



MUSE: An Interview from Exile

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Rishi Sunak: the first year of the 5th Tory PM

Tom Lindley (he/him) reviews Rishi Sunak's first year as Prime Minister
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Nouse



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Rowan on York and Bake-Off

Nadia Sayed (she/her)
DEPUTY EDITOR

THE GREAT BRITISH Bake-Off returned to Channel 4 on Tuesday, 26 September. One of this year's bakers included former English Literature student at the University of York, Rowan Claughton.

This year, the series saw Alison Hammond as the new co-host alongside Noel Fielding. Hammond replaced Matt Lucas, who, said to the BBC "his three-series stint had been a "delicious experience" but the time needed to oversee bakes alongside other projects was too much." Hammond's participation on the show as co-host was well received overall.

Nouse reached out to Rowan to find out more about his experience on Bake-Off and what he thought about his time as a student in York.

To begin with, Nouse asked what originally determined Rowan's choice to study at the University of York. Rowan replied, "I live in Leeds and was desperate to move far away and start a new life elsewhere. What better city to choose than twenty minutes down the road."

Given Rowan's familiarity with both baked goods and the city of York, having graduated from



Rowan Claughton enjoying his time in the Great British Bake-Off tent with this year's co-host Alison Hammond who stepped in to replace Matt Lucas.

Student commuters left feeling isolated with unaffordable accommodation in York

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"It's really lonely": commuting York students are missing out on their university experience with soaring rent prices

Alanah Hammond (she/her)
NEWS EDITOR

THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK student renting prices increased by a 27 percent average last academic year. With weekly rent bills rising up to £195 for popular housing areas, such as Hull Road and Badger Hill, students were concerned for how their finances would be impacted with the unprecedented rent rise.

One year later and the aftermath of the renting crisis is apparent. Third year students Scarlet Saunders, Ellie Underwood and Max all no longer live in York and commute to university because they can't afford the rent prices.

With a reliance on public trans-

port, Scarlet, Ellie, and Max have all missed crucial university teaching but also "the university experience" because of delayed, long and expensive commutes.

The commuters are not alone in their concerns about money. The University of York found in their 'Tell us' student survey, in February 2022, that 60 percent of its students were worried about finances.

The University has offered schemes such as a £100 Off Campus Rent Grant, and Food Vouchers, but for many students this is not enough as their student loans do not cover their rent. The student housing charity Unipol confirmed this, finding accommodation costs take up almost all the average maintenance loan received

by university students in England.

The University of York also found that 11 percent of its students don't talk to anyone about money or finance worries. However, Scarlet, Ellie, and Max agreed to tell Nouse their stories to highlight the severity of the renting crisis which has impacted both their studies and mental health.

Scarlet Saunders is in her final year of studying Economics and commutes from her hometown Swinton, which is just outside Sheffield in South Yorkshire (not to be mistaken with Manchester's Swinton). Scarlet's commute is around an hour and a half, including one train and one bus, and costs around £30 a week.

Scarlet wakes up every morning at 06:30, walks to the station and

catches the 07:20 train. The train takes around an hour, if there are no delays and arrives at York station at 08:30. With bus delays, the earliest Scarlet can get to the university campus is 09:30, sometimes 10:00.

Commuting four out of five weekdays, Nouse asked Scarlet to describe her journey to York. One-word: "terrible". After a nervous laugh, Scarlet explained "It's really bad and very time-consuming. Of course, it is a lot cheaper, £30 a week is much cheaper than the rent prices in York, but with the train times I can't make any 09:00 teaching".

With missing multiple 09:00 seminars and lectures, Scarlet has received emails from the university highlighting her poor
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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR AND DEPUTY EDITOR

Thank you!



Orla McAndrew (she/her) and **Nadia Sayed** (she/her)

Welcome to the first edition of *Nouse* this academic year 2023/24, *Nouse* #505! Firstly, a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed to *Nouse* this year; we have had a fantastic start, and the entire committee has worked so hard. Not to be cheesy, but you should all be proud of yourselves! The enthusiasm everyone has shown is incredible, and we are so happy to have over 140 members!

We have also successfully launched our brand new *Nouse* and *Muse* radio shows, which we wanted to implement this year. You can catch up on the previous episodes of *NouseCast* and *Muse-ings* on URY On Tap if you haven't already.

Although we are grateful to everyone who has contributed to this print edition, we want to thank a few who have stood out especially. Firstly, thank you to our chief Sub, Katy, who has been a part of *Nouse* for longer than we know! (Sorry to bring it up again, Katy).

Once again, a huge thank you to our technical team. You have not only worked behind the scenes on updating our website, but you are always there to provide a helping hand when the tech stops working (read as Orla didn't realise the router had been unplugged); we really couldn't do this without you!

A huge thank you to our Social Secretary, Tom; we've had some great socials already, and having more opportunities to spend time with everyone outside the office has been lovely! We can't wait to see what events you come up with next, Tom.

A special thanks to George for his outstanding work in crafting the graphics for our *Nouse* events, even on short notice! We are always impressed by how creative the designs you make are!

As always, a huge thank you to Emily and Ellen. You have both contributed a lot to *Muse*; it is truly a delight for both myself and Nadia to work alongside you on the senior team. Another thanks to Dhuha and Abbie for keeping us both sane!

Finally, thank you to all our editors and writers who have contributed their ideas and dedicated so much of their time to putting this edition together.

In this edition, within the News section, you will find an interview piece with Rowan Cloughton, former York student and Bake Off contestant and a thoughtful piece on the current Israel/Palestine conflict by Nadia Sayed. Also in News, there is an emotive interview exploring the struggles of student commuters in York by Alanah Hammond. In Comment, you will find a piece on why Ethan Reutuer dislikes Tinder, and Maya Umpacis investigates how the veneer of 'goofy' politicians hides their failures. In Science, you can find about about the effects of Male Birth Control written by Ben Morris. Over in Business, Meadow Lewis gives a run down on the recent AI safety summit and graduate job cuts at the Big Four. Over in Politics, Antonia Shipley looks at the Renters Reform Bill and some of the changes that are affecting students.

As we come towards the end of this first semester (it still feels weird not calling it a term), not only as *Nouse* Editor and Deputy but also as final-year students, we want to encourage you to cherish these winter months in York. We both can't believe this will be our last time in York at Christmas as students! When life gets busy, especially as assessment season looms upon us, it's hard to take the time to appreciate the beautiful city we live in and the campus we have. York is made for the winter months. Yes, it's slightly cold and windy, but that's Yorkshire for you! Whether you're a winter person or not, York is truly magical at Christmas. So, make sure to soak up all the festive atmosphere which York has to offer! If you're struggling with gift ideas, this edition would make an excellent present for your friends and family.

As always, we welcome new writers. So if you want to join *Nouse* and have your name in our next print edition, or if you want to write an article to go up online, we'd encourage you to get in touch with our editors! But for now, we hope you enjoy reading *Nouse* #505.

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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SCIENCE



Will we ever find alien life elsewhere **P. 21**

York Giving Day raises its largest ever amount

Katy Leverett (she/her)
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

YORK GIVING DAY, which takes place annually, raised its largest sum yet this year, at £309,476. The large-scale fundraiser took place on 1-2 November 2023, and saw donations from 859 people including staff, alumni and students.

York Giving Day aims to raise money for underprivileged students to make the most of their university experience. This year there were five categories donors could donate funds to: The York Opportunities Scholarship, The Equal Access Scholarship, YuFund, GenerationResearch and Mentally Fit York.

The York Opportunity Scholarship, which sees the University provide £3,300 to undergraduates from less advantaged backgrounds over their three years at University, was the biggest cause donated to. £70,585 was raised, with 282 donors. Not far behind was GenerationResearch, which provides work experience opportu-

nities to those interested in careers in the science industry. £58,219 was raised, with 115 donors.

The third category, The Equal Access Scholarship, raised £41,719 with 252 donors. The Scholarship provides asylum seeking students access to a York education by giving them a £12,300 bursary for living costs funded by donations from Giving Day and a full tuition fee waiver. Since its creation, the scholarship has supported students fleeing conflict in both Afghanistan and Ukraine.

The final two categories also raised large sums. YuFund, which helps to enhance the student experience whilst at York, raised £15,790 with 67 donors. Whilst Mentally Fit York, which works to help with initiatives and research into improving mental health, raised £8,794 with 139 donors.

Two significant donors were Dr Anthony H Wild and AstraZeneca. Before the day, Dr Wild had agreed to match the first £60,000 raised by the Giving Day, but with 36 hours to go,

he increased this to £100,000.

AstraZeneca, the University's corporate partner, donated £19,000 to GenerationResearch as a result of the University meeting its Giving Day challenge of having over 530 donors.

This was not the only challenge set by large donors. There were numerous milestone donors had to pass in their fundraising to 'unlock' further donations from different groups. The idea behind these challenges is to encourage people to donate more in order to gain further funding. Another challenge was 'The Final Three Hour Challenge'.

This saw an extra £15,000 donated to the Equal Access Scholarship as a result of £30,000 being fundraised by donors.

This has been the largest amount raised by a York Giving Day to date. In an email sent out to students, the York Unlimited Giving Day Team wrote: "Thanks to the generosity of the York community,

we will be able to provide support to more students to access a York education, set more students up for the best chance of a successful career, and make greater advances to im-

prove mental health".

"In York's 60th anniversary year, it was heartwarming to see the community spirit on Giving Day, helping to ensure York remains a welcoming, safe space for all."

York Student Union President, Pierrick Roger, also commented: "We have been absolutely blown away by the alumni response to Giving Day. We're incredibly thankful for all of the donations that have been made - raising over £100,000 in excess of the day's giving goal."

The money raised, whether for scholarships, YuFund, or Mentally Fit York, will make a huge difference to students and student activity on campus. OPPA has gone above and beyond for the student body and we could not be more grateful for their work".

For more information on this year's York Giving Day, visit unlimited.hubbub.net.



IMAGE: ELLEN MORRIS

Nouse interviews YUSU Academic Officer Meely Doherty

Daisy Couture (she/her)
NEWS EDITOR

ON 17 NOVEMBER, Nouse sat down with newly-appointed Academic Officer, Meely Doherty, to ask her about her role.

What exactly does your role involve?

Unsurprisingly, the Academic Officer deals with academics! It's assessment, feedback, timetabling, graduation issues and also employability. It means that the role tends to deal with less campaigning than some of the other SABBs [Sabbatical Officer] roles - it's a bit more operational. I call them 'little fires', we tend to deal with more department-specific issues, rather than university-wide ones.

What inspired you to run for Academic Officer?

One of the big things that really encouraged me to run was that I used to work for the Inclusive Education department in the University. We did a project called the Assessment and Feedback Project, which is still running. Then, when the self-certification campaign came around last year, I wanted to be involved. I got in touch with staff members outside of [Pierrick and Deb's] campaign and forwarded it onto them so that they could use the information - it was nice to see this tangible impact.

I try really hard to make sure that reps are included in everything. For example, I'm getting department reps

on working groups that they wouldn't usually be invited to. I wanted academic representation to change, and I guess I decided to be the person to do it.

It's a fun job but it can be quite difficult, and that's okay! I also wanted to do it in a way that was a bit more empathetic to staff. Obviously there's times where staff do something wrong, however, if you don't assume malice, you can usually get it fixed. It's about creating those avenues of communication at every level of academic representation, so it's not just me at the top going "Hey, why haven't you done this?"

What are you currently doing to help support students academically?

In the summer, I ran on a policy centering around inclusive assessment and employability. Inclusive assessment is very policy-based. It tends to be quite rhythmic in how it works because it has to fit around committees, but it will have a long-term impact. Employability tends to be something you can get done a bit quicker, but the impact might be more short-term. I've been working a lot on employability recently, we're designing a competition that I can't tell you much about yet, but it should be fun!

I'm also working on a signposting guide that focuses on what you can do after university - I think a lot of undergraduates end up doing panic masters because they're not sure what to do. Obviously postgraduate studies

are 100% valid, but it's not always the best choice for some students. So it's making them aware of other options that they might not have considered.

Finally, I've been working with the careers department on York Leaders. In the past, York Leaders was only open to second years - I've got them to extend it to third years, and it's also become short-



IMAGE: YUSU

er. I'm very grateful to the careers department, because I kind of gave them all my ideas and they made it work!

What are your main goals for this academic year?

It's optimistic thinking, but I want people to feel that when they leave uni, they've got the most out of their degree. When a lot of people leave, they feel as though they've taken part in a lot of societies, college events, sports, extra-curricular activities. They've had a great personal experience, but they haven't thought too hard about their degree. I want

to make sure people get the most out of it. It can take the path of knowing what you want to do when you've graduated, but it can also be making sure that assessments and timetabling work for students. These might seem quite small, but they build a bigger picture of your university experience.

One of the big things I've been working on this year is dictionaries. As we move from open to closed exams, there's this sense of anxiety around them, especially for students who haven't sat one before. One of the best ways we can make this as comfortable as possible is by providing things that can uphold the closed exam style, whilst not being so daunting that they cause students to underperform. Dictionaries sound small, but they can actually be a really big benefit. If I leave and all that I've achieved is making assessments better for students, then that is good enough for me.

Are there any major changes you'd like to see in the educational system?

I think that the British educational system creates a level of competitiveness within students that actually disadvantages them later. For example, the number of students that don't take part in Languages for All because they're worried about being mocked for being a beginner. Or the fact that students are often discouraged from trying disciplines they're not familiar with and I think that causes genuine problems. On the other side of it, I think that students

are often pushed in the direction of university, when it's not always the right choice for them. The education system needs to stop promoting the high school to university to dream job pipeline. University is a great place for so many people, but it's also the wrong place for some people and that's okay. Make university open to everyone, but make it a choice as well. It's a great form of social mobility, but it's not the only one.

What has been the best part and most challenging part of working with YUSU so far?

I think my favourite thing about working for YUSU is the people. I think that the University has some really amazing people who want to help you, people get wrapped up in the idea that the more senior a person is, the less likely they are to want to interact with students, but I don't think that's true! I have a lot of respect for the University staff, and I do think it's really cool getting to know different people. I just want to make people happy!

I'm also a bit of a nerd and I love all the meetings, I find it so interesting watching all the policies come together. The government structure is fascinating. I couldn't be in any other role.

The hardest part is the imposter syndrome. You're occasionally sat in a room with people who are much more senior than you, or who have been working there longer than you've been alive. But you have this moment where you realise that you're there to be the student voice.

NEWS IN BRIEF



Jeremy Corbyn comes to the University of York

On 1 December 2023, Jeremy Corbyn partook in a debate with the York Dialectic Union. Corbyn was on the proposition for 'This House would introduce a wealth Tax' alongside Joe Seddon. York student Cameron Bennett and Chris Snowden were against the notion. Jeremy Corbyn won the debate.

Scarborough unveils food poverty tree

A 20ft Christmas tree made entirely of food items has been unveiled in Scarborough. The tree features the ten most sought-after necessities, including tins, juice and pasta. It comes as part of Tesco's food donation scheme, and aims to raise awareness of the record need for food this winter.

York Christmas Market

York's Christmas Market is back up and running on Parliament Street for another year. Popular stalls include York Gin, Northern Brownies and the Mulled Wine & Cider stall, as well as various arts and crafts kiosks. The market will be up until the 22nd December.

University of York commits to strengthening UK's ecosystem

The University has published the findings of a new review. The review places emphasis on the significant role that various institutions play in supporting creation and economic growth through commercialising research.

York University student commuters left feeling isolated

▶▶▶ Continued from front

attendance, which is just another added stress she says. On the flip side, Scarlet explained that she also can't stay in university too late or she will miss the last train home. For example, on a Tuesday Scarlet has a lecture which finishes at 18:00 but the last direct train is 17:15. If Scarlet went to that lecture, she wouldn't get home until 22:00 or 23:00.

Nouse asked how much teaching Scarlet has missed because of commuting. She explained, "I've missed a lot of hours. Definitely ten to fifteen lectures which are two hours each, and it's only November. It's really hard to catch-up too. With economics, my lecturers use a whiteboard and lots of diagrams which I can't see online, so I miss notes and descriptions".

It's Scarlet's third and final year—arguably the most important. Nouse asked how she is feeling with the pressures of the degree but also the commute. Again, with her emphatic declarations, Scarlet said "stressed". She continued, "I'm quite stressed but it's not just that. It's really lonely. I feel like it's not really common for people to speak about, but I've been speaking to my boyfriend about it a lot. I just feel so isolated".

Scarlet used to cox at the University of York's Boat Club when she lived in York. As a consequence of the commute, Scarlet has had to give up such social societies. "Even if I wanted to cox and row this year, I can't. It's just not feasible for a 06:30 session. You really miss out on the university experience".

Scarlet has moved back with her Dad and brother, which took some adjusting to "It's really like going back in time. You have all this freedom at university and then it's like you're in

secondary school. It's made me want to move out of my house".

Scarlet described how the commute has impacted her social life "I often feel that people don't really understand how it feels to travel because whenever I mention it to people, they're like 'but you do have friends'. But you go from living with these people, seeing them every day, to seeing them twice a week, if that".

After two months of commuting Scarlet is beginning to reflect. "I definitely regret choosing to commute but I couldn't afford to live in York, so I was pushed towards that option. It wasn't really a choice".

Scarlet explained how the commute is rarely pleasant. In particular, Scarlet recalled one early morning commute which left her both distressed and exhausted: "With the rail cuts, there aren't any rail guards per se at Swinton station. I'm not sure if it's because I live in a small area". Scarlet continued, "But in broad daylight, I was harassed and followed by a man on the platform. He offered me substances and kept asking me where I lived to the point where I was so upset, I just went home and didn't go to university that day or do any work".

"It upset me so much and there was no one to report it to, both other passengers and rail staff. I could have phoned the transport police, but I wasn't sure if it was severe enough and by that point it was too late. It was not a nice feeling at all. It really put me off".

Nouse asked how Scarlet's mental health had been impacted by her commutes to university. Scarlet explained, "I'm just in a cycle of mood swings. One day I'm happy and then on the next day, I don't want to get out of bed". She continued, "I really have to push myself. I've never really

had to push myself this hard. Just to get here is such a push. I have to force myself out of bed in the morning instead of sleeping in. I used to be able to sleep through my 09:00 seminar but if I sleep through my trains, I miss everything".

Scarlet finished by stating, "I put quite a lot of stress on myself about it all. I don't want to come across like I'm struggling or that I can't handle it all. I want it to come across like everything is ok, so I just keep pushing".

Ellie Underwood is a third year Philosophy, Politics, and Economics student commuting from Harrogate which takes around an hour and a half, depending on buses.

Ellie wakes up at 06:30, gets the bus at 07:10 then catches the 07:30 train to York station. Often the 07:30 is cancelled, so Ellie gets the 08:05 train which means she has to pay for a £15 Uber to make it to a 09:00 seminar on time.

With a commute depending on three transport links, including train and bus, the commute is also impacting Ellie's teaching "I've missed two seminars which could have been really crucial, and it is only November. I managed to catch up but that's in my own time". Ellie added, "The commute eats into your day very quickly. There's been multiple instances when a bus hasn't shown up which has made me late for my seminar, so I've just had to turn back and travel home".

"When I'm running late, it throws you off for the whole day. I spend the first ten minutes trying to catch up and then sometimes I miss the check-in codes, so it's like 'why do I put the effort in to get here if they don't even know I'm here?'".

"It gives me such anxiety when I know I'm going to be late. It distracts

me for the first half of the lecture and if I miss the start, I often miss anything important".

Ellie's commute costs around £20 a day, but if a £15 Uber is needed with train delays it can quickly become much more expensive. Ellie only commutes twice a week because "any more would be insane". She explained, "It very quickly becomes around £150 a month to commute".

Ellie only comes in for seminars and misses lectures. She explained, "If I was commuting any more it would be too expensive. I can't afford £300 a month to come in for four days. I must come in for seminars, but at least I can watch my lectures at home".

Ellie continued, "I can't afford to come into university for literally an hour or a 20-minute conversation".

The final student commuter Nouse spoke to was Max a third year Business Management student. Max commutes from Tadcaster which is on the outskirts of Leeds. Max started the academic year living in University of York accommodation in David Kato but soon left. Max said, "I left accommodation in York because it was too expensive. Now I'm in my third year, I've had two full-on years of spending quite a bit of money, so I thought the best option was to move back home and save money".

Max now spends £15 a week on his commute rather than £165 a week for accommodation in York. His journey is a 20-minute walk to the train station, a 15-minute train to York station and then a bus to campus.

However, like the other commuters, Max has missed university teaching with train delays and cancellations. Max also described how he is missing out on the social element of university, "I'm not speaking to the

people I used to live with as much... living in York in the accommodation was a lot easier".

Nouse asked if he thought the university was doing enough. Max said, "No. No chance. We're putting all our loans onto accommodation and last year I was working to help pay rent too. It is very tough, but the university needs to up their game".

Max understands how most students are struggling with rent. "moving back home and commuting was the only smart option because I live in Leeds. I did have an easy way out whereas people I know who live in London or Newcastle, they can't travel back home and commute".

He continued, "They have to pay £200 a week on rent with external landlords, in my situation, I am quite lucky. I now have the option to spend my loan on something else other than accommodation fees".

The University have said "We know finding the right place to live is a huge part of university life and that accommodation is a major cost to our students and we are sorry to hear about the experiences of Scarlett, Ellie and Max. It is clear the current cost of living crisis is affecting everyone, with increases in rent, utility bills, food prices and transport costs. We have dedicated support (see our web-pages) for students who live at home, highlighting help available and, in addition, students who live at home while they study can join a WhatsApp group and we organise regular social events. We're continuing to look for more ways to provide support to students for example with our off campus rent grant scheme which was launched this semester and put in place as a direct response to the rising prices of private rental accommodation in York."

A York landlord explains why student rent prices rise

George Udale (he/him)
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

NOUSE SAT DOWN with a local landlord to understand how rent increases have impacted landlords' decisions in determining the price for their student properties.

Wishing to remain anonymous, the landlord remarked that they understood student's issues. They felt problems first began with the 2015 Finance Act. This introduced Section 24 as a means to inhibit the acquisition of properties into the Private Rental Sector, freeing up housing for first-time buyers and gaining political support from those previously unable to break into the housing market. This was achieved by removing the landlord's ability to subtract their mortgage interest, maintenance costs and arrangement fees from their rental income before working out how much tax they were due to pay.

The result is that landlords pay tax on the gross income of their properties and are moved into a higher tax bracket; thus, they must raise their rent costs, guarantee profits, or break even.

The landlord explained, "imagine if Tesco had to pay tax on their total revenue and could not offset

the costs of their premises, or finance and borrowing costs, against their profit...they simply would not be able to continue to be in business, or they would have to put their prices up massively to pay the extra tax"

Seeing the amount of the mortgage interest landlords could offset against their property income decrease by 25 percent each year since 2017; it has only been in the past couple of years that this reduction has been felt in full force, especially given York's house prices.

The landlord further stated, "Rental houses are financed by much more expensive borrowing than residential mortgages because they are classed as a business", and any quick search on Rightmove or Zoopla will tell you that a four-bedroom house close to York city centre has always been comparatively expensive when compared to nearby areas. Landlords in York have always been forced to charge a relatively higher rent to earn back the money they initially spent on the houses they manage.

This has only been worsened by rising energy costs and how (until Rishi Sunak's recent U-turn in late September of this year), landlords were legally obliged to raise the Energy Performance Certificate (EPC)

of their properties to a C.

The landlord explained, "In a country where the average EPC rating is D, and the costs of raising the rating of a Victorian terrace house will be upwards of £10,000 (if it is achievable at all)" and whilst this policy has been reversed, some landlords have been forced by York's strict licensing scheme to already meet these demands.

Having taken out a large mortgage and bought their first student house in 1998 on Heslington Road, the landlord stated that with "little government interference, no licensing schemes, I wasn't forced to spend thousands on trying to raise the EPC levels of a house built in 1820 plus I was able to offset my massive mortgage costs against the rental income." This had allowed them to charge his tenants fairly and make a profit.

Moreover, given that an ONS study found that the prices of gas and electricity in October 2023 were around 60% and 40% higher, respectively than two years previously, the EPC level of housing in York has driven up rent prices irrespective of whether they have been improved or not since those left with lower levels will allow more heat to escape and cost more money to keep warm.

With rising maintenance costs and higher tax rates, landlords have been left with two viable choices: either charge higher rent or transition into offering short-term accommodation through less regulated marketplaces like Airbnb. As the landlord explains, using York's huge tourist population and marketplaces that allow property owners to claim an allowance for mortgage costs, landlords "can list their terrace house on Airbnb and have a couple of groups of tourists each month and actually make an income for their family, without any of the red tape or hard work involved in running student houses". The result is that in places like Fairfax Street in Bishophill, up to a third of housing is dedicated to Airbnb, whilst across York, YorkMix found that there is estimated to be more than 2,000 properties listed as short-term rentals, 85 percent of which are for entire homes.

York's new council leader, Cllr Claire Douglas, responded that her team are doing what they can to ensure "Airbnbs and short-term holiday lets aren't as prolific in the city as they currently are." However, no legislation has been put into place to reduce their prominence as of yet. The result is that this dramatic increase in non-student housing leaves far more ten-

ants seeking considerably less student housing, creating a vast imbalance between supply and demand.

According to an article published by the BBC, students in York have said they feared being "priced out of education" due to an increase in accommodation costs. University of York students told the BBC they had seen their weekly rent increase by between £50 and £60."

As the landlord stated in an email to student tenants, landlords in York "either raise rents to a level that covers our increased costs and the extra tax that we have to pay or sell up and reduce the supply of housing even more," the latter of which only increases rent further by increasing competitiveness.

This issue is reflective of a more significant national crisis relating to rising energy costs, an inflation rate that remains, as of October 2023, at 4.6% and a lack of affordable housing nationally.

With an increasing number of students being forced to budget due to rising rent costs and student dissatisfaction with housing costs at an all high, the perspective offered by this landlord allows us to see the national and local factors driving this increase.

The Covid Inquiry and York

Jessica Sherburn (she/her)
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE UK COVID-19 Inquiry is an examination of the UK's response to, and impact of, the Covid-19 pandemic. This includes elements of the pandemic that members of the public and government feel were handled well or poorly. The aim of the inquiry is to set down examples for the future as a way to learn from them. Local newspapers, such as *The York Press*, have written on the recent importance of Patrick Vallance and Chris Whitty giving evidence at the UK Covid-19 Inquiry in November 2023.

Sir Patrick Vallance, the UK government's scientific adviser during the Covid-19 pandemic, gave evidence on the 20 November following England's chief medical officer, Sir Chris Whitty. This included how scientists were worried about 'Eat out to help out', and that the UK "should have gone into lockdown earlier".

Local newspaper, *The York Press*, responded to this inquiry with a particularly scathing article titled "There wasn't any 'science' to the UK Covid

response", based on Vallance's comments. They went on to say "that it's taken until now for Sir Patrick Vallance to finally admit that, at the Covid inquiry".

In terms of locality, York, like most cities in the UK was severely affected by the impact of Covid-19. This included a Covid-19 mortality rate of 165 deaths in York with 71 (43 percent) in care homes, according to Peter Roderick, Acting Consultant in Public Health, York.

This is as well as York experiencing high levels of alcohol-related harm during this period and around 27,000 people being furloughed in York, which directly impacted people's well-being.

University students were also impacted by Covid-19. As the continued inquiry is likely to reveal, the impact of the pandemic and government action directly involved young people. The University of York furthered this by publishing on their 'News and Events' section that the pandemic is "likely to result in long-lasting socio-economic impacts in York". This relates to student well-being, as York's

population contains a large proportion of students.

28 November, as the Covid-19 inquiry continues, *The York Press* commented on Michael Gove's suggestion that the virus was "man-made".

The Levelling Up Secretary went further than any Cabinet minister so far, but was quickly dismissed by Hugo Keith KC, lead counsel for the inquiry, who said that this was not part of the inquiry's terms of reference. *The York Press'* continuous stream of helpful updates on the Covid-19 Inquiry can be seen as a reflection of the people of York's desire to find out about the government action during mid-March 2020.

Quizzed by Hugo Keith KC, whether by March 2020 Covid-19 was a matter of life and death, Grove stated, "Absolutely. And that is why I believe I should have been [clearer]." Though the nature behind the beginning of Covid-19 has been long argued as either "man-made" as Gove suggests or traded to humans via wildlife, it is undeniable that the biggest impact of Covid-19 has been the effect this has had on people.

Plans Postponed for Student Centre

Jessica Sherburn (she/her)
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE NEW STUDENT Centre has been an ongoing project at the University of York since mid-2021. The idea behind its construction is to create a new open space for students as well as a central welcome point at the heart of Campus West. The centre will be located between Market Square and Greg's Place, with the library only a short walk away.

The University has been facing increasing costs. This has been described as the result of "the sharp end of the impact of inflation" as well as the "uncertainty in global markets". In the UK, this has largely been in response to the global recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic that has put a pressure on gas and energy prices. Even as the inflation rate dropped to 4.7 percent in October 2023 from 6.3 percent in September, this still remains high.

In response to these financial pressures, the University is re-evaluating the designs originally proposed for the Student Centre due to excessive cost. As a result, work on the Student Centre has been put on hold until these plans have been finalised.

The building is one of the many improvements that the University of York is hoping to achieve as part of its transformational project regarding Strategy 2030. These transformations are about improving students' experiences on campus as well as improving diversity and inclusivity by creating new and exciting departments for people to collaborate, or simply relax, in.

YUSU'S former Activities Officer, Rohan Asher, stated that "the plans for the Student Centre aim to make the building a busy hub of activity". This should be achieved by its design of "flexible flat floor spaces, events and meeting rooms".

Although the plans have been pushed back, the University seems confident in its ability to move forward with Strategy 2030 and meet all of the aspirational and thoughtful designs outlined.

As for the noise and disruption of the ongoing project, there are three main sectors that have, or will be, affected.

The first is the main closure of the footpath near Vanbrugh College from 13 November 2023. This is the footpath that runs from Harewood Way through to the covered walkway between the construction site of the Student Centre and Vanbrugh. The reason for the closure is due to the demolition of the student admin block. The anticipated time for this closure should be around two weeks.

The second is that the former Security Centre, IT and Student Admin is to be demolished, with the Security Centre having already been removed in October. To minimise noise the building has been taken down panel by panel.

The third is that the car park 2.4 (campus central) has now been par-

tially closed to allow safe demolition to take place for the Student Centre. Alternative car parks can be found on the University of York's disruption page and includes details of Campus North and Church Lane accessibility.

The decision on how the University chooses to continue the design of the Student Centre is entirely dependent on financial strain. The University has also stated they aim to "prioritise inclusivity and accessibility in every decision, to empower everyone in our diverse community." This is despite the fact this may lead to further delays in the completion of building the Student Centre.

How this has affected current students is of particular interest. One student that was interviewed for *Nouse* said that "it's really annoying" that the Student Centre has been postponed again. The reason behind this is because "all the building work disrupts the time it takes to get to class with a new route seeming to be closed everyday".

The student allowed us to comment on the fact that they are in their third and final year of their course. The added pressure of getting to classes on time, it seems, with the continuous cycle of building works in the centre of campus west has taken its toll. Another final year student went on to say "with the added stress of getting used to semesterisation and now all the building works, it's getting kind of hard to know where I can go and when."

When asked further about the pressure they are under, the student said that in relation to semesterisation sometimes the dates listed for building works are different to the curriculum given by professors.

Although the dates for construction work are on the University home page, the student says that this doesn't always mean that they know what lessons they will have that week due how the semesterisation system is used by professors who often use different week names for the same dates.

Ultimately, this has added a level of stress for final year students who have spent a large portion of their time at the University with the construction works ongoing. Not knowing what areas of campus are open and when will certainly impact how confident students are moving around the University centre.

One second year student said, "It's just a shame that [the centre] will be finished after we have left. It's not the nicest thought that all of this money is being spent on something we're never going to get any use out of. When you can't see where money is going, I think it makes it harder to sympathise with the cause".

This is a reminder that the deadline for the new student centre is 2030 and that the works will affect many more student years to come.

More information about the new Student Centre and how this may affect you can be found on the University's 'Student Centre' webpage.

The Pedestrianisation of York

Daisy Couture (she/her)
NEWS EDITOR

WE LIVE IN an age of walkable cities. The word 'walkable' has seen an increase of around 160 percent since 1800, and has been on a steady incline since the 1990s. The benefits of walkable cities have been coming to light in recent years – they reduce carbon emissions, promote active living and minimise road accidents, to name a few. While it is important to note that walkable cities are not completely vehicle-free (they refer to cities whose infrastructure facilitates the accessibility of amenities by foot), some may as well be. York is often regarded as such – in fact, 2023 research has named it 'the UK's most walkable city'.

Many areas of the city are pedestrianised or vehicle-restricted, including Parliament Street, Davygate, Coney Street, Lendal and many of the streets leading up to York Minster. This has been the case since 1987, when the City of York Council began implementing footstreets, pedestrian zones and vehicle restriction in and around the city centre. At the time, it was northern Europe's biggest pedestrianisation scheme.

The first initiative of the scheme was to replace the pavement on Market Street and Feasegate with concrete blocks. According to Councillor Dave Merret, the vice-chairman of a York City Council Working Group overseeing the project, the blocks aimed to create a "safe, pleasant and long-lasting walking environment."

Since then, numerous schemes have been set up to ensure the walkability of York is maintained. For example, Scarborough Bridge was completed in 2019. The bridge spans the River Ouse and connects York railway station with the city centre and was successful in reducing traffic congestion.

In 2021, the city received a £3.3 million boost for York cyclists and pedestrians. The scheme aimed to introduce a number of cycle lanes, as well as safety measures for cyclists and pedestrians.

The Active Travel Programme was introduced in York during the Covid-19 pandemic, but became a

Regulations 2020 granted Fossgate businesses the right to trade outside. According to the petition, concerns over disability access have since prevented many businesses from trading outside. A ban on vehicles on the street would open up the external areas of businesses whilst allowing them space to accommodate for disabilities.



permanent fixture in order to promote safer, more convenient walking and cycling across the city. There has also been changes to infrastructure, such as road improvements, footpaths and cycling routes, were introduced as a result.

In July 2023, a petition was released calling for the pedestrianisation of Fossgate. The street is already recognised as a pedestrian and cycle zone. This means that only service vehicles and residents have access to the street between 8am and 6pm. Outside of this, parking is restricted to permit holders or pay-and-display. However, petitioners are calling for complete pedestrianisation of the street.

The petition came after the Health Protection (Coronavirus)

The petition was handed over to the City of York Council on 8 November 2023.

In 2019, the York Transport Consultation found that 60 percent of York visitors had used a car or van at some point during their journey, including nearly all (96 percent of those visiting for either an everyday or one-off shopping trip, 30 percent had used trains, and 20 percent utilised the Park and Ride service).

There seems to have been generally positive responses towards the pedestrianisation of York. One local resident said: "It feels more convenient and a lot safer when walking around town to not have to worry about vehicles. At the same time, the foot traffic can be a bit overwhelming."

Nouse interviews York alumnus and Bake-Off's Rowan

Continued from front

the University in June this year, Nouse asked Rowan what his favourite cafes in York were. Rowan replied with the list: "Piccadilly, Fossgate Social, Rise for brunch and Lucky Days."

He then went on to explain how he first got into baking. "I was never a footballer like the other lads at school (shock), so my thing was always baking. Yeah, they could kick a ball in their spare time, but at age 12, I could make a wedding cake." Upon recounting his excitement about getting onto the show, Rowan told the *York Press*: "Getting the call to say I had achieved that dream, I did the only thing appropriate - I slid to the floor, screamed down the phone and ran to the shops for a bottle of Prosecco, all before getting back to join the group wash-up in my uni house. Classy."

When asked 'What is the best thing you have baked so far?' Rowan replied it was the wedding cake he baked himself for his 21st birthday. "It was huge, and apparently tasted amazing. I wouldn't know, I was too pissed to cut it myself." The cake Rowan is referring to, was made of three-tiers and had a total of 12-layers.

Nouse then asked if Rowan had a baking disaster story he could share. He stated this occurred during his practice for pastry week (week 5,) or in Rowan's terms, the "week [he] got the boot". Rowan explained, "My Ab Fab pies just kept collapsing, but I

got them to work once, and they were great. My biggest disaster was in the tent for millions to see."

Given the recent death of the infamous campus duck, Longboi, Nouse felt it was only right to ask Rowan how he felt about it. "Devo'd. [devastated] Like a punch to the stomach," Rowan



IMAGE CREDIT: ROWAN CLAUGHTON

said. The Indian Runner duck-Mallard cross, was often spotted around Derwent, which Rowan told Nouse was the college he was a part of during his

time at York.

Rowan also remarked that being a part of Derwent college contributed to his overall experience at York, making it an "amazing Uni to study at," and the "not-so-far-away move" even more worthwhile. Rowan then humorously commented: "Derwent till I die x"

In response to the question: "What was the process of getting onto Bake-Off like?" Rowan replied, "It was long but so worth it." He continued to explain, "There were casting calls, camera tests, live baking tests in London. Basically, every stage was to make sure we had a personality and could bake. Somehow, I ticked both boxes."

Rowan then described what the atmosphere in the Bake-Off tent was like. "It's really energetic. There are so many crew members there, and you do become friends with them on set. So during a challenge, you have your bakers to chat to, and the crew to look over to and laugh about how disastrous your bake is going. Good vibes."

In the first week, the bakers were tasked with creating a vertical cake. Although he did not win this particular challenge, Rowan's cake was well received. This was especially true for Prue who commented Rowan's bake was "a perfect example of a vertical cake."

When prompted with the question, 'Who was your favourite judge on Bake-Off and why?' Rowan replied, "Paul is lovely, and has such a

good heart. He cares so much about the baking, and it was refreshing to see him away from the lens and just in person. However, the Dame (that's Prue Leith) is just a hoot. She's funny, kind, honest... Just a joy."

Nouse jokingly asked if Paul Hollywood had a particular scent, to which Rowan replied "Roses (the Yorkshire one)."

Nouse wanted to get Rowan's take on some of the best traditional dishes in the region - as a Yorkshire local. Rowan began by telling Nouse "I want to be different and say a Yorkshire Gin, but I've lost most of my life-long reserves of dignity on that. So I'll say Yorkshire Puddings. Stunning stuff."

Rowan then summed up some of his highlights from the show. A key thing Rowan noted was the fact the experience has allowed him to learn to do things that scare him. "I don't think too deeply about things which might seem intimidating because I'll always find a way to get out of doing them."

Despite throwing himself into this experience and dealing with the pressure of the Bake-Off tent, Rowan stated he would, never do the ITV show 'I'm a Celebrity Get me out of here.'

To end the interview, Nouse asked Rowan if he could share any

advice for budding bakers. His tips were: "Find a recipe, follow it, eat it, improve it. It's good to learn as you go along in the kitchen, and baking, even if it goes wrong, is most of the fun."

Although the 21-year-old was the youngest of this year's twelve contestants, he is certainly not the only baker to have been the youngest of their cohort in the tent. Freya Cox, who appeared on the twelfth series of the show, broke the record for being the youngest contestant to enter the tent in 2021, at aged 19.

Freya is also a York alumna and was also the first Vegan baker to appear on The Great British Bake-Off. Since Bake-Off, Freya has released her own recipe book: 'Simply Vegan Baking: Taking the faff out of vegan cakes, cookies, breads and desserts.'

The winner of this year's series, was announced on 1 December, as 28-year-old

Matty Edgel who the Guardian describes as having "come from nowhere to triumph."

If you are also interested in showcasing your baking skills, applications for next year's show are now open! To apply, visit: www.applyforbakeoff.co.uk



IMAGE CREDIT: ROWAN CLAUGHTON

York University raises money for 20th year of Movember

Poppy Clare (she/her)
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

FIRST STARTING IN 2003, Movember is a movement for men's health funding over 1,320 health projects globally, according to the official movember site. To celebrate its 20th year of running, Movember has become a big part of campus life for societies to fundraise for. The University of York has ranked 8th on the list of universities participating in the challenge raising £38,328.37 for men's health and well being. By supporting Movember it is helping the charity take on and support some of the biggest health issues affecting men: mental health and suicide prevention, prostate cancer and testicular cancer. The top fundraisers from the University were Anne Lister and David Kato Football club raising £5,494.04 and Derwent Rugby raising £3,270.01. Last year the University of York raised £37,182 for Movember so this year's campaign has beaten last year's results by over £1,000.

Another one of the top raisers for the University were Halifax Football Club who ranked 4th across the table. As a club they initially planned to raise £1,500 for the cause however in total they were able to raise over £2,603.01. Nouse asked social media secretary Archie Bett what he thought was the reason for the club's successful fundraising campaign, and he credited it to be down to different initiatives and social media presence encouraging people to participate and to donate for the cause. As a team Halifax

FC introduced different initiatives for each money goal they received : baby pictures at £100, head shave at £250, group 10k at £500, leg waxing at £1,000 and a half marathon at £1,500. Halifax Football Club is a great way to demonstrate how a collective team effort can help raise a lot of money for a great cause.

In 2022 the charity HUMEN



IMAGE: HALIFAX FOOTBALL CLUB

conducted a one-year study to create one of the first of its kind mental health rankings by combining a study of over 7,200 students sharing their levels of satisfaction and engagement with in-depth data on mental health budgets and staff training. It was found that the University of York was ranked 4th in the country for some of the best mental health facilities available. Specifically focusing on Men's mental

health the University seem to have a lot available, there are multiple initiatives which focus on the improvement of men's health. Their aim is to encourage men to get together, take part in activities and support others to talk about physical and mental health issues. According to the University's wellbeing page, they state that men, in comparison to women, are less likely

to express concerns about their physical and mental health, engage with professional help, visit a GP or attend a NHS health check. Available to anyone interested in men's health there are men's mental health discussion sessions held every couple of months as well as this there are buddy systems in place, common interest groups and a number of organisations elsewhere in York who focus on creating com-

munity and providing support. When Nouse spoke with Hannah Nimmo, community and wellbeing officer, to ask how the University has improved their mental health and wellbeing facilities over the last couple of years, Hannah said there has been significant investment made into student wellbeing and mental health support. This includes investing in Talk Campus, a virtual platform where students are able to access peer support, in addition to clinical psychological support 24/7.

Another society that contributed a lot to were the club of PEP, who raised £803.72 for Movember. The Club of PEP is the student society associated with the school of PPE; it is entirely student run and independent from the University. Nouse spoke to member Ted Barnett to ask him what the society did for Movember. To raise money they held a charity dodgeball tournament on the 12th, and walked 60km for the 60 men globally who lose their lives to suicide every hour (a challenge on the official movember web page). As an initiative whoever raises the most money for the cause receives a free crate, courtesy of the club. According to Ted, the way that PEP helps mental health struggles is to have a family system in place to make people feel more included and to have a way for new members to be able to communicate any struggles they may have with somebody they trust. From speaking with the students of York in November, a general consensus was that not a lot of people feel the supervisor system is established well

enough, and the college system seems to fade after the first year. That is why he believes that through a family system it provides the help that people might feel is lacking.

Nouse also spoke to James College Rugby Football Club's Vice President Jakub Kowalski as JCRUFC came in 9th highest by raising £1,599 for Movember. He believes that some of the best men's mental health support can be found within the society and they are going to create a role for a designated well-being officer in place in future years to ensure that it becomes a safe place for their members. As part of the Movember fundraising some members took part in the three peaks challenge. Jakub says that part of the reason he wanted to push so hard for Movember was to leave a positive mark as well as set goals for charity for the team to follow in future years. He believes that there is a responsibility to take part in charity fundraising events, such as the inter-sport charity match for CoppaFeel with James College Netball. A good way for the University to raise money would be to add more charity focused initiatives within sport societies.

With an incredible effort from everyone that took part in the Movember campaign the university was able to beat their previous result, proving that coming together as a community for a great cause can make a big difference. These past years have been challenging with the cost of living crisis and other factors, so it is important to get talking, spread awareness of causes like Movember.

The University of York respond to Israel-Palestine crisis

Nadia Sayed (she/her)
DEPUTY EDITOR

ON 7 OCTOBER 2023 Hamas, the Palestinian group, launched an attack on Israel. As reported by CNN “More than 1,400 Israelis were killed in the assault, and more than 240 were taken hostage, according to a count by Israeli officials.” Since then, Israel has responded with a series of military attacks, cut off access to water, food and fuel in Gaza and killed over 15,000 individuals, according to Gaza Health authorities.

Although the Israel-Palestine conflict broke out in early October, it was not until Wednesday, 25 October, that the University of York’s Vice-Chancellor, Professor Charlie Jeffery, emailed staff, students, and alumni addressing the crisis.

Jeffery began the email by disclosing why he had not yet reached out about the situation, stating “I wanted first to make sure that I or my colleagues had had the opportunity to engage with those most directly affected by the conflict.”

He continued, “Universities are and must, especially at moments like this, be places in which difficult issues can be discussed openly, in good faith and with mutual respect. York must live up to that ideal.”

Within the same email, the Vice Chancellor also expressed the need for the University to “reject any forms of racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism, abuse, intimidation and harassment.” With regards to this element of

the email, *Nouse* asked the University, “What is your response to instances of Islamophobia and anti-semitism rumoured to be affecting students at the University, as addressed in Professor Charlie Jeffery’s email?” In response a University spokesperson replied, “We need to be very clear that acts of racism or harassment are totally unacceptable. The Vice-Chancellor has condemned any form of racism, Islamophobia and antisemitism, abuse, intimidation, and harassment. It will not be tolerated...”

The University spokesperson also commented that “Universities are and must, especially at moments like this, be places where difficult issues can be discussed openly, in good faith and with mutual respect. We are listening to staff and students to understand how best we can facilitate these opportunities to enable respectful and reasoned debate on this conflict, which we know is raw and emotive, and which has such deep roots.”

Nouse then inquired about what the University of York was doing to support students affected by the Israel-Palestine crisis, to which a University spokesperson responded “We are spending time listening to students, including understanding concerns and how best we can respond, with an emphasis on how we can collectively support each other – as a community of compassion and mutual respect. This includes speaking with our student societies, academic departments, our Student Unions and Colleges to help everyone have

their voices heard. In doing so, we especially want to support those most impacted by the conflict, including staff, students, and student societies closely connected to the region. This approach allows the University to understand the needs and concerns of those directly affected and offer the appropriate support.”

In light of the crisis, several societies at the University of York have united to organise fundraisers, demonstrating concern for all those affected by the situation. Iqra, a member of the University of York’s Islamic Society (ISOC) spoke openly about the society’s efforts to fundraise for innocent civilians in Palestine. Iqra began by informing *Nouse*, “For me personally, I haven’t seen the University advocating for either side.” Instead, she stated she thought the University has been “silent on the situation that’s happening in Palestine.” However Iqra acknowledged the University’s provision of welfare support for individuals affected by the conflict and informed *Nouse* that ISOC has been allowed “to perform fundraisers and events to support Palestine with no issue for their society.”

Iqra expressed this has enabled the society to collectively articulate their right for “freedom of expression to advocate for Palestine.” Crucially, funds raised have gone towards charities including Medical Aid for Palestine.

Another student at the University, external to the society, expressed they felt emotionally impacted by the

Israel-Palestine crisis. The student articulated that they feel more needs to be done regarding the number of communications issued by the University to students. This includes the support offered to those affected by the conflict, both directly and indirectly. Furthermore, the student highlighted their opinion that the University’s response to the Palestine-Israel crisis has been much slower than its response to the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

Nouse also asked the University of York’s Jewish Society (YorkJSoc), to provide a statement on the situation. YorkJSoc replied: “Our thoughts and prayers are, as always, with all those affected by the current situation in Israel and Palestine, and we mourn all lives lost as a result of this conflict. We hope the University continues to provide support to those both directly and indirectly affected much more proactively. We appreciate that the University took the time to consult with relevant student groups, but the support provided to the wider student body was slow to come and insufficient, with many in our community feeling like the University has not offered them support or acted responsibly. Although we understand the need to hold discussions on the right approach, ultimately, the relative lack of response has left many feeling disillusioned and unsafe.”

The society went on to state their disappointment regarding the University’s “lack of urgency in releasing a statement,” and “failure to directly

condemn the terrorist attacks on 7 October 2023 and the continued loss of life in Gaza.” Furthermore, they were appalled “by the University’s treatment of those who are exercising their right to peaceful protest and their failure to respect free speech.” However, YorkJSoc expressed support towards the University’s “zero-tolerance policy towards prejudice and hate speech.”

To conclude, YorkJSoc stated: “We hope that the University becomes more active in addressing any forms of hate speech, and that they help to make York a safe place for all regardless of faith or ethnicity. We would encourage everyone at this [time] to be sensitive to emotional distress that the conflict has placed on many students at York, and to strive for peace for all.”

Finally, *Nouse* asked YUSU President Pierrick Rodger to comment on the crisis.

Rodger stated the University encourages those affected to consult the University’s independent Advice and Support Centre, who can signpost students to the support available.

The University said “It is right that we spent time listening to students, including understanding concerns and how best we can respond, with an emphasis on how we can collectively support each other – as a community of compassion and mutual respect. This approach allows the University to understand the needs and concerns of those affected and offer the appropriate support.”

YUSU campaign for £1 million in support of cost-of-living crisis

Daisy Couture (she/her)
NEWS EDITOR

YUSU PRESIDENT PIERRICK Rogers and Wellbeing Officer Hannah Nimmo have campaigned for £1 million from the University of York to support students during the ongoing cost of living crisis.

YUSU has set up various initiatives since summer 2023 in support of the cost of living crisis, including cheap campus meals and the Fruit and Root scheme.

The money has come from the University as a result of four months of campaigning and lobbying.

YUSU have provided a full breakdown of the areas in which they have delegated the money. Firstly, YUSU have campaigned for £687,862 for Off-Campus Rent Grants, £137,117 for the Emergency Accommodation Fund, £100,000 for the Student Support Fund, £51,296 for Digital Hardship Support, £45,649 for food vouchers and £30,000 for the Fruit and Root initiative.

Nouse spoke with Pierrick and Hannah to find out more about the campaign.

Nouse asked: For people who aren’t sure, could you expand on the Fruit and Root initiative? What does it involve?

Hannah replied “It’s a free food initiative, students were coming to us, saying that they were struggling to afford basic necessities, and this included weekly food shopping. We put together bags of essential items, such as fruit, vegetables, juice and

pasta, that students might be struggling to afford due to the increase in prices. We gave 600 bags out last year, and that came directly out of YUSU’s funds. Part of the £1 million total is because the University saw how successful it was, so they’ve put some more funding behind it now. We can give out 6000 bags this year with their funding.”

Pierrick stated “It’s definitely expanding, and we’re also expanding into a Food Pantry initiative too. This is an essentials pantry, with items such as cleaning and hygiene products that people may not be able to afford right now. We’ll be asking for a £1 donation, but people will be able to take whatever they want off the shelf.”

Nouse then asked the question “Can you offer some insight on future initiatives?”

Pierrick replied “The main one is the Off-Campus Rent Grant. We’re giving out £700,000, which meant there was some clarification needed from the University. There was a question around whether people on current bursaries were eligible, which the University accepted – if you’re on a current bursary, you can get £100 off of it. That’s the main source of support that we have available, and it’s complemented by the Student Support Fund. This is for people who aren’t eligible for the Off-Campus Rent Grant.”

Hannah responded by commenting “For me, the biggest one is probably the Emergency Accommodation Fund. It’s designed for people who need to escape their cur-

rent household situation, for reasons such as sexual violence or domestic abuse. The fund is there at the moment so that students can be put up in temporary, University-funded accommodation until they can find more permanent living arrangements. Oftentimes, people are just put into hotels, but because of the amount of money that’s in the

fund, I want to work out

more of a permanent arrangement – that might involve setting up purpose-built temporary accommodation, for example.”

“A lot of our cost of living initiatives are driven by student feedback, so we’re more than willing to go the

extra mile – whatever students tell us they’re struggling with, that’s what we react to. When we start getting more information through, we start building our next set of initiatives.”

Nouse proceeded to ask “What was the biggest challenge you faced during this campaign?”

Hannah replied by stating “It was a really challenging year in general, and I think that this year is probably going to be an even bigger challenge. Obviously, £1 million is a lot of money, but we’re getting it from an institution that’s also cutting back a lot of its funding. The University is in a bit of a financial deficit at the moment, which means that they’re cutting funding from everywhere. YUSU funding hasn’t been cut directly, but other areas that we’ve been getting money from have been affected.”

“Another challenge is having to go through a process of ‘proving’ what students need to the University. With the Off-Campus Rent Grant, for example, we had to go away and do some research to prove how much rent was going up around the city. It wasn’t an easy process – it

involved a lot of back-and-forth and criteria-setting. We’d like to be able to offer support to everyone who needs it, but sometimes funds don’t allow for things to be very open.”

Pierrick went on to say “I found it difficult to tell people last year that we weren’t able to support certain things. Right now, everybody needs money, and there’s not enough. We’ve got £1 million, but we’ve had to tell people that an initiative they might need isn’t able to be funded because we need to prioritise something else. That’s horrible, because it means that we can’t support whatever we’re meant to be supporting because so many other things need to happen. For me, it was mentally taxing – I’ve had students get in touch and tell me that they’re not eligible for certain initiatives but still need support, and I’ve had to tell them there’s not enough money to go around.”

Hannah followed Pierrick’s comments in agreement. “Yeah, that’s really hard. I get it quite a lot from a wellbeing perspective – students have come in and told me that their wellbeing is being impacted because of the significance of these issues, but because of things like criteria or financial restrictions, they can’t get access to the support they need. We do as much as we can, but it doesn’t always go as far as it needs to.”

Students can visit the University of York’s dedicated ‘Cost of Living hub,’ or ‘YUSU’s Cost of Living Resources’ page where a full list of the available support for students can be found.



IMAGE: BEN JORDAN

Nouse Interviews Spotlight Magazine President

Ethan Reuter (he/him)
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

NOUSE MET SPOTLIGHT president Avvayar De Mel, at Merchantgate, a handful of minutes past midday. Somewhat conveniently, it's just ticked past the Red Lion's opening hour, and so we head inside to start talking about *Spotlight*, York's only specialised Film and TV magazine.

Initially we start talking about why there is space on campus for a magazine like *Spotlight*, and why Avvayar, Mattia and Elly are the right people on the revived committee to help fill the gap. De Mel explains that the difficulties in fitting quality film and television articles into other newspapers and how Letterbox reviews don't allow space for a specialised magazine catering towards just film and TV. She also mentions her sadness at *Spotlight's* discontinuation during COVID and how it helped empower the motivation to restart the society, creating quality cinematic journalism on campus.

There is already a strong film community on campus with the York Student Cinema Society and the World Cinema Society, so there is a market for an outlet that will focus solely on film and TV journalism.

On such a theme of revival, given that *Spotlight's* back and it's their main question in their first issue, Nouse asks the *Spotlight* president, "Is cinema back?" De Mel argues that "cinema culture is coming back and I'm quite excited about it". Further expanding that in the post-Covid-19 world,

the way movies such as *Barbie* and *Oppenheimer*, and recent offerings like *Saltburn* and *The Hunger Games: Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* were marketed showcases that the film industry is confident in people coming back to the cinema. The *Barbenheimer* event gripped the world with many fans seeing both films on the same day and encouraging others to dress to the theme of the film they were going to see. It brought back an excitement and energy to cinema that was lost during the pandemic. Cinemas are an example of what is known in philosophy as a third space, a space that is outside of the home or workplace. De Mel points out there has been a decline in third spaces since the pandemic which may be contributing to the rise of the cinema. De Mel explains "while *Barbenheimer* might've been an accident, it was a reflection of a trend within young people to want to have third spaces." Her convincing reflection on the underlying root of cinema culture's revival and our most loved lost haunts within society dis-

play a critical level of thinking that no doubt she'll bring to her role as editor of *Spotlight*. Even if Hollywood's revival has its pitfalls, *Spotlight's* feels in good hands.

Given such a response to *Spotlight's* opening question, it felt only appropriate to ask what, as a grander sense, film and TV means to *Spotlight's* president. De Mel highlights that "Film and TV are one of the

point clear by going on to describe her passion for the earlier phases of the *Marvel* movies during her childhood and her current enduring love of *Hotel for Dogs* in contrast with her equal love of more arthouse-catered films such as *Apu Sansar*.

The conversation leads into a question surrounding pretentiousness, a theme throughout our interview, and within the film industry, that some films are of higher value than others. De Mel points out that films are made for distinctly different reasons. One film may be loved for a certain reason and it doesn't devalue it in any way in comparison to another. Pa-

there should be an underlying sense of heart, of warmth, that the film allows for happiness and entertainment if that is its end goal.

Just because the prig might dismiss the idea with the waft of a hand and an upturned sneer of cold command, doesn't mean the endeavour is any less valuable or worthwhile. It might in fact mean that given its nature, it reaches more people and consequently touches more people in the way in which only films can.

The markedly subjectivist and relativist nature of her viewpoint on the philosophy of films fights against the wind of the film industry and especially those who write about films. However, she argues, this inclusivity is especially important for *Spotlight* and how *Spotlight* is run as a magazine.

Again, focusing on pretentiousness, De Mel makes it clear that writing for *Spotlight* doesn't include a towering barrier to entry, requiring encyclopaedic knowledge of films and TV, where only the most correct of opinions are tolerated. Instead, *Spotlight* is open to everyone, no matter how much they know about films. Films are there to be enjoyed as one of their primary purposes, she explains "we want people to write about films without worrying about specific knowledge".

Overall, it is that such love of films, of their art and their scope, of their capacity for entertainment and humour, of their beatific nature and pure expression, Del Mel expresses, as inspiring her to revive *Spotlight* and silver screen journalism across campus.



IMAGE: MYKE SIMON

most beautiful art forms" and that growing up with film being "such an expressive form [...] allows for its magnificence in its higher sense. For De Mel, not only is film illustrious and august in character but also that "it's such a fun way to bond with friends and family." She makes this

sionately elaborating on what makes a film valuable, in her own opinion, it is firstly its cinematography and direction, the technical aspects of a movie, and the highbrow artform in a traditional sense, but also whether the film has heart. For her, films may be highbrow and beautifully shot, but

School of Natural Sciences to close next academic year

Nadia Sayed (she/her)
DEPUTY EDITOR

THE UNIVERSITY OF York is set to close its School of Natural Sciences next academic year (2024/2025) following the graduation of all current students.

One student at the University, informed Nouse that they were initially disappointed to hear of the closure. However, they also commented: "In my experience, I have felt quite neglected as a Natural Sciences student as we are often forgotten

about, left off mailing lists and it doesn't feel like we get the same support as single science students. I think the closing of the school could have been avoided if [the] organisation was improved."

They continued to state that the decision to terminate the course felt rather sudden. "It feels like we were excluded from manage-

ment decisions about the course. I really liked the idea of Natural Sciences, and that's why I chose the course, but I have been quite disappointed about its delivery and, in hindsight, wish I had chosen a single science from the offset."

As stated on the University's webpage for the School of Natural Sciences, "Following a recent review of provision, the School of Natural Sciences will close to new applicants from September 2024. September 2023 will be the final intake of students."

Joe Lyne, a Natural Sciences student specialising in Physics at the University, spoke openly to Nouse about how they felt blindsided by the email that announced the school's closure. The email was sent to students in the middle of the summer.

The third year student, further stated "No one expected this as Natural Sciences was flourishing, being one of the University's top courses for quality of teaching, learning resources and much more."

The School was ranked third in the UK in *The Times* and *The Sunday Times Good University Guide 2023* and fifth in the same guide in 2024 for the subject of Natural Sciences.

Joe continued, there has been a "lack of transparency from the University surrounding their reasoning [for the closure] and that no discussion or input had been from us prior to the decision was very frustrating, and we were concerned [about] how our remaining time at the University would be affected."

Joe also stated "A 'town hall meeting' was arranged with the Dean [of the Faculty of Sciences, Professor Andy Dougill] and Associate Dean [Professor Claire Hughes] to allay worries and provide a [clearer] motive behind their decision." However, Joe highlighted that students still felt dissatisfied with the situation, asserting that the questions asked during the meeting were answered formulaically. "We still felt like we weren't being given the full picture," added Joe. Since the meeting, Joe said, thanks to the student representatives, students have been given guarantees as the department closes, including continued access to the standard room and weekly guest speakers.

Nevertheless, Joe still feels concerned about how Natural Science students will be affected. "A lot of the managerial aspects of our course

are being absorbed by the Biology Department, which could mean stu-



IMAGE: DS PUGH

dents getting less specialised support. What truly has aggravated me, however, is finding out the primary reason for the University's decision, which is ... to reduce costs. It is very upsetting to see a university, which is a place of academia, be run like a company."

"Whilst I am aware that a university should seek to meet its operation costs, it seems like York [and other universities] are becoming much more interested in turning profits and telling investors how much money they saved by scrapping an interesting and enjoyable course."

However, Joe commended the

course and noted, "Studying Natural Sciences at York is such a wonderful and unique experience. As well as providing the opportunity to study interdisciplinary sciences, it offers something so hard to find in many other courses: a large and strong community. Thanks to the common room and weekly socials run by the Natural Sciences Society, you not only become close friends with your own year group but all the other students in other years too. I can walk into the common room at any time and find someone to chat and laugh with; it is such a positive and familial environment [in which] to learn. It is the main reason I chose to study at York compared to other universities [that] offered the course."

Finally, Joe remarked although "the University may be saving more money," he thinks "they will find they have lost something much more irreplaceable."

Nouse reached out to the University of York and they said "We remain fully committed to the current cohort of students, and while there will be some changes to the way the School is managed behind the scenes, our students will continue to receive the normal academic and pastoral support. In this case, our student services team in Biology, who have supported natural science students over recent years, are here to help and support."



IMAGE: ANNIE WATSON



COMMENT



IMAGE: Joshua Sukoff

Israel-Palestine: Disinformation and York's vigil

Nouse explores the dangers of disinformation and the success of York's peace vigil

Millie Simon
(she/her)



CONTENT WARNING:
This article mentions violence towards children.

The Israel-Palestine conflict has raised some alarming truths about the state of humanity. So far 1,200 Israelis have been killed, as have 15,000 Palestinians, of which 6,000 were children, according to *Al Jazeera*. However, there have been doubts over the validity of certain points regarding the war being presented as facts by the media and Governments. The situation surrounding the conflict has been dubbed by *Al Jazeera* as a “masterclass in disinformation” fuelled by the accessibility and convenience of social media. False information used to bolster support for either side has been a common theme since before Hamas’ attack on 7 October 2023. Since the 1917 Balfour Declaration, the dispute over who controls Palestinian territory has seen the interpretation of truth lead to the rewriting of history.

Dr Matthew Hughes from Brunel

University suggests that, until the 1970s, the narrative was mainly that the Jewish state was under considerable threat from the Arab world which justified the series of wars. However, Dr Hughes highlights that, since the 1980s, support has shifted and is growing towards the Palestinian people.

Reports reinforced by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and US President Joe Biden that Hamas’ soldiers had decapitated and burned babies ignited understandable distress. When journalists questioned the validity of the story, Israeli military officials said “we cannot confirm but you can assume it happened”. Days later, it became clear that there was no evidence to confirm whether babies had been killed by Hamas militants. But it was too late; social media posts had already begun to circulate the story, causing outrage. Marc Owen Jones, an academic researching disinformation in the Middle East informed *Middle East Eye* that tweets about the “40 murdered babies” had reached 44 million impressions on the first day the story was reported in the UK.

The danger of this style of reporting is that readers won’t be inclined to read further than the initial headline.

This encourages the general public to consume media that confirms the version of events they wish to believe, reinforcing extremism on both sides of an issue. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees says that disinformation spreads fear and suspicion which Constella Intelligence adds is “used to sway public opinion... and divide citizens based on ideological lines”. Todd Helmus and William Marcellino from RAND Corporation suggest that for social media users, the Israel-Palestine conflict blurs the distinction between who is the victim and who is the aggressor.

An example of disinformation emerged from the bombing of the Al-Ahli Arabi Baptist hospital. Hamas, Palestinian authorities and the Israeli Government all blamed one another for the blast, which, according to the Hamas-run Gaza Ministry, killed 471 people, while US officials believe the number is between 100 and 300. Both social and traditional media had already determined who was to blame, and immediately after the blast, numerous articles were headlined to reinforce Hamas’ claim that Israel had bombed the hospital.

Israel justified their disinvolvement with the explosion by insisting they “wouldn’t target a hospital”. Rishi

Sunak told MPs that the UK intelligence service were confident the blast at the hospital was caused by a rocket fired by a Palestinian militant group and denounced the initial reports that blamed Israel. *The New York Times* elected to publish the headline, “Israel Strike Kills Hundreds in Hospital, Palestinians Say”. This type of reactionary reporting should heed a warning says Lee McIntyre, a researcher from Boston University, who argues the danger of disinformation is that it erodes our trust in other people to tell the truth.

There are also concerns that the deliberate use of disinformation will cause further and unnecessary deaths. In the last few weeks, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) entered the Al-Shifa hospital in the North-West of the Gaza Strip. Israel claims that Hamas’ headquarters are in tunnels under the hospital – claims the US supports. *The Independent*, in a video that can’t be independently verified – reported on the story which seemed to show bags containing rifles and Hamas uniforms. The BBC also reported on the video showing weapons that had been hidden behind MRI scanners. The BBC added that it “has not yet been able to verify the video or its location”. Israel has come under increased pressure to provide evidence of tunnels compris-

ing a Hamas command centre under the hospital, in order to justify its infiltration. Despite the flood of disinformation obscuring the realities of the conflict, many still manage to parse the disparate narratives into a plea for peace. Saturday 11 November saw York Minster host a peace vigil for Israel and Palestine. Imam Ammar Sacha of York Mosque addressed the vigil by quoting the Quran, emphasising everyone who attended the event was there under the umbrella of humanity. Miriam Hoffman, a trustee of the York Liberal Jewish Community, added that each death was a loss to humanity. The Archbishop of York, Rt Rev Stephen Cottrell, proclaimed that “the cry of a child needs no translation”. York Central MP, Rachael Maskell, exclusively told *Nouse*: “We cannot build peace with weapons, only talks and the human spirit is determined to see such peace built”. Children, students and other residents of York, people of faith and no faith, people who had never met or spoken to each other united through the message of peace. They gathered to write messages of hope to be sent to national and world leaders.

Support for students affected by the conflict can be accessed on the University’s website.



EDITOR'S OPINION

It's been a rollercoaster

Ethan Reuter
(he/him)

Heavens above, the reign of terror has started. Gone are the days when towering Comment editors who believed in cutouts ruled the roost. One former Comment editor recently claimed to be the executive editor of Comment, perusing and stalking it like an old hand, weary with life, pointing at problems with his walking stick. We find these claims to be unfounded. Those greying hacks are in the past now and it is time for the first print edition of the new academic year. It comes with a new and fresh team of editors, editors who live with a bit of *joie de vivre*, editors who thrive off the zest of Comment, editors with verve.

Now, now, I hear you say, it is week 11, the days feel curt or flat, we've got exams after Christmas, we don't have time for your pontifications on the treatise of life right now. By this time you've probably fallen out with your flatmates, my guess is, in week six, failed to do all your formatives during week eight, and spent far too much money on formals by week ten. I promise you, I understand.

As I write this I am unfortunately completing all these things. I haven't helped myself, I should mention, as this year I set myself the mammoth task of completing not only *Nouse* but also *Muse* bingo, which I am told nobody has ever achieved in the space of one year. This has created an interminable hellscape as each article stacks on top of another like fat bloating pancakes. I can only apologise to my fellow exhausted section editors whom I've terrorised with my writing, and splattered across this newspaper. A special thanks to the Creative Writing team who've had to read my fatuous and painful attempt at a short story.

Enough about me, as you can tell I'm doing great, and more about this section. It genuinely couldn't have been possible without the fantastic help of my inspired co-workers and our fabulous set of writers, all of whom seem to be doing significantly better than my haggard, hollow-cheeked self.

Leading the section is Millie Simon, who writes about the dangers of misinformation on Israel-Palestine and York's vigil for the conflict.

On page ten, next to this godly mess, is a co-written piece by Ethan Attwood and *Nouse's* Deputy Editor, Nadia Sayed. They look at pressures going into and resulting from post-grad life.

Following is Heather Gosling's illuminating piece on the gender gap within journalism and Comment's better half, Maya Upmancis, writes about the veneer of goofy politicians.

You're then graced by my presence on page 12 with a hard hitting piece of journalism on why I don't particularly like Tinder despite never having once opened the app. My amuse-bouche of an article starts something distinctly more serious and well-written with Georgina Spriddell's take on whether traditional diplomacy still has a place in 2023.

Finally on page 13 there's Ellie Banyard tackling bouncer culture and how we got to this stage.

Also as a fun special in our gossip side – former editors look away now – we have tales from the party conferences with a double header from Jacob Boheman and Max Abdulgani. They reflect on their experiences at their respective conferences, key events and what's the state of the parties heading into the election.

It's been a bit of a rollercoaster ride getting to grips with Comment as my first print-edition in charge but I couldn't have done it without the stellar work of the rest of the Comment team and the higher-ups, Orla and Nadia, who've never failed to help when we've needed them.



IMAGE BY DAVID MORRIS

On pre and post-grad anxiety

The pressure for career success is premature to graduation.

Nadia Sayed (she/her) and
Ethan Attwood (he/him)

Nadia: When I first started university, I had a very vague idea of the career I wanted to pursue after graduation. The dreaded question, "What are you going to do after university?" never failed to evoke a sense of dread within me, and still does to this day. What frustrates me about this question is how it assumes that everyone possesses a meticulous planner which they have used to stage the exact trajectory their life is set to take. If such a planner exists, why has nobody cared to share it with me? Although I now have a clearer idea of what my ideal career might look like, it still feels extremely distant from my current reality as a student. The pressure students face, especially final-year students like myself, to offer an immediate answer to what they are going to do with the rest of their lives is concerning. One of my close friends took a year abroad just so they could delay having to face their final year of university. Students face an imminent pressure to secure a 9-5 job, which they are expected to enter, immediately after they graduate. However, this issue is by no means unique to final-year students. Throughout university, there is an uncomfortable pressure to be as productive as possible, to gain masses of work experience, join numerous societies and acquire as many transferable skills as possible, all while balancing a social life and keeping up with rigorous academic study.

Unfortunately, this leads to what is often referred to as hustle culture, propelling productivity anxiety, which is merely exacerbated by the world of work. Students often feel compelled to showcase their accomplishments on social media platforms like LinkedIn, which I like to call an Instagram for employment, or virtual impetus for imposter syndrome (depending on how successful you are).

Whilst I have succumbed to the pressure of using LinkedIn – mainly so I didn't get left behind, it can be disheartening for students to be constantly reminded of the success of

those around them, especially if you already feel like you're falling behind. Observing your peers post about their amazing work experience opportunities or seeing they have a job lined up post-graduation can worsen the feelings of imposter syndrome and anxiety, which numerous students battle during university. Hearing phrases like "it's who you know, not what you know" also heightens the pressure on students to network with as many people as possible whilst initiating the worry all their previous efforts might be minimised for lack of connections to industry professionals.

To cope with the pressure of finding a job, many students seek solace in pursuing further academic studies, such as a master's degree or a PhD. While achieving such a high level of education is admirable and a personal goal for some, for others, it's the only way to find stability in the uncertain world that lies beyond graduation.

Ethan: This can be a high-risk, but high-reward approach, with post-graduate degrees opening up previously unimagined possibilities and providing invaluable networking opportunities. However, as the cost of living continues to soar, graduates may find it harder to justify the price tag of a masters, or the sacrificed earnings during a PhD.

Students face an imminent pressure to secure a 9-5 job ... immediately after they graduate.



Many fields are simply not directly accessible from an undergraduate background, and pursuing them through further qualifications while continuing to develop skills for working life is worthwhile. But what many postgraduate veterans would say is that they're an expensive and stressful way to defer career decisions and stay at university, if those are your only objectives. For many, the middle path can be useful: focusing on finishing your degree, taking the time to find a job that suits you, while leaving open the possibility for a return to academ-

ia down the line.

The period just after graduating was very difficult for me (Ethan). The final months of a relatively intensive undergraduate program required total focus and sacrificing the time for job-hunting. I did a few interviews, but the bottleneck was less from the available hours in the day and more from the mental tax of deciding on a career. Those few months spent at home searching indeed.com were difficult for someone who valued stability and professional validation. Once I let go of the idea that I had to find the career I'd be in for life, and started looking for what would teach me what I wanted to learn, the process became much easier. And in many ways, even better than university.

Recent University of York Politics graduate and former *Nouse* Deputy Editor, Hannah Boyle, had this to say about the transition into the working world: "Since graduation, I've been working [in] a role that I absolutely love, and it's more satisfying than any essay I've written. The main thing I've found challenging has been the lack of immediate friends as I was very involved in societies at university."

Indeed, the transition from the social playground that is university and into the working world confronts many with the classic question of "how do adults make friends?" My advice on this is threefold: one, there are still sports and clubs available to professionals (dodgeball is getting very popular). Two, find the colleagues that will also become your friends. Some don't like the idea of mixing the business and social lives, but many of my colleagues remained close friends even after leaving the company. Finally, take care not to let real friendships atrophy. You may have less time to spend with acquaintances after university, but the time you do have can still be invested in lifelong connections.

Facing the first true freedom of your life can be hard, when there's no longer a convenient rail on which to roll the future. I ended up returning to university for a PhD after experiencing the pros and cons of the private sector, and it was one of the best decisions of my life. It's never quite the same as the first time, but in some ways, it's better than ever.



How we fall for the guise of goofy politicians by Jess Herbert

Inherent gender biases in journalism still persist

The gender gap in journalism is closing but there is still more to be done

Heather Gosling
(she/her)



The stories we write matter. The writers of these stories matter too, and the media should reflect the society we live in. Unfortunately, this is far from the case. A lack of gender diversity in editorial positions impacts the content decisions that are made. 'High status' journalism including 'hard' news, business, and politics remains male dominated and many women's news stories are not spotlighted. Whilst the gender gap in media is closing (albeit slowly), more change needs to happen to prevent an exclusionary glass newsroom.

A report released by the consultancy Man Bites Dog and Women in Journalism stated that fewer than one in five female journalists believe there is adequate gender diversity in the industry. So, why does a gender gap exist? Firstly, there's a lack of career progression. More than half of the female journalists who filled out the same survey said they were concerned with their career progression. Female journalists are denied senior positions – positions that have the power to shape news content. This

creates a glass effect ceiling that can often feel impossible to break through and perpetuates a harmful culture.

Tokenism is also a hurdle, with 52 percent of female journalists feeling that some companies believe having one woman in a senior board position is sufficient.

The expectations associated with working practices also create barriers for women. The expectation

We need a holistic, diverse, and well-rounded view of the news

of 24 hour news coverage is a problem for journalists who are juggling their work life balance, despite the changes in attitudes to remote working that developed during the Covid-19 pandemic. Women's 'unpaid work', like childcare and housework, means that the unsociable hours that working in journalism entails are not always feasible.

Moreover, the male dominated

of some news rooms creates a macho culture. Whilst not as rampant as in previous years, it persists today, with 74 percent of male and female journalists agreeing that this culture still exists. Research has shown 'macho' culture alienates women. Its impacts range from discrimination in story assignments to the lack of promotion. The macho culture is one of the reasons for the inequality between men and women in newsrooms. It can be traced back to the history of women's entrance into journalism – a field that had previously been inaccessible because they were expected to remain in the 'private sphere' of the home. In the 19th Century, white middle class women in the USA and UK began to work in journalism, but only to write 'women's news'. 'Women's news' meant any topics that were thought to be of interest to women (fashion, cooking and family), but these did not include politics or any hard news. Female journalists were marginalised to 'women's pages' and their voices and opinions were not heard on important topics.

'Women's news' still exists today with many female journalists being sidelined and discouraged from participating in hard news coverage. In roles such as sports reporting, war coverage and opinion columnists, women face a hard battle with hyper-

masculine, toxic environments.

The emphasis on objectivity in journalism is important, but it often means that feminist news reporters are viewed as unable to be objective because of their experiences as women. However, we should have a much more holistic, diverse, and well rounded view of the news.

Despite more women than men enrolling in journalism courses, women remain under-represented in the newsroom. Even in news itself, women's stories are under-represented. The Global Media Monitoring Project found that as news subjects, women only make up 24 percent of people heard, read or seen in newspapers, television, and radio, with men making up 76 percent. Representation matters in creating change, and the trivialisation and marginalisation of women, their voices and their stories creates the gender news gap.

Whilst all journalists can experience online abuse as a result of

their job, the abuse that women receive is particularly severe. 73 percent of female journalists that took part in a ICFJ research survey said they had experienced online violence in relation to their job with threats of physical and sexual violence. This gendered online violence intersects with racism, homophobia and other forms of discrimination that threaten female journalists and make their workplaces unsafe, silencing voices that we should be uplifting.

We cannot change what we cannot see. Many news outlets fail to measure the gender and ethnic diversity of their workforce with only 23 percent of directors stating that their organisation actively measures diversity in workplace surveys. This means that the lack of gender diversity is often not visible. Gender diversity is needed in journalism. We need unique stories from nuanced perspectives because at the moment we are only telling half of the story. The media is a mirror through which society views itself, and having visible female experts in journalism will inspire more women to enter the industry.



IMAGE: BENJAMIN CHILD

How do we fall for the goofy guise of politicians?

Boris Johnson isn't your mate, it's time to reflect on the role of politicians

Maya Upmacis
(she/her)



Have a few scrolls on *LadBible* or *UNILAD* or any other imitable British entertainment platform and I can guarantee, you will stumble across at least one video compilation of 'Boris Johnson's top ten funniest moments'. You might watch him cheerfully offering journalists a tray of cuppas instead of offering retractions for islamophobic remarks, and a few of the comments will be commending our, at the time, former foreign secretary for being "a top lad". This is, may I remind you, the same "top lad" who gloated about shaking hands with "everybody" in a hospital ward during the early days of Covid-19. A couple more scrolls and you

may well stumble across a clip mocking Theresa May's wonky gait as she leads us to lie in the rubble of her economy.

For us, it's a tease, for them it's a tactic. Together, it's a phenomenon. Politicians adopt a 'silly' demeanour to divert our attention from their political failures, and we fall for it in more ways than one.

Take, exhibit A: Boris Johnson, aka Bojo aka good ol' Bozza. He's the UK's object of ridicule (his nicknames are a testament to this truth), yet he has cultivated support by his self-crafted buffoonery. During his first PMQs in 2019, Jeremy Corbyn asked Johnson to provide details on a no-deal Brexit, specifically regarding an increase in food prices. Rather than answering with definitive plans, he hurled surreal insults to the Commons Chamber, like calling

the leader of the opposition a "chlorinated chicken" and a "great big girl's blouse". Johnson's reliance on quick quips and wisecracks warranted him to dismiss deliberating very real political issues with very real civil impacts,

sweeping these concerns under the rug. Thus, the bellows of our laughter shut the window of opportunity to engage in critiqueable dialogue. And, what of the 'oven-ready' Brexit he promised? To Keir Starmer and many more, "it wasn't even half-baked". But hey, he's still our mate "Bojo", right?

Humour humanises too. We only have to turn our telly on to watch exhibit B in my cautionary tale: Former UKIP Leader Nigel Farage heading down under the Australian Jungle. His mission to show the world the 'real' him (which is apparently displayed when he's chowing down crocodile penises) can make us susceptible to sympathising with him. But, with speculations of a comeback to politics, it is important not to forget his intolerant attitudes towards migrants and immigrants and asylum seekers and basically anyone who isn't British.

Finally, exhibit C: Theresa May, the UK's second female prime minister and self-proclaimed menace to arable land everywhere when in a 2017 interview on *ITV's Tonight* programme, she daringly confessed that the naughtiest thing she had done was "run through fields of wheat" as a child. "Well nobody is ever perfectly behaved, are they?" No Theresa, but you've done much naughtier things, haven't you? Like piloting 'go-home' vans to intimidate migrants into self-deportation or fracturing families by introducing a minimum earning threshold for British citizens to bring

a foreign spouse into the UK. Unlike Johnson's oddities, May's wayward thrashing of grain is not relatable, it's an embarrassing attempt to relate. We don't laugh with her, we laugh at her disconnect and in the process, unravel social class contradictions. It's a disciplinary sort of humour, and our laughter renders us compliant.

Maybe I'm being too harsh. May most likely didn't intend to become an online target for parody and Johnson probably doesn't scruff his hair up before interviews. But, regardless of whether the intention behind Johnson's zip wire stunt parading miniature union jack flags was a clam-

the bellows of our laughter shut the window of opportunity to critique

orously calculated move to mask political failures, muster votes ahead of a possible election campaign, or even a genuine sign of clinical insanity, the effect on us remains the same: we remain the same.

With the risk of sounding like a killjoy, this is not to say don't poke fun at our leaders, an accidental mispronunciation of a word is harmless fun

to mock, and a lot of the time laughing at our legislatures is the best way to lampoon their shortcomings. Afterall, I rarely find videos mocking Jacinda Arden for a misuse of a household tool (albeit a *TikTok* algorithm and location bias may sway this) but the point still stands that we tend to laugh at politicians who are doing a 'bad job'. Although I'm always cautious to claim cause and effect, the satisfactory levels speak for themselves; only 17 percent of the UK is satisfied with how the political system is functioning, and that encompasses the conduct of our representatives. So, when watching the spectacle of rambunctious circus clowns who comprise our government, we must ensure that when we place them in their pillory, we don't just indulge in derision but we also actively hold our leaders accountable.

Politicians are generally self-serving. They will masquerade as gimmicky nit-wits to endear and distract constituents, we fall for it and they do it again. It's a vicious cycle. Naturally, fingers will be pointed but there's plenty of blame to go around. Where politicians have a duty to remain professional and deliver their promises, we have a civil duty to call them out when they're not doing as such. So, this is not a telling off but rather a caution when playing in the dark. I've delivered a diagnosis of a collective case of myopia across the public. Use it to open your eyes and see beyond the veneer of 'goofy politicians'.

IMAGE: DIEGO SIDEBURNS

We shouldn't swipe right on dating apps anymore

Dating apps harm our pursuit of genuine love, you won't catch me on them

Ethan Reuter
(he/him)



Oh God, a straight white man - without a relationship, it should also be mentioned - has an opinion again. Please call me, I promise I'll be free. Does his ego know no bounds? Surely this is proof someone should finally check his privilege. The final sanctum, where you're free from our loud, brutish and ignorant opinions has been breached. Not even dating advice is safe anymore. I speak with the knowledge that I have the least qualified opinion possible and so I won't hold it against you if you disregard everything I say from this point on.

Tinder had never been a problem before uni - I didn't use it, I didn't really know anyone who used it, I was free from its grasp. Cliche as it may be, ignorance is bliss. My life now is markedly different at university, and I get the distinct sense I'm never going back. My problem, principally, is that it removes all of the things that make relationships work, removing personality, removing person. Stitched into the fabric of our online cloak is the inanity of opening lines and the banal-

ity of whatever happens next. There is nothing left of the other side.

In our undying quest for someone to hold us when the sun goes down, we commodify ourselves. The tech bros have won, we are becoming the production line. It's a mass sterilisation of identity. The liberal utopia of Silicon Valley's dreams. Reflecting, the venture feels akin to online advertising, an app for our own personal ads, where some of us are lucky enough to be Saatchi & Saatchi, some of us are Saul Goodman, none of us really ourselves anymore. Yes I like dogs, yes I like Taylor Swift, yes I like novels, yes I like going out, yes I'd actually like the reckoning or rapture right about now, thank you very much, that sounds like a fantastic tonic.

Now I'm not saying the real world is much better - lord knows it can be a lot worse - because that flirtatious temptress that's eyeing you up from across Ziggy's basement is hardly going to be the love of your life. I doubt they're looking for their prince charming either. Nor is it likely that the person glancing at you from those painfully sharp shouldered library chairs is going to walk down the aisle, but that isn't the point, at least not right now. The point is that you have to interact, talk, and get to know the person. You have to be yourself, acne included.



IMAGE: NATHAN RUPERT

In some parts, I'm sure, this is the beauty of Tinder, and apps like it. There are no consequences, no requirements placed on the reality of your person, and as such, it becomes a hobby. One glorified game of smash or pass, to the joy and excited giggles of flatmates as you swipe left and right, basking in the knowledge that nothing is going to actually happen. I can't

quite shake the sense that it doesn't help the whole love thing though. It has nurtured a culture of sliding standards and an overall feeling that we can get away with not trying when we should, because after all, there's another profile waiting. A charge, I know, I can be tried and found guilty of, to the first degree.

Unfortunately, this phenomena has translated to the outside world as well. The decent, polite even, thing to do now appears to be breaking up with someone in the back corner of a Nando's. Or so the anecdote goes, when explained to me earnestly in Courtyard. Hurriedly, she's calling it quits after a flurry of dates in front of bland wing roulettes and meagre chicken wraps, what a way to go. It's hardly Annabels or The Ivy, I'm sure you'll agree. Where next, the Welcome Break in Derby? I hear the Greggs there is lovely. The send off they deserve. This story is only bested by a former section editor at this very paper. They, in good conscience and heart, have broken up with someone in a Wetherspoons before. You know the pubs I mean. The ones with the cheap pints and a stench of deep seated regret that paints the slow continuity of time. Let's hope it fares better for their current relationship. The bar is low, I'm sure you've gathered, for our future, and our editor selection

process.

Maybe, I ponder, self-aggrandisingly, that I don't actually dislike these apps, instead it's that I won't like myself on the apps. It takes a certain level of confidence and conditioning to position yourself at the epicentre of the online world just so complete strangers can brutally dictate, yes, or, no. Silent rejection beckons 1,000 times over. One day, I'm sure I'll succumb to the pressure, to those narcissistic impulses and make a profile which lacks any distinct quality. Before that day, there is hope, and recent inventions such as the PearRing, calling themselves the world's largest social media experiment, offer a cure-all. Simply wear as a man (or woman) about town and you'll make genuine connections as a live dating experiment. It works as a ring that's worn to identify who's single in real time and open conversation in the real world.

It's perfect, don't you think? They've invented a continuous amplifying megaphone, that tells everyone you're living an involuntarily solitary, lonely life. For £25 I can look less like a pear and more like a lemon. Great! With all hope lost, and on the advice of my most trusted friends, I'm off to break up with my situationship in the Blake Street McDonalds. Take that Wetherspoons, Nando's, and all those dating apps!

Is traditional diplomacy a dying art in 2023?

Increasingly hawkish international relations may threaten, but not replace, classic statesmanship

Georgina Spriddell
(she/her)



What do you think of when you hear the term diplomacy? Personally, a misinformed amalgamation between politics and espionage springs to mind. Whilst there certainly is an element of this intermingling, the reality is a line that has to be walked in a much more subtle way. In this subtlety, diplomacy could be considered to be an art form - but recent events across the globe have lent to questions surrounding traditional diplomacy's presence, or lack thereof. The overarching query - is traditional diplomacy a dying art? Diplomacy, the profession of maintaining and advancing international relations, was a word first utilised in the English language in the 18th century, by the political theorist, Edmund Burke. Despite this, diplomacy today is an entirely modern concept.

Within the question 'is traditional diplomacy a dying art?', there lie two key issues. Firstly, labelling diplomacy as 'traditional' in comparison to something more 'modern' is, in my view, reductive to its purpose. Secondly, to ask whether it as an art that is dying, is to limit diplomacy's

capability to change and evolve. It is better to emphasise continuity and evolution, rather than revolution, in the development of diplomacy.

After all, the ability to adapt to changes across international foreign policy is in the job description. The Covid-19 pandemic is a testament to this, with parts of the annual meeting of the UN general assembly taking place online in both 2020 and 2021. While routines, procedures, and settings have been modified over the last decades, the basic principles of diplomacy as the basis for negotiations between nation states have an enduring validity.

You may have seen Netflix's new political drama *The Diplomat* that aired last spring. It would seem from the script that, although dramatic licence was certainly employed to keep it racing along like a thriller, diplomacy is far from a dying form. Members of the real Foreign Office have reflected on the programme, saying that many of the major plot drivers of the show are unrealistic, such as the London ambassadorship being given to a career dip-

lomat over a wealthy donor, or how, almost immediately, the US ambassador was holding meetings with the Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister. But, they said the main point Netflix was accurate in was showing the relentless phone calls of the job, and the back-and-forth checking of protocol before the Prime Minister takes over the work started by the diplomats.

Diplomacy, as we imagine it, was crafted in the later 20th century during international incidents, the Vietnam War and the Cold War standing out amongst these in particular; and in the creation of diplomatic bodies such as the United Nations, the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), and the European Union.

Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State during the presidencies of Nixon and Ford, is perhaps the most well-known example of the individuality of diplomacy. Kissinger's role in maintaining relations with China and the Soviet Union won him a Nobel Peace Prize for his work during the Vietnam War.

Today, the 'front-pagers' of diplomacy tend to be the heads of state and the prime ministers, rather than smaller members of the foreign offices. This is not to say that career diplomats are phasing out into a non-entity, quite the opposite. But, the climate of modern international politics requires strong leadership at the front for the work of behind-the-scenes diplomacy to ever be successful.

For instance, Tony Blair's determination in achieving the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 was the driving force behind its success, as was Clinton's role in orchestrating the Camp David Summit in 2000.

Indeed, the current Israel-Gaza conflict has seen Presi-

dent Biden exercising diplomacy and urging caution to Prime Minister Netanyahu. Biden has been quite sharp in his advice to Israel, though he was subtle in couching that counsel in terms of the lessons the US has taken from fighting terrorism. Biden bade Netanyahu not to act rashly, referring back to 9/11 - "While we sought justice and got justice, we also made mistakes."

Of international diplomacy, it has been asked whether it is all showmanship. Consider the meeting of President Trump and Vladimir Putin in Helsinki in 2018 - a veritable stream of press photography, smiles all round, the warm shaking of hands and Trump promising a rosy future for Russia-United States relations, but did anything lasting really come of it? Clearly, the answer is pejorative.

Pessimists will say that these agreements, even those led by tanker organisations such as the UN, are merely smoke and mirrors - that today's political entities no longer have stringent values they cling to, making the art of diplomacy semi-redundant. But, ultimately, the resilience of the diplomatic system in the last century to change in technology and in world order is impossible to ignore.

So, diplomacy as an art is continuously shape-shifting and evolving. Perhaps the old world order is dead, but diplomacy certainly is not.



IMAGE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE



IMAGE: AARON MAC

Door staff culture must reform

How so called bouncer culture is impacting student nights out

Ellie Banyard
(she/her)



Everyone loves a good night out, we're students it does kind of go with the territory. For the most part everyone will experience a great night, maybe even a trip to Salt and Pepper (or one of the many food trucks in York, although we all know Effe's is the best) and then a slightly less than great hangover the following day.

Recently however, it isn't the nights that are being remembered but rather the behaviour of the door staff outside the club. Commonly referred to as "bouncer culture" (although we can all agree this term is slightly old fashioned now) the door staff are meant to be there to help vulnerable and perhaps slightly tipsy students. There have been videos shared across social media showing that this might not be the case. Usually smoking areas are the place to be even if you don't smoke, just taking in the not so fresh air, getting a break from everything inside and escaping your mates by making new friends.

The Complete University Guide's "crime rating" statistic rates York at 38.6, significantly lower than, for example, Aston University's rating of 180.3. York is traditionally viewed as a safe night out and I do believe that many people would agree with this statement. However, the actions of some door staff have drawn attention to a small, but notable, shadow over this positive statistic. Door staff should symbolise safety and security on a night out (even if they do make me doubt my own birthday when checking my ID). If you scroll through the reviews of these institutions on social media platforms, such as Facebook, you will see a recurring theme

of students' negative experiences with door staff on student club nights.

It can be argued that the actions of a select few should not be generalised to condemn everyone, as most students have had positive experiences. Therefore, people should look more at the institutions and agencies that hire them and what rules and regulations are put in place for their employees. Door staff complaints are prevalent in social media comments, a problem extending back at least 7 years. Not only does this history show that little has been done to effectively fix the problem, but that problems with institutional policies is a common thread running through the years. Therefore, it could be suggested that agencies should implement stricter rules regarding door staff conduct to deter disproportionately aggressive behaviour. Perhaps it would be worth starting investigations now so that there isn't a case of waiting until an incident occurs. This issue is not exclusive to York, as evidenced by the many online articles from Glasgow to Durham addressing negative experiences with door staff. According to a *Guardian* article by Anna Codrea-Rado on the history of nightclubs, clubbing has been considered a popular activity since the 1960s.

This raises several questions; are problems with door staff only a contemporary issue or has it been around since the origin of clubbing's popularity? Is there anything unique about the role that contributes to these issues, compared to those arising from, for example, bar staff? Is it because their job is built around security through force, where preventative actions may be perceived as unprovoked aggression, compared to staff working at the bar whose jobs are merely to provide a service? Or could it be that when put into a position of power and authority, some people are more likely to exercise it in a violent way? It's difficult to give a definitive

answer to any of these questions without a rigorous inquiry, as speculation is unlikely to provide satisfactory solutions due to the issue's ubiquity both geographically and historically.

Any given person's behaviour in stressful environments will vary so much due to their life experiences. One may be inclined to defend door staff the nature of their job leads them to assume the worst of people and act proactively to make everyone else in the club safe. This however is not a blanket excuse for their behaviour.

The rise of awareness about this issue on social media can be argued to have impacted the environment experienced by students on a night out. The issue can be exacerbated by putting revellers more on edge and likely to act more defensively. This can limit options for seeking assistance when on a night out, particularly on finding the balance between safety and having a good time with friends. The most important factor for feeling safe whilst clubbing and drinking is to be surrounded by a network of trustworthy friends.

Additionally, the University has many different types of support to offer, on a college, academic and university-wide basis. There is also a voluntary university-run student group called NightSafe, where students wearing orange hi-vis jackets are available in the city to help students on each YUSU club night.

All this to say, remember that it does seem to only be a minority of door staff who are causing problems, if you do encounter issues on a night out and need help please use either NightSafe or the door staff if you feel able to do so. Not trying to sound like a parent but make sure you surround yourself with people you trust on a night out, eat before you go out and leave some water by your bed for when you get in and you will all hopefully have a fun and safe night out in York.

Tales from the Conservative and Labour conferences

Max Abdulgani
and **Jacob Boehman** (he/him)

Max: Having experienced my first Labour Conference in 2022, this year left me with a more eager anticipation for what 2023 had to offer. It is rare in politics that you feel all the hard work genuinely pays off. The conference this year in Liverpool showed Labour at its best. A party with a policy vision to put to both its members and, most importantly, the country. A party with the capability to govern next year and prove they are worthy of that trust from the British public.

The brutal reality facing Labour since 2005 is that it has not won one general election. The conference aimed to showcase a party finally on the verge of entering government and ready to win an election. It was particularly telling that big businesses and corporations flocked to the Labour conference and not the Tory one. This year's speeches ranged from economic credibility with a Labour government utterly committed to best usage of taxpayers' money, to tackling regional inequality through house building and empowering metro mayors. Notably, Keir Starmer's speech was quite literally the most dazzling display of the conference. Ahead of setting out his vision to thousands of Labour members, Starmer was upstaged and covered in glitter by a protestor. Despite the concerning lack of security measures and the scale of this interruption, it played well with the audience both inside and outside the conference hall.

For me, the highlight of the conference was Rachel Reeves giving a hugely accomplished speech on Labour's compelling economic plan, followed by a surprise endorsement from Mark Carney, former Governor of the Bank of England. There was an array of fringe events with speakers including the likes of Wes Streeting on healthcare, Thangam Debbonaire on the arts industry, and even Peter Mandelson discussing his time as Business and Trade Secretary. These events were the ideal opportunity to put detailed questions to the speakers and have informal chats afterwards.

Drinks receptions in the evening gave attendees a much-needed rest from the busy schedules of the week and a chance to catch up with friends and peers. Most of them had free bars too, so I didn't even need to buy one drink. Being in the same bar as Sophy Ridge and Sam Coates at 2am certainly felt like a rare occurrence! Media attention and hype towards a potentially incoming government is always a blessing and a curse. When the tables are turning, a once in a generation sea-change in politics will occur. The opposition begins to dominate

the media narrative and all eyes are on them. It was clear that any mistake had to be swiftly dealt with and ideally avoided. This is a reality Labour has not faced in years.

This year showed Labour is ready to fight the next election. People across the country have continuously expressed the need for change and are recognising Labour is now able to offer it. Politics is a tough, gruelling business. With apathy high and hope at an all-time low. I'm confident, however, that Labour can restore this for people.

Jacob: The Conservatives has been accused of being out of touch with the electorate recently, a narrative used by both critics and members alike to describe the party's ailing mandate. Every October the party descends upon a city and soon after questionable tales lie widespread.

If pathetic fallacy is to be believed, the sporadic downpours over Manchester were an ill omen. However, the first day of the conference gave other impressions. Evening drinks receptions are often described as a must-do at conferences, the first night seeing, already, the Northern Reception turns into a party. It wasn't until he started speaking that I realised that the PM was standing a few feet away from me. Rishi Sunak's speech may have been brief, and rather lacklustre, but it's unique to conference season seeing such a formal figure so informally.

The fringe events were in the highest demand, none other than the Conservative Growth Group led by Liz Truss and Jacob Rees-Mogg. The atmosphere was palpably energetic and optimistic. Conversely, the neo-liberal and centre right Centre for Policy Studies Think Tank hosted numerous seminar. In contrast, the former Home Secretary's speech on the third day was extremely popular, her speech in front of a packed room connecting with what members were thinking. Reflecting on her speech and tenor, members said she was saying the things other politicians wouldn't, Braverman could leave the conference buoyant.

Divisions were only emboldened by the arrival of Nigel Farage, who with the GB News lanyard swinging, was the 'guest of honour' on the second and third day of the conference. Easy to locate, but swamped by young Conservatives desperate to meet him for the duration of the conference.

In comparison, the Sunak's closing speech was well-received but didn't have the same level of anticipation. It was described by many to be a "last hurrah" for the Conservative government. The common consensus found was that of discontent with the leadership, but no one person or group that's universally popular.

Almost everyone agreed that the party must rally around Sunak if they are to have any chance of overcoming Labour's lead in the polls.



CLASH OF COMMENTS

Fancy dress: fun or frivolous?

FUN

Juliette Barlow
(she/her)



For me, not liking fancy dress is a major red flag; it means that you are either boring, unimaginative, or think you're a bit too cool.

As someone who spent an entire pre-drinks painstakingly threading peas together to make a pea necklace for my pea costume (alongside my friends, the princess and the mattress), it's safe to say that I am a massive fan of fancy dress. Love it or hate it, fancy dress is a massive part of uni culture, whether it be for Halloween, themed nights out, or 'dress up as the first letter of your name' house parties. Many people dread the extra hassle, and dismiss fancy dress on the basis that it's childish, silly and unnecessary. However, for me, this is exactly the basis of fancy dress' appeal.

In a world ever categorised by increasing stress, responsibility and the inescapable capitalist rat-race of the modern day United Kingdom, fancy dress offers a much needed outlet. It is not simply another thing on the long list of things we have to do, but a way to channel our passion, creativity, and (hear me out) rediscover our inner child. Although this term has been damagingly co-opted by the Instagram therapy community, there is still something to be said for connecting to what we used to love doing when we were younger. Rediscovering the hobbies and activities that we used to do takes us back to the core of our interests, and what we actually enjoy doing for fun. When we were little, we used to play for the sake of play, dressing up and using our imagination to create fantasy lands in which we were princesses and pirates. As we reach adolescence and adulthood, this child-like innocence becomes replaced with cynicism. We no longer do things because we simply want to, but instead have to dedicate our time to an ever-growing list of responsibilities. In a world of lectures, readings, and just trying to stay alive, fancy dress is a way to break out of the monotonous cycle of existence, and recapture the sense of fun that is so vital to life itself.

Fancy dress can often add some excitement to the standard night-out or houseparty, where you go to the same places, see the same people, and dance to the same 2010's chart playlist. As we all know, getting ready for the party is half the fun of the party itself, and fancy-dress makes this

endlessly more entertaining, particularly when it comes to group costumes. To me, there is nothing more fun than everyone working out what the group outfit is going to be, all getting the supplies for it and DIY-ing a costume together, and of course taking the mandatory group pictures. It's a form of collective bonding, and can also be a way to find your friends at parties (asking someone if they have seen a member of ABBA is easier than asking if they have seen a girl with blonde hair.)

Fancy dress offers an excuse to use your imagination and dust off your paint brushes and felt-tips to channel your creative side, as well as show off your personality. You can immediately connect with other people based on their costume;

without them being dressed up you might not realise that they love the same TV shows, music artists or niche pop culture references as you. Without fancy dress, you might find out that boy in your seminar is actually also a not so secret fan of the Spice Girls. Nor would you be able to witness a heated political discussion between Dick Turpin and Gemma Collins.

I'm not sure the same can be said for a party where the dress code is just jeans and a nice top.

Ethan Attwood
(he/him)



If one thing has changed since my time as an undergraduate, it's that social events now seem obligated to have a theme.

This perplexes me – are we judged to be so incapable of making our own fun that events require some social lubrication from the shared experience of putting together some outlandish costume? Is this an indictment of our interpersonal aptitudes, our social secretaries de-



claring that no, having drinks with your friends isn't enough anymore, you people can't do it? Is this really what they think of us?

Maybe I'm too quick to judge. Perhaps it is in fact us, the silent majority, the social clientele, the frothing, hysterical peanut gallery rabidly clambering over each other for yet another reason to shop at Primark. Our wardrobes are bare, the bourgeoisie charity shops are overflowing with donations and I really need another Made In China cowboy hat. Hey, it's good for

FRIVOLOUS

the economy right?

Fast fashion is one of the greatest contributors to climate change that we actually impact via our choices. The fashion industry contributes over 90 million tonnes of waste and consumes 80 trillion litres of water per year. It's responsible for ten percent of global carbon emissions, and even washing clothes releases almost half a million tonnes of microfibres into the ocean - the equivalent of 50 billion plastic bottles. We've made progress to move away from plastic use as a society so far. Fashion should be held to the same account, and students priding themselves on sustainable lifestyles should avoid the hypocrisy of encouraging more mass-produced tat by oppressed workers.

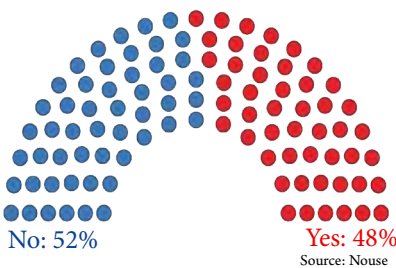
Another issue is how "optional" themes rob people of the individuality and self-expression they experience through clothing. Not everyone sees fashion this way – for many it's simply a necessary way of presenting oneself in public. But to others, it's a critical part of their identity; one of the few ways they can feel comfortable, or even experience joy in their freedom of self-expression. What is the point of spending time, money and in some cases, a significant amount of mental effort curating a wardrobe that makes you feel confident if you just have to spend time out with your friends dressed as a polyester banana?

I don't hate everything about fancy dress. Presenting a collective front through a social uniform can build team cohesion and chemistry. Costumes at Halloween are absolutely acceptable, a sacred seasonal tradition that was the highlight of my year from around the ages of six to twelve. But making every Friday a village-hall-tribute-band version of Halloween violates its sanctity. The costumes themselves are, in the classically (and wonderful) British culture of respect for being slightly half-assed, amusing for about the first ten minutes of the social. After this point, their usefulness expended, various bits of themed paraphernalia start being discarded, misplaced or stolen, further increasing their likelihood of ending up in a bin.

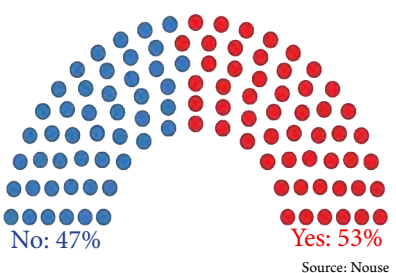
Not every social must be a rigorously planned and executed excursion, though I do retain a nostalgic fondness for the ridiculously convoluted conversion tables between alcoholic units and team points. Instead of substituting one of these with four banal themes half the society skips because they can't be bothered with the theme, let's have fun the old fashioned way. By bantering, arguing, and actually being allowed into a club because we're not carrying plastic mediaeval weapons.

According to the polls

Have you had a negative experience with bouncers?



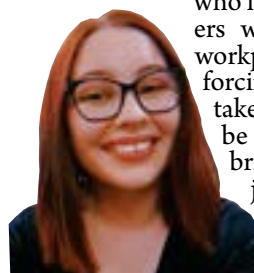
Have you ever used a dating app?



Comment in brief...

"XMAS JUMPERS FALL FLAT"

I love Christmas. Tacky decorations, cheesy songs, the markets, the lights, all of it. However, I don't love the arbitrary Christmas jumper days. Work is already not a vibe at Christmas time so the last thing we need is to have to go out and hunt down a scratchy jumper that I'll only wear once and then shove in the back of my wardrobe. Let those who like Christmas jumpers wear them, but can workplaces please stop forcing everyone to partake in a trend that, let's be honest, does not bring the office any joy.



(she/her)
Orla McAndrew

"YORK'S FOOTPATHS ARE HELLISH"

Although York is a beautiful and historically rich city, it's home to some of the worst footpaths I've ever seen. The amount of times I've nearly been hit by a bus or had my feet run over by the wheels of a bike is ridiculous. It was only yesterday that my friend had to pull me off the road and back onto the path so I wouldn't get run over (I was trying to walk next to him so we didn't have to shout to continue speaking to each other). In the end, we walked home in silence and single file.



(she/her)
Nadia Sayed

"PONDERING THE APP-OCALYPSE"

"If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not now, yet it will come." Originally used in *Hamlet* to ponder the inescapability of death, this line is equally pertinent to describe the day I'll finally delete Snapchat. Like the torments alleviated from mortal men upon their earthly demise, I shall no longer suffer the tackiness of bitmojis and feckless influencers flogging miracle cure self adhesive gel through their sponsorship with Lockheed Martin. This bête noire of mine is both defunct and infantile.



(he/him)
James Clay



MUSE.

**TRAVELLING THROUGH: SPACE
AND SIZE FROM THE UK TO USA**

**ETHAN REUTER (HE/HIM) REFLECTS ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN
LIFE IN THE SUBURBS IN LONDON AND NEW YORK**

FEATURES

M4
Ella Raw (she/her) speaks to Somali journalist and activist about surviving persecution, civil-wars, military dictatorships and prison

M5
Ellen Morris (she/her) explores the Western male gaze through a feminist lens of film and literature

M8
Grace Bannister (she/her) introduces alumNOUSE and shares her first interview

Grace Bannister (she/her) explores celebrity involvement in the world of politics

M16
Charlotte Legrand (she/her) explores the feminist origins of 'girl' trends and how they redefine girlhood



4

ARTS

M6
Elena Savvas (she/they) discusses the history, shortlist and winners of the LGBTQ+ book prize

Cara Doherty (she/her) interviews the recent graduate about the musical theatre industry

M7
Emily Stevens (she/her) spoke with **Katie Proctor (they/them)** about their new poetry book
Jenny Hall (she/her) reviews the exhibition 'Drawing Attention: Emerging Artists in Dialogue'

6

FASHION & SHOOT

M9
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JEREMY CORBYN'S 'POETRY FOR THE MANY'

EMILY CHRISTIE SHARES HER CONVERSATION WITH JEREMY CORBYN REGARDING HIS NEW BOOK 'POETRY FOR THE MANY'

On December 1st, the Independent MP for Islington North, Jeremy Corbyn, embarked on a journey to the University of York. Not only was he here to partake in the invigorating York Dialectic Union debate, but he also made the journey to discuss and promote his new book, *Poetry for the Many*. By reimagining the Labour Party's 2017 manifesto slogan, 'For the many not the few', he advocates the belief that poetry is not limited to the privileged few, but rather a powerful means of expression that belongs to the masses. Collaborating with

ple that turned up when we were just reading poetry with Melissa and a lot of young people turned up who wanted to read their own poetry so I said, "Go right ahead!". We then had the idea at the end of that to do this book, 'Poetry for the Many', which is about the choice of poems we've made and then we've described why we've made those choices. The only arguments were which poems to leave out because of the size of the book. If it had my way, it would have been about another couple of hundred pages. It's also about trying to make poetry accessible,

called 'Calais in Winter', which is about the way refugees survive in Calais. There's also one that is not often published in Britain at all. There's a woman living in a monastery in Mexico where they discovered that she could read and write and write poetry and write about women's rights. Most of her poetry was burnt by the church and destroyed. Some of it appeared in Spain when some of the governments took it back. I suspect that some is in the Vatican Library, but we have no way of knowing that. The poem is called 'You, Foolish Men. Read' it, it's very strong.

And this was written 100 years before Mary Wollstonecraft wrote it.

What do you hope readers take away from your book?

I hope that they'll take away from the book that there's some poetry there that will make you think, some will make you cry, some will make you happy. And it does talk about the natural world and environment, it talks about hope, it talks about personal relations, it also talks about tragedy. There's a poem by my friend, the late Adrian Mitchell, who wrote a poem about Victor Jara, who was a Chilean singer that was killed in the stadium in

1973, is much revered in Chile to this day. And as the poem is called, his hands were gentle, his hands were strong. And Victor's widow, Joan Jara, died last week. From most of the time of exile she was living in my constituency. So, I'm very proud of the relationship with her.

If you were stranded on a desert island and could only bring one book, which book would you choose?

Either 'Ulysses' to read it again and again and again, I've read it twice. There is a different meaning in every line. I wouldn't say every sentence because there's no punctuation in it. I'd say, 'Ulysses' or if we're allowed an extra, I'd also pick the complete works of Shakespeare, that way I'd be happy.



Len McCluskey, this compelling anthology sheds light on the transformative nature of poetry to inspire, unite, and give a voice to everyday individuals. Following his reading and book signing in The Portal Bookshop, I was fortunate enough to engage Mr Corbyn in a brief conversation regarding his anthology.

What inspired you to write this book?

I've always enjoyed poetry. Len and I discussed poetry at various meetings. He enjoys poetry as well, even though everybody's very surprised by this. I don't know why they should be surprised, but they are. We then did an event at the castle in Liverpool. We were amazed at the number of peo-

saying to young people, please write poetry, because in poetry, you tell a truth, you give an impression, you display a view, which often you wouldn't do in speech and you wouldn't do it in written prose. I'm really pleased with the way it's gone and it seems to have sold an awful lot these past two or three weeks. I just did an event this afternoon in the bookshop in the centre of town, which is great.

Are there any specific poets or poems included in the anthology that stand out to you?

Well, there's so many in this book, it's very hard to pick one out. There are some poems there that are unusual. There's a poem by me in there at the end about Calais,

EDITORS' NOTE



EMILY WARNER (SHE/HER) REFLECTS ON THE ARTS

It feels like only yesterday that this semester began. Campus was full of bewildered looking freshers, modules still felt new and exciting, and York was basking in the last rays of summer. Now, we're trudging back in the dark at 4pm, booking our trains home for the holidays and dancing to the Sia Christmas album while crying over our unplanned dissertations- (sorry, I got a bit personal there). The only thing that hasn't changed? The fact that people still don't understand how semesters work. Perhaps, it will be a constant enigma.

While I've been ruefully neglecting my degree, I am so proud to see how Muse has grown this semester. From the launch of our brand new radio show 'Muse-ings' and the birth of AlumNOUSE to our new Puzzles section, there are wonderful things on the horizon (no, not the sun - we probably won't be seeing that again until June).

I'd like to give a special mention first to Ellen, Deputy Muse Editor. She has been amazing this semester, approaching everything with calmness and patience (not to mention looking stylish while she does it - I'm going to start a petition to put Ellen's outfits on the next front page). I also have to thank Lucy, my co-host of 'Muse-ings', for steadfastly enduring my technical inaptitude and last minute guest cancellations. Her enthusiasm for the show and impressive ability to secure interviews, has made my dream of a Muse radio show possible. I am also extremely grateful to URY for being open to collaborating, on the show and on various workshops. I have long felt that Muse needs to expand across different multimedia platforms, to keep up with the changing landscape of journalism, so it is exciting to see that happening.

Another massive thank you goes to all of the editors who have helped put this print edition together. Everyone has worked extremely hard in their role, whether that be writing, editing, taking photos or wrangling Adobe InDesign into cooperation. There are lots of new members and some old ones (sorry Katy, I promise I'm not calling you old) but I appreciate all of your effort and enthusiasm. You are the reason why I love being part of Nouse!

I think it is easy for the arts to be overlooked, or forgotten, when we are witnessing such atrocities in the news. What place can art have when we are facing the cost-of-living crisis, climate change, the war in Gaza? It seems unimportant, insulting even, to talk about beauty, or aesthetics. However, I was recently reading Olivia Haig's *Funny Weather: Art in an Emergency*, in which she writes, "Empathy is not something that happens to us when we read Dickens. It's work. What art does is provide material with which to think: new registers, new spaces. After that, friend, it's up to you". The arts, and writing about the arts, is not just about telling the audience something. It is about creating space to react, cultivate empathy, process difficult truths and experience hope. The constant cycle of news can be overwhelming, frustrating, depressing, and we need something to cling to in this maelstrom; something through which to formulate our response. So, take a breath. Enjoy reading about beautiful things like art, music, hot chocolates and *Gilmore Girls*. These things are an essential break from those topics which weigh on us all the time, and ones which provide the space to process them.

IMAGE CREDITS

Cover: Reynaldo #brigworkz Brigantty
Left (top to bottom) : Surene Palvie, Raph_PH, IMDb, Joonas kääriäinen
Right: Jonah Quinton Instagram: @nomalquinton



AN INTERVIEW FROM EXILE WITH ABDALLE AHMED MUMIN

ELLA RAW (SHE/HER) SPEAKS TO SOMALI JOURNALIST AND ACTIVIST ABOUT SURVIVING PERSECUTION, CIVIL-WARS, MILITARY DICTATORSHIPS AND PRISON, BEFORE ENDING UP ON A GROUP OF STUDENTS' DOORSTEP

*Content warning:
Discussions of violence and conflict.*

Sitting across from me is Abdalle Mumin, a man that I have lived with, eaten with, watched TV with, sat across from and laughed with when I burnt my toast and he could not cook pasta. I asked Abdalle to tell me about his childhood in Somalia and why he decided to become a journalist. I had heard fragments of the terror he had endured murmured around cups of tea and every 'how was your day?' Although, in the comfort of our university ac-

“ Abdalle: “That was the year, 2007, when I started writing about politics”
Me: “Which you’re not supposed to do?”
Abdalle: “Yes.”

commodation, it felt like the heavy doors before an ICU; better to stay on the safe, ignorant side and laugh about how different the weather is here, than in Africa. But, Abdalle has given his voice to newspapers across the globe, he is the voice of the Somalians he watched being murdered in his youth, of journalists unjustly persecuted and all those still fighting for freedom today. Now, he will have the students of York’s voice as well.

Abdalle was born in 1984 in Kismayo, Somalia. When he was four, his family moved to the capital city, Mogadishu, with the hope of providing him with a better education. However, these plans were abruptly cut-short. In 1991, the Somali Democratic Republic, a military dictatorship, was ousted from government by clan-based groups and a civil war broke out. Somalia now had no central government. Abdalle describes it as “lawless anarchy, complete violent



anarchy”. His family’s hurried move to a nearby town, Qoryoley, was shadowed by “bombing, shelling, destruction” and traumatising events that still haunt Abdalle today.

Following the government’s removal, more clan-based militias formed and fought for control of Somalia, targeting communities disagreeing with their agendas. At seven years old, shortly after moving to Qoryoley, Abdalle witnessed

several men being kidnapped from hiding, and murdered in the street. The men were innocent, killed because they came from a different community to the militia, the same community as Abdalle’s mother. He tells me, “it was not safe anywhere”; but the family must flee again.

In 1992, Abdalle’s family had moved in and out of the capital three times, attempting to survive the civil war. The second time they were forced to leave, in-fighting in the rebel group named United Somali Congress led to a bomb dropping on Abdalle’s home moments after they had left it. The third time, with no home to go to, his family joined a displacement camp in the city. Abdalle remembers when one stranger gave his family Somali shillings during their long journey, on foot, to the camp.

“It was big money for us at that time. Enough to buy food for days and days. So, I remember that man, I don’t know who he was, I don’t know, but someone with a deep sense of humanity... And he didn’t know us at all.”

It is now 1993, and intervention from the United Nations and United States task forces are attempting to combat the humanitarian crisis ensuing in Somalia. Somalians were dying and suffering due to seaport closures, drought, and the resulting famine. The UN mission opened up the ports and deposited US marines in the country. As well as, most importantly for Abdalle, opening NGO schools, where he learned how to read and write. But again, suffering seemed to crush the seeds of hope as they were planted. There was an Irish nurse who worked at his school. Abdalle ponders slightly, “I recall her name, Valeria”. The nurse was Valeria Place, who was brutally murdered by militia on her way to work. Her death caused outrage surrounding the lack of protection for aid workers, leading to the UN and US pulling out of Somalia in 1995.

“I remember all of these bad things, women being raped from the camp, people killed on the nearby streets.”

Abdalle continued his education at a private school. On 13 May 1998, whilst returning from school with his brother, militia began fighting in the street. Lowering his voice, Abdalle tells me this: “One militia was fighting another one, my brother, younger to me, next to me, was hit by the bullet. I was also hit. Some other kids died.” Abdalle was 12, his brother 11. With no ambulances, they were taken to hospital by civilians on the street. Abdalle woke three days later with his right arm amputated, receiving a blood transfusion, and was told his little brother was dead.

Traumatized and in pain, Abdalle lived his teenage years with unparalleled resilience, learning to write with his left hand and deciding to become a journalist. He describes to me how he rented newspapers with his precious lunch money, memorised them, and wrote out his own newspaper at home. This process introduced him to the political corruption in Somalia; and as he grew up, he became disillusioned with his community and angry at its suffering. He felt compelled to act.

In 2003, his mother died in hospital due to poor basic healthcare. As a result, Abdalle moved to Bosaso, in northeastern Somalia. The gruelling trip appeared to be worth it as Abdalle settled and began teaching at a school. Now he was married and a father, but this did not mean he would disappear into domesticity; he started a school newspaper for students and began working for radio stations as a writer.

Abdalle: “That was the year, 2007, when I started writing about politics.”

Ella: “Which you’re not supposed to do?”

Abdalle: “Yes.”

It was in Bosaso that Abdalle had his first of many experiences with Somalia’s severe sup-

pression of free press. His radio station colleague conducted an interview with a local armed group, fighting against the regional security forces in charge who were not happy about this interview. “But we journalists want to just tell the story of both sides”, Abdalle says. His colleague was arrested, sentenced to six years in prison for the interview. Abdalle visited him, and describes the cell...

Abdalle: “40 people were put in a two-metre cell. All of them standing. No space to sit down.”

Ella: “How do they sleep?”

Abdalle: “They don’t sleep.”

Continuing...

“So, I was given five minutes to speak to my Colleague and I interviewed him in those five minutes. And he told me everything... And I put it online.”

Abdalle explains: “There was an order sent from the President of the regional state against me, and he sent armed men to my house”. Abdalle fled his home once again, stopping a passing truck driver, asking, “can you spare my life?”. The driver agreed, and a 12-day journey proceeded to the capital city, where he had grown up. Here, Abdalle increased his journalism efforts, becoming a publication editor and writing for The Guardian and Wall Street Journal. But Somalia does not have free press.

Ella: “So, you’re doing this without the government knowing?”

Abdalle: “You do it without them knowing and you don’t seek permission.”

Ella: “You hope they don’t notice?”

Abdalle: “No, they will find it. But you have to be careful... like a fish in very poisonous water... I’m scared, I’m afraid.”

Ella: “But you still write articles anyway?”

Abdalle: “I do the articles anyway. Because that’s what you know... you are a journalist, your job is to do an article, to write, to speak... Even if that is a risk.”

Abdalle did just that. In September 2014, an American airstrike targeted the outskirts of Mogadishu. Its aim was to kill a top commander of the Al-Shabaab terrorist group in Somalia. Local journalists were terrified about reporting on the incident for Western media, a dangerous affiliation to have under the new federal government. This did not scare Abdalle, who wrote an article for The Guardian. Instantly, he received unknown calls from militant groups saying they were going to kill him, and they meant it. On January 26 2015, when driving home from work, the militia started shooting at his vehicle. The next morning, after escaping death, Abdalle and his family fled to Nairobi, and stayed there for four years.

Nairobi, though veiled in safety, brought its own disguised troubles. As an exiled journalist, from a foreign country, Abdalle struggled to get a work permit, whilst combating prejudice against migrant Muslims attempting to work. Eventually, he registered himself and his family as refugees.

It was also here that Abdalle became an activist for the safety of journalists and developed the idea for a book he would later be a part of, *Hounded: African Journalists in Exile*. The book collates the stories of journalists forced to leave their homelands for their “unrelenting conviction to tell the truth”, and Abdalle’s chapter is ‘Terror and Death in Somalia’, and is available to read as PDF download online.

In 2019, restless for change, Abdalle returned to Somalia. He co-founded the Somali Journalist Syndicate and began training young men and women to become journalists. His efforts eventually angered the government, and in 2021, whilst working in Jowhar, near the capital, he was ambushed in his hotel. The police de-

manded he hand over the names of the journalists he was training. When he refused, he was interrogated for hours. Once released, he wrote about the incident on Facebook.

Abdalle: “In the morning they came back and they said, You put down the article or we will kill you. I said, no, I’m not putting down the article.”

Ella: “Even though it was just the truth?”

Abdalle: “Yes, even though it was just th-

“So, I was given minutes to speak to my Colleague and I interviewed him in that time. And he told me everything... And I put it online.”



truth. I said no and they said we’re going to kill you. I said, do whatever you want. So they took me in a police vehicle and put me in a cell. They said they were going to kill me.”

Ella: “And they are supposed to be the police?”

Abdalle: “They are the police. The police are members of former militia groups.”

Numerous local media outlets had picked up his story and after a day in jail, he was released. However, despite tasting the consequences of speaking out in a freedomless Somalia, Abdalle continued his work for the Somali Journalist Syndicate as Secretary General.

On 10 October 2022, Abdalle conducted a press conference following a new directive from the Ministry of Information - attempting to restrict media freedom as the government fought against terrorists Al Shabaab. Abdalle explains that any media “can be deemed critical of the security forces if you say something bad about the police or the military.”

IMAGE: ABDULLE AHMED MUMIN



“I thought I was going to die. I prepared myself. I prayed, and I remembered my family and said, God save my family”.

”

For example, the military were invading villages and raping women. You are not supposed to cover that. Killing civilians, you are not supposed to cover that... They say “we are fighting a militant group and the only way to win the fight is just to shut the media”.

As the clamp-down on censorship and free press became stronger than ever, Abdalle became a stone in the government boot. Consequently, following the conference, he was arrested at the airport whilst attempting to visit his family in Nairobi. But it was different this time. The cell was underground and extremely hot, other inmates were suffocating around him. Looking me in the eyes, he says,

“I thought I was going to die. I prepared myself. I prayed, and I remembered my family

and said, God save my family if I die here.”

Abdalle was arrested and imprisoned four times in the following six months, beaten violently each time. Whilst detained, he befriended other inmates also unjustly detained, who offered him clothes, food and their stories. He tells me, “as a journalist, my role was not to complain while in detention, but be happy because I got a good story”. The government wanted him to break down, to surrender, and he would not surrender. His eventual release from prison, in March 2023, left him “completely deteriorated”. After much struggle to return to Nairobi, Abdalle is reunited with his family and hospitalised, but begins writing down the stories he had collected. It is here that he applies for The University of York’s Centre of Human Rights’ Research Fellow programme, through

Amnesty International. Arriving on the 5th of May, to my flat.

One thing that struck me whilst Abdalle recounted his life was the goodness and humanity of others also suffering. From the stranger who gave his family money, and the truck driver who helped him flee persecution, to the detainees who, whilst in crisis themselves, offered him help. Despite the evil and pain that punctuates Abdalle’s life, his story also demonstrates how there is hope in the darkest darkness, because where there is humanity, there is a story.

Writer’s note: If you would like to follow Abdalle’s continued efforts to fight for free press and journalists’ rights in Somalia and Africa, follow his X (formerly Twitter) page @Cabdalleaxmed.

MALE GAZE: THEY HAVE 'NOTHING TO LOSE BUT THEIR CHAINS'

ELLEN MORRIS (SHE/HER) EXPLORES THE WESTERN MALE GAZE THROUGH A FEMINIST LENS OF FILM AND LITERATURE



IMAGE: V2OSK

thought about the way we are perceived.

I bathe my skin, layer my eyelashes with charcoal cement, and stain my lips a dusky rose. I wait for my straighteners to heat and glide it through my hair to flick at the ends. My mind drifts into subconscious conversation.

What constitutes ‘beautiful’? Am I doing this for them or me?

Why do the curves of my face and the pigment on my cheeks determine the way I am treated?

I know I did not teach this beauty to myself. Whether you theatrically perform for it, or avoid its gaze - each fulfils some male fantasy. I know of a girl that stopped wearing makeup after reading this quote, but I wonder if this is an act of defiance or submission. Does she think, ‘I refuse to give them what they want’, or does she think, ‘All I can do is hide’. The male gaze is a concept that is painfully hard to set aside once you encounter it, but it is interesting to understand.

Laura Mulvey popularised the idea of the ‘male gaze’ within cinema through her 1973 essay, *Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema*.



IMAGE: ACTUALITTE

Mulvey talks about the ‘determining male gaze project[ing] its fantasy on to the female form’, with the woman being the plot, passively through her appearance. An example of this can

be Naomi Belfort, Margot Robbie’s character in *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013). Whilst it can be argued that her sexual

character displays (Leonardo DiCaprio’s character) Jordan Belfort’s

internal world of lust, sex and drugs, it is clear that Naomi is used as a passive

object of fantasy. What makes this clear is that it was written and directed by straight

men, for the target audience of straight men.

Mulvey points this out by saying that said female characters encompass ‘the combined gaze of the spectator and all the male protagonists in the film.’ All the men present on screen and off screen relish together in her attractiveness. ‘She is isolated, glamorous, on display, sexualised’.

Recently, as I left the cinema after watching

Saltburn (2023), I found myself contemplating the film’s portrayal of sexuality, particularly its focus on the male characters instead of the female ones. Interestingly, *Saltburn* was written, directed and co-produced by a woman, which could explain my next thought. Barry Kheogan’s character, Oliver Quick, and Jacob Elordi’s character, Felix Catton were heavily sexualised, combined with Oliver’s homosexual fantasies of Felix, with some disturbingly graphic scenes - if you know, you (unfortunately) know. Could the increasing embrace of LGBTQ+ inclusivity and the growing influence of Western feminism be reshaping how sexualisation is depicted in cinema? It’s plausible, with mainstream cinema focussing on homosexuality, and meanwhile negating arguments about misogynistic interpretations of female characters.

Nevertheless, in a society deeply rooted in historical male influence, it seems unlikely that men could become the primary targets of objectification. In a quote by Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949), she writes that it is ‘difficult for men to measure the social discrimination against women’, as they enforce patriarchal norms without realising their impact. She says that women, on the other hand, internalise these norms to such an extent that they appear innate. To consider the potential shift in gender roles and expectations would be to consider that the entirety of history can be redefined. The male gaze may be everlasting; women have ‘nothing to lose but their chains’!

BREAKING QUEER WAVES: A RECAP OF THE POLARI PRIZE 2023

ELENA SAVVAS (SHE/THEY) DISCUSSES THE HISTORY, SHORTLIST AND WINNERS OF THE LGBTQ+ BOOK PRIZE

The end of November saw the hotly contested announcement of the winners of this year's Polari book prize. Endless media publications have been writing on who – excuse the pun – is “coming out tops”, but it feels imperative to discuss the other nominees and the history of the award itself. After such a prolific year in the world of queer literature, perhaps this announcement calls for a little more discussion than who took home the perennial trophy.

The award celebrates two winners annually, one for the official Book Prize and the other for the First Book Prize, and has been platforming LGBTQ+ writers since 2011. It is run by the Polari Literary Salon, a collective dedicated to showcasing upcoming UK queer literary talent, and judged by queer writers themselves. It was founded by Paul Burston in 2007, who is known for his writing, journalism, and most notably, his activism. As we have just passed International AIDS Day on 1 December, it is vital



IMAGE: KARGALTSEV, FLICKR

to highlight Paul Burston's involvement with the UK dissection of the ACT UP movement, and his powerful and transformative writing about the epidemic ever since. With the history of the Polari Prize pointing to a writer who was credited by Bernadine Evaristo for their “ruthless honesty and brave emotional vulnerability” in depicting their experience of the crisis as filled with experiences of nihilistic “intoxication and compulsive sex”, one can naturally expect the award to reflect unadulterated, political queer realities in its fictions.

Impressively, a mix of both independent and wholesale publishers made up the shortlists of both categories, including various memoirs alongside poetry collections, historical re-tellings and experimental magic realism. The recurrence of the memoir form is notable: this year's award has broken the record for the highest number of memoirs nominated in Polari history.

The memoir holds such an important space in queer literary history, as autobiographical writing has served to represent the diversity of personal realities that have been neglected in the mainstream. Perhaps this indicates a post-

pandemic desire for first-person narrativity: after getting used to solo existence, who wouldn't feel more inclined toward jumping into somebody else's psyche? Amongst these memoirs there is editor-in-chief of British Vogue Edward Enninful's, *A Visible Man*, which recalls his experiences as a black, working-class, gay man in the elite fashion sphere, and *Love from the Pink Palace* by activist Jill Nader, who is known for inspiring Channel 4's *It's a Sin*. Travis Albanza's exploration of their non-binary identity *None of the Above* was nominated too, marking an important milestone for trans voices in the height of governmental anti-trans law and rhetoric.

Organisers have credited the 2023 shortlist as inhabiting “queer utopias and exquisite prose”. This was reflected in the two writers that took away the final prize. The winner of the Polari Prize went to Julia Armfield's *Our Wives Under the Sea*, the story of a relationship between two women that was transformed by a dive onto a mysterious, gothic underwater vessel, credited for its genre-bending between the sublime and the grotesque, the romantic and the horrific. The winner of the Polari First Book Prize went to Jon Ransom's *The Whale Tattoo*, continuing the bodies of water theme, which details a love story plagued by a sea-spell that comes to emblematises an inherited trauma, resembling that of survivor's guilt.

In both works, the sea washes up all sorts of memories and prophecies. Both writers toy with a sense of pastness, forming a connection with the traumas of the queer past that continue to haunt the everyday, including the aforementioned not-so-distant lives lost at the hands of

AIDS. “Queer utopias” perhaps seems a problematic description here, however it is undeniable that these hauntings exist alongside a look toward a queer future, as both writers (and many others short-listed for the prize) partake

“

Doesn't this oppose the radical collectivity embedded within the word 'queer'?

in space making practises that transform the literary sphere into one that can inhabit the oppressed, the transgressive. Both writers are greatly deserving of their recognition.

However, it still bears importance to question the lack of diversity in this year's listings. Both Armfield and Ransom are white authors, as is the majority of the shortlist. Also, the 2023 list has seen various recurring authors from 2022. This is not to discredit their outstanding achievements, but to pose the question: can we really award first-place prizes in queer literature? Doesn't this oppose the radical collectivity embedded within the word 'queer'? As water flows between fictions and washes up queer genealogies, perhaps we ought to put down our trophies and swim in the chaos?

INTERVIEWING SHREK THE MUSICAL'S NATASHA CAYABYAB

CARA DOHERTY (SHE/HER) INTERVIEWS THE RECENT GRADUATE ABOUT THE MUSICAL THEATRE INDUSTRY

After enjoying the touring production of *Shrek The Musical's* opening night at the Grand Opera House in November, I had the opportunity to interview ensemble member Natasha Cayabyab, a 2023 drama school graduate on the experience of her first professional credit.

How have you been finding *Shrek The Musical*?

“Working on *Shrek* has been so amazing! The show itself is so funny and I absolutely love my track. I have absolutely loved having family and friends seeing the show and finally understanding what I've been training for.”

What was your experience of getting the job?

“*Shrek* is actually my first job out of drama school! I was in my third year, doing Guildford panto, and going through a bit of a messy break-up. Classic post-breakup energy, I started self-submitting for literally everything I was right for on Spotlight – think LinkedIn for actors – when I came across *Shrek*, and was lucky enough to get an audition.

The whole process took less than two weeks. The first round was a dance call, then there was a singing recall on the same day. The

following week I had a singing and acting material call, followed the next day by a dance final, and a final singing and acting call on the Friday. I was offered the job the Monday after!”

What was the turnaround like from graduating to going straight into touring?

“I had one week off between my final performance of *Cry-Baby* and starting rehearsals which was wild! It's been great being in a job in such a competitive industry from the get go, but it was knacker-ing with such a little break. One of the craziest days was graduating in Guildford then driving four hours straight with my family to Plymouth ready to start the tech run for the show the next day, but it was so worth it getting to graduate with all my friends.”

Are you enjoying touring?

“Touring has been one of the craziest experiences, it's so fun. The touring company are all super lovely and we get on like one big family. Being on a weekly touring schedule brings its own challenges, such as sometimes having to travel to your next venue on your day off, and

having to find digs to live in each location which can get a bit tiring, but it's all worth it”

Can you tell me a little about your training?

“I have done ballet since about age five, and then drama classes a few years later. Then started tap and modern around age nine. I first started doing musical theatre properly aged ten at Berkshire Theatre School, who I owe so much to.

When I turned 12 I successfully auditioned for Italia Conti where I went until I was sixteen, then I won a scholarship to ArtsEd Sixth Form. After sixth form I went to study musical theatre at Guildford School of Acting where I graduated from this July with a BA (First Class Honours) in Musical Theatre.”

Have you faced any setbacks? How did you overcome them?

“The main setbacks I've had have been in regards to my physical and mental health. In November 2021 I underwent shoulder surgery to repair my torn anterior capsule which was a huge setback in my second year of drama school but it was definitely the right choice. I have really struggled with bad mental health on and off which has been a huge challenge; in October last year I received a diagnosis of bipolar, but this was positive as I now take the appropriate medication to stabilise my moods and received treatment which had significantly improved my mental state.”

What's next for you?

“After the tour, I'm hoping to join the already announced principal cast for the London stint at the Eventim Apollo in Hammersmith,

London, for the summer season. This industry is super unpredictable so to be honest I have no idea what's next! Hopefully an exciting project comes for September. Although I love working in musical theatre I'd also like to branch out into TV and film, as well as voiceover projects!”

Biggest advice for people looking at getting into the industry?

“My biggest advice for anyone looking to get into the industry is train as much as you can! Also self-tape vocal, acting and dance reels and set up a Spotlight account to post them, then look for agency representation!”

Natasha also kindly encouraged people to get in touch with her via Instagram (@tashacayabyab) if they are interested in specific advice!



IMAGE: BENKIN PHOTOGRAPHY

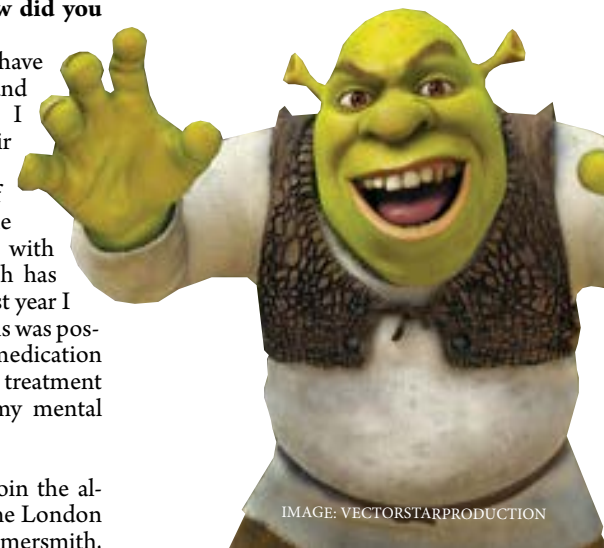


IMAGE: VECTORSTARPRODUCTION

INTERVIEWING A STUDENT POET ABOUT SMALL PRESS PUBLISHING

EMILY STEVENS (SHE/HER) SPOKE WITH KATIE PROCTOR (THEY/THEM) ABOUT THEIR NEW POETRY BOOK

As an English Literature student at the University of York, I am surrounded by people who channel their emotions into creative writing. Many of my lecturers are poets, or simply write in their free time, and the same goes for my fellow students. Recently, I was lucky enough to speak to Katie Proctor (who also studies English) about their new book of poetry *EVERYTHING IS FINE*. The text is rich with emotion and delicate imagery, so the opportunity to discuss Proctor's intentions behind the book was fascinating.

We began our discussion with Proctor's beginnings as a writer. They explained they had always wanted to create books and initially wanted to write novels but felt this was too daunting to tackle as a young teenager. I identified strongly with this experience, as I too have always loved creative writing, but never got past the first few chapters of each 'novel' I insisted I was writing. As a result, I would inevitably become disheartened and think of a new idea for a story. But while I eventually discovered a love for reviews and journalism, Proctor gravitated towards poetry.

Through the internet, Proctor discovered the world of small press publishing. After working on their poetry for a while, they posted on social media, asking around for anywhere that was open for submissions. It was then that they found The Hedgehog Poetry Press, a UK based organisation, which went on to publish their first two works: *Seasons* (2020) and *A Desire for Disaster* (2022). For subsequent publications, Proctor wanted to expand their audience, and so *HELICOPTER HONEY* (2022) and *EVERYTHING IS FINE* (2023) were published

by Alien Buddha Press, which is based in the United States.

After speaking about Proctor's background, I was curious to understand why poetry is their preferred method of expression and asked as much, to which they revealed that when they were younger, they never read poetry. They explained: "I had it in my head that it had to



IMAGE: SUMIT MATHUR

rhyme, and I didn't like it because I thought that that was really restrictive in terms of what you could do with it". Once they realised poetry didn't have to rhyme, they loved the idea of writing whatever they wanted in a short form, as they found it the most natural technique.

After receiving praise at school for one of

their poems, Proctor fell in love with "how free poetry is, more so than other forms, because you can do so much with language". They felt that the flowery language, metaphors, and symbolism typical of their work can often feel clunky or disjointed when written solely in prose. We both agreed that in general, lots of fragments of personal poetry feels much more personal to

the writer than a single fictional novel.

Our discussion then moved onto Proctor's latest work, their poetry anthology *EVERYTHING IS FINE*. Proctor emphasised that they believe good poetry should not be written just to have something to publish; all the poems in the collection were written at different times,

inspired by different experiences, and later collated into the book.

As a result, there were several poems that did not make it into the final edition. I had not considered that poets put an equal amount of effort into organising their anthologies as they put into writing their poems, but Proctor dem-

onstrated that the editing process is hugely significant. In *EVERYTHING IS FINE*, they wanted to create a cyclical structure, which was evident to me upon reading the anthology. The opening poem reflects on an intense, dangerous obsession, but poems at the end of the book illustrate an obsession that is equally intense, but beautiful. Motifs of fixation and shame transform into ideas of love, peace, and certainty, and by the end of the book the reader feels they have experienced a journey of self-discovery with the poet.

Proctor confirmed they would encourage more people to get into small press publishing, as they believe it is a "more accessible way of getting into publishing... it feels more personal, you get a lot of control over what you do".

Small press publishing seems like a great option for poets who are just starting out, as it is much less intimidating and more accessible than traditional publishers, which are incredibly competitive. It can also be a great starting point to test the reception to a writer's work.

Proctor has also connected with other poets and writers through small press publishing, making it a great way to build connections in the industry.

My interview with Katie Proctor was an illuminating discussion about poetry and the small press publishing industry. I would highly recommend *EVERYTHING IS FINE*: it is a uniquely personal anthology about love and self-discovery. I would also encourage more student poets to discover the world of small press publishing.

EVERYTHING IS FINE is available to purchase on Amazon via Alien Buddha Press.

REVIEW: YORK ART GALLERY'S EXCITING NEWEST EXHIBITION

JENNY HALL (SHE/HER) REVIEWS THE EXHIBITION 'DRAWING ATTENTION: EMERGING ARTISTS IN DIALOGUE'

York Art Gallery welcomes a touring exhibition from the British Museum, *Drawing Attention: 'Emerging artists in dialogue'*. With this expansive collection, the gallery unites works by renowned artists including Barbara Hepworth alongside some of today's youngest aspiring artists, striving to make a name for themselves.

On a midweek visit to the gallery, I pretty much had the exhibition to myself. The graphite-coloured walls offered a bold contrast to a range of different textured and coloured artworks, each challenging the limits of 'drawing' further and further. I was surprised to see intricate collages and pastel sketches presented alongside oil paintings, as well as a range of perhaps more traditional media that comes to mind when we think of drawing. But as the exhibition shows us, drawing is really the fundamental process that runs through all artworks, and that is not confined to just pencil on paper. In the first room of the exhibition, I was struck by the relationship between sculptures and drawing. Yorkshire-based artist Sam Metz uses sketching as a key stage for planning their geometric plywood structures, by mapping out their composition, inspired by "deconstructing" the human body. The gallery exhibits *Stone* and *Study for 'Stone'* as key examples. Through this abstraction of the human form, Metz shows that the appearance of disabled bodies can push the boundaries of social norms. Metz draws upon their personal experiences as a disabled and neurodivergent artist and has also described using these drawings as a way of "stimming" (the repetition of movements or sounds, used by autistic or neurodivergent people to

calm and express feelings). They said "drawing gives me a release. The shapes seem to reproduce the movements of my tics well. The line as compulsion, the mark as its evidence". Drawing therefore has impacted not only Metz's artistic process but also their personal life.

The second room centres on untold histories through drawing, and once again the diversity of media mirrored the variety of emotive but somewhat overlooked narratives. On display is Miriam de Burca's *Long forgotten in Oughterard*, from an ink series of forensically studied clumps of earth taken from burial sites of people outcast in 1980s Ireland. This included unmarried mothers and the mentally ill. By focusing on the growth and fragility of plants, she has tried to reconnect with those who were almost forgotten in history.

As does David Haines with his delicate tonal portrait of a sex worker checking his phone for messages from clients. The subtly blended graphite easily gives a sombre tone to the drawing and its small-scale acts as a quiet, voyeuristic snapshot into this man's life. As well as these perspectives, a particular spotlight is given to artists who depict precolonial histories.

In fact, the exhibition hosts a full chapter on Ugonna Holsen, Nigerian born artist who calls upon mythological imagery and the human psyche to explore the richness of a culture shattered by colonialism. Her vast charcoal canvases flow across the central room narrating the spiritual adventure of a young woman as she seeks to connect with her 'chi', a guiding spirit and deity in the Igbo culture of Nigeria. Amongst the wall-to-wall compositions which combine portraits, caves, mountains, and ani-

mals through collage-inspired compositions, there are large tonal studies of shells and seeds. These are displayed next to more traditional still lifes from the 1820s "French School". This juxtaposition highlights how historically, these dialogues have been overlooked in favour of Western art in major art collections, and shows the importance of dedicating a room for Holsen's homage to her Nigerian heritage.

'*Drawing Attention*' concludes with an impressive display of drawings from the "Teenage Art School" which runs every summer and takes place at the gallery. In this room we hear accounts from teenagers who took part in these workshops. It's an inspiring part of the exhibition which encourages visitors to tell their own stories through draw-

ing, without focusing too much on the outcome. There is a multitude of materials available, and easels are set up encircling a still life display, with dried flowers, household objects and various piece of furniture. Taking a few minutes to reflect on what I'd just seen was extremely relaxing and pinning up my own work to join the community of visitors' artwork was a really rewarding feeling.

It's safe to say that visiting this exhibition really challenges your ideas of what a drawing must look like, but it also sheds light on a multitude of stories and alternate histories that have not been remembered in this way before.

The exhibition is open in York until 28 January before moving on to Wolverhampton and Hartlepool.



IMAGE: JENNY HALL

INTRODUCING ALUMNOUSE: WHERE ARE THEY NOW

GRACE BANNISTER (SHE/HER) INTRODUCES ALUMNOUSE AND SHARES HER FIRST INTERVIEW

Firstly, welcome to 'AlumNOUSE': a space designed to promote a more interactive community between our alumni and current students. We hope that 'AlumNOUSE' will allow you to find out what our students get up to post studying at the University of York, and how they got there!

So, our inaugural York alumnus for 'AlumNOUSE' is Ruby Brown, a 23 year old graduate marketing apprentice currently living in York.

I recently spoke with Ruby Brown, who attended the University of York from 2018-2022, completing her undergrad BA(Hons) Politics and International Relations, and her postgraduate in MA Political Theory.

Ruby was in Constantine College, and was involved in *Nouse* as a Deputy Politics Editor

“Really take advantage of the opportunities university provides

and Sub Editor in her third year, as well as writing for *Nouse* during her second year. While Ruby's third year was “entirely remote”, her involvement in student societies and extra-curricular activities including the Politics Society, YUSU's

Women and Non-binary team and her role as a Departmental Community Coordinator for the Politics Department certainly kept her occupied. Ruby's high-level of engagement with university schemes and societies is something she recommends for all students; not only to increase job prospects, but to have an enriched university experience: in her first year she also went to the Higher School of Economics in Russia on a two-week exchange programme through the University which she has described as “a fantastic way to experience a new place, meet new people”.

Having completed her third year during the Covid-19 pandemic, Ruby's internship experience differs from the norm. She completed two remote internships during the Covid-19 pandemic and highly encourages other students to seek out these opportunities. Ruby explained to me that even if you don't enjoy the internship, “it can be just as useful to find out what you don't like”.

There's a lot of pressure at university to have it all figured out, and to have a five, ten, or 15 year plan – but in today's climate and job market it is reassuring to have someone to tell us to not “stress too much about jobs after uni”.

Upon leaving York in 2022, Ruby worked in recruitment for a year, telling me that her experiences in *Nouse* of proof reading, writing, in addition to cross team collaboration gave her important and relevant work experience. After a year in recruitment, Ruby decided to search for a more creative role and industry having particularly enjoyed writing (both academically and for *Nouse*) during her undergrad and MA. It was for these reasons that Ruby was drawn to a career

in marketing. She explained to me about the diverse range of opportunities available within marketing, “something students don't really know about”, with social media marketing only being the tip of the iceberg.

Ruby is enrolled in a year-long graduate marketing apprenticeship, at the end of which she will obtain the Chartered Institute of Marketing qualification.

As a Humanities student myself, hearing about the opportunities post-university for funded qualifications specific to the industry you're interested in was particularly useful. This is something Ruby really wanted me to emphasise to all students: to unlearn misconceptions that apprenticeships are only for school leavers, and to take full advantage of these great opportunities after university studies.

Ruby continues to live in York; we spoke about the allure of the ‘Northern charm’ that is certainly a reason why “people never leave York!” and remain in the city beyond University studies. She also told me about the career opportunities available in York, as well as in places easily commutable from here, including Leeds and Harrogate. It was refreshing to hear someone break free from the ‘moving to London post-graduation’ mould, and to hear about how happy and settled she is in York.

Much of my interview with Ruby was spent reminiscing about her years here at York. We spoke about the lovely campus and the city, as well as the societies available here, which Ruby told me “really made it for [her]”. It truly made me appreciate being a student here, and how quickly our university years pass by.



IMAGE: RUBY BROWN

Ruby for her participation and for being our first 'AlumNOUSE' alum, and to extend my gratitude to the *Nouse* senior team who let me bring 'AlumNOUSE' into fruition. We are excited to continue this project over the coming year and meet more and more of our *Nouse* alumni.

Writer's note: if you want to get involved with 'AlumNOUSE', contact grace.bannister@nouse.co.uk

REVIEWING CELEBRITY ENGAGEMENT IN POLITICS

GRACE BANNISTER (SHE/HER) EXPLORES CELEBRITY INVOLVEMENT IN THE WORLD OF POLITICS

The demands we place on celebrities are forever increasing: from having the perfect body, the best fashion sense, and now having a say in politics. But are we being fair in the heightened expectations that we're placing on our favourite celebs, and should we always listen to what they say?

Perhaps I should start with a confession; as a self-declared “Swiftie”, I often find myself googling her opinions on political and social issues. Recognising my own interest in my favourite celebs' thoughts on every topic under the sun does make me question the wider role of celebrities in current affairs and politics, and to ask not only how important their contribution is, but also why we care?

Pretty much every celebrity from Reese Witherspoon to The Rock has shared their views on the Israel-Gaza conflict. Furthermore, those celebs who have stayed away from offering an opinion on this topic have faced backlash for their silence.

Selena Gomez is one celeb who has remained largely silent on this issue – and it has not gone unnoticed among her fans and the online community. While Gomez's primary occupation is that of a singer, her role as a ‘UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador’ since 2009, in addition to being the third most followed person on Instagram, is seen by

many to demand some kind of response to this crisis. Selena is typically quite vocal in discussing her political and humanitarian views, and has been widely praised for previous campaigns.

She has been active in discussions on mental health, including her recent bipolar diagnosis, as well as on her chronic illness, lupus. Gomez also co-founded the charity ‘Wondermind’ with the aim of “destigmatising and democratising mental health”. As a UNICEF ambassador, she also pledged to advocate for “the world's most vulnerable children”, and has promoted campaigns such as #SahelNOW in which she encouraged her fans to raise money for the Sahel food crisis in 2012.

So why the

relative silence over this war? Given her activism in so many realms, her silence on the crisis confused fans, with many becoming increasingly frustrated at her response. Many felt that she was “downplaying her massive following” and ignoring her ability to raise awareness and funds for Palestinian families. On X (formerly Twitter) @parkwoodfilms asked “if a post can't help change the world, why call yourself a philanthropist?”. People were especially frustrated over her alleged hypocrisy – from posting on issues such as BLM to the Ukraine crisis, why choose to remain silent on this? Others have asked if a celebrity with a following of over 400 million feels helpless, what hope do the rest of us have?

Or is there actually some deeper truth to Selena Gomez's response? Is she right? After all, what good would a post actually do? In reality, probably very little, but what it does highlight is the increasing problem celebrities face when they choose to cherry pick which issues they take a public stand on.

Why is it that we expect a singer or an actor to have opinions on politics, and to promote their opinions online? Particularly when their fame stemmed from something entirely different and unrelated! Doesn't poorly informed celebrity intervention come with the increased risk of misinformation; an issue so often discussed in the realm of social media.

Maybe we need to start closer to home with the pedestal we put celebrities on. Is it reasonable to expect celebrities to express a view on everything, and how realistic are we being if we expect to always agree with them? It feels to me

like it might be time for a reset on both sides of this equation. From the fan perspective, we might need to pull back on our expectation of the ‘always on and always right’ celebrity, but not allow celebs to distance themselves from the real world entirely, and from their side perhaps

“I wish I could change the world. But a post won't. Love, Selena”

a realisation that it can be problematic to ‘pick and choose’ which issues you stand for, and even more so to distance yourself from the real world entirely.

We also cannot ignore that many of these celebrities have outsourced their social media ‘brain’ and faith in, what they hope, is a good enough PR team to tell them what to post – alluding to a disingenuous intention for posting in the first place!

I can't claim to have answered my original question about whether we are being fair in expecting so much of our favourite stars. Maybe Selena was right after all: a post from a celeb, any celeb, won't change the world – but shouldn't they try?



IMAGE: SURENE PALVIE

THE PERFECT 'GILMORE GIRLS' WINTER WARDROBE: A GUIDE

DHUHA USMAN (SHE/HER) SHARES TIPS TO ACHIEVE THE ULTIMATE 'GILMORE GIRLS' INSPIRED WARDROBE THIS SEASON

It wasn't long ago that I started my annual rewatch of *Gilmore Girls* and rediscovered just how much I love the fashion. I have this revelation every year, and I'm sure I'm not the only one. As soon as the clocks go back, it's the universe's sign for a hot tea (or coffee in true *Gilmore Girls* style) and an episode of everyone's favourite cosy programme. The big jumpers, skirts and boots are the pinnacle of autumn-winter fashion. The sheer amount of low rise denim and early noughties trends define *Gilmore Girls*



IMAGE: ANNA KHUMTOVA

and encapsulate everything I look forward to in winter. As the leaves increasingly change, I am seeing lots of people creating their winter wardrobe based on the fashion we see in the show. I see comments on TikTok complimenting people's outfits because they're so '*Gilmore Girls* coded' and the quest to find THE Rory Gilmore jumper is a serious battle for the fashion girls among us. The pair have marked fashion in the later months of the year, it is impossible to scroll Pinterest for autumn-winter outfit inspiration without seeing a plethora of Lorelai and Rory images. From denim mini-skirts and cowboy boots, to the infamous cream cable knit 'Rory

jumper', the iconic duo have you covered once again to see you through to the spring in style.

Whilst I won't go into detail of how deeply infuriating I find Rory Gilmore, she has an impressive jumper collection. Her preppy vibes are an ode to light academia, dark academia's more low-key counterpart. What draws us all to Rory is her notorious oversized, '*Gilmore Girls* in an outfit' jumper. The rolled over neckline, hugely oversized sleeves and mid-thigh length of the jumper are everything dreams are made of. Rory pairs her jumper with a pair of straight leg 90s' style jeans but a black mini skirt would also pair perfectly with some tights and boots. Not only is this classically stylish, it's comfortable and practical for the weather. For those who aren't so into mini skirts, a denim maxi or midi skirt would also work, an ode to the early noughties denim obsession whilst still being in season. Your classic high-top Converse would add a Rory edge to this outfit but as a Lorelai fan (and an even bigger Dolly Parton fan), I think a pair of black cowboy boots would add something special to this outfit. Here me out, there is something about wearing cowboy boots that makes you feel on top of the world, and what is fashion if it doesn't make you happy? This being said, I wouldn't wear cowboy boots to drop my daughter off on her first day at private school (if you know, you know). You could also throw on a pair of mini UGG boots to chime into the nostalgic yet also trendy vibe



IMAGE: BETTERXXTOMORROW

of this year's winter style. Back to the jumper, H&M are currently sporting a few different variations similar to Rory's. They vary from £17.99 to £37.99. This being said, the 2000s fashion of *Gilmore Girls* means that lots of similar fashion can be found second hand, kinder to our student bank accounts and more environmentally friendly. Type in 'oversized cable knit jumper' to the likes of Depop or Vinted to see your Gilmore potential, or have a rummage through the charity shops! You are bound to find this staple jumper at a bargain.

Lorelai's inherent coolness does not stop with her humour and sarcasm, it infiltrates her wardrobe too. Her style is eccentric and varied, from crisp white shirts and sweater vests to baby tees and an impressive jacket collection. When I think of Lorelai, it has to be her amazing 'jeans and a nice top' collection. Starting with Lorelai's more casual tops, her baby and slogan t-shirts are fun and something easy to throw on with jeans or even skirts to make them a bit more dressy. ASOS are sporting a good range of slogan and baby t-shirts, starting as low as £8.50 in the current sales. Now to the more exciting part, Lorelai's multitude of what I would describe as 'cute tops', a collection I am insanely jealous of. Lots of these tops have a vintage nightwear feel to them, you could try looking in these departments or as I've mentioned, have a good rummage through the charity shops. The Y2K mood of Lorelai's tops are guaranteed to

be in the bargain baskets or on second-hand online shops. Pairing any of these tops with a warm scarf, an effortless black leather jacket or blazer and a bouncy blowdry (or a quick updo with a claw clip or headband for that 'I've just run out the door to grab a coffee from Luke's in my perfect small town' charm) and you will be mirroring Lorelai with endless amounts of style and class.

All in all, the Gilmores' autumn and winter fashion is all about being cosy, classy and comfortable. They wear staple pieces and style them in a way that suits their personalities. I am sure you have many pieces similar to Rory and Lorelai sitting in your wardrobe already, the Y2K trends at the minute bode quite well to taking inspiration from the pair's fashion. Ultimately, have a bit of fun with your winter fashion, if *Gilmore Girls* shows us anything, it's that there is no such thing as a boring jumper.



IMAGE: DVDSET COLLECTIONSALE

IT'S DAYLIGHT ROBBERY: FAST FASHION'S DESIGNER CRIMES

HEATHER GOSLING (SHE/HER) WRITES HOW FAST FASHION BRANDS STEAL DESIGNS FROM INDEPENDENT DESIGNERS

It is no secret that fast fashion designers such as SHEIN have stolen designs from independent designers, and they have been doing so for years with no compensation or credit. The blatant nature of this theft is remarkable, with so many designers posting side by side photos of their design and SHEIN's identical rip off: this is daylight robbery. Instances of this go back as far as 2013, so why is it that big brands such as ASOS and SHEIN continue to profit from stolen designs?

SHEIN was founded in 2008 in China and sells clothing for ultra-low prices. The company has come under fire from climate change campaigners for their unsustainable practices. They have also faced controversy over labour practices with workers being paid as little as four cents per item produced.

Fast fashion has escalated in recent years. With new trends every week, and roughly 10,000 new items added to SHEIN's website every day, it is impossible to keep up with the flurry of new clothing SHEIN and other fast fashion brands pump out. But how do they manage to create these new designs at such a fast pace? The answer? By stealing from other designers. It's not just small, indie designers

that are the victims either.

In 2018, Levi Strauss accused SHEIN of copying its trademarked stitching pattern and filed a lawsuit that was settled. In a rare instance of fast fashion companies fighting against each other, H&M also sued SHEIN earlier this year for stealing its designs.

For the big players of the fashion world, the stealing of designs does not threaten their place in the industry. The power and wealth these companies hold allows them to easily settle the issues that arise. It is not the same story for independent designers. However, the amount of time (and more importantly, money) that it takes to file a lawsuit against a huge company like SHEIN, is a resource that many independent designers do not have. For example, California-based knitwear designer, Bailey Prado, had 45 of her crochet designs stolen by SHEIN last year. Prado called out SHEIN in an Instagram post, showing side by side photos of her design and SHEIN's plagiarism. Her caption reads: "The way SHEIN copied my whole life...". The pieces that SHEIN had copied, which sell on Bailey Prado's website for \$95 - \$300, were listed on their website for \$20 or less. You would be correct in thinking that this is a suspiciously low price, because it is. The low price of fast fashion items reflects both its low quality and the ultra low wages of its workers.

SHEIN has since removed some of the listings, but only the pieces that gained the most attention on social media, which is far from a real resolution. This response shows the lack of care fast fashion companies have for the people who design clothes; the time, effort and dedi-

cation that is put in only for their design to be ripped off by a fast fashion brand and sold at a lower price. Bailey Prado has previously stated that she has received legal advice about the matter, but was discouraged by "stories about large companies just burying smaller brands in legal fees and paperwork". A similar case happened to French fashion label MaisonCléo in 2019 when SHEIN copied some of their designs including its "Angèle" white off-the-shoulder blouse. Marie Dewet, founder of the label, stated that she was "not surprised unfortunately, as it's the way fast-fashion brands operate". Dewet reached out to SHEIN, but only received a response after fashion watchdog Diet Prada posted about the issue on Instagram. Only then did SHEIN reach out to the label offering a collaboration: "You make the designs, we make the clothes", but Dewet refused to respond, stating that she would never work for a fast fashion company.

Whilst SHEIN has gained the most attention for stealing designs, it isn't just SHEIN that is to blame. Many fast fashion companies use the same process of using social media to gain "inspiration" for designs. In 2020, ASOS was accused of ripping off an independent jewellery brand Studio Cult's 'Flame earrings'. Studio Cult's earrings were made from stainless steel and were marked at £40 on their website, whereas the ASOS copies were made of inferior materials of 90 percent zinc at just £8.

Fast fashion companies seem obsessed with gaining profit from stealing trendy designs and making them cheaper by cutting workers wages and making items from cheaper materials.



IMAGE: RIO LECATOMPESSY

But the issue is, it works. SHEIN is a multi-million dollar company for a reason, and our mindset as consumers needs to change. The constant change of trends on social media creates the perfect environment for fast fashion companies to flourish. If we are constantly looking for the next trend, then we become obsessed with wanting more and more clothes at cheaper and cheaper prices. If SHEIN can steal intellectual property from artists and designers and still continue as a company, what does that mean for the fashion industry?

As consumers, are we going to allow this to happen? SHEIN exists as a company only because there is a demand for inexpensive fast fashion, and whilst slow fashion can be inaccessible to many people due to its cost, the damage that SHEIN is doing needs to stop before it is too late.



IMAGE: LINE KNIPST

“THOSE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS”

Here we capture the ‘Christmas Lights’ of York’s Christmas Market.



“Up above candles on air flicker
Oh, they flicker and they flow
And I’m up here holding onto
All those chandeliers of hope”



Lyrics from ‘Christmas Lights’, by Coldplay



“Those Christmas lights
Light up the street
Down where the sea and city meet
May all your troubles soon be gone
Oh, Christmas lights keep shining on”



PHOTOGRAPHY: EMILY KIRK (SHE/HER), DAISY REECE (SHE/HER)

SPOTIFY WRAPPED (MUSE'S VERSION)



Reuben Virk's Top Song: **SZA – 'Low'**
An R&B, trap infused track that made the soundtrack of my 2023, playing it 461 times this year!

IMAGE: ERIN CAZES



Niamh Kitson's Top Song: **Ocean Alley – 'Deepest Darkness'**
I've really enjoyed listening to Australian music this year and this a favourite!

IMAGE: BRUCE BAKER



Alexandra Pullen's Top Song: **Taylor Swift – 'Maroon'**
I knew that my top five were going to be taken up by Taylor Swift but I was surprised that this came out on top!

IMAGE: PAOLO V

**TO LISTEN TO OUR WINTER 2023
PLAYLIST CHECK OUT THE MUSE
SPOTIFY:**



KEY NOMINATIONS:

Album of the Year:

World Music Radio, Jon Batiste
The Record, boygenius
Endless Summer Vacation, Miley Cyrus
Did You Know That There's a Tunnel Under Ocean Blvd, Lana Del Rey
The Age of Pleasure, Janelle Monáe
GUTS, Olivia Rodrigo
Midnights, Taylor Swift
SOS, SZA

Song of the Year:

'A&W' – Lana Del Rey.
'Anti-Hero' – Taylor Swift.
'Butterfly' – Jon Batiste.
'Dance the Night' – Dua Lipa.
'Flowers' – Miley Cyrus.
'Kill Bill' – SZA.
'Vampire' – Olivia Rodrigo.
'What Was I Made For?' – Billie Eilish-O'Connell.

Best New Artist:

Gracie Abrams, Fred again..., Ice Spice, Jelly Roll, Coco Jones, Noah Kahan, Victoria Monét, The War and Treaty.

GENRE SPOTLIGHT: ELECTRONIC DANCE MUSIC

NIAMH KITSON (SHE/HER) DISCUSSES EDM'S CONTINUING POPULARITY IN 2023

After Fred again... and Nia Archives secured 2nd and 3rd place respectively on the Radio 1 Sound of 2023 at the end of last year, it was clear that the trend of increased popularity for a whole range of EDM genres in the UK would continue into 2023.

Certainly, both Fred Again... and Nia Archives have surged in popularity. 30-year-old Fred Gibson has been gaining momentum for some time, writing and producing for a whole range of artists, including Ed Sheeran and Stormzy. However, it was his viral July 2022 Boiler Room set which catapulted him to success as an artist in his own right. Impressively, this year he has achieved feats such as closing Coachella 2023 with Skrillex and Fourtet – two mega DJs who he has worked closely with this year – and he has earned nominations for four awards at the 66th Annual Grammy Awards as well. Closer to home, he has recently been announced as a

headliner for Reading and Leeds Festival 2024.

Jungle icon Nia Archives' sell out show on 8 December at The Warehouse Project epitomised all that has been successful in the UK's EDM scene this year. The Warehouse Project ranked ninth in DJ Mag's Top 100 clubs of 2023 and was not the only UK venue to secure a place in the top ten, with Printworks London taking second place. Clearly there is a massive audience of people who want to be able to watch their favourite DJs live, as shown by the success of these two venues as well as the continuing success of festivals such as Boomtown Fair and Creamfields (which has already sold out for August bank holiday weekend 2024).

With most people having access to music streaming services, EDM is more accessible to listeners as well as aspiring DJs and producers now more than ever. Bath-born PinkPantheress has utilised TikTok to rise to fame, combining

different EDM genres such as drum and bass, jungle and UK garage, but also bedroom pop and hyper pop. In November, she released her debut studio album, *Heaven Knows*, featuring 'Boys a Liar Pt.2' with American rapper Ice Spice.

Her global success demonstrates how UK EDM is not only popular here now, but all around the world. Similarly, other British producers and DJs have also grown their audience through TikTok. Sammy Virji shared a video of his performance featuring a UK garage dub of Unkown T's 'Goodums'. Since its upload in

September, the video has received over a million views.

It would be impossible to talk about EDM and, in particular, drum and bass music this year without mentioning the mega-single 'Baddadan',



2023 firmly reinforced why the UK is still the home of drum and bass

by pioneers of the genre Chase and Status and popular producer Bou, alongside a collection of vocalists and rappers. Peaking at number five in the charts, the mainstream success of this single exemplifies drum and bass' appeal to a larger audience this year. It has also been a staple in DJ sets since its release in August, emphasised by the TikTok trend of people counting how many times they heard 'Baddadan' played over the weekend during festival season. Despite now being a successful genre around the world, 2023 firmly reinforced why the UK is still the home of drum and bass.

It is undeniable that the Covid-19 pandemic reinforced how important dancing and EDM is, especially in the UK as the birthplace of different EDM sub-genres. With producers and DJs being able to advertise their music and events and reach larger audiences through social media, this trend of increasing popularity for EDM is sure to continue into 2024 and beyond.

THE 2024 ANNUAL GRAMMY AWARDS

THE MUSIC TEAM WEIGH IN ON THREE OF THE MAIN CATEGORIES OF THE AWARDS AND GIVE THEIR PREDICTIONS ON THE POSSIBLE WINNERS OF THE 2024 GRAMMYS

Album of the Year:

The prestigious Album of the Year award at the 2024 Grammys has six albums from female artists out of the eight albums in total. This year in music has seen female artists from a variety of genres working hard on their passion projects. This has seen the succinct, often concept-driven albums that are accurately representative of their desired sounds, from the "feminine rock" of Olivia Rodrigo's *GUTS*, to the Afrobeat and reggae-driven influences in Janelle Monáe's songs in *The Age of Pleasure*. It is commendable that the Grammys has given a diverse range of genres a fighting chance at receiving this accolade, with boygenius' indie rock album, to the R&B and soul-driven albums from SZA and Jon Batiste. It could be a record-breaking fourth Album of the Year win for fan-favourite Taylor Swift, or even a first Grammy win altogether for Lana Del Rey or Miley Cyrus. Here are the *Muse Music Team's* predictions for the Grammys' Album of the Year winner, 2024:

Reuben Virk: *SOS*, SZA
Niamh Kitson: *Midnights*, Taylor Swift
Alexandra Pullen: *The Record*, boygenius

Song of the Year:

Following the consistent trend of the Grammys' nomina-

tions, the songs listed for Song of the Year are mostly taken from the albums nominated for Album of the Year, with the exception of 'Dance the Night' and 'What Was I Made For?', both taken from the *Barbie* soundtrack. While the 54th Grammy guidelines suggest that the award is presented "without regard to album sales or chart position", it is interesting to consider whether the songs selected are the most representative of the respective artists' sound, or whether they are just the most commercially prominent single. Crucially, the award goes to the songwriter, compared to Record of the Year which goes to the recording team. Notably, Jack Antonoff has a writing credit on both 'Anti-Hero' and 'A&W', distinguishing

him as the most nominated songwriter in this category. Here are the *Muse Music Team's* predictions for the Grammys' Song of the Year winner, 2024:

Reuben Virk: 'What Was I Made For?', Billie Eilish
Niamh Kitson: 'What Was I Made For?', Billie Eilish
Alexandra Pullen: 'Anti-Hero', Taylor Swift
Best New

Artist:

Having first been presented at the second Grammy Awards in 1960, some previous winners of Best New Artist include The Beatles, Amy Winehouse and Megan Thee Stallion. Even the list of past nominees boasts big names such as Phoebe Bridgers and Led Zeppelin.

The criteria for the category states that nominees must be "a new artist who releases... the first recording which establishes the public identity of that artist". This year though, we see a recognition of some musicians who have been in the industry for years. Out of this list, it's interesting that only Gracie Abrams and Ice Spice have actually come to prominence in the past year, whereas the likes of Coco Jones and Fred again... have been making music for a long time.

It is also notable that the category covers a wide variety of genres, from indie folk with Noah Kahan to country and gospel with The War and Treaty. Even without winning the award, these artists are bound to influence the music world with the nomination alone.

Our predictions:
Reuben Virk: Victoria Monét
Niamh Kitson: Fred Again...
Alexandra Pullen: Ice Spice

Keep an eye out for our upcoming Grammys series on the *Nouse* website, where we will delve deeper into uncovering the history of the Grammys, each category that was up for nominations, and finally our thoughts on the eventual winners of the 66th Annual Grammy Awards.



IMAGE: NUTMEG66

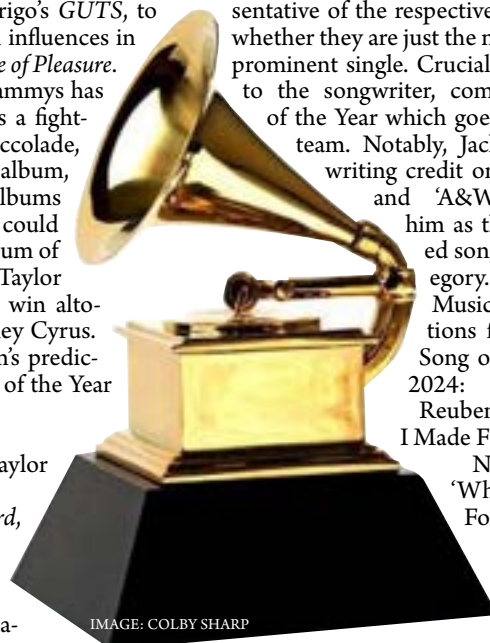


IMAGE: COLBY SHARP



IMAGE: TIFFANY KOMON

MUSE ARTIST SPOTLIGHT: SZA

REUBEN VIRK ON THE INFLUENCES OF SZA'S DISCOGRAPHY AND TOUR ON THE MUSIC INDUSTRY IN 2023

Nine-time Grammy nominated singer-songwriter Solána Rowe (or SZA) has both dominated and developed the music industry in 2023, and for this reason we are awarding her *Muse Music's* Artist of the Year.

With the release of her second album *SOS* on 8 December 2022, her 22 song record carried effortlessly into 2023. Her album remained at the top of the charts for ten non-consecutive weeks, the longest-running number one female album of the decade. The 34-year-old artist has truly made her mark with this album, by flawlessly developing her sound without losing her individual essence in the process.

Over the course of this year, SZA has not limited herself to her own projects. In the midst of her own album rollout, with four music videos and a year long world tour, SZA has collaborated with the likes of Drake, Justin Bieber, Lizzo, Doja Cat, Travis Scott, and Future. This definitively assured that her name would not be forgotten in the midst of the countless other extreme talents of this year in music. Her consistency and commitment to gifting her fans with her one-of-a-kind soulful, bluesy tone and irreplaceable energy has made her a hugely successful artist this year, and rightfully deserving of nine Grammy nominations.

The impact SZA has had on music and the

“I feel like that ‘girl next door’ energy, we don’t get to see in black music”

”

way genre-related content is stylised also cannot be ignored. Her openness to discovering and experimenting with other genres of music have allowed her to blend her sounds into a sonically cohesive yet equally diverse album with a strong theme and aesthetic to go along with it. In an interview with *Billboard*, she voiced her opinion that: “I feel like that ‘girl next door’ energy, we don’t get to see in black music”.

SZA chose to surpass these sonic stereotypes and offer herself every opportunity to create the sound that she felt expressed her vision most accurately.

Her sound on this album ranged from clas-

sically R&B songs such as ‘Love Language’ and ‘Snooze’, to a more acoustic, ballad-inspired concept with ‘Blind’, ‘Nobody Gets Me’ and ‘Special’, and even some 2000s inspired rap melodies in ‘SOS’, ‘Smoking on my Ex Pack’ and ‘Forgiveless’.

Her features on tracks this year have also seen her experiment in classic pop, such as ‘Special’ with Lizzo. With the rise of dance, house and drum and bass music this year, her song with Drake and Sexyy Red, ‘Rich Baby Daddy’ really blends these three genres together for a liquid, high energy dance song that immediately became commercialised on TikTok, like her other tracks ‘Kill Bill’ and ‘I Hate U’. One of the most notable tracks from her album that fans will perhaps identify as a stand out, portraying a hugely different sound for SZA, is ‘F2F’. This song throws the artist into the pop-rock generic sphere, a genre that SZA felt had been denied, or under-represented in black music, having been unintentionally caged into the stereotypical Rap or R&B genres. The grunge rock chords, produced by Scott Bisel and Carter Lang, develop underneath a self-confessional SZA discussing her toxic behaviour in searching for satisfaction from a rebound post-breakup are reminiscent of late 90s and early 2000s rock, critics drawing comparisons to Avril Lavigne and Paramore.

Despite the expansive range of genres SZA has experimented with this year, her album, aesthetic and tour experience seem so specifically curated and structured intelligently around a nautical theme, with the album cover of SZA on a diving board over the open ocean. I was extremely lucky to attend her tour in person in Manchester in June, an incredible concert to say the least. Her performance was simultaneously extremely relaxed, yet also had the audience out of their seats for the entirety of her set. Her stage presence was comforting and showcased her plethora of performance talent as she performed many songs from *SOS*, and fans were overjoyed to see the inclusion of songs from her wildly popular debut album *CTRL*, released in 2017.

A highlight for me was her surprise performance of ‘Normal Girl’, a song that she began to perform in her UK shows due to its high demand. As the first venue to experience this song on the tour, the audience reaction filled the building with admiration and excitement.

It is safe to say that SZA is in fact far from a ‘Normal Girl’, being the most Grammy-nominated artist for the 2024 Grammys, and her exceptional talent, as performer, singer, songwriter and producer taking 2023 by storm and making her fans, her label, and hopefully herself, proud.

REMEMBERING CHRISTINE MCVIE: ONE YEAR LATER

ALEXANDRA PULLEN (SHE/HER) REFLECTS UPON THE LIFE AND LEGACY OF LEGEND CHRISTINE MCVIE

When I heard the news about the passing of Christine McVie, I was devastated. I had always admired her as a musician and since the age of 12 had wanted to see Fleetwood Mac live, but knew this would not be possible without her. McVie’s fellow band member, Stevie Nicks, confirmed this: “When she died, I figured we can’t really go any further with this. There’s no reason to.” But, one year on it is crucial that we remember the legacy of the ‘Songbird’, and how she truly was the glue that kept the band together during all of their turmoil.

Christine McVie passed on 30 November 2022 following what was said to be “a short illness”, and was later confirmed to be an “ischemic stroke”. While she is mostly recognised for her role in Fleetwood Mac, singing and writing some of their biggest hits such as ‘Little Lies’, ‘Everywhere’ and ‘Don’t Stop’, her musical career started long before joining the band.

Born Christine Perfect, she first entered the musical world very early on as her father was a music teacher and violinist. It was during her time at the Moseley School of Art in Birmingham, after meeting Stan Webb and Andy Silverster, that she really got involved in it. Some years later, she joined their blues band named Chicken Shack and featured on vocals on their hit cover of ‘I’d Rather Go Blind’ by Etta James. However, after marrying Fleetwood Mac’s bassist John McVie in 1969, Christine left Chicken Shack, and shortly after was invited to replace Peter Green as pianist for her husband’s band.

She first worked with them fully on their 1971 album *Future Games*, then moved to California with John and Mick Fleetwood three years later, which led to Stevie and Lindsey Buckingham joining the band. This is where things started to take off for Fleetwood Mac, and it’s safe to say that Christine and Stevie were the perfect duo of female voices from the very beginning. The two were inseparable; speaking to *Vulture* after Christine’s death, Stevie said “Christine was my best friend. When I think about Taylor Swift’s song ‘You’re on Your Own, Kid’ and the line ‘you always have been’, it was like, that was Christine and I. We were on our own in that band. We always were. We

protected each other.”

The release of the first album featuring the new lineup, Fleetwood Mac, made Christine’s songs ‘Over My Head’ and ‘Say You Love Me’ big hits, and it only went up from there. Within the next decade, the band released their most well-known album *Rumours* which included her slow ballad ‘Songbird’, followed by *Tusk* and *Mirage* then in 1987, *Tango in the Night*. While the former two are more Buckingham-Nicks dominated, Christine still contributed greatly to the writing of the albums. However, it is *Tango in the Night* where she really stands out, with lead vocals on several songs and writing credits on even more.

Arguably, when we think of Fleetwood Mac we instantly think of the drama: the drugs, the lawsuits, the affairs, and Christine was certainly a part of this. Before the release *Rumours*, she had an affair with the band’s lighting director which was the inspiration behind her song ‘You Make Loving Fun’. By the end of the tour for this album, she and John had divorced.

Throughout all of the chaos, Christine stuck with the band, even in the ‘90s when Stevie had left and many members were working on solo projects. By 1997, Fleetwood Mac were back on tour and inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame but the next year Christine left due to a phobia of flying. She spent the next couple of decades focusing on her personal life and solo music but still maintained musical links with Mick Fleetwood and Lindsey Buckingham. Then, 2017 saw the moment everyone had been waiting for, the announcement of a tour with the most successful lineup of the band (Christine, Stevie, Mick, Lindsey and John). Unfortunately, some disagreements meant that Lindsey was replaced by guitarist Mike Campbell.

Five years later, her death shook the world of music, but it is clear that she leaves a powerful and unforgettable legacy behind her. She helped make Fleetwood Mac one of the most successful bands in the world, and her songs are some of the most recognisable. Christine will be remembered by fans as Fleetwood Mac’s ‘Songbird’, but by her bandmates as “the best musician anyone could have in their band and the best friend anyone could have in their life.”



IMAGE: RAPH_PH

FOLLOW OUR INSTAGRAM: @YORKMUSEMUSIC

OUR EDITORS RECOMMEND:

THE BEST SHORT FILMS SHOWN AT AESTHETICA

THE TALENT

An underappreciated assistant takes the opportunity to stand out on the set of a high-end car advertisement. Directed by Thomas May Bailey.



IMAGE: IMDB

NAI NAI & WAI PO

Sean Wang follows his two grandmothers' lives as they humorously navigate the days and nights of their final years.



IMAGE: IMDB

LETTER TO A PIG

A Holocaust survivor reads a letter in a school class that he wrote to the pig that saved his life in the short film directed by Tal Kantor.



IMAGE: IMDB

SPOOKY BASTARD

A couple finds themselves in a horror movie but just wants to go back to sleep in Michael and Rafe Bird's comedy.



IMAGE: IMDB

VOICE ACTIVATED

In Steve Anthopoulos' short film, a stammering florist must work with a voice-activated car while travelling to a crucial delivery.



IMAGE: IMDB

AESTHETICA SHORT FILM FESTIVAL ROUND-UP

VANESSA ROMERO AND CHARLIE CRAVEN RECAP YORK'S WORLD-RE-OWNED, MONTH LONG FILM FESTIVAL, BOTH ONLINE AND IN PERSON

The 13th edition of York's very own Aesthetica Short Film Festival took place from 8-12 November in-person and continued until 30 November online. The BAFTA-Qualifying festival was established in 2010 and has since grown to be one of the biggest and most prestigious film festivals in the UK. The *Muse* Film and TV team were there reporting in person, immersing ourselves in this year's expansive programme.

We started our Aesthetica experience on Wednesday morning, catching some of the very first screenings at City Screen Picturehouse and getting a taste of some of the over 300 films from across the world that have been shown at this year's festival. After overcoming minor technical problems, we saw our first short films in the comedy category under the heading 'Take Control'. Our first foray into the wonders of Aesthetica included six stories navigating the overpowering pulls of life and the fashioning of power within one's world. These stories comprised comedic deliberations on cancel culture, fair play within the workforce and a man whose hearing is delayed, which causes him to be out of sync with his environment. It quickly became evident that this year's line-up was fresh and diverse.

After this initial screening, we saw films spanning around a dozen genres in some of York's most iconic venues. Among them was a poignant performance from Golden Globe nominee Emma D'Arcy in *The Talent*, directed by Thomas May Bailey, thematizing the hunger for meaning, validation, and fame. The film follows unnoticed assistant Tommy (D'Arcy), who takes advantage of his opportunity to be noticed on the set of a car advertisement and lets his delusions get the better of him. This depicted a sense of having a big break in the film industry, which especially struck a chord with the audience, as it was made up of film enthusiasts and creators alike. Who in that crowd hasn't imagined being on a talk show discussing their meteoric rise in the film industry?

In general, the festival takes you into the world of filmmaking, producing, and distributing. In many cases, the people who made the films attended their screenings. There is something extremely magical about having a director, or the subject of a documentary, sit in the audience. It is as if, for a moment, you are let in on the secret and become a spectator, part of the enchanting world of filmmaking. Besides these screenings, hearing from people working in the industry proved to be one of the highlights. Pitching sessions were also available for attendees. These opportunities allowed you to submit your short film and learn from seasoned professionals, help-

ing to inspire and put small filmmakers on the map.

For instance, we attended a talk at the Yorkshire Museum with Will Becher, a senior narrative designer at the award-winning British animation studio Aardman, responsible for cult classics like *Wallace and Gromit*, *Shaun the Sheep*, and *Chicken Run*. We were taken behind the scenes of the stop-motion films with figures made from clay and plasticine, and told how the iconic characters were developed. Becher reveals that *Gromit* was originally conceived as a cat but that a dog was easier to produce, and therefore, his species was changed. Aardman, famous for its clay animation, recently made headlines as their modelling clay supplier shut down, causing rumours that they may not be able to produce new films. However, Becher assures us that they are in search of new materials and have enough clay to cover the new *Wallace and Gromit* film, releasing in 2024.

Another highlight at this year's festival was the VR and Immersive Experiences Lab, situated in the basement of City Screen. It featured 20 intriguing projects, including multiple 360-degree films, which immersed visitors in new worlds. Aesthetica is committed to bringing new technologies to people and does not shy away from novel ideas. Consequently, this was the inaugural year of the Games Lab, which was located at Spark: York. Aesthetica is the UK's first film festival to include games in its public programme. The Games Lab was established in collaboration with York-based research group *investigate.games* and visual effects studio *Viridian FX*, which was part of the visual effects team on HBO's *House of the Dragon*. This brand-new feature of Aesthetica was established due to the increasing importance of game culture and design in filmmaking. With its 40 selected games, attendees were invited to experience a new genre of immersive adventure and storytelling.

The festival's virtual events were equally interesting, and made the whole experience very accessible. As we attended Aesthetica during term time and could not attend physi-



IMAGE: JAMES PAYNE

cally every single day, we made use of this online content accordingly. Although not every single film was available immediately, the website was soon stacked with content. Not only could we access all the films that were screened, but we could watch the recorded talks with industry professionals. This enabled us to consume as much content as possible, even from the comfort of our own homes.

Just like that, we had reached the closing awards ceremony, the last event of the festival's extensive schedule. Every major genre and format present had a respective award, from comedy short films to advertising and music videos to VR. Hosted in the Yorkshire Museum, the ceremony was a prestigious affair with festival director, Cherie Federico, in attendance to deliver a speech on Aesthetica's impact.

Big successes of the night included *Safe*, Debbie Howard's drama on harassment which won her both Best Director and Best Screenplay. Her acceptance speech was impassioned, lamenting how the events of her film have been unfortunately resonant for women globally. The Royal National Institute for Blind People's latest campaign won the Best Advertising Award, and the artistic process was deconstructed by *An Ode to Procrastination*, winning Best Fashion. *The Golden West* did equally well with Tom Berkeley and Ross White's short film, winning both Best Drama and Best of the Festival. The level of storytelling, craft and passion on display was truly exceptional, with both those familiar and new to the festival being recognised for their outstanding work. The ceremony itself closed with a beautiful testament to the festival, with all nominees and filmmakers behind the varied programme standing together for a photograph.

Yet the night was far from over, as a complimentary drinks reception was held at the Yorkshire Museum. Amongst historical artefacts from bygone eras, a new generation of artists stood – a juxtaposition highlighting the festival's support of cutting-edge storytelling methods. The atmosphere was undoubtedly warm, a welcome respite from the cold November weather outside. But most importantly, the event served to bring like-minded creatives together, providing a fitting end to a festival celebrating audiovisual art in all its forms, old and new.

Writers' note: our unlimited passes were provided by Aesthetica Short Film Festival.



IMAGE: CHARLIE CRAVEN

REVIEW: MARTIN SCORSESE'S 'KILLERS OF THE FLOWER MOON'

JAMES LAPPING (HE/HIM) DECONSTRUCTS INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION IN SCORSESE'S LATEST EPIC

CONTENT WARNING: This article discusses racism toward indigenous people, violence and sexual assault.

Man: "Well, that was good!"
 Woman: "It was horrible. It just makes you so ashamed to be white."

This was the brief interaction I overheard when the final credits for *Killers of the Flower Moon* (*KOTFM*) rolled on opening night. No doubt, this was the exact reaction that Martin Scorsese wished to evoke from his audiences. Based on true events, *KOTFM* recounts the serial murders of members of the Osage Nation. What was the motive? Oil money.

These brutal and calculated murders, known as the Reign of Terror, occurred just one hundred years ago. Shortly before they started, citizens of the Osage Nation became the wealthiest on the continent due to the oil deposits discovered under their territory. They were granted headrights, allowing individuals to profit from the oil. Word soon spread, and the murders commenced.

Based on David Grann's 2017 book, *Killers of the Flower Moon: The Osage Murders and the Birth of the FBI*, Scorsese recognised the cruelty and injustice faced by the Osage Nation. Opting to shed light on this shameful history, Scorsese recruited two longtime collaborators – Robert DeNiro and Leonardo DiCaprio – guaranteeing *KOTFM* an instant mainstream audience.

Although it reaches three hours and 26 mins in length, *KOTFM* grips you for its entirety. The Osage members dancing and the oil raining down on them is truly mesmerising. Complimenting the stunning mise-en-scene is

the enthralling original soundtrack by the late Robbie Robertson, another longtime Scorsese collaborator. Robertson, whose mother was Cayuga and Mohawk, captured the mood of the 1920s with his blues-heavy soundtrack that included contributions from Osage singers and musicians. Naturally, the harrowing performances of the main perpetrators, by DeNiro and DiCaprio, steal the show. *KOTFM* also introduces Lily Gladstone to her first major role in a Hollywood feature. Playing the resilient Mollie Burkhart, and in strong contention for an Oscar, there is no doubt that we will see more of her in years to come.

Despite the obvious highlights, *KOTFM* is far from perfect. Throughout cinematic history, Native Americans have lived in the collective imagination of what is known as the "Hollywood comfort zone". These tend to be Westerns that focus on the westward expansion of the United States in the 19th century, and generally historicise, victimise, and dehumanise Indigenous communities. Although set slightly out of this traditional "comfort zone", *KOTFM* still adheres to tropes from this period of cinema, portraying the array of Hollywood Indian stereotypes – the alcoholic, the sexually promiscuous woman, and referring to them as "s*vages" in a racist manner. Until the FBI enters the narrative, the Osage are shown to be helpless to the plight of white wickedness.

Another arguably tiresome cinematic cliché is explicit violence against Indigenous women. Although the film recounts the stories of men who were murdered during the Reign of Terror, the victims were predominantly women,

and *KOTFM* displays some of these in unnecessarily graphic detail to the point of gratuity. Furthermore, despite equal billing, Gladstone's screen time is surprisingly limited and seems to be a supporting role compared to the presence of DeNiro and DiCaprio, which is entirely different from the book.

Given the film's length, it is shocking how rushed the ending feels. Arguably, it is a poignant attempt by Scorsese to show his fallibility as a white man making a film about Indigenous issues. If this is so, why did he bother making it at all? Why didn't he hand the project to a Native director? The final scenes merely rounds up the true story – who goes to jail, who doesn't; who survives, who doesn't. *KOTFM* misses an opportunity to address how the Reign of Terror continues to impact the Osage Nation. Settler families still have Osage land and headrights, descendants of the murdered Osage fight legal battles for the return of land and headrights, and injustices against Indigenous communities – not just the Osage – continue to this day. If you are interested in ongoing contemporary issues involving Osage headrights after the events portrayed in *KOTFM*, I recommend the podcast *In Trust* by Rachel Adams-Heard.

The Reign of Terror isn't the

only dark moment in the United States settler colonial legacy. If you haven't heard about the American Indian residential schools, watching Jeff Barnaby's directorial debut, *Rhymes for Young Ghouls* or listen to IllumiNative's podcast, *American Genocide* are a good place to start. If you would prefer to consume something more vibrant and joyful that celebrates contemporary Indigenous lives while giving agency to Native artists, then check out these two hilarious Indigenous-led comedies: *Reservation Dogs* and *Rutherford Falls*.

KOTFM, regardless of its inadequacies, is still a very important film. It is also a step in the right direction regarding films that focus on Indigenous topics but are directed by non-Natives. Osage consultants were advised throughout the making of the film and authorised the representations chosen by Scorsese. Moreover, if *KOTFM* was intended to be a white-centred narrative aimed at unsettling predominantly white audiences, it may have served its purpose.

Most importantly, the historic crimes committed by a group of heinous, rapacious, manipulative white settlers are rightly hung out to dry.



IMAGE: IMDB

STRIKES, STRIKES AND MORE STRIKES: FILM INDUSTRY UNREST

ROBERT SALATHIEL (HE/HIM) DISCUSSES THE IMPACT OF THE US FILM INDUSTRY STRIKES IN THE UK

Some knew they were coming. Some pretended that they didn't. But when the SAG-AFTRA (short for 'Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists') strike action against the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers (or AMPTP) finally left the shores of the USA on 14 July 2023 and hit the United Kingdom, it came (at least at first), seemingly, as a whisper. There would be no posters, no mass-panic, no demonstrations or picket lines – at least not in the UK – most of that happened in the USA. Business as usual for the Warner Brothers studio in Leavesden, Watford, or the Pinewood studios in Shepperton. The industry ticked over as it had done, day-by-day. Cast, crew, stunts, extras; two by two heading onto set by foot and buggy. Casting calls still went out and the cameras were still

rolling. Everyone seemed calm, perhaps expecting that things would go the same way as the writers strikes (which began on 2 May 2023). Indeed, no one knew what to expect. It marked the first time that actors initiated a labour dispute in the USA since the 1980s actors strike, and the first time that actors and writers have walked out simultaneously since 1960.

And then, one-by-one, the work began to dry up. Postponed. Released. Flights were cancelled, dates moved. Costumes placed back into their respective wardrobes or shipped back to the costumiers. The "part-time" jobs – whether in a bar, building site, or production house, suddenly became very "full-time".

Combined, the writers' strike and SAG-AFTRA strike caused the loss of around 45,000 jobs, and enormous financial losses to studios

worldwide.

The reasoning for the actors' and writers' strikes were related to several highly contentious topics. Primarily centred around pay and job security, the unions made many other demands. For example, limits on the use of AI in the generation of new scripts and other written pieces, and the scanning of actors faces to digitally recreate their likeness in the future – recent examples include the new *Indiana Jones* movie.

Personally, I had the privilege of starting my career on one of the most ambitious TV productions that is as-yet to be released. *Masters of the Air* – the sequel to *Band of Brothers* and *The Pacific*. Although only (at least initially) starting out as an extra, opportunities can be found in the industry – if you look hard enough. Having now credits for film, TV and stage productions, I was ready to go even further in my career. Then, just like that, everything dried up for three months when the strike happened.

Of course, the strikes didn't just impact the actors and "stunties". The crew – lighting technicians, makeup artists, props, costumes, drivers had also been affected. I had many friends on the other side of the camera who found themselves unable to find work for many months, resorting to helping out on smaller productions until the strikes finally ended.

Interestingly, the reaction by the AMPTP is reminiscent, perhaps, of a Hollywood villain. According to one source, an anonymous AMPTP executive stated that their strategy was to "allow things to drag on until union members started losing their apartments and losing their houses".

Some productions, such as local, British-made film and TV, were still running during the strike, including the new ITV production

Ruth, starring Lucy Boynton as the titular Ruth Ellis. Smaller films, commercials and the like still plodded along, with actors eager to jump onto any work they could find. I recall having to spend hours scrolling through auditions and job requests, and then waiting for a call from an agent before sending in numerous self-tapes.

By the time of writing this article, both the writers and SAG-AFTRA strikes have now ended, with agreements being formalised on 27 September 2023, and 9 November 2023, respectively. Now, one must remember that the strike deal was only agreed for the next few years. Considering the extremely rapid advances in AI, as well as financial issues throughout the world, one has to consider whether this is truly 'the end' to the strikes, or simply just a brief respite.

Indeed, it's important to recognise the ever-changing world of Hollywood (and beyond) and what that might mean for the expanding world of British film and TV. Forecasts indicate that, by 2025, the UK will rank fourth by overall filmed entertainment revenue with an estimated turnover of more than US \$4.5 billion, which could cause issues between studios in the future, as well as the rules governing productions. Indeed, one could see a shift from the use of actors belonging to SAG-AFTRA (though this is highly unlikely, considering the vast majority of our most well-loved actors are part of the Union). Additionally, the advent of new streaming platforms and other mediums may also cause bumps down the road.

Then again, who knows what's to come? With the industry in its current state, perhaps we'll find ourselves going *Back to the Future* sooner than we think. Or maybe we won't... I just miss the craft coffee.



IMAGE: EDEN, JANINE AND JIM

INFANTILISING OR EMPOWERING: THE 'UNIVERSAL GIRL'

CHARLOTTE LEGRAND (SHE/HER) EXPLORES HOW THE FEMINIST ORIGINS OF 'GIRL' TRENDS REDEFINE GIRLHOOD

From 'girl maths' to 'hot girl walks', 'girl dinner' to 'girl's girls', the internet has begun to universally embrace girlhood. With each scroll, my TikTok algorithm introduces a new 'girl' trend, reframing everyday activities into a relatable, often satirical, collective feminine experience. For example, 'girl maths' rationalises spending such as money refunded or spent on reaching the free shipping threshold as 'basically free'. 'Girl dinner' validates a taste in haphazardly put-together meals of strange combinations, and 'hot girl walks' encourage exercise to music dedicated to gratitude and self-love.

The language of the universal girl feels similar to that of the 1990s 'girl power' movement. Encouraging unapologetic confidence and independence, the phrase was inspired by the Black Power slogan and coined by the punk rock band Bikini Kill. The band also contributed to the 'riot grrrl' subculture, aiming to reclaim the word girl through the production of zines, art, and music. Around the millennium, the Spice Girls' emphasis on strong female friendship and empowerment is comparable to the modern 'girl's girl' – uplifting other women without pettiness or jealousy. As third-wave feminism sought to redefine society's

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If women lose power as they age, a universal girlhood becomes a denial of agist misogyny

ideas of sexuality, femininity, and beauty, the girl power movement sought to redefine girlhood. This definition was also growing more universal, with the rise of intersectionality and class consciousness within feminism encouraging mass female solidarity towards a universal girl.

Moving into the 21st century, girl power developed into a new phase of 'girlboss feminism'. Encouraging female infiltration into traditionally male-dominated industries, the girlboss would break through the glass ceiling with unapologetic confidence and femininity. Pop culture hailed Elle Woods, Katniss Everdeen, and Kill Bill's assassination squad as 2000s icons, achieving the perfect combination of femininity and power. However today girlboss feels more like an insult than a mark of female success and independence. Swallowed by capitalist motivations of competition and exploitation, figures such as Margaret Thatcher soured the girlboss image by pursuing individual career goals at the expense of feminism. The girlboss became the antithesis of the girl's girl – willing to step on fellow women to chase personal, and often financial, success.



IMAGE: MARTIN.

There's a similar contemporary need to reclaim girl as a positive term, combating the word's assumptions of immaturity and unprofessionalism – feeding into infantilising gender roles. 'Girl maths', for example, plays upon and makes fun of the patriarchy's assumption that women are worse at maths. By labelling clearly satirical financial decisions as 'maths', women are reclaiming and making fun of sexist stereotypes.

Referring to fully grown women as 'girls' is harmful as it plays into the patriarchal idea that women are less mature, responsible or profes-



IMAGE: JOSLYNLM

sional. Especially in the working world, these childlike qualities don't align with strong leadership – with a lack of a male equivalent. Therefore, maybe the weight and meaning of 'girl' depends on its context. Coming from others in a professional setting, a woman is 'just a girl'. In contrast, referring to yourself as 'still a girl' feels like an act of reclamation, redefining girlhood in a positive light. If women lose power as they age, a universal girlhood becomes a denial of agist misogyny. Therefore, today's use of 'girl' in a satirical and informal way breaks down its impact as a word used to demean or exclude.

However, this logic has been critiqued as harmful to womanhood. Labelling activities done by women as 'girly' could assume there is something wrong with womanhood, some kind of dullness that comes with women growing up. There is a fear that even acknowledging and using infantilising language contributes to the stereotypes women are trying to reclaim. Yet, even if 'girl' trends are just re-packaged stereotypes, they are being re-packaged in a context without the word's exclusionary weight. The fun and lighthearted sentiment of 'girl' trends can be translated to womanhood, removing the possibility of infantilisation and making the jump to adulthood less daunting.

Therefore, maybe today's 'girlification'

comes from a need to re-modernise society's approach to womanhood, to again reclaim the word girl. Rising costs of living, endless job-hunting and an intimidating housing market are making the transition to adulthood more daunting than ever. Repackaging adulthood into a series of smaller 'girlified' experiences makes growing up more approachable, and simply more fun. Fourth-wave feminism's use of social media has made the creation of a mass movement possible, allowing the universal girl to be more relatable and accessible than ever.

experiences that could be as small as a meal or a purchase.

Most recently, the internet has responded to 'girl' trends with a series of opposite 'boy' trends. To clap back at men making fun of 'girl maths', 'boy maths' has emerged as a satirical justification for male habits. For example, 'boys maths' could be a 5 ft 10 man 'rounding up' his height to 6 ft, using three-in-one shampoo to 'save money', or having a 70-inch television but no dining table. The trend has mainly been attributed to and fed into by women to call out and make fun of men's hypocritical behaviour, rather than holding a wider social significance. However, politics have been bought into the conversation on X, with US Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez adding 'Boy math is needing 15 attempts to count the votes correctly to become Speaker and then shutting down the government 9 months later' in response to Republican Kevin McCarthy's push to shut down the government over the passing of a spending bill. On the whole, 'boy' trends don't carry the same social weight as 'girl' trends, as there is no similar issue of referring to men as boys. Instead, it provides a mocking extension to 'girl' trends – a space to satirise gender stereotypes in a lighthearted way.

As to be expected, 'girl' trends haven't come without criticism. 'Girl dinners' have been exposed as normalising eating insufficient and unbalanced meals, and 'girl maths' criticised for encouraging unnecessary overconsumption of often trendy items. It feels like these criticisms, although often valid, should be targeted more specifically onto the roots of the trend itself – rather than its associations with girlhood. It's no secret that the internet's rapid trend cycle and addictive algorithms can lead to unsustainable consumer habits and worsening mental health. But, if anything, many of the trends within the

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The unity and embrace of girlhood that has come through the wave of 'girl' trends is a step in the right direction towards a reclaiming of womanhood

girlhood movement encourage sustainability and healthy lifestyle choices. For example, 'girl maths' justifies clothing purchases through an intention to re-wear – if a pair of jeans is £40, and you wear them 40 times, they only cost £1 per wear. 'Hot girl walks' encourage exercise purely for the sake of mental health, without an ulterior motive of aesthetic physical goals. Regardless of the name, the positivity surrounding these trends is hard to criticise.

Reclaiming the word girl is a reclaiming of linguistic power, allowing girlhood to be defined free from patriarchal stereotypes. The unity and embrace of girlhood that has come through the wave of 'girl' trends is definitely a step in the right direction towards a reclaiming of womanhood, and the creation of a new universal woman.

WHY ARE VIDEO GAMES SO DIFFICULT FOR STUDIOS TO ADAPT?

TASHA ACRES (SHE/HER) INVESTIGATES WHY MOST FILM ADAPTATIONS OF VIDEO GAMES FAIL TO IMPRESS THEIR FANS

As game developers create more complex and immersive narratives, film and television studios have identified them as accessible sources for their next projects – but why are the majority so bad? Does the blame lie with the film studios or is the medium of a video game inherently difficult to adapt? With many more beloved games set to be transformed into films in the near future, how high should we set our expectations?

In recent years, the release of video game adaptations has increased exponentially: from *Assassin's Creed* in 2016, to *Five Nights at Freddy's* in the last month. However, only a few of these adaptations have been critically acclaimed, such as HBO's *The Last of Us* series that was released in early 2023. Many have failed to immerse the audience or portray a faithful reconstruction of the games that they were based on.

Lara Croft is a character that has been redeveloped in games since her creation in 1994; Angelina's portrayal of the character is undoubtedly a strong one, yet the plot of 2001's *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* is stitched together with a string of action-adventure tropes that become more predictable as the years go on. 2018's reimagining of *Tomb Raider* has an increased budget and is a brilliant example of a brave and adventurous female lead, however the mass of exposition was difficult to sit through, and there was still a distinct lack of charm.

Uncharted is another adaptation that was released in 2022, to many fans' disappointment. Tom Holland attempts to play Nathan Drake faithfully, having been enthusiastic about the role, but what's been created is a film that's like a memory of *Uncharted* – certain scenes

are ripped from the games, merging action sequences in a timeline that just doesn't make sense. The film is supposed to be a prequel: it seems unlikely that Drake would encounter a pirate ship or fall out of a plane, and survive, more than once in his career. It's clear that the creators of the film have not taken the care required to preserve Drake's timeline, or at the very least made the story logical. The wrong casting for Victor Sullivan, I believe, also led to the film's demise. It became a product of Hollywood, and I genuinely believe that the failure of these films can be blamed on a fundamental misunderstanding of the source material. If you interpret *Uncharted* as an *Indiana Jones* story rather than focusing on Drake's narrative itself, you're going to end up with a movie that just does not feel like the original game, and is drowned by uninspired side characters. Chloe's character was also let down by the creatives behind the film – to me, it seemed like they couldn't decide what to do with her. They didn't want her to be completely trustworthy but as a result the fickleness of her character isn't reflective of her intelligence that we see clearly not only in Drake's games but also in *The Lost Legacy*.

Assassin's Creed came out in 2016, and was an astounding disappointment – poor visuals, a plot that seems like *Assassin's Creed* on paper but in practice lacked any sort of style, and more fanservice than a faithful narrative. This film is only *Assassin's Creed* by name – the creators carelessly constructed a screenplay that is uninspired. Again, I maintain that it is the result of a misunderstanding of the meaning of the source material that ruins adaptations. Directors seem to get too excited by the idea of adapting a video game and proceed to write a story based on their interpretation of the game,



IMAGE: NAUGHTY DOG PRESSKIT

with boring plotlines and convenient plot armour.

An adaptation that has succeeded, however, is HBO's *The Last of Us*. While it is not faultless, it is an adaptation that has potentially revived video game cinema... except it was a television series. This format could be a valid reason for its success, giving exposition and action room to be balanced and considered carefully. Neil Druckmann, the creator of the original game, also had an incredible amount of involvement in the series, which undoubtedly helped to ensure the series' success. Changes to the plot of the game were thought through carefully, which meant that they didn't lead to plot holes or soulless exposition, but rather, they enriched the viewer's experience and built the universe in a way that fit perfectly with the atmosphere and meaning of the game. Druckmann knew what he wanted the adaptation to highlight in the game, and this meant that it became one of

the most critically acclaimed television series of the year. It's not surprising that fans prefer adaptations that are faithful to the original plot. The formula that's been used to adapt video games in the past needs to change. Clearly, studios need to discover a new way to replace the gameplay element of their source that doesn't include shakily stitched together exposition without communication with the game's developer. Perhaps as 'triple A narratives' develop, adaptations will be able to deliver a more complex film with a charm that allows it to be as beloved as the games they came from.

With more adaptations set to be released in the coming years such as *Borderlands*, *Days Gone*, *Death Stranding*, *Dead by Daylight*, and *Ghost of Tsushima*, we have to hope that these creatives understand the source material before they begin to adapt. After cinema's history of reducing games to cliched films with no depth, beloved games like these deserve better.

THE NARRATIVE SHIFT: FROM ARCADES TO NINTENDO SWITCH

NIAMH FLEUR MCKELL-REDWOOD (SHE/HER) EXPLORES THE DEVELOPMENT OF VIDEO GAME NARRATIVES OVER TIME

Narratives have vastly evolved since the arcade days of video games, but in what way? From Pac-Man to *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*, the story-telling elements of narratives have evolved to serve different purposes with the change of time and technology.

The narrative of arcade games serves its play style, games such as *Space Invaders* and *Pac-Man* have no story-telling depth beside the binary fight between good and evil. Designed to feel infinite (or to be infinite in the case of *Space Invaders*), there is no ending to the story. This concept works to compel players to spend money, enticed to buy just one more turn. This game can be played Ad Infinitum, playing on the desire to continuously beat a high-score. As gaming moved from arcade machines to consoles, the narratives also changed.

Nintendo's most iconic figure: Mario, allows players to examine a new kind of narrative in the Super Mario franchise. Mario's quest to save Peach is told in the form of a two-dimensional platform game, allowing for a next exploration of 'good versus evil'. The two-dimensionality of the game translates not only visually but thematically; the narrative provides the possibility of an ending. Super Mario allows exploration of different environments and levels, allowing players the satisfaction of progressing level by level, until completion. While not the first game to include easter eggs, Super Mario's discoverable secret sections create a new level of depth, exploration and storytelling. Super Mario uses secrecy and progress to make Mario's world come to life, creating another narrative and exploring the satisfaction of knowing

a secret. Super Mario also only explores the superficial theme of 'good versus evil', leaving no room for deeper conceptual narrative in this franchise. Another Nintendo game, *The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess*, explores a similar storyline, but the narrative branches out beyond the two-dimensionality of Super Mario.

The Legend of Zelda: Twilight Princess explores the three-dimensionality of the world of Hyrule. Link (the playable hero) fights to save his world from calamity, while balancing both the light and dark elements of his world. Link explores a complex narrative, involving different challenges, cultures and mythology of his world. *Twilight Princess* journeys through the chaos and culture of Hyrule, compelling players to continue through this engaging world, allowing them to overcome a variety of problems. This

new narrative allows players to explore morality, questions of right and wrong; it is complex, but still linear. In other *Zelda* games, such as *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*, linearity is removed and player freedom is vastly expanded.

Open world games such as: *The Legend of Zelda: Breath of the Wild*, allows players to choose their own narrative. The choice of what comes first, what knowledge to pursue, what side quests to explore, which characters to talk to, is completely up to them. Developing narratives in such a fashion allows for an immersive experience; players are responsible for the speed and direction of narrative progression. Link's amnesia allows players to discover his history through flashbacks, creating an immersive, interactive narrative history. The world of adventure and quests allow *Breath of the Wild*

to burst with life. The freedom players are granted, allows for fluidity within the narrative, making each playthrough unique. However, other games like, *Little Nightmares*, restrict narrative freedom and use these restrictions to structure terrifying narratives.

Little Nightmares is a horror game told from a doll-house-like perspective, placing players into a restrictive society and role, forced to avoid monsters of this world by slipping through cracks.

This world can be navigated in a 3D manner, but only within the limits of the individual room. Manipulating this separation; specifically in the horror genre allows for narratives to explore new roles for the player. Players cannot place themselves into the character's shoes, rather they are placed in a parental role, the game exploits the player's protective instinct and creates a sense of responsibility within them. Forcing players to watch 'their' child lose humanity, while navigating an infanticidal world, leaves players morally confused, horrified by the realities the character must face. These narratives allow for complex psychological dilemmas not possible in games like *Pac-Man*. *Little Nightmares'* narrative permeates the player's soul, keeping their hearts racing on and on.

Narratives in video games have shifted over time, not only to fit the different profit needs of games, but to fulfil more complex roles and storylines as technology has changed. These individual narratives build on human desire, desire to be the hero, to solve a puzzle or to protect the innocent. Narratives build on humanity, each having unique elements serving to fulfil the individual needs of the games.



IMAGE: TARSIER STUDIOS PRESSKIT

FROM YORK TO AARHUS: FIVE TOP TIPS FOR STUDYING ABROAD

EMMA STAPLES (SHE/HER) SHARES HER ADVICE FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE CONSIDERING A YEAR STUDYING ABROAD

In the third year of my undergraduate degree at the University of York I moved from my home in the UK to study abroad for a year at Aarhus University in Denmark. The year was filled with a mixture of new and exciting opportunities, alongside unexpected challenges, and after reflecting back on my time in Aarhus I have come up with five top tips for students who are going to study abroad.

1. Be organised

Organisation is key when it comes to keeping track of all the essential documents you need to fill out for studying abroad. For example, applying for your visa can be much more time consuming than you expect, and you don't want to find yourself stressed as your visa hasn't arrived yet and it's only a couple of days until you leave (as it was for me!). Remember to check the expiry date on your passport too. I had to renew mine to make my visa application – due to Covid-19, this was my first time travelling abroad after a few years – and it took around six weeks to arrive. It is also important to keep track of all application deadlines at your home and host universities, such as those for housing, student finance/scholarships and module selection forms.

2. Research where you're going

One of the most useful things you can do before studying abroad is to research the city and the country you're moving to, alongside what student life is like at your chosen university. This will give you a bit more confidence when you arrive in a city you likely haven't visited before. It will help you to navigate those first few weeks when everything is new and unfamiliar. I recommend thoroughly going through the website of your exchange university as, for example, Aarhus University have an international website for incoming exchange students where I was able to find out about the cost of living in Denmark from a student perspective, how to navigate public transport in and around Aarhus, and what to expect from their academic system. Social media can also be incredibly helpful as most universities have an Instagram page specifically for international students, where you can get first-hand accounts of international student experiences, and ask questions to current students – I always found that the best advice I received was from students already at the university. If your study abroad institution is in Europe, I recommend checking out the local Erasmus Student Network (ESN). They host a variety of events throughout the year where you can meet other international students and

go on day trips to explore your new city and country.

3. Take the opportunities you don't have at your home university

To make the most of your study abroad experience, take all the opportunities you can that aren't available to you at home. I made this one of my goals whilst living in Denmark, to say "yes" to all of the personal and academic opportunities on offer at Aarhus University, and these experiences formed some of my best memories of studying abroad. For example, with the ESN in Aarhus I was able to go on a student budget friendly five-day trip to Swedish Lapland in December with a group of international students. I had never been to Sweden before, and I was able to go snowshoeing, husky sledding, and see the Northern Lights – which was a magical experience!

4. Make a bucket list of all the things you want to do

One thing that can be difficult whilst studying abroad is finding the right balance between studying and making the most out of living in a new country and immersing yourself within a new culture. I definitely spent less time studying than I would do in a normal year at university, and I found that the best way to balance studying with seeing and doing everything that I wanted to in Denmark was by making a bucket

list. This enabled me to add one or two activities from the list into my plan for each week, slowly

making my way through everything that I wanted to experience whilst keeping on top of my work.

5. Be prepared for things to go wrong

A key part of studying abroad is encountering, and

overcoming, new challenges such as culture shock, dealing with homesickness, and learning to work in a new academic system. Each of these things can sometimes feel difficult and overwhelming, especially when you're in a new country and away from all of your family and friends at home. But it is important to remember that each of these challenges are a normal part of studying abroad, and part of the experience is learning how to overcome them – and you will! One of the best things you can do is wrench out to other international students at your exchange university, as they will be going through the exact same things as you.

I hope you find these tips helpful, whether you're studying abroad for a year, a semester or a summer! If you have any questions, I recommend checking out the Centre for Global Programmes page on the University of York website, and their Instagram @goglobalUoY.



IMAGE: EMMA STAPLES



IMAGE: EMMA STAPLES

TRAVELLING THROUGH: SPACE AND SIZE FROM THE UK TO USA

ETHAN REUTER (HE/HIM) REFLECTS ON THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN LIFE IN THE SUBURBS IN LONDON AND NEW YORK

“America's too big to know itself” Hugh Laurie decrees to nodding heads in an educated Edinburgh audience as someone in Florida can't possibly know what it's like to live in Oregon. The spirit of collective agreement infuses the air. Laurie, realistically, has no business being this right, but he is, and it shows up in voting patterns and what kind of car you're likely to drive. Therefore, I hope you'll understand, I can't just scribble down the character of a country for a couple week trip. My expectations are much more humble, and realistic, than that, just what is integral to their culture.

Sleep, then, and I'm cowering in the back of the Lego Store on 23rd and 5th, waiting for my dad to finish. Mid-dissociation, my mum

mentions New York has a phonetic feel about it. What she means is that New York feels like it's always speaking, vibrating, racing in your presence, Manhattan standing above all the other American cities, its skyline spells out an ode to all the glory of the American dream. It's more authentic

than a fame riddled, intoxicatingly Instagram Los Angeles or the bureaucratic, broad streets of Washington DC. Money proudly stands as the cultural kudos and movement inextricably

interlinked with its lifeline. There is, I think to myself, only one other city like this in the world, one that feels almost interchangeable in its complexion, London. No other city matches their grandeur, scale, significance, ethos, and internationalism. An unparalleled duopoly in ambition, magnitude and inimitability.

London itself is not without its downsides and drawbacks, and neither is New York. Euston's glass cages of finance bros, an exhibit for the unindoctrinated, or earth's most vacuous honeypot (colloquially referred to as Leicester Square), make for an easy reference point in a debate about London and its virtues. This is to say nothing of certain aspects and parts of New York City. There are, however, interesting distinctions to be drawn between the two cities, and countries, in their cultures and mannerisms.

Manhattan, along with their quintessential yellow cabs, has a uniquely American black car service. Leviathan SUVs with grills up to your neck parade around the blocks, Caesars of the cross sectioned roads. For its amazing qualities, tinted, titanic cars may seem like a necessity for the wealthier areas of our capital, however, the

closest comparison is the army of Range Rovers that roll through Kensington. There is no grip on luxury transport held by the armada of vast blackened chauffeured SUVs like there is across the pond. This is, on a microlevel, a desire to showcase success. Humour me then, in a question of greenhorn philosophy. Why, beyond the comfort and signification of success, does this, for America, equate towards it being any better? The answer lies in the idea of space, and America's understanding of quantities.

Bodegas, themselves unique to Manhattan, sell, amongst other things, selections of soft drinks or sodas. Nothing groundbreaking from the Costcutter in Camberwell as of yet, but, when taking an iced tea out of one of their fridges, you'll notice you can barely get your fingers around the thing. To call it a bottle would be doing it a disservice. This isn't just the drink's natural condensation or the writer's natural incompetence, it relates to the size of the item on offer. Neither I, nor my dad, can hold the thing with any confidence. Sheer impracticality of the drink aside, it speaks again to America's desire for something grander and larger in stature than what we have to offer on our islands. America's solitary but enduring sum, that the greater the quantity, the greater the value, has filtered itself down to the drinks aisle.

These are examples from America's largest and most valuable city, as such, it'd be fair criticism to ask how this translates to the suburbs. Driving through leafy Northeast suburbs isn't indicative of the vast majority of lifestyles or

economic development, as all but one of these states are more developed than the national average. However, examining the wealthiest gives insight into people's desires and wants for a good life if they had the opportunity in the first place. Strikingly, houses sit surrounded by moats of grass, open and unobstructed. Oliver Dowden's quote about our 'privet hedges of freedom', itself unintentionally ironic considering hedges block things, hasn't quite gone transpondian yet. Go into one of these McMansions and you'll be greeted with double height ceilings and eyesore chandeliers. The simple size of the space, when combining all these factors, and comparing with England and Britain is what stands out. The back-to-backs and terraced houses of factory towns or the idyllic Wordsworthian cottage could never dream of such a yawning entrance.

In both the cities and the suburbs there is an integral difference in mores, separated by the Atlantic. In one corner there lies Britain with its masochistic weather and cramped spaces. In the other, standing, the shining city on the hill, there is America. It's bulking cars, giant self-serve sow-duhrs, and cavernous houses all pointing towards the same thesis. America, holds these truths self-evident, that space and size are tautological with good and better, that a posteriori reasoning isn't required. For America, space and size are to be the higher forms of the realm, and in the realm of forms, the highest goods, inescapable from their reach, entwined with their culture, woven into the very fabric.



IMAGE: WORLDSURFER

TASTING HOT CHOCOLATE AT THE YORK CHRISTMAS MARKET

GRACE CLIFT (SHE/HER) REVIEWS FOUR HOT CHOCOLATES TO FIND THE BEST KIND FOR ALL YOUR CHOCOLATE NEEDS

Hot chocolates are an essential aspect of Christmas, for all of us who are going to lectures at the freezing cold hour of 9am or needing a treat after completing a day of studying. York Christmas Market has lots of options on offer (though not as many as I expected) and I, along with a hot chocolate crew, decided to review all the hot chocolates that we could find.

There were only four basic hot chocolates available at the Christmas Market, after looking into every stall and battling through the queues. We bought the basic hot chocolate at each stall (when there was one), but there were options of Oreo, Chocolate Orange, and Biscoff, as well as a wide alcoholic selection. While the aim was to find a winner, it seems there were options for everyone, so they're sorted into four categories: For those on a Budget, For Sweet Teeths, For Drama, and For Dark Chocolate Lovers.

For those on a budget:

First was Wonder, which was an extremely popular option. Their hot chocolates were selling for £3.50, the joint lowest price on offer, with no extra charge for whipped cream and marshmallows – nowhere else did this! It came with big marshmallows instead of the usual mini ones, which was a celebrated decision amongst the hot chocolate crew. There were also options of



IMAGE: GRACE CLIFT

Chocolate Orange and Bailey's hot chocolate on offer.

The reviews came in at a very average 3.5/5. Though it was very creamy and milky, the general consensus was it was not chocolatey enough – maybe a cheap powder? Nobody would say no to this hot chocolate – it's still hot chocolate, of course – but there was too much cream and it tasted somewhat bland. We think this type of hot chocolate is repeated a few times at different stalls; look out for the same font and menu as Wonder.

If you're looking for a cheap, bog-standard hot chocolate, this is the one for you. Nothing too special, this is the true basic hot chocolate.

For Sweet Teeths:

Next was the Real Hot Chocolate & Coffee Bar, which was the same price as Wonder, though charged 50p for cream and marshmallows. It came in a takeaway cup with a lid and had a number of alcoholic options, including Bailey's and Amaretto.

This was a very popular choice at a whopping 5/5. It was sweet, creamy, with a good cream to drink ratio. It was the perfect temperature so there was no waiting around,

and was just the right amount of chocolatey. This was the favourite choice for half of the crew, and wasn't too small either. If you're not sure what you want for a hot chocolate, you'll

probably still love this one.

For Drama:

Now, the Chocolate Circus was a highly anticipated stop on the hot chocolate search. As well as selling what we suspected was Wonder hot chocolate, this stall also did a Biscoff, Gingerbread, Oreo and Chocolate Orange option, all of which came with a design that looked like a snowman on the top. This easily took the top spot for presentation and creativity, and seemed to have a lot going on according to the ingredients listings. This was a bit pricier at £5.50, and each had a £7 alcoholic option, which was similar to the Real Hot Chocolate & Coffee Bar alcoholic hot chocolate prices.

The crew rated this one highly at 4/5, and we tried the Chocolate Orange option as it seemed closest to the original hot chocolate. It was topped with Terry's Chocolate Orange pieces, Matchmakers, cream, marshmallows and a snowman marshmallow, and once the cream had melted into the hot chocolate a bit, this one became my personal favourite. It was sweet, the Chocolate Orange taste was noticeable, and it was a big cup, so worth the money. I'd recommend waiting for the cream to partially melt to get the best experience – before we did this, it was good but not anywhere near as tasty



IMAGE: GRACE CLIFT

as after. **For Dark Choc Lovers**

Our final hot chocolate was at York Cocoa Hot Chocolate, which was highly praised among students at University of York. It was £4 and an extra 50p for cream and marshmallows, and served out of what looked like a cauldron. There was only one option on sale, which was the 40 percent hot chocolate.

It was significantly smaller than the other hot chocolates we had ordered, and came with

no lid. It had a very deep, rich and dark chocolatey tang, and it tasted very expensive, as if high-end chocolate had been melted into it. I found it quite bitter, but half of the hot chocolate crew said it was their favourite. Therefore, it was rated a 4/5.

I hope you enjoy the York Christmas Market while it's running, and manage to try out lots of the hot chocolates! There are so many variations we didn't get to try, but the Amaretto and the Gingerbread hot chocolates looked absolutely brilliant. My overall verdict is that the Real Hot Chocolate & Coffee Bar is the best option for an all-round great hot chocolate experience – from size to sweetness, this drink fulfilled all of our expectations. Have a lovely winter, and happy hot chocolate season!

THE FIVE BEST BUDGET FRIENDLY ROAST DINNERS IN YORK

ALICE LILLEY (SHE/HER) REVIEWS FIVE TASTY ROAST DINNERS THAT WILL WARM YOU WITHOUT COSTING A FORTUNE

As the temperatures get colder and the evenings get darker, the nation's beloved roast dinner comes back into season as the star of the show. Providing a comforting and heart-warming meal out in York, sometimes it's all you need on a cold winter's night. There's nothing like a hot roast dinner to warm the soul. Fortunately, roast dinner lovers will not go hungry in York as the city is home to a vast array of great pubs and restaurants which serve roast dinners. Here is your guide for those wishing to treat themselves to a winter-warming roast that does not break the bank.

The York Roast Co:

Nestled in the heart of York's city centre, the York Roast Co stands out as the perfect choice if you're craving a quick and hearty roast dinner amongst the cobbled streets. Whilst a classic roast dinner here ranges in price, from £13-15, the York Roast Co is also home to the well-renowned, world famous Yorkshire Pud-



IMAGE: FURKANFDEMIR

ding Wrap – a must try for anyone visiting or living in York! The Yorkshire Pudding Wrap does what it says on the tin, with a roast dinner being served wrapped in a giant Yorkshire pudding. The Yorkshire Pudding Wraps are even better for the bank account, costing only £9.50 and providing a new spin on the classic roast dinner. What's not to love?

Toby Carvery:

If you're looking for the best bang for your buck and a traditional British carvery, Toby Carvery is the place to go. Costing only £9.29, a trip to Toby Carvery comes in as one of the cheapest (and tastiest) roast dinners in York, satisfying both the taste buds and the wallet. The best part? They serve roast dinners every day of the week. Regardless of the generous helpings offered, if you're wanting to treat yourself, an extra £2 will get you an extra carving of meat, an extra Yorkshire and two chipolata sausages. The warm and relaxed atmosphere of Toby Carvery adds to the dining experience, making it the perfect option for families, friends and students to gather. Moreover, Toby Carvery offers students a generous 20 percent discount from Monday to Friday and 20 percent off click and collect takeaways for those looking to indulge in the comfort of their own home (available via Unidays). However, it is out of town, so is most easily accessed by car.



IMAGE: CHABE01

The Old White Swan:

Hidden inside York's historic city walls and just a short walk from the York Minster, the Old White Swan is a traditional British pub, well-known for its hearty yet reasonably priced roast dinners and its cosy and welcoming atmosphere. Having been open in York for over 150 years, the Old White Swan has garnered a long-standing reputation as a reliable choice for a scrumptious and affordable Sunday roast.

Costing only £14-16, customers can choose between a 21-day-aged roast beef, a succulent roasted half chicken or a vegetarian nut roast, satisfying whichever seasonal choice you are craving.

Plonkers Wine Bar:

Located along York riverside, Plonkers Wine Bar is a family run wine bar serving home-cooked and locally sourced roast dinners in a quaint and unique building in the heart of York city centre.

Plonkers hosts a range of events from Open Mics every Sunday from 8pm to seasonal events at Halloween and Christmas through to Valentines Day. So, if you're looking for some light and relaxing entertainment while tucking into your roast Dinner, Plonkers is the place for you! Costing only £16 for an adult's carvery, Plonkers is an ideal spot for families and students looking to feast and enjoy some live music without spending a fortune.



IMAGE: THE CASTLEBAR

Rose & Crown :

Last but not least, situated just outside York's historic city walls, the Rose & Crown has a well-renowned reputation for its famous selection of ales and homemade pies, as well as its traditional Sunday carvery featuring locally sourced ingredients. The Rose & Crown offers customers a choice between a succulent roast chicken and a roast beef carvery, both reasonably priced at only £15-16. The best part? The pub garden and bar areas are dog friendly making the Rose & Crown an ideal destination for roast-lovers looking to bring their canine companions out for the occasion. But get there fast as the Rose & Crown operates on a first-come, first-served basis with a limited number of roast dinners available while supplies last!

There are so many more places to get a good roast dinner in York, so why not go out into the city and give them a try?

THE CORPSE HANDLER ELEANOR HULL

I rolled up my sleeves once again and picked up the rag on the kitchen table. They had a habit of falling down while I was working, impractical considering how careful I needed to be, how steady I needed to keep my hands. After soaking it in the basin I returned to my workstation, wiping over the heavily marked table, leaving it glistening slightly in the candlelight. It was covered in scars, its wood warped with age, veins running across its surface, dents and nicks like the liver spots on frail hands, like the ones that had so recently been lying across it. After returning the now-bloodied rag to the sink, I moved to the window. What must it be now, ten, maybe eleven o'clock? I always lost track of time when I was working.

Peering through the curtains, my muted reflection gazed back at me, soft at the edges like an old photograph, set against the darkness of the sky. The path outside, busy during the daytime with horses, carts and running children, was deathly silent now aside from the rhythmic slosh of the waves as they hit against the promenade, slowly eroding my little coastal town away. In the distance I could just make out a faint glow, the light-house on the rocky cliff furthest out. It felt like I was the only soul awake.

There is something dangerous about the midnight hours, that magic time when you are all alone in the world, a ghost drifting along an empty road. Quietly, I picked up my lamp, the flame sputtering slightly, and resolved to go to bed. As I set down the light, I heard a noise. Unusual for this time of night, but then again, I did work in a very unusual field. I had grown accustomed to this particular sound, the slick trundle of a carriage rolling over wet stone. It was always raining here, the skies thick and brooding on the best of days, a constant sheen of moisture clinging to the salty air.

I stepped outside, crossing my arms.

"Another one?" My voice sounded hoarse after so many hours of silence. I looked up at the dark mass in front of me. The horse stamped an impatient foot and snorted. I was so close I could smell the hay on its breath.

"Last one tonight," came the response. The stranger set down the reins and reached a gloved hand into his pocket, drawing out a pouch. I never know who the driver is, and he changes most nights. I don't like to ask either.

"How much?"

"Five shillings." I reached into my apron, fishing around before extracting the coins.

"How many more do you need?" I passed them to him. He inspected each one, bringing them close to his eye, before he put them away, obviously satisfied with their quality.

"I won't need them for much longer, I should be finished with my research soon enough," I replied, my eyes wandering to the back of the carriage. I wouldn't be able to keep up with the cost of their services anyway, I was quickly running out of money and no closer to a breakthrough. The driver, whoever he really was, dropped down from his seat and disappeared behind the bulk of his vehicle. I hastened after him, keen to take a look at what I was working with. He unfastened the door and it swung on its hinges, revealing a dim interior shell. Stacked on inserted rows, each covered with a sheet of white cloth, lay around a dozen bodies.

I didn't want to get into this line of work, not really. I used to want to be a fisherman, like my father, and his father before him. It's funny how life works out. You think you know where you'll end up, the next thing you know you're lugging another dead body into your kitchen. Would it surprise you to know that I'm actually quite a squeamish person?

The driver moved towards one of the closest cadavers, by the door. He

unfixed the wooden slab and pulled it out of his private morgue. "Will this one do?" I stood next to him, my eyes studying the mass under the sheet. It looked incredibly small. I had never dared to ask where the bodies came from before. It was mainly out of cowardice, and I loathed myself for it. Not knowing was so much easier.

"Looks fine." I shoved my hands into my pockets and reminded myself to breathe. I took hold of the other side of the slab and eased it out of the carriage. In silence we shuffled into the house. I looked back over my shoulder every few steps, well aware of the covert nature of our smuggling operation. With a nod of his head the stranger left, leaving me to my own devices and the empty silence between myself and the thing on the table.

My tools were still out on the countertop, in a line, unclean. I picked up a scalpel, running my finger along its sharp edge. Like a magician unveiling his latest trick, I drew the cloth from the table in one fell swoop. The body was pitifully tiny, a child. Grey skin was stretched tautly over bone, as if disease had all but eaten him up, festering inside his feeble frame. I wondered if anyone would miss him. Was he just another vagrant child now missing from the streets? "Last one tonight," I muttered to myself, as the candle wax dribbled further down its wick, pooling in the base of its tray. Last one.

The process of anatomical dissection was very mechanical, an incision just below the sternum, exposing the rib cage and vital organs. I felt no different from a butcher, yet I had to work quickly. Too long and the body would start to rot. I removed the heart, my fingers slippery red, and set it aside. I didn't have the right equipment to prolong the expiration of the corpse. Besides, during the summer it was just too hot, give it a couple of hours and flies would start to swarm.

With a nauseating gulp I thought of a morning from the year before last, coming downstairs, the exact way the light filtered through the door pane, casting a warm shadow on the floor. The sound of the birds on the tangled branches outside the window. I pulled back the sheet to find maggots crawling around in her eye sockets amongst a cluster of eggs, as they stared blankly upwards, cavernous black holes, the mouth open in a slack horror mimicking my own, as if she were eternally screaming.

I paused, eyes heavy, scalpel hovering inches above skin, the candles dotted around the table like winking stars, their flames diffracting through my slanted vision. The dead boy's hand jerked open and closed, like a floundered fish stuck on the sand. I moved over to inspect it. How interesting! It was as if the lower limb were still alive, acting independently from the rest of the nervous system. I picked up a notebook and started to document what I was witnessing with fervour. I had read religiously all about galvanism of course, even tried to replicate the process in my own studies to minimal success, but had never seen anything like this before. I poked the palm with the flat point of my scalpel and the movement abruptly stopped. I turned away, slightly disappointed, to place the journal down and felt something ice cold gripping onto my wrist. I froze, hardly daring to turn around, my heart careening in my chest. Before I made a move the things grip slackened and rolled off the edge of my fingers and I stepped away hastily, knocking into my equipment with a clatter. Another cadaveric spasm, unfortunately timed. I looked again at the cold dead hand, this time with distaste. I was being ridiculous; the dead couldn't harm anyone.

The boy sat up, gazing at me with a glassy stare unlike anything I had ever seen before, the whites of his eyes stark as they flashed in the dim light. He surveyed me, and I him, as if we were at a standoff, each of us unsure of the next move to make.



IMAGE: JOONAS KÄÄRIÄINEN

LETTERBOX LOVE NOTES EMILY WARNER

Listening to the sound of the rain in the dark
Narcissus flowers bloom on my eyelids.
The quiet paints lilac brushstrokes on the floor and
I am cradled in a crib of memories,
head resting in a nook where the door meets the wall.
The house opens one idle eye; slitted, feline, purple-tinge
cold to touch and colder to press my ear to.

The breath of the outside floods in through the letterbox.

Amidst scattered leaflets and mail and the four corners
of a postage stamp, she writes love notes onto my lips.
Lemon and ginger. Kisses that linger.
Pulling me closer by the belt loops of my jeans so we are hidden
by the bowed head of an umbrella.
Breath misting the air, we wear one fleece
and watch our reflections hurry down the street to
eat ice cream in the rain.
'I bet nobody's ever done this with you before' she says,
Clearing the salt and pepper from the kitchen table.
'Nobody' I try to write, scribbling poetry on the back cover of the map.
I am realising one language isn't enough. Personne, nadie, niemand...
Mahal kita.
But I missed something she said and now she's turning off the light.

Counting out love with cups of tea
which stamp beige circles on the arm of the settee;

a constellation of footprints marching across the history of -

'Would you like another cup?'

'Yes please.'

And my heart unfolds like origami;

A swan, unfolding her paper wings only to realise they are tissue
and the moon can peer in through the window
and I wonder why her eyes are damp when I can
hear rain on the roof. No cup of tea can disintegrate me
Like the tears which she drops on my arms
as I hold her and try not to shake; try not to break
apart.
Since when could I feel my heart?
Perhaps since my bones became prison bars.

But then I'm singing in the car.
Mariah Carey, even though it's only just November
and the weather says 'no sign of a white Christmas'.
All those quiet spaces,
are held within light that streams through a window pane.
Sadness, contentment, tenderness, stencilled
on the wall like framed portraits; somewhere behind us
held between bricks of slate.
We will bury them when love notes are pushed through the door
and curl up on the doorstep to sleep.

EDITORS' PICKS:

Between classes, formals and making travel plans it can be hard to find the time to hunt down the perfect Christmas gift for everyone in your life. This is why we've decided to put together our favorite reads that we think will make excellent gifts this year:

Little Women, Louisa May Alcott
Any Christmas book list wouldn't be complete without this favourite. As an exceptionally accessible classic, this book is fantastic for everyone from avid readers to your casual page browser. The story is equal parts heartwarming and heartbreaking and captures the warm fuzzy feelings that make Christmas so magical.

The Last Devil to Die, Richard Osman:

The newest installation in the author's *Thursday Murder Club* series, released in September. The new hardback makes the perfect gift for parents or any other murder mystery lover in your life. This new plot focuses on the mysterious death of an old friend, and the disappearance of a package they appeared to be guarding with their life.

A Christmas Carol, Charles Dickens:

If you fancy your winter season cold and redemptive, or if you've only watched the Muppets version, now is the time to dive back into the classic itself. The icy story of morality, ghosts and the fact that "Marley was dead: to begin with," is sure to delight new and old readers.

Finally, whatever you celebrate, we wish you a lovely winter season filled with wonderful writing!

I WISH TO SEE SNOW
ARIEL SCHREIBER

I wish to see snow.
I wish to sled down a hill.
I wish to wrap up nice and warm with a mug of hot chocolate and a plate of cookies.

I wish to experience childlike wonder in this marshmallow world.
I wish for that Christmas joy, elicited by children believing Old Saint Nick will bring presents soon.

Winter doesn't feel the same, I look forward to it only to be disappointed that I'm getting older,
But that's the part of growing up –
Knowing what you will receive under the tree that fateful morning.

Winter has arrived
I pack my bags and say goodbye to the life that I've started.
I don't leave broken hearted but with the new conviction I can do this on my own.

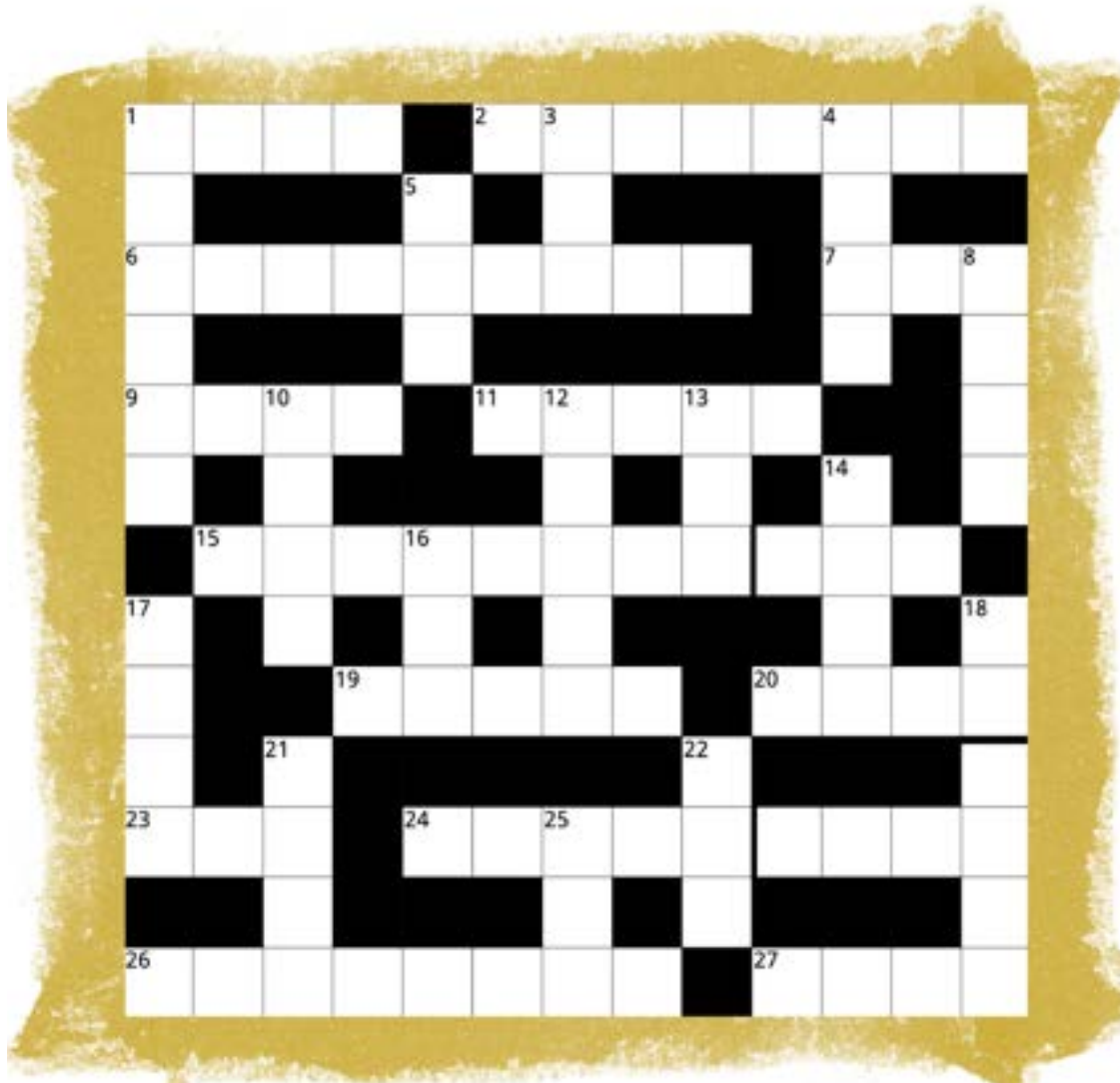
MUSE CREATIVE
WRITING COMPETITION!

SEND IN YOUR PIECES TO MIA.SCATTERGOOD
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DEADLINE - 14th January 2024
THEME - NEW BEGINNINGS

WINNERS WILL BE
FEATURED ON THE NOUSE
WEBSITE

CROSSWORD



Hi everyone! This is the new puzzle page. You can find the answers on the Muse website.



DOWN

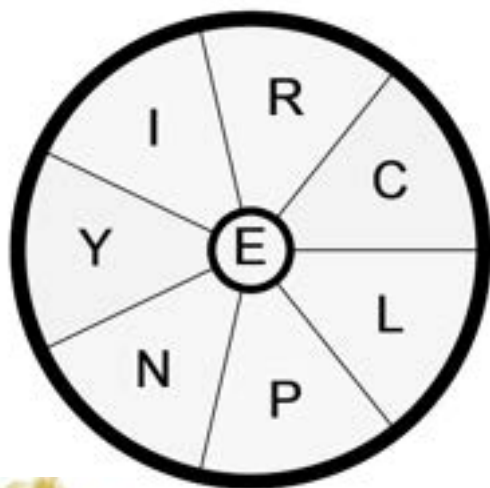
- 1 Wednesday club night for students (abbreviation) (6)
- 3 Munch (3)
- 4 Prominent feature of famous duck (4)
- 5 Courtyard and Glasshouse, for example (3)
- 8 Place for a charger (4)
- 10 Virtual assistant (4)
- 12 Platform, kitten or wedge, for example (5)
- 13 ABBA hit (3)
- 14 Halifax's colour (4)
- 16 Winter sports season (3)
- 17 Group of musicians (4)
- 18 Holy man of York (2,4)
- 21 Every thing (4)
- 22 Poem of praise (3)
- 25 Animal doctor (3)

ACROSS

- 1 Breeze (through) (4)
- 2 The Heather of York (8)
- 6 Red rose (9)
- 7 Short sleep (3)
- 9 The river seeps out, we hear (4)
- 11 Shambles merchant (5)
- 15 September illness (8,3)
- 19 Bus brand (5)
- 20 Kid around (4)
- 23 Two factor authentication (3)
- 24 Newest college (5,4)
- 26 Founding college (8)
- 27 American Fairy (4)

TRY OUR WORDWHEEL

Create as many words possible with the letters in the wordwheel. You can only use each letter once and every word must contain the letter in the center of the wheel.



SUDOKU

	7	5	1			6	9	
9			5	3	7		8	1
	8			2				4
						5		9
6	5		2					7
4	9		6	1		3		8
5		8		9	1			2
			8			9	7	6
7			4	6				

WRITE YOUR ANSWERS HERE:



IMAGE: IMDB



IMAGE: IMDB

CLUE These are two stills from different wintry scenes. One is a Christmas film and the other is not.

Mike Johnson: out of the wilderness onto the hill

Dominic Williams
POLITICS CORRESPONDENT

THROUGHOUT AMERICAN HISTORY, very few politicians can claim to have had such a tremendous surge in relevance as Mike Johnson. In a matter of days, Johnson had gone from a forgettable Louisiana representative, barely known by either party, to Speaker of the House and currently the most powerful Republican in Washington.

After the overthrow of Kevin McCarthy, many thought that it would be impossible for the Republicans to choose a new Speaker. Their underwhelming performance in the 2022 mid-term elections gave them a razor thin majority, making it particularly easy for rebellious factions within the party to deny any candidate that didn't suit them. For this reason, Mike Johnson's irrelevance played to his advantage. Mainstream figures of the centre and right wings of the Republican party came with baggage and history that disenchanted their peers. Moderates didn't want to vote for high-profile MAGA candidates like Jim Jordan. After the sub-par performance

of Trump-approved candidates at the midterms, some of these Republicans didn't want the new speaker to be a high-ranking loyalist of the ex-President.

On the other hand, hardcore MAGA fans did not want there to be any doubt of the new Speaker's loyalty to Trump – their rejection of Steve Scalise proves that.

However, it wouldn't be accurate to see Johnson as a compromise between the far-right and moderate Republicans. Although not as high ranking as Jim Jordan, there is no denying the devotion that the new Speaker has for Donald Trump. Dubbed "MAGA Mike Johnson" by

Steve Bannon's media network, many of Trump's supporters have hailed the election of the new Speaker as a great victory.

Furthermore, Johnson voted against legitimising the 2020 election and used his legal background to play a debatably significant role in the campaign to overturn the results. Johnson's takeover compounds the pre-eminence of the far right in the GOP, viewing his new position as nothing short of a religious crusade. In his own words, the best way to figure out his position on any issue is to "pick a Bible off your shelf and read it". This biblical inerrancy has pervaded his political career,

celebrating the overturning of Roe versus Wade and vociferously campaigning against gay marriage early on in his career, branding homosexuality "destructive" and "sinful". On gun control, Johnson rejects background checks, or any form of gun restriction, stating that "the problem lies in the human heart." Thus, his election signals a triumph for the religious right of the GOP.

Johnson has also been outspoken in his views on foreign policy; a firm supporter of Israel, Johnson boasted about US efforts in sending the IDF billions of dollars more than they asked for, whilst condemning Biden's \$100 million Humanitarian aid package for Palestine: "They [Hamas] don't even give their people clean drinking water – we're supposed to believe they're gonna use US aid for Humanitarian purposes?" On Ukraine, he has been critical of what he sees to be reckless spending from the Democrats and called for greater accountability from Ukraine. However, he believes that "we cannot allow Vladimir Putin to succeed in Ukraine" and expressed support for America to send Ukraine MIG jets, in order to end the war in a firm Ukrainian Victo-

ry. Increasingly Republicans, particularly far-right members of the party, are calling for the US to send military aid and allow Ukraine to fall. By only calling for more accountability, whilst offering US jets, Johnson does hold an unorthodox position within his wing of the Republicans.

Whilst Johnson's position is still tenuous, it is perhaps more stable than that of his predecessor. The coup against McCarthy was led by a faction characterised by its stalwart support for Trump, but now this group is placated, Johnson is safe for now.

The Republicans are also conscious of their tentative position, with the knowledge they cannot survive another tumultuous speaker election if they hope to retain a modicum of credibility at the next election. Uniting the slim majority of Republicans remains a "Herculean Task", with internecine conflict dominating the party agenda.

It still stands that any house Republican can demand a vote to depose the speaker, as it only takes three of their colleagues to corroborate, meaning the party will be forced to face the existential crisis it has been so desperately running from.



IMAGE: GAGE SKIDMORE

The cost of living crisis continues to affect students

Isobel Moore (she/her)
DEPUTY POLITICS EDITOR

ACCORDING TO A NEW study carried out by Unipol and the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), students across England are left with only 50p a week after their maintenance loan has been swallowed up by rising rent costs.

Student Finance England supplies students each year with an average maintenance loan of £7,590. This should be used on essentials such as food, travel and other expenses that contribute to day-to-day living for students. Rent is something that a maintenance loan should cover, but not use up. With the average student rent price in England now standing at £7,566 for the year, as the study points out, rent effectively swallows up most of students' maintenance loans. Unipol and HEPI take these two numbers, maintenance loan and rent costs, into account with a meagre £24 left for students to live on – or 50p a week.

This study focuses specifically on UK universities such as Bristol, Leeds and Glasgow, but these concerns around student finance are applicable for every university, University of York included. As an already expensive city in terms of living costs, rising

rent costs only compound the difficulty for students balancing their lives alongside their education. Although not focused particularly on student housing, the Office for National Statistics has calculated that in York, the average rent paid in March of this year was £850, with many student house rent prices climbing well above this figure. For instance, students currently searching for a five bedroom house in York will face costs of up to £197 per student, per week.

So, why is it so expensive? Unipol asked university accommodation providers and found that rising costs of energy, staff and construction were important components in impacting private and university providers of accommodation. The report also describes how the Renters Reform Bill will exacerbate these issues, with more landlords likely to stop working in the student housing market, putting even more pressure on students finding a roof over their heads.

The Unipol report suggests that the government, universities and providers should consider a major reform of Student Finance England, allowing for the 'levelling up' aspect of university to be true. A maintenance loan, or

more supply of housing. The University of York has tried to address these financial constraints with schemes offering help to students: they are the first university to create a cost of living hub, offer free meals to over 3,500 students and many YUSU venues offer hot meals for under 60p.

But, concerns surrounding where to live still affect students immensely. A lot of the time, students find themselves in a balancing act between working part-time and their education to fund their university experience. Not only is education missed out on, but societies too, meaning students miss out on a key part of university culture, negatively impacting mental health. Moreover, questions surrounding where they will live and how to budget their money properly

means the reason students attend university, to gain an education, takes a back seat to worries about if they can find the money to do so. The retention and attainment of students is therefore very difficult, with a survey completed by the Russell Group Students' Union finding that one in five students consider dropping out due to the rising cost of living, especially socioeconomically disadvantaged students.

Similarly to the Unipol report, the Russell Group's chief executive called out the flaws of the maintenance loan system, and urged the government to take urgent action such as raising loans in line with inflation, introducing grants for those more disadvantaged and reviewing the parental threshold for maximum support.

In the months leading up to Christmas and into the New Year, these problems are only exacerbated, with November and January being very vital months for students in York in search of accommodation.

After only being at university for three months, why should students have to balance exam periods, the cost of living crisis and putting a roof over their heads all whilst living on roughly 50p a week? Until the government takes action this is the reality of student life.



IMAGE: DAVID BAYLES

as they would rename it as 'contribution to living costs' should bridge the gap between students and evaluate what living independently as a student actually ensues. The report also mentions a consideration of more affordable rooms and a facilitation of

GLOBAL



POLITICS

Myanmar activist comes to York

The Centre for Applied Human Rights welcomed an activist from Myanmar to lecture on the updates since the Spring Revolution. Myanmar's military junta faces challenges after armed groups gained territory near the Chinese border. The fate of Myanmar remains uncertain; the unwavering resistance of its freedom fighters is ineffaceable. – Antonia Shipley

Riots in Dublin

Riots broke out in Dublin after a knife attack on a woman and two children. Following the attack, accusations circulated on social media that the perpetrator was not an Irish national. This then led to riots which the Garda Commissioner Drew Harris stated had an "element of radicalisation" and saw levels of violence "not seen in decades". – Orla McAndrew

Tension between India and Canada

Enmity between the two nations are mounting following accusations from Canadian PM Justin Trudeau, regarding India's involvement in the killing of pro-Khalistan Sikh Hardeep Singh Nijar in British Columbia. In 2022 Indian authorities declared Nijar a terrorist. India has now removed 41 diplomats, while 60 Indian diplomats remain in Canada. – Antonia Shipley

Elgin Marbles

Anglo-Greek relations have worsened as a row has broken out over the Elgin Marbles. Greek Prime Minister, Kyriakos Mitsotakis, stated his disdain that the marbles are being held in the British Museum. Following this, his meeting with the UK was cancelled. The rightful owner of the marbles has long been contested and relations have thus reached a stalemate. – Tom Lindley

Rishi Sunak: the first year of the 5th Tory PM

Tom Lindley (he/him)
POLITICS EDITOR

THE PAST FEW years have been turbulent for Rishi Sunak. Joining the Commons in 2015, his meteoric rise to power has culminated in him holding the top job in British politics.

When his predecessor's greatest legacy was that her tenure didn't last as long as the shelflife of a lettuce, Sunak was bound to take over. Now, with mounting scandals, historic by-election defeats and an increasingly popular opposition, Sunak may have outlived a tin of tomatoes, but can he make it to the next general election and beat a tin of spam?

One year on, Sunak has set out five key priorities for Britain: halve inflation, grow the economy, reduce debts, cut waiting lists and stop the boats.

Sunak inherited an economy in turmoil, following the volatility of Liz Truss' 'mini budget'. He set out to bring the markets back into a state of equilibrium, with some success. Inflation has reduced to two thirds of what it was one year ago.

On economic growth, the Inter-

national Monetary Fund predicted earlier this year that the UK economy would contract by 0.6 percent in real terms. There have been positive signs of growth following the pandemic. However, these have merely been incremental increases, with the economy growing only 0.2 percent in August.

Sunak's third economic priority has been to cut national debts, as a proportion of GDP. Debt was thought to be over 100 percent the value of GDP earlier this year. Although this figure was taken prior to the GDP figures being updated, since then, it has fallen back down to 97.9 percent of GDP - which is still historically high for the UK.

Public sector debt has increased by around 2.5 percent since the new GDP figures were released. However, as inflation is higher than the Bank of England's 2 percent target,

the real value of the debt is less, but this will soon reverse if Sunak is to achieve his priority of reducing inflation.

With Covid-19 backlogs swamping the NHS, Sunak has made reducing waiting times for NHS patients a key priority - no doubt a key issue to voters, but figuring out how to achieve it is the question leaving the PM's critics stumped.

Analysis by the Health Foundation suggests waiting lists will rise to eight million and won't fall until next summer. Numbers rose by 100,000 in July alone, taking waiting lists to a record high of 7.75 million. This means that, since announcing his pledge in January, the numbers have increased by 550,000.

Supporters of Sunak have cited the many strikes undertaken by NHS professionals being the underlying factor to the waiting list increase. In September this year, junior doctors joined with

consultants in a historic display of industrial action.

The British Medical Association (BMA) published a report, stating that junior doctors have staged 19 days of strike action between March and August. Since then, they have been on strike a further two times. This continued industrial action is perhaps the lead cause behind the increase in the waiting lists, although talks between the government and the BMA have yet to make any significant progress. This shows that Sunak is partially responsible, as he is in direct control of pay negotiations and has yet to find a solution the BMA can get behind.

Sunak's final pledge has perhaps been his most divisive one: stopping the boats. This pledge refers not only to policies concerning the reduction of illegal migrant crossings, but also the plan to cut the asylum backlog.

The Prime Minister stated that migrant crossings in the first five months of him launching the pledge had decreased by 20 percent. However, the weather forecasts between January and May have been a significant contributing factor to the reduction of this figure.

As for current asylum seekers,

the promise that the backlog will be cleared by the end of 2023 seems increasingly unlikely. BBC fact-checkers have shown that at the current rate, it will take 23 months to make the decisions on the existing asylum applications.

The UK government signed an agreement with Albania last year to return Albanian asylum seekers. This had significant impact, as Albanian nationals accounted for 30 percent of all small boat migrants in 2022. A triumph for Sunak, as 1,788 migrants were returned within six months. However, this figure also includes foreign national offenders and voluntary returners.

The jury is still out on whether Sunak has achieved any of his five pledges. Inflation hasn't halved, but could by the end of the year. On economic growth, we are yet to see any real-term progress, as is true of nation debt reduction. His economic policies have yet to be fully met, but Sunak supporters will say on social policy, he has had some success. One might have to ignore the NHS waiting lists to fully back this idea, but in the case of migration, he has been relatively successful.



IMAGE: NUMBER 10

The student housing crisis is not going anywhere

Antonia Shipley (she/her)
DEPUTY POLITICS EDITOR

THE ARRIVAL OF the 16th housing minister in ten years and last month's decision to delay the Renters Reform Bill is a paradigm of the crisis surrounding housing markets; and things have never looked worse.

The Renters Reform Bill has been subject to parliamentary ping pong since its launch as a manifesto pledge in 2019. The Bill proposes to prohibit all section 21 "no fault" evictions and make it illegal for landlords to discriminate against renters in receipt of benefits or on the basis of having children.

Whilst this is a step in the right direction, it also leaves loopholes for rapacious landlords to exploit, particularly in its failure to regulate rent increases, meaning landlords can create large rent hikes and circumvent new regulations. Since the promise to ban section 21 evictions was made in 2019, over 54,000 households in the private rented sector have been threatened with no-fault evictions, and 17,000 households were evicted by bailiffs- yet still there is no sense of urgency to implement reform.

The student housing crisis sits firmly within this national struggle,

yet seems to be non-existent in political discourse. The student work app, Stint, ran a national survey of over 1000 university students, finding that 50 percent of students in Yorkshire and Humber have lived in housing deemed "unfit" for habitation (this includes students from York, Leeds, Sheffield and Hull). This is in spite of the fact that one in ten of these students spend their entire maintenance loan on accommodation.

The University of York Student Union (YUSU) published a report on the experiences of York students in the private renting sector. They found that around 80 percent of University of York students spend a greater proportion of their income on accommodation than the average UK private renter, yet 57 percent had experienced mould on walls and windows, 31 percent had experienced pest infestations and 16 percent had experienced gas, electricity, or fire hazards. This is having long term impacts on students, not only due to their safety, but their mental health, with 30 percent of students believing their housing situation has negatively impacted their mental wellbeing.

Evidently, young people are viewed as a lucrative profit opportunity in the increasingly unregulated

housing market rather than citizens with the same rights as everyone else.

Overpriced and poor quality housing is a distressing problem for all students, but particularly those from a widening participation background. Since 1992, the total number of students has doubled, but student housing has not been built to match this.

At the University of York, 57 percent of students receive help with housing costs from parents and guardians, yet for students from a low income background or those who are estranged, this is simply not possible. Even students in receipt of the maximum student loan find that the amount only just covers average student rent in York, meaning a numerous amount of stu-

dents have to work part time in order to make rent and often compromise their ability to fully apply themselves to their studies, diminishing the concept of 'widening participation' and instead, widening the gap between students from varying economic backgrounds.

If universities are to provide pathways to meaningful 'social mobility' there needs to be more effort dedicated to the student housing emergency. YUSU has launched two widely productive schemes this year; 'rate your landlord' and a one off rent grant for students living off campus. Whilst these plans will help students to alleviate some finan-

cial stress, the onus still lies on central government to solve the disastrous housing situation. The markets are pitted against young people, acting as a bulwark against student's aspirations, and for many, the wider crisis has inhibited them throughout their lives and will continue to do so.

It is not student's job to fix the housing crisis, but they have the right to be concerned about the future of student housing. The scourge of the housing crisis is implicitly political, a consequence of 40 years of deregulation and commodification of the housing market which has created a market impenetrable to those who are not wealthy. There's no signs of slowing down for the nation's property hoarders, with 68 Conservatives sitting in parliament known to earn a substantial income from being a landlord, there is little real impetus to create change.

It is important that student tenants partake in schemes such as 'rate your landlord' but also lobby MP's and representatives for rent caps and better quality housing for everyone, keeping the issue of housing at the forefront of priorities at election time. If change does not come, the housing war on all will rage on and eviscerate our hopes for the future.



IMAGE: TIERRA MALLORCA

LEFT WING

RIGHT WING

In the new Left Wing Right Wing, Nouse asks the political organisations on campus their view on the following:

"Given the ongoing conflict in Gaza, is the University of York's Ethical Investment Policy fit for purpose?"



Lib Dem Society

The University has certainly made some welcome declarations in their ethical investment policy, The UoY Lib Dems do not call for a ban on investing in arms companies, nor do we support the BDS (boycott, divestment, sanctions) movement. However, we do think that the University should be as honest and transparent as possible.

York Tories

The University of York Conservative and Unionist Association was approached by Nouse to comment but declined.

Labour Club

The University of York Labour Club's position has been made clear by the resolution we passed in October, calling for a ceasefire and condemning Labour Party leadership for their support of continuing the conflict. In this, we also must call on the University of York itself to divest from relations with arms manufacturers which fuel this conflict.

Black Friday and the Cost-of-Living Crisis

Bailey McIntosh (she/her)
BUSINESS EDITOR

AS THE CHRISTMAS markets are put up and the final pay-checks before December's spending spree roll in, retailers optimise the occasion; slashing prices, driving advertisements on the fatal Black Friday. As the fourth Friday of November arrives, consumers prepare to take full advantage and check off their Christmas to-do list in one day. Coined for its ability to place businesses in the black for the rest of the year, Black Friday for retailers becomes a saving grace for under-performance. Additionally, as one of the heaviest spending days of the year, for economists it becomes a valuable tool in the prediction of consumer confidence and economic health. However, can we fully expect the significant holiday to perform in the same way that it has throughout history, in this current monumentally priced market?

As the UK market was struck with a cost-of-living crisis in 2021, economists have been thrown aghast with unpredictable behaviour from both consumers and the global market. In 2022, for instance, spending on non-essential items dropped by a mountainous £4.4 billion, consequently predictors believed a 'day of discounts' would produce a staggering level of spending as consumers rush to make the most of the opportunity.

Some analysts, such as Wunder-

man Thompson Commerce, leant in the opposite direction, with expectations of 'Up to 50 percent off sales' dropping from £168.18 to £86.06 for an individual consumer. They expected that the cost-of-living crisis would have a far more detrimental impact on British consumers, making them more wary and conscious of their spending than last year. However, the detrimental drop in 2021 did not lead to a continual decline from 2020 to 2022. The slump in 2021 was a one-time occurrence as Black Friday sales in the UK recorded an 8.3 percent year-on-year growth from 2021.

Analysts from GlobalData and VoucherCodes predicted that for 2023, £8.7 billion would be spent over the Black Friday weekend, a 0.4 percent increase from last year. As Black Friday approaches and consumers begin to save their money for the big day, the sales begin to drop in the first weeks of November and phenomenally for 2023, a 6.2 percent drop was recorded for the second week. As the reports rolled in following this year's shopping spree, the predictions appear to fall short. Building from the Barclaycard transaction volumes, there was a 0.6 percent year-on-year decline in 2023 in addition to a 1.6 percent decrease in footfall. The disasters following the struggles produced by the cost-of-living crisis have reared their head for retailers relying on this day for resurgence. The spending on Black Friday this year only held a 2.7

percent increase in comparison to any other regular Friday in October.

However, has Black Friday's popularity been overcome by Cyber Monday? With online shopping dominating the modern shopping world, is there reason to speculate that the stark decline in sales on Black Friday is due to its online successor surpassing it? Yet, it still appears that Cyber Monday hasn't quite caught the same attention, but rather elongated the success of the sales event.

Many small, online-based businesses experienced an incredible surge of web traffic as the high street demand dies down and aggressive social media marketing demonstrates the new turn in marketing and retail. For example, Temu, a Chinese marketplace focusing on small fidget toys and games, were able to achieve a staggering 74,150 percent increase in web traffic from 2022, proving the impressive capabilities of maximising the online benefits of Black Friday and Cyber Monday.

In spite of these individual successes, the overall web traffic for the UK did not fall under a success story, with a whopping 12 percent decrease from 2022. There were big drops for certain companies, such as 45 percent for PrettyLittleThing, 43 percent for Asos and 30 percent for Boohoo – a lack of success for the fast fashion world.

In particular, one of the most staggering differences from predic-

tions is that of the monopolising e-commerce giant, Amazon. In 2022, the market-dominating company got 39 percent of Brits purchasing an item in their sales in addition to 51 percent of Black Friday shoppers making an impulse purchase. However, as we venture into the 2023 sales, Amazon was amongst the losing retailers, suffering from a 1 percent loss in web traffic; this may seem like a small number but in a failure to reach expectations, Amazon will already be searching to find solutions to turn these statistics around for 2024. Looking away from the current economic state as the reasoning for Amazon's surprising fall in success, many turn to Prime Day as the takeover in Amazon's sales day. The July sale from Amazon beat

Black Friday with an increase of £1.15 billion up from 2022 in the UK, a number that has only grown from the previous year. With the day marketed by Amazon to have "more deals than Black Friday", maybe the 'unsuccess' of Black Friday for Amazon is not as remarkable as it appears.

As predicted, Black Friday has not generated the same exceptional sales numbers as in previous years, and we may be expecting these numbers to decline for the foreseeable future. Slowly the long-term impacts from the cost-of-living crisis become increasingly evident and retailers may begin to implement more long-standing strategies to account for the drastic alterations in consumer behaviours.



IMAGE: GENE HAN

The Big Four: Remaining 'Big' for any longer?

Meadow Whelham Lewis (she/her)
DEPUTY BUSINESS EDITOR

EY, PWC, KPMG, and Deloitte. If you're a university student aiming to secure a graduate placement, it is highly likely that you have heard of the Big Four, which offer incredibly sought after opportunities. Currently employing more than 80,000 people in the UK alone, they have recently announced significant job cuts and limitations on bonuses, primarily impacting juniors and students.

In September this year, Deloitte warned employees of its plan to cut 800 jobs, using decelerating growth and the current economic climate as its justification. This figure means that Deloitte will be reducing its 27,000 workforce by 3 percent. It is stipulated that 20 percent of these jobs will be junior consultants, as 150 first and second year consulting roles have been selected. Overall, just under 19 percent of all cuts will be juniors. Deloitte's enterprise technology and performance wing will be hit the hardest, bearing the brunt of more than 60 percent of reductions. Meanwhile, graduate roles focusing on supply chains and IT will be slashed, impacting 18 first year graduates and 85 second year graduates out of 292 in total.

For graduates working in human capital management, the news remains bleak. 45 out of 172 will lose their place, with this figure accounting for over 50 percent of the depart-

ment's layoffs. Looking at the rest of the Big Four, cuts made by EY will be entirely focused on its financial services, reducing staff by 5 percent. With the current number of staff resting at 2,300 people, this means

Overhiring in the Pandemic caused the downfall of the Big Four

that 115 jobs will be lost. Yet EY has begun planning ways to counteract this, and has outlined its plan to create 1,000 jobs in Northern Ireland over the next five years.

In October, KPMG announced that it will be firing 110 people in its UK deals business, after it already declared that 125 redundancies would be made in its consulting department. Those working at PwC appear to be the least impacted, with staff being told to prepare for smaller pay rises and bonuses.

One of the first questions which presents itself is, how did it get to this? Many analysts have concluded that over-hiring during the pandemic has been a key catalyst to the downfall of the Big Four's job security. Additionally, the firms have seen a reduction in its staff turnover statistics, which are linkable to

the increase in interest rates and an increase in economic caution. It is likely that current employees at the Big Four see little opportunity elsewhere, enticing people to remain in their bubbles of familiarity until the UK's prospects appear more promising. Furthering expansion of staff retention means the increase in interest rates causes a reduction in merger and acquisition activity, leading to a decrease in the demand for company integration.

Another key issue has been disruptions to supply chain management. Fiona Czerniawska, the chief executive of Source Global

In this period investors threw money at internet start-ups in the hopes of making a profit, which eventually resulted in a mild recession. The tactics adopted to handle this were to eradicate excess labour to mirror demand which had not kept up with the extent of start up hiring and investment. We can now see history repeating itself with the Big Four and their acquisition numbers during the pandemic.

Whilst graduates who started working this year (September 2023) will be immune to the cuts, what about the students who are currently hoping to work for the Big Four?

thus more competition, leading to a more intense recruitment process. Current students can expect recruiters to be more critical when it comes to considering assessment results, interviews, and general performance.

In general, the job cuts reveal a specific trend, as the UK's demand in certain areas such as consulting is notably behind the rest of the world. Alternately, demand remains elsewhere, specifically in The Middle East. With it not being complete doom and gloom on a global scale, this means that opportunity remains in place for those who can afford to work elsewhere.

The impact of this is that those who cannot afford to move elsewhere for work will have to live with the limitations on accessing such opportunity, and thus the cuts can be seen as reinforcing the class disparities in the UK.

I'm sure many of us have had enough of living in a constant state of despair at current affairs, so I wish to end this report with some more positive news. Consulting Point recently released data which demonstrates that whilst the UK's consultancy demand is behind compared to the rest of the globe, internally we are still experiencing growth. Digital consulting demands are growing at 31 percent, whilst energy consulting is growing at 35 percent. This growth is attributable to the growing field of low-carbon technology. Therefore, hope remains for the UK and the stabilisation of its opportunities.



IMAGE: JOAQUIN CARFAGNA

Research, has likened the current climate to the ramifications of the dotcom boom between 1995-2000.

There will now be fewer graduate schemes and placement vacancies, meaning less opportunity and

AI: More Questions than Answers?

Meadow Whelham Lewis (she/her)
DEPUTY BUSINESS EDITOR

ChatGPT, online interviews, and Bard. Living in the year 2023 means co-existing with the rapidity of technological advancement. Accompanying this ever-changing landscape is a great uncertainty, and in many cases scepticism and anxiety. To accommodate this, the first ever global summit on artificial intelligence took place on the 1 and 2 November.



IMAGE: JAMES DUNCAN DAVIDSON

The main goal of the summit was to outline the dangers of AI, whilst seeking to attenuate them. Additional objectives centred on international collaboration for safety (namely how national and international frameworks can be supported), and ways to cooperatively evaluate its abilities. This has been deemed a “world first agreement”, reducing competitive pressures between key states like the USA, UK, and China. Other names who were present include: Michelle Donelan (the UK’s technology secretary), Ursula Von Der Leyen (the European Commission president), and Giorgia Meloni (the Prime Minister of Italy). Those who did not appear were Justin Trudeau (the Prime

Minister of Canada), Emmanuel Macron (the president of France), and Joe Biden (president of the USA). In many ways, their lack of appearance could indicate something more sinister than merely a busy schedule, suggesting a general apathy towards the subject matter.

Outside of governmental figures, many technological CEOs were in attendance, most notably Elon Musk. Despite his current development of ‘Grok’, an AI bot intended to challenge ChatGPT, Musk has been transparent in his warning against AI. He stated, “for the first time we have something which is going to be smarter than the smartest human”, rendering such technology “one of the biggest threats”. Acting on his fears, Musk founded OpenAI with Sam Altman in 2018, which is a non-profit research lab that makes its software open-source, preventing it from being controlled by a single person or corporation. This concept of reducing AI as a tool of individual power, whilst also broadening the market to ensure consistent checks and balances, is something that pervades the majority of AI discussions.

Commencing his own speech on the matter, Prime Minister Rishi Su-

nak declared “there is nothing in our foreseeable future that will be more transformative for our economies, our societies, and all our lives than the development of technologies like Artificial Intelligence”. With the government claiming to take the risks of AI as seriously as our current climate crisis, one may wonder what its explicit ramifications are.

Over the next one to two years, it could be possible for AI systems to orchestrate cyber attacks on significant infrastructures, subsequently resulting in the loss of electricity and water for targeted areas. The potential for AI to construct biological weapons or conduct chemical warfare has also been stipulated. The most commonly

There is nothing in our foreseeable future that will be more transformative

suggested outcome of this has been future pandemics, fuelled by the intention of wiping out civilisation. Thus, the summit’s main conclusion was to subsidise safety research. Harking back to the point above regarding the climate crisis, each country will commit to nominating its own experts to conduct such research, inspired by the

organisation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Adopting a similar sentiment, day two of the summit amounted to the agreed development of an independent ‘state of the science’ report, with this being led by the award-winning scientist, Yoshua Bengio.

Working in unison, Rishi Sunak and USA Vice President Kamala Harris will now formulate ‘world-leading’ safety institutes. These will seek to unify governments and AI creators, resulting in state-led testing of frontier models prior to their release. The institutes will also implement preventative measures to impede malicious actors from accessing dangerous AI tools. However, the logic behind this action is immediately flawed. With the outlined plan to reserve advanced AI for purely governmental usages, the threat of war and cyberattacks remains. The similarities between this plan and the one applied to nuclear weapons furthers this unsettling sentiment, intensified by recent nuclear intimidation. Does this then mean that soon enough, AI will also be utilised as a threat during conflicts? Additionally, will it merely be reserved to intensify certain global powers whilst being cut off from other countries, thus furthering global inequalities?

Further policies will be discussed at later summits, first in France and then in the Republic of Korea within the next six months. This means that the questions I have raised may soon have answers, no matter how bleak...

The economic impact of Swift’s Eras Tour

Orla McAndrew (she/her)
EDITOR

THERE IS NOTHING stopping the Taylor Swift ‘gold rush’ sweeping the globe, as the pop star takes her sold out Eras Tour from America to the rest of the world. You don’t need to be a Swiftite to know that Swift is dominating the music scene. From the release of *Speak Now (Taylor’s Version)* in July to 1989 (*Taylor’s Version*) in October, as well as the announcement of the international dates of the Eras Tour.

The Eras Tour was incredibly successful across the USA, taking place in Stadiums across the country. In Seattle, the dancing of fans caused seismic activity equivalent to a 2.3 magnitude earthquake, according to seismologist, Jackie Caplan-Auerbach. The economic impact of the tour on Swift has put her net worth past \$1 billion, a rare feat for popstars. According to QuestionPro (a market research firm), the Eras tour could generate \$5 billion in consumer spending, and that figure is just for the USA.

Can Taylor Swift still be called a popstar? The *Eras Tour film* (which she personally funded to bypass the cost of film studios), like many other things relating to Swift, debuted at Number One in the UK and Ireland box office, bringing in around £5.7 million. With the sheer amount of merchandise on her store and the loyalty of her fans, it may not feel like it to fans but Swift is an incredibly successful brand. When Swift releases the same album but with four differ-

ent coloured vinyls and CDs, dedicated fans will buy all four to have the full collection. David Herlihy, a Northeastern University professor explained that Swift sits in “a weird intersection of emotion and capitalism”.

Each night on tour, Swift plays two surprise songs, occasionally having guests come on, but these songs can come from any of her projects. For example, she recently performed



IMAGE: RONALD WOAN

‘Safe and Sound’, a song written for the *Hunger Games* film franchise. Fans want to go to more than one show because there is no way of predicting just what she will do. Carolyn Sloane, a labour economist from the University of Chicago explained to *Bloomberg* that “Taylor is a great economist, she has great ideas, is able to scale her ideas and seems to be pretty risk-seeking”.

Arguably the biggest risk Swift

has taken was to re-release her albums from her first self-titled album *Taylor Swift* up to *Reputation* after they were sold without her knowing and without her having the option to buy them. Would fans go crazy for another version of an album released years ago? The answer is of course yes, because it was never going to just be a re-release of an old album. Swift also released songs ‘from the vault’ which

hadn’t made it into the first version of the album for a variety of reasons. Perhaps the most influential vault track is ‘All Too Well (the ten minute version, from the vault)’ which also had a short film, specific ‘All Too Well’ merch and was a track that fans were desperate to hear. According to *Bloomberg*, music released by Swift since 2019 has an estimated value of \$400 million, another example of a risky move paying off for Swift.

It is not just Swift who is benefiting from this, but the cities that she plays in also see a huge, positive economic impact. Across the USA, hotel revenue for the days Swift was playing increased dramatically compared to the same weekend in the previous area. In Minneapolis, hotel revenue reached just under \$6 million when Swift was there compared to the \$2.7 million the year before. Over in Houston, city-wide revenue was up by 136 percent compared to the same period in 2019. This leaves one question: should the UK expect similar figures?

The Eras Tour will be visiting London, Edinburgh, Cardiff and Liverpool for multiple nights in each city. When Beyonce brought her Renaissance tour to the UK Global Edge reported sale surges of 30 percent and local businesses saw an increase in foot traffic as more people were visiting. Micheal Grahn (Danske Bank chief economist) explained to the *Financial Times* that wherever Beyonce played hotel prices boomed in what he described as having a “very rare” impact on the economy. The Online Travel Agency (OTA) is already seeing demand for accommodation for the cities Swift is playing in Europe boom. They are beginning to predict that Europe will see a similar economic impact to America, the OTA stated that even though the concerts are still a year away “some destinations are already experiencing high demand”.

Only time will tell whether the UK will see the same economic impact from Eras Tour. However, it is safe to say that it is looking likely.

Week in Numbers

A digest of the most important figures to know this week:



5.2%

The Bank of England held the base rate for the second consecutive time



20%

The estimated rise in cost for student accommodation in York since 2021, according to Charity Unipol



£2.5 billion

The size of Microsoft’s investment into AI infrastructure and skills within the UK



£84.9 billion

The forecasted value of Christmas retail sales according to the Centre for Retail Research and GlobalData

BANK OF ENGLAND: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
HOUSE KEYS: PXHERE.
LAPTOP: FLICKR, KARLIS DAMBRANS
SHOPPING: FLICKR, SVEN.HALLMANN

Science in Short
Declassified Cold War satellite images reveal roman ruins

After the recent declassification of Cold War spy satellite images of Iraq and Syria, new evidence is coming to light about Roman occupation of the area. Previously, 116 forts were discovered through imaging from a biplane in the 1920s and 1930s by Antoine Poidebard, a French archaeologist. They were thought to create a defensive wall at the border of the empire; however, with the new evidence, they appear to be but a small part of a much more extensive network, with 396 more structures in a scattered array uncovered. These suggest an interpretation centred around trade and movement, a notable change to the idea it was a wall to keep outsiders away.

Moon older than previously thought

In October it was discovered that the moon may be 40 million years older than believed. The discovery was made at Northwestern University, where scientists analysed the mineral zircon in rock samples from the moon on the Apollo 17 mission in 1972. While the samples used in this discovery have been on Earth for over 50 years, the technology needed for this analysis (atom probe tomography) has only been developed recently. It is believed the moon formed after a collision between Earth and a Mars-sized object. Zircon is the oldest known solid on the moon, as the first to crystallise there. The moon is now estimated to be at least 4.46 billion years old, while it was previously thought to be 4.42 billion years old.

Most detailed map of brain

A new collection of papers published in *Science*, *Science Advances* and *Science Translational Medicine* in October of this year, details the most intricate map of the human brain to date. In one study, Kimberley Siletti's team used single-nucleus RNA sequencing to analyse samples from 100 sections of the brain, yielding a catalogue of 3000 cells, many of them new to science. Another influential study showed a link between certain cell types and neurological disorders. Yang Eric Li's team tracked chromatin accessibility at distinct areas of the brain. Chromatin is a mixture of protein and DNA used to ensure that DNA is tightly wrapped in the nucleus of a cell. This formed a 'map' to navigate the brain, which eventually helped identify relevant cell types for 19 neuropsychiatric traits and disorders.

Tackling drug misuse in UK universities

Robyn Garner (he/him)

With thanks to Eitan Ostashinski and Jak Wright from York Drug Science Society

SCIENCE EDITOR

Drug misuse is a common issue throughout university, with increasing rates of spiking in various cities across the country. A wealth of misinformation continues to surround the topic, as well as poor information usually stopping at "Drugs are illegal, don't use them" throughout British education. Drugs are often portrayed as unambiguously 'evil', ignoring usage in medical context and often demonising addicts. York is lacking appropriate action compared to other universities across the country such as Cambridge, Bristol, Newcastle and Manchester. These universities are



IMAGE CREDIT: YORK DRUG SCIENCE SOCIETY

providing drug testing kits and training on their usage. Despite the current lack of action, there are those looking to change this.

York Drug Science Society (previously named Psychedelics in Medicine Society) is a multi-disciplinary society dedicated to educating and advocating for the medical research, safe use, science and surrounding history and culture of psychedelic and psychoactive substances. YDSS provides a space for research and discussion about these substances – with the aim of providing valuable and potentially life-saving information on safe-use. The new name reflects interest in all things psychoactive, including medical use of non-psychedelic substances like MDMA and Cannabi-

sis, as well as in the promising results that psychedelic substances such as Psilocybin and DMT have shown in recent clinical trials for treating mental illnesses such as treatment-resistant depression, addiction, PTSD and end-of-life anxiety. Furthermore, the new name allows them to widen their lens, capturing the world of prescribed drugs and non-illicit substances including SSRIs, "study drugs" and benzodiazepines. With the main goal of education and harm reduction around psychoactive substances, they seek to ensure safe use of all drugs, legal or illegal. While not condoning the latter, YDSS believes it is still important to support those who do explore such options.

Universities foster an environment where many people will explore drugs for the first time, the long sought-after independence university offers allows spontaneity and curiosity to drive decisions. A government report from 2020, "Drug misuse in England and Wales: year ending March 2020" suggests one in five people aged 16-24 report having taken a drug within the last year. This same report also shows that around one in 20 report taking a class A drug during the same period of time. Often, these new experiences with drugs such as cannabis, or even lower doses of drugs like Ketamine, refute what was previously taught. With the "all drugs are always bad" rhetoric overturned, "all drugs are good and fun" is an easy road to slip onto. Suddenly, what was harmless, one-time-only fun becomes a dangerous uninformed habit. A drug may be misrepresented as a different drug, or it could be contaminated with other drugs, knowingly or by negligence. Some drugs are even dangerous in small doses. Many drugs can cause addiction, or compulsive redosing, or can impair judgement, and this is not limited to those on the wrong side of the law. Alcohol, caffeine and nicotine

also all have their own form of harm to cause.

To the committee members of YDSS, harm reduction is the most important way to tackle drug misuse. After the clear failure of the war on drugs, with opioid drug fatalities in the north of England tripling in ten years, focusing on education and safety is evidently the more humane and effective approach when it is inevitable that people will continue to take drugs. Harm reduction largely involves real education about drugs, conveying what safer doses are, drug consumption practices as well as the problems with contaminated and "designer drugs" (pharmacological analogues – which may be more dangerous). The other side of harm reduction is being able to provide the necessary emergency medical care where drug usage has gone wrong, be it providing psychological care while "trip-sitting", or administering a life-saving dose of Naloxone (an opioid overdose antidote). This is especially important in environments like festivals. There are a number of charitable organisations that deal with this, such as PsyCare, a team of individuals specifically trained to provide medical attention.

YDSS provides free and open-to-the-public information about harm reduction, mostly in the form of guest lectures, and related topics. Furthermore, they have begun to campaign for the University to do more for its students as other universities have done. Another major drug issue is the prevalent spiking problem. There are countless stories about spiking in York, spread by word of mouth and printed news articles from a variety of local and major outlets. You'd be hard pressed to find a York student who doesn't know anyone who has suffered from spiking. This demonstrates the importance of harm reduction of drugs to everyone, be it to avoid spiking or to be able to aid others overdos-

ing with life saving antidotes such as Naloxone.

Naloxone is administered through injection or nasal spray and counters the effects of opioids, and it is incredibly fast, being a lipid substance. It distributes through the body in two to five minutes, and is finished acting within 40 minutes. It is capable of returning the breathing of someone who has overdosed to a normal level within two to three minutes. A synthetic N-allyl (a group with the same structural formula) derivative of oxymorphone, it is the first opioid antagonist to completely lack agonist activity, meaning it does not bind to and activate cell receptors which cause a biological reaction. It is highly effective on most overdoses. However, the increased use of fentanyl with heroin has reduced its effectiveness, meaning it must be administered multiple times or with extreme swiftness. New techniques such as naloxone-laden nanoparticles are a possible alternative. However as the antidote is still naloxone, it lacks the potency to affect molecules inclined to a certain type of opioid (mu) receptor such as fentanyl. Currently, it is the best option of reactive harm reduction we have against overdoses.

YDSS is working to provide students with education and resources to stay safe and knowledgeable. For example, next term, an event will be hosted with an instructor to teach people how to administer Naloxone in life-threatening situations. This is particularly important in light of the rise in fentanyl contamination. As an education-based society who believe strongly in the right to education, they have organised free public talks and events about drug use, drug policy, drugs in medicine and harm reduction. A project is in the works to bring drug testing kits to the University, via the student union. Potentially, this could save lives on our campus.

Yorkshire wildlife trust given funding

Shannon Reed (she/her)

SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

The Yorkshire Wildlife Trust (YWT) has announced that it has been awarded over £280,000 to fund the protection of three threatened species native to the region. In 2023, Natural England launched the Species Recovery Programme to provide financial support for projects aiming to halt or reduce the decline of threatened species in England. The programme will support local authorities, wildlife organisations and environmental charities in their projects across the country, in line with the UK Government's Environmental Improvement Plan. The funding received by the YWT will support three conservation projects: Dragons in the Dales, the Lady's Slipper Recovery Programme and Claws for Thought. In a recent announcement from the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, the

Deputy Chief Executive remarked on Yorkshire's importance in supporting nature, with the county supporting "two thirds of British flora... and around 70 percent of British breeding bird species." The funded projects will thus aim to "protect and restore" three threatened species that are following the nationwide trend of biodiversity loss.

The UK's orchids are also in decline, with Lady's Slipper flower believed to have gone extinct in the UK by the end of the 19th century following habitat degradation and over-picking. However, a chance discovery of a wild Lady's Slipper in the Yorkshire Dales in the 1930s has allowed scientists at Kew Gardens to propagate new orchids from the wild remaining flower. The Lady's Slipper Recovery Programme is a coordinated effort between the YWT, Kew Gardens PlantLife and the National Trust aiming to save Lady's Slipper orchids "from the brink of extinction." With seedling plants now successfully grown, the programme is identifying new and historic habitat

sites for orchid transplanting to occur. Although many of the orchid sites are being kept secret, this threatened flower species can be visited at Kilnsey and Malham Tarn in North Yorkshire.

The Dragons in the Dales project is aiming to restore the White-faced Darter in Yorkshire, where populations are now extinct. The White-faced Darter is a small dragonfly species that is facing extinction due to the conversion of peatland and bog pools for agricultural development throughout the UK. However, a recent project led by the YWT, named the Yorkshire Peat Partnership, has restored nearly 43,000 hectares of peatland which have begun to attract dragonflies and damselflies back. Consequently, the Dragons in the Dales project will seek to survey the restored peatland and bogland in the Yorkshire Dales which will later become sites of White-faced Darter release.

The final project to be awarded funding is the Claws For Thought partnership with the Yorkshire Dales Rivers trust, Flamingo Land, and members of the North Yorkshire Crayfish Forum. The Claws For Thought



IMAGE CREDIT: PAUL RITCHIE (2016)

Project aims to create new protected habitats for the White-clawed Crayfish, which is threatened by 'crayfish plague', carried by the invasive North American Signal Crayfish. The YWT describes North Yorkshire as "a stronghold for White-clawed Crayfish" and depicts so-called 'Ark sites' that will act as refuge sites for the threatened species.

The funding of these local projects is a significant success for the YWT following a competitive application round, and highlights the charity's importance in wildlife protection across the region.



IMAGE CREDIT: ANNA ZELINSKI

Will we ever find alien life elsewhere in our universe?

Freya Milwain (she/her)

DEPUTY SCIENCE EDITOR

From the philosophers of Ancient Greece to the modern day, humanity has always wondered if we are alone in the universe. After thousands of years the question remains: will we ever find alien life?

In 1950, Enrico Fermi asked the pivotal question: “Where is everybody?”, highlighting the apparent contradiction between the likelihood that other intelligent life exists and the fact that we have never been able to find it. This is now known as the Fermi paradox. From the Drake Equation, created by Frank Drake in 1961, we can predict the existence of at least ten intelligent civilisations that should be detectable from Earth in the Milky Way alone. In spite of this, it’s radio silence from space. Drake’s Equation depends on a host of factors relating to the probabilities of life appearing and developing into an intelligent civilisation, and the length of time that an intelligent civilisation is detectable for.

It is largely assumed that alien life would require conditions similar to the ones on Earth to develop. This idea is mainly centred around the dis-

tance a planet is from its star – it must lie in the star’s ‘habitable zone’ where the climate of the planet is such that water can exist in its liquid form on the planet’s surface. In addition to water, a planet must also have a host of elements, including carbon, nitrogen, hydrogen, phosphorus and sulfur, which form the basic ‘building blocks’ of life.

However, these aren’t necessarily the only conditions that life can develop in. It has been suggested in recent years that Europa, one of the largest moons of Jupiter, could have life under its vast oceans, despite the fact that it is outside of the solar system’s habitable zone, meaning the surface of the oceans are covered in ice. This year, the James Webb space telescope was used to find evidence of carbon under one of Europa’s oceans, building more evidence for the possibility of life. If life exists on Europa it will be far from an intelligent civilisation, but the prospect of alien life within our own solar system brings hope to the chances of finding it in the rest of the universe.

If life is able to develop, there are a

number of theories as to why we have never come across it. One of the main ones is known as the Great Filter. This theory states that there is some barrier to the

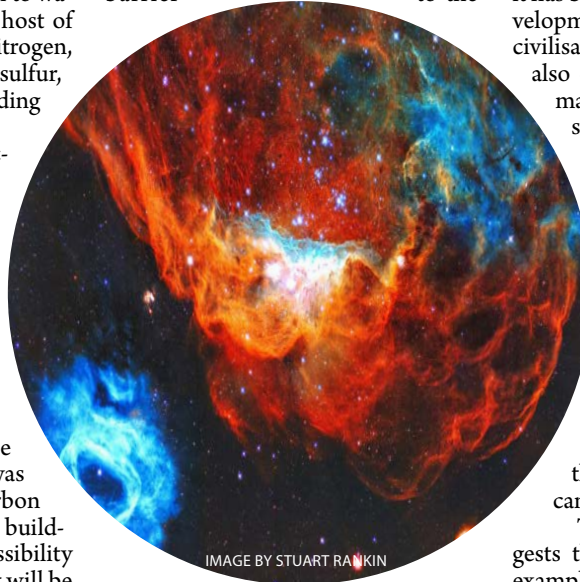


IMAGE BY STUART RANKIN

evolution of life, either before or after it develops enough to be detectable. This ‘filter’ has been theorised to be very near to the beginnings of life, possibly in the creation of life itself or in the jump

from prokaryotic to eukaryotic cells. This would mean that the chances of there being any other life in the universe at all is very slim. Alternatively, it has been suggested that after the development of technology that makes a civilisation detectable, the civilisation also develops technology that ultimately destroys them. Comparisons can be made with Earth and recent developments such as nuclear weapons and climate change. The estimation that there could be at least ten intelligent civilisations in the Milky Way assumes that a planet will produce detectable activity for at least 100 years, but if a civilisation destroys itself in a short amount of time after starting to produce activity, this estimation reduces significantly.

The Great Filter therefore suggests that humanity is either a rare example of a species overcoming the filter, or comes with the daunting implication that we may not survive as a civilisation for much longer. However, it is only one of many theories as to why we have never come across other intelligent life.

In 1975, astrophysicist Michael Hart published “An Explanation for the Absence of Extraterrestrials on Earth”, which suggested a multitude of reasons why aliens have never come to Earth. For example, it could be that aliens are simply uninterested in communicating with us, or that they have not existed for long enough to have the resources to do so. Hart suggested that aliens may have even already visited Earth at some point without making contact with us – we have only been on the lookout for alien life for a short amount of time compared to the age of the universe. Generally, we have a picture of intelligent civilisations as being similar to us in motivation and technology, but whatever life has developed separately from us could be vastly different to us and therefore not prioritise making contact with other life in the same way we do.

As it is, there are massive uncertainties and unknowns when it comes to estimations made in the Drake Equation, so we may never know whether there actually is other life out there. Despite the apparent impossibility of finding alien life within our lifetimes, humanity will continue to search for years to come to find out if we really are alone in the universe.

Development of male birth control... Where has it been?

Ben Morris (he/him)

DEPUTY SCIENCE EDITOR

Since the discovery that both sperm and egg had to be in union to produce an offspring in the 1850s, the burden has almost always fallen on the egg-carrier to work to prevent this union.

Scientists have worked for nearly two centuries to churn out options for female birth control – both hormonal and non-hormonal. However, many of these can cause life altering side effects and are not an option for all women. Contrastingly, the only two options for men – condoms and vasectomies – are non-hormonal and minimally invasive.

The responsibility of birth control in most heterosexual relationships almost always falls on the woman. It may be argued that this is due to the lack of options for male contraception. So where are the options?

The earliest evidence of orally administered contraception was in the ancient Greek and Roman colony

Cyrene, in Libya, where people often ingested the crushed leaves of the silphium plant – a relative of fennel. It was used as a coughing suppressant, aphrodisiac, food and, most relevantly, as a contraceptive, mostly taken by women to ‘purge the uterus’.

News spread fast of this miracle plant. Quickly, it became as valuable as precious metal. The reliance on silphium quickly led to its extinction. It has not yet been conclusively rediscovered, but its identity remains debated, as are its contraceptive properties.

The main obstacle to overcome when creating male contraception is the rapid production, and sheer number, of sperm. They must all be disabled and stopped from reaching the egg, hence why barrier methods are the easiest way to combat this problem.

In 2016, a study published by *The Journal of Clinical Endocrinology and Metabolism* reported a new, injectable male contraceptive that suppressed sperm production in 274

of the healthy male participants – reducing sperm count to around one million sperm cells per millilitre of semen; normal levels are anywhere above 15 million per millilitre. The injection regimen involved intramuscular administration of 200mg of norethisterone enanthate, the active agent, alongside 1000 mg of testosterone undecanoate, to counteract the reduced levels in male hormone from the treatments. These were administered every eight weeks.

During the study, only four pregnancies occurred during the ‘efficacy phase’ – the part of the trial that tests for how well the drug works – which monitored 266 men and their female partners. Many participants dropped out of the study during this phase, resulting in only 111 completing the final phase before recovery.

Following the 52-week ‘recovery phase’, 94.8 percent of the participants’ sperm counts returned to normal levels. This makes the drug sound promising, as it does not cause long-term fertility issues for the majority of subjects. However, in 2011, WHO intervened and stopped new recruitment for the trial, claiming that the rate of side effects reported was too high, with 1491 incidents reported, including acne, injection site pain, increased libido and mood disorders – similar side effects to its female counterpart. Yet, 38.8 percent of incidents reported were found to be unrelated to the trial.

Injections may not be viable for wide use, as administration requires training or professional help, so pills may be a better option. A study published in 2018 demonstrated promising results of orally administered dimethandrolone undecanoate (DMAU for short). Subjects were healthy men, aged 18 to 50, with



IMAGE: RAWPIXEL.COM

“general good health and normal reproductive function”.

This trial was double-blind, meaning some participants unknowingly received a placebo, others the active drug at different doses, and not even the researchers were aware of who had what.

DMAU works by suppressing two hormones on which sperm production is dependent: follicle stimulating hormone (FSH), which stimulates the production of sperm, and luteinising hormone (LH), which causes cells in the testes to produce testosterone. The aforementioned study shows that DMAU does just that. Over a 28 day regimen of this pill, the results showed that, as the dosage of DMAU increased, levels of testosterone, LH and FSH decreased. Researchers did not measure sperm count.

Longer studies will be needed to monitor its effectiveness in reducing sperm count, which the study did not do, meaning there are no conclusive results that DMAU reduces risk of

pregnancy – since the body takes 90 days to produce sperm, side effects may become more severe.

Side effects reported over the 28 days were similar to the injected drug: acne, change in sex drive – similar to the female pill – alongside mild erectile dysfunction and weight gain.

Indeed, there are many promising options, but studies demonstrate perhaps an inconsistency in how side effects for birth control are regarded. Studies into male birth control present side effects as unacceptable, worthy of promising trials being shut down, yet female birth control, that is already available, has many of these side effects and more. If these risks were viewed the same, regardless of sex, male birth control may have already been available. Such attitudes still hold back male birth control today.

There is still a long way to go, but the science is nearly there. Many studies are still in the works, now it is just a matter of time, money and resources.



IMAGE: MARCO VETCH PROFESSIONAL

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EDITOR'S COMMENT

Jude Cobb
(he/him)
SPORT EDITOR



THE FIRST PRINT edition of the year, and the first Sports section for the new Sport's Editorial team, oversaw a great deal in the world of sport. This entailed both the rugby and cricket world cups, the resumption of league football – for both the men's and women's games – Max Verstappen claiming his third Formula One World Championship and the victory for Europe in the Ryder Cup.

This is to say nothing of the resumption of both the University and college sports, as we will cover in this issue and for the remainder of the year. This semester's Battle of the Birds between James and Derwent college gave the first prolonged look at college rivalry for the year and in this edition, we look at a few key battles in the war.

Importantly, this semester also saw a number of our University and college teams participate in November, a charitable cause benefiting men's mental health. This method of giving back proves to be a key part of the University and college teams at York. This spirit is especially clear with the extra fundraising by not just the men's

teams, but the women's team's participation in different sponsored events.

As a completely new editorial team we have been working to adapt to the requirements and deadlines of the newspaper, it has however been a pleasure to rise to this occasion. I can personally thank the other editors for this, as we have made quite the formidable team. I would also like to extend my thanks to the senior editorial team who have offered invaluable support to us in getting our section ready to be published.

On a personal note, I am glad to be your sports editor, as – though I have my favourite sports, as both my present and future articles will attest to – I have loved the freedom I have had to get involved and learn about the joy of new and perhaps more niche sports, especially during the Battle of the Birds. I look forward to continuing our coverage of all the sports you all are interested in, along with the big stories in the sports world. Focusing on this edition however, I hope there is something for everyone in our coverage and that the newspaper is closed out as strongly as it deserves.

All the best,
Jude

Cricket, Darts and England as Class: should darts be the new national sport?



IMAGE: MARC A

Ethan Reuter (he/him)
SPORT CORRESPONDENT

THE POEM 'And did those feet in ancient time', by William Blake finishes on the line, "In England's green & pleasant Land". You may know this line, most famously from the hymn, 'Jerusalem'. 'Jerusalem' has become a rugby hymn, and whilst sung at other sporting events it's most commonly associated with Farrells and Vunipolas. It's known as a hooligan's game that's played by gentlemen, while football's a gentleman's game that's played by hooligans. Cricket, England's game, on those "green and pleasant" lands, is a gentleman's game that is played by gentlemen.

That was the way it has been for all these years, cricket, played in cotton whites on the fields of Great British institutions is deemed our national sport. The values which have been nurtured down the generations have diffused through a cricketing filter to make better men and a richer culture. To play with a straight bat means honesty and respectfulness, decency and sportsmanship, as much as that's not cricket means the antonym of these upstanding english virtues. The vernacular of cricket has been injected into our vocabularies. It's built and centred around the idea that cricket's values are England's values and our language is their language.

Cricket paints in beautiful brushstrokes a picture of all that England was seen to be, and how it wanted to be viewed. A portrait of endless hills, tranquil villages, Cotswold stones, and picturesque perfection. An impression inspired by the universities, the schools, and stiff upper lips. A watercolour of privet hedges hiding crisp, polished lawns, and heartwarming food. A romantic ode to an England of old, built on the backs of great men, driven by a culture of public service, and united in the pursuit of a better England. A cricketing England is an England of moth-ridden libraries and Scruton's conservations, of poetic prose and upstairs living.

It's all a very traditional, rosy look through the passage of time, ignoring the inconvenience of history and class, that view of cricket. The IPL isn't quite the quiet claps around the village green on plastic chairs, nor is Christopher Martin-Jenkins the right fit for the Barmy Army and Edgbaston wouldn't work with the Lords Pavilion as a stand. The idea of cricket as England's game, belies a heightened tale of history, of what cricket was then, and what cricket is now. It ignores the worldwide appeal of cricket, and how that worldwide appeal came to be. It ignores the way cricket is played in format and in style, neither Bazball nor the Hundred live up to such formalised expectations. It ignores the purpose of cricket as a so-

cial tool and for what purpose cricket is watched: entertainment and enjoyment. Such a view, rigid and unflappable in its class and hierarchy, may still be called England's game but it devalues what cricket has become and what England has become most importantly.

The upstairs downstairs, class based view of society which this nostalgia-driven idea of good cricket draws on as its northstar has gone long ago. In the formalised sense, England's class system died when introducing the 1958 Life Peerages Act, allowing anyone to be a member of the 'upper house' of British Parliament. In swings the 1960s, a time when progress music is played and heard by the vast majority of the country, signalling the first car, the first foreign holiday, the first signs of a new era.

From this point on a class-based system experiences successive humiliations as opportunities for all open up and rigidity of movement eases. The writer Martin Amis notes, money has won. Money stretches boastfully as the defining signifier of success because society wants your bank accounts not birth names. Class must put its hand down for now, no longer called upon to give the initial answer when asked, and so too should England as cricket. The new boy has arrived at the gates and shaken up the batting order, old boys be damned.

This upstart isn't so much high tea and Hurlingham club polo but rather a raspier, grittier side to England, a side that's more in tune with its character and backbone than cricket could've ever been. Played not on "green and pleasant" lands, surrounded by detached houses with gravel driveways and village shops, but in halls and wet-led pubs to a backdrop of cacophonous noise and sunk pints. It's the art of darts, signifying all that cricket clings to and more in its poetic richness and beautiful meritocracy.

Cricket has a high barrier to entry, requiring large green space, consistent manicuring and investments in both instruments and time taken. It is by no means golf, nor motorsport in stratification, however, it is inaccessible for a percentage of the country. Eton's 19 cricket pitches towers over an inner city comprehensive, monuments to England's disparity and inequality. Darts, in contrast, hold no such problem. Pubs litter the land, themselves having either a darts board or a pool table if you look hard enough on 99 percent of occasions.

The difference serves as a reminder of where England was and where England is now. We are no longer so upper crust focused but allowing all to participate if they wanted to.

One of my friends turned to me, while we were watching the darts, and said 'there's a quick trick to earn money

fast". No, he's not actually trying to sell me his course, again. Instead, he said, pointing with his Beavertown glass, pick the largest person competing and put a fiver on them. Why, you may ask, and I did, because they'll have spent longer time in pubs, drinking, competing, laughing, improving. "It has never failed", he claimed. Call it dumb luck or anecdotal evidence, the larger Englishman wins.

Watching darts on TV, the fantastic spectacle of it all, it's England encapsulated. Since 2008, the venue has been the West Hall of Alexandra Place, holding 3,200 in all their glory, or to give it its colloquial name, Ally Pally. Setup in long wooden tables covered with drunk pints fans hold 180 signs aloft to pulsing music.

The atmosphere is festively electric, inspired by a positively british drinking culture and energy. Nowhere else could it be the same. The Southern Europeans drink moderately over long lunches and evenings, Americans have a few bottles at the dive bar. Only here, on this island, with this weather, could there be this intoxicating intoxicated love of the stuff. The darts is the epitome of the most British of pursuits, a celebration of a drinking life.

It starts with the walkout music, itself selected by the players, Nathan Aspinall, from Stockport plays 'Mr Brightside', an invariable stamp on the minds of every Englishman (any woman) from Carlisle to Lands End. Joe Cullen, from Bradford, after quitting his job as a postman to focus on darts, plays 'Don't look back in Anger' by the Mancunians, Oasis. It isn't just an Eton and Harrow, Oxford and Cambridge anymore, there is variety in this country's sports and a three dimensional nature full of distinct and different character.

This contrast, in this green and pleasant land that stands so stark. The end of class and the emergence of new societal signifiers, that don't care where you're from. In the distinction between cricket and darts, we can chart our history. The romanticism and expanse of a forgotten era through our own revolutions and reformations. The end of nationalisation and the closure of the pits and the ability for anyone to go to university.

The change is in the notion that England claps politely in village halls to a truer idea of who we are. England can still clap but we can also shout boisterously, drink contentedly and laugh in the elation of good company. Gone are tails of formalised dinners and proper black tie dress codes. These changes to the inner workings of our nation over the course of a century can be traced, with sheet and pencil, on our movement from cricket to darts as truly representative of our national character, it shows us who we might've been in rosy reflection to now, in poetic, truly english, ecstasy.

NOUSE STAT ZONE

3

The three brothers, Beauden Barrett, Jordie Barrett and Scott Barrett, played for New Zealand in the men's Rugby World Cup final 2023 for the first time.

19

Max Verstappen dominates 2023 winning 19 races in the year, F1's highest percentage of wins in a season.

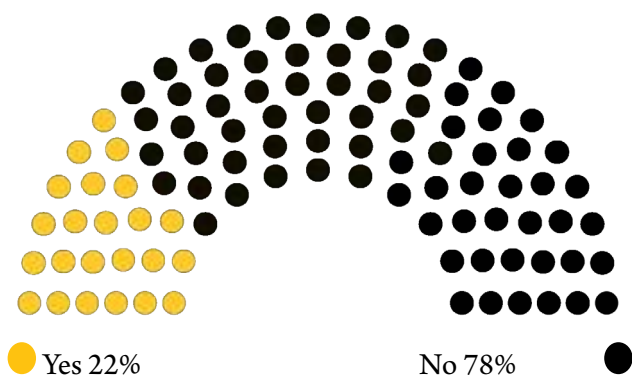
6

Simone Biles set a new record by becoming the all-around world champion six times, winning 58.399 points at the Artistic Gymnastics World Championships.

450

Over 450 claims from players in the Rugby Union and Rugby Leagues have been made as an increasing number of players are suing over head injuries.

POLL: Should darts be the national sport of the UK



Formula One Sprints: A failed experiment?

“Sprint races – in their current form – can’t continue taking away from the rest of the weekend”

Jude Cobb (he/him)
SPORT EDITOR

THE 2021 SÃO PAULO Grand Prix Weekend could be regarded as the greatest performance by an individual driver across a weekend in Formula 1 history. Lewis Hamilton set the fastest time in every qualifying session only to be disqualified for an illegal rear wing and had to start the sprint from 20th on the grid for the Sprint Race. He then used this sprint to rise up to 5th on the grid for Sunday's race which became 10th after a 5-place grid penalty. From this position he went on to drive an incredible race, eventually overtaking Max Verstappen for the lead on lap 58 and maintaining his championship challenge.

When compared to the same weekend in 2023, it was not only the lack of genuine competition to Verstappen's dominance that caused an arguably boring weekend, as the excitement of Lando Norris' sprint pole had little effect beyond the first corner of the Sprint Race and had absolutely no effect on Sunday's race, the pinnacle of the weekend. This separation of races on the weekend is something that would have made Hamilton's masterful display in 2021 impossible, as in the current format sprints split the weekend into Friday and Sunday for the race and Saturday for the Sprint Races. This raises a number of issues,

the easiest to dismiss is the fact that qualifying is on a Friday which limits its accessibility to viewers at work or school, as it more often than not occurs in the early afternoon. During the São Paulo sprint's Sky presenter Martin Brundle raised this issue, as no fan wants to miss the first competitive running of any weekend. He claimed it would be the most important change for Liberty Media when tweaking the sprints for next year.

This, however, is not the largest issue, as with the Sprint having its own qualifying and taking up all of Saturday it is reducing the reverence of Sunday's race, which is obviously the pinnacle of all weekends, with perhaps the jovial exception of Monaco – with its qualifying session being billed as the most important of the season. The Sprint Race is around a third of the race distance which when combined with around 30 minutes of “sprint shootout” qualifying makes the whole process take almost as long as the race itself, again taking away from the race, where the serious points are given out.

This brings me on to the next issue with sprints, the point distribution. Currently first gets eight points, second gets seven and so on, until eighth gets just one. This issue is two-fold, especially in the current climate

of Formula 1, with five clearly dominant teams – with perhaps a question to be asked about the downturn in performance from Aston Martin towards the second half of this season. This notwithstanding, the top ten and especially top eight positions before any given weekend can be assumed to contain drivers from those five teams, meaning more than likely, the teams that will be getting these single digit points will have hundreds of points



IMAGE: LUKAS RAICH

to their name in the championship. Though the old adage “every point counts” remains true even at these high levels it is unlikely that a haul of twelve points to six is going to change much between constructors who are regularly scoring podiums. I have alluded to the 2021 Sprints which didn't have the “Sprint shootouts” and only gave out three, two and one points for the top three, which though not perfect did a much better job of giving points and is generally similar

to the fastest lap rule. With this system, the sprints aren't likely to decide any championship positions, though it doesn't pretend it will, unlike the current system.

The essential issue is that the current distribution offers a small amount of points to the lowest teams, where individual points mean so much more, though the chances of achieving these positions is a lot harder, with two fewer positions to aim for. This issue was seen in the São Paulo sprint, as the Alpha Tauri cars both performed well in the shootout but were left to scrap for the bottom few positions, which ended with Yuki Tsunoda scoring three points for a sixth place finish, which would be worth eight points in a full race. Therefore, Alpha Tauri were limited to a three point gain due to a strong Saturday, whereas in 2021, this would have given the team two top ten starts with no points, but a higher chance to score bigger points in the race itself.

Despite the ludicrously low points, relative to the total points of the front runners, this year a Sprint coincided with Verstappen's title win. Only needing to score six points over the entirety of the weekend of the Qatar Grand Prix, Verstappen predictably took a noteless Sprint win

to confirm his third World Driver's Championship anticlimactically on Saturday. Though there have of course been arguably boring title deciders in the past, looking even to Hamilton's complete lack of challenge from Valtteri Bottas in the 2020 Turkish Grand Prix, it has always been decided in a race, Did Not Finish (DNS)'s notwithstanding. It is important to note that all of Verstappen's titles have been decided controversially, with 2021's contested season finale, and 2022's post-race penalty for his challengers. Though of course this year's championship battle was nothing beyond the first four races, due to Verstappen's dominance, the Sprint in Qatar took the final drop of excitement from Driver's championship for the season.

Therefore, though it is obvious that sprint races – in their current form – can't continue taking away from the rest of the weekend this doesn't mean that they are to go the same way as the 2016 qualifying experiment, as they have provided some incredible racing. The simplest fixes are clearly changing the points system to either very little or a much higher amount, rather than this unproductive middle ground and to axe the shootout, as it only confuses the weekend. One huge positive is that, contrary to the 2016 experiment, the ownership of F1 are clearly committed to experimenting to try and improve the viewing experiences of the fans, along with of course, their bottom line.

James Triumph in Battle of the Birds Varsity

“In a game of missed free throws, the talented James attack in open play proved decisive”

Jude Cobb and Charlotte Tabart

SPORT EDITOR AND DEPUTY
SPORT EDITOR

THE WEEKEND OF THE 17-19 November saw the start of the 2023 Battle of the Birds varsity between Derwent and James college. Following the victory of Derwent in 2021 and James in 2022, both colleges set out to reclaim their victories.

On the first night of Battle of the Birds, after success for James throughout the day, both James and Derwent supporters lined the JLD waiting for the match to start.

The match had a dramatic opening with Derwent quickly taking possession of the ball to score the first goal. However, this did not deter the James team who followed with two goals in quick succession in the eighth and tenth minutes

of the match, leading to great cheers from the James supporters. These celebrations continued as after being given a corner the James team scored once again.

James continued to dominate the match but Derwent refused to give up, scoring another goal in the 46th minute. But this was shortly followed by a James goal scored from a penalty that meant that game reached halftime at a score of 4-2 to James.

But this was quickly followed by two goals from the James team and here James continued to dominate the match. Both teams scored another goal before the match hit half time.

In the second half, both teams continued in the attempt to secure the victory for their college, but James continued to dominate possession of

the ball, scoring another goal. Leaving the match as a 5-2 victory for the Swans.

Success for James continued across the weekend, especially with the Netball teams. The James and Derwent Netball 1s, 2s, 3s and 4s played throughout the weekend in which James won three with the Netball 4s ending in a draw on Saturday.

The James 2s team gained a massive win of 19-4 as the players continued to dominate the game from start to finish. They had a strong start, scoring seven goals to Derwent's one. But Derwent came back fighting in the second half closing the gap by scoring three more goals, however the brilliant match did end in James' victory.

Taking place before the opening ceremony, the men's basketball game had an electric start with the James team quickly taking the lead, with a couple of unspectacular, yet important, baskets. This was followed by a return two pointer from Derwent. These back and forth baskets were the order of the day for the first two quarters. It is important to note however the poor discipline of the Derwent defence, giving away multiple free throws, though none were converted in this section of the game. The Derwent attack were equally ineffective, despite scoring six points they had one free throw ruled out for an infraction,

meaning they failed to level the game to 7-7, with James eventually stretching their lead to 11-7 at half time.

The third and fourth quarters followed a largely similar pattern, with James eking out a small lead, despite their lack of quality from free throws, though they did eventually score one. Importantly however, they did give away multiple baskets following missed free throws and effective counter attacks from Derwent. Despite this, they saw off the challenge with two late, morale destroying baskets, to cause an early capitulation from the Derwent players and to come out 20-15 winners. Therefore, in a game of missed free throws, the talented James attack in open play proved decisive.

This extended their reclaimed lead in the Battle, picking up the torch from the volleyball and women's foot-

ball team, after James' victory in the early cricket match.

The James College teams then continued this dominance across the whole weekend, with the eventual score reaching 41-10 in favour of the Swans. With the darts closing ceremony emblematic of the Battle, with James claiming the final five points, to increase their victory margin. Though Derwent did demonstrate quality in cricket, rugby and table tennis their lack of ability to take points in the majority of sports proved to be their undoing. This is to take nothing away from James and their dominant performance, in the three sports discussed, as well as during the rest of the weekend.

Therefore, James took their second victory in the varsity in as many years, surely a huge morale boost, as they look to retain the title next year.

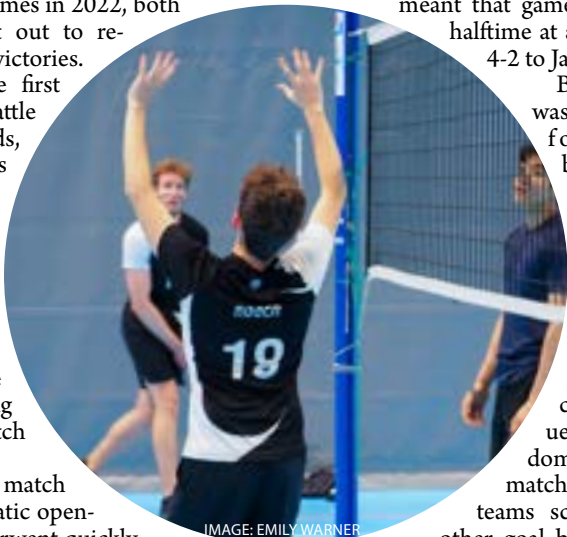


IMAGE: EMILY WARNER



IMAGE: EMILY WARNER

Sport News in Brief

More funding for women's football announced

Following the Lionesses' success at the Euros 2022 and the latest FIFA World Cup, recognition of women's football has increased massively. Evident with funding of £30 million being announced on the 29 November 2023, sourced by both the UK government and the FA. The money will be used to further accessibility to women's football, especially in schools and grassroots sport facilities, with the aim to fund 30 new facilities.

Darwin the duck

York Sport has recently announced their first ever sport mascot. Darwin the Duck has been working to motivate sports teams on campus and encourage the learning of new skills.

University of York Mover fundraising

With the end of November comes the end of Mover with another amazing fundraising effort across the University of York. The Mover fundraising surpassed their goal of £35,000 to reach £38,668.04 with the top ten fundraising teams being sport teams.

New Rugby League Rules

The Rugby Football League (RFL) have announced a raft of amendments to the rules in anticipation of the 2024 season. They primarily focus on player welfare, enabling teams to use their 18th player after two head injury assessments down from three, previously. There were also changes to the ruck area and scrum.

York City FC vs Wigan Athletic

Having beaten Chester 2-1 at home in the first round of the FA Cup, York City FC faced Wigan Athletic in the second round. The game on Friday 1 December was played in freezing temperatures, heavy fog, and in front of BBC TV cameras. Wigan won 1-0 with Stephen Humphrys scoring the only game in the 61st minute.

England at the Cricket World Cup

Proper planning and preparation prevents poor match performance

George Roberts (he/him)
SPORT EDITOR

ENGLAND'S DEFENCE of their ODI World Cup was at best lacklustre and at worst abysmal. This is the first men's team to hold both the T20 and the ODI World Cups simultaneously and a team that contains 11 players who played in 2019 in the 2023 squad.

True, one Australian has replaced another with Matthew Mott taking over from Trevor Bayliss as coach; Eoin Morgan was the captain and now it's Jos Butler; but aside from that England's top three run scorers from 2019 were playing this time and two of the three top wicket-takers also playing. Jofra Archer was the third but he missed out through injury. In other words, this is a squad with proven champions.

So, what happened? How can a team of such vast experience be so dreadfully out of form? What preparation did the team have this time round? "England played 88 ODIs between the 2015 and 2019 World Cups compared with 43 between 2019 and 2023", I hear you declaim. That is indeed true but the picture is more nuanced than that.

Naturally, the Covid-19 pandemic severely impacted the ability of nations to play international cricket. England have had the largest percentage drop in matches but have still played more games, just, than Pakistan and Afghanistan, both of whom finished above them. The gap to Australia is only seven games, to

New Zealand six, and South Africa three. This is hardly a significant number of games and is certainly not significant when the top three of Malan, Bairstow, and Root have played 304 ODI games between them. Woakes, Willey, and Rashid have been involved in 328 between them,

Although 11 out of the 17-strong squad were retained from 2019, significantly the leadership has changed. Matthew Mott took over as white ball coach in May 2022. Before, he successfully led Australia Women to two World Cups, held on to the Women's Ashes four times, and won the Sheffield Shield (the Australian First Class Competition) with the New South Wales Blues at the first time of asking. So, he is a coach with a serious pedigree. However, his record at the helm with England leading up to the World Cup has been mixed, playing 29, winning 13,

26 games, since then winning ten and losing 14. A record that is poor on paper however Morgan endured a similarly poor start to his captaincy. He lost 13 of his first 26 games in charge. At the 2015 World Cup, he won two out of six as opposed to three out of nine this time round.

Butler had played 151 games before taking charge scoring his runs at 39.68. His average as captain, however, is 33.64. Although it has increased in IT20s. By comparison, Morgan's average increased from 39.29 over his career to 42.29 as captain. Albeit Morgan's sample size is much larger having captained in 118 of his 248 ODIs.

The cricketing world was full of praise when Butler was appointed white-ball captain. Former Yorkshire all-rounder, Azeem Rafiq said "the minute I met him it was obvious Jos had everything about him that you look for in a leader". Warren Hegg, formerly of England and now Cricket Operations manager at Lancashire CCC and the Manchester Originals, said "Listening to his team talks, when he speaks, people listen". Notwithstanding that he won the T20 World Cup in 2022, it would be hard to argue that England have picked an inadequate captain. It is hard, therefore, to lay the blame at Mott's and Butler's doorstep. As the adage tells us, cricket is a team sport

made up of individuals.

So, let us look at the XI that triumphed by 93 runs



IMAGE: BEN SUTHERLAND

against Pakistan in the last game of the World Cup (see the other table below).

This is a team that simply hasn't played enough cricket in the last four years. Whilst rotation is important, there have to be more opportunities to let the first choice players play and to work out the ideal team. It was only in the last two games against Netherlands and Pakistan did England use the same team consecutively.

During the World Cup it was clear that England were short on cricket, short on runs, and short on wickets. They hit only the 11th highest score in the tournament whilst suffering the fourth greatest defeat by 229 runs at the hands of the South Africans. Dawid Malan was their highest run scorer, but only 11th overall, and Ben Stokes next in 28th. Adil Rashid took the 14th most wickets with David Willey next in at 23rd.

Perhaps even more importantly, England played only six games on the Indian sub-continent since 2019. Three against India in March 2021, losing 2-1, before journeying to Bangladesh in March 2023, winning 2-1. The England teams in both felt relatively familiar bar a few exceptions: Jason Roy played all six of these games; Ben Stokes only played the India games; James Vince and Phil Salt played all the Bangladesh games. Notably, Joe Root nor David Willey played in either of these series.

Hundred has had a seismic impact on English domestic cricket since its first edition in 2021. Owing to the schedule, it forces players to choose between county, List A fixtures against depleted sides or the Hundred against international elite players. For the up and coming limited overs player it is an obvious choice. Previously, there had been a clear pathway to the England One-Day side. Now however, Gus Atkinson made his England debut after two List A games.

With only eight ODIs scheduled from now until the end of the 2024 summer and with the Hundred looking likely to clash with the domestic One-Day competition for the foreseeable future, and with many players approaching retirement, England's chances at the Champions Trophy in 2025 look slim. The future looks uncertain for English ODI and for how long ODI cricket will be played.



IMAGE: CIELL

and losing 14.

Jos Butler was appointed as Eoin Morgan's replacement as white-ball captain in June 2022 and has played

	2015-2019*	2019-2023*	% played in comparison to 2015-2019
England	88	43	48.86%
India	86	71	82.55%
Australia	76	50	65.79%
New Zealand	76	49	64.47%
South Africa	74	46	62.16%
Pakistan	80	42	52.50%
Bangladesh	62	59	95.16%
Sri Lanka	85	61	71.76%
Afghanistan	63	39	61.90%
Netherlands	2^	40	-----

*NOT INCLUDING THE WORLD CUPS IN THOSE YEARS
^ONLY HAD ODI STATUS SINCE 2018

	ODIs played between 2019-23	% of total played
Dawid Malan	20	46.51%
Jonny Bairstow	24	55.81%
Joe Root	24	55.81%
Ben Stokes	13	30.23%
Jos Butler	27	62.79%
Harry Brook	6*	50.00% '
Moeen Ali	31	72.09%
Chris Woakes	15	34.88%
David Willey	21	47.83%
Gus Atkinson	3^	50.00% '
Adil Rashid	27	62.72%

*DEBUT ON 27TH JANUARY 2023
^DEBUT ON 8TH SEPTEMBER 2023
'PERCENTAGE OF GAMES PLAYED SINCE DEBUT

BookTok, ice hockey and the sporting world

Sport romance novels are taking BookTok by storm proving that what's going on off the pitch is just as important

Orla McAndrew (she/her)
EDITOR

THE SPORTING WORLD is vast, full of an array of sports and a plethora of ways to get involved. However, and this is a bold statement to make in the Sports section, nothing has ever really held my attention. Aside from bothering my dad while he was trying to watch rugby (sorry dad) and attempting to learn on the go whilst covering Roses last year my knowledge of sport is limited to say the least and I know I am not alone in this.

As a literature student, there is one area where my knowledge is thankfully not limited. Pair that with some light university work, procrastination, a Kindle Unlimited subscription, and a mild TikTok addiction and I entered the world of sports romance. BookTok has already played a huge part in how authors market their work and how readers share their love of novels. The hashtag #BookTok has been used in over 60 billion videos. This is also impacting the sales of

books with authors that have a large following on TikTok generating more than \$750 million in sales (according to Circana BookScan).

Books that have a strong focus on sports are even driving new fans into the stadiums. Potentially no sport has seen the impact of BookTok quite like ice hockey. From Hannah Grace's *Icebreaker*, to Stephanie Archer's *Behind the Net* and of course Becka Mack's *Playing for Keeps* series. All the popular romance tropes (enemies to lovers, friends to lovers, best friend's brother, grumpy sunshine, and the controversial surprise pregnancy) just hit different when set against the backdrop of an intense sporting competition.

I am well aware that a spicy sports book may not be considered the height of literature (I personally disagree with that statement) but the impact they are having on the sporting world cannot be disputed. For someone who has never taken an interest in sport, I have been introduced to a variety of new teams, cultures and a whole new world of sports.

Something hits different when

you're reading a book that pairs a fiery romance story with the intensity of ice hockey. Do I understand the rules of hockey? Not really. But I can't

say that you really need to when it comes to a sports romance. All it does is give you an insight into the sports and maybe means that I definitely have unrealistic expectations about the lives of sports players.

It's not just the girls who are benefitting from the rise of sports romance, individual teams are mak-

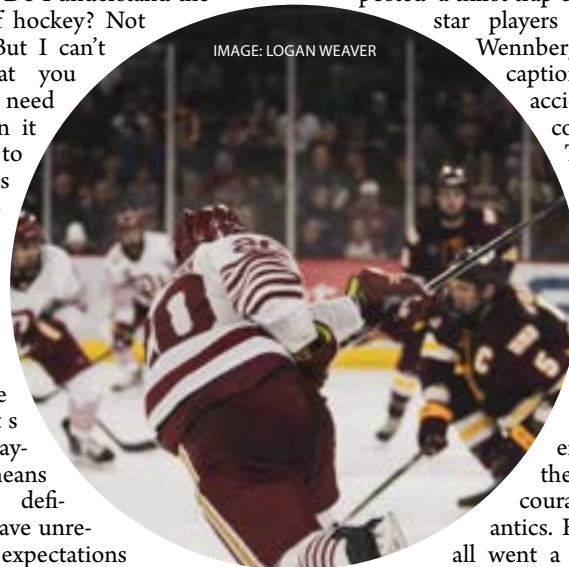
ing the most of the extra advertising. Over the summer the Seattle Kraken's

posted a thirst trap of one of their star players centre Alex Wennberg with the caption "when you accidentally become a BookTok account and now that's all you can post." This put BookTok in a shambles, finally one of the teams was not only engaging with them but encouraging their antics. However, this all went a little too far

when the player's wife spoke out about the hate she had been getting from BookTokers. One of the main accounts that had engaged with the Kraken's apologised both pub-

licly and privately and the majority of booktokers reiterated to their audience that BookTok should be a safe space for people to share their favourites, upcoming releases and just have fun.

The summer may have been all about ice hockey but as we settle into the cold winter months there is only one sport to read about; the NFL. This may have been helped by the relationship between global superstar Taylor Swift and the Chief's tight end Travis Kelce. This is a romance practically lifted off the pages, two seemingly opposites come together in a whirlwind of appearances at games, tours and restaurants before solidifying their place as relationship goals. It was obvious that they were going to get the BookTokers talking (and honestly I can't blame them). So now the 'it' sport for BookTok is American Football, but who's to say what will come next? What is for certain though, is that the romance genre will keep focusing on the sporting world and hopefully help the popularity of some more teams and sports rise.



Halifax Football

▶▶▶ Continued from back

the Vanburgh Women's team 3-0. The team excitedly discussed their 'emotional' first win as all their training had finally paid off. This win clearly set them up for future success, their next match, also ended in a victory. Namely a 4-0 win against the Derwent's Women's team on 19 November.

Parkinson described how their first win had brought them together. "We're not just a team, we really feel like there's a sense of community", which has grown from the players rooting for each other through losses and wins, creating the strong team they are today. This is clear in their match day celebrations, which Sheppard describes as like no other teams, as their enthusiasm is clear as the whole team runs onto the pitch to celebrate their goals. It's this enthusiasm that the co-captains want to keep moving forward. Keeping that 'passion' for the sport as the whole team improves together.

This community feeling is present both on and off the pitch with the team's socials, which are both themed nights out and games nights, for the team to get to know each other outside of football. Co-captain Grace Parkinson describes this as particularly important as football is not just a sport but a way for people to get to know each other and create long lasting friendships.

During my meeting with the team it was clear that they are a welcoming and supportive team. The co-captains described how, with new members joining the team throughout the year, they work to involve everyone. They focus on this as with it being a college sport everyone is there for different reasons, not only to improve their

fitness but to be more sociable and make new friends. Parkinson and Sidhu describe how "it's tough at times" to cater to so many different levels of interest and ability. With no external support, they are the ones who organise all the drills and training which bring together the novices and the experienced players. They have been successful with these new players being on the team and helping Halifax win more games. The co-captains are happy to welcome any new players: "Come and give it a go if you fancy it! Everyone is welcome".

I also met with Millie Browne, who had just joined a few weeks before. She described how she was really enjoying the sessions, "it's somewhere to have a bit of fun, get out the house, meet new people".

For my final question I asked what their favourite part of being on the team was, and for the co-captains it was definitely how far the team had come since starting a year ago. It was great to see their pride in creating a safe space where women can go and learn a new sport and have fun. Something that seems so simple but from their experiences growing up and the struggle to set up the team, it is clear that some sports are not always as accessible for women. However, the struggle definitely paid off as the team spoke of their love for the training sessions. Sheppard said, "my favourite thing is probably the match days just because of the support we get with everyone supporting us on the lines. It really pushes you to try your best".

Check out the team on Instagram @hcvfc_ and if you're interested in trying out, the team trains every Tuesday 6-7pm on the JLD and they welcome anyone to come along, no matter what your level of experience is.

In Brief: Rugby World Cup

George Roberts (he/him)
SPORT EDITOR

ONCE, TWICE, THRICE...

South Africa triumphed for the fourth time, the first nation to do so, beating New Zealand 12-11. It was the first New Zealand-South Africa final since 1995. 1995 marked South Africa's return to the global sporting stage since the end of Apartheid and epitomised with Nelson Mandela, in a Springbok shirt, presenting the Webb Ellis Cup to Francois Pienaar.

Discipline

New Zealand captain and flanker, Sam Cane, became the first man to be sent off in a Rugby World Cup Final, previously only Ben Smith, in 2015, had received a card in a final. Three more yellow cards were awarded with one to New Zealand and three to South Africa. Overall, eight red cards were awarded in this edition the same as in the 2019 instalment. However, 56 yellow cards were handed down in comparison with 28 in 2019. England were the only team to not have a player warming the seats in the sin bin as opposed to five last time.

The Northern Hemisphere Can't Win Knockout Matches?

Wales, Ireland, and France all went unbeaten in the Pool Stages and lost in the quarter-finals. England, also unbeaten in the Pools, survived a late surge against Fiji (30-24) in the quarter-finals. This left them the sole Northern Hemisphere team in the semi-finals, narrowly losing to South Africa (15-16). Both New Zealand and South Africa suffered defeats in the Pool Stage but came back to face each other in the finals. 2019 went better for the Northern hemisphere with two representatives in the semi-finals. However, 2015, hosted in England and Wales, all the Northern



Hemisphere representatives departed in the quarter-finals.

It's not all about Tier One

The Portuguese rugby team pushed ahead of the author in the queue for security at Montpellier airport in September but they did produce some brilliant rugby beating quarter-finalists Fiji in a Toulon thriller (24-23) and drawing to Georgia (18-18). This was their first World Cup victory at only their second World Cup. Samoa came agonisingly close to humbling England (17-18) and Argentina (10-19). Uruguay gave Italy (38-17) and France (27-12) a run for their money. Fiji reached the quarter-finals (losing 30-24 to England), beating Australia on the way (22-15). Japan almost became back-to-back quarter-finalists but for a tight game with the Pumas (27-39).

A Second Tier Future?

World Rugby announced plans for a Nations Championship to begin in 2026. It will alternate between the July and November Test windows, Lions tours, and Rugby World Cups. Importantly, there will be promotion and relegation, but not until 2030 and

no formal plans have been announced. The gap between Tier one and two nations was, at times, painfully obvious. Romania, for example, conceded over 70 points in three of their outings. In a glimmer of hope for Tier two, England "A" are due to play Portugal in February 2024 but there is still a dearth of test matches for Tier two nations. Argentina entered the Rugby Championship – competing against Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa – in 2012. Three years later they were semi-finalists at the World Cup.

A Trio of Statistics

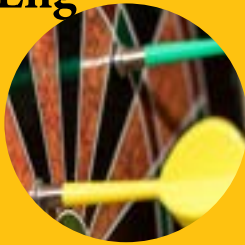
New Zealander Will Jordan scored eight tries across the tournament. Heequalified the all-time record, drawing level with compatriots Jonah Lomu and Julian Savea and South African Bryan Habana.

Sam Whitelock of New Zealand (2011-23) now has the most appearances at World Cups with 26.

Henry Arundell managed five tries in one game against Chile. Impressively, not a World Cup record as that accolade is still held by New Zealander Marc Ellis who run 6 past Japan in 1995 (it ended 145-17).

Cricket, Darts and England as Class

In a sport comment piece *Ethan Reuter* looks at what should be the national sport of the UK **P.24**



Battle of the Birds

Jude Cobb and *Charlotte Tabear* report on James College victory in Battle of the Birds **P.25**



The cricket world cup

George Roberts reports on England's performance at the cricket world cup **P.26**



SPORT



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Tuesday 12 December 2023



IMAGE: HCWFC

Nouse speaks to Halifax's women's football team

Halifax women's team discuss success, building a society, and the future ahead of their first year anniversary

Charlotte Tabear (he/him)
DEPUTY SPORT EDITOR

APPROACHING THEIR FIRST year anniversary, the Halifax Women's Football Team has gone from strength to strength, winning their first match against Vanburgh Women's football team on 11 November. As a member of Halifax college last year, I thought it would be great to interview the committee members to see the journey of the team.

Until last year Halifax, despite being the largest college, was the only college not to have a women's football team. If women wanted to play they would have to play for other colleges. The co-captains, Grace Parkinson and Nina Sidhu, discussed the negative effects of this as Halifax members would always feel unsure if they could join another team and ultimately be discouraged from playing football. The co-captains themselves did this play-

ing for Alcuin Women's FC last year until deciding enough was enough.

Sidhu and Parkinson described the 'slow' process of setting up the team, in which they received a lack of support from Halifax College Sport. They described the stress of seeing a badly organised poll on a Facebook account with low followers to gauge interest, not on the main Halifax Instagram. From this the college deemed there was not enough interest within the college to warrant funding, disappointing the co-captains who knew there was interest as a number of Halifax women were already playing in other college's teams

Despite the co-captain's attempts, ultimately Halifax college was reluctant to help set up the women's team, despite being the only college without a women's team and already having five men's teams. Nevertheless, Parkinson and Sidhu persisted. They used what equipment they could find

and spread the word themselves by putting their own posters across campus.

They knew it was 'crazy' that their college didn't have a women's team and believed there was interest and they were correct. After a taster session on the 22 acres field outside of Halifax, a solid team slowly began to grow with people returning each week.

The team welcomes any ability, from those who have played for years to those who have never played before. From the start the co-captains wished to provide a place for women to be able to play football, knowing that many have not had the chance.

Jessica Kennedy, the treasurer and social sec, was one of the first members to join the team after seeing the poster in the Halifax Circuit Laundry building. Kennedy described how she'd "never played for a girl's team, there were no girl's teams near [her]

where [she] grew up". Similarly, Indianna Sheppard, the vice captain, hadn't belonged to a women's football team before, despite having teams in her school, as a lack of members meant the teams would be stopped. Sheppard stated that, "that's always been an issue for me playing football", highlighting the importance of this team as now any woman at the University of York has a chance to represent their college and play football.

Today, this team is officially a part of Halifax College Sport and they had their first freshers fair this year. Not only were they able to meet the other Halifax teams, which have been established in the college for years, they got to welcome new freshers and raise awareness of the team.

Despite being a new team and finding new members of differing abilities, the team has had great success playing against other college teams this year.

The team described a "frustrating" start to the year with matches ending in losses and draws. They knew they could play well as a team, as they would make a great start to matches only to lose by one goal in the end. The co-captains discussed the importance of continuing to train their new team, as they knew that they had the potential: "everything was there for us, it was just getting that win". Out of the four college matches they had played in October and early November they had lost two and drew two. "We really really needed a win", said Sheppard after these matches, and this was soon to come.

On 11 November 2023, the team had a double fixture, playing against both the Vanburgh Women's team and the Medics Women's team. The team drew 1-1 with the medics but the day ended on a high as the girls received their first win, as they beat

Cont. 27