ever been able to hibernate safely?

There is evidence to suggest that yes, they have. Though we wouldn't have initially evolved the ability as a species due to *Homo Sapiens* originating from the tropics 300,000 years ago, the Ice Age (115,000 years ago to 11,700) gave us a significant reason to use hibernation if we could. Temperatures averaging 14 degrees colder than now would have meant finding food to survive would become increasingly difficult.

The only evidence for human hibernation found so far is from skeletons found in the Lima Cave in Atapuerca, Spain where the hominins would

have experienced extreme glaciation. Archaeologists found that the bones showed disease due to sacrificed nutrition and Vitamin D, such as rickets, but this was only experienced annually. Similarly, the skeletons showed annual intermittent puberty.

Though this could be proof of human hibernation, this is not for certain, and this discovery also emphasises the damage of hibernation.

If hibernation isn't the answer, my belief is that we should follow the example of Icelanders who, studies have shown, experience relatively little change in their mood due to change in daylight hours (this is very significant considering they live in complete darkness for 20 hours of the day). In fact, the further north these studies have gone, generally the more positively people's mindsets towards winter. People also appear more willing to do activities and challenge themselves independent of the season, temperature or hours of light in the day. This is significant in showing that a positive attitude towards winter is important in beating winter blues.



A CHIPMUNK HIBERNATING
IMAGE BY MICHAEL HIRSH
REUTERS

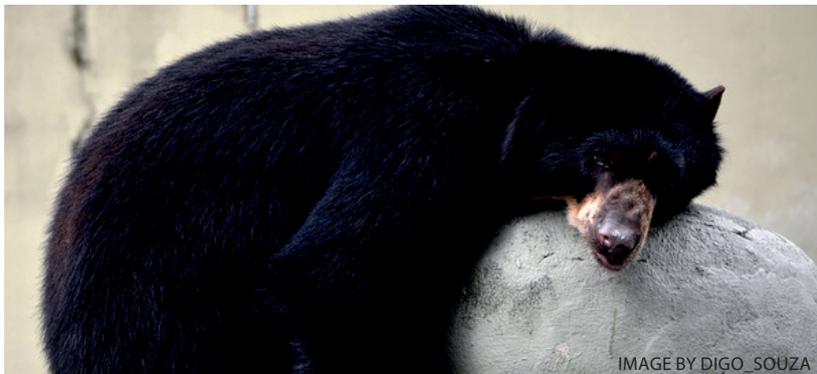


IMAGE BY DIGO SOUZA

Carbon sinks critical to preventing climate crisis - and now they are facing extinction

MILLIE STANLEY-DAVY
SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

Carbon sinks, areas that absorb more carbon than they release, are fast becoming one of the last frontiers in the fight against climate change. The Amazon rainforest alone is estimated to store around 123 billion tons of carbon, 57 times the amount of carbon dioxide that Brazil emitted in 2020. Without these natural "storage units", the climate crisis would undoubtedly have already decimated our natural resources and ecosystems. Earth would be wracked by intense droughts, storms and wildfires, unless of course our carbon emissions were brought under control. Whilst the instrumental role that carbon sinks play in mitigating climate change is widely acknowledged by the scientific community, these natural havens are fast becoming victim to resource-hungry nations. Mycorrhizal fungal networks are a less well known carbon store, but these underground ecosystems are estimated to house a staggering 75 percent of all terrestrial carbon. These systems should be conserved and protected, but instead aggressive farming techniques, combined with the use of damaging pesticides such as the "bee-killing" neonicotinoid Cruiser SB, are causing severe soil damage and erosion. Half of the planet's topsoil has been lost in the last 150 years, a monumental loss considering that humans have been on the planet for the last 300,000 years without this decline. The need for food has driven our species for millennia,

with farming first emerging during the Neolithic period, yet it is precisely this which now is impacting our future survival.

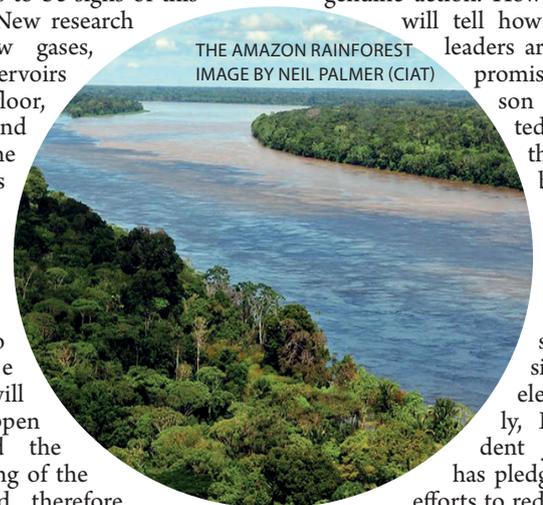
It seems almost too easy to blame governments such as Brazil's, where the Amazon Rainforest is held up as a symbol for deforestation. It is true that around 17 percent of the Amazon Rainforest has been destroyed in the last 50 years, but the perpetrators of climate mismanagement are found on every continent, including in the UK. 70 percent of the land in Britain is used for agricultural purposes, with intensive farming predicted to cause soil infertility in as little as 40 years, without even considering the destruction of fungi habitats and ecosystems. The UK also has 15 percent of the world's blanket peat, and this is in danger of becoming a massive carbon source if global temperatures continue to rise. It's melting would cause all the previously stored carbon dioxide to be released into the atmosphere, shoving the planet further into decline. The British government is constantly accused of climate inaction, especially after the recent dreadful floods, and the facts are stark: every month that Boris Johnson's administration does not act in protecting the natural world is another month closer to irreversible climate devastation. Countries all over the world have a responsibility to safeguard these habitats, and there is arguably no carbon sink more important, or worth protecting, than the ocean. The ocean contains 16 times as much carbon as the terrestrial

biosphere, or one quarter of the carbon dioxide that humans create through the burning of man-made fossil fuels. This is undoubtedly our saving grace when it comes to protecting our future, as without this carbon store the emissions created would already have wreaked havoc on our planet. Worryingly however, there seems to be signs of this declining. New research shows how gases, held in reservoirs on the seafloor, escaped and caused the planet's temperature to rapidly rise in Prehistoric times. There is no guarantee that this will not happen again, and the rapid heating of the planet, and therefore the oceans, puts these reservoirs at risk of destabilising and causing a fatal positive feedback loop.

Action is urgently needed to halt the Earth's devastation. For this, COP26 has provided some hope. Many attention grabbing headlines have promised that world leaders will manage climate change, most notably signing an agreement to end and even reverse deforestation by 2030. This is an extremely bold claim and previous deals, for ex-

ample the 2015 Paris Agreement, has so far failed to provide the rapid and meaningful change needed. Yet, it is still promising that many countries including Brazil, China and Russia, who are some of the biggest carbon emitters, have pledged to end deforestation. This seems to imply they want to enact genuine action. However, only time

will tell how willing global leaders are to fulfil their promises. Boris Johnson seems committed to following this agreement, but on the other hand, oil and gas firms have given more than £1 million to the Conservative Party since the last election. Similarly, Brazilian president Jair Bolsonaro has pledged to ramp up efforts to reduce Brazil's impact on the planet, yet deforestation of the Amazon rainforest increased by 22 percent in 2021. These figures seem to suggest little hope for the future of Carbon sinks, yet it still is probable that when faced with the reality of climate change leaders will step up and enact progressive policy. Perhaps COP26 is the start, adding to the instrumental work of countless climate activists and charities. Only time will tell what the future of these carbon sinks will look



THE AMAZON RAINFOREST
IMAGE BY NEIL PALMER (CIAT)

Let's Look Up: An astronomical impact hypothetical

ETHAN ATTWOOD

SCIENCE EDITOR

There are few modern filmmakers more adept at blending heartfelt, sobering situations with sharp, satirical humour than Adam McKay. He established his post-Anchorman style with 2015's Oscar-winning financial docudrama *The Big Short*, wherein Steve Carell's character's amusing rage at Wall Street is motivated by a tragic personal loss. McKay leverages the same dichotomy in last December's disaster/comedy *Don't Look Up*.

This time, the motivating apocalypse isn't human-created, but is in the form of a comet due to impact Earth in six months. Rather, the necessary human-element is provided by our utterly inept and self-interested response in the face of certain annihilation, painting the backdrop for cutting commentaries that are a bit too relevant: social media, fake news, the rise of anti-intellectualism, and our disheartening tendencies towards denial and confrontation and away from coordinated action. The last is a particularly scathing indictment considering the looming climate crisis, and in fact the entire film could be seen as an environmental allegory; characters remain unmoved by a threat until it's at their doorstep, at which point any attempt at mitigating action becomes too little, too late.

Despite a nagging defensiveness at being metaphorically chastised for my lack of social activism by celebrities pulling in seven-to-ten figures annually (and the hypocrisy of plutocrats lambasting other plutocrats), I really

enjoyed both of these films. However, I'm conscious of the fact that further analysis can be far better handled by *Nouse's* stellar film and TV team, and also that this is a science article. So let's present ourselves a hypothetical: what would actually happen in the event of an impact by a large astronomical object?

The vast majority of space rocks that impact the earth are meteoroids, fragments of rock too small to meet the definition of an asteroid, which can be considered minor planets. Meteoroids enter the Earth's atmosphere at a speed in excess of 70,000 kilometres per hour, generating an enormous amount of heat and breaking material off the outer surface, which can be observed from the ground as a meteor. Most of us have seen these "shooting stars" at some point, and many still retain enough of their structure to impact the ground as a meteorite – about 6,100 a year or 17 every day. Given that 70 percent of the

Earth's surface is covered by water, and of the 30 percent land left over, only 10 percent can be considered to be inhabited by humans, there's a 97 percent chance those meteorites are landing somewhere they'll never be noticed.

Obviously, these relatively tiny rocks have virtually no impact on our daily lives. Once something becomes big enough to actually be noticed by astronomers however, it's much different. Asteroids and comets (frozen asteroids with the size and

chemical compositions to have thin atmospheres, creating a bright tail) would have profound, irreversible and lethal effects on the planet in the event of an impact – and have before.

Anyone with a childhood obsession with dinosaurs [raises hand] has probably heard this story. 66 million years ago, an asteroid roughly ten kilometres wide hit the Earth and caused a mass extinction event that ended the reign of large dinosaurs on Earth. The crater, called Chicxulub, still exists today off the coast of Mexico's Yucatan peninsula. To give a sense of scale, the Earth was hit at such velocity that the crater is 15-times wider than the asteroid itself. We never see energies like this terrestrially except in the very largest volcano eruptions, and in that case most is released as heat and directed upward rather than as a kinetic blast, which would be far more destructive.

Immediately after impact, anything in the immediate vicinity would be levelled by the initial shockwave. If the asteroid landed in a large body of water, it could cause a megatsunami tens-to-hundreds of metres tall, extending the destruction far beyond the initial blast radius – in Chicxulub's case, reaching modern-day Texas. The seismic shockwaves radiating out from the blast would trigger global earthquakes and volcano eruptions, releasing toxic gases. The heat produced would effectively broil the Earth's surface, causing wildfires stretching thousands of miles. But the most damaging and long-lasting ramification would almost certainly be a consequence of the dust and soot produced by the vaporisation of the asteroid and the ground beneath and around it. Along with containing sulfur and other toxic compounds, this natural smog would block out the sun's light for up to a decade. This would cause

perpetual night, as well as vast temperature swings from the lack of sunlight and greenhouse-effect from enormous

is expected to happen roughly every 2,000 years (the most recent occurred in Saudi Arabia in the 1800s). Once an



CO2 release, decimating the entire world's plantlife. Followed in quick succession by ecological collapse.

Despite the brutality of this almost-comically hostile hellscape 66 million years ago, (to quote Jeff Goldblum) life, uh, found a way. The plants hardy enough to survive supported enough food-chains to keep avian dinosaurs and small mammals alive, with the former evolving into modern-day birds (consider the conditions his ancestors had to survive the next time you see that fat fluffy robin). Ultimately, our survival would be determined by the size of the object the universe sent to annihilate us; a rock the size of a house would have roughly the impact energy of the atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima, and would flatten anything within about a kilometre. Something the size of a 20-story building, equating to the largest modern nuclear weapons, would wipe out a city and cause extensive climatic effects, but not quite an extinction. An impact of this extent

asteroid reaches the size of Chicxulub, catastrophic effects are seen globally, but scientists estimate some humans would survive. It would take an impact from something about 100 km wide to totally wipe out life on earth.

These doomsday scenarios assume that we do nothing to avoid them. This is precisely what makes them attractive contexts for disaster films – they're the only natural disaster that we could entirely evade with the right collective action, creating the potential for a happy ending. NASA and related organisations do have contingencies for this scenario, most recently with the launch of the DART spacecraft in November whose objective is to smash into a distant asteroid and measure how much its orbit is affected. These sorts of tests are crucial to developing what would be our front-line defence in the event of *Don't Look Up* proving prophetic. Let's hope then, that the apathetic public reaction presented in the film doesn't prove just as prophetic.

Periods and the Pandemic: How stress affects biology

EMILY JONES

DEPUTY SCIENCE EDITOR

In a 2020 study collecting data on 1,031 menstruating women from the UK, 46 percent reported changes in their cycle since the beginning of the pandemic and 53 percent reported worse premenstrual symptoms (PMS). The women who reported changes in their cycle, including worsened PMS, more painful periods and reduced libido, were more likely to also experience low mood, stress, and anxiety. What's happening here – and is the pandemic all to blame, or is it merely a coinciding factor?

The hormones progesterone and oestrogen decrease during menstruation, triggered by the corpus luteum on the ovaries breaking down due to the absence of a fertilised egg. PMS is caused by the change in these two hormones which in turn affect serotonin levels – the "happy hormone".

The cause of more or less severe PMS in different women is down to different sensitivities in changing progesterone and oestrogen levels, rather than having different amounts of these hormones. Factors including stress, diet

and exercise can impact this sensitivity.

In the aforementioned study, a higher percentage of participants were of white ethnic background than is reflective of the UK population, meaning that the study may not accurately portray the experiences of all menstruating people during the pandemic, namely women of BAME backgrounds.

Research has shown that the Covid-19 pandemic has caused an increase in stress and anxiety in the general public, with people facing new problems such as loneliness, weight gain, job security, and a change in their diet and exercise.

Endocrinological processes have shown to be highly sensitive to stress. The hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis increases the release of cortisol while the body is in fight or flight. Problems arise when this stress response occurs over a long period of time, causing unregulated cortisol levels which then suppresses reactions connected to ovulation, thus disrupting your usual cycle.

A study published in *The European Journal of Contraception & Reproductive Health Care* found that 44.4 percent of participants from over 15 countries had noticed changes in their menstrual

cycle over the course of 2021.

Another study focusing on women in sport, with participants ranging from "physically active" to "elite", found that 52.6 percent noticed differences in their menstrual symptoms over lockdown.

In agreement with previous studies, the participants also recorded changes in their mental state.

One of the key differences reported was an increase in lower back pain, which is caused by the walls of the

womb contracting to facilitate the shedding of uterine lining. Much research points to stress worsening our perception of pain.

What happens to our periods after being infected with Covid-19? One study found that, of 177 hospitalised patients, 20 percent had a significant decrease in menstrual volume and 197 experienced a prolonged cycle. Interestingly, 99 percent of patients who reported changes returned to normal after one to two months.

Unsurprisingly, science is still playing catch up on the subject of female reproductive health due to the many years of stigma surrounding menstruation.

Patriarchal society has assured that records of menstruation have been omitted from other events of mass stress in human history.

The societal and physiological effects of the Covid-19 pandemic will continue to be researched for decades after the fact, and while studies have shown that most of the effects on female reproductive health are transient, this can only be confirmed years into the future.

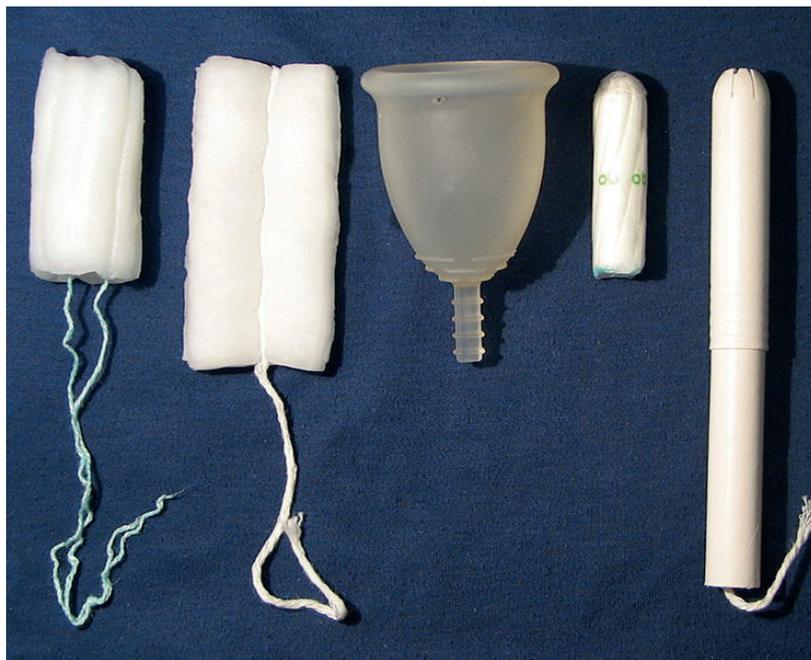


IMAGE COURTESY SALOONA.CO.UK



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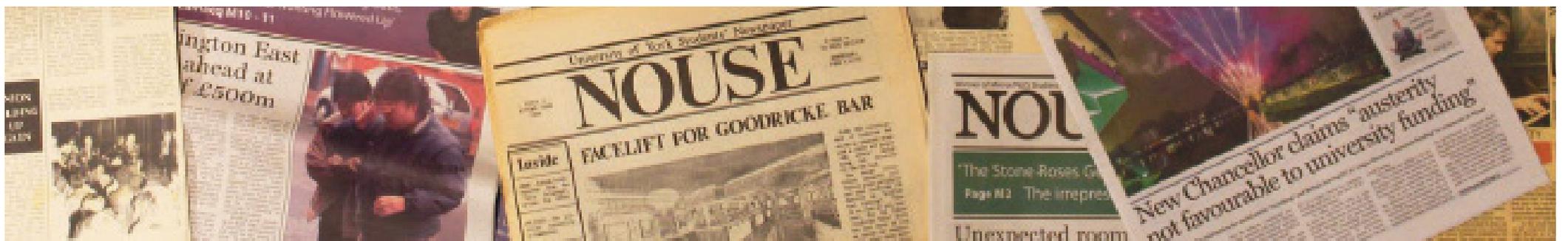
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EDITOR'S COMMENT

Dom Smith
SPORT EDITOR



I feel I say this pretty much every day. But I'm going to say it again: what a time this is for sport. The Six Nations is back, springing a surprise almost every weekend. The Australian Open just concluded, with the superb Simona Halep and the returning Rafael Nadal crowned singles winners. Nadal, out with injury for a long time, didn't even think he'd be able to take part in Melbourne. He conquered all to become the most decorated male tennis player in history — for now.

I've not even mentioned the Winter Olympics, or the WSL, or the African Cup of Nations, all of which have kept many of us suitably entertained over the past couple of weeks. I haven't mentioned the Ashes either, although that's entirely by design. I don't want to hear it, so keep it to yourself.

This edition of Nouse Sport is one I'm extremely proud of. My team has worked to tight deadlines to produce some excellent, insightful content about all manner of topics. It should be as informative as ever, while also offering the odd chuckle along the way. I should

add here that if you don't chuckle once, that doesn't mean you can take us to court. I'm predicting the odd giggle, not guaranteeing it.

Just to the right of this editor's note we have a deep dive into China's underachievement in international football. Jack O'Callaghan analyses why the Chinese are yet to conjure up a men's football team that can compete with the best in the world. In sport comment over the margin, Jack Bleksley argues that the EFL Championship is the best football league in the world for a variety of reasons, while I make the case that British tennis is in a better place now than it was when Andy Murray was trading blows with 'the big three'.

On pages 26–27, I interview Derwent 7s men's football captain Liam Rooney to ask what's it's really like to play for a 7s team, and I speak with Langwith netball's former social sec Jess Cleverdon to ask what a sport social sec really gets up to. Lucy Wilde follows a thrilling day of hockey and Jack Bleksley some men's football, both in the Varsity qualifiers. Seth McKeown covers netball, before explaining how Varsity works.

That's enough to be getting on with, isn't it?

Enjoy
Dom



ANALYSIS: Why's China had no success in international football?

Jack O'Callaghan
SPORT CORRESPONDENT

CHINA IS THE WORLD'S most populous country, and yet when it comes to the world's most popular game, its men's national team lags far behind the competition.

Languishing in 74th place in the FIFA world rankings, behind minnows like Cape Verde and Montenegro, China fails to make its huge population count when it comes to its footballing pedigree.

The team have only qualified for the World Cup once, in 2002, when they exited in the group stage with zero points and zero goals. Despite this, President Xi Jinping has set his nation the ambitious goal of winning the World Cup by 2050. Right now this goal seems light-years away, but why is that? Why is China, a nation that often finds itself towards the top of the medal charts at the Olympics, quite so bad at the world's most popular sport — football?

In the early 2000s, Chinese football suffered from a lack of investment. The country's first professional football league was set up in 1994 and enjoyed some early success and popularity.

However, it soon became associated with corruption and illegal gambling syndicates, causing investors to pull out and viewers to lose interest. In 2000, the Dalian Wanda group, wishing to distance itself from the league's tainted image, pulled its sponsorship, and in 2001, car manufacturer Geely followed suit.

Domestic football hit rock bottom in 2009 when Qingdao Hailifeng FC clearly attempted to score an own goal in a match so their owner would win a bet. With investors unwilling to back teams, how could they afford to nurture future talents and build up grassroots football?

Furthermore, parents came to see the world of football as a dirty and shady one, not one where their children could develop and grow. Corruption became so bad that spots on the national team were being sold to players under the table for 100,000 yuan — roughly £11,000.

China was hardly likely to win anything when they didn't even pick their best team.

When investment did arrive in Chinese football in the mid-2010s, it unfortunately came in the wrong areas and proved to be totally unsustainable. Chinese Super League clubs spent a massive \$298 million in the 2016 winter transfer window on talents like Oscar, Hulk and Lavezzi, who all came from top European clubs.

32-year-old Carlos Tevez was given an eye-watering £600,000 a week contract by Shanghai Shenhua for what he described as a "holiday". Had this money been invested into youth players and the academy structure, rather than in ageing foreign players, Chinese football could well be in a different place right now.

Unsustainable spending has meant that eleven of the sixteen current CSL clubs are now struggling with their wage bill, whilst over twenty professional clubs have folded in the last two years, including last year's CSL champions Jiangsu Suning.

One of China's biggest clubs, Guangzhou Evergrande, brought in only a third of the money it spent in 2019. This is a sad situation that could harm Chinese football for many years to come and halt their progress towards building a world cup winning team.

Without investment in the right places, China will simply not get enough kids playing football.

Rowan Simons, chairman of Club Football Beijing, has estimated that one

child in every 200,000 that plays football becomes a world-class talent, but The Economist reckons that only 100,000 children play regularly in China. Half a world-class player is hardly going to carry a nation to World Cup glory. President Xi wants 30 million-to-50 million children to be playing regular football in the near future, a number that would make them a formidable force in world football.

However, this will not be easy to achieve by any means. 'The beautiful game' must compete with sports like basketball, ping pong and badminton for the attention of the youth, and the government has some way to go in convincing parents that sports deserve a place alongside education in their kids' lives.

Tom Byer, the Head Technical Adviser for the Chinese School Football Program Office, has complained that "parents think of sport as a distraction to education."

If the present looks bleak for Chinese football, perhaps the future looks a little brighter.

Should the grand plan of the football-mad President Xi's come to fruition, there will soon be as many as 18 'footballing cities' in China, each with two professional clubs, a youth training centre, and several local training centres.

A total of 70,000 pitches and 50,000 training centres will be constructed across the country, allowing children to discover the game and hone their skills.

The Evergrande Football School has already opened in Qingyuan, and with 2,500 students and 115 coaches, it's the largest institute of its kind in the world. Perhaps with sustainable investment of this magnitude, China will someday come to achieve the status of footballing superpower.

NOUSE STAT ZONE

8

The number of goals Derwent 7s men's football team conceded in their recent 8–0 defeat to Vanbrugh 4s

1

The number of professional tennis players competing in the men's tour with a metal hip. Andy Murray is the only one

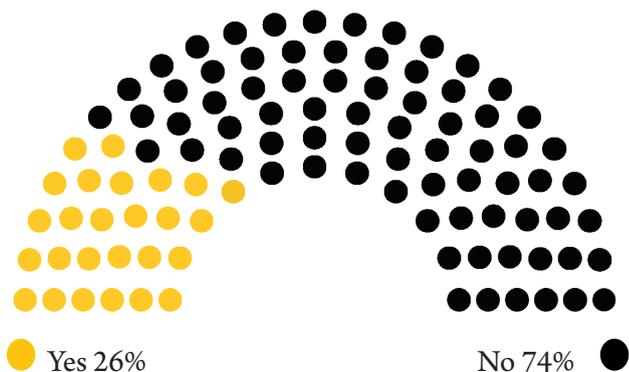
5

The number of medals Team GB won at the Winter Olympic Games in both 2014 and 2018. The 2022 delegation are due to fall well short of that tally

9th

The position in the 14-team league table in which York City Knights currently find themselves. They compete in the rugby league championship

POLL: Have you watched any of the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympic Games yet?



We are living in a thrilling era for British tennis

Dom Smith argues British tennis is in a better place now than when Andy Murray was at the peak of his powers

Dom Smith
SPORT EDITOR

Like the rising temperature does to the animals in spring, Emma Raducanu's preposterous US Open victory in September put an end to hibernation for British tennis.

The magnitude of the teenager's achievement in Flushing Meadows was somewhat underplayed partly because the human story was that an 18-year-old nobody had won a grand slam. And that was all true. But the extent to which she was a nob what was most ludicrous about it all. Never had a qualifier ever reached a grand slam semi-final in either the men's or women's draws of any modern-era grand slam. Not only Raducanu managed to win her semi... and not dropped a single set at 18.

Overnight, Raducanu changed forever. But what else is changing in tennis? It perhaps doesn't have the same permanence. It perhaps isn't quite changing, and it is this: British tennis is lugging itself out of international obscurity, at long last.



IMAGE: SIROBI

scurity, at long last.

It was too tempting during the peak of Andy Murray's exceptional career to assume that British tennis was prospering. By no means was it prospering. It was simply the case that one of the five or six best players in the world, for a decade or so, was British. He'll say Scottish, but we'll go with British. That's a debate for another time — besides, he's not here to defend himself.

Murray grappled for top spot in the sport at a time when three utter freaks of nature were making grand slam titles seem more like fun. Wimbledon, the US Open, and the men's singles titles both the London 2012 and Rio de Janeiro 2016 Olympic Games. He also won the ATP Finals in 2016 to finish the year as world number one. The result of his career drive, not to mention his world-class defensive game.

But Murray's significance was tantamount to

British brilliance. This was, after all, the exploits of just one (exceptional) player. Murray's injury torment in the last four years is well documented, though he is now back fighting regularly at a level much higher than he was ever likely to return to. Murray's prime gave British tennis prominence. The intervening years have shown British tennis to have depth rarely seen before.

On the men's tour, Andy Murray's brother Jamie has inevitably always found himself in Andy's shadow. But as a doubles and mixed-doubles player, Jamie Murray has continued to perform at the very highest level. The former world number one at doubles is a seven-time grand slam winner and is still going strong ranked 19th at doubles at the ripe old age of 35.

Since Kyle Edmund stunned all in Melbourne to reach the 2018 Australian Open semi-finals, he has struggled with a chronic knee injury which is still keeping him out. But the 27-year-old has two career titles so will be back for sure. Murray, meanwhile, has earned a number of stunning wins over the likes of Rafael Nadal and top-ten players Hubert Hurkacz, Jannik Sinner and Casper Ruud recently. Having plummeted below 800 in the ATP rankings during his injury woes, he is now up at 102nd.

Yet Great Britain's impact on the men's tour touches much higher reaches of the elite than even this. Dan Evans at 22nd and Cameron Norrie at 13th have grafted hard at tour level, and results are

now paying tangible dividends. Evans won his first career title in 2021 when he stunned Canadian sensation Félix Auger-Aliassime to win the Murray River Open in Australia. Then in July, Norrie won the Los Cabos Open in Mexico. And in October, Norrie produced the best tennis of his career to lift the title at Indian Wells. Daniil Medvedev, Stefanos Tsitsipas, Alexander Zverev, and 16 of the world's top 20 all competed. 26th-ranked Norrie prevailed, seeing off Diego Schwartzman and Nikoloz Basilashvili en route to victory. It was a

British tennis is lugging itself out of international obscurity, at long last.

stunning result just a month after Raducanu's Flushing Meadows fairy-tale.

Norrie, Evans and Murray will continue to lead Britain's charge in the men's singles as a new era begins. The era of Novak Djokovic, Roger Federer and Nadal is nearing the end whether they like it or not. Can Norrie and Evans force themselves into the reckoning as tennis enters its next chapter?

Emma Raducanu doesn't need to

force herself into the reckoning. She's in the reckoning. She captured the British imagination when she reached the last 16 in her first-ever grand slam at Wimbledon last year. Then she did the supreme at the US Open. But although he has struggled for consistency since, so has everyone else on the women's tour ever since Serena Williams started to fade from her hegemony.

Raducanu is 19 years old, ranked 13th in the world, British number one, and too powerful and too ruthless not to find similar levels to her autumn form at some point again in the future. It's a good sign if a tennis player produces their best tennis when they really need it. She does.

Johanna Konta's surprise retirement in December left a sizeable dent in the quality of British in the women's draw. However, the former world number four leaves the tour in decent condition from a British perspective. Heather Watson is ranked 87th and — while blowing hot and cold — does have real pedigree, having won four singles and four doubles titles, as well as Wimbledon mixed-doubles in 2016. Besides Watson and the oh-so-exciting Raducanu, three more Brits find themselves inside the top 200: Harriet Dart, Katie Boulter and Francesca Jones.

It's a thrilling time to follow British tennis — and an important time to remember that it's not all about the return of Murray and the rise of Raducanu. Other players are available. Finally.

Championship is best football league in the world

The EFL Championship is the greatest football league in the world, argues Jack Bleksley

Jack Bleksley
DEPUTY SPORT EDITOR

MANY ENGLISH FOOTBALL fans argue that the Premier League is the best league in the world.

Some argue that other European leagues such as Spain's La Liga or Italy's Serie A are superior. I am here to inform that they are all wrong. Whilst it could be argued that the Premier League has more quality than any other, the English Football League Championship is in fact the greatest football league in the world.

Each year 24 teams compete for a chance to be promoted to the Premier League. The top two teams go up automatically, whereas the third-to-sixth-placed sides battle it out in the play-offs with the final being played at Wembley Stadium. The bottom three clubs get relegated to League One.

The Championship is a notoriously close league. Very rarely do one team run away with it and rack up a huge lead at the top. If they do then you can guarantee that the rest of the league is close enough to remain interesting. As of 10 February 2022, only five points separate sixth place and 14th place. In addition, the league also produces some very unexpected results. Everyone is able to beat everyone else, on their day.

In January, for example, 19th-

placed Hull City beat two promotion contenders, Blackburn Rovers and Bournemouth, in the same week. Talking of the unexpected, in the 2009/10 season, Blackpool were tipped to be relegated to League One. They clinched sixth place on the final day of the season

The Championship contains one of the most riveting events in world sport: the play-offs.

by a single point — and then went on to win the play-offs, thereby securing promotion to the Premier League for the first time. Proof that truly anything can happen in the Championship, one of the reasons it is the greatest league in the world.

Most of the world's greatest players play in Europe's top flights. Watching Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappé and Robert Lewandowski is all well and good, but in the Championship, you can watch young players emerge before they are established. You will be able to say: "I saw him play

before you did." There has been a lot of world-class talent nurtured in the Championship. 19 of England's 26-man squad that reached the Euro 2020 final had played in the Championship. Jude Bellingham had his breakout season with Birmingham City in the Championship. The most expensive English player ever, Jack Grealish, has 89 Championship appearances for Aston Villa.

Moving away from English players, Adel Taarabt reached exceptional levels for QPR in the 2010/11 season, registering 19 goals and 23 assists in 44 league appearances as well as winning Championship player of the year. It is an individual season that lives long in the memories of Championship fans of all stripes.

And when it comes to talent, it is important to note that there were players from the Championship at Euro 2020 than there were players from France's top division, Ligue 1. It would be foolish of me to try to argue that the Championship has the most skilful or most talented players in the world. This simply isn't true. However, the joy of watching a young player emerge who goes on to have a wonderful career is a feeling that viewers of many top tiers don't witness too often.

As I have already mentioned, the Championship contains one of the most riveting events in world sport: the play-offs. The teams that finish third,

fourth, fifth and sixth battle it out in two semi-finals and a final to see who takes the third and final promotion spot to the Premier League.

The Championship play-off final is the most valuable game in world football, with last year's final being worth a staggering £170 million. The play-offs have seen some of the most memorable moments in English football history. From Troy Deeney's stoppage time winner in the 2013 semi-final after Anthony Knockaert's missed penalty, to Bobby Zamora's famous left-footed strike to send QPR into the Premier League right at the death against Derby County in 2014. Premier League fans will never know the agony or ecstasy of watching their team in the

play-offs. I feel sorry for them. At least they can pretend to fret over whether or not they'll get a place in the Europa Conference League.

One of the best things about the Championship is the difference in size of some of the clubs. Clubs with huge resources and recent Premier League status such as Sheffield United, Bournemouth and West Brom play against clubs with smaller budgets who have recently come up from League One such as Peterborough and Blackpool. And as I've already mentioned, the best part is that sometimes, the smaller teams beat the bigger teams. There aren't many football leagues in the world where you can see a player such as Jefferson Lerma, worth a reported £25 million, play against a team like Peterborough with a total squad value of £10 million. One of the beautiful elements of the Championship: that splashing the cash doesn't guarantee success.

I hope I have convinced you that the Championship is in fact the best football league in the world. If not, I at least implore you to watch a little more of England's second division. It truly is a marvellous spectacle and you might find it to be a nice break from all of the glitz and glamour of the top-flight.



Sport in Brief

Team GB medal hopes fading after sorry show in snowboarding

Team GB are attempting to equal or better their tally of five medals won at both of the last two Winter Olympic Games. However, the medals are hardly flying in for Great Britain in Beijing. The latest significant disappointment came last Wednesday, when world champion Charlotte Bankes crashed out of the snowboarding at the quarter-final stage. She looked to be safely through to the semi-finals in first position. But the 26-year-old from Hemel Hempstead quickly fell to third place, ending her hopes of retaining her title. It marked the end for the athlete considered Team GB's best hope for a gold medal at these games.

Alcuin beat Langwith in netball thriller

Langwith finished second in the league in term 1 and were favourites going into the fixture. However, Alcuin were leading Langwith with a score of 31-27 going into the final quarter. Alcuin were able to cement their position as Halifax's opposition for the final netball varsity qualifier of the year.

Derwent lead table in college pool

Derwently currently lead Constantine and Halifax in the tables after finishing third in term 1. With three games played, Derwent currently have on 28 points. The league is played every Tuesday from 6-10 at The Lounge on West Campus. Eight colleges field teams.

Mike Britland leaves James College to become sports photographer

Mike Britland has left his post as College Manager of James to pursue a career in sports photography. He was regularly in attendance at college sports fixtures and organised the first-ever all-York intra-college varsity between James and Derwent in 2021.

Joe Cullen making Yorkshire proud in darts

Bradford-born darts player Joe Cullen has been on great form in recent weeks. He won his first televised title in late January, winning the 2022 Darts Masters. This led to him obtaining a place on the 2022 Premier League of Darts for the first time. Last week, he got to the final of Night 2, eventually losing 6-4 to the formidable Jonny Clayton.

James dominant on bumper day for hockey

Lucy Wilde

DEPUTY SPORT EDITOR

	Alcuin 1s	0
	James 1s	10

THE SURPRISINGLY SUNNY pitch-side conditions came to characterise the performances from the mixed college hockey teams this weekend.

Sunday morning played host to a series of college matches, kickstarting bright and early at 9am with Langwith vs Halifax.

Almost at the midpoint of term, lingering post-Christmas cobwebs were less easily detectable as the matches unfolded across the morning.

Alcuin have experience at holding their nerve in close-fought games, having held out a win against a strong Derwent side at the end of last month. Taking a 3-2 victory set them in good stead ahead of taking on the notoriously solid James side.

Target shots from the top of the D followed — with no goalkeeper to dictate the angles, most shots were pocketed in the centre. Close observation by Alcuin might have proved beneficial as an indicator of James' game tactics; first time hits down the line seemed a preferable — and should-be predictable — path to goal.

The on-pitch camaraderie was evident from across the spectators area

— as with any sport, this promised to make for enjoyable viewing.

Alcuin's start to the game was slow burning, which the James team were quick to capitalise on.

James had the first pushback — immediately shifting the ball to the sidelines, the team were clearly well versed in the advantages of pushing wide. This opened up the pitch and scattered the opposition's defence.

A neat passage of play from centre pitch and a forceful push pass sealed the deal to mark the first goal of the game. 1-0 James.

What was then made to look like an easy defensive pick on the reverse stick, put James back on the offensive after Alcuin's pushback: 2-0.

Alcuin noticeably struggled to take the ball from the 16 and move up the pitch towards goal; James' top line formed a close knit defensive unit. A single Alcuin player in the midfield took on the task of making short runs to break James' press, but to little avail as the rest of her team remained largely static.

This meant James' high press had an admirable success rate and granted plenty of opportunities to attack the goal line. A missed chance from James at the penalty spot was soon rectified to take them 3-0 up.

The James centre field played deep, seemingly inadvertently adopting a diamond like structure which crowded the pitch and prevented Alcuin from gaining many opportunities to break. 4-0 James.

Alcuin's centre back maintained

communication from the bottom of the pitch, encouraging her team to drive forward and use each other in two-on-one scenarios to create space to move into.

Despite this, James did not hold back in moving towards Alcuin players with the ball and closing down the space: forcing them to make quick decisions under pressure led to consequential errors. 5-0 James.

Alcuin's defence faced a tough task in the first half, given the majority of play was focused in their defensive half.

With a player down Alcuin might have benefited from adopting a bolder approach and overloading the centre field. This could have disrupted James' flow by closing down the space for 2 vs 1 passages of play: Alcuin's stance to remain defensive gifted James several chances to attack unchallenged.

At 5-0 down with another 25 minute half to go, Alcuin's team spirit wasn't diminished.

Starting the half with a clear mindset — as if a clean slate at 0-0 — can prove a productive way to regain morale and team energy. Alcuin did.

An early passage of play looked promising as Alcuin began to use each other to move round the James players — rather than attempting to run at them and win a man-on-man tussle for possession - this added fluidity to the game. 6-0 James. 7-0 James.

Alcuin's defence were kept busy, stopping a series of on-target attempts that would have seen the score line increase further still. A short corner awarded to James from a foot didn't

reap another goal, yet Alcuin's tendency to clear the ball through the middle of the pitch continued to cater to James' hunt for goals. James' pace gave them extra time on the counter: with the time to make a judgement call on whether to attack solo or play the ball into space, James soon found the backboard of the goal again. 8-0. 9-0. 10-0.

A series of quickfire goals doesn't do justice to Alcuin's continued efforts to move the ball up pitch and use the wings to create space for attacking the line. The match was characterised by good team spirits on both sides, despite the one-sided score line.

As of Sunday, Varsity competition is a mere one month away. With no means of predicting how the colder weather might disrupt upcoming evening training sessions — or how the current student Covid case rates might force a reconfiguration of teams — all sides ought to be capitalising on the opportunity to play competitively.

Practising set plays in game scenarios, testing out pitch formations and player combinations, will form a key part of each college's preparation for Varsity qualifiers. Failure to prepare is preparing to fail, after all.

As always, the weekend of March 5th promises to be one filled with on-pitch competitive rivalries, camaraderie and sportsmanship. Before then, the college teams must battle it out to decide who will have the chance to compete for the title.

Given this week's performance, James seem a safe bet to represent York at another year of Varsity competition.

What's it really like to play for Derwent 7s?

Dom Smith

SPORT EDITOR

Were you ever picked last in PE? Imagine a sports team compiled entirely of people who were. Every Sunday on the JLD football pitch, a group of young men meet to play football their way. The football they produce is often good enough to win them matches in the bottom tier of University of York college football. But the football is always sufficiently gung-ho that it would make Pep Guardiola very ill indeed if he ever caught a glimpse.

Luckily the Manchester City manager is yet to attend a match involving Derwent college's seventh-best men's football team. Someone who experiences the soap opera every week is Liam Rooney, Derwent 7s' captain.

One reason why there are seven Derwent teams and only five or fewer at other colleges is that so many Derwenters want to get involved in college football. "I think it's just a good boozy society," Rooney jokes. Speaking to *Nouse*, he adds: "I don't know how many people are in Derwent, but it seems about half of them are in Derwent football — even people who can't play football, which is the majority of our team. Just there for a good time, and it is a good time."

Rooney does not have an easy job — much like Wayne Rooney. "It is quite stressful trying to chase people up. People turn up two minutes before the game or, as we had last weekend, ten minutes after kick-off." But the fourth-

year has no regrets about taking the role on this year. "It's good, it's a fun thing to do."

And why did he decide to become Derwent 7s captain in the first place? "Just to give myself a game really!" Fair play.

Rooney is proud of the culture at DCFC. He suspects it is more open to members with slightly less footballing acumen than other colleges might be. "I feel a lot of societies might not be as welcoming to new members. We try and get as many people involved as possible, regardless of ability. We try and facilitate everyone."

"Lot's of people are very competitive about it, but I think it's about getting everyone involved. I try and get as many people as I can down every week and try and play everyone. I think a lot of people take it extremely seriously when in reality it's not that serious. People expect me to be devastated when we lose and over the moon when we win. In reality, it's just something to do."

Do they ever win? One would assume a 7s team is destined to lose when it comes up against 3s, 4s and 5s from rival colleges. You'd be surprised. "Last term we beat Vanbrugh 3s, Alcuin 3s, and finished third in our league out of eight. We're really not the worst team, which is quite shocking to be honest. We manage to find a way."

"We won our first game 7-2. Sunday we lost 8-0. It's taken a sharp decrease every week so far. We'll have to see how it goes next week. I think we can get promoted this term."

Rooney has a sort of tragic fond-

ness to their style of play. "I always say that it's not actually the same sport as playing for the 1s or 2s or any higher team. The bottom tier of college football just doesn't look the same. It's a mixture between rugby and a bit of football. I don't find it demeaning — I don't think anyone else who plays for the 7s does. I think they just think of it as a good laugh really."

"The size of Derwent football, we've got so many people. There's a lot of people that I don't even have room to pick. There are 25 people who we don't even have space for with seven teams. So the quality is getting a bit better just through sheer volume of people. People who wouldn't have been in the 7s in previous teams now are, when they would have been in a higher team in previous years."

And there the 7s is now gaining a team bond that would be more expected from a 1s or 2s side. "With the introduction of the set squads, you can't be jumping between. I've had basically everyone say to me: 'I'm not moving up a team. I want to stay here. This is way here.' So we have community spirit," says Rooney.

"Once you've played a few games, you have got that camaraderie between you all. We're all in this together with objectives for the season. We're trying to go for promotion this season, and people don't want to move up a team and move away from that common objective."

The huge numbers of spectators

who turn up each weekend and will the Derwent 7s on really is a spectacle. Rooney is still amazed at how much support his quirky side get each game.

"I think we've got the second-highest attendance for Derwent sport, behind Derwent rugby. I think we have the highest attendance for any college football team. I have done my bit to try and promote them by emailing the whole of Derwent a few times. But nobody's turned up from any of those emails. All

I've got back is people telling me to stop emailing them. Nobody turns up to any other games, but normally we have 20-to-30 people at ours.

"When we scored the other week in the last kick of the game to make it 2-2, it was everyone, tops off, running round the pitch swinging their tops around your head. Everyone piling on and winding the other teams up, but not going over the edge. That's where the fun comes from I think."

How big a part of Uni has 7s been for him? "I would say way too much. It's obviously a social every Wednesday, a game at the weekend, training, and all the other little things in between. The majority of people in Derwent football have their good mates in Derwent football. So they made their mates and then they all go along to everything together. You're kind of constantly in a Derwent Football cycle."

I forgot to mention: there are plans for a Derwent 8s team. Trust Derwent.



Constantine cruise past Halifax to qualify for Varsity

Jack Bleksley
DEPUTY SPORT EDITOR



> **CONTINUED from back**

to their full advantage by consistently launching long balls over the top of the Constantine defence in a way that even Sam Allardyce would be proud of. However, they weren't able to utilise it as Halifax's number 11 had two shots saved early in the first half.

In the 18th minute, Isaiah Jones fired the ball into the back of the net following an impressive counterattack from a Halifax freekick. Unfortunately for the men in pink, the goal was dis-

allowed as the referee ruled that a Constantine player had handled the ball in the build-up. It remained 0-0.

Despite Constantine's efforts, Jones couldn't be kept quiet for long. Just two minutes later he had scored again and this time it counted. An impressive bit of footwork got him in between two Halifax defenders and he neatly placed the ball in the bottom left corner.

The wind was definitely having an impact on this game, especially for the Constantine goalkeeper. Any kick up the field that he attempted was taken off course by the wind and ended in Halifax's possession.

This put his defence under a lot of pressure in the first half. Luckily for him, he was a better shot-stopper than kicker as he kept out any chances Halifax had.

As the first half came to an end not much was separating the sides. You felt that Constantine had done well to

come away leading 1-0. With the wind against them in the second half, a big effort was needed from Halifax if they wanted to hold onto their lead, and ultimately, secure a place for Varsity.

It was a nightmare start to the second half for Halifax. Jones scored his second of the day after a good through ball from left back Will Bolton. This time Jones opted for the bottom right corner and hit it past the Halifax goalkeeper.

At 2-0 down with gale force winds blowing in their faces, it was going to be an immense struggle for Halifax to get back in the game.

For the rest of the second half, Constantine were utterly dominant. Frustration was building for Halifax. Mid-way through the half, two Halifax players were shown a second yellow card. One was for a poor challenge. The other for a wholly unnecessary push on a Constantine player. As the referee said after the game, "You simply can't

do that in football."

Football is a difficult enough game when you have eleven players, it's a whole lot harder when you only have nine.

Halifax now had to resort to playing three at the back, something they had not prepared for. And it showed. The ball barely left the Halifax half for the final twenty minutes of the match.

Shot after shot was blocked by a Halifax defender or kept out by the keeper. In all fairness, they did well to keep it to just 2-0. It could have been five or six by full time had Constantine utilised their two extra players more effectively.

But Halifax managed to keep the score at 2-0. At the final whistle there were cheers from many of the Constantine players. Not many people had backed them to win this match and they caused an upset few were expecting. Halifax finished top of division 1 in first term.

This was a huge accomplishment for Constantine.

Halifax captain Taylor Sawyer said: "It wasn't our day. In the second half the weather wasn't in our favour.

"Frustration set in and Constantine deserved the win." The victorious captain Cheikh Wam was very proud of his team, "I thought we were quality today.

After this victory, Constantine earned themselves a place at Varsity on Sunday 6 March 2022. They were deserved winners.

Constantine join James in representing the University against Durham at Varsity 2022.

The match proved to be an exciting way to set up what will be a tough tournament against the Durham sides.

If Constantine can replicate the determination they showed here, they have every chance of doing well and being top seeds for Varsity.

What's life like as a sport social sec?

Dom Smith
SPORT EDITOR

"I WAS NEVER REALLY focused on the netball," admits Jess Cleverdon. She is — perhaps worryingly — the president of Langwith College Netball Club. "I never really played netball until halfway through second year. I was just trying to be cool!"

Cleverdon is possibly being a little too honest, but it allows the LCNC president to explain what her previous role at the club was really like.

"I was social sec for Langwith College Netball Club last academic year. We have 150 social members. Social secs get help from the rest of committee," she says. Nevertheless, responsibilities come down to her when the club is out on their Wednesday socials.

Speaking about the ethos of the club, she states: "It's such an inclusive culture, so many good girls. No one takes themselves too seriously, everyone's up for a laugh. Each week, we do 'W**ker of the Week'. Celebrating people's mistakes and making everybody else feel a bit better about themselves."

"For a laugh," she says, when I ask why she ran for social sec in the first place. "I like bossing people around, and I like drinking. I did win best social member in first year. It almost felt like destiny. So I thought I'd run, and was very luckily voted into the role."

Asked what the ideal social sec is like, Cleverdon says: "You've got to be fun, enthusiastic, organised, and charismatic. I think you also have to be approachable. You have to

be kind of narcissistic as well. You also have to be willing to take a joke and have people laugh at you. If you're not willing to embarrass yourself, nobody else is willing to embarrass themselves."

There are clearly a number of benefits to being social sec at a society. It doesn't tend to be the most popular role at elections without good reason. But what is the best part of the job?

"I think it's definitely making friends," says Cleverdon, LCNC's now-president. "You get to make way more friends than you would if you were just solely a social member and not on committee, because you actively have to make the effort with people. And people come to you as a first point of contact — accidental welfare officer and an accidental friend." Very profound.

I ask her again what attributes the ideal college sport social sec possesses, keen to see whether she will answer in the same vein as she did before. "Me," she says abruptly. "I am the embodiment of social sec."

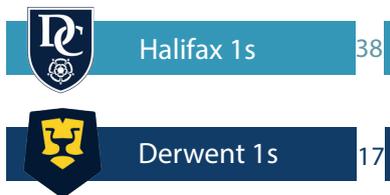
Her advice to college sports players considering running for social sec at their team's next elections is simple. She strongly recommends the role. "Definitely do it. It's such a good experience. It opens other doors. I don't think I would have become president if I hadn't been social sec. Socials don't end on a Wednesday. You're social sec every day of the week."

Social secs rightly get a reputation for being the joker of the pack. But should freshers look up to them as role models and model members of the sports club? I ask Cleverdon whether freshers and new members should look up to her?

She replies swiftly. "Not really."

Fax face Alcuin in qualifier final

Seth McKeown
SPORT EDITOR



SATURDAY MORNING SAW two of the most competitive college netball fixtures of the year take place. An excellent performance from Halifax's prolific GS Annie Murphy and a defensive masterclass from GK Lauren Tew was enough to overcome a strong Derwent line-up, with Halifax claiming a 38-17 victory.

As important as the league tables were to both teams, the pinnacle of college sport is the opportunity to represent the University at varsity, and this semi-final fixture would decide who that may be. The magnitude of the match was palpable with over 70 in attendance including students and parents, and the atmosphere was arguable the best varsity qualifier yet.

And it's safe to say the match lived up to its hype.

Halifax were favourites going into the game. They won the first division in term 1 whilst Derwent finished fourth. However, Derwent eased through the varsity qualifiers in 2020 to verse Durham, with many of players on Saturday played in the varsity edition two years prior, giving them unique experience that Halifax didn't have.

The game began with Derwent's centre pass from skipper Amy Owens. It didn't take long for Derwent's energetic press to be rewarded via GS Phillipa Widdows, but shortly after Halifax equalised after a foul from Derwent's Annie Hollis.

The rest of the first quarter saw end to end action with the score 5-3 to Halifax going into the second phase of play. Derwent had more chances, but Halifax's front line looked much more prolific and it wasn't telling that Halifax would go on to win by a 21 goal margin. The second quarter told a different

story from the first. Halifax scored from centre play, and then netted three more before Derwent managed to enter the attacking third again. The goal of the match came in the 5th minute of the quarter from Derwent's Eve Hasler, scoring from the edge of the goal circle to the applause of the crowd.

Derwent looked to be making a comeback with Widdows scoring shortly after. However, Halifax's attack proved too strong for Derwent as six goals followed in the last five minutes of the quarter to Derwent's one, widening Halifax's lead to 6 goals going into the halfway point of the match with a scoreline of 15-9.

Derwent was forced to defend all the way down the court in the third quarter. Halifax capitalised on Derwent mistakes to create chances in the attacking third and stepped up their defensive tactics and tightly marked Derwent's WA Rose Sara-Kelly and GA Eve Hasler, making it difficult for Derwent to find attacking options. Halifax also played a series of ambitious long balls to find Player of the Match Annie Murphy, who netted most of Halifax's goals in the game.

Derwent looked defeated as Halifax bolstered their attacking threat with a substitution in midfield. Halifax scored 12 in the third quarter and there looked to be no way back for Derwent in the last quarter.

The last phase of play saw Derwent's efforts efficiently squandered by Halifax's GK Lauren Tew. Tew's interception during a 2 v 1 Derwent counterattack was met with applause from the crowd and it was clear that this was the story of the match for Derwent - when key chances presented themselves, Halifax's defence was quick to intercept any danger.

Halifax scored a further 11 goals in the final quarter compared to Derwent's 3 to give a final score of 38-17 to Halifax.

It was a consistently strong performance from Halifax. When they took

the lead from Derwent in the middle of the first quarter, they defended solidly and proved difficult to defend against.

The scoreline is perhaps a little too harsh on Derwent. Solid performances from GD Mia Hammond and GS Phillipa Widdows put Derwent in a good position to capitalise on any possession won in the middle, and the arm-up defending tactic in a series of turnovers in the third quarter was an effective defensive approach to win back possession. But Halifax proved to be a team that made few mistakes and placed huge pressure on Derwent to play long-balls throughout the game which were swiftly intercepted by Lauren Tew.

Halifax captain Emily NG described the performance as a "rocky start in the first quarter but we pulled ahead in the 2nd and kept our heads". GC Annie Murphy was voted Player of the Match by Halifax, although a series of players could have pitched a claim for it. Derwent's player of the match was arguably Mia Hammond who was effective

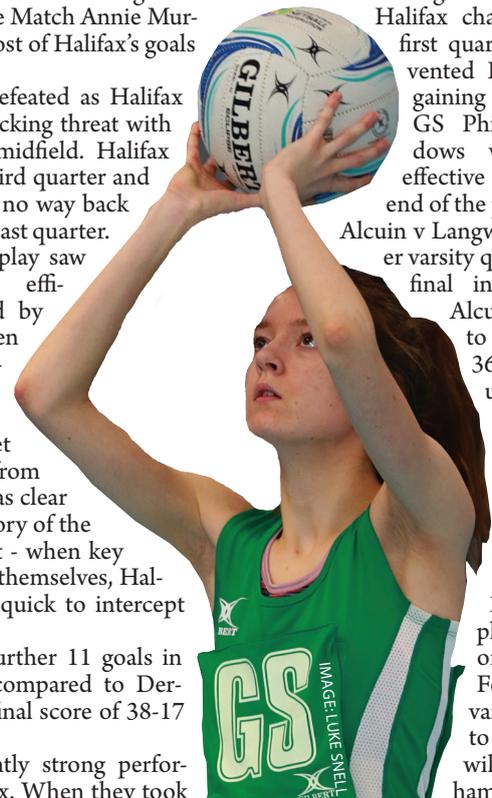
in shutting down a series of Halifax chances in the first quarter that prevented Halifax from gaining an early lead. GS Phillipa Widdows was equally effective at the other end of the pitch.

Alcuin v Langwith, the other varsity qualifier semi-final in York, saw Alcuin score 43 to Langwith's 36. It was an

unexpected win for Alcuin, who finished behind Langwith in the league tables in term 1. Halifax play Alcuin on Sunday 13 Feb in the final varsity qualifier to decide who will play Durham on 4 March.



IMAGE: JESS CLEVERDON



GB tennis on rise

Dom Smith argues British tennis is in a better place than when Andy Murray was competing with 'the big three' to be world number one.

P.25



Championship rules

Jack Bleksley makes a strong case that the EFL Championship is the greatest football league in the world, for a number of reasons.

P.25



College netball

Derwent 1s and Halifax 1s face off in an all-important varsity qualifier. Seth McKeown was there to report on the action.

P.27



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CONNIE BEAT HALIFAX IN THRILLER

Jack Bleksley
DEPUTY SPORT EDITOR

A PLACE IN THIS year's Varsity versus Durham was up for grabs in the 12 o'clock kick off on the 22. Halifax took on Constantine on a windy Saturday afternoon in a game that would eventually see Constantine triumph.. Two comfortable finishes from striker Isai-

ah Jones were enough to win the game for the East Campus college as Halifax had two men sent off in the second half.

Going into Saturday's game Halifax were the favourites. Playing in a mishmash of various different blue and white strips, they started the game with the wind blowing in their favour. They used this...

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Varsity countdown begins after 2021 cancellation

Seth McKeown
SPORT EDITOR

AFTER A YEAR BREAK, College Varsity will be back in less than three weeks time. The annual Varsity series will showcase the most successful sports teams from the institutions' colleges in a series of action packed sports events, and this year it is to be held at the University of York. YUSU runs it as "the pinnacle of college sport, where local rivalries are put aside for one day only as colleges come together to represent their university." Wholesome.

On 6 March 2022, 32 fixtures will be held on the university campus in which the ultimate goal will be to earn points for York. The winning institution will be the team who earns the most points after all the sports have been played. It is a competitive and historical affair, as all varsities across the country

are. Oxford has Cambridge, Birmingham has Warwick, and York has Durham.

York's maiden varsity took place in 2005 with York St. John before being replaced with the University of Hull in 2011 to make it more competitive. The event was labelled the "White Rose Varsity" due to the proximity with Yorkshire as well as the event being a prelude to the main varsity "Roses" event in the summer term, which is a varsity inspired by the medieval war between the white rose of York and red rose of Lancaster.

In 2014, York decided to change its varsity opponents again — this time to Durham — due to the acrimonious relationship between the two universities Sports Unions and disappointment over the lack of competitiveness of competition. Hull's new varsity opponents became the University of Lincoln in a series of sports challenges

they rather cringely call "The Humber Games".

York trail Durham's overall varsity record to just a single win, winning three editions to Durham's four. But the hosts have won every edition of varsity barring Durham's away win at the very first varsity in 2014. Can York level the score for the very first time?

It will no doubt be a difficult task. Home advantage taken into account and with York's most successful varsity yet taking place in 2020 with a 76-47 victory, York are favourites.

Varsity qualifiers in York, which will occur on the weekend of the 12-13 Feb, ensure that only the best represent the University. For Rugby, Netball and Football, the qualification process involves the top four teams in the top division in which a semi-final and final takes place. The winner then represents the University against Durham. Similar means of qualification take place in the

remaining 13 sports.

This makes sure that York always puts up a strong performance and ensures that the competitive nature of the event is protected. But just how strong are Durham?

Durham has one of the most comprehensive sports facilities in the country. They have 16 colleges, 18 different college sports, 85 percent of students are involved in sport either as a player, official or coach, and they have over 700 teams in their college structure in comparison to York's 150. Their 2020 varsity consort were evidently their weakest yet in the contribution as it was York's was biggest margin of victory in the competition, however with the disruption of the Covid-19 pandemic, most of the 2020 participants will not be competing in the 2022 edition.

This means that it really is all up in the air. York did win the 2020 edition by a significant margin, obtaining

76 points to Durham's 47, and York does have the home advantage — but Durham is renowned for its sporting facilities and highly competitive sport culture.

Varsity is always a competitive event. There are few opportunities at university to represent your college against other universities. York and Durham's collegiate systems make it one of the only intra-college varsities outside the Oxford and Cambridge edition. Durham also appear to be our toughest opponents yet, with the chance to equal the all-time score for the first time ever, this year's Varsity will be a special edition if it were to go York's way.

It looks to be a competitive day of sporting fixtures at York — so make sure you get down to the 22, the tennis bubble, the 3G or wherever any of the sports you fancy watching are taking place, and support the Black and Gold!