



MUSE: Muse-ical run down of the Grammy Awards

Alexandra Pullen (she/her) recaps winners, record breakers and scandals at the ceremony

M12

IMAGE: COLBY SHARP

Power Sharing Resumed in Northern Ireland

Isobel Moore (she/her) reviews the Republic of Northern Ireland's future

P8



IMAGE: SUZANNE PLUNKETT

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Ukraine war, two years on

Alanah Hammond (she/her)
NEWS EDITOR

SATURDAY 24 FEBRUARY marked the two year mark since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, a genocidal war which has killed thousands of citizens. Millions have fled Ukraine as refugees to surrounding countries such as Poland but also further afield, including the United Kingdom.

The University of York has a small but tightly-knit community of Ukrainian students, all with different experiences of how and why they left their homeland. Some have been in British education for many years, but others are experiencing it for the first time on scholarships created because of the invasion.

One year ago, Ukrainian scholarship student Vitalina Shevchenko founded the University of York's Ukrainian society. I interviewed Vitalina about her achievement, and we reflected on her journey to York. It does not feel like a year has passed since that conversation, yet Vitalina has now graduated and has been living in Ukraine for the past two months.

This week I met with Vitalina and her friends – Ira Lebeaga, Vika Skiak and Mariya Kuzmenko – to discuss the anniversary.

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ILLUSTRATION: EMILY CHRISTIE



IMAGE: NADIA SAYED

The University of York's Health Sciences department stimulation room, where students are given practical training as preparation for their placements.

Student Nurses Speak Out: Emotional Toll of Patient Deaths and Lack of Uni Support

Nadia Sayed (she/her)
DEPUTY EDITOR

ON 30 JUNE 2023, the NHS released a Long Term Workforce Plan, outlining its vision for the future trajectory of the NHS. One of the objectives outlined in the plan is the enhancement of the NHS workforce, involving the reformation of current training of healthcare workers including student nurses.

Within the workforce plan the NHS communicated that they aim to train "5,000 NAs [Nursing Associates] in both 2023/24 and 2024/25, increasing to 7,000 a year by 2028/29".

However, the escalating attrition rates among nursing students across the UK have resulted in concerns regarding the feasibility of achieving this target – especially within the specified timeframes.

One individual expressing significant concern is Pat Cullen, who

serves as the General Secretary and Chief Executive of the Royal College of Nursing.

On 14 February 2024, Cullen issued a letter to the Secretary of State, which drew attention to the fact: "New data from UCAS reveals a ten percent decline in nursing degree applicants to universities in England compared to 2023. This represents a 26 percent decrease in just two years, marking the lowest number of applicants since 2019".

Cullen also wrote: "Failure to address these critical issues will make the ambitions set out in the NHS Long Term Workforce Plan unattainable". The full letter can be accessed on the Royal College of Nursing website. However, nursing degrees have not only seen a reduction in applicants but also in the number of students completing the full course of their degree.

Data collected from 125 individ-

uals, found that, after one year of studying BSc(Hons) Adult Nursing at the University of York, 83 percent of students continued with their studies (data entrants in 2020-21). However, seven percent of students left without obtaining their qualifications and eight percent took a break from their studies after one year on the course.

Nouse asked Professor David Barrett, Deputy Head of the Department of Health Sciences, what he thought of the NHS' Long-term workforce plan. "The principles behind it are absolutely sound. From an apprenticeship perspective I also really support it", said Professor Barrett. He also highlighted a key challenge in achieving this plan, which is the fact that nursing is a difficult environment making it harder to recruit and retain staff by stating: "If people don't feel they have the support they need, then like any job, they will leave. So, retaining staff in certain areas is difficult as well".

In light of the evident decline in the completion rates of undergraduate nursing degrees, Nouse engaged with several students at the University of York to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the current state of student nursing.

One of the students Nouse interviewed is in their third and final year, studying BSc Adult Nursing. Due to an incident which occurred during one of their placements, the individual has requested anonymity, and will be referred to as 'the student'.

Firstly, Nouse asked the student: "Which aspects of studying nursing at the University of York have most positively influenced your overall experience?" The student began by explaining that, as an individual with dyslexia, they appreciate the way York separates term time between academic teaching and placement.

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A NOTE FROM THE DEPUTY EDITOR

Welcome to Nouse #506



Nadia Sayed (she/her)

Welcome to the second print edition of Nouse this academic year!

Despite being half the size of our usual editions, this issue still packs a punch with some excellent articles. Nouse 506 has been challenging work, with a reduced team of writers, editors and the aftermath of the post-exam period. There's also been debate in the office on the risk of us developing frostbite with the lack of heating, and whether we could be successful journalists typing solely with our elbows. However, I am overjoyed that it has all come together in the end and really hope you enjoy reading our labour of love.

In this edition, you'll find an emotionally charged and beautifully sensitive interview article by Alanah Hammond. Within the article, Alanah commemorates the two-year mark since Russia's invasion of Ukraine, including insightful conversations with the University's Ukrainian society.

Also in the News section, there's coverage of the hurdles faced by student nurses and Jess Sherburn writes about York's 'flexible' stance on admitting international students next academic year, and the surge in parking prices in the city.

In the Comment section, Evie Banks debates the value of refreshers week, particularly for second and third-year students. You'll also find an article by Rebecca Leyley delving into Rishi Sunack's strategy for the upcoming General Elections. Daisy Couture writes on the argument for the ban of disposable vapes and Millie Simon discusses the upcoming General Election.

Over in Politics, Millie Simon discusses Britain's relationship with the Middle East and Antonia Shipley guides us through Rochdale's political history.

Meadow Lewis takes the helm in the Business section, addressing the timely Post Office scandal and assessing the future sustainability of cars powered by hydrogen.

In the Science section, Robyn Gardener delves into the thought provoking question 'is the anthropocene unscientific?' and you will also find an article on the ban of Sandeel Fishing in UK North Sea and Scottish Waters written by Shannon Reed.

Last but never least, over in the Sports section,

you'll find a personal reflection by our Muse Editor, Emily Warner, on her running journey. Additionally, George Roberts explores the future of professional women's cricket. Millie Simon also contributes her thoughts on women's football this year and Jorgah Herbert explores whether people still care about local rivalry in Sport.

In other news, our brand new Nouse and Muse radio shows continue to air! Don't forget to catch up on previous episodes of NouseCast and Mus-ings on URY On Tap if you haven't already!

Finally, I'd like to take a moment to give a massive thank you to everyone who has contributed to this print. There are a few individuals without whom this print edition would not have been possible! First and foremost, a heartfelt thank you to Chris Stapleton, who has worked tirelessly to ensure each article has undergone the necessary legal scrutiny and has provided invaluable assistance with lay-up (even if his Indesign skills are a little rusty).

Thank you to Alanah and Jess for your support with the News section and Millie Simon and Antonia Shipley for dedicating time to help with the Nouse lay-up!

Of course, this editor's note would not be complete without thanking Ellen and Emily for their support. Despite their busy schedules with Muse, they have generously dedicated their time to assisting me with Nouse. Your support has been invaluable so thank you both!

Lucky for you lot, this won't be the last you hear from Nouse. Next month we will also be working on our YUSU Elections Supplement as this year Nouse will be exclusively revealing the YUSU candidates. For all that and more you can find us on all social platforms @YorkNouse.

If you would like to get involved with us, please get in touch with either Emily Warner, Ellen Morris or myself.

For all other questions and inquiries, feel free to send a message to our general email: inquiries@nouse.co.uk

That is all for now! I hope you enjoy reading Nouse #506.

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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Is the anthropocene unscientific? P. 10

IMAGE CREDIT: KL CHONG

Student Nurses facing extreme isolation at York

▶▶▶ Continued from front

Nadia Sayed (she/her)
DEPUTY EDITOR

They stated that this was a key factor which had influenced their decision to study at York, as opposed to other universities.

Despite the initial assurance of support for their dyslexia, the student expressed disappointment regarding the lack of support they have received from the University. "The support has been really limited, and I have had to go out and find a lot of support on my own" the student explained.

In response to this, Professor Barrett expressed that he was "really sorry" to hear, that in the case of this particular student, they felt they had to "fend for themselves" and he encouraged the student to reach out to him directly, should they feel comfortable doing so. Professor Barrett further commented that he recommends that prospective students, and those already studying at the University, engage with the support available. "Once we know that somebody has got those additional needs, we can make those adjustments [and] we can provide whatever support is required," he remarked. "I think [that], with the central University's support systems coupled with the additional support offered by the department, I hope, for our students, does provide the support they need" Professor Barrett added.

The student further opened up about their challenges, disclosing the fact they had considered dropping out of their degree on multiple occasions. When *Nouse* asked about the specific triggers behind this contemplation, the student indicated a pivotal factor – an especially challenging nursing placement.

Although the student had reached out to the University with a request for reallocation, they informed *Nouse* that they were told to continue with their current placement. As a consequence, the student had to persist with this challenging placement, despite expressing the fact it was having a detrimental effect on their mental wellbeing.

The University of York's policy on re-locating nursing students to alternative placements are managed through the placement change request process. Professor Barrett explained that allocations are made a few weeks before students officially start their placements; providing them with enough time to identify any particular issues. He explained this includes issues such as accessibility, financial concerns or personal matters. In this instance, the University explained to the student, that they were unable to relocate them to another placement due to the limited time and availability.

The student also highlighted another challenge, noting that they were placed in an elderly ward where they encountered eight deaths during a twelve-week placement. "For all eight of those deaths, I had to do the last rights including washing and wrapping the body – which is emotional in itself," the student said.

They continued to state this was a highly emotional experience, which was exacerbated by their perception

of the "de-sensitisation" of qualified nurses on the ward. Instead of being given sufficient time for reflection and to discuss their feelings regarding these deaths, the student emphasised there was a complete absence of follow-up on the ward. "Nobody asked me 'how do you feel about this' or 'are you okay?' It was like let's go onto the next thing and just ring the porters to come and pick up the body".

York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust have stated: "The comments do not represent our students as a whole and we regularly receive positive feedback from our student nurses. We have an excellent partnership with all our higher education institutes. This includes regular meetings to discuss student issues and review placements which are regularly evaluated, and any feedback and learning acted upon.

"The health and well-being of all our staff, including students is important to us. When students are allocated to a placement they are all given a named practice assessor and a practice supervisor to ensure they feel supported. Students can also speak to practice education facilitators who are assigned to all placement areas, where they are encouraged to raise any issues they may have in a confidential and safe space. In addition, most wards also have a designated professional nurse advocate who is there to support all nursing staff, including students".

The third year continued to comment that the only time student nurses can stop and fully process their day of placement, (each twelve hours long) is once they arrive home. However, the student noted that, at this point, exhaustion from the day has set in.

This prompted *Nouse* to ask the question: 'What is the University doing to prepare student nurses for dealing with patient deaths and do you feel this support is enough?'

The student replied: "In first year, you have a whole term of theory before you go on placement and in that term of theory, there needs to be more discussions about the fact that, as a student nurse, you are going to see people die. You subconsciously know that [you will witness deaths], but you don't realise how impactful it is until it happens".

This led *Nouse* to inquire about the department's efforts in preparing student nurses to handle patient deaths. Professor Barrett, in response, emphasised that, as a department, they actively incorporate strategies to address challenges encountered by students during their clinical placements. This encompasses the practical elements of performing the last offices and dealing with the emotional aspects.

Another issue which contributed to the students' negative experience of placement stemmed from their fear of saying "the wrong thing" while consoling grieving relatives. The student emphasised the variability in how each relative responds to a patient's death, adding: "Each relative reacts differently and when a patient does die, you then have to look after the relatives of that patient". They explained student nurses must adapt

to the unique demands of each situation, which has increased the emotional burden of their responsibilities.

When *Nouse* asked what could be done to better prepare students for these circumstances, the student voiced the need for greater conversations about the emotional impacts of patient deaths. They also commented that student nurses should be given greater guidance on how to console relatives who have suffered a loss.

Acknowledging the University's provision of a space for students to discuss patient deaths, referred to as the 'Death and Dying Cafe,' the student stated the cafe was only available for second-year students. They stated that this was "pointless" as they think the Cafe needs to be accessible to students in first-year.

Professor Barrett clarified that the decision to postpone the 'Death and Dying Cafe' until second year is to enable students to not just discuss potential encounters but also to allow time for reflecting on their past experiences with patient deaths. He explained: "It is absolutely possible that students may see deaths in [first year] during their first placements, so there is a temptation to think we [should] talk about it loads in the first

"When you have reduced holidays, reduced social chances, no wonder people drop out"

term. But we also don't want to scare students off or give people complex information that they are not quite ready to deal with".

Nevertheless, he emphasised that introducing more sessions for students to discuss patient deaths earlier on in the course, is something he would consider implementing in the future and discuss with the department moving forward.

Now that they are in the final year of their nursing degree, the student attends 'End of Life and Communication' seminars, which they remarked are "great". However, their primary concern is: "What we learn at university doesn't reflect in placement, as you don't have those moments to debrief on placement".

Loneliness is another issue which student nurses have to contend with, often due to the structure of undergraduate nursing degrees. The student explained that at the University of York, nursing students have shorter holidays than students on different degree courses, such as Arts and Humanities.

Nouse asked the final-year student if they felt the lack of breaks between teaching and placement during their degree thus far had impacted them – the student confirmed they had indeed made an impact.

During their interview with *Nouse* (which

took place in mid-January 2024), the student explained that their housemate, a third-year English Literature student, won't be attending teaching until mid-February of this semester (2023/2024). However, as a nursing undergraduate, the student has already completed a whole month of teaching. "We are always the last ones by ourselves in the summer... Yes, we have each other, but you feel alone on campus. All the cafes on campus shut down and you think, I don't even have social spaces [to visit on campus] at the moment, because to them [the University], they are finished for the semester. It feels lonely sometimes, especially if you don't live with other nurses" the student said.

They continued to express: "We only get two weeks off at Easter and three weeks off at Christmas and then six weeks over Summer. It never feels like enough time... you don't have time to check in with yourself. Instead, we [student nurses] just have mental breakdowns. It is the only time where we will cry. It's like you just don't get a break for the whole three years. When you have reduced holidays, reduced social chances, no wonder people drop out".

When *Nouse* asked if the student felt like their inability to join societies and attend other university-based events had negatively impacted their university experience, they replied: "Massively. Massively. I was part of a sports society but I had to stop because it was too much. I was getting stressed".

The student also told *Nouse* that they work part-time which has further reduced their time and energy to join societies. "We [nursing students] do not have the luxury of time like other students to fit into societies and sports groups. A lot of nurses then miss out on the university experience," they remarked.

NurSoc is a student-led society which predominantly targets student nurses and trainee nursing associates at the University of York. When *Nouse* asked NurSoc if they could comment on the challenges faced by student nurses, a member of the society told *Nouse*: "There are a number of challenges faced by student nurses today nationwide, and every student will have their own perspective on this".

The NurSoc member further explained: "Our society aims to provide space for student nurses to relax with other student nurses. We aim to provide an informal space with people who understand the challenges of the course".

Although the student stated they were familiar with NurSoc, they explained the society was not really of interest to them, given the fact they already lack opportunities to engage with non-nursing students and the wider student community.

Nouse then asked how confident the student feels about entering a career in nursing, post-graduation to which they replied: "I think the NHS is in a state of crisis". However, they said the only option is for healthcare professionals to carry on. "We cannot stop nursing. We do it for the patients at the end of the day. But I think there is going to be a lot of turmoil in the

next coming years depending on the government of the UK".

The financial burden which derives from the cost of commuting to and from nursing placements also proves to be a challenge for student nurses.

Nouse spoke to Zaria Ugonna, a second-year undergraduate at the University of York, to develop a greater understanding of her experience as an international student nurse.

Firstly *Nouse* asked whether Zaria felt like her experience as an international student was different to domestic students. She replied: "As an international student, I would say the biggest difference is that we do not get any financial compensation for travelling to placement or buying accommodation to be closer to placement".

The second-year nursing student further detailed her experience, highlighting that she was assigned a placement that posed challenges in terms of accessibility through public transport. Upon raising the issue with the University, Zaria was presented with the solution of renting accommodation in closer proximity to the hospital – where she was due to complete her placement. However, she expressed, this was outside her financial capabilities. Zaria stated: "When I explained to them [the University] that I was [an] international [student] and that this accommodation would have to come out of my pocket, they were not understanding".

Zaria remarked that the University had left her to her own devices, instructing her to independently navigate the cost of commuting to and from her placement. "I ended up needing to travel four hours a day to get to placement just to make it on time for shifts. I wish that the department took this into consideration and would send students who cannot drive to locations that are a bit easier to get to" she stated.

Due to national policy, whilst most domestic students are entitled to receive a £5000 non-repayable support fund, international students are not.

Nouse asked: 'Given the inability of international students to access the same support as domestic students, how is the department supporting international students?' to which Professor Barrett replied: "There is no doubt that this is an additional burden on them [international students]. It is something we try and take care to acknowledge when we are allocating placements. It is something that we, and other universities have highlighted on a national level".

He further acknowledged the fact that the lack of financial support for international students is unfair: "These are still incredibly motivated students who will be a really important part of the future of the NHS workforce. We [the department] feel that they should therefore get the same support".

Also on the subject of finance, *Nouse* asked if and how the cost-of-living crisis had affected Zaria's studies and her experience of placement. Zaria replied: "I have to budget tremendously to be able to afford to get

▶▶▶ Continued from page 3

transport to placement which can add up to considerable amounts...I have had to skimp on food shops near the end of the month to be able to afford to get to placement”.

When *Nouse* asked about additional challenges she had encountered as a student nurse, so far, Zaria mentioned that the difficulties during her placement primarily stemmed from the broader problem of understaffing within the NHS.

As stated on the Royal College of Nursing website, student nurses “should not be placed in a situation where adequate levels of support cannot be guaranteed.” Nursing students should also not be placed “to make up the numbers”.

However, Zaria expressed she felt she had been brought into work, to compensate for NHS staff shortages “on many occasions”. She explained this has been to the detriment of her ability to immerse herself in practical learning during her placement.

Zaria further stated that during her first year as an undergraduate nursing student, she was inappropriately assigned the “sole responsibility” of watching over an elderly patient to ensure they did not fall or acquire any injuries. She expressed: “It was not appropriate for York Hospital to assign me to do this as I did not have the experience needed to provide proper support effectively. The patient was not in proper care due to my lack of experience.”

York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust responded to this by stating: “End-of-life care forms part of the nursing programme; however, at times, students will experience the reality of the role, although should never be expected to do anything outside of their scope of practice”.

When *Nouse* questioned how Zaria has navigated these challenges, including balancing her placement with taught theory, she explained that her friends have been crucial in reducing her stress levels and allowing her to feel less lonely. “I have effectively managed to cope with the pressure of this role because of the friends I have made on placement... It is really helpful to be able to meet up and talk to them about the things I’ve experienced and know that they are going through similar things,” Zaria said.

Nouse also spoke to Olivia Bull, who graduated from the University of York in 2023, after completing an adult nursing degree in 2022.

When *Nouse* asked Olivia if she felt her degree had adequately prepared her to enter a career in nursing full-time, she replied: “I think that when I qualified I was shocked at having the responsibility of a nurse. When you are a student you are aware that you can make mistakes as you are there shadowing [qualified nurses and healthcare professionals] but as a qualified nurse you feel the pressure to be perfect”.

Nouse then inquired if Olivia had a positive experience as a student nurse.

In response, she stated she enjoyed studying at York and found the University to be very supportive: “I was offered occupational health support for my mental health and also encouraged to take time off when I was struggling. I had a personal supervisor called Alison who was very supportive and was available on short notice when I needed help”.

Finally, *Nouse* interviewed second-year nursing student Josie Conbib. When *Nouse* asked if Josie felt the University of York sufficiently supports student nurses she replied: “Honestly I feel like they do as much

as they can do but it’s a structural problem and the solutions we need are beyond the capabilities of the University”.

Josie further commented: “Financial pressures are at large seeing as we do 2500 hours of unpaid work over the three years.” She stated this reduces the time student nurses have to earn money through paid work during their degree.

Furthermore, Josie stated she thinks the current state of student nursing is a national problem which needs to be tackled by the government. She proposed student nurses would be better off if they earned an apprentice wage, rather than having to complete their training and degrees, unpaid.

Despite the existence of petitions advocating for student nurses to receive a minimum wage payment for their placement work, the government’s stance remains unchanged, maintaining the policy of not providing payment to students throughout their undergraduate nursing degrees and mandatory placements.

Nevertheless, nursing unions including the Royal College of Nursing, are continuing to plead for more support for student nurses.

Students are encouraged to reach out if they are struggling. Professor Barrett highlighted that students can still reach out to the department and the University during their time on placements. “If anybody is finding placement difficult or worried about something they have seen, just talk things through with us and wherever we can help we will help”.

For more information on how and to access support, students can visit the University of York’s dedicated support page. Support is also signposted on the Royal College of Nursing website.

NHS improvements

Jessica Sherburn (she/her)
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

ACROSS THE UNIVERSITY of York and Hull York Medical School, a collaborative experiment is being conducted by researchers to study the cause of health inequalities in North Yorkshire. This aims to improve the lives of North Yorkshire’s residents, particularly the most vulnerable.

In North Yorkshire, 1 in 17 residents live in areas considered among the 20 percent most deprived nationally, according to the University of York’s research page. £5 million of research funding has been granted to the NIHR (National Institute for Health and Care Research), part of a £55 million scheme that will cover 11 areas of England and Wales. This cash injection aims to boost research capacity on the discovery of the issues people from North Yorkshire face to their health.

Work on the project was estimated to begin on January 1, 2024 with no new data coming to light at this time. However, this may be because the collaborative experiment between the NIHR, the University of Hull and the University of York is part of a five-year programme to hopefully aid how the Council of North Yorkshire can improve its services. Therefore, it may be a while before we see any results. Professor Helen Weatherly, from the University of York and the academic lead, stated that: “it’s a tremendous honour to be part of this exciting new grant”, before saying how she hoped to make a difference to the lives of people in North Yorkshire, alongside the University of Hull, which York is twinned with, and the North Yorkshire Council.

North Yorkshire Council executive member for health, Cllr Michael

Harrison, is quoted as saying that “research shows us that education, income, housing, and access to transportation play a significant role in an individual’s overall health.

“This collaboration will help us better identify the local social economic and environmental factors that influence the health and wellbeing of our residents and help the council with our partners to shape policies and interventions that promote health equity.”

While it may not be obvious how this will affect university students, it potentially can. If, as Harrison states, this will help “identify the local social economic and environmental factors” that influence health in North Yorkshire, students living in York, Hull and other areas may see improvements in health equity as much as the locals.

The co-chief investigator, Dr Pearson, states: “Research is an essential component of public health, helping us to understand the determinants of health, identify and address health inequalities and evaluate the impact of new approaches or interventions.

“We will work in partnership with North Yorkshire Council to share our research knowledge and expertise and support them to build capacity and capabilities in research, which we hope will facilitate improvements in health within the region.”

Where a person lives can have a great effect on their overall health. According to the University of York’s research page, although the general population of North Yorkshire is in “good health”, diverse areas also exist within the region including urban, rural and coastal environments which must be researched in order to understand the health factors of the public of North Yorkshire.

Parking costs set to rise in York

Jessica Sherburn (she/her)
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

YORK CITY COUNCIL plans to charge £20 a day to park in York’s car parks run by the council. Members of the public have described it as “dangerous” and an “extortionate” proposal, whilst students worry about the effects this cost this may have on visiting parents and friends.

This decision comes as part of a series of cuts and price spikes in the City of York Council’s budget. This increased fee is part of a plan to cut £14 million from its 2024-5 budget.

Hourly daytime charges will increase by 30p and day charges will now cost an extra £2, making the total cost £20. With the plans already being backed by senior councillors, a vote by the majority meeting is set to happen on 22 February.

Pete Kilbane, executive member for transport, said: “Increasing parking charges isn’t an easy decision but it’s necessary to stave off making bigger cuts elsewhere in the budget beyond those we’re already being forced to make.

“So far increasing these charges in past years hasn’t deterred people from parking but we will continue to monitor the impact prices have on demand.”

However, this is not something felt by all members of the public and

student body. Ahead of the meeting, interviews conducted by the BBC spoke to people using the city’s council-run car parks to find out how the change would impact them. The majority of respondents spoke about the extortionate price, the possibility of more illegal and dangerous parking and the use of public transport being overwhelming with an already limited amount of buses available.

York students also have concerns about the price increase. In conversation with a few students from the University of York, many felt that the price increase may affect the amount of time parents, family and friends came to stay in York. With the prices already being so high, one student admitted it could be the difference between a friend staying for another hour or two or the price of getting a coffee together.

Supposedly, the inflationary increase to parking rates should save the council £2 million.

York City Council has announced council tax and rental tax will also rise.

With a near 5 percent increase in council tax having been agreed by senior councillors in York, this means that the council’s executives have agreed to raise council tax by 2.99% with a further 2% rise for the social care of adults.

Rent prices are set to increase by average of 7.7 percent, which will af-

fect students looking for shared housing between the 2024-5 period.

Officials in York have speculated that the next four years will have the “most significant financial challenges” for the people of York, with the council’s total budget for 2024-5 being approximately £150 million, making it one of the lowest-funded councils in the entirety of England.

Cllr Claire Douglas, the City of York Council leader, said: “We’ve been clear from day one that the budget we inherited after 13 years of central government cuts meant making very hard decisions.

“We said already there would have to be cuts, a root and branch challenge to all council expenditure and a hard look at levels of capital investment. As the full scale of the challenge has become clear, so too has the need to make what we know will be some very unpopular decisions.

“It is heartbreaking that council budgets across the UK have been brought to this, and we are deeply troubled by what these changes might mean here in York.

“We remain committed to delivering our Council Plan, but because we cannot do that alone, or with the financial resources we have now, we need the support of partners and residents to achieve the significant ambitions it contains, including support for people hit hardest by the cost-of-living crisis.”

YUSU & GSA merger

Daisy Couture (she/her)
NEWS EDITOR

IT HAS RECENTLY been announced that the University of York Student Union (YUSU) and the Graduate Student Associates (GSA) are merging.

On 1 March 2023, a statement was issued from YUSU President Pierrick Rogers and GSA President Vivienne Cao.

The statement declared that: “Board and management representatives, including both of us, have been holding meetings over this academic year, supported by the Academic Registrar, to consider the benefits of establishing a single, unified Students’ Union for all students at the University.”

It also read that: “In the coming months, we will be issuing a joint survey to garner your thoughts on what a new union could look like.

“We will also be running targeted focus groups for student groups we feel have been traditionally left out of Union activities and for postgraduate researchers specifically to ensure our transitional arrangements and the new union deliver for them.”

On 8 February 2024, another

statement was issued regarding the Articles of Association. This is “YUSU’s key governing document.

It sets out [the] Union’s structure, purpose, and objectives, and determines governance activities such as how trustees are appointed, how policy is set and how core Union functions should be undertaken.”

Following on from this, YUSU held an Annual General Meeting on 22 February 2024.

Its purpose was to gain student approval to change the Article of Association in preparation for the merger. Students who attended were given the opportunity to talk to Sabbatical Officers and Trustees, gain a better understanding of what the merger will mean for the student community and raise any queries.

The main purpose of the meeting was to decide what the single SU governing document will look like, such as the number of Sabbs. The article was approved meaning there will be seven Sabbs.

Over the coming months, the two unions will unite to create a single union that accommodates every student at York, undergraduate and postgraduate alike.

Reflecting on two years since Russia's full-scale invasion

Continued from front

After reminiscing on our conversations from a year ago, Vitalina said "I never actually imagined that we would speak about a second-year anniversary. I thought that in 2024, on the 24 February, we would be like 'Oh, remember that? Two years ago, the full-scale invasion started... but meanwhile it would have already finished. Unfortunately, that hasn't happened'."

Vitalina continued, "I would never have imagined that we would face this date. I think for every Ukrainian person the anniversary of the full-scale invasion is a difficult day mentally. You go back and remember how things started, your feelings, and how some of us had to flee from our city or even country."

York. Vika explained her approach to the upcoming anniversary, "I think it's my way of dealing with stuff, but I just don't think a lot about it before. I think I'll feel a lot of emotions on the day, but I just try not to think much about it. It's going to be a hard day".

Mariya Kuzmenko is from Zaporizhzhia, in south-eastern Ukraine. Mariya studies Economics and Finance at the University of York.

Mariya said, "It's tough that it's been two years, but we just have to accept the fact and do our best".

She added, "It does seem like it's been two years now, it's quite interesting. The perception of time changes a bit because you just kind of get used to it. But I've just been back home – it feels much heavier when you're there because obviously people have been living in Ukraine for the past two

Ira is from Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. Ira studied in Ukraine for two years at the National Medical University but had to stop her studies at the start of the full-scale invasion. Ira took a gap year and re-started her studies at the University of York in Biomedical Sciences in 2022.

Ira described how she was remaining hopeful for the approaching second-year anniversary. "A lot of things have changed since [the first anniversary] but we're not losing hope and we still know that at some point we're going to win".

Living abroad in York and enjoying university while the full-scale invasion continues in Ukraine has left both Vitalina and Vika experiencing feelings of guilt.

Being in York for the week of her graduation, Vitalina explained "You are always thinking about your own country even when you're abroad. Since everybody has their relatives back home in Ukraine, you cannot just be okay... like I'm here in the UK, living my best life and they are there".

Vika explained that she was back home only recently, at the end of January. "My city, Ternopil, can't really relate to what's going on in the east because it's closer to Poland – I think my city is one of the safest in Ukraine. We don't experience a lot of air raid sirens... people live normal lives there".

Vika continued, "I see a very different Ukraine when I go home, and I live and study abroad, so it then just makes you feel guilty a tiny bit".

Vitalina has been back home in Kharkiv, in northeast Ukraine, for the past two months. Vitalina described, "Even though I was always reading the news and my parents were giving

me weekly updates about how dangerous or safe it was, being in Kharkiv in-person just doesn't feel the same".

"In the past two months, there have been a few attacks. Sometimes the alarm goes crazy – during the day, it can go off up to five times and every time you need to go to the shelter. So,

"It's tough that it's been two years, but we just have to accept the fact and do our best"

obviously it's more dangerous but also more difficult to just keep living your life."

In Kharkiv, Vitalina explained that the local government has released plans to build new underground schools for children. With the full-scale invasion, Vitalina explained "unfortunately children and students in the east of Ukraine do not have the luxury of having in-person education".

Such news is bitter-sweet for Vitalina. She explained, "I'm very happy because finally I'm really realising that my brother will be able to continue his education in-person but also, it's just a reminder that no one knows when the war will finish... it's already been two years. It's just a reminder that the war has not finished as fast as we wanted it to."

Mariya explained that her city, Zaporizhzhia, is a kind of hub for refugees from the east. She described how her family, living in Ukraine, are feeling about the anniversary: "Just

because they are so used to it at this point, they don't really think of it as such a massive milestone since there's a lot of things happening right now."

People are definitely tired of everything that's going on. They're just trying to do their best to keep going and keep living."

To mark the two-year anniversary, the University of York's Ukrainian society partnered with City Screen Picturehouse and Ukrainian Hub Preston, to host a free screening of the Oscar-nominated Ukrainian documentary *20 Days In Mariupol* on 23 February 2024.

The film, nominated for the 2024 Oscars, depicts the resilience of a group of Ukrainian journalists as they continue documenting the atrocities of the war while trapped within the besieged city of Mariupol.

Ira, who is the President of the University of York's Ukrainian Society, said "It's really important to talk and to raise awareness about what's happening in Ukraine. That's why we're doing this... we're just hoping to engage as many people as we can".

Vika Skiiak, Social Secretary for the University of York's Ukrainian Society, shared a similar view. Vika explained, "It's going to be hard [to watch the documentary], especially seeing all of that [destruction] again and again. When you're abroad, you're in a bit of a bubble, so it's good that we can put ourselves and other people through the film – they can actually see what's going on right now."

Mariya Kuzmenko, also Social Secretary for the University of York's Ukrainian Society, added "It is quite a hard watch, but it's something that's eye opening. It's giving you a bit of a sobering up from the pink sunglasses because it is quite harsh."



IMAGE: UKRAINE SOC

Vika is from Ternopil, situated in the west of Ukraine, and studies International Relations at the University of

York. But when you're there it's a bit like, how is this still happening?"

York's Flexible Approach To International Student Grades

Jessica Sherburn (she/her)
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

AN EMAIL SENT to academics from the University of York said to take a more "flexible approach" to accepting overseas students. This could be a possible response to the University's decreased funding from domestic students, as many universities are facing, according to a recent PWC report.

Overseas applicants typically pay higher fees than home students. In England, fees for home students have been capped at £9,250 since 2017 whilst international fees have grown by 12 percent per year since 2017-18, as their fees are not capped. According to PWC, this means that by increasing the number of international students "a short-term boost to the sector's financial sustainability" can happen.

Increasing the number of high paying international students across universities in England is achieved by making the grade expectations more "flexible". Whilst a spokesperson from the University of York said: "We want to be really clear that the University has not lowered its entry grades for international students" the *Financial Times* has stated: "York will now admit some overseas applicants who

achieved the equivalent of B/B/C grades at A level into its undergraduate programmes, or a 2:2 degree to join its postgraduate courses".

The difference for UK students is that a "typical offer" for home students ranges in the grades of A*AA-BBB at undergraduate level and a 2:1 for most postgraduate courses.

The spokesperson for York went on to state that "the change we've made is about taking a more flexible approach to offer holders who miss their grades. We already do this for UK students after we receive their results". This approach is similar to "Clearing". According to the *Financial Times*, "Clearing" is a system in education where British students who do not achieve the required grades for a chosen university can try and find a place on a different higher education course.

In an interview with a home student that went through clearing, they told *Nouse* that "after not receiving my first choice of Uni, I reapplied through clearing, and was offered a place [at York]. When I first applied, I was offered AAA for the course I wanted but when I dropped that offer and then re-applied through clearing I only needed BBB."

Therefore, in some cases home students do still require higher grades

to international students who miss their grades.

The PWC report also states one in four UK universities reported an operating deficit. A University of York spokesperson admitted that "like many others in our sector, we continue to face increasing costs and universities now lose £1 billion each year on teaching domestic students and £5 billion on undertaking research, as well as having to absorb wider cost of living inflationary pressures.

"As a result, many universities are carefully managing their finances and York has moved quickly to put in place a series of measures to address deficits, including reducing the cost of our estate and pausing infrastructure projects such as the Student Centre, so that we are in a good position to remain resilient and deliver our strategy".

The Student Centre referred to is the £35m project set up by the University of York. This five-storey complex was to be built in the heart of campus west, with plans submitted last March for an impressive event space, and collaborative study spaces all to be accessible to every student. Yet, the project was "temporarily paused... for a period of at least three years" in January 2024 due to management of finances.

By "reducing the cost" of the infrastructure projects at York and, as financial accounts show "raising" the tuition fee income by ten percent in the academic year 2021-22, this will enable the University of York to carefully manage their finances.

Data from the *Financial Times* shows that this increase in income follows the University's rapid increase in the number of overseas students which grew from 4,750 to 6,145 during the 2021-22 period.

However, Professor Alan Smithers at the University of Buckingham and the Director of Education offers a negative account of the increase of international students to home students in England.

He states that: "The fees of foreign students are not capped so universities are increasingly turning to them to balance their books. While this business-like approach keeps them solvent, it means that the country is in danger of not fully developing its own talent. We are selling access to overseas students and not honing up many talents we have in the country. A financial solution is having many social consequences that are not being accounted for in the same way."

Indeed, conversations with home students at the University of York reveals a similar apprehension about

an increased number of international students attending the university through taking a more flexible approach. One home student stated that 'it feels unfair', and went on to explain "because we all put in a lot of effort to get here".

A spokesperson at the University of York stated: "We think some of the recent speculation on these issues has been misleading and divisive. Behind the scenes, we have been working tirelessly to bust myths and challenge headlines. Above all, we are championing our wonderful, inspirational students, and emphasising that the UK remains a welcoming and brilliant destination for study."

"This enables us to remain competitive and it also allows us to take context and individual circumstances into account. We know inequalities can limit ability and potential, and being flexible enough to consider these factors is important for everyone, no matter where you are in the UK or the world."



IMAGE: JOHN ROBINSON



COMMENT

An Argument for the ban on disposable vapes Will banning disposable vapes actually work to discourage people from using them?

Daisy Cotoure
(she/her)



Recently, it was announced by the government that disposable vapes are to be banned in England, Scotland and Wales.

For many university students, this is probably horrendous news.

I have never personally partaken in the fad of vaping (disposable or otherwise), but I know many people who will miss standing in the smoking area of Salvation or Flares with a cherry-flavoured device in hand.

Once an avid social smoker, I can't say that I miss the feeling of nicotine filling my lungs whilst four vodka shots deep. Vapes appear to do nothing other than mask that thick smoky flavour with artificial fruit or confectionary.

We have been told that vaping is less harmful than smoking – this is, for the most part, true. Vapes contain far fewer toxic chemicals than cigarettes, yet they still contain their fair share. In fact, vapes and e-cigarettes are generally only recommended for cigarette smokers looking to quit; the NHS actively discourages non-smok-

ers to begin vaping.

However, this is not meant to be a debate on cigarettes versus vapes; this is a question of how much good banning disposable vapes will really do.

In my opinion, this is a great thing. As I previously mentioned, vaping seems to be popular in universities – according to a recent survey by *The Tab*, over half of university students vape. This number is growing in younger people too; it appears that around 15 percent of 16-17-year-olds have access to vapes, as well as 18 percent of 18-year-olds.

Surely these figures are alarming. Vapes may be better for your body than cigarettes, but by no means does this suggest that they are good for your body. Vapes still contain nicotine, the same highly addictive substance found in cigarettes, as well as low levels of cannabis and food grade flavouring.

Effects of vaping are being more closely looked into since their sharp increase in popularity. Short-term effects such as throat and mouth irritation, headaches, coughs and nausea are fairly tame, and probably aren't enough to put vapers off for life. Some suggested long-term effects are

much scarier though. For example, diacetyl, a common flavouring agent found in vapes, can cause 'popcorn lung' – inflammation and permanent scarring in the lungs – which makes it difficult to breathe. However, perhaps the scariest thing of all is the fact that



IMAGE CREDIT: SARAH JOHNSON

we are yet to discover the true breadth of the long-term effects of vaping. The practice is not yet distinguished enough for us to be able to determine the exact damage that vapes do like we have with cigarettes.

It is quite clear why, for the most part, younger people (such as teenagers and students) prefer vaping over smoking. Smoking is no longer 'cool' – it makes your teeth and fingers yel-

low, your breath smell like smoke and I don't know many people who could argue that it actually tastes good. There is also the obvious risk of cancer hanging over the 's' word nowadays that wasn't really talked about until recent years. People were aware of the risks for a long time, but it didn't seem to scare them as much as it does now.

As well as the cigarette's dying popularity, vapes taste nice. Well, allegedly. Their flavours are generally sweet, composed of flavourings such as strawberry, lime, coca-cola or candyfloss; things that young people like to consume. One of the worst parts of smoking, in my opinion, is the taste (I'm sorry to every serious smoker out there who will probably chastise me for stating something so sacrilegious). Covering that up with a fruity flavour is a sneaky (although admittedly genius) way of ensuring the development of a nicotine addiction without having to endure the gnarly aftertaste of an actual cigarette.

I will address the argument that always seems to crop up when debating the banning of things; banning items will just make them crop up in more illicit ways. This may well be

true of vapes. Perhaps they will be obtained illegally and sold underground. They are addictive substances; anybody who knows the first thing about addiction knows the length that addicts will go in order to fulfil their needs. I really don't doubt for one second that this will be a difficult law to enforce; do those who already own vapes have to throw them away? Is somebody going to go and check on every single person who has a vape and fine them if they refuse to hand it over? Highly unlikely.

Chances are, everybody who currently owns a disposable vape will be able to hang onto it and use it until it runs out. Anybody who is thinking about obtaining a disposable vape in the future will not be able to purchase one.

I think that this is a huge step in the right direction. The government's intention with this law is to protect young people's health. How can the idea of children no longer wandering into high-street shops, handing over a fake ID and purchasing a vape rub some people up the wrong way?

Children won't be obtaining their vapes illegally – or we'd at least like to think not. Cutting off their vaping supply at the source is the best way to tackle this rising issue.

Rishi Sunak's Appeal for Far-Right Populism Will Sunak's half-hearted appeal for far-right populism secure a win in the General Election?

Rebecca Leyland
(she/her)



A month ago I was in London getting a taxi with my parents. Once the driver – a white British man – realised that my mother had grown up in the city and then moved away, he told her to "never come back to London" We paused, expecting him to disparage the rising house prices or air pollution, but he didn't. Instead, he told us that there were "too many Muslims" in the city.

He then proceeded to tell us about how 'stupid' the new green measures were for taxis. This type of blatant racism and ignorance is something many people in Britain have encountered in their daily lives.

However, in recent years it seems that this language is now emerging from people with power, most notably, from our Prime Minister. Rishi Sunak knows that the traditional image of the Conservative party will not hold up against Keir Starmer, who is being touted as 'the voice of reason' in the current political chaos. So, in a bid to regain voters disillusioned by the Tories' failed promises, Sunak is turning to populism.

He is attempting to follow other far-right European leaders such as Marine Le Pen and Geert Wilders by doubling down on climate change measures and upping the ante on Islamophobic and transphobic sentiment.

However, Sunak, our wealthiest leader to date, likely does not believe in these politics – instead, populism is what he thinks will be his most plausible path to victory. Not long ago, we saw Sunak boasting about funneling money to wealthy Tories in Tunbridge Wells. He feels like a businessman playing dress-up as a politician, one that has chosen to invest in the safest stock. In doing so, he has chosen the route of barbs and backtracking rather than any real action, leaving Starmer with a clear path to victory in the 2024 election.

Whilst this might appear simply comic, it is not. Sunak has caused irreversible damage as Prime Minister. Crucially, his decision to ignore the advice of the Climate Change Committee and take a U-turn on net zero strategy will have long-term consequences not only environmentally but also economically. In Sunak's speech last September, he claimed his U-turn was to stop people having to sort their rubbish into different bins. It was not. It was a clear appeal

to people like the taxi driver I met in London, to those who would rather do nothing now and let the future generations pay for their mistakes. In that same speech, Sunak said that during "big decisions", politicians "too often, motivated by short term thinking, [...] have taken the easy way out". Yet, that is exactly what Sunak has done during his time as leader. To take no action on climate change is to make a detrimental decision for the future of our country.

Whilst the net zero measures could have been altered to help the UK better transition, the answer was never to scrap them. Getting rid of measures like this will only harm those struggling. The removal of energy efficiency standards will help landlords by getting rid of an upfront cost for them, whilst leaving rising bills for those renting. This kind of short-term appeasement which will only end up helping the very wealthiest is indicative of the Prime Minister's entire brand.

Islamophobic attacks are up 600 percent since the Hamas attack on Israel last October according to the charity, Tell MAMA, which tracks anti-Muslim incidents in the UK. Sunak has exacerbated this through his leadership – when asked by Labour's Zarah Sultana to call for an immediate

ceasefire in Gaza, Sunak responded callously: "Perhaps the honourable lady would do well to call on Hamas and the Houthis to de-escalate the situation".

This language shows exactly the type of person that Rishi Sunak is, someone who exercises hateful tropes and jibes rather than addressing the important questions. He is exactly the type of politician from his September speech, who will take "the easy way out".

He is attempting to appeal to those who are threatened by multiculturalism and immigration, by opposing anyone not in complete support of so-called 'British values'. In political debate, Sunak does not come across as calculated or cool. Instead, his jokes seem cruel. Sunak is failing to win over anyone as his actions do not seem that of a savvy leader, but instead that of a man desperately trying to stay in power.

The Prime Minister's transphobic comments earlier this year have put the last nail in the coffin. Despite being told that Esther Ghey, the mother of the murdered transgender teen, Brianna Ghey, was in the room, Sunak joked that on defining a woman, Labour made "only 99 percent of a U-turn". This callous remark and his refusal to apologise has shown

that he does not care about the British people, instead his only worry is how he will appear to voters. He is a man willing to dance any dance and sing any song if it will get him over the finish line.

However, this lack of principle is obvious to anybody who has been watching him perform during the last year and a half as Prime Minister and it will come back to bite him in the next general election.

Rishi Sunak's attempts to imitate other populist far-right leaders are half-hearted at best, with him resorting to cruel punchlines rather than risking isolating either the far-right or centrist sides of the Conservative party. Sunak is both trying to appease people like the taxi driver and those unsure whether to vote for him or Starmer – and a middle ground between these two opposites seems farcical.

This is why the UK needs to get the Tories out, Sunak is spineless and unwilling to make any real change. If the Tories stay, Britain will be left in the shambles it has been in ever since Brexit. Sunak will not make the sacrifices necessary to secure the UK's future, as his beliefs lie in what he thinks will keep him popular for the longest time, not what is actually best for the people of this country.

Refreshers: Is it over-rated for non first years

Do the realities of refreshers week really extend the expectations when starting a new semester?

Evie Banks
(she/her)



After a long Christmas break, many students look forward to getting back into the familiarities of university life. In the spirit of this, college committees run various Refreshers Week events, looking to revive the activities of the previous semester. With Refreshers Week 2024 having just passed, I decided to further investigate whether this week lives up to the same expectations as its predecessor of Freshers Week, as well as providing the perspective of a college committee member in the planning and execution of these events.

Intended to be the smaller, more muted, counterpart to Freshers night, it is inevitable that Refreshers is not going to deliver the same scale of events. On the University 'student news' webpages, Refreshers has a much more academic lean, promoting workshops on digital tools and utilising assessment feedback.

With the advertising of 'Undergraduate Dissertation Writing' and 'Everything you wanted to know about using academic libraries', there is a noticeable variance in the aims of this week. Far from meeting flatmates and coursemates, this 'refreshing' takes a different slant when in the

middle of an academic year; the focus on exploring the various offerings of York nightlife and on-campus mixers is eschewed for reminders of your degree in the eyes of the University.

With the beginning of the second semester, the scope of university life has lost its novelty, with increased reading lists and upcoming deadlines making it challenging for the same experiences to be had.

In my experiences over the past two years at York, Refreshers Week has not yet seemed to rally the same sentiments as the very first week of the year. There has been a greater focus on reintegrating students back into previous college events and general university life, more so than a larger barrage of events aimed to include all newcomers. Yes, there is still something for everyone to enjoy, and college staff and student committees alike dedicate careful thought to the timetable, but the numbers of those

taking part is in stark contrast to September.

Speaking from the position of a College Student Association (CSA) member, as Head of STYM for Vanbrugh College, Refreshers Week is about reestablishing the key values and hopes of the college after the break. For us, we chose to have a non-ticketed week, so that students were able to pick and choose the events that best suited them.

Vanbrugh's weekly events returned – such as Make Soup, Eat Soup, STYM Brunch, and Jazz Night – with the addition of more irregular or one-off events to showcase the dedication of the CSA, with a Valentine's movie night, and quiz night proving our most popular. College collaborations are also at the heart of both Freshers and Refreshers Week, in the hope of gaining greater traction, and enhancing networks across Campus West and East. Vanbrugh's 'Monopoly campus crawl'

with Alcuin is one such example. Especially at a time where the Student Housing Market foregrounds many discussions, these activities can prove pivotal in the wider student experience.

For those who may have missed out on some of the offerings of Freshers Week, or not yet found their favourite event or society, Refreshers is a prime opportunity in which to do so.

Signposting different teams – such as in College Sports Fairs to reinstate interests in summer and year-round sports – proved popular across the University.

Refreshers Week also renews the emphasis on wellbeing that is at the heart of the college operations. Whilst fewer may be in attendance, having the more obvious reminder of the work of student associations and staff should certainly not be overlooked.

Using Vanbrugh events as an example once more, our Heads of Wellbeing and Events collaborated to produce a wellness afternoon, centred around sustainability and planting. As well as this, the associated subcommittees collaborated to produce a booklet of resources for all aspects of student life. Whilst this event may not have been to the same scale as Freshers Week, there was still a fair turnout – so the benefits of these cannot be wholly dismissed.

Speaking to two Second Year students, they provided additional insights into Refreshers week, agreeing that there is a less sustained focus on the events at this time. One said: "Personally, I think that the college events are a really nice thing to have available. I don't take part in Refreshers week myself, as I think the concept doesn't quite rival Freshers. The excitement of Freshers week is that it is so new, both in the place and people. I do like that there are still options available, but there seems less need to have big College wide events".

Another commented that Refreshers Week seems to be "more targeted for first years who are still establishing themselves at uni. I have enjoyed attending some of the events, both this year and last, but it's definitely not the same as the start of the year. It is beneficial to have something to help ease you back into a new semester, but the need for big events isn't the same".

All in all, Refreshers Week, whilst still an integral part of student and college life, isn't regarded to be on the same level as Freshers. It certainly has its benefits, and the planning of the various events is not to be diminished.

Maybe the more relaxed nature of it is to the benefit of a busy student lifestyle, but do all see this advantage? Or is it simply for first years?



IMAGE: PHERE

UK migration rights to guide the General Election

How this year's General Election 2024 will include a fight for the future of migration in the UK

Millie Simon
(she/her)



The UK's General Election in 2024 is going to be fought on three grounds: the economy, the cost of living crisis and immigration.

As well as Rishi Sunak's "stop the boats" commitment, he is using the topic of illegal migration as a key election strategy. It hasn't been as smooth sailing as Sunak perhaps intended it to be, but regardless, Sunak is continuing to argue that the Conservatives are being proactive and realistic about immigration, and if governed by Labour, the country would be "back to square one".

The government's Rwanda Bill passed through the House of Commons on 17 January 2024, despite various legal obstacles, media and MPs' criticisms and his own Home Secretary, Suella Braverman, resigning. The Bill is currently in the committee stage in the House of Lords with peers admitting they will do everything they can to delay and/or water down the Bill.

Britain has generally had a negative view towards migrants, particularly asylum seekers. It is a well-es-

tablished argument that unregulated migration to the UK can have unfavourable impacts on the economy and more specifically on the job market and welfare state. Immigrants are more often than not, employed in dangerous working conditions with few worker protections.

The migration debate has been framed to be one that includes controlling and managing the migration issue because it is seen as a crisis or an overwhelming feature of British society. Sunak and Labour leader Keir Starmer will reiterate the necessity to "control" migration in order to secure votes for this year's General Election. However, during the 2005 General Election, Labour viewed immigration as a "positive" aspect of Britain with the Conservatives being slightly more sceptical on this issue. Sunak's unequivocal stance on immigration has been somewhat forced by Labour's positioning to the centre of the political spectrum.

The Conservatives, in order to have any chance of maintaining seats in the General Election, have no choice but to move further Right and

appeal to Reform and former UKIP supporters. This may explain the Conservatives' tougher anti-immigration stance.

It begs the question why children of twice migrants – Sunak, Braverman and former Home Secretary under Boris Johnson, Priti Patel – have such hostile views towards migrants.

deploy, particularly when the government is expected to perform poorly in the General Election. Despite the courts proving to be an obstacle to Sunak's plans, the government has the support of most of its MPs following the success of the Rwanda Bill and therefore appears to be the party of managing the migration crisis. This plays into the pockets of the Reform voters who may feel inclined to vote for the Conservatives later this year.

Labour, if elected to as the leading governmental party, will scrap the Rwanda scheme mainly because the cost of the agreement outweighs the benefit. In terms of the morality of sending asylum-seekers to Rwanda, a country viewed by the courts

as being unsafe, Starmer simply claimed the Rwanda Bill went "against our values".

Labour's vague direction on immigration is sure to become more specific as the General Election gets closer and there is growing pressure from swing voters for Labour to outline its plan to reduce migration. Al-

though the government has certainly struggled with it, and we can question their morals over it, the Conservatives already have a plan.

Britain's hostile attitude towards immigration is an expression of our colonial legacy. During Britain's traditional colonial period, citizens would be regularly moved around the Empire to fill labour shortages, but once countries achieved independence from Britain, migration to this country was frowned upon and even legislated against. Britain's rejection of accountability towards asylum-seekers in military operations is hypocritical. When the UK engaged in military strikes in Syria in 2014, thousands of innocent Syrian refugees were displaced and some fled to Europe in search of safer environments. The UK accepted some of the fewest Syrian refugees into the country despite contributing to the active displacement of citizens.

Following this, the British media dubbed the number of Syrian refugees attempting to reach Britain, as a "Syrian Refugee Crisis", painting asylum-seekers as a threat or a nuisance to British society. British military involvement in other countries and a refusal to accept the consequences is an expression of Britain's colonial legacy. We can't ignore the immigrants who flee the destruction we have contributed to.



IMAGE: SANDOR CSUDAI

The Prime Minister is often heard hailing Britain's inviting and welcoming nature to migrants and refuses to agree that the government is using some of the most vulnerable in society to stoke up animosity in order to win an election.

The migration question is perhaps the easiest election strategy to

Power Sharing Resumed in Northern Ireland

Isobel Moore (she/her)
DEPUTY POLITICS EDITOR

HISTORY WAS MADE on 3 February 2024, with Michelle O'Neill becoming Northern Ireland's first Irish nationalist, republican and Catholic to hold the title of first minister.

This comes two years after the Democratic Unionist Party's (DUP) boycott of power sharing. For this period, the region was left without a power-sharing administration amidst on-going cost of living and public health system concerns. As a main unionist party, the DUP is legally essential to decisions going ahead in Stormont.

The party, and its 130-member executive, ended its boycott after long-running post-Brexit trade disputes with the UK. The UK promised to further remove checks on goods remaining in Northern Ireland.

The Northern Ireland Protocol was what initiated a lot of these disputes, former UK prime minister Boris Johnson agreed to this, with checks on goods at the border as Northern Ireland continued to do trade within the EU's single market for goods. This effectively created a sea border,

drawing a wedge between the UK and Northern Ireland. The Windsor Framework also raised concerns. This was the first agreement with the EU, coming into force in January 2021, regarding resolving the trade conflict between UK and Northern Ireland.

However, checks on goods at the border, and goods which stayed in Northern Ireland were contentious and initiated the DUP's boycott. This agreement was revamped two years later, and allowed more flexibility with the implementation of two lanes: a green lane, for goods remaining in Northern Ireland, and a red lane, for goods being sent to the EU.

The new trade deal between the

UK and the unionists, 'Safeguarding the Union', implemented early this year, further reduces checks on goods entering Northern Ireland from England, Scotland and Wales. There is no custom declaration needed for selling these goods within the country. Presented to parliament by Secretary of State

Chris Heaton-Harris, this deal also introduced Intrade UK, modelled on Intrade Ireland, promoting small businesses and the scrapping of a Scotland border control plan which would have provided further controversy for Northern Ireland. This new deal clears the way for the Northern Ireland Assembly to meet again after two years. To resume the Northern Ireland

Assembly post-boycott, Edwin Poots was designated the role as a neutral speaker and DUP politician Emma Little-Pengelly was assigned her role as deputy first minister. Both moves had been previously blocked seven times by the DUP since Sinn Féin's win against them in the May 2022 election. Sinn Féin became Stormont's biggest party after this, with Michelle O'Neill only assuming the role in February of this year given the devolved nature of Northern Ireland's government for two years.

Power sharing was created in 1998, from the Good Friday Agreement, and at the same time, Michelle O'Neill joined Sinn Féin. After Martin McGuinness' resignation, she became deputy first minister of the party and later first minister. Throughout her career, she has been embroiled in controversy over her actions: addressing the killing of IRA men, her attendance at the funeral of republican Bobby Storey during Covid-19 and her expression that there was "no alternative" to IRA violence on a podcast.

However, the history-making first minister is willing to cooperate and work more with the unionists, claiming that more Northern Irish leaders must do the same.

Historically, Stormont has faced much upheaval due to power-sharing, with five suspensions occurring since it was implemented. However, the recent two-year suspension of power-sharing is not the longest Northern Ireland has gone with having a devolved government as between 2002 to 200, unionist parties withdrew after allegations of intelligence gathering for the Irish Republican Army (IRA.)

However, Michelle O'Neill wants to keep in mind a representation of both republican and unionist interests, mentioning recently her attendance at the Queen's funeral and King's coronation as symbolic efforts of this.

Even with her efforts to achieve peaceful relations going forward, many are still adjusting to this historic event. Hard-line unionists have fiercely criticised the DUP's decision with party leader Jeffrey Donaldson receiving threats due to this. Still, power-sharing questions arise of the future of Northern Ireland's relationship with the EU and what the 'Safeguarding the Union' deal means for Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland going forward.



IMAGE: SUZANNE PLUNKETT

The Politics of Disillusionment in Rochdale

Antonia Shipley (she/her)
DEPUTY POLITICS EDITOR

ON AN OVERCAST Saturday in February, the air is tinged with dampness and despondency; there seems to be an unshakeable milieu of apathy and disillusionment. It wouldn't appear there was a momentous by-election here.

As a native Mancunian, I was keen to visit Rochdale for the by-election and better understand why the area, which is so often forgotten about or 'left behind' in policy-making, is now on the front page of every tabloid newspaper.

Rochdale is steeped in a rich and radical history of labour, spearheading the Industrial Revolution with prodigious cotton and textile factories, making it a key trading post for the country's wool merchants.

It is also the birthplace of the Cricket Ball, made by Rochdale cobbler Hamlet Nicholson in 1860. Most notably perhaps, it was the very place where the modern Co-operative movement was created on 21 December 1844, with the Rochdale Equitable Pioneer Society starting a revolution that would shift the world of business and labour on its axis forever.

However, this history of radical mavericks and pioneers is often forgotten, replaced by a tale of deprivation. With 28 percent of children living in poverty, Rochdale is one of the most impoverished areas in the UK. These adversities have heightened divisions, making it something of a political minefield, with the EDL rallying there a number of times, and using it as a subject for their vitriol and vituperation which has marred the area's radical history.

Rochdale is no stranger to scandal, particularly following the Roch-

dale sex abuse case, in which nine British Pakistani men were convicted of sex trafficking, with up to forty-seven girls being identified as victims of child exploitation during the investigation. Both Greater Manchester Police and Rochdale Council were found culpable for negligence in the case.

This catastrophe was equated to the racial backdrop of the area, with 30 percent of residents being Muslim, sparking racism and shock across the nation. This made Rochdale a place only "worth" mentioning through pursed lips. Prior to this, it had been represented by Liberal/ Liberal Democrat MP Cyril Smith, who was found to have sexually assaulted a large number of teenage boys, only discovered after his death due to a copious amount of clandestine cover-up.

It was also represented by Simon Danczuk from 2010-2017, who was suspended from the Labour Party in 2015 after it emerged that he had sent explicit messages to a minor. This seemingly unabating political entropy seemed to pause with the election of Tony Lloyd in 2017, popular and well-respected in both Rochdale and Westminster.

His death last year was an enormous loss for British politics as a whole, but particularly for his constituents in Rochdale. The by-election that would follow was hoped to be one of relative consensus and peace, as Lloyd's family had requested, yet no one could predict the entropy that would ensue, with the town becoming the epicentre of political scandal and mass media attention once again.

The disgraced former MP Danczuk threw his hat into the ring for the pro-Brexit Reform party, along with George Galloway reemerging as a champion for the Palestinian cause, presenting himself as an alternative

to the 'pro-Israel' sentiment of Parliament, a position which garnered him support across the country and particularly among Muslim populations. The picture was still somewhat hopeful for Labour, with Azhar Ali tipped to secure the seat, albeit by a fine margin, in spite of Labour alienating a significant proportion of the Muslim vote in the area due to its position on Gaza.

That was until it emerged that Ali had supported an anti-Israel conspiracy theory that the government was aware of Hamas' attack before it happened - news I read on the train back from Rochdale, with utter shock and uncertainty about what would happen next.

Two days later, the shutters of the Labour Club, where a multitude of frontbenchers had visited over the previous weeks, were down, and all support from the party was withdrawn. However, the deadline for his withdrawal had already passed, meaning he would still appear on the ballot as the Labour Party candidate.

No one can quite predict what will happen next, or whether the people of Rochdale, in such profound need, will be truly represented at all. When talking to members of the constituency, those who did want to talk spoke with an implacable apathy. Some did not even know there was a by-election happening, too busy with the "real life stuff" as one individual put it. Whilst Labour now celebrates huge wins in the Kingswood

and Wellingborough by-elections, it seems unfair to act as though Rochdale simply isn't happening. In the 1950s, the Conservatives had around three million members, and Labour over one million, but now they have around 172,000 and under

400,000 respectively.

trated deprivation and division needs parliamentary representation. This farrago lends to the much-pondered debate about the moral fibre of contemporary politicians; love them or hate them, politicians such as Margaret Thatcher, Tony Benn and Denis Healy are seen as relics of a time long gone, in which politicians had a sort of 'gumption' and discipline that is much rarer in politics now. With the successive scandals that have plagued the nation, such as Partygate and the disastrous 'mini-budget' that has left us a laughing stock on the international stage, we must be focussed on installing a stable government.

But this does not necessitate compromising on morals and ethics - it cannot be done at the cost of those in need.

We must reinstate political faith into our nation, making voting and political participation a source of pride, leaving no room for populists or hateful groups to exploit and incite hate.

This must be accompanied by uncorrupted politicians and a collective effort to install hope and progress across the nation, including areas that may seem a 'lost cause' such as Rochdale. Whilst electoral arithmetic is at the heart of British elections, it must not come at the expense of citizens. If it does, then the high price of democracy and political participation will be at stake.



IMAGE: DAVID DIXON

MUSE.

A CAMERA IN A MOVING WORLD: VOLUNTEERING IN AREQUIPA

EMILY WARNER (SHE/HER) REFLECTS ON HER TIME AS A VOLUNTEER
FOR THE PERUVIAN NGO, INTIWAWA

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Millie Simon (she/her) explains the most challenging aspects of working for a member of parliament
Grace Bannister (she/her) interviews Isabelle Brattle, 2023 graduate studying an MA Law Conversion

M10
Heather Gosling (she/her) explores the decision to name Brianna Ghey's murderers
Heather Gosling and **Grace Bannister** explore the tiktok trend of celebrity lip-reading



ILLUSTRATION: EMILY CHRISTIE

MUSIC AND FILM & TV

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M4
Alexandra Pullen (she/her) recaps winners, record breakers and scandals at the ceremony
Gregor Brindle celebrates the importance of local venues for the music community in York

M5
George Udale (he/him) explores the box office decline of blockbuster superheroes
James Lapping (he/him) tunes into Indigenous representation in Marvel's new show Echo



IMAGE: EMILY KIRK AND DAISY REECE

ARTS AND SHOOT

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M6
Emily Stevens (she/her) reviews the returning exhibition at the national portrait gallery
Cara Doherty (she/her) reviews a recent Theatre@41 production of Alexander Zeldin's show
Emily Kirk (she/her) and **Daisy Reece (she/her)** design a Galentines shoot

FASHION AND FOOD & DRINK

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M8
Grace Clift (she/her) gives us a run down on her experience at the vegetarian Goji Cafe in York
Dhuha Usman (she/her) writes on shaking off new year blues through your wardrobe this spring time

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Tasha Acres (she/her) explores the reasons for the searing popularity of Larian studios' Baldur's Gate 3
Isobel Armstrong (she/her) shares her advice for planning and exploring Rome to match your budget the development of video game narratives over time

CREATIVE WRITING AND PUZZLES

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EDITORS' NOTE



ELLEN MORRIS

Thank you for picking up a copy of Nouse, Edition 506 and welcome to the first print in 2024! Before I tell you about this edition, I would like to give a special mention to those in our senior team.

Emily, our Muse Editor, who dedicates so much time to Muse whilst juggling 7000 hobbies and a dissertation. I don't know how she does it, but it is wildly impressive. Also, to Nadia for taking up such a large responsibility and eating Courtyard pizza with me. To Chris, who has been a huge help in navigating the legal minefields. Finally, to Lilly for being the comedic relief.

The editors and writers that have helped with this edition are greatly appreciated, here is a big well done to everyone who made this happen. After a busy exam period and various personal circumstances, this was a stressful time for a lot of people, and we do really appreciate your efforts. We send our love to Orla, our Nouse Editor who could not make this print, but her presence and giggles are very much missed.

Our print here is half the length it normally would be, with many sections falling onto a half-page. We wanted this print to be manageable in acknowledgement of our team's circumstances, however it also acts as an easily digestible and quick read. So, your indulgence will be short-lived; take your time to peruse the pages.

Firstly, we start in Features with Millie Simon's first-person experiences working with York Central MP, and visiting Parliament. Next, Alumhouse joins our print for the second time, created by Grace Bannister, interviewing York alumni.

Alexandra Pullen reviews the Grammy Awards, and Gregor Brindle speaks of his visit to The Crescent for local live tunes. Film & TV shares the end of Blockbuster superheroes with George Udale, and James Lapping speaks of the indigenous representation in new Marvel show, Echo.

Arts brings us a review of the National Portrait Gallery from Emily Stevens, and of a Alexander Zeldin Theatre@41 Production by Cara Doherty. Keep turning for the beautiful Shoot page, curated by Emily Kirk and Daisy Reece to see their girly Galentines get-together.

Grace Clift visits Goji Cafe, a vegetarian cafe in the centre of York to share her low-down with us for the Food & Drink section. Then, Dhuha Usman shares her relatable experience with the January blues, and on how she plans to spruce up her spring wardrobe to combat the feels.

Tasha Acres from Gaming reviews the new Balders Gate 3 and its reasons for the surge in popularity, and Travel, recommends how to travel Rome on your student budget.

Creative Writing showcased the winner and runner-up of the Creative Writing Competition that was advertised in the last print edition: Charlotte Ambrose and Mia Kain. Last but not least Puzzles has created a crossword and the sudoku for you all to solve; answers can be found online.

Being in the office for this prod was certainly an experience, but we managed to pull through with copious amounts of caffeine (partly sourced by the kind people at the Christian Union Events Week tent in Greg's Place) and Naked noodles from Nisa (usually Singapore style but I did dabble in Cantonese on the last day). We finally found some heaters to keep the office habitable, so I apologise for those who came in at the beginning of the two weeks. and couldn't feel their feet.

All in all, this print has a diverse range of topics that we are so grateful to provide. I hope atleast one article takes your fancy, and if you are interested in writing for us, then definitely get in touch. We are always welcoming new writers, and if you are here next year, it's a great time to get involved prior to the Summer elections.

There is room for everyone, so drop us a DM on instagram @yorkmuse or email ellen.morris@nouse.co.uk or emily.warner@nouse.co.uk. For general inquiries, we are currently using inquiries@nouse.co.uk

Happy reading!

Ellen

THE TRUTH ON BEING A STUDENT AND WORKING FOR AN MP

MILLIE SIMON (SHE/HER) EXPLAINS THE MOST CHALLENGING ASPECTS OF WORKING FOR A MEMBER OF PARLIMENT

Almost 8 months into being a Parliamentary and Constituency assistant to an MP, it's still as surreal as it was on the first day.

After an internship last summer, I continued working with the York Central MP, Rachael Maskell, focusing on housing and crime case-work, as well as writing campaign letters and attending surgeries. Constituents will write in with problems concerning landlords, damp and mould, anti-social behaviour and parking tickets, and it is our job to help resolve those issues locally, or take them to Westminster.

It's an absolute privilege to have the responsibility to support people with housing and crime related issues on behalf of a representative. However, there is no denying the system is broken. Since joining the team as an intern in June 2023, the number of people writing in with more serious problems has increased, particularly throughout the winter when people are struggling to afford their heating bills or there is a significant damp and mould issue causing worrying respiratory problems.

Social housing has been decimated by the

“It's an absolute privilege to have the responsibility to support people with housing issues”

lack of Government funding to councils across the country. The City of York Council has reiterated the message that the Conservative Government refuses to provide enough financial support to their aspiration of building affordable houses in York.

Not least helped by the 'Right to Buy' scheme, first introduced by Margaret Thatcher, which allows council tenants to buy the home they are renting from the council at a discounted rate. This disincentivises councils to build homes if they are to be sold into the private sector.

As assistants to an MP, we will continue to hear horrifying stories of constituents unable to afford their rent, mortgage or service charge, unless we invest in social housing.

As well as emailing constituents, councils and ministers, another part of the job is to attend surgeries with the MP. Constituents, who want to meet their MP in person or over the phone,

have the opportunity to talk about the issues they're facing and need assistance with.

Many of the stories we hear of the hardship of people's lives are heartbreaking, particularly with housing issues. We constantly hear people struggling to pay their rent in York, because there aren't rent controls on landlords who increase the rent, sometimes just for the sake of it. Young people in particular are affected. We have been emailed by students who simply can't afford their rent because maintenance loans barely cover the cost.

Visiting Parliament is another privilege of working for an MP. Just like any other Politics

student, the thrill of Parliament doesn't expire. Along with a colleague, we recently had a grand tour of the House of Commons, House of Lords and Portcullis House (where some MPs have their offices). One particular surreal moment

was walking past Jacob Rees-Mogg, Wes Streeting and Jeremy Corbyn's Comms and Media manager.

I had the opportunity to sit in on the committee stage of the Leasehold and Freehold Reform Bill which sets out to allow tenants to acquire the land in which the home they rent or own is situated on. This is a problem for residents here in York, who often find that the service charge (which is the money paid by the tenant for the upkeep of the grounds) is extremely expensive.

The committee went through all the amendments proposed and scrutinised every line of the Bill. One highlight was meeting Coventry South MP, Zarah Sultana. We talked about Islamophobia in The Labour Party, her new Bill which seeks to scrutinise arm sales to Israel and the importance of trade unions. I've met my fair share of MPs - on all sides of the political spectrum - but I've never felt as calm meeting an MP as I did with Zarah. She was an incredibly humble, kind and articulate person and those qualities definitely drive her politics.

The biggest challenge of being an assistant to an MP is detaching myself from the work. My inbox is flooded with ordinary, hard working people trying to secure a home that doesn't cause respiratory problems, or rents that exceed their wage or separate rooms for their children. And yet, there are still news headlines reporting record profits for owners of corporations or politicians blaming migrants for the economy.

For many people having to contact their MP, it's a very bleak time. But with successes in obtaining a home, or resolving neighbourly conflicts and contacting ministers on behalf of constituents, it's an honour to be a part of helping support people in York.



IMAGE: MILLIE SIMON

ALUMNOUSE: IN CONVERSATION WITH ISABELLE BRATTLE

GRACE BANNISTER (SHE/HER) INTERVIEWS ISABELLE BRATTLE, 2023 GRADUATE STUDYING AN MA LAW CONVERSION

Welcome back to AlumNOUSE, the medium aiming to connect our students and alumni community. Our next alum is Isabelle Brattle, a 2023 BA History graduate now studying an MA

particular, who were unable to join societies until the end of summer term, Isabelle's resilience and positive outlook meant that she valued the opportunity to get to know her flatmates sitting around the kitchen table playing cards instead of in Salvos.

It was in the third term of her first year that university started to resemble what it is today. Two weeks before the end of the academic year, societies opened their doors to freshers who'd been eagerly waiting to join. Isabelle joined JCNC and described to me how welcoming the club was. However, the return to some kind of normality was short-lived for Isabelle. In an early match, Isabelle ruptured her ACL and ATFL, and broke her ankle leaving her in a wheelchair for the summer and much of second year.

When discussing her injury, our conversation quickly turned to York's accessibility for wheelchairs. For most of us, the hardest part about navigating York is avoiding tourists and the long queues for Harry Potter shops. But for Isabelle, her injury meant relying on her friends to help her navigate our city and campus in an entirely different way.

Fortunately, her time in a wheelchair was temporary with recovery promised through rehab and physio. However, this experience was still immensely formative for Isabelle. She shared her experience of student life in a wheelchair, which involved finding accessible entrances and discovering that Uber doesn't take wheelchairs! It also made Isabelle realise that she'd like to work for wheelchair and accessibility charities in the future.

While Isabelle only managed one match at JCNC, this didn't stop her enthusiasm for the club. From being a social member in her second

year, to the Treasurer of JCNC in her third year, Isabelle's commitment to the club has helped to form it into what it is today, and allowed for her to develop a professionalism suited to the corporate world.

Isabelle approached the nightclub Flares to initiate a sponsorship deal for the club, and worked as a broker to negotiate contracts. She had almost daily contact with Flares and was responsible for maintaining a professional relationship and positively representing the club. As Treasurer, it was also down to Isabelle to manage the sponsorship deal and money. For JCNC, this meant a snazzy Flares logo on the netball dresses, and for the Committee, a VIP no-queue status. Isabelle described Flares as "so lovely to work with", and worked through what was "uncharted territory" for both Isabelle and JCNC.

I asked Isabelle to describe her university experience: "busy, that's for sure". And, busy she was! Alongside her History degree, overcoming her injury, and her role as Treasurer, Isabelle was also gaining work experience for her MA Law Conversion application. Isabelle told me that she'd always considered law, but that her

decision was cemented after having completed, and enjoyed, some legal work experience. Furthermore, both the University of Law and BPP University attended a 'Next Steps' Careers fair at York which allowed Isabelle to speak with both institutions and to decide on her next steps.

We spoke about how she's finding the change of degree and the notoriously challenging MA Law Conversion. Isabelle told me that, particularly within the field of law in which everyone is gaining qualifications and experience at their own pace, it is important to not compare yourself to your peers. Isabelle advised to take things at your own pace, to believe in yourself but to also reach out and ask for help when needed.

Isabelle now lives in London with two friends from JCNC. While her university experience certainly "wasn't what [she] anticipated it to look like", she certainly left her mark at York and JCNC, and has taken experi-

ences and memories with her.

Want to get involved? Whether you are a current UoY student and want to write for AlumNOUSE, or if you're a York alum and want to share your story, please contact me via my email: grace.bannister@nouse.co.uk



IMAGE: ISABELLE BRATTLE

Law Conversion at the University of Law's London Moorgate campus.

Isabelle and I actually met in my first year at York, at a James College Netball Club (JCNC) taster training session. Isabelle was introduced to me as a fellow History student and as a friendly, and happy-to-help third year.

Like many recent alumni, Isabelle's first year was almost entirely remote. Not allowed to meet in groups of greater than six meant freshers couldn't even sit with all of their flatmates. Teaching was done online, and the second term was met with a lockdown and an instruction to return home. While impacting freshers in par-

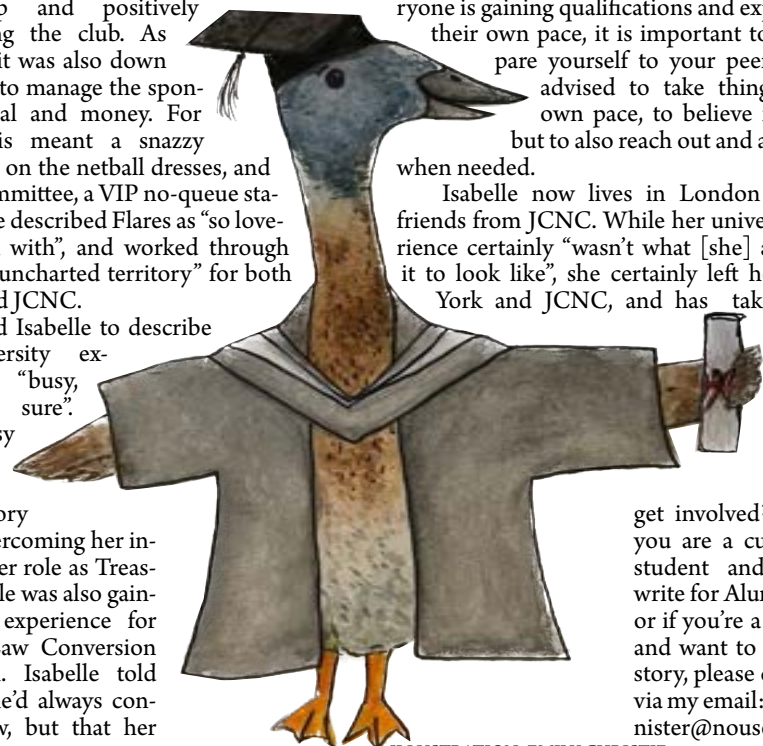


ILLUSTRATION: EMILY CHRISTIE

A MUSE-ICAL RUN DOWN OF THE 2024 GRAMMY AWARDS

ALEXANDRA PULLEN (SHE/HER) RECAPS WINNERS, RECORD BREAKERS AND SCANDALS AT THE CEREMONY

The 66th Annual Grammy Awards took place on 4 February in order to commemorate musical achievements and releases between 1 October 2022 and 15 September 2023. It was certainly a night to remember, filled with ups and downs: records were broken, some artists gained their first Grammy award and female artists dominated both the nominations and the wins. However, like many awards ceremonies, it did not go without its scandals. So, let's look back on the biggest night in music this year and unpack the highlights.

We will begin with the controversies of the night, many of which were not brought to the forefront of the main ceremony. First of all, after winning three Grammy awards, rapper Killer Mike was spotted in handcuffs and it was later reported by TMZ that this was for a battery charge. Since then, he has spoken out and stated that he had "a long talk to God" after the arrest, according to The Independent. Another minor blip in the night was involving Killer Mike, when he won Best Rap Song, but the award winner had been announced as Nicki Minaj and Ice Spice for their track 'Barbie World.' If true, this would have been Minaj's first Grammy win, a pivotal point in her career until it wasn't.

Despite this drama, the Grammys ceremony was one which contained history-making wins. Taylor Swift became the first artist to win Album of the Year four times after gaining the award with her album *Midnight*s. She has previously won the award for her albums *Fearless*, *1989* and most recently, *folklore*. Swift also



IMAGE: RAPH_PH

won Best Pop Album with *Midnight*s, and made a stir when she announced a brand new album named *The Tortured Poets Department* in her acceptance speech. While fans were expecting the announcement of *Reputation (Taylor's Version)*, they are still thrilled by the news of new music being released on 19 April.

More on the topic of firsts, Miley Cyrus won her first ever Grammy for Song of the Year with 'Flowers' which was quite a surprising success in a very strong category. The track, from her eighth studio album *Endless Summer Vacation*, is strongly rumoured to be about her ex-husband Liam Hemsworth. Cyrus then took to the stage to sing her winning song.

She added a fun twist to the performance adding in "started to cry, but then remembered I... just won my first Grammy!" to the pre-chorus. The audience went wild and she proceeded to dance around the stage with glee. Victoria Monét also became a Grammy award winner as she won Best New Artist and Best R&B Album for *Jaguar II*.

The night was filled with more amazing performances from the likes of Billie Eilish and Finneas, Dua Lipa and a surprise appearance from Tracy Chapman. Eilish delivered a beautifully emotional rendition of her song 'What Was I Made For?' from the Barbie soundtrack which also deservedly took home the award for Record of the Year. There were also performances by some musical legends such as Joni Mitchell who performed 'Both Sides Now' and Billy Joel who sang his first new song in around 17 years named 'Turn The Lights Back On.' One performance

which made a lot of people happy was the unexpected appearance of Tracy Chapman with Luke Combs, singing her song 'Fast Car'.

Many believe that artists such as Lana Del Rey and SZA were snubbed in their categories. However, while Del Rey did not win any awards on the night, SZA won Best R&B Song for 'Snooze' and Best Progressive R&B Album with *SOS*. As well as this, she won Best Collaboration along with Phoebe Bridgers for 'Ghost in the Machine.' This contributed to Bridgers being the most awarded artist of the entire night, also taking home three awards with *boygenius*.

It was quite a bittersweet night for fans of the supergroup, as they have recently announced that they are having a hiatus, but they were sure to go out with a bang. After the ceremony, Bridgers called out Neil Portnow, the previous Academy CEO, by telling him to "rot in piss" after he said in 2018 that women needed to "step up" if they wanted to be represented in Grammy nominations.

And with that, we see the highs and lows of what was ultimately an amazing night for recognising women in the music industry. The Grammys were filled with great performances, history-making wins, shock announcements and appearances, making it a memorable one. Here's to the 67th!



IMAGE: COLBY SHARP

CHECK OUT ALL OF OUR GRAMMYS COVERAGE AT [NOISE.CO.UK/MUSE/MUSIC](https://www.noise.co.uk/muse/music)

GIG REVIEW: PERSONAL TRAINER LIVE AT THE CRESCENT

GREGOR BRINDLE CELEBRATES THE IMPORTANCE OF LOCAL VENUES FOR THE MUSIC COMMUNITY IN YORK



IMAGE: JADE SASTROPAWIRO

A bitingly cold Thursday night did little to dispel my excitement as I ventured through the streets of York in search of my gig for the evening, Personal Trainer at The Crescent. Hidden away off the high street and nestled amongst a row of high terraced housing, it's an unassuming entrance to one of the city's most exciting and important venues. Over the years, The Crescent has cemented itself as a true community venue, being independently founded and run on the site of a renovated Working Men's Club; and it has maintained itself as a core part of social and cultural life in the city.

Not only is The Crescent community run, but it has also built itself as a cultural hotspot for the city, hosting bands, comedy acts, DJ sets and more. Stepping inside I immediately felt at home and welcome, The Crescent is always an inclusive and friendly place, and it doesn't take long before you feel part of its community that it has built up over the years. Without sounding pretentious, you immediately feel part of something greater here!

That evening, Personal Trainer would be playing as part of Independent Venues Week and would be joined by fellow Dutch indie-rockers in Real Farmer and The Klittens.

Real Farmer kicked the night off with a set brimming with

energy and hitting the audience with a wall of sound to get the crowd going. With their angry brand of indie punk, they left everything on the stage, putting heart and soul into their performance, and a couple of cans of lager too!

The Klittens then followed, delivering a set oozing with dreamy ethereality blending punchy guitar pop with mellow vocals. They also spoke of the importance of venues like The Crescent for up-and-coming bands in providing a space to cut their teeth, grow a fanbase and also to meet like minded musicians for future tours and collaborations.

Finally, Personal Trainer took to the stage to a tremendous reception, eliciting excited grins from the band. They were as happy as the audience to be there, that was for sure!

The band went onto deliver a refreshing brand of indie rock that encompassed all that is great about the genre, whilst not shying from embracing its chaotic side. They seamlessly blended Real Farmer's boyish enthusiasm with The Klittens' sweeping choruses.

It might surprise you to learn that, despite the band consisting of around seven members onstage, only one of them, Willem Smit, is a permanent member! The others comprise a rotating roster of musicians from the Amsterdam indie scene. This makes every live performance unique, with different musicians playing in different performances. Personal Trainer are therefore a band that have to be seen live to be properly appreciated. Yet this ever-changing cast does mean that the performance can be a little rough around the edges at times, but they take this in their stride to deliver a genuine sound that embraces the opportunity for improvisation and spontaneity onstage.

This roughness and sometimes improvised feel only added to the energy in the room. You could also see how much fun the band were having. Band members would goof about on stage, trumpets would be played with one hand whilst the other stayed on the keys, two drummers kept in perfect unison whilst also chipping in with vocals, and a sweaty towel was thrown about to

cover the heads of soloists, before spinning them around to deliver a scintillating sax solo.

There were infectious levels of fun, and the crowd were lapping it up. Joining in on belting out choruses, cheering on the band and laughing at their antics. Audience interaction and engagement like this can only truly occur in small, intimate venues, where the crowd is as much part of the experience as the band is, and Personal Trainer made full use of The Crescent's tight surroundings to create a participatory and collective experience like no other.

As much as this article is me reviewing a gig, it is ultimately a celebration of independent music venues and their community building powers. The space that these institutions provide is invaluable in creating a vibrant music scene, which benefits music lovers and musicians alike by giving them the opportunities to connect to one another. Personal Trainer embodied the communality of The Crescent by embracing the crowd and bringing them along on a frenzied musical journey.

“ Personal Trainer embodied the communality of The Crescent



IMAGE: RAWPIXEL

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DEATH OF THE SUPERHERO

GEORGE UDALE (HE/HIM) EXPLORES THE BOX OFFICE DECLINE OF BLOCKBUSTER SUPERHEROES

Between 2008 and 2019, Marvel released 22 films that culminated in the spectacular end of the Infinity Saga in *Avengers Endgame* (2019), a film that marked the pinnacle of critical and commercial success of the superhero genre and seemingly marked its immortalisation as a cultural force that is here to stay. Fast forward just five years later and Marvel has produced 20 projects and have 24 more due by the end of the decade, expanding the fictional universe in a quantity detrimental to its quality. With the dramatic box office failure of late 2023's *The Marvels*, the worst cinematic opening of any MCU film, and the disappointing critical reviews, vast production costs and low quality CGI of *Secret Invasion* and *She-Hulk*, Marvel's superheroes have become a collection of a money making formulas buckling under their own weight and seemingly destined for collapse.

Seeking to understand how the superhero has been pushed to its breaking point, I rewatched the last superhero film I truly enjoyed, James Mangold's *Logan* (2017) and wanted to understand what sets it apart from films today. For a start it's a gritty R-rated thriller that sees Wolverine (Hugh Jackman) navigate a harsh dystopian world to deliver a young child to safety, a stark difference to the high-octane, family-friendly superhero content that we recognise from Marvel today. However, its true power, is the way it references the Western genre and frames the tragic end of Jackman's 17 year cinematic run as Wolverine as the looming death of the authentic superhero. Mangold has the characters watch clips from George Steven's great Spaghetti Western *Shane* (1953) and embeds other recognisable Western motifs to align the modern superhero with the golden-era of cinematic cowboys, a cultural icon that soon became formulaic. Where it was between the 1960s to 1980s that the Spaghetti Western genre became an oversaturated and forgettable mass of stock characters and clichés, Superhero films have become so common that the roles of their heroes also cease to have any defining meaning.

Acquired by Disney in 2009 to be part of Bob Iger's media conglomerate, Marvel and its heroes have become severed from their authentic origins as unique, hand-drawn

stories and commodified into a product that, for the last 20 years, has grown to become the highest grossing film franchise. New characters might be introduced, as is true for *The Marvels* and *Madame Web* (2024) and new stories might be told, but by virtue of being superhero films, they can't escape the clichés and character tropes that make them predictable. When public interest wanes, Marvel's recent multiverse concept means that they can resort to bringing out alternate versions of the guaranteed sellers, allowing the most popular superheroes to cheat their permanent cinematic death and marking their immortalisation as just a financial formula to boost views and maintain relevance.

Whether it's rebooting killed-off characters like 2021's *Black Widow* or finished stories like Toby Maguire and Andrew Garfield's roles in 2021's *Spider-Man: No Way Home*, superheroes have sacrificed their authenticity to become products. Returning back to Mangold's *Logan*, this death of authenticity, or the uniqueness and individuality of the superhero genre, is integral to its ending. Here, Jackman's longest running superhero role is ended through his death at the hands of a younger and CGI enhanced clone of himself, an authentic hero dying at the hands of a soulless, duplicated version of himself that is reflective of how the authenticity of Marvel's characters is being killed by the constant creation of newer versions.

Just like *Logan's* cloned adversary, Marvel keep their characters unchanging in a cryochamber and immortalized as household products that are denied the chance to die. Jackman's death, unlike that of his regenerating clone, has meaning because his sacrifice was permanent and his screen time at an end, a meaning that translated to its commercial success, bringing in \$619.2 million at the box office worldwide. With the constant reliance on reviving stories about Spider-Man, Captain America and Iron Man that have already come to their end, the superhero has become a sales pitch, instantly recognisable on the screens we watch, games we play and products we buy, but missing meaning.

The result is that the superhero is increasingly becoming recognisable as a product with money rather than emotion at its core, an iconography that is everywhere but that leads to nothing. The irony is that for all *Logan's* authenticity and uniqueness, Jackman is set to reprise his role as Wolverine in this year's *Deadpool & Wolverine*, revived from the dead and another demonstration as to how even the best stories aren't untouchable. Stripped of its magic and becoming increasingly formulaic, the superhero genre as we know faces the same fate as the Western and losing its most valuable asset: the viewer.



IMAGE: IMDB

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IMAGE: IMDB

CHOCKTAW CULTURE ECHOES IN MARVEL MINISERIES

JAMES LAPPING (HE/HIM) TUNES INTO INDIGENOUS REPRESENTATION IN MARVEL'S NEW SHOW ECHO

Meet Maya Lopez, aka Echo. The Marvel Cinematic Universe's first Indigenous superhero! 25 years after her first appearance in the *Daredevil* comics, Echo gets a dedicated miniseries on Disney+ that comes off the back of her previous cameos in the *Hawkeye* series.

Menominee actress Alaquia Cox reprises her role as Echo in this new Marvel show. Like the character herself, Cox is also deaf and an amputee. The use of American Sign Language is significant in the show and the rest of the supporting cast have done a wonderful job at learning ASL for their roles. By creating this series, Disney and Marvel have successfully bought to life a brutal and badass comic book character that exhibits the intersections between race, gender, and disability.

The story revolves around Maya Lopez's conflicted relationship with Wilson Grant Fisk, the supervillain known as Kingpin. Their origin story is explored and we discover how Fisk initially acted like a father figure to the young Lopez. However, this exploration leads to highlighting Fisk's manipulative characteristics and the series delves into the darker sides of domestic and emotional abuse that shaped Kingpin and his flawed relationship to Echo.

However, Lopez tries to rekindle relations with her family in the Chocktaw Nation, and whilst doing so, is faced with visions of her female ancestors. These begin with a magnificent depiction of the Chocktaw origin story from the clay people. Chafa (or Chahta), the first Chocktaw woman, saves her people from Nanih Waiya, the Mother Mound. A scene set in pre-contact Alabama allows us to witness an example of the game Ishtaboli, also known as stickball and a precursor to lacrosse. Lowak must win the game or else her tribe is banished from the region forever. We also get to see Tuklo save members of the Lighthorse, a police force formed in the 19th century by tribes based in the Southeast of the United States. They tackled horse theft and other criminality which came to prominence during the period. These ancestors each possess individual strengths that Echo harnesses to form her powers and allow her to acknowledge who she truly is as a Chocktaw woman.

These wonderful flashbacks not only intertwine with the plot, but give Marvel the opportunity to display accurate examples of Chocktaw specific culture. The series was assisted by Indigenous consultants from the Chocktaw Nation who helped with historical depictions, costuming, traditional dress, and language. The

Chocktaw language, which at one point almost died out, is now recovering and it is projects like *Echo* are helping with its rejuvenation. As such, the entirety of the series has been dubbed into Chocktaw. This makes *Echo* an excellent resource for Chocktaw people to witness their language and culture on such a huge platform. This follows Disney+ previously dubbing the *Predator* prequel *Prey* into Comanche and *Star Wars* into Navajo.

Echo is directed by Navajo filmmaker, Sydney Freeland, and Gunaikurnai filmmaker, Catriona McKenzie, who both wondrously capture the dark and gritty world of organised crime alongside the colour and vibrancy of Chocktaw culture. Furthermore, *Echo* boasts an array of Indigenous talent, old and new. Tantoo Cardinal and Graeme Greene, both of *Dances With Wolves* fame, play the roles of Maya's grandparents. The cast includes those that have been making a name for themselves in more recent television projects too, such as Zahn McClarnon of AMC's *Dark Winds*, Chaske Spencer from the BBC's *The English*, and Devery Jacobs and Dallas Goldtooth who both star in the sensational Disney+ series, *Reservation Dogs*.

Unfortunately, at times during the five-part series, the pacing feels slightly off and some scenes seem to be either cut short or unnecessarily long. With episode lengths varying between 35 to 50 minutes, it may be the case that *Echo* was the victim of heavy editing. The show may have benefited from consistent run times or further episodes. Some criticism has also suggested that the plot is lacking in substance. This may be the case to an extent. However, *Echo* provides us with a slice-of-life focus on the trials and tribulations of Maya Lopez – dealing with her brutal past in New York City, the internal conflict of her role as heroine, anti-hero, or villain, and a desire to reconnect with her roots and her community. These aspects of the series are much more compelling than the crimefighting clichés.

With an open ending to the miniseries and the relentless production rate of Marvel currently saturating the market, hopefully we will see more of Echo in the future. Freeland is currently working on other projects too. Alongside *Reservation Dogs* creator Sterlin Harjo, she is producing the highly anticipated series *Rez Ball* for Netflix. As major production companies, studios, and streaming platforms continue to champion Native American representation, it is certain that the Indigenous renaissance continues to Echo through the film and TV industry.

“Only the best day of the year” Galentines Day in Pictures



Galentines was a phrase coined by Leslie Knope, the main character in the TV sit-com *Parks and Recreation* as the “best day of the year”. Since, it has evolved into a perfect way to celebrate all kinds of love. Here we capture the joy of Galentines and the importance of making memories with your friends.



DAVID HOCKNEY 'DRAWING FROM LIFE' EXHIBITION REVIEW

EMILY STEVENS (SHE/HER) REVIEWS THE RETURNING EXHIBITION AT THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT GALLERY

As the winter break drew to a close, my family and I decided to head into London for the day to visit the David Hockney 'Drawing from Life' exhibition, before I returned to university. The exhibition was first opened in 2020 but was cut short after only a

IMAGE: EMILY STEVENS



few weeks due to the pandemic. In 2023, it reopened at the National Portrait Gallery featuring new portraits, composed by Hockney in 2021 and 2022. I visited in January 2024, in the exhibition's final weeks.

Having arrived in London slightly early, we decided to look around the nearby National Gallery. This has to be one of my favourite art

galleries in London; the variety of paintings and artists is completely staggering. Amongst the world-famous works we saw were Holbein's *The Ambassadors*, Rousseau's *Surprised!*, and Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*. However, my personal favourite was *The Execution of Lady Jane Grey* by Paul Delaroche, which I have always found incredibly moving. After spending a while wandering amongst centuries-old masterpieces, we were eager to see some more recent art. We had a quick look in the gift shop before heading just down the road to the National Portrait Gallery for the Hockney exhibition.

The exhibition featured portraits from the past 60 years of people significant in Hockney's life, such as his mother, Laura Hockney, his longtime companion JP and even himself. One of my favourite parts of the exhibition was the room dedicated to portraits of Celia Birtwell, fashion and textile designer and close friend of Hockney. His portraits perfectly capture her romantic, feminine style and their intimate friendship was clear to see through the artwork.

New to the exhibition in 2023 were recent portraits of significant people in Hockney's life, composed in 2021 and 2022. I must admit, this was one of the main reasons I was so excited to see this exhibition, as amongst the thirty new portraits was one of Harry Styles, one of my favourite musicians. Seeing the renowned portrait of Styles in person was amazing; Hockney's vibrant, messy style perfectly complements the joyful pop music and iconic, colourful wardrobe of Styles. As a fan of both artists, seeing them collaborate on the portrait was easily my favourite part of the exhibition (although I am obviously a little biased!).

I also loved the self-portrait included in this new section of 'Drawing from Life'. There were many other pieces depicting Hockney throughout the exhibition, and it was fascinating to see both Hockney's artistic style and his image evolve through the canvases.

This was not my first time experiencing Hockney's work firsthand. In 2021, I was lucky enough to attend a summer exhibition, 'David Hockney: The Arrival of Spring, Normandy, 2020' at the Royal Academy of Arts. During the worldwide lockdown in 2020, Hockney retired to his home in Normandy, France and spent his time turning the picturesque views of Normandy in bloom into digital art. Hockney used an iPad to create the stunning landscapes in the exhibition, exploring a new medium at a time when everything was different and uncertain.

By contrast, the new pieces added into the 'Drawing from Life' exhibition were a return to portraiture and the classic medium of acrylic on canvas. Visiting both Hockney exhibitions caused me to reflect on how significantly the world has changed since the beginning of the pandemic. Hockney's 2020 digital depictions of nature were so clearly created during a time when the natural world was free to blossom whilst people were staying inside and relying on technology. Visiting that exhibition in 2021, I do not remember noticing the lack of people represented in Hockney's digital art but looking back now, it is clear how significant that was.

The return to portraiture in 'Drawing from Life' was strangely comforting; it was a reminder of how far the world has come since the pandemic. Some digital art was still staged, but this time the subjects were all people rather than

nature. Although 'The Arrival of Spring' was an excellent exhibition, it was a joy to see so many recent paintings of significant people in Hockney's life. The digital art depicting intimate portraits of Hockney's loved ones is a reminder of the isolation and reliance on technology during the pandemic, but also that the world has recovered since that time. The exhibition felt like a time capsule; it was a uniquely personal look into an artist's life as well as a beautiful display of artwork.

David Hockney: 'Drawing from Life' was open at the National Portrait Gallery between 2 November 2023 and 21 January 2024.

IMAGE: EMILY STEVENS



REVIEW: YORK ACTORS COLLECTIVE'S 'BEYOND CARING' PLAY

CARA DOHERTY (SHE/HER) REVIEWS A RECENT THEATRE@41 PRODUCTION OF ALEXANDER ZELDIN'S SHOW

The last time I was this nervous walking into a theatre, I was the one performing. After heading into rehearsals and chatting with director Angie Millard and the cast a few weeks ago, I've raved to friends and family about the York Actors Collective's *Beyond Caring* continually. Now, five of my friends braved a particularly cold and wet Thursday night for some live theatre in the homely black box setting of Theatre@41. Thankfully, the show was everything I expected it to be: a fresh, funny and full-hearted showcase of local talent and passion.

Beyond Caring was devised by visionary director Alexander Zeldin and the original company back in 2014 to explore a topic and tension that remains contemporary: the bleak reality of zero hour contract work. Starting at the interview stage for three new temporary workers and then following through their successive night shifts, the audience is given a documentary-like insight into the lives of five strangers crashing together for a moment in time.

Stage manager, Em Peattie, creates a simple but effective set – soulless but functional, just as the play's insipid night manager Ian would likely approve of. I appreciate the added detail of placards projected onto the stage, delineating "Another Night" or "Machine Clean" and effectively breaking up the play's steady rhythm while also highlighting the monotony of the work.

The emotional core of the piece is found in the relationship between Chris Pomfrett's quietly kind Phil and Grace, played by Victoria Delaney. Grace suffers the most with the physical demands of the work, recently taken off of disability benefits but struggling with pain man-

agement for her rheumatoid arthritis. Delaney's Grace charms her colleagues and audience effortlessly, always quick to engage the group in benign chatter and laughter. Soon she forms a closer connection with Phil, who she gently



leads out of the shell he has hidden in since he lost his wife. Their friendship – like much in the play – is timid and tentative, but I felt myself rooting for a happy ending that I resignedly knew the realism of the play would never permit. One of the most heartbreaking scenes is a simple and poignant moment: Grace, cry-

ing from pain and frustration, is read to sleep by Phil. Played with an understated tenderness, Phil's struggle and eventual finding of his voice acts as a beacon of hope in the bleakness.

Friendship manages to be both surface-level

and see her daughter once a week – and the other a social chameleon that hides the fact that he doesn't have anywhere to sleep. But they strike up an easy camaraderie, joking and jibing their way through the long nights. Angie's directorial style, which prioritises collaboration and improvisation, fills the characters and their relationships with authenticity worn casually by the talented cast.

Neil Vincent excels as the soulless night manager Ian, who borders sadistic in his mental and physical torturing of Grace – that is, when he can be bothered. A painful reminder of managers I've worked under in the past, Vincent still cleverly maintains the counterpart of this kind of character: that they are unintentionally hilarious. Lengthy, senseless rants about how he "is sort of his own God" (real quote) are well-received by the audience, his monotonous speech patterns punctuated by equal parts laughter and groaning.

Discussing with my friends afterwards, they were left yearning for answers. Do Grace and Phil get together? Does Ian finally get his comeuppance? What's next? But this isn't a play of answers, much as real life isn't. The lack of firm, beginning-middle-end storylines was exactly what made me rave about this play for weeks. The audience are offered a privilege – a no-holds-barred look into a few days in the lives of five individuals trying, failing and trying again. Little is insinuated or encouraged or told.

Whatever you take from the play, whether that be questions or answers, is sent out into the void – or maybe the mirror? *Beyond Caring* seems to say just one thing: it's your choice.

Editors Note: This production was seen 8 February 2024 at Theatre@41 Monkgate.

VISITING THE YORK CITY CENTRE VEGETARIAN HOTSPOT: GOJI CAFE

GRACE CLIFT (SHE/HER) GIVES US A RUN DOWN ON HER EXPERIENCE AT THE VEGETARIAN GOJI CAFE IN YORK

Goji Cafe is a vegetarian cafe and deli in central York, which has been selling cakes, salads, soups and more for over 10 years. In the top 100 of 571 restaurants in York on TripAdvisor, I knew that I had to test out the food, and see if it lived up to expectations. We ordered two main meals and two drinks, and left the restaurant with lots to say. Keep reading to see if Goji Cafe is the next student hotspot for a meal out!

The first main meal we ordered was the Goji Hot Dog, described on the menu as a 'large tofu hotdog in a baguette with ketchup, gherkins, onions, whole grain mustard and salad garnish'. It was £9.95, and came with a side salad. It tasted like a proper, American hot dog

– not trying to be fancy or add too many extras. The baguette worked in place of the hot dog bun because it was soft, and the fillings were well thought out and traditional. It was worth it for the cost, and was a filling meal.

The second main meal we tried was the Salad Platter, which was three salads of your choosing from their daily options, with beetroot garnish. The salads we chose were the fresh mint tabbouleh, middle eastern aubergine in a yoghurt and sumac dressing, and curried cauliflower, spinach, sweet potato and cashew salad. It was £11.95. The first thing I noticed was the strong display; each salad was connected on the plate by a beetroot garnish. However, the

portion was quite small for the price, and wasn't as filling as the hot dog. The salads were outstanding – the tabbouleh was light and refreshing, the aubergine perfectly soft, and the curry dressing not too thick. If you have a smaller appetite but want something with brilliant quality and variety, this is the perfect choice.

We tried two drinks at Goji Cafe; the Goji Tea

and the Rooibos Gingerbread Tea. The Goji Tea was the winner of the two – including goji berries, strawberries, blackberries and apple, it was a refreshing, light tea that wasn't too overpowering. At £3.10, it seemed worth it for the price, and was perfect when paired with a heavier meal, like the Goji Hot Dog. It tasted like a regular, well made tea, with a fruity aftertaste.

The second drink we tried was the Rooibos Gingerbread Tea, which had rooibos, honeybush tea, orange and spices in it. It was £3.25 a pot, as were all of their 'Wellness Tea' selection, and it seemed like the quantity was worth it for the price. The citrus and the spices were particularly notable, and it wasn't too strong or sweet. For a light, citrusy tea, this is a great option.

In terms of the cafe in general, the staff are friendly and there was quick service time. The physical environment itself feels independent and welcoming, with local art on the walls and a cosy upstairs room. There's a small courtyard outside that would be a great place for a summer meal, and it was good value at around £13 a head. The food itself felt nutritionally dense and very summery, with strong variety for those

with smaller or larger appetites. Favourites were the Goji Hot Dog and the Goji Tea, both of which were clearly made with consideration to how each flavour would complement the rest.

This is a great place for students to bring parents or guardians for visits, to show them the independent and cosy feel of York's food and drink scene. It's also great for a meal out if you're willing to spend that little bit more for great quality. Overall, the environment was friendly and the food was consistently high quality. I would recommend this restaurant wholeheartedly, not only for students but for any visitors of York.



IMAGE: GRACE CLIFT



IMAGE: GRACE CLIFT

FASHION

JANUARY BLUES TO SPRING HUES: HOW TO DRESS FOR JOY

DHUHA USMAN (SHE/HER) WRITES ON SHAKING OFF NEW YEAR BLUES THROUGH YOUR WARDROBE THIS SPRING TIME

I am sure I am not the only one who was hit by the January blues this year. With my final semester approaching and being bed bound thanks to my chronic illness, it is certain to say that I have not been thriving, and neither has my wardrobe. An abundance of time spent in my very stylish highland cow pyjamas and the occasional jersey midi skirt to make myself acceptable to the outside world, has left me determined to dress with joy to shake off those new year blues and finally merge into 2024.

With the colder weather still here, it is easy to dress in the usual blacks and greys, maybe a navy blue if you are feeling bold. It is without a doubt that the colours we choose to dress in

always have an effect on our moods. In this same way, listening to 'Motion Sickness' by Phoebe Bridgers every morning is probably not the best choice to be pouring your cup of ambition to (this is your sign to add some Dolly Parton to your playlists, she always sparks SO much joy). According to the *London Image Institute*, "colour can play an important role in conveying information nonverbally, creating certain moods, and even influencing the decisions people make". Back to Dolly, her incredible wardrobe is curated with the utmost joy. From the highest heels to the wigs and tons of pink glitter in between, she has created an iconic signature wardrobe. Her joyous energy on stage and in interviews reflects the clothes she wears and is celebrated in the way her fans have adored her for over 50 years. This is exactly what the *London Image Institute* explains: could you imagine Dolly on stage in all black and flat hair? That would be a firm no.

Taking a leaf out of Dolly's book, I have been reminiscing on the 'Dopamine Dressing' saga of 2022. Essentially, this was a strive towards dressing for joy in order to boost our dopamine levels, the happy hormone. My main question is why was this a fad and why did this ever end? With trends like the 'clean girl' aesthetic or Tik Tok's new favourite, 'mob wife' craze, it can be difficult to actually know what clothes make you feel good rather than what you feel you should be wearing. To start, I like to think back to my childhood and what brought me joy then. Children don't really have that need to care what other people think, they show up as their authentic selves without trying. Whilst my

mother arguably gave me way too much creative freedom with my wardrobe, I dressed however I wanted and changed multiple times a day. Influenced by the likes of *Hannah Montana*, *That's So Raven* and *Wizards of Waverly Place*, my style was a mix of country, city diva and aspiring fashion designer. Written down, that sounds horrific and it probably was for anyone looking at me but my freedom in wearing whatever I wanted kept me happy, boosted my confidence and my love for fashion.

Thinking back, I wore lots of colour and accessorised to the heavens. Whilst I will steer away from the plastic jewellery from *GirlTalk*, I will be making a conscious effort to change my jewellery. I know lots of us are guilty of wearing the same emotional support pieces every day but perhaps changing one piece will invigorate a feeling of something new and get one out of a rut. This being said, if wearing signature pieces brings you joy then stick with that! After all, we are dressing for joy not to please other people, although I do think it's worth a try to switch up your style. Similarly, I used to wear lots of pink and if that doesn't scream happiness, I'm not sure what does. Recently, I was searching for a wool trench coat seeking a black or tan colour. I came across a burnt red colour and I honestly cannot describe how much I enjoy wearing my new coat. It's not a hugely bright colour, it is simply a new colour to my wardrobe and infiltrates a classic style with modernity. Try adding a new colour into your wardrobe, it is so easy to fall into the trap of wearing one palette but it is possible to add complimentary colours outside of your comfort zone. This could be via cloth-



ing, bags, jewellery or even a new nail colour. Sometimes re-introducing or increasing joy means trying something new, whether that is a huge change or the most subtle shift it can calm that monotonous feeling that January often brings to many of us.

So, what does dressing for joy really mean? It varies person to person but ultimately, it encourages happiness in our clothing choices. Wear what really makes you happy; that may be all black or a new pop of red in your wardrobe. For me, dressing for joy is merely wearing whatever makes me feel comfortable and wearing pieces I feel excited to put on. Simple things like this are pockets of joy in everyday life and can often pick up our mood, particularly after such a cold January.



IMAGE: JOSH HILD

HOW BALDUR'S GATE 3 SET THE NEW EXPERIENCE FOR GAMES

TASHA ACRES (SHE/HER) EXPLORES THE REASON FOR THE SEARING POPULARITY OF LARIAN STUDIOS' BALDUR'S GATE 3

When *Baldur's Gate 3* was released last summer, the gaming industry wasn't prepared for what was about to hit them. Much less, Larian Studios, the game's developer. Both returning fans — many of whom had purchased the game's early access — and new fans were anticipating the plunge into the land of Faerûn, ready to create their perfect character: their Tav. The game's popularity exponentially increased and the fanbase began to grow; video essays began to emerge on Youtube asserting its perfection, articles from game journalists flooded the Internet with hidden tips, and memes started to infiltrate algorithms. A good handful of these essayists and gamers are newcomers, and have started their content with a very similar sentence about their first RPG: "I really didn't think it would be my thing... but I loved it."

As someone whose experience with RPGs is limited to *Skyrim*, *The Outer Worlds*, and *Fallout 4* (which I am perhaps controversially listing here) I was somewhat familiar with the format, yet still, whatever expectations I had were exceeded. Like the aforementioned content creators, I fell into the game completely, admiring its narrative, its pages and pages of lore, and the pure wealth of content that's available to you. It's clear that this is a game thoughtfully and dutifully made to enhance your experience. Many reviewers praise similar elements, but this evidently emphasises the impact that these features had on its players; *Baldur's Gate* has set a new standard for RPGs and, perhaps, the gaming industry entirely.

According to the *Baldur's Gate X* (formerly Twitter) account, on the second weekend of launch players had already spent over 88 hours

in character creation. It truly is one of the most complex character creators in an RPG; the vast amount of options are there for you to create your perfect character, from appearance to classes and races, and it succeeds in almost every way. Your character's backstory can shine through their appearance, so that they are exactly as you imagine them, making the game far more immersive. Immersion is exactly what the game excels at, and something that is so important for a video game to achieve, given that for so many, gaming is a form of escapism. I'm sure you can imagine that the genre of an RPG would highlight this criteria, making it easy for critics to find a fault, but *Baldur's Gate* doesn't falter. It's easy to be immersed in

a game with so much lore and world building — you can speak to every character, make even the smallest choices, and choose which relationships you want to pursue. It helps that the game is based on the fifth edition of the popular tabletop game *Dungeons & Dragons*, successfully bringing the game to life in a way that I've never experienced before. *Detroit: Become Human* was one of the first choice based narrative games that I'd ever played, but *Baldur's Gate 3* is infinitely more complex; every player's experience is different and replaying the game won't dilute one's experience. Its characters are three dimensional, with their own distinct personali-

ties that feel so vivid, and the size of the world that you can roam through on your terms is immense.

The outstanding creative content itself is not the only precedent that Larian studios has set. The game arrives during the age of micro-transactions, therein which it stands out simply because it has none. When you buy the game, you own it entirely: there's no pay to win, or pay to get a better experience. Any future downloadable content will presumably be on the Playstation store, but my point is that you don't have to pay for better armour or weapons through the game, and so it feels entirely complete. Every playable character, every upgrade, every reroll of the dice is of no extra charge to you, and it's an incredible shame that this makes the game unique, when it should be the trend instead.



IMAGE: LARIAN STUDIOS PRESSKIT

However, it's an unfortunate reality that over the last decade studios have tried to squeeze every last penny out of their customers.

In the midst of all this praise, it's still curious how this game is now beloved by so many newcomers. What caught their attention? Crucially, because turn-based gameplay, mirroring that of a tabletop game, isn't very common in video games and is perhaps less attractive to gamers who are used to FPS style gameplay. Firstly, I'd suggest that the recent popularity of *Stranger Things* had already introduced many of their fans to the world of *Dungeons & Dragons*, sparking an interest in a board game they either didn't

know existed or had written off as one they could never imagine themselves playing — as a video game, it's been made entirely accessible for those who don't know anything about the tabletop game and even allows one to play solo. The use of the dice roll system is also unique for a video game, bolstering the tabletop playstyle and keeping players on their toes. For others, the sheer freedom of the game was attractive: the developers thought through every possible choice a player might have, and they wrote extensive plot points to ensure every player's experience was enjoyable, which other RPGs have struggled with. For one scenario, there are several ways to proceed — from poisoning a punch bowl to lighting a grease fire. The creativity that players have to invent new ways of approaching these scenarios makes every player's journey unique. Additionally, in many other RPGs or narrative based games, the mechanics don't allow you to attack allies — in *Baldur's Gate* your ability to choose which characters live through the plot allows you to feel as if you're making a difference in the world, furthering your immersion into the game. Perhaps new fans of *Baldur's Gate* will also turn with curiosity to play *Dungeons & Dragons* for themselves, facilitating yet another form of escapism that we're all so desperate for during a time of global unease.

After the game's release, Belgian developer Larian Studios collected more awards than they could imagine: in the 2023 Game Awards, they won eight awards, including the prestigious Game of the Year. It seems like this game impressed everyone, where new and old *Dungeons & Dragons* fans are able to fall in love with a detailed world and characters that feel so alive.

TRAVEL

WHEN IN ROME: THE BEAUTY OF TRAVELLING ITALY ON A BUDGET

ISOBEL ARMSTRONG (SHE/HER) SHARES HER ADVICE FOR PLANNING AND EXPLORING ROME TO MATCH YOUR BUDGET

Rome is a hub of culture: the arts, Italian cuisine and the ancient, historic architecture around which modern Rome flourishes. The 14th most visited city worldwide in 2019, it draws in tourists from all over the world and holds a special appeal to students as a unique experience of history and culture. Travelling while in university often goes hand in hand with travelling on a budget so here are my tips for ensuring your trip to Rome doesn't break the bank, and you may come away feeling a bit more enriched at the end!

Flights

Rome has two international airports: Leonardo da Vinci / Fiumicino (FCO) and Ciampino (CIA). Most

cheap flights will take you to Ciampino Airport, a converted military air base, the smaller and less well-connected of the two. Fiumicino is the more popular of the two and connected to Roma Termini by train, but the shuttle bus from CIA averaging at only 10 Euros per return trip is a cheap solution, offering a unique scenic route past Aqueeduct Park and Via Appia (one of the oldest Roman roads!)



IMAGE: ISOBEL ARMSTRONG

Location

As in all major cities, the closer you are to the centre, the more expensive the accommodation is, so where you decide to stay is the largest factor to consider when budgeting your trip. Rome has a fantastic transport system with regular buses and three metro lines so don't be afraid of staying a little further out from the major attractions such as the Colosseum or the Pantheon. There are plenty of hostels to choose from, or two-star hotels that are relatively inexpensive. Hotel Altavilla 9 in the Termini area averages about £70 per night for a double room, including breakfast, and offers more privacy than a hostel dorm.

Exploring by Foot

City breaks are often non-stop, so taking the time to wander the streets of Rome can be just as relaxing as it is beautiful. Rome's architecture, ranging from antiquity to modern is incredible, every street is almost picked from a story, and the best way to experience it up close is by foot. Getting (a little bit) lost in Rome allows you to encounter beautiful sites, such as Ponte Sisto, the 1400s

bridge that crosses the Tiber River, inaccessible by car. For a more guided approach to exploring the city, keep your eye out for free walking tours! These are typically led by locals or students at regular times throughout the day for free with a tip given at the end for their time.

Food and Drink

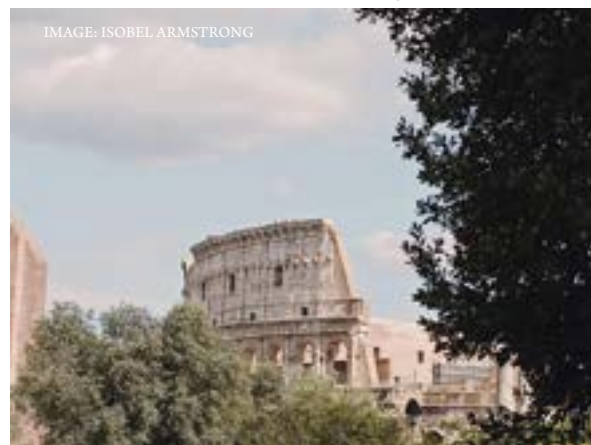
While Rome is renowned for its food, eating out for every meal can become expensive quickly. Many hotels have a breakfast included in their price but don't be afraid to use Rome's local shops for food on the go such as fresh fruit, bread, bruschetta, olives and more. Local pizzarias are inexpensive, offering pizzas averaging at 9 Euros and for wine drinkers, a glass of house wine for around 3 Euros. For something different, try one of Italy's famous espressos to end your meal, either instead of or alongside your dessert.

Planning and Prioritising

Rome has so many incredible sights it's impossible to see them all in a few short days, so planning is essential to get the most from

your trip! Trevi Fountain is only a short walk from the Spanish Steps, the Pantheon and Piazza Navona (a great place to rest your legs and watch the world go by!) While the Pantheon isn't free to enter, it is just as beautiful from the outside, so don't be afraid to prioritise only paying for the sites that matter most to you.

A guided tour of the Colosseum may be



more expensive than simply going alone, averaging at £70 per person including a tour of Palatine Hill, but an expert's perspective can make the visit far more interesting! One of the Seven Wonders of the World, the Colosseum is unmissable, and however you choose to see it will be memorable. Another option

is self-guided audio tours that can take you around the neighbouring archaeological park and Palatine Hill — the site of the Roman Forum. Simply pack a picnic and make a day out of it. Rome has so much to offer that no matter the budget, the Eternal City has something to offer for everyone, and it is a trip that can stick with you for a lifetime.

A CAMERA IN A MOVING WORLD: VOLUNTEERING IN AREQUIPA

EMILY WARNER (SHE/HER) REFLECTS ON HER TIME AS A VOLUNTEER FOR THE PERUVIAN NGO, INTIWAWA

“To photograph people is to violate them, by seeing them as they never see themselves, by having knowledge of them that they can never have; it turns people into objects that can be symbolically possessed. Just as a camera is a sublimation of the gun, to photograph someone is a subliminal murder” - Susan Sontag, *On Photography*

Photography is always a compromise between light and shutter speed, or zoom and focus. However, it wasn't until I was volunteering this summer that I was confronted with a compromise between art and life. Susan Sontag's words began to hover at the back of my mind and every time I squinted down my viewfinder, I was laden with the weight of capturing lives without exploitation, turning individuals into subjects without objectifying them.

My volunteering experience started in August when I began creating an impact video for Intiwawa about their work. Born in the streets of San Isidro, Intiwawa is an NGO in Arequipa, Peru, dedicated to uplifting the lives of low-income families and communities. They offer life-changing education to children, socio-emotional support for families and a textile training programme to empower women. As I arrived in this world, I felt the chasm between their reality and my lens. How could I authentically capture the values of Intiwawa - autonomy, responsibility and integrity?

Just navigating to the school involved a bewildering 45 minutes on a crowded bus, surrounded by voices I couldn't understand and desperately trying to hold onto my belongings (after being robbed several days earlier). Now, here I was on the outskirts of Arequipa, trying to dodge feral dogs and wishing I'd gotten that rabies vaccine after all. Inside the school, every wall was layered with colourful paintings illuminated by the sun. The sound of children

seeped from the classrooms and discarded footballs were scattered across the floor, enjoying a



brief reprieve before the next break time. Overwhelmed but determined, I gathered my courage (and whatever scraps of Spanish I'd learnt on Duolingo) and walked into the first classroom to introduce myself.

In the space of that first day, my fears were dispelled as I realised that some forms of communication are universal. People speak with their bodies, with emotions, through art, photography or film. Joy might be an abstract thing but laughter is not. Pain might be intangible but tears are not. Love can't be seen but at Intiwawa, it was written on every face.

I conducted a series of interviews with people across the organisation to weave their voices into the fabric of my video: volunteers, mothers, children, local partners and directors, the school's cook, their psychologist and the founder of the organisation, Leonel Revilla. Julia Audinet, the director of Intiwawa said:

“Intiawa is a family that has a deep connection with the local community. I was surprised how quickly the children and the families allowed us into their culture and wanted to build

a bond with an international community.”

Her words reinforce the reciprocity between the volunteers and families at Intiwawa. The shared mission and equality of this organisation.

In order to build a relationship with the families, I began learning Spanish. Over time, their words became more comprehensible to me and I was able to conduct interviews in Spanish, spending hours drafting the questions beforehand with my teacher. The children, of course, found my pronunciation hilarious and delighted in hearing me stumble over basic sentences - “más fuerte” I found myself pleading with them during interviews, feeling quite distinguished for knowing that much. Still, the unconditional love and gratitude they expressed overcame any language barrier, and that was true of everyone at the organisation.

Mardeli, who coordinates the mothers textile project, spoke about the importance of her work:

“The project is important for these mothers because they need so much. A place where they feel welcomed, where they feel that someone wants to help them, that someone listens to them, that their needs are also important and that [...] they also have a potential to fulfil.”

She highlights how Intiwawa gives these women the greatest gift possible, their own autonomy. Their testimonials confirm the transformative impact of Intiwawa:

“I decided to come here to improve myself,” one of the mothers in the textile project told me and another said: “I leave here happy. That's the most important thing for me, and I know I'm learning and I'm proud.”

However, not only does Intiwawa benefit

the families themselves but also the volunteers and the wider community, for these children are (to quote Mardeli again), “the future of our society and our country”. To invest in them is to invest in Arequipa, cradled in the Andes with its vibrant plazas and colonial past. Dayana, the psychologist at Intiwawa, “want(s) to give them knowledge so that their rights are always respected: the right to education, food and health.”

I ended every interview by asking how they would describe Intiwawa in one word. “Strength”, “friendship”, “happiness” and “beauty” were just some of the responses. These things are impossible to capture on a photo or in a film, yet, this does not mean that all photographers and videographers are doomed to failure.

As I grappled with the ethics of journalism in a different country and language, I realised what Susan Sontag fails to acknowledge in her famous essays *On Photography*: that taking photos is more than camera and a subject. To see photography in this way is to assume an imbalance of power in favour of the person holding the camera. In actuality, photography is about honouring the humanity in every individual; it is a process, a craft and an intimate relationship between photographer and subject. Cameras should never claim to possess power - in fact, cameras cannot possess at all, these boxes of glass and metal. Cameras and those who wield them should be humble, acknowledge their insufficiency, gesture to what is beyond the frame without making assumptions about it and allow their art to be guided by the subject.

When wielded with empathy and integrity, photographic journalism has the power to illuminate, inspire, and foster genuine human connection. There, in the space between what is seen and unseen, is where power resides — a testament to the beauty, resilience, and interconnectedness of the human experience.

READ MY LIPS: IS IT UNETHICAL TO LIP READ CELEBRITIES?

HEATHER GOSLING AND GRACE BANNISTER EXPLORE THE TIKTOK TREND OF CELEBRITY LIP-READING

In a seemingly new trend on social media apps such as TikTok and Instagram, users have found a new way to investigate the lives of their favourite celebs. Lip-reading: the new social media phenomenon that renders whispering redundant.

Previously thought of only as a necessity for those with a hearing impairment, lip-reading has now become a social-media phenomenon. Lip-readers share their speculations on the conversations between different celebrities online. From Taylor Swift at the Superbowl, to celebrities on the red-carpet - it seems that celebrity spheres are becoming increasingly monitored and scrutinised. However, does this trend go beyond concerns of invading celebrity privacy? What happens when the supposed ‘lip reading experts’ get it wrong, and what rumours are they spreading?

Nina Dellinger, TikTok's top lip-reader, has attracted lots of attention for her uncanny ability to decode celebrity conversation. Her top-hit: a video uncovering a conversation between A-list celebs Timothée Chalamet and Kylie Jenner at the Golden Globes. While this conversation was fairly mundane and probably not too dissimilar to one that you've had yourself (Jenner sharing her thoughts on Chalamet's tie, followed by their respective “I love you's”), isn't the principle of this new lack of privacy at least a little bit alarming?

Dellinger has decoded conversations from the red carpet, to a video taken by the paparazzi.

This recent rise in lip reading celebrities can be seen as part of surveillance culture and our ever-increasing interest in the lives of celebrities. Social media feeds on our addiction to knowing everything about celebrities and now, even their conversations are no longer private. Dellinger has stated that: “I think the main reason for the boom, unfortunately, is that when you're a celebrity, people want to know about your life.” Wanting to know about celebrities and their lives is something we can all relate to with our hounding of gossip columns and TikTok posts. However, holding celebrities up to moral standards over their conversations leads us down a dangerous road of surveillance culture. Recently, Taylor Swift has been seen on the red carpet with a fan covering her lips to protect her from lip readers, something that she should not have to do to have privacy.

Dellinger has certain limits on what she will lip read. In a recent video post revealing a conversation between Olivia Rodrigo and Iris Apatow at the Lakers game, Dellinger omitted the name of the man that Rodrigo was talking

about. Dellinger stated that: “If I read something that is too personal, too invasive, I absolutely won't post that.” “I'd never want to stir something up or imply something that could also turn out not to be true.” And herein lies the problem: where is the line when it comes to lip-reading? Who gets to decide what does and does not become public knowledge? No one should feel that their conversations are being scrutinised by the public. Lip-reading only has an accuracy of 40 percent on average, and therefore it is not a reliable source of information. In all of her videos, Dellinger states that what she is lip-reading is ‘alleged information’, but this does not stop her viewers from taking it as the truth.

We all know social media has the potential for misinformation, but isn't this concept even more alarming when it is seemingly backed by ‘expert evidence’? A prime example is the rumours of divorce taken from a conversation between Emily Blunt and John Kraskinski at the Golden Globes. Lip-readers on TikTok assured their followers that Kraskinski told Blunt that he: “can't wait to get a divorce”. While these rumours have now been

dispelled, with Blunt and Kraskinski speaking out against the allegations (Kraskinski actually telling Blunt that he “[couldn't] wait to get in doors”) this certainly shows the platform available to lip-reading content creators. Rumours spread faster than real news, so is it possible that these creators are purposefully spreading misinformation for more clicks and views?

We believe that we are entitled to information about celebrities: their whereabouts, their thoughts, and their words. The desire to gain this information, that we should not, in fact, feel entitled to, is what causes parasocial relationships with celebrities. Parasocial relationships are one-sided relationships, and are most common with celebrities. With the wealth of information about celebrities on the internet, it is no wonder that we feel like we know them. Social media drives these parasocial relationships, making us forget that celebrities are real people, and listening in on their conversations is incredibly invasive.

While Selena Gomez and Emily Blunt have now been able to laugh at their respective rumoured conversations, Gomez sharing a photo of her and Blunt to her story with the caption “we shall not speak lol”. This new phenomenon is certainly not something we should expect celebrities to simply ‘laugh off’. Rumours and false allegations are damaging and we need to recognise the dangers of misinformation and fake news, and look more critically at the content produced by so-called TikTok experts.



THE WINNERS OF THE MUSE CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION 2024

WINNER - CHARLOTTE AMBROSE

The man who waited for his perfect 'new beginning'

Henry spends his days within his grave, his soul is tired, and his heart depraved. He had awaited Death as a new fresh start but found that life and Death don't so easily come apart. When I was alive, I was always waiting and prolonging my chance of a new beginning. Tomorrow, I would quit smoking. Next month, I would get my life together. Soon, I would figure out what I wanted. But, as you can expect, my new beginning and my new 'me' never happened. So, in my final years, I eagerly awaited Death: this would be my real 'fresh start'. I thought I could finally draw a sharp line under my past and have the perfect, new beginning that I always wanted. If you thought that birth was the ultimate 'new beginning', you should wait until you see Death. Surely, nothing gives you a new perspective of the world than observing it from six feet underground. At least, that's what I thought. But it didn't work like that. This new life is a continuation of my old one. This new life never gets boring, yet it tires me perennially so most days I confine myself to my home. Cozy and concealed; I spend most of my days in my coffin. Some days I'll venture out of my underground cabin. Like the flies inside my coffin's walls, I watch my family's lives continue from the dark corners and forgotten spaces of the room. I am there when the sudden chill in the air makes you want to shudder. I sit very still, watching them make and break their New Years Resolutions each year like clockwork. My spirit exists, infused in the air, during all their 'fresh starts' and big family moments. I breathe in their existence. The overwhelming odour of life is very unpleasant to me so, as revenge, I like to play tricks on them. Call me bitter, but even ghosts like having a bit of fun. Shivering and scared in the dark, they hold a candle to my face, but still never meet my eyes. I never got the 'new beginning' that I was searching for; that perfect break between the 'old me' and the new version. I thought that Death would finally give me that. Yet, Death only marks the coming of a new phase of existence: new problems, new pains, new plights. The Triumph Of Death becomes the Triumph of Life. The release of Death didn't involve the sweetness I was promised. There was less closure. New beginnings don't signal the complete loss of the past and the creation of a new person as I foolishly thought they did. Death didn't signal the end of my life, just the beginning of a quieter, lonelier one. Every moment that passes is an opportunity for a fresh start, don't wait until Death for a new beginning like Henry did.

RUNNER UP - MIA KAIN

Wordsworth Led The Way Up the Mountain

Wordsworth lead the way up the mountain
 With me trailing behind,
 Staggering and struggling
 To keep up the pace
 With which he marched up the fell.
 Spluttering like a pug behind him,
 Praying that the whipping wind
 Will flood his ear drums,
 And drown out my panting.

He wove his way, picked his path
 Seamlessly through the heath,
 The cotton grasses and foxgloves
 With his head up, never once stumbling
 Over the rocks on the unforgiving path.
 Not like me, chasing this striding
 Apparition uphill, tripping over sneering
 Stones, who rigged my passage with
 Their tripping hazards.

At the top, he left what he saw to me.
 I didn't know how to tell him
 (Not solely because my breath
 Had yet to return)
 That in my time
 There will be tourism
 And A roads
 And co2.
 That chemtrails keep the
 Lonely clouds in unwanted company,
 That even from all the way up here
 The hawk's cry now must fight
 The ubiquitous, monotonous hum
 Of the engines above and below him.

The lakes stretch out onto an infinity
 That we no longer have.

One day, I will have to say goodbye.
 One day, some other poet will write
 The last line about the primrose tufts,
 Before it all is chartered and sold.
 Before our antecedents will look up at
 the hills
 Through the gaps in mesh fencing
 With only our cryptic handwriting
 To help them imagine what it would be
 like
 To peer down from those peaks.

He speaks at me like Zeus
 To mortal, looks down on me
 Like I'm still at the base of the fell.
 I let him go on monologuing,
 Trying to take it all in
 Whilst he waxes lyrical.
 As if I needed him there to
 Really understand what I was seeing.
 Putting a foot on the summit,
 He surveys the expanse of the land
 Opening up in a 360 all around us
 Like it belongs to him.

I think I want to push him off.



PUZZLES

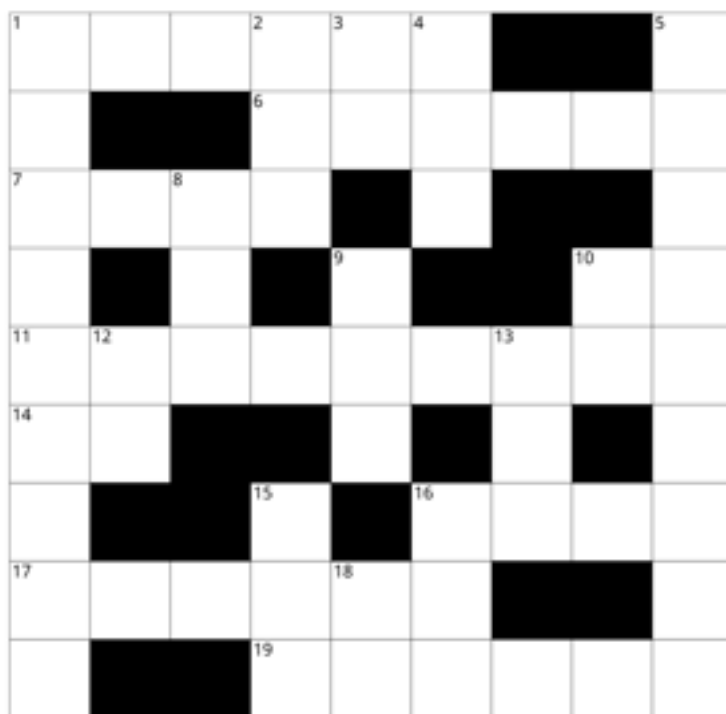
CROSSWORD

Across

- 1. Smooth music (6)
- 6. Poet of Lesbos
- 7. Piggy, perhaps? (4)
- 10. Book genre aimed at teens (2)
- 11. Pre school (9)
- 14. Instagram (abbr) (2)
- 16 New Facebook (4)
- 17. Trinidad and _____ (6)
- 19. Former US president and famous duck (6)

Down

- 1. 1986 Film starring David Bowie (6)
- 2. Italian chain (3)
- 3. Thanks (2)
- 4. Pick (3)
- 5. Refresher's event (5,4)
- 8. Out of a gamer's control (3)
- 9. Three subject degree (3)
- 10. (Half of) a toy on a string (2)
- 12. For example (2)
- 13. Rocks, at a bar (3)
- 15. Like Wonderland's hatter (3)
- 16. First day of the working week (abbr)
- 18. Monopoly square (2)



SUDOKU

4	8	7			2	1	3	6
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	9	5	1	6		7	8	
	4	3			1			5
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2			9					

Financing Fujitsu: Business Misconduct

MEADOW LEWIS (she/her)
BUSINESS EDITOR

AFTER THE RECENT release of the TV series *Mr Bates vs. The Post Office*, the Post Office scandal has become a common topic of current discussions. For those who are unaware, during the years 1999-2015, the Post Office prosecuted 700 labourers for alleged theft and fraud. Other bodies also prosecuted, with the total number of people affected amounting to more than 900. As a result, some of the sub-post masters faced criminal convictions. Yet, the real scandal was revealed to have lied with the computer system named Horizon, run by technological giant Fujitsu. Instead of sub-post masters committing theft, the Horizon software created false shortfalls in sub-post master accounts. In the ITV series, the the extremely detrimental impact of the scandal is shown on the lives of innocent workers, with many being forced into bankruptcy. Four workers were driven to suicide by the stress of the ordeal.

The bid for justice on behalf of the sub-post masters commenced in 2017, and extensive legal action ensued. Two years later, £58 million was granted as compensation for the miscarriage of justice. However, with the legal battle still taking place today, the total compensation bill risks amassing £1 billion. The logical solution would be that it is Fujitsu's responsibility to cover such costs, given that the mis-

conduct was their own. Yet currently, the financial sanctioning appears to be falling on the British taxpayer.

Speaking on the matter, the Europe director for Fujitsu, Paul Patterson, stated in the House of Commons that "there is a moral obligation for the company to contribute". I'm not sure if it's because I'm an English student, and therefore overly analytical of language, but 'contribute' merely suggests paying a small portion. The same sentiment was conveyed by the postal minister, Kevin Hollinrake. Last month, Hollinrake stated that "this will cost the taxpayer a billion pounds, maybe more than that", followed by his opinion that Fujitsu should contribute a "significant portion" of the costs. This has been exacerbated by the fact the UK remains to be in a cost of living crisis. Fujitsu itself has expressed its desire not to comment on the matter, other than saying they are in discussions with the government regarding "appropriate actions". Once more, the extent to which Fujitsu will be held accountable appears vague.

Despite the Justice Secretary, Alex Chalk, advocating for Fujitsu to pay the full cost of compensation, it is increasingly clear that this is unlikely to be the case.

For quashed convictions, £600,000 is stipulated to be paid. As of this month, 100 convictions have been quashed. For those who were not convicted, but financially affected by the scandal, £75,000 is the estimat-

ed compensation. As it stands, just 64 percent of all those affected have received the money they are entitled to. With 46 percent left to go, and millions having already been paid, the resulting cost is staggering. Whilst these payments are undoubtedly essential for justice, the injustice is that Fujitsu do not appear to be entirely accountable for this cost. The question arises, what is the purpose of a justice system which fails to pursue justice? Why is it not compulsory that Fujitsu pays for its own mistake, especially one it was willing to watch innocent people pay for since 1999? How often does this happen?

The answers to such questions appear unattainable. The case of Fujitsu's misconduct is so specific that interpreting current compensation laws becomes highly complex. In terms of the law, the most commonly used one in cases of misconduct tends to be the Equality Act 2010, which states that employees can't be discriminated against on the grounds of gender, sexuality, ethnicity, religion, class, or age. However, in the case of Fujitsu, this law is not applicable.

Instead, the Malicious Prosecution Compensation law must be deployed, which outlines that compensation claims can be made for legal fees and earnings lost as a result of false charges or accusations. In my (unprofessional) opinion, my inter-

pretation of this is that technically Fujitsu are fully liable for the costs of the compensation, including the costs resulting from the court case and employment of legal advisors. But, the case is complicated by the fact that no specific business law was broken by Fujitsu, but rather, a culmination of varying counts of misconduct.

This mostly centres on false accusations against employees, whilst simultaneously defending a system which they knew to be faulty, therefore being dishonest in a

court of law.

Consequently, it appears that there is a gap in the justice system for cases like this, further complicating its outcome. As it becomes increasingly likely that Fujitsu will evade full accountability for the compensation costs, demonstrated by current governmental discussions and the very fact that there is a current debate on the issue, the overriding conclusion is that new legislation needs to be put in place to prevent misconduct on such a large scale, and to avoid the taxpayer footing the bill.



Business in numbers

A digest of the most important figures to know this week:



12%

The savings which can be accrued from the launching of a fixed-rate energy deal / price cap by British Gas



20%

The decrease of the Super Micro Computer stock



£2.8 million

The number of people who are inactive at work due to long-term sickness, according to the Office for National Statistics



£2 billion

The amount most authorities plan to increase council tax bills by from April

BRITISH GAS IMAGE: IVAN RADIC
MICRO COMPUTER STOCK: IAN PRINCE
SICKNESS IMAGE: NVINACCO
COUNCIL TAX IMAGE: KEITH EVANS

Exploring Emissions: Car Sustainability

MEADOW LEWIS (she/her)
BUSINESS EDITOR

In recent news, hydrogen has been announced as a key contender against the battery in powering sustainable cars. Claims in favour of the element stem from significant figures in the automotive industry, namely Akio Toyoda and Oliver Zipse, two powerful minds from Toyota and BMW.

Weighing in on the topic in January, Toyoda (the chair of Toyota) declared his belief that hydrogen's share in the automotive industry will rest at 70 percent, with the rest stemming from batteries, the current frontrunner in sustainability.

Meanwhile, Zipse (the head of BMW) deemed hydrogen the "missing piece", in what he referred to as the "jigsaw" of low-emission vehicles. Expanding on his stance, Zipse explained that to truly implement sustainable cars on a global scale, a combination of hydrogen and batteries will need to be deployed.

Before delving further into the debate, it's firstly important to establish how hydrogen actually works when fuelling vehicles. When used as fuel, hydrogen can be placed in what is referred to as a 'fuel cell', an electrochemical which converts chemical energy to fuel once the chemical reacts with an oxidizer. While this may initially sound like a process which would omit more damaging chemicals into the environment, the only product of such an action is water. Alternatively, hydrogen can also be

burned (although to me this sounds less beneficial to the environment than the first option - just think of the smog...).

Unlike batteries, hydrogen is capable of a longer range, higher payloads, and offers refuelling at a faster rate. However, its creation has some flaws. The energy required to produce hydrogen (without extracting it from fossil fuels) is greater than the



amount needed to simply power a battery (around three times more). Furthermore, due to the fact that hydrogen has to be created, and thus a transformation of energy must occur, heat is lost on a large scale. As a result, hydrogen as a power source provides less energy than a battery.

As a substance, hydrogen is highly reactive, and thus, flammable. Consequently, it has very specific storage requirements. It must be stored under pressure, and with this comes the risk

of leakage. In contrast to fossil fuels, hydrogen emits less energy per unit volume, creating further complications regarding the number of tankers there would need to be. There is an alternative to this, which would be to deploy onsite electrolyzers. But the question remains, why go through all of this hassle when battery powered cars are already fully functioning?

Strengthening the battery side of

the debate, efficiency ratings seem to work against hydrogen fuel. The energy losses from the well to the tank for an electric car rests at 94 percent efficiency rating, whilst a hydrogen fuel cell car offers a measly 68 percent. When testing the efficiency from the tank to the wheel, the disparity between the two sources worsens. With battery fuelled cars offering a 77 percent efficiency, hydrogen rests at 33 percent. However, all hope is not lost, as the hydrogen results are still an im-

Science in Short

Molecular Jackhammers

A paper recently published details how high-energy molecules can act as 'jackhammers' to eradicate cancer cells. Ciceron Ayala-Orozco's team based in Texas, USA devised this method. Using large, conjugated molecules as these molecular jackhammers, and exciting them using near-infrared light, the way in which the molecule vibrates upon exposure to the light can be utilised to rapidly kill cells. Incredibly rapid vibrations can be achieved at low doses of both light and molecules. In vitro experiments show complete eradication of human melanoma cells under these conditions. Mouse-based model experiments also demonstrate an up to 50% efficacy of eliminating melanoma cells. The exploitation of molecular vibrations holds a promising future for the development of a new branch of cancer treatments.

New Type of Magnets discovered

Scientists in Switzerland have discovered evidence of a third kind of magnetism. Previously, it was thought that there were only two kinds of magnets, ferromagnets and antiferromagnets, where ferromagnetism is the traditional kind of magnetism associated with iron. Different kinds of magnetism are defined by electron spins – in ferromagnets electron spins line up to produce a magnetic field, but in antiferromagnets they alternate in direction, giving no net magnetic field.

This new, third kind of magnetism, termed altermagnetism, shares properties with both ferromagnetism and antiferromagnetism, and has been theorised since 2019 but not proven until now. The proof of the existence of altermagnets was found by analysing the energies and speeds of electrons in the crystal manganese telluride, which was previously believed to be an antiferromagnet. It was found that they aligned with the theorised behaviour for an altermagnet.

Altermagnetism is predicted to revolutionise spintronics, with applications in magnetic memory in computing, as altermagnets have a useful combination of magnetic properties. However, the concept is still new and will need development in the future.

Is the anthropocene unscientific?

Robyn Garner (he/him)
SCIENCE EDITOR

By August 2024 the changes humanity have inflicted on the planet could officially place us in a new Epoch. Known as the anthropocene, this proposition was first popularised in the year 2000 by atmospheric chemist Paul Crutzen, intending to replace the holocene which earth has been in since the last ice age, 11650 years ago. Epochs themselves are a part of the geological time scale, which splits the history of the planet into sections based upon rock depositories. An epoch is a relatively short time in the 4.5 billion year history of the earth, and the second shortest unit of geochronology, though its significance is not to be downplayed. Should the anthropocene become for-

date for the anthropocene, based upon geological evidence, was voted on by the Anthropocene Working Group (AWG). Epochs across the geological time scale have been aided by radiometric dating, which uses radioactive isotopes such as carbon-14 to measure the age of materials, although many are dated by their fossil content instead. For the anthropocene, however, many isotopes that would be used in this method have a margin of error too large to be of use.

Several propositions for its beginning were considered, such as Sihailongwan Lake in China and Coral Reefs in Australia. Ultimately Crawford Lake in Canada in 1950 was voted as the so-called "golden spike", the ultimate escalation of human impact. It was declared the anthropocene's official begin-

ning due to the plutonium isotopes from the fallout of nuclear weapons present in the sediment in the lake, signifying indisputable dramatic human alterations to geological matter. This has sparked much controversy among scientists across various disciplines, with many opposing putting such an exact date on the anthropocene's beginning. With events such as the detonation of the nuclear bomb and the increasing warming of the earth since pre-industrial times the beginning of the anthropocene to many is indisputable. However it is easy to argue that significant human impact was not one moment in time exactly, but a gradual effect that we sank into slowly. Ecologist Erle Ellis, who resigned from the AWG in protest against the decision regarding the golden spike, considers the definition "unscientific and harmful". Ellis argues that restricting the beginning of the epoch to just "a shallow band of sediment in a single lake" will harm public understanding of the anthropocene, possibly directly damaging how people think about the history of human impact on the climate.

Ellis has also contributed to an article arguing for more inclusion of the social sciences in the definition of the anthropocene, highlighting the ongoing lack of interdisciplinary research in scientific fields. If the formalisation of the anthropocene conveys important context about the ongoing environment crisis to the public, it cannot be treated as an exclusively geological matter. The article proposed an alternative committee to formalise the anthropocene, including "a formal procedure for inclusion", ensuring that at least half of the members are of social science disciplines.

Others, particularly those who specialise in social sciences, consider the term anthropocene itself to be the problem, suggesting that it promotes an anthropocentric narrative and does nothing to challenge the supposed hubristic attitudes of humanity. The term "Capitalocene," first put forth by human geographer Andreas Malm, instead looks at a new epoch from the perspective of the era of capital. This is in alignment with arguments that the name anthropocene itself is unfair to blame all of humanity for the actions of a few. The richest 1% account for more carbon emissions than the poorest 66%,

highlighting where change must come from. Some argue this would begin with the industrial revolution, but there is no unanimous consensus. Another alternative term "Chthulucene", meaning of the earth, proposed by philosopher Donna Haraway, instead focuses on the future hoping that a harmony between humans and nature would emerge.

Opposition to the idea does not end there. Geologist Stanley Finney argues that the AWG are "working backwards", trying to fit the golden spike to their proposed epoch instead of considering the strata (i.e. sedimentary rock layer) first. Similarly, palaeontologist Lucy Edwards argues that the evidence for the anthropocene cannot yet exist as the epoch is too young.

It is evident there is a wide variety of scientific and academic opinion on the definition and formalisation of the anthropocene. Whether pinpointing it to 1950 is unscientific due to geology, or unrepresentative of the true time scale humans have been affecting the planet, it appears that no one can settle on one meaning. It can become easy to view it as an arbitrary squabble between scientists that means very little outside of academic circles. Why does it matter beyond academia?

The concept of the anthropocene seems to have surpassed its original geological definition, with the social and political ramifications of announcing such an impactful change by humanity. It is undeniable that the message the concept of the anthropocene delivers is a necessary one, a fact that is far more frequently agreed upon among experts than the exact moment of its beginning. Francine McCarthy, a member of the AWG, hopes "the stratigraphic commission draws that line and formalises the time in Earth's history when the planet has been so impacted by humans, it will hopefully convey a sense of urgency to people to act now to look after our planet."



IMAGE CREDIT: KL CHONG

malised, it will become a notable contribution to the ever growing evidence of irreversible impact humanity has had on Earth.

After much effort and debate, in 2023 the official starting point and

ing indisputable dramatic human alterations to geological matter.

This has sparked much controversy among scientists across various disciplines, with many opposing putting such an exact date on the anthropocene's beginning. With events

Sandeel Fishing Banned in certain waters

Shannon Reed (she/her)
SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

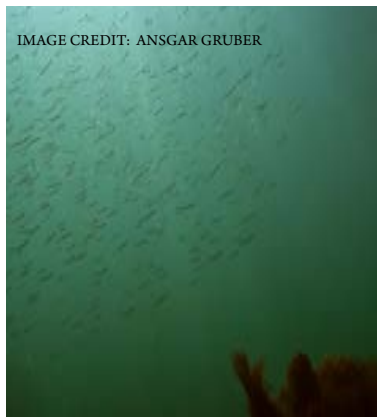
Industrial sandeel fishing will be banned from April in the UK's North Sea and all Scottish Waters following 25 years of campaigning by the RSPB.

The UK is home to almost 8 million globally important seabirds, but last year's seabird census found more than half of our breeding seabird species have declined over the past 20 years. Puffins and Kittiwakes are just two species that depend on our depleted sandeel populations for food, and are both now threatened with global extinction. After its feature in 2023's Wild Isles series narrated by David Attenborough, the decline of sandeels due to climate change and the effect of overfishing on beloved birds such as Puffins received national attention.

Such coverage only furthered the public's support for a total industrial fishing ban, with the UK Government receiving more than 33,000 responses to their consulta-

tion last year. The consultation found overwhelming support for the closure of sandeel fisheries, with 95.5% of re-

IMAGE CREDIT: ANSGAR GRUBER



spondents in agreement. Whilst there has been a ban in place since 2021 for boats from the UK, the new ban will also encompass fishing vessels from other nations such as the EU.

So, exactly how important is the closure of sandeel fisheries for our seabirds?

This week, the RSPB has called the move the "single greatest act to safeguard seabirds", with the RSPB's Chief Executive Beccy Speight referring to the "resilience (of seabirds) being pushed to the limit" as they are placed "at the forefront of the nature and climate emergency." Sandeels may only be a very small fish, but they have a large impact on a range of UK wildlife from Guillemots and Shags to wild Salmon, forming an essential part of the food-chain. But each year, industrial trawling by EU countries removes thousands of tonnes of the already climate-threatened fish from our waters and places further pressure on our wildlife. For example, surface-foraging seabirds such as Kittiwakes are only able to dive very shallow depths to catch their prey and rely on sandeels to sustain their young. As such, the severe overfishing of sandeels has crippled many of the UK's breeding seabird colonies which have also been affected by the current outbreak of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza.

The closure of industrial sandeel fisheries comes at a critical

time for UK wildlife, following last year's State of Nature report that found the UK to be one of the world's most nature depleted countries.

IMAGE CREDIT: KYN WAI



The ban is subject to Parliamentary approval, but will likely come into effect ahead of the 2024 fishery season in Scottish waters.

Do people still care about the local rivalry?

Jorghah Herbert (She/Her) discuss the relevance of the derby to fans and players and the continued violence

Jorghah Herbert (She/Her)
SPORT CORRESPONDENT

Securing bragging rights, enjoying a lively Monday at work, and arguing during morning form time are all part of winning a football match over the weekend. But winning a local derby is nothing short of pure heaven. However, is this feeling starting to lack authenticity in the media?

Focusing on the top five divisions in English football, local derbies have been compiled for well over a century, often engaging in biannual clashes. The Merseyside clubs provide an example of this tradition, with their respective stadiums merely 0.8 miles apart. Although referred to as the 'Friendly Derby', as families in Liverpool are usually a mixture of both clubs, their hatred for one another runs deep.

Pundits claim that the Manchester derby is one of the most anticipated matches in English football. It is plastered on televisions and city billboards. But is it overdone? Do we risk derbies becoming boring if they

happen every year?

It is hard for everything to keep being exciting – the Manchester teams play one another at least twice a season. Only in cup matches do many classic derbies take place. The Tyne-Wear derby made its first appearance in 2024 since 2016, with the Premier League team taking the win. It went without major violence, unlike the 2013 clash which saw over 100 Newcastle United fans charged after a brawl in the city centre. Even without the violence, both sets of fans turned up on the day and proved that local derbies are exciting.



In spite of this, it felt as if the media were more excited for Arsenal versus Liverpool which was taking place on the Monday. It seems as if the top six playing one another means more than a local derby, not only in cups but in the league as well. It is understandable that the encounters between 'bigger clubs' perhaps have a bigger impact on the race for a league title, or qualification places, but they lack this unique intensity and passion fuelled by historical rivalries. This is something that the media and streaming services tend to neglect.

Recently, the Black Country derby between West Bromwich Albion and Wolverhampton Wanderers reached national news

after violence between fans broke out in the 82nd minute. It took people right back to the seventies, with no VAR and pure hatred from both sets of fans. The last time both met with fans in attendance was 2012, with the Baggies battering Wolves 5-1. It seems as if, for the past decade, tensions had been bubbling in the Black Country and over spilled onto the pitch. Afterwards, the media decided to focus on the negatives of the day, rather than Wolves breaking their Hawthorns' curse. Whatever the score outcome, it proved something, that fans still care about derby rivalry.

But what about the players?

Bellingham and Grealish's days of playing the Second City Derby are over. Not many footballers play for their boyhood club anymore and player loyalty is not what it used to be. The professional mindset of players means that all games are viewed equally, a derby shouldn't affect how you play. For them it's a job, for us fans it's a bit different. But many players understand how important local derbies are. For example, Alan Shearer

made a remark about wanting Sunderland to be promoted in order for the Tyne-Wear derby to be played more often. Even Pickford's appearance at that same derby shows how players still have love for their boy-hood club.

It is challenging for players to understand their fans when playing a rival, especially when they have no emotional connection to the opposition. The supporters, deeply connected to the rivalry and the club, are seen as catalysts capable of inspiring the players to rise to the occasion. They fans become a driving force of history being each monumental meeting between the two clubs, and the players need to embrace this.

It is vital that historic derby matches are maintained and nurtured in our modern game. It is clear that people still care about derby matches. It is something exciting and different, everything goes out the window when you play a rival. Streaming services and pundits may neglect the true emotion behind these games, but the fans keep this passion alive.

Women's Cricket

▶▶▶ Continued from back

On venues, county grounds are stretched to the limit as it is. Many grounds staff have expressed their frustration over how full the calendar is. It is unclear therefore how a county would divide the ground allocation. Playing at out-grounds is not a sustainable solution as outlined in the ECB document.

The professional women's game looks sure-footed for the next few years, with the ECB guaranteeing funding. But what happens after? Will the game be commercially viable to cope with a reduction in ECB funding? How far will professionalisation trickle down the pyramid?

It would be foolish to try and pre-

dict how the game will look at the end of the 2028 Season. Who knows how many professional cricketers there will be in England by then.

Hopefully what we will see is a trickle-down into the recreational game. That more clubs both the semi-professional, ECB premier league sides and the village XI will have women's teams. In my beloved Birmingham, the West Midlands Cricket League - the premier women's competition in the region - features teams from Astwood Bank and J G Meakin. A mere 1 hour 25 minute trip.

With the depth of talent always increasing, these leagues should become more local.

It is a time of great opportunity. The future is very bright indeed.

It's an exciting year ahead for women's football

Millie Simon (she/her)
SPORT CORRESPONDANT

2024 is shaping up to be an exciting year for national and international women's football from tournaments in the summer. To players returning following career-changing injuries and head coaches making intriguing decisions.

This year will see manager Emma Hayes leave her post at Chelsea, as she plans to move to the USA National team as head coach.

Towards the end of last year, it was announced that Hayes was leaving her role with Chelsea after thirteen years to seek "something different". However, she will remain at Chelsea till the end of the domestic season.

Hayes' legacy will be defined as one of immense success in the Women's Super League (WSL) following four consecutive title wins, which by the end of this season could be five as Chelsea see themselves at the top of the table.

Hayes' leadership for the US will be refreshing following their disappointing exit at the FIFA Women's World Cup last summer, where they were kicked out in penalties by Sweden. Hayes' strong record of winning titles and trophies will be an exciting prospect for the formiddle US team.

Unfortunately, Hayes' protege, Chelsea striker Sam Kerr, announced earlier this year that she suffered a ruptured anterior cruciate ligament (ACL). In the last 18 months, approx-

imately 195 elite players suffered an ACL injury with some consequently missing the 2023 World Cup. Many hoped that 2024 would encourage more research into the causes of the injury particularly in women, however, professional and lower-tier players are continuing to suffer from what's being dubbed as an "epidemic".

One positive story following the ACL crisis, is the return of many prominent players, including Arsenal's Leah Williamson. The England captain suffered the injury in April

teams competing for the gold medal. Previous gold medalists, Canada are looking to redeem themselves following an early exit in last summer's World Cup. Unfortunately, England didn't qualify for the Olympics since goal difference with the Netherlands saw them just miss out on a spot in the tournament.

Despite England not qualifying, Head Coach Sarina Wiegman extended her contract earlier this year until 2027, meaning England under Wiegman intend on defending their

Euros title in 2025.

Another exciting tournament taking place this summer is the Women's Africa Cup of Nations where 12 teams are competing for the title. For the second time in a row, Morocco are hosting, with disgraced former Spanish manager, Jorge Vilda now managing the Moroccan side.

Surprisingly, Cameroon won't compete this year despite not missing a single tournament in nearly 30 years. South Africa are reigning champions with 9-time champions Nigeria looking to challenge their success. Last year's tournament saw a record number of fans travelling to games and the number is also set to be big this year.



NOUSE STAT ZONE

3 The Kansas City Chiefs beat the San Francisco 49ers by 3 points to win the Super Bowl 25-22, on 11th February 2024.

16 Luke "The Nuke" Littler was 16 years old when he was runner up in the World Darts Championship, after the final on 3rd January 2024.

18 BBC Sports Personality of the Year winner, Mary Earps, won a total of 18 England caps in 2023, only conceding 4 goals in the entirety of the World Cup.

200 Roy Hodson managed 200 games as Crystal Palace manager, in two different stints before being sacked on 15th February 2024.

Sport News in Brief

Hamilton's shock departure to Ferrari

Lewis Hamilton is set to join Ferrari in the 2025 season after a shock exit from Mercedes. Following 82 victories during his eleven years with the Mercedes team, Hamilton has become the figurehead of F1. But since 2021 his career has stagnated, potentially pushing him to seek new experiences with Ferrari. Fans are concerned Hamilton and teammate, Charles Leclerc, will clash over the WDC title, which would cause tensions within the team.

College Varsity 2024

The University of York is set to host College Varsity against Durham University on 3 March. This is an opportunity for every college sport to showcase their talents on behalf of their university. York Colleges are no doubt looking forward to defending their 2023 title.

Tragic death of marathon winner Kelvin Kiptum

Kenyan marathon world record holder, Kelvin Kiptum, was in the prime of his life before being killed in a road accident. Best known for running 42km in two hours and 35 seconds – breaking the world record, the long-distance runner was selected for Kenya's provisional team for the Paris Olympics this summer 2024.

Can Man City break Chelsea's winning streak?

As it currently stands, Chelsea Women and Manchester City Women both have 34 points and 28 points in goal difference in the WSL. Chelsea have dominated the WSL by winning four consecutive titles under manager Emma Hayes, so will it be this Manchester City team who breaks their record?

Who will be Jurgen Klopp's successor?

As soon as Jurgen Klopp announced his departure from Liverpool at the end of the season, talk was already being had about his next successor. There's a lot of attention around Xabi Alonso who has a positive history with the club as a midfielder, and is currently managing Bayer Leverkusen.

Editor's Comment: The State of Play

George Roberts (he/him)
SPORT EDITOR

I write this watching Wales host Scotland in the Six Nations. Scotland are 20-0 up and we've just had a check for head-on-head contact. The lead-up to the Six Nations was dominated by the release of the Netflix show *Six Nations: Full Contact* and a publication from a posse of academics arguing that rugby is a form of child abuse. The former seeks to grow the appeal of the sport following the success of Formula One's *Drive to Survive*.

It is not the only sport that is facing a fundamental challenge. Cricket faces a funding crisis as the traditional red-ball, first class, multi-day format becomes increasingly unprofitable for most of the test-playing nations. The West Indies run every home test series at a loss, although they recently secured an historic test victory in Australia. All this comes with the rise

of the white-ball, fast-paced, privately-owned T20 leagues able to pay eye-watering sums for their players. The game stands at a crossroads.

Saudi Arabia further increased their influence over a range of sports with their launch of a new snooker tournament featuring a "golden ball" that has many traditional fans in uproar.

In tennis, without a hint of irony, the women's WTA Tour final will be staged there for the next five years. Rafael Nadal has joined up as tennis ambassador for Saudi Arabia.

Wayne Rooney is reported to be taking over as manager for Saudi Pro League side, joining streams of players moving there. The Saudi Public Investment Fund has also agreed a deal with Formula E and have been linked to various teams in the English Rugby Premiership.

Sports finance is a murky world; sport-washing even murkier. Let's leave that alone.

On the brighter side, there is a lot to look forward to. The Olympics are in Paris this Summer, adding breaking (break dancing), sport climbing, skateboarding, and surfing to the Olympic roster. There are two cricket World Cups, both men's and women's, both T20s.

In March, there's the World Indoor Athletics Championship in Glasgow, the World Figure Skating Championships in Montreal, and the Safari Rally in Nairobi.

For me, the Olympics is always a great fortnight. It's a chance to watch sports which have little exposure out of that four year cycle. I sit amazed at the skill and technical precision of gymnasts, watching with fond memories of seeing Max Whitlock and Louis Smith competing on the pommel horse at London 2012 at the O2 Arena. The mêlée of the velodrome cycling events are also a nice

Nairobi.

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credible spectacle and one I always watch. The Madison, which looks like carnage, is a particular favourite and one I encourage you all to see.

Closer to home, York City FC went on a seven game unbeaten streak, lifting themselves out of the relegation zone. 27 January saw York Knights beat Newcastle Thunder 114-10 in the first game of their season.

BUCS and college competitions have just restarted after the winter break. This semester will see the college varsity between York and Durham on 3 March. At the beginning of May, York will cross the Pennines and head to Lancaster for Roses 2024. Hopefully this year we will see a York victory.

But in this edition of *Nouse*, a vast array of topics are covered by the sports section, from football, to running, to cricket.

So, happy reading!

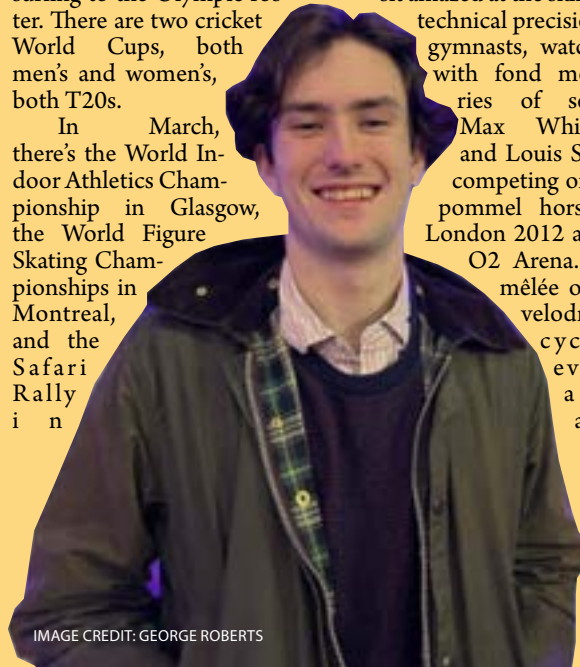


IMAGE CREDIT: GEORGE ROBERTS

“There is no such thing as a runner's body. You have a body, so run with it.”

Emily Warner discusses her rediscovery of running as a method for recovery

Emily Warner (she/her)
MUSE EDITOR

CONTENT WARNING: This article mentions eating disorders.

The world of running is a dangerous one for someone in recovery from an eating disorder. Peppered with discourse about the 'runner's body', 'minutes per mile' and calorie counting, running seems to demand perfection from someone whose recovery process is about letting go. Kristen Schindler writes in *Trailrunner*, “whether aiming to break records, surpass personal barriers, or simply revel in the joy of nature running caters to a wide range of athletes, making the concept of ‘enoughness’ both subjective and elusive”. Similarly, eating disorders are often a struggle to accept ‘enoughness’.

For many people, they're not about eating but more about control, perfectionism and the negative thoughts that emerge when those expectations aren't met. Increasingly widespread, UK charity Beat estimates that 1.25 million people in the UK now suffer from an eating disorder.

With this in mind, it isn't difficult to understand the correlation between running and disordered eating. There

is a scientific reason for the link too. According to the Physiotherapy Eating Disorder Professional Network, activity urges are controlled by a brain chemical called Leptin. In the majority of individuals with a restricted diet, the levels of Leptin significantly reduce, resulting in an increased urge to be active, often referred to as 'compulsive exercise'.

A quick Google search yields countless testimonials and scientific studies which prove this. Although the statistics vary, they all agree on one thing: running is a trigger. At the beginning of my own recovery, this was a belief that I clung to, developing an almost pathological fear of the sport. For me, running conjured up memories of my lowest moments when I was struggling up hills, fuelled by nothing but a desire to lose weight. Running meant relapse and relapse meant losing the last two years of progress.

Until one day, I tentatively laced up my trainers, zipped myself into a fleece and tried running a 5k.

For years, having been an “I don't run” girl, it was liberating to find that I enjoyed the pulse of my footfall on the pavement, the sound of my breath and the clouds

cartwheeling across the sky. I learnt to revel in the joy of movement. Movement not for the sake of weight loss or personal bests but just for the



IMAGE CREDIT: EMILY WARNER

sake of movement. I won't pretend it was easy – those old thoughts always linger in the corners of my mind, as they do for many who have fought and won against a mental illness (even in recovery, “enoughness” is subjective).

However, reorienting the way I thought about running transformed the way I thought about my own body. Suddenly, I was celebrating what I could already do instead of pushing myself to be thinner, be faster, go further. I noticed myself becoming stronger and a new mantra

replaced the old: eat to run, don't run to eat.

A year later, I had completed my first half marathon.

Apparently, I'm not alone in this. Science proves that running benefits mental, as well as physical, fitness by boosting endorphins, reducing stress and improving body image. Jessyca Arthur-Cameselle,

associated professor of sport and exercise psychology at Washington University, studies athletes who have experienced an eating disorder. Although she has found that for many athletes, sport is a trigger, up to half the athletes she's interviewed also say it helped them recover. Reading this, I thought, “maybe, just maybe, running isn't the problem, but society is.”

The experience of professional marathoner, Phily Bowden, seems to support this conclusion. She told the *Telegraph* that her struggle with anorexia was perpetuated by a ‘problematic culture’ which prioritised the number on the scale over athletes' wellbeing. She added: “To say a great mathematician would be a great track and field coach is nonsense. You're dealing with human beings who have lives and feelings.” Similarly, for British Athletics running coach and former elite runner, Jo Wilkinson, changing the toxic discourse around running is vital for the safety of future athletes. Now, both have recovered their relationship with running and Jo said she's “at a point where I love and appreciate everything my body has done for me.”

Let's return to Schindler's ideas of “enoughness” – what does that actually mean? When have you run enough, or recovered enough, or shed enough pounds? I'm not sure there is an answer. Fitness and recovery are states which people perpetually move in and out of. When you go for a run, it is your current body which runs you through the finish line, so leave any concept of what's ‘enough’ at the door.

There is no such thing as a runner's body. You have a body, so run with it.

Editor's Note: This article does not offer medical advice. If you feel you need additional support, you can contact the Beat helpline: 0800 801 0677.

Running as Recovery

Emily Warner looks at the complex issues of eating disorders and exercise.

P.11



IMAGE: ED YOURDON

Football Derbies

Jargah Herbert speaks of the importance of local rivalries in football and the violence associated with them

P.12

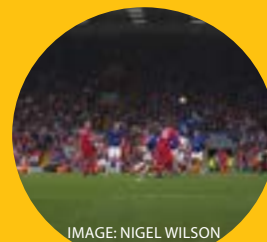


IMAGE: NIGEL WILSON

Women's Football in 2024

Millie Simon anticipates this year in women's football, following the World Cup in 2023



IMAGE: JAMES BOYES

SPORT



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Tuesday 27 February 2024



Image: Robert Drummond

The Future of Professional Women's Cricket

George Roberts looks at the ECB plans for the professional game and how they might benefit the sport

George Roberts*(he/him)*
SPORT EDITOR

The future is, in theory, quite bright for the professional women's game in England.

It may not have been professionalised as long as it has been in Australia. Indeed, it may not have the money that India has, where the sale of the Women's Premier League (the equivalent to the IPL) teams amounted to £456 million. However, in the last four years – since the regional structure was established – the number of professionals has risen from 17 centrally contracted national team players to 80+ international and domestic players.

The regions established professional set-ups, a move away from the traditional, amateur county structure. By concentrating the number of teams, full professionalisation was realised with players, coaches, sports

scientists, academies, and player pathways all coming under the purview of one of the eight regions.

These have now run their course. They have driven up standards but not created successful brands. Women's cricket still feels separate. The sense of 'otherness' is strong. Even for an obsessive like myself, finding streams and fixture lists are hard. The streams that do exist are poor in quality. Most detrimentally, 43 grounds were used for the professional game last year.

How can you create a fanbase with such nomadism? For example, 2024 looks better with all except two of the Central Sparks home grounds scheduled to take place at either Edgbaston or New Road, although those two are listed as "TBC". It would be hard to see such an entry on the men's fixture calendar.

One last note on the present: whilst it is important to honour two

greats of the women's game – Rachel Heyhoe Flint and Charlotte Edwards – by naming the competitions after them, who actually remembers which is the 50-over and the T20 competition? And how do neither have a title sponsor?

The Women's Professional Game Structure 2.0 seeks to address the problem of "otherness" and begins to marry up the men's and women's games. The counties have a long history, strong fanbase, established pathways, and strong brand awareness. This will make it far easier to follow the women's game.

The structure will be three-tiered beginning in 2025. Tier one will be professional and will likely look fairly similar to the current competition. The main change will be a greater alignment between the competitions. There are a few double headers in the upcoming season but hopefully the new structure will draw on the suc-

cess of the Hundred and schedule plenty, if not only, double headers. With counties successfully requesting that T20 blast games happen between Thursday and Sunday, this should be easy to achieve. Tiers two and three will be semi-professional.

The first-class counties have been invited to bid for the Tier one teams, or at least the money to run the teams. There will be still be eight professional teams. However, there will be Tiers two and three made up of the remaining first-class and National Counties. Promotion begins in 2029.

Of course, the cynics will say that the counties will just use this money to subsidise the men's team. Although it seems that the ECB will put in plenty of safeguards to ensure this will not happen. The *Telegraph* tells us that this plan will make a loss of £86.7 million over the next five seasons.

The *Telegraph* article by Fiona Tomas focuses not on the opportu-

nity but the pitfalls. Nowhere is it mentioned the financial growth that women's cricket has undergone over the last decade – with the global value of women's elite sport expected to surpass £1 billion next year.

There are a few interesting parts of the tender document that has been sent out to the counties (it is also freely available online).

Firstly, this plan is to last from 2025-2028, concurrently with the County Partnership Agreement that is currently being negotiated between the First-Class Counties and the ECB. However, the Venue Agreement, also still in negotiation, lasts from 2025-2031. The lack of overlap seems slightly incongruous.

The exponential growth of women's cricket means it could look very different in seven years time, leaving the venues obsolete.

Cont. 1