



## AlumNouse interviews Film Editor of Dune

Grace Bannister interviews Joe Walker,  
Oscar Award-Winning Film Editor  
M16

## Nouse speaks to first non-binary mayor

Owen Hurcum discusses their masters  
study in Transgender Archeology  
P.7



IMAGE: OWEN J HURCUM

# Nouse



Est. 1964

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## University Disinvests from arms

Heather Gosling  
NEWS CORRESPONDANT

The University of York has confirmed that it has stopped investments in arms companies following pressure from student organisers. A freedom of information request by the Palestinian Solidarity Campaign discovered that the University of York had invested a total of £33,251 in two companies, Cisco Systems and Smiths Group. Cisco Systems is a US-based networking hardware company that has established contracts with the Israeli government. Smiths Group is a British technology arms company that provided Israel with checkpoint lanes and it has also supplied several components to the Lockheed Martin F-35 Lightning II programme, used in Israel's May 2021 aerial bombardment of the Gaza Strip.

The news of the University's divestment was announced on the 11 of April through a public statement on the University's website about its new responsible investment commitments.

The statement read: "In 2024 the University confirmed it holds no investment in companies that primarily make or sell weapons and defence-related products or services."

Vice-Chancellor Charlie Jeffrey also commented: "I'm very proud York has evolved our investment strategy in this way, in line with our values as a University for public good. Our students in particular have raised their concerns about responsible investment and corporate links to armaments and defence, and they have rightly and passionately challenged us to rethink our approach."

The Palestinian Solidarity Campaign and the University of York Palestinian Society (PalSoc) released a joint Instagram post stating that the news was "a major win for the Palestine solidarity movement at UK universities, showcasing the power of collective mobilisation and direct action." However, this claim has been strongly disputed by Pierrick Roger, he stated that: "I would also like to address certain student groups who have not productively worked with me in the slightest

Cont. 4



IMAGE: JOHN QUINTON

## Exclusive Interview: What's next for Corbyn?

"The policies...being offered, as I understand them, by Rachel Reeves, are not going to significantly, if at all, close that wealth gap."

Millie Simon & Nadia Sayed  
NEWS CORRESPONDENT & EDITOR

On a chilly day in the office, *Nouse* joined Jeremy Corbyn - Independent MP for Islington North and former Labour leader - to discuss his stance on current affairs, his time as Labour leader and his plans for the future.

With a plethora of colourful book spines behind him and a momentary interruption from his cat, who according to the *Daily Mail* has "socialist tendencies" and whom Corbyn addresses as El Gato, ("the cat" in Spanish), *Nouse* began by asking Corbyn about his time in York last December.

Corbyn debated in favour of a wealth tax at The University of York after dining with York Central MP Rachael Maskell, the Dialectic Union and Millie Simon - who attended on behalf of *Nouse*.

After speaking to his Communications and Media Officer (who was also present at the dinner) about the possibility of interviewing Corbyn, and following the exchange of Instagram direct messages, Corbyn agreed to be interviewed.

Prior to starting the interview, *Nouse* introduced Corbyn to the world of BeReal, taking a quick snap before delving into his political career.

Jeremy Corbyn joined the Labour Party when he was 16 and stood in 1983 as the Labour MP for Islington North, after being disillusioned by the lack of prominent left-wing voices.

Following a successful Labour leadership contest in 2016, a year later, Corbyn faced Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May and then Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson in the 2019 General Election.

Corbyn has spent a significant amount of his career being actively engaged in international campaigns for the release of individuals who have suffered gross miscarriages of justice, standing in solidarity with the people

of Chile during the arrest of Augusto Pinochet in 2000.

He also campaigned against the apartheid regime in South Africa in 1984.

One of Corbyn's current international focal points revolves around the ongoing Israel-Palestine conflict, a topic on which he has actively spoken on.

When asked about his stance on the conflict, Corbyn began by condemning Hamas' attack on Israel on 7 October 2023 and expressed sorrow for all those affected in both Israel and Palestine stating: "The conflict is awful".

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## MUSE.



## A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

# Thank you!



### Nadia Sayed (she/her)

Welcome to Issue 507 of Nouse!

As I sit down to write this editor's note, I can't help but take a moment to reflect on my highlights from the past few years at Nouse. This marks the final print edition of the year, and for me, it's the culmination of dedicating more time to writing articles and laying up in the office, than on my actual degree.

I didn't join Nouse until my second year at University, and it's funny to think that I only stumbled upon it while considering joining Vision. Walking into the Nouse office for the first time was like navigating through an InDesign minefield, but now my time is nearly over, I feel like I've finally mastered it all.

Writing for Nouse and being editor for some of this year has been an incredible experience, but what I cherish most are the friendships I've made and the like-minded individuals I've met along the way.

Despite the challenges we've faced, I'm immensely proud of how the team has come together, especially for this final print edition.

Before I delve into what this edition has in store for you, let's take a moment to celebrate some of Nouse's highlights from this year.

Firstly, we launched the first-ever Nouse and Muse radio shows! Abbie and Lucy, you've been fantastic radio editors, and, I'm sure Emily will agree, that co-hosting the show with you has been an absolute pleasure. Nouse's growing collaboration with URY has been incredibly rewarding, and I'm excited to see how Nouse continues to diversify in the future.

We were also responsible for covering the York Student Union Elections, producing a supplement shortly after the last print release—a quick but successful turnaround thanks to the help of the team.

And let's not forget MUSE's well-deserved win for Best Specialist Publication at this year's Student Publication Awards. This recognition, along with the numerous other accolades and nominations, speaks volumes about the dedication and passion of everyone on the Nouse team,

a team I have loved being a small part of.

Although balancing Nouse with my studies has been a juggling act, I wouldn't have had it any other way.

In this edition, you'll find an exclusive interview with Jeremy Corbyn, conducted by Millie and myself. Make sure to check out the part where we disclose how Jeremy agreed to be in Millie's BeReal.

Also in News, Emily Warner reports on the recent arrest of the 2023 James College Freshers hypnotist, Robert Temple, and Alanah Hammond delves into Calumn Mackellar's experience as a Zero Gravity ambassador.

Over in the Comment section, you will find a thought-provoking piece by Ethan Reuter on whether tuition fees should differ for humanities subjects and ...

In Business David Chu discusses the current state of Tech stocks including Apple and Amazon and Daisy Couture discusses the closure of York eatery Dyl's.

Robyn Garner delves into the scientific intricacies of social media algorithms, and Ben Morris examines the effects of CBD, in the Science section.

Last but by no means least, in the world of Sport, Charlotte Tabcart sits down with York Sport President Tasha Jai for an insightful interview and George Roberts discusses whether Kookaburra balls will be the saviour of English Cricket.

Of course, there's also plenty to sink your teeth into within our creative and arts sections, MUSE!

As we approach the end of the year and start contemplating resolutions for the next, I would like to leave you all with one piece of advice: if you're considering joining Nouse or any student media at York for that matter, just do it! Student journalism has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my university life, shaping my career aspirations in ways I couldn't have imagined. I'll cherish the memories, even the long days spent in the office, the copious amounts of caffeine and the people I have met along the way, forever.

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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Centre Stage: The Blazers

M.13

IMAGE: LILLY TURLEY



# Former James College Freshers Hypnotist Jailed

**Emily Warner**  
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

ROBERT TEMPLE, a comedy hypnotist who performed during James College Freshers Week 2023, has been given an eight-month prison sentence. On March 18, Temple was found guilty of fraud, hacking and concealing criminal property at Teesside Crown Court.

Temple's sinister double life was first brought to the attention of detectives in 2021.

They were informed by Action Fraud about an online forum where users could exchange untraceable cryptocurrency for explicit images of women. This forum was traced back to the home of Robert Temple.

It emerged that the performer had been hacking into women's emails and social media accounts to gain access to their identity details and naked photos. He then used these to create fake accounts in their name, for his own cryptocurrency business, amassing over £1000.

According to *The Northern Echo*, Annette Thomas, the senior crown prosecutor for CPS East Midlands stated: "Using insidious tactics, he exploited these unsuspecting women by hacking into their social media accounts and sharing intimate images of them online, without their knowledge, all for finan-

cial greed [...]. Let this conviction be clear to those who hide behind a screen to commit their crimes, you cannot hide from the law."

Two women have come forward so far. The first had nude and topless photos of herself sold online by Temple.

The second is 29-year-old Ellie Norman who became a victim of Temple's internet hacking after sharing mutual Facebook friends. She was approached by a woman offering her modelling work, which she declined, only to find several social media accounts created in her name, using her private photos. "What he's done to me is appalling," she told *The Telegraph*.

Ellie added: "I went into panic mode – I thought 'Could I end up going to prison?' It was really scary."

Robert Temple's presence was expansive, having hypnotised 30,000 people in 3,000 locations across 20 countries. From the Las Vegas Strip to the West end of London. From Mumbai to

Greece. From Egypt to... Weymouth boasts his website. Not to mention, York.

The evening was hilarious and magical, if a little unnerving.

For Jacob Simms, one of the stu-

them. It was almost like I had a small voice in the back of my head telling me to do whatever Robert said".

After the performance ended, Temple invited students to follow him on social media and many did. He "put on a great show that everyone seemed to enjoy," Jacob said.

If anything, these events are a reminder for students all over the country to secure their online accounts, establish secure passwords and be mindful of the information they share.

In hindsight, the nature of Temple's performances is ironic. On his website, he offers two different kinds of show: a 'squeaky clean show' for 'anyone who enjoys a good clean laugh' and a 'naughty show' which contains 'adult humour' and 'inappropriate shenanigans' to 'tickle the naughtiest parts of your mind'.

A metaphor for his life, if you will, split between the gregarious performer and the deceptive internet predator.

Now, one thing is certain.

He may be able to put on a 'squeaky clean show' but the same cannot be said for his conscience or his criminal record.

Editor's Note: The University of York James College chose not to comment on these events.



During James College Freshers week, Robert Temple took to the stage at the Roger Kirk Centre, to hypnotise a group of unsuspecting first year stu-

dents who underwent hypnosis: "It was a very unique experience in the sense that I was fully aware of my actions, it was just that I had no control over

# York International Shakespeare Festival Returns

**Nadia Sayed**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

ON 18 APRIL 2024, the York International Shakespeare Festival (YISF) returned for the sixth year, with an exciting ten-day line-up celebrating all things Shakespeare.

Initially established in 2014, the festival showcases adaptations of Shakespeare's works, making "global Shakespeare accessible to UK audiences from York and beyond" (YISF).

This year's festival lasted until 28 April with several exciting events, from talks to showcases and performances.

Beginning as a partnership between Parrabbola, York's Theatre Royal and the University of York, the festival now includes multiple York-based organisations including Riding Lights Theatre, the York Shakespeare Project and from 2023, York St John University.

This year, the University of York's very own Shakespeare Society (ShakeSoc) participated in the festival, with members volunteering in showcases and live performances across the ten days.

Events included a staged performance of *Twelfth Night*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, an hour of music from past Shakespeare productions and numer-

ous other exciting events.

Literary events such as the York International Shakespeare Festival hold a significant role in terms of injecting the North with opportunities to celebrate literature and the creative industry, in a region that is frequently overlooked.

The director of the YLF, Philip Parr, told *Nouse*: "We invite companies who make Shakespeare in languages other than English... Within the European Shakespeare Festival's network we define the international festival by presenting work from countries that are not your own."

"There is more Shakespeare not in English than in English."

The festival encourages guests to engage with diverse interpretations of Shakespeare's work, enriching cultural understanding of the writers from the Early Modern period.

Parr stated the importance of having the festival in York: "Apart from Manchester, this will probably be the only international festival that happens in the North of England".

When asked what some of the challenges were surrounding funding,



Parr stated: "The main challenge is not having any money. We need to find ways to find other support." Parr also expressed that since Covid-19, he has been trying to build a range of connections to improve the readings and overall production of the festival.

In addition to encouraging the local community to engage with Shakespeare's work through various mediums, this year's festival worked on bringing even more diversity with the 'Pass It On!' ticket scheme.

Anyone who buys a ticket to the festival has the option to also purchase an unlimited amount of additional 'Pass It On!' tickets. The extra tickets provide asylum seekers or refugees within the York community with the opportunity to also access the festival, further breaking down barriers between the creative industry and Shakespeare more specifically.

However, a key challenge facing this year's festival stems from the fact that organisers have been unsuccessful in their applications for funding from Arts Council England. As a result, during a time when financial barriers are already proving significant for the arts and culture sector, organisers are pleading for greater support and donations to keep the festival going.

Attendees of the event were also encouraged to donate to the festival.

When *Nouse* asked Parr about the scheme he stated: "If you're a refugee, you don't have any money for luxuries and theatres. Theatre is a luxury. We could give people tickets, but this would have an impact on our box office. So we created a way of buying a ticket which could be given to someone who couldn't afford a ticket, and that is, pretty specifically for us, around the refugee and asylum seeker community in York." *Nouse* then asked if the 'Pass It On!' ticket scheme had been successful so far, to which Parr replied, "Yes, yes, we have been oversubscribed for tickets... and a lot of people have even just bought a pass it on ticket for others."

Finally *Nouse* asked Parr what one of his best achievements has been so far.

Parr poetically responded, "One is probably proudest of the things he starts from scratch. So, a theatre company and an Opera House. If it [the Opera House] were still there, I'd be even prouder of it but it had an impact. I am proud of this festival because it didn't exist until we decided it should and it still does exist".

Finally he stated: "What's important now is the mantra of community play-making and community arts".

## The Great York Walk 2024

This year's Great York Walk takes place on Saturday 18 May. The walk will be raising money for Mentally Fit York, and those participating have the choice to take three routes around the city with different distances and terrains. The longest of the three walks is 40km, followed by a 20km route then a 10km walk. Tickets are still available to confirm a spot.

## One Star Hygiene Rating For Doe

York's beloved Doe Bakehouse on Church Street has received a temporary One Star Food Hygiene Rating after the York Council's recent visit. According to a representative speaking to York Press, this does not reflect "food handling but the available paperwork." The shop now awaits a revisit from the inspector to redeem a five star rating instead.

## The Return of York Pride Festival

Saturday 1 June will see the return of North Yorkshire's biggest LGBTQ+ celebration, York Pride. The headline act was announced to be RuPaul's Drag Race UK Season Five contestants, Ginger Johnson, Michael Marouli and Tomara Thomas, aka. 'Angels of the North'. They will perform at York Racecourse, following the pride parade through the city centre to the Knavesmire.

## Sabbs Come Dancing

Our 2023/24 Sabbatical Officers took to the stage in Central Hall on April 25 for a "shimmery, glamorous and glittery" night of dancing. Community and Wellbeing Officer, Hannah Nimmo, and her dance partner Millie took home the mirrorball after some fierce competition. The event raised over £1000 for Coppafeel, who work on breast cancer awareness.

## York Festival of Ideas Is Back

York Festival of Ideas is set to return this summer on June 1 until June 14. The banner for the event this year is 'The Power Of...' and will include a variety of talks, performances and exhibitions across the fortnight. Last year, the Festival delivered 241 events to an audience of 38,500 people. You can sign up to their newsletter to find out what's to come this year.



# York University Disinvests from Arms Companies

▶▶▶ Continued from front

but have decided to co-opt this win as their own: I put this case forward and I have been the person on the frontline demanding these changes day in and day out. I will not allow others who vehemently criticise my work to suddenly decide that they deserve to be credited for it. Hundreds of thousands of pounds of University funding have been divested for good, but not because you have thrown your toys out of the pram at every given opportunity. This win belongs to those who spent long hours creating impactful research, making the student case for divestment at the Executive level, and pushing for reasoned change through campaigning. You haven't forced anyone to divest, I have."

The direct action that students have taken on campus includes the disruption of career fairs, walkouts and an open letter calling for immediate divestment which gained over 600 signatures from students, staff and alumni.

University of York Palestinian society told Nouse: "This announcement from the University of York comes after 40,000 Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli occupation forces. This is a positive step in the right direction, but there is still so much the University must do."

"We demand the University com-

mits to full divestment, including 'professional ties' with weapons manufacturers. Departments have extensive ties with BAE systems. We demand the University commits to full divestment, including 'professional ties' with weapons manufacturers that recruit students to build missiles. We will continue to keep our university to account and do what we can to commit to full divestment." BAE systems is a weapons manufacturer company, and as an article by Reuters mentioned, BAE is a part of the supply chain for F-35 fighter jets that are used by Israel in combat in occupied areas. BAE told Reuters that "it does not directly export any equipment to Israel." However the group is a tier-one supplier on the United States-made F-35 fighter jets which are flown by Israel. A spokesperson from BAE told Nouse: "A BAE Systems' spokesperson said: "The ongoing violence in the Middle East is having a devastating impact on civilians in the region and we hope the parties involved find a way to end the violence as soon as possible. We respect everyone's right to protest peacefully. We operate under the tightest regulation and comply fully with all applicable defence export controls, which are subject to ongoing assessment." BAE systems was also present at a careers fair with MBDA Missile systems hosted by the university in October at the Exhibition Centre, and students from University of York's Palestinian Society, Extinction

Rebellion Hub, and Amnesty International protested against their presence on campus.

Nouse also approached Stella Swain, Youth and Student Officer for Palestine Solidarity Campaign for a comment about the news, and her views on what more students can do across the country to put pressure on universities to divest. On the news of University of York's divestment, Stella stated that, "It is really exciting to see that York is no longer investing in companies that produce weapons. It is a testament to the power of student organising, without which the university would not have been pushed to do this sort of action. It is a sign that students can push this kind of change, and I think this will be inspiring to students across the country. Especially when we are seeing encampments pop up with this as one of their demands." When asked why divestment is so important as a form of activism, Stella commented that: "It is really important because the way that companies are profiting off Israel's genocidal attacks on Palestinian citizens living in Gaza should be a cause for concern for any moral individual. At the moment, over 34,000 Palestians have been killed just since October 2023. There are no universities left in Gaza, they have all been destroyed by Israeli attacks. In that context, students are realising that their universities are complicit by providing investment and money in those compa-

nies complicit in Israel's attacks." Stella also stated that campaigning for divestment was "a material way that students can show their solidarity with Palestine. It is also answering a call from Palestinians because in 2005 Palestinian Society put out a call to the international community to boycott Israel through divestment and sanctions. By taking part in divestment action, students are taking part in this call from Palestine."

Divestment has also been advocated for by Pierrick Roger, who was YUSU President from 2021 to 2024 through his report, Money Doesn't Grow On Trees, which outlined the investments that the University of York received.

The report details that as of 2021-2022, the University received £1.2 million in funds over a period of 5 years from the global top 30 arms manufacturers. The majority of funds were split between Thales and Rolls-Royce Holdings, BAE systems also featured in the top five companies that the university had invested in. Nouse reached out to Pierrick for a comment: "I am very pleased that the University has ac-

cepted my proposed amendments to its responsible investment policy. Divestment from weapons companies, fossil fuel banks, and violators of international law is long overdue. I have been calling for this for the past 3 years through petitioning, direct action and advocacy at senior level and I am very happy the University has chosen to implement the recommendations set out in my Money Doesn't Grow on Trees Report, the first of its kind in the UK. Through this, we show institutions nationally what social responsibility actually looks like - I am already in touch with other Students' Unions looking to make the change at their own universities."

University of York's divestment from weapon manufacturers has been celebrated by all student organisers involved in the campaign. This news shows that action by students, whether through protest or investigation, is vital in causing change. The University of York is the first university in the UK to divest from arms dealers, making this a historic moment that student organisers hope will lead to other universities following suit.



IMAGE: ELLEN MORRIS

## Rwanda bill gets passed in UK

**Charlie Carter (She/Her)**  
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

ILLEGAL MIGRATION has been experiencing particular attention from the government in the lead up to the General Election, and at the centre of the issue is the Rwanda Bill. The passing of the Safety of Rwanda Bill on the 22nd of April 2024 means that the Government can go ahead with their controversial plan to deport those who arrive illegally in the UK to Rwanda.

The process of passing this Bill has been complex and opposed by many, but the Conservatives were determined to push it through after making it a focal point in their campaign for an election that is looking rocky for their party.

The scheme to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda was first proposed by Johnson in 2022 and a flight was set to leave, but at the last minute a European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruling challenging the legality of the Rwanda policy stopped this flight. In the two years since, the policy has been blocked and opposed multiple times by legal and legislative institutions.

The Supreme Court ruled that the policy was unlawful in November 2023, and in response the Government introduced the Safety of Rwanda Bill in December. This declares Rwanda safe to deport asylum seekers and refugees to. The Bill was 'bounced back and forth between the House of Lords and the House of Commons, but it was finally passed on the 22nd of April becoming law. Now the Conservatives are set to have flights leave to Rwanda by this summer, although they had previously claimed that they would have started by

this spring.

The controversy surrounding the Bill is based upon a few major points, one of which being the cost. The National Audit Office estimated that sending the first 300 people to Rwanda would cost £540 million, almost £2 million per person, sparking concern over cost to the taxpayer.



IMAGE: BRANDON HATTILONE

Another point of contention is Rwanda's history with receiving refugees from Israel, as between 2013 and 2018 Rwanda deported thousands of refugees sent under the Israeli 'voluntary departure' scheme. Some of those that opposed the bill lacked confidence in the safety of refugees deported to Rwanda due to Rwanda's shaky past with honouring this type of agreement, and its questionable record with human rights.

Many that oppose the Bill question whether the Rwanda policy is an effective approach to small boat arrivals, or an effective deterrent. In 2022 a permanent secretary at the Home Office, Matthew Rycroft, in a letter to Priti Patel, expressed worries about the uncertainty of the deterrent effect.

The Refugee Council produced a report in 2023 claiming that the Rwanda scheme will not act as a deterrent, and that it will likely make the journeys and methods illegal migrants use riskier but not less frequent. Charities, migration experts and civil servants alike seem to lack confidence in the Rwanda policy and its ability to tackle the problem of dangerous illegal migration.

The legal process of the Bills passing has also raised questions about the integrity of our institutions. The Committee's second report on the Safety of Rwanda Bill found that the Bill would be "disappointing almost all of the key provisions of the HRA in respect of removals to Rwanda". Concern over the potential erosion of institutions such as the Human Rights Act has provoked more controversy surrounding the Bill.

The question now is will this win for the Government translate to a better outcome for them in the General Election? It is very unlikely that the Conservative party will be able to form a government after the General Election this year; current polling has Rishi Sunak's disapproval rating at around 65 per cent. But how major the losses will be is not yet certain, and the push for the Rwanda policy has been an important part of the Conservatives effort to win back voter support.

Immigration and asylum is an issue that matters to many voters, but many view the economy and health as particularly important factors in the lead up to the General Election. The passing of the Bill may not be enough to win over voters after 14 years of a Conservative government and the current state of the NHS and economy.

## York road disruptions

**Daisy Couture**  
NEWS EDITOR

As part of the Station Gateway project, a section of York's Queen Street bridge was demolished over the weekend of 27-28 April 2024. This followed a closure on 20-21 April that saw the creation of a temporary diversion road.

Built in 1877, Queen Street Bridge runs over railway tracks that no longer exist next to York Railway Station. A temporary bridge has been constructed in the meantime.

Over the weekend, work progressed as planned and sections were gradually removed, creating adequate space for work to continue over the coming weeks. Drivers and pedestrians were advised to stay away from the area, as the temporary bridge and Rail Station car park were both closed during this time. They reopened on Monday 29 April.

The City of York Council has said that the bridge is being demolished in order to "improve the setting of the city walls and free up the space needed to transform the area to the front of the railway station."

Councillor Pete Kilbane, Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Economy and Transport said: "More progress was made this weekend [27-28 April] with work taking place to remove Queen Street Bridge, which hasn't been needed since the 1960s."

"People will notice a real difference in the area and there will be more to come as the project progresses. [...] There is still much more work to do on the project but for the next few months

this will be done on the construction site with the temporary road in operation."

Parts of the bridge are still intact around Tofts Tower. This area will host a platform for a retaining wall which will protect the City Walls before further construction work.

Businesses in the surrounding area remained open during construction but there were considerable disruptions to the city's bus routes.

Changes to First Bus routes lasted from 19-29 April. Most services stop or terminate at the Railway Station, but this was not possible due to the construction work. As a result, stops such as Lendal Gyatory, Ouse Bridge and Bishopthorpe Road were introduced as alternative options. In addition, a free shuttle bus was implemented running from Blossom Street to the Railway Station.

Disruption to the 66 and 67 services impact students especially. During the demolition of the bridge, they terminated at Rougier Street instead of the Railway Station. They also did not stop at Nunnery Lane, but routes resumed as normal from Merchantgate.

The Station Gateway project is being delivered in partnership with City of York Council, Network Rail, LNER and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority and is part funded by the UK government.

The project is set to transform the front of the Railway Station, provide an improved transport interchange and revive the public space in this area. It will also improve the setting of the City Walls and other heritage buildings around them.



▶▶▶ Continued from front

# Nouse interviews former Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn

Corbyn further commented: “We now have over 30,000 people that are dead. The failure of so many people around the world to even call for a ceasefire and instead continue supplying arms and weapons into the conflict has prolonged the conflict and we now have a death rate that is increasing very rapidly from starvation and wholly preventable conditions.”

Emphasising the “awful” living conditions in Gaza, which he has witnessed first-hand having visited Palestine numerous times, Corbyn expressed concerns that these conditions will only get worse throughout the conflict.

On Wednesday 21 February 2024, Parliament prepared to address the need for a ceasefire.

Corbyn recounted the event, telling *Nouse*: “The speaker [Sir Lindsay Hoyle] bizarrely changed the whole proceedings to prevent the Scottish National Party motion on a ceasefire

“Just imagine in York, if you had to pass three checkpoints to get from the station to the University.”

being voted on at all... deciding to put Sir Keir Starmer’s motion ahead of the SNP’s... [which] called a ceasefire dependent on Israel’s agreement to it.”

He further added that this refusal brought about a “row in Parliament”. However, he stated it was especially “sad” to see that the “British media were [preoccupied with covering] the parties’ parliamentary procedure rather than focusing on the horror show of what is Gaza at the moment.”

*Nouse* then asked Corbyn whether he thought a one-state or a two-state solution was the most realistic solution and why.

Corbyn replied: “It is up to the people of the region to decide what

“not calling for an immediate and complete ceasefire has done an awful lot of damage to support of the Labour party.”

their future should be. At the moment the two-state solution is the one that is being discussed and does have quite a lot of support within the region.

“People in the region ought to be able to live together in some form, but I think it’s very dangerous for outsiders to say this [two-state solution] is the only way forward. Our question must

be about saving life and bringing about hopeful opportunities for Palestinian people. That means now, a ceasefire.”

Corbyn further addressed the difficult process of establishing a new government for the Palestinian people as “obviously complicated,” due to the multiple political forces which find it difficult to meet each other as a result of the occupation.

“This may well lead to an interesting process going forward and there are many discussions going on amongst all of the Palestinian groups at the present time which are desperate to try and save lives and desperate to save lives in the future. For people on the West Bank, their normality is a life of checkpoints, occupation and a government which has very limited resources and no ability to control its own security and police forces.”

Contextualising the University of York’s position, Corbyn used the example of York, stating: “Just imagine in York, if you had to pass three checkpoints to get to the station from the University. That’s the measure of what the occupation is like and that plays on the lives of people who are very, very angry. It would make you angry; it would make me angry, and that’s been their own life,” he said.

Corbyn then declared that he re-

many communities. This [the call for a ceasefire] is not a religious thing, this is a feeling about people wanting to live in a place of peace.”

In February 2024, The Labour Party called for an “immediate humanitarian ceasefire” between Hamas and Israel. However, figures show Labour has lost significant support amongst communities for its delayed response to the conflict. As stated in *The Independent*, support from the Muslim community has “fallen from 86 percent to 60 percent, since the 2019 election.”

Since speaking to Corbyn, The Labour Party has called for an immediate ceasefire between Hamas and Israel. However, figures show Labour has lost a lot of support amongst particular communities for its delayed response to the conflict.

What Labour has said (at the time of the interview):

## The Labour Party

In the 2019 General Election, Corbyn advocated for protecting the NHS from privatisation, raising the minimum wage from £8.21 to £10 and nationalising key industries including water and the railways. In December 2019, Labour’s MPs decreased to 202 from 262, leaving Conservative leader Boris Johnson with a majority of 365

stating: “At the moment, the policies that are being offered, as I understand them by Rachel Reeves, are not going to significantly, if at all, close that wealth gap, that to me is absolutely the crucial issue.”

“I want to see a Labour movement that is committed to bringing about real justice and equality within our society, which is to me, the most important issue facing us.”

When asked about his views on

“I want to see a Labour movement that is committed to bringing about real justice and equality within our society.”

the future of the Left within Labour, Corbyn stated: “There is an enormous amount of hope”.

In the lead-up to and following the

with it, but the level of sustained attack against individuals is for me a sign of weakness in the other side’s argument if all they can do is attack an individual because they propose obvious things like reducing levels of inequality in our society, then we’re not in a very good place.”

Keir Starmer has confirmed that Jeremy Corbyn won’t be allowed back in the Labour Party, following Corbyn’s statement in response to the EHRC report, which investigated anti-semitism in the party.

## Jonah Quinton The Peace and Justice Project

*Nouse* asked Corbyn what the proudest moment(s) of his political career were to which he replied: “Some of my greatest moments are when I’ve been involved in campaigns...like the Birmingham Six and the Guildford Four, which took years of campaigning.”

Corbyn added: “I am active in many causes, [including] international ones, through the Peace and Justice Project.”

Currently, Corbyn is focused on his charity, The Peace and Justice Project, which was founded by Corbyn and Pamela Fitzpatrick in 2021.

The project works to unite indi-



sents the way Pro-Palestine marches and demonstrations across the country, have been characterised by some of the media as marches of hate, stating: “They are exactly the opposite. These are a very big, very cohesive, very nice community of people. The biggest cheer I got on the last march was when I welcomed the Jewish block into Parliament Square -it was an enormous number of people on that block from different Jewish communities, just as much as there were lots of people from different Muslim communities. Yes, there are people of different perspectives there, but they all wanted the same thing, a ceasefire.”

*Nouse* went on to ask Corbyn why he thought Starmer didn’t call a ceasefire back in October.

In response, he stated: “I don’t know the answer to that question... What I do know is the Labour front bench position of not calling for an immediate and complete ceasefire has done an awful lot of damage to the support of the Labour Party amongst

Conservative MPs.

Following electoral defeat, Keir Starmer - having been elected as the Labour leader in 2020 following the resignation of Corbyn - has emphasised he has “changed the Labour Party”. Starmer plans on using private healthcare to reduce waiting lists on the NHS, ensuring a real living wage whilst ruling out a wealth tax and nationalising the railways.

This led *Nouse* to ask: “Do you think Starmer can narrow the gap between the poorest and the richest?”

Corbyn responded: “Unless the policies are serious about increasing wages for the poorest and increasing taxation at the top end, then the gap is unlikely to narrow. There will always be some people who will become entrepreneurs, become super rich and so on. They are not an example of the end of inequality, they are an example of greater inequality.”

Corbyn went on to criticise the Shadow Chancellor, Rachel Reeves,

2019 General Election, Corbyn faced intense criticism both within and outside of his party, particularly from the media.

LSE conducted a study in 2016 and found that 52 percent of articles regarding the Labour leader, in the first months of his leadership, didn’t reflect his own views.

In 2019, right-wing newspapers labelled the Labour leadership as Marxists and terrorist sympathisers, and added that Corbyn was a threat to Britain’s future.

Despite the criticism Corbyn received, he remains firm in his belief that “social justice is the essence of everything we do. Peace has to be the essence of everything we do...that doesn’t always make you popular...” After asking Corbyn about the abuse he faced during his time as a politician, especially when he was Labour leader, he concluded:

“I’m not that bothered about what people say or think about me. I’m more interested in the wider issues that go

viduals, communities and organisations through events on critical issues including climate action, new economics and refugee protection.

*The Times* reported that Corbyn had been encouraged by his “inner circle”, to turn The Peace and Justice Project, into a political party.

More information is available on The Peace and Justice Project official website.

Now standing as an Independent Member of Parliament, and turning 75 in two week’s time, *Nouse* asked Corbyn when he planned on suspending his activities in representative politics.

Corbyn joked: “I’m still very young, these things don’t concern me.”

“I’m very proud to be the MP for Islington North - I have been for 14 years. I enjoy the community and the many friendships I have around the community.” He concluded by stating, “if the people want me, I will carry on!”.



# Big surge in student protests

**Alexis Sturgeon**  
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

SINCE SEPTEMBER 2023, there has been an increasing number of protests by students at the University of York. These have ranged from a campaign for the transition to plant-based catering in September, to the October protest against the inclusion of MBDA Missile Systems and BAE Systems, and the most recent Pro-Palestinian demonstration on 16 March 2024, which included both students and staff in the city centre. Most recently was the Student Walkout for Palestine rally on 8 May 2024.

As the students take more and more of a stand against issues, both pertaining to the University as well as not, the relationship between staff and students comes into light.

As the student body grows in its opinion and its action, the University has to grow alongside it, learning to embrace freedom of speech and student action. So, has it?

The University of York has historically been tolerant of student action and protests.

One example is the 10 December 2010 student sit-in, which lasted for 15 days and protested against the Browne report. This report recommended removing the cap on the level of fees universities can charge which would have led to an unparalleled increase in the price of courses.

However, despite calls from the student body for the University to release a statement opposing the report, the University of York stayed silent on the issue, only tolerating the sit-in by allowing the Exhibition Centre to stay open 24/7 throughout and not forcibly removing the students.

Moreover, the University has recently updated the guidelines on student protesting.

These guidelines are put in place to “ensure that student protests can be best supported to be delivered safely for all members of the University community and the general public and reduce the likelihood of protesters breaching University regulations and becoming subject to disciplinary action”. This update includes a set of new rules, including a need to give notice before a protest to the Campus Safety Team as well as a rule prohibiting banners from being attached to buildings without permission. This update follows the recent string of protests in October 2023. It aims to prevent students from being penalised for protesting, but also removes the University from responsibility, allowing them to act against student protestors who disrupt teaching or University property.

With these new rules, the protests have not slowed down. Leaflets for protests and organised marches have been stuck inside toilet cubicle doors on campus, suggesting a need for discretion amongst the student body. Most recently, the Pro-Palestine protests have brought a spotlight to student protests.

Claire Sheldon, a second-year English student and a member of York Action for Student Solidarity spoke to *Nouse*.

When asked about the

academic staff’s reaction to student protests, Sheldon spoke positively, “Although we are a new group, York Action for Student Solidarity (YASS) has already had several very positive interactions with a range of academic staff, who have often expressed to us both gratitude and hope for creating a space to bring students together to challenge the university’s often unethical and harmful decisions.”

“Quite a few of our members have been involved in student campaigning before YASS’ launch, including the Palestine Solidarity Campaign, which calls on universities across the UK to divest from Israeli arms, and the Plant-Based Universities campaign, which calls on universities to transition to 100% plant-based menus in order to fight the climate crisis. Both of these groups have only had positive experiences with academic staff, with York Student Staff Network giving speeches on divestment at rallies outside Heslington Hall, and with over 40 University of York academic staff signing an open letter calling on the university to begin a plant-based transition. I would say student campaigners’ relationship with academic staff is an absolutely brilliant example of solidarity against an institution that attempts to resist change at every turn.”

The relationship between student protestors and the academic staff at the University of York speaks to the ability of an institution to support freedom of speech and an increasing awareness of justice in the next generation. Despite this beneficial relationship, Sheldon spoke to *Nouse* about the vastly different relationship with the University’s senior staff. They pointed out that the senior staff have refused to meet with Palestine Solidarity campaigners and emphasised that the new guidance on student protesting seeks only to limit protest.

“Students are now expected to seek permission before hosting a protest by contacting the university’s security, who will decide whether the protest is mild enough not to cause anything that could be viewed as disruptive or annoying, and try to modify plans as best as they can to limit the protest’s impact. Even when permission has been sought by groups planning a protest, there have still been several experiences of the

university calling police on its own students in the past year!”

“Personally, I attended the university’s careers fair last autumn and began to hand out a few leaflets next to the stall run by Drax power station (who burn trees shipped from America and Canada to Yorkshire, and call it renewable energy as trees grow back). Security was swiftly called on us just for leafletting, and after trying to stand our ground as students who should be allowed to attend our own careers fair, they threatened to call the police on us if we did not leave the Exhibition Centre.”

“The university’s attitude towards student campaigning is becoming more and more hostile, possibly due to our strategies succeeding in pressuring them to make more ethical decisions, and almost certainly reflective of the Tories’ attempts to squash protest on a national level,” Sheldon said.

The new guidelines suggest a desire to limit and minimise the impact that student protests can have, particularly with the restriction against banners and disruption of teaching. Despite the support of the academic staff, the student body relationship with the University Staff seems to be fracturing, but the student ability to protest for change must be preserved.

The university had this to say on the matter:

“Lawful free speech is to be treasured, including protests and demonstrations on campus, and we are proud of our campaigning students who over the years have rightly challenged us on a number of issues.

“We need to make sure we listen and learn from each other, but we reject violence, intimidation and harassment. Our campus safety team is here to protect all students, and we only ever alert the Police when we have serious concerns about safety, like protests spilling out onto busy roads.

“We have a strong history of challenging social injustice and we recognise the strength of feeling students may have on many global issues. We believe our community does - and will continue to - embrace the values of free expression, ensuring our campus is a place where difficult issues can be discussed openly, in good faith and mutual respect.”



IMAGE: ELLEN MORRIS

# Fundraising in April

**Alexandra Pullen**  
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

DURING THE MONTHS of March and April, there have been a huge variety of fundraising initiatives ranging from marathons within the UK, running across Africa and - more close to home - completing the Yorkshire Three Peaks.

Two of the UK’s largest marathons took place in April in Manchester and in London, and both have seen a record number of people getting involved. The London Marathon was on 21 April and saw over 53,700 finish the 26.2 mile route around the city. This year, the runners raised over £67 million for charities, with the official charity of the event being Samaritans.

It had been recognised by the Guinness World Records as the marathon with the most entries ever (578,374), until the applications for 2025 opened. 840,000 people have applied for the marathon next year, which is set to be on 27 April.

The Manchester Marathon also had a record number of runners taking part, with over 30,000 participating, raising more than £3.5 million for many charities. The event saw some interesting world records being broken in relation to clothing. Christian Howett ran the entire marathon in cros and finished in an impressive 02:58:54; a group of participants also set the record for the fastest marathon in a six-person costume. Marcus Green, Rich Bidgood, Hugh Tibbs, Nick Wright, David Mills and James Bewley completed the marathon in style, dressed as a caterpillar, in 02:57:31.

Another running record has been broken by Russell Cook, better known as “Hardest Geezer” on social media, when he became the first person ever to run the full length of Africa after finishing his endeavour on 7 April 2024. Cook started the extraordinary achievement on 22 April 2023 in Cape Agulhas, South Africa and 352 days later reached the finish line in Ras Angela, Tunisia.

On his podcast before starting the journey, Cook shared how determined and confident he was for the challenge: “I sound bizarre but I have zero doubt in my mind that I will do it; get me to the start line!” However, as expected, the run was not easy and there were many bumps in the road including a problem regarding visas in Algeria. Hardest Geezer took to social media on day 278 of Project Africa to tell his

new following about the issue, asking Algeria to contact him if they needed anything from him. As well as this, Cook has recently come out and spoken about a traumatic experience on day 102 of his run, where he was kidnapped in the jungle and “thought [he]

was going to die.”

All problems aside, Cook showed an insane amount of resilience and raised a hugely impressive total of £1,010,374.38 for The Running Charity, who help young people experiencing homelessness by providing fitness-based initiatives and Sandblast, which builds awareness and solidarity for Saharawi people.

Here at the University of York, there have been some fantastic initiatives to raise money for charity, including the Halifax College Football Club who completed the Yorkshire Three Peaks on behalf of three charities: Macmillan Cancer Support, Mind UK and Dementia UK. Back on 25 March, the team took on the challenge of climbing the peaks of Pen-y-Ghent, Wharfedale and Ingleborough. The three peaks accumulate to a whopping 5000 feet of vertical ascent, and according to one member of the team, they walked 61,000 steps in one day. In their own words, “the lads are taking off their football boots and lacing up their walking boots to tackle the 24 mile, 12 hour hike in the Yorkshire Dales.” And tackle they did!

Speaking to a member of the team, Thomas ‘Little Greg’ Ralling, said, “My God it was hard. Some lads struggled more than others...but we all got across the line and we all made it to the pub at the end. Best pint of Guinness I’ve had in my life.” It’s safe to say that the 18 lads certainly deserved that pub visit by the end. ‘Little Greg’ explained that the “charity route had been in the pipeline since the first committee meeting”, but it was down to the organisation of Ollie Bury and Archie Bett that they actually ended up doing it. *Nouse* reached out to the club and they said the highlight of the journey was “us giving a lad called Joe a guard of honour at the last peak and him tripping and nearly stacking it.”

Halifax Football Club raised an amazing total of £1440 for their chosen charities. Thomas urged others to do things like this for charity: “Whether you’re a society or a group of friends, just do something. Raising money was the preliminary reason but we had so much fun doing it.”



IMAGE: THOMAS RALLING

It is incredible to see so many groups and individuals take on new challenges to raise money for others. If there’s something you’ve always wanted to tackle for a charity, go for it, and take each and every one of these people as motivation and inspiration!



# First former non-binary mayor is studying PhD at York

**Nadia Sayed**  
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THE WORLD'S FIRST, former, non-binary mayor of the Welsh city of Bangor is pursuing a PhD in 'Transgender Archeology' at the University of York. Owen Hurcum (they/them) received funding from the White Rose Arts and Humanities Research Council (WROCAH), an organisation which offers internationalised doctoral training programmes across three UK Russell Group universities, including the University of Leeds, Sheffield and York (where Owen is pursuing their PhD).

Owen told *Nouse*, "I've always loved archaeology". The 26-year-old further explained that they grew up watching the programme 'Time Team' – a show about archaeological exploration in Britain and the importance of the past.

In 2016, Owen began their undergraduate degree in Archeology at Prifysgol Bangor University, where they stayed to do their Masters in Celtic Archeology.

"It was a no-brainer to stay there [Prifysgol Bangor University] for my Masters, but I did feel that whilst there is so much expertise in Archeology [at Bangor] it was time to experience a new challenge and find supervisors who specialised in the type of theory I got into [Queer Archeology]," said Owen.

*Nouse* asked Owen what influenced them to study a PhD in Trans Archeology. Owen explained they had looked into the University of York after investigating specialists adjacent archaeological theories.

They further stated that their aspiration to study a PhD in Archeology stemmed from "a lifelong line of love of Archeology, a developed love in Queer theory whilst at Prifysgol Bangor University and using [their] lived experience and interactions with the trans community and as a trans person."

When asked if they could outline the subject of Trans Archeology, Owen replied: "Depending on who you ask it's either a stand-alone thing or a part of gender Archeology which started in 1984," stating the fact that this was "when archaeologists discovered that women exist."

Owen also addressed the primary issues which Trans Archeology aims to interrogate: "How do we queer gender beyond a binary? How do we talk to genders that are not Western 'man and woman'? [...] How do we apply archaeological analysis to that because, if we don't, we are effectively saying that for all of human history [...] there have been two genders existing exactly as the West wants them to exist today. It's pretty self-evident that gender is more complicated than that."

"It is about developing a framework in archaeology that can help elucidate gender variants in the past and about making technology a tool for transgender emancipation in the present."

When asked if the University of York had been supportive of Owen's studies, as an openly trans and non-binary researcher, Owen stated the University "have lots of systems in

place for harassment for researchers in public situations."

However, they also explained, "[I don't think that] the University has ever had to deal with the sheer level and quantity of hate which being a trans researcher can generate."

"I come with a social media following and exposure from my time in politics and being the mayor of a city." As a result, Owen has become a target for transphobic abuse, something they have become used to, and even anticipatory of, over time.

According to a report published by the Home Office in the year ending March 2023, "transgender hate crimes increased by 11%, to 4,732 offences" in England and Wales.

Owen candidly shared their experiences of transphobic abuse stating: "I have been sent weird images of somebody mopping up a desiccated chicken carcass with blue hair, I get called a paedophile and mentally ill."

Owen responded: "It definitely took its toll at the beginning."

However, Owen said they have built up several coping mechanisms, which they have used to overcome the hate they continue to receive, exacerbated by the existence of their platform on social media.

"Amongst all the hatred I have always and continue to get a lot of support, which is nice, and people reach out to me in different ways," said Owen.

Owen also explained that one of their coping mechanisms is to read the hate comments they receive. Owen expressed that some criticism, especially within academic journals and newspapers try to sound "smart" however, they stated that this is rarely achieved. Therefore, their coping mechanism is "to read the hate comments [they] get sent because they [the comments] are all dumb in content transphobia."

Owen expressed online hate is

activism. You can be an activist because somebody is going to see you in public and know that it's okay and you know you're going to get help from that one person. You don't have to put everything on social media if you don't feel comfortable." They also recommended surrounding yourself with "lovely people" and to "reach out for support."

From 2021 to 2022 Owen served as the world's first openly non-binary Mayor of Bangor, Wales.

When asked about their mayoral experience, Owen stated: "I am very proud of the time I have spent on the council [...] and I am very privileged that Bangor accepted me as their mayor." However, they expressed that it was not a one-person operation and they worked closely with a team of twenty people working "their arses off for the city, unpaid."

They also stated that their mayoral experience currently exists in two

'proof of need' and freezing council tax for a year. All of which, Owen emphasised, was a joint effort with the entire team of Bangor city council.

*Nouse* then inquired that, in lieu of Owen's five-year anniversary of coming out as trans, were they ever afraid to come out, and how did people respond?

"I have known since my earliest memory that I wasn't a boy, I just didn't know what that meant I was or if that could even be a thing. There was a lot less visibility around non-binary people back in the day," replied Owen.

"What even is gender? Who cares - it doesn't matter! Coming out was an ongoing process. You consistently come out."

One of the first people Owen told was their friend Amber, who was incredibly supportive and an instrumental part of their coming out.

Owen's family was also supportive of their coming out. "Bless my stepdad. He said, 'I always thought you'd been a bit of a dandy,' which is such a nice thing."

They went on to emphasise that coming out is something that should be done "when it is safe, when it is right, and when it is comfortable and that can change situationally."

*Nouse* then asked what Owen thought of the current state of transphobia in the UK.

Owen expressed the fact that trans people are one of the main talking points in UK politics at the moment, which "terrifies" them.

They stated that they believe the rough trajectory they see happening in the UK (without intercession) includes making it harder for trans people to access puberty blockers and NHS treatment to the eventual revoking of people's Gender Recognition Certificates.

When asked what Owen thought were some of the solutions to this, they stated that activism, direct action and attending support groups were all important. They also stated that they think transphobia is being justified in part by denying trans history, therefore their academic study in Trans Archeology is an aspect of their own activism.

More importantly, Owen emphasises the power of trans joy, which they describe as the "opposite of trans rage - understanding that regardless of how you feel, you can find joy in certain things."

Owen listed several examples of trans joy, including having your name and pronouns used correctly and wearing clothes that fit you in the way you want them to.

"Whatever brings you joy, do it with pride and in a way that is genuine to you," said Owen, expressing that "you can find joy in everything."

"It is powerful to stand up and say the best thing that ever happened to me was coming out [and] you can never take away who I am and how grateful I am that I am me."

Finally, *Nouse* asked Owen where they saw themselves in the future to which they responded: "I will keep doing activism, spreading trans joy and [they are] keen to continue [their] journey as a researcher in academic settings."



IMAGE: OWEN HURCUM

Despite the hate, Owen acknowledges the support provided by the University throughout their studies, conveying the fact that they feel completely safe and supported at the University of York.

They also expressed full confidence in the University's capabilities to support fellow researchers in the same or similar fields.

Owen's funding body (WROCAH) has also reached out to offer them support.

*Nouse* then inquired whether transphobic abuse had ever deterred Owen from the continuation of their trans activism.

much simpler: "I know I am not a Nazi, someone may call me a Nazi for being trans, I can go, 'well you're wrong,' and it's weirdly cathartic."

They also commented that, as a researcher in Trans theory, transphobic abuse often becomes "data points" within their research.

However, they articulated the fact that they do not recommend reading hate comments as a coping mechanism.

They concluded by offering advice to individuals facing exponential levels of hate: "Don't feel like, just because you're trans or queer or any minority that your lived experience has to be ac-

parts of their mind.

Firstly, their mayoral position gave them a platform to speak on behalf of trans issues, which they said got them "twice investigated by the national ombudsman [with] no misconduct found obviously because saying trans people are human is not an act of misconduct. [...] I was never going to stop talking about trans things [as mayor]."

In another sphere, they value their experience and their achievements including continuing the city council's donations of "upwards of £1000 every month to food share projects in the city [so that] locals could get without



# Nouse speaks to York's Zero Gravity Ambassador

**Alanah Hammond**  
NEWS EDITOR

IN A WORLD where educational and professional opportunities can seem bound by socio-economic barriers, Zero Gravity stands out as a beacon of hope and possibility.

Their platform is dedicated to enhancing social mobility through providing mentorship and exclusive career-boosting events to students from low opportunity backgrounds who are applying to university.

Cameron Mackellar, a third-year law student, is the current ambassador of University of York's Zero Gravity. Zero Gravity is looking for their next ambassador and it could be you.

But first, what is Zero Gravity? It is an award-winning tech start-up. In April they were even recognised as having the Best Innovation in Recruitment at the 2024 targetjobs UK National Graduate Recruitment Awards.

The start-up connects talented university students to students applying to university to receive guidance and support in drafting personal statements and answering questions about university life.

Mentoring offers a rewarding opportunity for university students to guide and support someone from a low-opportunity background through the university application process, sharing in their successes.

But it also provides mentors a chance to develop a broad range of transferable skills that are invaluable in any career.

In return for mentoring, Zero Gravity offers university students from low-opportunity backgrounds several

kinds of support:

Exclusive internship opportunities that provide valuable hands-on experience in various fields, a supportive Zero Gravity community page of like-minded individuals who are passionate about social mobility, and connection with mentors and industry professionals who can guide you on your career path, providing insights and advice.

Nouse caught up with Cameron, who discussed his experience with Zero Gravity. He explained, "I have had the opportunity to serve as both a Mentor and a Campus Ambassador for Zero Gravity this academic year. As a mentor, I guided students through the intricacies of university applications and career planning in the legal sector."

He added, "As a campus ambassador, I have led workshops and sessions on topics such as writing effective personal statements and strategies for job applications and completed a number of projects on campus on behalf of the team at Zero Gravity."

Cameron discussed what projects he has worked on through the start-up: "Mostly my work involves blogging, content creation, and sharing information about the opportunities Zero Gravity offers with the campus community, all of which have been incredibly fulfilling. These tasks are designed to be flexible, allowing me to balance them effectively with my academic commitments. Organising and leading sessions has enhanced my public speaking, planning, and leadership abilities, proving invaluable in my personal and professional development."

Cameron discussed the highlights of his time with Zero Gravity. "One of the best things about my experience has been the strong community of

like-minded individuals committed to combating social mobility. Engaging with this community, both online and during the fully-funded training day at Zero Gravity's headquarters in Central London, has expanded my network and provided a supportive environment. Additionally, the role has been enriched with various rewards and incentives through competitions and giveaways, enhancing motivation and recognising the impact of our contributions."

Cameron is leaving York this year and will start his training contract with a prestigious international law firm in 2026. He believes his mentoring and campus ambassador position was a great addition to his portfolio.

Cameron explained, "I was able to express my genuine enthusiasm for social mobility through directly supporting individuals from low opportunity backgrounds achieving their educational and professional goals. This experience not only reinforced my commitment to fostering an inclusive environment, which is paramount in top law firms, but also allowed me to develop and showcase a variety of

transferable skills such as effective communication and active listening."

Zero Gravity is actively looking for their next ambassador. Cameron said, "As my time as a Campus Ambassador nears its completion, the exciting opportunity is now open for someone new to step into this role for the next

to lead workshops, take part in projects, and be part of a vibrant community that is eager to help and uplift one another. It's an environment where every success is celebrated. So, if you're looking for a role where you can truly make a difference while being supported every step of the way, make sure to check out this opportunity."

Nouse asked Cameron about the application process.

He said, "The application process is simple, you first need to ensure you are signed up as a member with Zero Gravity. You would then need to submit your application through the platform linked below."

"The application consists of a few short questions and a video interview designed to help the team learn more about you. To demonstrate your commitment to their mission, actively engage with Zero Gravity on LinkedIn and Instagram."

"This not only helps get your name noticed but also strengthens your application. Applicants who successfully capture the team's interest will be contacted in July 2024."

Reflecting on his time at university, Cameron summed up his experience with Zero Gravity: "I have thoroughly enjoyed my opportunity with Zero Gravity, which has significantly supported both my professional and personal development. Given the great benefits and supportive community, I would highly recommend this opportunity to anyone looking to make a meaningful impact."

If you are interested in becoming the next Zero Gravity ambassador for York, check out their website at: <https://www.zerogravity.co.uk/uni/ambassadors>.



IMAGE: CAMERON MACKELLAR

academic year. I can't recommend this experience highly enough. Working with Zero Gravity, both the other ambassadors and the entire team, has been fantastic. Everyone involved is incredibly supportive and dedicated to the mission of social mobility."

He added, "You'll have the chance

# A new system is randomising jobs for medical graduates

**Zoha Nadeem**  
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

A NEW COMPUTER-generated system has been implemented this year to allocate UK medical graduates to Foundation Programmes, in hopes to try and create a fairer system.

However, it seems like the UK Foundation Programme Office (UKFPO), the body who facilitates the operation and development of the Foundation Programme, has created havoc amongst medical students across the country.

Fifth-years on social media are frustrated over being given jobs in regions that were their last choice, with many being forced to move to cities far away from family and friends.

After five, or even six, years of hard work, the control over where they get a job has been replaced by a system that works on chance. The future of the NHS has been reduced to numbers on a spreadsheet. Prior to the introduction of the new Preference Informed Allocation process, UK applicants were ranked based on a combination of their Educational Performance Measure score (based on how well you did in your medical school exams against your peers) and a Situational Judgement Test score. Those with the highest-ranking applications were then given their preferred Foundation Programme.

Students addressed their concerns stating many would not be able to af-

ford extensive revision resources to do as well as others in their exams.

Students also claimed the Educational Performance Measure was not standardised, and the Situational Judgement Test, a test mandatory in the previous allocation process, could be a very unfair multiple-choice exam, with perceived subjectivity in the answers.

In order to improve the process, a randomised system was announced. Medical students have a list of hospital deaneries, which they rank based on preference. A computer would then un-systematically place students in different areas of the country.

The aim of the system is to give the maximum number of people their first choice. The result of any exams the students sit are not involved in the outcome, allowing students to feel less pressure at medical school.

Once the proposed changes to the allocation system were backed by the Medical Schools Council, the British Medical Association (BMA) and all four UK governments, student feedback was welcomed. Out of 14,500 responses from a student survey initiated by the UKFPO, over half (66 percent) of people agreed that they inclined towards a Preference Informed Allocation that had been proposed for 2024.

Nouse spoke to fifth-year student Safia Qureshi, belonging to our very own Hull York Medical School (HYMS), about her experiences with this new Preference Informed Alloca-

tion Process.

Safia was pleased with where she was placed, having received her first-choice deanery, Yorkshire and Humber. Safia described the application process: "The process was generally simple, no tests were required. We applied through a website called Oriol, where there was a section which listed all the deaneries of the UK and we were given a couple of months to order these deaneries."

Nouse then asked Safia whether the Medical School had given any support during this daunting process: "HYMS hosted a webinar explaining how to navigate the site. We were also given reminders of specific deadlines through emails. But the webinar was not the most helpful as most of us were still very confused."

Safia spoke about how working through the website was "incredibly confusing" and how that was "very scary as you don't want to accidentally jeopardise your application." She expressed however, that after asking around and watching YouTube videos, navigating Oriol became easier.

Safia mentioned how one mistake while using Oriol cost her greatly: "One thing to be careful of is that if you tick the box saying you don't want to apply for the Specialised Foundation Programme (SFP), you can't change your mind - I learnt this the hard way. I accidentally said I don't want to, and emailed asking if I could reverse this decision, but they said it was too late."

One huge concern with the previous system was the competitiveness that emerged amongst medical students, to do the best in their medical school exams and rank the highest.

Safia expressed relief with not having the outcome of her exam results determine where she will be placed for the next two years: "It makes fifth year less stressful because you aren't competing with your peers, and not feeling as trash for not doing as well as others. Medicine is already such a hypercompetitive environment so it has reduced that massively."

Safia's experience of this new system reflects how the UKFPO's approach in creating a less stressful atmosphere for students has been somewhat a success. Nouse asked Safia about how her friends found the application process, and she revealed, "a lot of my friends got their first choice, but quite a few got their fifth, sixth or even sixteenth choice, which is incredibly unfair."

She then continued, "one of my friends was given one of her lower choices. It's sad because she did really well in her exams, so with the old system she would have probably been allocated her first choice."

Safia added, "It's crazy to think that a random number generator decides your life for the next two years! It seems almost inhumane, not having any control over the job you will get considering how hard you have to work to make

it this far."

Nouse then asked Safia if there are any changes she would like to see in the application process: "I think some priority should be given to household location, as it's almost impossible to rent accommodation based solely on our future salary."

Junior doctors have been going on strikes in their long-running pay dispute with the government. A call for increasing the wages of doctors has been going on for years now, due to salaries not corresponding with the intense workload and pressures doctors face at their workplace.

The UKFPO revealed on their website that "all 9702 eligible applicants for the 2024 Foundation Programme were allocated to a Foundation School, with 75 percent of those applicants getting their first preference." This is an increase from 2023, where 71 percent of candidates got their first preference. The introduction of the Preference Informed Allocation process may be a step towards an equitable chance for every medical graduate to get their preferred Foundation programme.

The UKFPO said: "Once implemented the new system will be under constant review to make sure it is working well for applicants."

However, it remains uncertain whether computer systems can be relied upon to employ medical graduates who have no control over where they will work for two years.





# COMMENT



IMAGE: Jeffrey Czum

## The university is still failing in its duty of activism

Emily Warner talks to Abi Perrin about the university's response to the climate crisis

**Emily Warner**  
(she/her)



Picture a scientist, educated at Cambridge University with a PhD in molecular biology. Now picture an Extinction Rebellion climate activist, who has spent 24 hours in a police cell for glueing herself to a government building.

They don't look the same, do they? Yet they are both Dr Abi Perrin, an academic at the University of York.

The assumption that activism and academia cannot go together is a recent one, as universities were once a locus for learning and change. It is a message clearly stated in the York University Sustainability Plan: "the University of York was founded on a commitment to public good". Yet, in recent years, the University is failing to support those who advocate for change.

In my conversation with Abi Perrin, she described the struggle to reconcile her academic work at the University, and her activism for Extinction Rebellion. There is a culture of "inertia" amongst scientists, she told me; academics who are unwill-

ing to see the bigger picture while they conduct their research. There is also a general hostility towards activists (unsurprisingly, considering the unfavourable media coverage they receive). It seems that trying to 'do', instead of simply 'tell', is incompatible with the University's beliefs, despite their lofty claims to do 'public good'. Abi is soon to leave her role at the University of York - a move which she has described as "devastating" - which made me wonder, was she given a choice? Can a successful scientist also have an active role in activism?

When I asked Abi what she felt the university should do, she said their current plans were "not ambitious enough". Their recent divestment from unethical industries, after a three year campaign by students, is a huge success. It means that the University "no longer holds investments in companies that primarily make or sell weapons and defence-related products or services." This includes companies whose primary activities are oil/gas, tar sands, thermal coal, shale oil/gas, mining and armaments. Without lessening the impact this will have, there is still more to do.

The most recent annual data from the University shows a large increase in carbon emissions, totalling

over 100,000 tonnes. This occurred despite their intention to be carbon neutral in all their activities, illustrating a mismatch between what they say and do. In addition, the University remains part of a pension scheme which invests in Shell plc, meaning that a significant amount of money is still going to a major polluter. In their amended Statement on Responsible Investment they address this issue by saying: "various pension schemes in operation at the University of York are outside the scope of this policy". It also says "it will consider on a case by case basis whether the University should stop doing business with institutions if their actions were (likely) to have an adverse reputational impact on the University". Is all of this a concern for 'reputational impact' rather than climate change? I urge you to read the smallprint.

Abi also wanted to see the University "recognising the role of advocacy and activism as part of the role of academics. If we want research centres to be places of change, we should be supporting people who want to do that." Change starts at the top, with those in management and leadership positions. "For any of our work to matter" she added "we need to solve these massive climate problems."

Her specific advice includes:

1. Education that empowers transformation, for staff as well as students.
2. Ambition and progress of sustainability and decarbonisation targets, particularly regarding food and travel.
3. Cutting ties with unsustainable partnerships or investments. Abi was unable to comment on specifics, but expressed a deep discomfort with some of these partners.
4. Transparency and democracy, so that University leadership can be held accountable for their decisions.
5. Support for academic advocacy, so that staff and students feel safe to empower change.

As a student, it might feel daunting to confront these difficult truths and still feel like you can make a difference. It is a feeling of powerlessness which Abi understood, having dealt with her own anxieties and personal sacrifices. She spoke about this with emotion: "I'm not making these choices for fun, but I would be naive to think that they don't have an impact beyond just me. I know that people who care about me worry about me in those situations, and some of those

situations are difficult: I wouldn't recommend 24 hours in a police cell to anyone". She described "long periods of burnout and exhaustion" as well as the difficulty of facing other people's opinions: "Some people who I love who don't understand [...] see my choices to tread a different path and take some risks as a monumental act of self harm."

Ultimately though, she feels lucky to be part of a community who are fighting for change. "When we come together, there is power" she said, and reiterated, throughout our conversation. To assume that things can continue as normal is a blind hope and it is far better to hope for change instead.

I asked her what students could do and her answer was simple: "share." Our voices are important - our collective voices - and this crisis goes far beyond individualised change. If the recent changes to investment commitments show anything, it is that campaigning makes a difference; the University will listen, but only if enough people speak out. Solving the climate crisis is about how we interact with systems of power and challenge them. That begins with reuniting academia and activism: it begins here, with us.



## EDITOR'S OPINION

### Old habits die hard

**Maya Upmacis**  
(she/her)



I've locked myself in a room. The weather has reached a stellar 23 degrees (a rarity from the British sun in early May) and I'm hoping that – by depriving myself of sunlight, the sound of birds, the little pleasures in life – I will finally finish the essay I've had two months to do and the vitamin D can be a sweet treat for afterwards. With exam dates and essay deadlines rapidly approaching, I find balancing time to be a difficult feat. I'm in a constant conflict between going to my next lecture or using that lecture time to catch up with the last lecture I missed. In times like this, I often turn to the opinions of my friends [insert a smooth segue into our opinion section here] who offer a range of suggestions: 'bin off the lecture you'll be fine' or 'Do it now, Maya, or you'll be nothing next year' (thanks, Ruby). The aim is to find a healthy balance. It is with the guidance of my friends' opinions that I went to my lectures, went outside, and then pulled-an all nighter to get that essay done – a balance! In our corner of *Nouse*, opinions are integral to devising your own, and to be being-open minded even if your old habits die hard. I can't offer any profound advice on managing your time, but I can tell you that reading our treasured opinion section will be worthwhile.

I'm incredibly proud of the hard-work our writers have invested into creating a fully-formed gem of a comment section. The behind the scenes has involved late nights, last-minute articles, and meeting deadlines later than intended, but it wouldn't be the prize that it is without the effort of every *Nouse* member involved, so thank you!

So, with all that schmaltzy stuff out of the way, here's the wonderful

spectrum of articles you can expect from us:

Comment opens with a thought-provoking interview, conducted by Emily Warner, with academic and Extinction rebellion activist, Dr Abi Perrin, on the conflicts between promoting activism and balancing commitments to research. On my right is Georgina Spriddell's entertaining take on whether we should all pay the same tuition fees and what does this question resurface about the age-old humanities versus STEM debate.

On page 11 is Emily Christie's illuminating article interrogating the gendered double standard between how susceptible men and women are to judgement for engaging in online trends (hint - it's misogyny!). Moving swiftly on, Dominic Bradshaw's piece has a lot to say on his cordial relationship with circuit laundry, all of which is perfectly warm and amiable! Next, you'll be greeted by Ethan Reuter as he explores how instrumental education is to our culture. Fun fact alert: this piece was shortlisted for the Guardian's Hugo Young Award! A glance below and you'll find my two cents on why a lot of us get our news from social media and what does turning a blind eye to this medium of information reflect on our status in society. On page 13, Kassie Sharpe gives her opinion on the online response to Kate Middleton's hiatus from the public eye, prompting inquisition into the ethics of speculation surrounding the private lives of the Royal Family. Also featuring Heather Gosling provides a compromise on whether we can separate the art from the morally questionable artist. As always, our Clash of Comments sections spotlights the 'for' and 'against' opinions of anything topical. This time round, it's semesterisation! Daisy Couture plays the defence and Ethan Reuter, the vicious attacker.

This will be the last print edition of the year for our current Comment team – Millie Simon, Ethan Reuter, and Ethan Atwood – It's been a hoot!



IMAGE BY DAVID MORRIS

## Should we all pay the same?

### Georgina Spriddell asks if some degrees are worth higher costs

**Georgina Spriddell**  
(she/her)



It's nearing that time of year again where we all must apply for our loan from Student Finance England (SFE) - and often probably forget about it thereafter. However, on the odd occasion where I'm required to visit my department in Vanbrugh, I tend to wonder where my money really goes. As a history student, for a meagre nine grand a year I get a pithy maximum of eight contact hours a week, for almost 21 out of the 52 weeks in the annum. That's not including the detractions when our department staff, understandably, decide to go on strike for seven of those weeks. Compare, my housemate who studies a maths and physics degree with an average of a 9-5 day on campus for around 25 weeks of the year (she doesn't have reading weeks.) Access to labs, up-to-date machinery, drop-in-sessions, seems to me to make the money worth it. My housemates and I love a good discussion about the rights of humanities students in contrast to their financially preferred STEM compatriots, and with half of us studying humanities and half science, these debates can become quite personal.

Now dear reader, I'm not going to bore you with the statistical breakdown of exactly where our exorbitant donations to the university goes each year – mainly because no one knows. All we can truly acknowledge is that the University's financial input into the various humanities departments must be considerably less than, say, Biology. Don't get me wrong, I love my course and my lecturers are wonderful but should I be paying the same amount as the average STEM student?

Let's take a look at the practicalities; my friend who does Biology gets her lab-coats and textbooks provided for her, courtesy of the department. On the contrary, my friends who study English Literature, are often required to read two books plus a few extra required readings a week for their degree. Physical copies are provided for them, surely? Of course not. What kind of library would have more than four copies of a key text? Silly

me. Online versions are administered, but these are hardly preferred – good, woe to the Age of Digital, I say. But you'd think a system of fund allocation for each student has been conceptualised in order to redirect some of their tuition fees into purchasing these texts. Alas, no. So, whither the money?

It will be of no surprise to anyone that the study of the arts and humanities is facing a relative crisis. Historian Benjamin Schmidt has suggested that "the plunge seems not to reflect a sudden decline of interest in the humanities, or any sharp drop in the actual career prospects of humanities majors. Instead, in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis, students seem to have shifted their view of what

If we were to introduce a discounted tuition fee to correlate with what is returned to us, our degrees would be viewed as 'cheap', and 'second rate', evenmore so than they already are in our modern economy.

All this being said, whilst in an ideal world a decrease in tuition fees or equal fund allocation to each department would be desirable, I think the reality would be counterintuitive.

The larger picture lends to some severe consequences for the perception of our disciplines. As we have seen through Sunak's recent proposals to decrease funding into the arts, our subjects (and within this sweeping term, I include the more general humanities as well as the general arts) are increasingly ridiculed. I fear that if we were to introduce a discounted tuition fee to correlate with what is returned to us, our degrees would be viewed as 'cheap', and 'second rate', evenmore so than they already are in our modern economy.

This is the unfortunate result of our constant commercialisation of absolutely everything. Would it also discourage people from studying STEM degrees? That I am less concerned about, as their god-complex would still remain, so long as we are told that the future is STEM. The question of what, or whose, future is in discussion here is another article entirely.

The Telegraph recently released their list of "mickey-mouse" degrees, within which I was surprised to find English Literature and Fine Art. For a newspaper that considers itself a champion of cultural traditionalism, this feels rather contradictory. Much of our more positive identity as a nation rests upon the shoulders of our literary and artistic giants. To my mind, the study and appreciation of words and art – the very things that make us human, is crucial, particularly in an age where the future of AI dominance looms large.

Marina Abramović, one of the pioneers of performance art said that "Art must be life — it must belong to everybody". To quantify art with regard to tuition fees and employability is to endanger our future as free and critical thinkers. So, the simple solution is that we are back to square one – it must either be the same fees or no fees. For the survival of arts and humanities pursuits, equality in their financial perception must continue. We can only hope that within our university spaces, a posi-



IMAGE BY JOHN ROBINSON

Exam stress and important conversations at the University



# Double standards only grow when we get online

## Women are more vulnerable to criticism for engaging in 'feminine' trends

**Emily Christie**  
(she/her)



In today's world of social media, it's hard to avoid the flood of judgments and criticisms, surrounding women's fashion, beauty, and lifestyle trends. We've all been there, scrolling through TikTok or Instagram, and stumbling upon a confident woman being torn to shreds in the comment section by complete strangers. This unwarranted criticism has become an all-too-common occurrence, raising questions about the underlying motivations and consequences of this relentless scrutiny.

Let's first define "female trends." These can include anything from clothing styles and makeup techniques to hobbies that many women enjoy. Exploring the reasons behind this criticism, we find a mix of societal pressure, gender norms, and misunderstandings about femininity. Even women criticise female trends due to a desire to distance themselves from stereotypically 'negative' aspects of femininity, stemming from society's long-standing internalised misogyny. Additionally, the objectification and sexualisation of

women's bodies in the media, demonstrates that these underlying factors are complex and multifaceted, creating a challenging landscape for women to navigate their personal styles and preferences.

Social media's influence in amplifying the visibility and subsequent scrutiny of female trends cannot be overstated. Platforms like TikTok and Instagram have become stages for evolving interests, but they

**The importance of empowering women to make their own choices without the fear of judgement is paramount. When we condemn female trends, we undermine the progress made towards gender equality and the very principles of self-determination.**

also serve as breeding grounds for negativity. Women who go viral for dancing, sharing makeup tutorials, or celebrating their bodies often face harsh backlash from users who feel entitled to express their unsolic-

ited opinions. The ever-changing cycle of trends, particularly in fashion, is prominently displayed on these platforms, sparking a constant comparison and competition, leading individuals to attack female trends as they strive to position themselves above others.

From a feminist standpoint, the importance of empowering women to make their own choices without the fear of judgement is paramount. When we condemn female trends, we undermine the progress made towards gender equality and the very principles of self-determination that feminism aims to uphold.

Female trends are frequently judged more harshly than their male counterparts, with women often accused of attention-seeking behaviour that, which when exhibited by men, is praised as confidence. This disparity in critical reception becomes strikingly apparent between the treatment of football fans with that of fangirls – passionate female fans of music, films, and other areas of interest. The glaring contrast between the acceptance of football fans and the mockery of fangirls is a telling example of the double standards that continue to pervade our society. Despite sharing qualities such as passion, dedication, and a sense of community, these two groups often

face vastly different treatment due to ingrained gender biases. This unjust discrepancy serves as a potent reminder of the ongoing fight for gender equality.

In examining the negative criticisms of female trends, it is crucial to consider the role of intersectionality and how this disproportionately impacts women from marginalised communities. Women of colour, plus-sized women, and LGBTQ+ individuals often face heightened scrutiny and judgement when embracing fashion, beauty, or lifestyle trends, by not aligning with mainstream beauty standards. Plus-sized women, or even women with larger chests, are frequently criticised for wearing form-fitting or revealing clothing, despite ongoing body

positivity movements. Such a disparity creates an unfair result that is no fault of their own, however, they bear the burden of the criticisms. By acknowledging and addressing these disparities, we can work towards creating a more inclusive and equitable environment for all women to express themselves freely.

Amid the criticism, it's essential to recognise the positive aspects of female trends. From body positivity and self-expression to fostering a sense of community among women, these trends have the power to uplift and empower. By focusing on these aspects, we can shift the narrative surrounding female trends away from judgement to support.

Reflecting on female trends, we must emphasise the importance of supporting women's choices and promoting an inclusive society. By questioning harmful stereotypes, fostering open dialogue, and embracing diversity, we can create a world where individuals embrace trends without backlash. The power lies in our hands to create an environment of acceptance and encouragement for women to express themselves. By working together to create a more inclusive and supportive landscape, we can ensure that the beauty and creativity of female trends is celebrated rather than criticised.



# A week under the confines of Circuit Laundry

## Dominic Bradshaw opines on what has thrown his life, and clothes, for a spin

**Dominic Bradshaw**  
(he/him)



Some of the most cruel and unusual punishments ever inflicted on York students has been the Circuit Laundry washing system. Is it cheap? No. Is it convenient? No. Is it clean? No. Is it easy to use? No. I think Circuit Laundry may be a kind of psychological test. How much humiliation can we put a human being through until they snap and try to burn down the Central Hall. Who knows? But week after week I am put through an unending gauntlet of new horrors for just wanting relatively clean clothes.

**05/10/23 6pm**

It is tipping it down with rain. The classic northern October weather is holding me down with icy water as I squelch to the laundry building gripping my stripy laundry bag with both hands. I am confronted with the heavy wooden door of the rather depressing laundry building which requires my room key card to enter. Now there is no good reason for this. Washing your clothes costs money, rather too much money in fact. The fact that the privilege of paying £5 for a wash and a dry is reserved only for James college students is genuinely beyond me. Are they worried

people may steal clothes? If so, would not the main culprit for garment theft be other university students which are in fact the only people that have the card. No, I think this, like many other aspects of the laundry experience, is only done for sadistic pleasure of the lizard people who designed this place to feed off human suffering. So, I pull out my card and drop my bag on the muddy pavement to do so and enter



IMAGE BY OLI WOODMAN

the circuit laundry building. Now there is really no other building like it. No other place is as moist but as dirty. As over stimulating but utterly lacking character. Strange objects litter the floor: clumps of hair, odd socks, suspicious shredded pieces of tissue.

I pull out my phone and

attempt to pay with the circuit laundry plus app. Because the servers are overloaded on the app. What servers? It demands I pay with paypal. I don't have paypal. Do the machines take cash? Of course not, that would be convenient. Sitting on the washing room floor I try to set up a paypal account, my spirit broken just that little bit more

**05/10/23 7:32pm**

I have already returned once to move my clothes from the washer to the dryer and am returning one last time to liberate my washing from this hellscape and return them to the safety and warmth of my wardrobe. But as I enter the washroom I am greeted with my drier containing an entirely different selection of clothes. Where are my clothes, you ask? Are they in the official basket specifically designated for clean clothes? No! They are on the damp but still strangely dusty floor, next to the clump of hair. Now I read somewhere that one of the great evils of capitalism is how it pits the oppressed against each other, worker against worker, people who should be comrades fighting for a common cause forced to ruthlessly compete to carve out a living in a cruel and uncaring world. Circuit Laundry does this even more wickedly, brutally dividing and conquering washers so we are too busy fighting each other to recognise our true enemy.

Despite knowing this I still

snapped. Flying into a blind rage I selected a dryer at random and changed it from 30c colours to 20c 'eco dry'. "Enjoy your wet clothes, you prick," I thought while peeling my t-shirt off the musty floor.

**12/10/23 a week later**

I have re-entered the Circuit Laundry guntlet again, and everything has

**Why me? What did I do to deserve this? Who has let this happen?**

gone swimmingly up until now. However, due to the hectic and fast-paced nature of University life, I had taken my eye off the ball, my dryer had been due to stop two hours ago and I had still not collected my clothes. Now at this point I had resigned myself to the fact that there was no saving my washing. Some mouth breathing troglodyte had obviously tossed my pristinely washed clothes out of the dryer and all over the floor, maybe stamped mud into them as well for good measure. So, my hopes were not high as I entered. But I laid my eyes on an even more horrifying sight. My clothes

were still tumbling. Two extra hours of tumbling! I stood there



IMAGE BY ENGIN AKYURT

shocked, frozen with fear. Tumble tumble tumble. I've got to do something. Tumble tumble tumble. I could see my favourite jumper staring at me through the plastic window begging to be released. Tumble tumble tumble. I start desperately pressing buttons on the drier. Still tumbling. In a panic I begin wrenching at the door, finally after hearing a worrying snap and the door opens, and my clothes tumble to the floor.

I fell to my knees, cradling my jumper which was now the size of a paperback book. I despaired. Why me? What did I do to deserve this? Who has let this happen? Who is responsible for stealing so much of my dignity, my time and a decent amount of my money. I clench my fist poignantly. One day, Circuit Laundry, one day.



# Educational Variety is the Soul of Pleasure

A degrees value comes not from monetary value but from how they foster cultural beauty

**Ethan Reuter**  
(he/him)



In August 2022, under Taliban control, women's secondary schools in Afghanistan closed. They have not reopened. Girls are banned from education beyond the age of 11. It served as a global reminder that to study is not a right, it is a privilege. A privilege that can be denigrated, stripped back, or taken away at any moment. Education, and the pursuit of knowledge, is a privilege that we should instead promote and encourage despite its detractors, especially those at the heart of government.

Rishi Sunak is no stranger to a privileged and first class education. Head boy at Winchester College, a first from Lincoln College, Oxford, reading PPE, and a Masters from Stanford. In his own ideal world, he sees himself as the slick and intellectually savvy Silicon Valley tech bro. The Prada loafers and cashmere hoodies in Chancellor-era Rishi are a perfect encapsulation of all that is Sunak Incorporated. Keeping in line with the Silicon Valley overton window is our Prime Minister's thoughts on education. These include plans for

compulsory maths education till 18, a British Baccalaureate, and a cap on admissions for 'low value' degrees. It is education defined by future earnings and economic potential.

By marginalising and categorising the subjects it continues to condemn our education system to a victorian-esque production line of yesteryear. One where children are shuttled and pressed through, only hoping to produce those who can 'earn more' or 'provide more value'. This ignores what should be the purpose of education. Education, for fu-

ture generations, must be seen as an intrinsic, inherent, public good. One that builds society, injects it with life, and allows humans to richly experience humanity.

What are we without the picturesque and poetic works of art, theatre, literature? When a turn of phrase can encapsulate the heart and transform the mind. When a captivating performance can scintillate senses and allow us to experience another world. The language used and thoughts expressed denigrates the greatest studies of generations. Philosophy, history, politics, linguistics, classics, the list goes on, to leave them behind, truly, forgotten in the dust, as nothing more 'Mickey Mouse' degrees would be an unconscionable failing. Vacating our station, our post, our duties to the past, present and future. We would lose answers to ultimate questions, ignore our collective mistakes and warnings, forgetting language, forgetting life.

This all may seem rather far-fetched talk and overstating of what will actually occur, however, to nurture talent, keeping the flame of passion alive requires resources and support. Without initial exposure and encouragement the disciplines that define our human experience will be left to rot at the altar of our own making. We owe it to ourselves and others that one subject not be seen as less important than another. There is no intrinsic price on the information and growth that Afghani girls will subsequently miss out on over the course of Taliban occupation.

This argument is obviously not an economic one, and Sunak is right in some respects. There are some degrees which will have higher earnings potential than others. Degrees which are going to increase your employability over another. Such a push does have the potential to increase the UK's economic growth and economic prospects. The question surrounds how we define education and where its purpose lies.

Some of the fondest days in my life surround learning, days in a library appreciative of the opportunity I've been afforded to study, to learn. They were the contentest, the brightest, those days in which I kept the old flame alive, cupping my hand around it and in return it warming me. Naturally, and as is to be expected, this is not everyone's experience. A large proportion leave education disliking

the concept. Education is associated with categorisation, standardisation and all other words that end in -isation that fill students with acute suicidal impulses. It's associated with routine tests, grading and people being narrowed into boxes, an inherently impossible and harmful concept.

It won't have taken an intellectual and academic titan to recognise the parallel there. Sunak's thoughts on education and learning spell an increase in all the torturous devices that plague the education system currently. Categories, pressurised singular routes and a dismay at a desire for an alternative system. Sunak's desires may make personal sense, they may even make economic sense, however, it is difficult to see how they make cultural sense.

Education, then, must be recognised not as a pathway to better job opportunities but as a question of the character of society. It must be a matter of increasing inspiration and to experience experiences. Certainly that is a richer, more wealthy vision than an approach formed in a supposedly inspired policy lab. Variety, in our education, is so important to the fabric of society that if we lose it, we lose our enjoyment, our culture, our lives, if not our livelihoods. Variety is the very spice of life that gives it all its flavour. Variety is the soul of pleasure.



CREDIT: RAWPIXEL

# Should we turn a blind eye to social media?

Maya Upmacis investigates the pressure and privilege involved in engaging with social media

**Maya Upmacis**  
(she/her)



As a politics student, it's crucial that I'm aware of the current political climate. So, when I made the decision to disable the default 'limit political content' button on my Instagram, my feed took a sharp turn from displaying clips of makeup hacks and hair tutorials to generating an inexhaustible stream of videos showcasing police brutality against student protesters and graphic images of wounded Palestinian civilians.

If you're as alarmed as I was and you're asking me why I didn't turn it off, you might as well be asking me why I didn't switch the tap off on my main source of world news. TikTok, Instagram, Twitter (I'm still reluctant to call it X) are mostly where I get my first account of any news story, before heading to other websites like the BBC, or to the radio, or print. I'm ashamed to admit that I found out about Matthew Perry's death through Instagram.

I know, however, I am certainly not alone in this – a survey by British trade magazine *PressGazette* found that 58% of young people (aged 18-24) get their news from social me-

dia. But, when the news starts getting heavy, when another student is stabbed to death, when mass graves are unearthed in Gaza hospitals, when another flood, drought or landslide devastates. It's no wonder why people make the active decision to stop reading the news altogether or to instead let the algorithm sweep them off into the escapist bliss of ASMR reels. But, for me and many others, the reason I choose to engage in online news is an intermingled mixture of pressure and privilege.

To preface, this is not to say that engaging in news is something that people don't want to do, to say that it's easy to plug the stream of relentless news and turn to the telly would undermine the mental health concerns of viewers everywhere. But, absorbing news catalyses a process of social reform: listening, reading and watching is 1. how we learn, and by learning we know 2. What and who to fight, and that action of fighting is what incites step 3 in this equation: change. In the words of Kant, we

are all activists. We all have an inherent compassion and empathy for people that emboldens us to participate in this process, but, in my opinion, the social and online environments in which we take the first step are tricky to navigate.

First of all, it must be said out in the open that we all experience a pressure to appear knowledgeable at some point in our lives. For many of us, this is felt particularly in educational institutes like University where discussions of political issues infiltrate the seminar room of every discipline. For students, there is a pressure to demonstrate understanding as it is a marker of credibility.

Lacking an understanding or an awareness of current political issues can be equated to being ignorant, a word far sharper than simply 'unaware' and ignorance, whether it is wilful or not, has connotations of something far more active and sinister: complicitness. Ignorance renders you a bystander. For example, say I choose to buy fries at a fast food restaurant without knowing that they are investors in fossil fuel companies, which harms the global climate. Does this action make me a complicit actor in a larger system of the continual oppression of the environment?

So unawareness equals ignorance equals complicitness – a stretch? maybe, but the discussion circles on social media can inflame this pressure to be knowledgeable. For example, the internet slang term 'social justice warriors' or 'keyboard warriors' refers to pseudo-progressive individuals who push for visibility and

subsequent change on social issues, but often do so by manipulating debates in order to boost their own reputation and ultimately, are counterproductive to aiding education. For example, using language of exclusion. Critical rhetoric from other activists creates an air of competition and may discourage open dialogue and encourage shame in admitting gaps in understanding. There's that pressure again, the pressure to be right 100% all of the time.

Furthermore, we are not our parents' generation. So long are the days where a newspaper clipping with a mugshot and a brief interview would be the extent of what we see of a murder case, for example. Now, social media gives us visual insight into the interrogation process, the autopsy, the confession. My point here is that we have extraordinary, violent visual exposure to what is happening in the world. But, it's happening whether we see it or not. And this is where our privilege comes in.

Privilege is the predisposition to this sense of pressure. It is a privilege to go attend university, it is a privilege to even access a phone and it is a privilege many cannot afford. I want to emphasise that by no means am I comparing the plight of tuning into Instagram reels to anything other than that. But, we must acknowledge our privilege and use it as leverage for education.



IMAGE: DOLE77



# Artist and art must be held in symbiotic balance

## Heather Gosling answers whether we can separate the work from the creator

**Heather Gosling**  
(she/her)



The question of separating the art from the artist is one that has arisen throughout history, and it continues to be relevant today in the arts. Separating the art from the artist involves evaluating a piece of art independently from an artist's personal opinions. Art lasts forever, and is often a reflection of the artist's inner self. By consuming art made by problematic artists, are we endorsing them as people? This is a nuanced question, and one that has been asked repeatedly on social media as soon as the latest celebrity is cancelled for a problematic comment.

This issue is an extremely broad one: there are artists that have committed acts of varying degrees of abhorrence. One of the biggest examples is in literature. Many authors' works have been viewed with suspicion due to the writer's controversial opinions. Writers such as Hemingway had misogynistic views that permeated their works. Roald Dahl was nicknamed 'Roald the Rotten' because of how he treated people, and several of his characters reflect his anti-semitic and racist views. The list of writers

that have held problematic views is extensive; Hunter S Thompson, Hemingway, Ted Hughes and H.P Lovecraft to name but a few. Although, the issue of separating the art from the artist becomes more complicated when the artist is still alive and creating. J.K Rowling's transphobic comments led many to express shame about liking the Harry Potter series. However, whilst J.K Rowling's comments are abhorrent and there are issues with monetisation and giving authors like Rowling a platform, there are ways of reimagining fictional worlds through fan-fiction that allow fans to engage with the art in other ways. Whilst we should avoid buying into these author's views or giving them a platform, by applying a critical lens to an author's work, we can acknowledge the problematic nature of their comments whilst still appreciating the power of their art. By recognising these views and being critical of them, we can learn from their art. There is a delicate balance between two extremes here: one reaction would be to discard these writers entirely, and the

other is to completely disregard these aspects of these writer's lives. Instead, we should view separating the art from the artist not as an excuse, but as a tool.

In the world of music, a similar problem exists; many musicians have come under fire for problematic comments or lyrics. With musicians, we go to their concerts to see them play songs. Performance is tied to their art, and in this way their persona is also a part of their art.

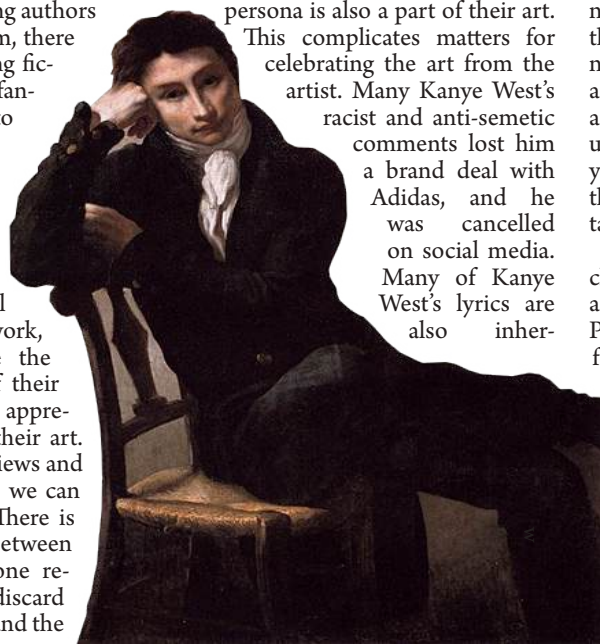
This complicates matters for celebrating the art from the artist. Many Kanye West's racist and anti-semitic comments lost him a brand deal with Adidas, and he was cancelled on social media. Many of Kanye West's lyrics are also inher-

ently misogynistic, particularly his comments about Taylor Swift. Can we still appreciate what Kanye West has brought to the genre of Hip-Hop whilst still holding him to account for his views? Lead-singer of the 1975, Matty Healy has also repeatedly been criticised for his controversial comments, yet I still hear the 1975 play through my housemate's AirPods on repeat. R Kelly is a Grammy award-winning RnB singer, yet when his name is mentioned many people will think of his conviction of child pornography, sexual abuse and marrying an underage girl. An artist's actions are important, they exist as public figures and are often role models for the younger generation. It is imperative that we acknowledge an artist's mistakes alongside their art.

Artists that are hailed as classical greats often have pasts that are brushed over with paint. Pablo Picasso's paintings exist because of his female muses, who he viciously mistreated. "Women are machines for suffering", he told his mistress Françoise Gilot in 1943. This aspect of Picasso's art is vital to understanding its meaning. If we ignore Picasso's misogyny and the role of his muses in producing paintings such as *The Crying Woman*, then we are not seeing the full picture. In January 2022,

a man took a hammer to a statue of Prospero and Ariel by Eric Gill, which stands outside the BBC broadcasting house. The protester was heard shouting 'paedophile' as he attacked the statue with a hammer. Statues that are placed in public spaces are often seen to be a reflection of the society we live in, people constantly see this statue, and it is a part of the urban landscape of the city. The sculptor Eric Gill had sexual relations with his two teenage daughters, due to his deplorable actions protesters have been calling for the statues removal for years, something that the BBC would've preferred not to be a part of.

The problem of separating the art from the artist has never been so topical. Every day there seems to be another singer that is cancelled on social media. Our study in the literature of the past uncovers dark truths about writers that we often wish we could forget and yet never can. However, it is of the utmost importance that we remain critical of art and artists; their lives, their views; their actions all shape the art that they create. Art is also historically important and culturally significant, and therefore we should not erase it. Instead, we should strike a balance between holding artists accountable and appreciating art for the power and beauty it holds.



# Online speculation into The Royal Family has gone too far

## Kassie Sharpe investigates Kate Middleton's right to privacy and our right to transparency

**Kassie Sharpe**  
(she/her)



On 25 December, Kate Middleton appeared in Sandringham for an annual church which, unbeknownst to the public, would mark the beginning of her long-winded absence. Middleton had undergone a planned abdominal surgery and was to recuperate at home. In the meantime, her duties were placed on a hiatus and royal representatives announced her want of privacy. Middleton's health would be addressed when significant changes arose but this ceased to satisfy the general population; causing a culmination of conspiracies and peaking public interest into the personal lives of the Windsors.

The media became frenzied. For many, the lack of information led to overwhelming concern. Rumours that she had undergone a BBL procedure began to circulate under the hashtag 'Katagate', as did rumours of plastic surgery and an unfortunate haircut. I cannot fault the immediate response as Middleton seemed to be in recovery. However, this does not mean the public's reaction was appropriate or necessary.

Recently, Kensington Pal-

ace released a photograph of Kate Middleton and her three children, happy and well, which attempted to assuage concern. However, internet sleuths began to scour for faults and rather than take the image at face value, letting matters be settled, the public's concern was only heightened. The need to know, I believe, became excessive even at an early stage in Middleton's absence, putting unnecessary pressure onto the family and public relation team for an explanation they are not indebted to give. The image was pulled from various publications due to concerns with digital manipulation.

A post on the instagram account The Archbishop of Banterbury was grounds for much discussion of this photograph, revealing an attitude towards the royals. There was a general divide between reactions. Most expressed concern, theorising real health problems, which Middleton may have been attempting to conceal from the masses, whilst a minority had more absurd speculations. One user commented on rituals to prolong the life of King Charles and users on X hopped on the bandwagon by claiming "The simplest explanation is most likely the right one, that her body has been inhabited by the ghost of a murdered Catholic priest." The absurdity of these comments can entice a laugh, but it is the sort of humour we know we shouldn't laugh at

and should quickly move on from. Whilst I doubt they were made maliciously, their recurrence seemed to disrespect the want of privacy.

An Instagram user's comment "Can't wait for The Crown to cover this" highlights the sensationalization of her disappearance, largely downplaying concern. It seems to ask, how would it be depicted on the screen? And whose theory would be correct? One perspective of the royals, highlighted by these posts, is that they are fair game to online trolls. An expectation of total transparency for the public became apparent. But there is a misconception that health matters are fair game too. This is greatly misinformed and has largely perpetuated 'Katagate'. More so, the Windsors have become a fiction. Their personal lives become detached allowing for speculation to go unchecked. On 22 March, Middleton's cancer diagnosis catapulted the media sensation into a new, and sordid, light. Suddenly, speculations revealed the insensitivity of social media and the trespass-

ing of a boundary. A majority of users apologised for earlier comments, and recognized what was shameful behaviour. The lack of information should have been an indicator that things were much more sensitive behind closed doors.

Whilst curiosity is inevitable, these speculations were better voiced in a closed-off space, rather than posted online for all to see. Interested parties should have theorised privately, without escalating the situation online; a public display of disrespect and criticism surrounding royal secrecy. Political and humanitarian arguments question whether the roy-

als should have been warranted privacy, despite the frenzy. Whilst transparency could prevent distrust and scandal, it is best to separate their personal lives from our political expectations. We forget that they live, as royals, as much as they work. Personally, I am not very political, but this secrecy should not affect their duties which would be completed by someone else in the meantime. I believe it would be harsh to devalue Middleton's right to privacy just because of duty and public interest. An attitude that nothing matters unless the public is satisfied and entertained raises secrecy and confidentiality questions. There are no grounds in which someone's medical history should be aired out; the public has crossed a line in their desire for know personal details.

On certain matters, there has to be total and complete transparency but for something as personal, uncontrollable, and intimate as what Kate, and her family, has experienced. There has to be a collective filter of thought amongst the rest of society. Kate Middleton and anyone, regardless of their privilege, deserves the right to come to terms with their diagnosis on their own outside of the public eye. Whilst we have speculated on matters beyond our entitlement to know, the Windsors have received some devastating news and that has to account for more than what we have given them.





# CLASH OF COMMENTS

## Semesterisation: For or Against?

FOR

**Daisy Couture**  
(she/her)



Semesterisation - one of the most contested topics of conversation around the student pub garden table (presumably only second to the Flares versus Salvos debate). Some love it, some hate it, and the ones that feel indifferent probably never showed up to their seminars anyway. Today, I would like to put forward my defence of the semester system; in my opinion, we don't show it enough love, and I think there is a very good reason for that. Most people don't like change. But I'm here to suggest that change can be a good thing! Imagine if you were still with the first person you kissed at Ziggy's during Freshers Week - what a dreadful, stomach-churning thought.

Aside from the highly important issue that my Instagram highlights can no longer follow a "term one, term two, term three" system, I do genuinely believe that semesterisation works much better for a wealth of (non-social media related) reasons.

Firstly, we are now aligned with the majority of the country's universities. The University of York was one of the last universities to adopt semesterisation, choosing to operate on a termly basis until the beginning of September 2023. This made frivolous activities such as visiting friends at other universities quite difficult; whilst they were revising for exams, you were probably sitting at home and vice versa. On a more serious but far less fun note, semesterisation also allows for better opportunities outside of university - things such as internships, placements and studies abroad. This is because the majority of outside institutions align themselves with the semester system. The downside is, of course, that you have nothing else to blame your overflowing inbox of internship rejections on.

Secondly, the academic year now ends over two weeks earlier. Last year, summer term officially ended on 23 June - this year, it ends on 7 June. Exams and assessments are held in mid-May to early June, and personally, my teaching ends on 9 May. To those who may be quick to point out that instead of one month off at Christmas and one month off at Easter, we now only get two weeks off at each, I ask

- is this really such a big deal? I know that I would rather savour an additional two weeks of summer over an additional two weeks of December. The Easter holidays were only so long last year because everybody's exams were crammed into the last few weeks of the summer term. However, with semesterisation, they're spread between January and May/June - ultimately being less stressful. Finally, we get more teaching weeks. Hear me out; this can and will be framed as a positive thing. We start back at university a week earlier than we did last year and finish for Christmas and Easter a week and a half later. We now have what

is more or less 11 teaching weeks, when we previously had nine. If you had asked me last semester as I was mentally preparing for back-to-back Tuesday morning seminars, I probably would have resented these extra weeks. But now, as I lounge in bed languorously waiting for my 11ams to roll around, I can't help but appreciate them.

I like feeling as though I'm getting (ever so slightly) more for my money. I like having an additional couple of weeks to explore an additional couple of texts. I like Week 11 which is, for my course at least, essentially a reading week. It's nice to end the academic year on a semi-relaxed note before starting the painful exam process.

I hope that you find my pro-semesterisation stance reasonable; my only advice to those who don't is to imagine how much work (rotting) and studying (procrastination) you can get done in those gorgeous additional summer weeks.

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**Ethan Reuter**  
(he/him)



York is a painfully interconnected mess at the best of times, an overwhelming nexus of people and problems that build and build over the course of a term. By the end I am simply exhausted, not quite of the academic work, hard as it can often be, but of the proximity. Everyone knows each other, for better or for worse, and everyone has a story about everyone else.

Two extra weeks at the end of term doesn't help this phenomenon. The desire to escape creeps ever closer, to home, to settled security over intellectual chaos.

This is to say nothing of the simple enjoyment of two additional weeks of holiday. The university bubble needs to be popped at some point and semesterisation only increases the time the butterfly is left in the cocoon. Two extra weeks in the sun, seeing friends, enjoying life is an inordinately better way to spend our precious time here over tedious unattended seminars.

There is also a greater, much more unassailable problem with this shift towards semesterisation that upsets the British palate. Its distinctly American texture. It reeks of the yanks across the pond. We already import a vast majority of our culture, problems, and products from the great American planet and its gravitational pull, I'd prefer to keep our holiday culture in our own hands. Simply

because we haven't been a major power since Suez, and they have, doesn't mean I want to adopt their proclivities surrounding work. British institutions of yesteryear still live by the term system for the haggard yet rakish university student. They deserve respect and praise for their commitment. Michaelmas, Hilary and Trinity are inordinately more warming terms than Semester 1 and Semester 2 with their vacation periods and week 11s. The term system should be something we cling to as a victory, pyrrhic maybe, in a greater ideological war.

The already alluded to, however, not yet elaborated on, argument has to be that of proper holidays. With semesterisation the Christmas and Easter breaks feel terse and flat, lacking in proper rest. Nobody is able to do their work and relax or relax and do their work. An unwinnable dichotomy appears where the only options fail in their duty to proper holiday conduct. There is a general rule of thumb in testing holidays, a good holiday needs to feel like a properly made cup of tea. I'll explain, I promise. It's warming, comforting, feels just like an extended break relaxing into a particularly comfy armchair and yet can also be completed next to a little spot of work sprinkled in. Disappointingly, post semesterisation edict the 'holidays' fail in this completely empirical and unfalsifiable test.

Under trusted terms the holidays achieve this magical quality. Long enough to sleep the days away and drink the evenings away with wanton abandon but also have enough time left over to occasionally stumble into an academic paper. Christmas and Easter achieve the perfect balance of ostrich-esque procrastination before finally, nearing the end of the holiday, a slight, flickering desire to come back.

Two weeks, a bit under after travel, they've barely left, you've barely turned around and they're back again. Holidays are an extension of REM sleep for the mind and under semesterisation it appears I have holiday insomnia. Didn't anyone tell those semesterisation trutheers that natural growth can only come from proper rest.

AGAINST

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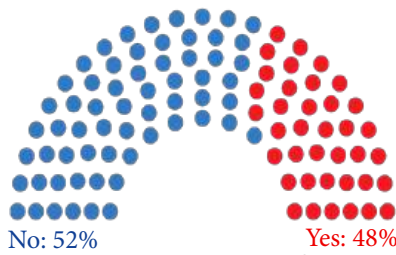
Under the weight of the exams and the emotional turmoil that comes with term two and three (no I won't call it a semester Charlie) surely it would be unbecoming of an Englishman to argue anything but a termed system.



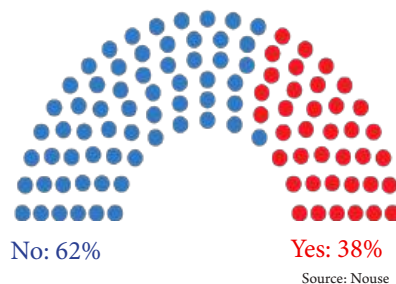
IMAGE: JASON WONG

According to the polls

Different Fees for different degrees?



Should we have Semesterisation?



**'YORK IS INCESTUOUS'**

York is an incestuous city. Everyone knows everyone. You cannot escape the web of connections. This becomes impossible when trying to gossip in public (cue 360° panoramic head turn), or when you keep bumping into that man who has played the guitar at you. With nowhere to hide, your personal life is laid bare. Anyone you have ever met has most likely heard the story (or seen) you fall out of a bus. Anyone you will meet likely knows a few more interesting tidbits about you too. It is truly a mortifying ordeal.



(she/her)  
**Heather Gosling**

**'STOP LOSING ENGLISH STUDENTS'**

What I love about English is being leached from classrooms by drastic curriculum reforms. Reading, storytelling and imagination are being replaced with tick boxes and stringent mark schemes. For students taking GCSEs this summer, it takes more analytical skills to decode the Assessment Criteria than it does to write the essays. I don't blame them for never looking back. Students aren't studying English at A-Level; even less at University. It's time to turn over a new leaf.



(she/her)  
**Emily Warner**

**'HEADPHONES ARE MICROTRENDS'**

My headphones are a lifeline, forgetting or losing them would risk a 50/50 coin flip between boredom or a breakdown. Since I bought a pair of brown Marshall IV headphones, I have noticed them everywhere in York, and now you'll be susceptible to this Baader-Meinhof phenomenon too. I have no problem with matching, infact I happen to think it's fun, but their constant sightings, I think, reflects our incessant consumption of microtrends for the sake of looking 'cool'. With the risk of sounding like an old man: when did owning a degerantre iPhone x, y, z reign over the fully-functional Android?



(she/her)  
**Maya Upmacis**



# MUSE



PHOTOGRAPHY BY LILLY TURLEY

M13 CENTRE STAGE: THE BLAZERS



FEATURES

**M4**  
**Ella Raw** and **Grace Bannister (she/her)** speak to Emmy-Award winning Foreign Correspondent Jane Ferguson

**M5**  
**Charlotte Legrand (she/her)** dissects the internet's constantly changing definition of irony and the threat it poses to authenticity on social media

**M8**  
**Antonia Shipley (she/her)** on how Taylor Swift is dominating the globe with her Eras Tour, but what does this tell us about the wider socio-economic arrangements?

**M16**  
**Grace Bannister (she/her)** interviews Oscar-Award winning film editor Joe Walker for AlumNOUSE



IMAGE: JANE FERGUSON

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ARTS

**M6**  
**Georgina Sprinddell (she/her)** reflects on the importance of art in the age of consumerism

**Elena Savvas (she/they)** commemorates the poet and filmmaker Margaret Tait

**M7**  
**Emily Stevens (she/her)** reviews unique event celebrating Shakespeare, theatre and the arts  
**Cara Doherty (she/her)** reviews Tilted Wig Productions' take on *The School for Scandal*

6

FASHION & SHOOT

**M9**  
**Raysa Allana Salim (she/her)** writes on the the summer coquette aesthetic  
**Dhuha Usman (she/her)** gives her top tips on caring for your curls and waves all season

**M10**  
**Emily Kirk (she/her)** and **Daisy Reece (she/her)**  
 April Showers, Bring May Flowers

**M11**  
**Emily Kirk (she/her)** and **Daisy Reece (she/her)**  
 Cultural Resistance: Celebrating Palestinian Art, Culture and Heritage at Norman Rea Gallery

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MUSIC

**M12**  
**Alexandra Pullen (she/her)** shares her favourite places to buy vinyls in York  
**Reuben Virk (he/him)** discusses the rise of independent artists and some deceptions made by major record labels in recent years

**M13**  
**Grace Clift** explores the history, definitions and critiques of the term 'industry plant'  
**Ellen Morris (she/her)** chats to 'the sexiest soul band in York', The Blazers

12



IMAGE: CHUFF MEDIA

FILM & TV

**M14**  
**Vanessa Romero (she/her)** discussed Switzerland in film

**M15**  
**James Lapping (he/him)** raves about Disney's groundbreaking new animated series, *Iwájú*  
**Adelaide Maddison (she/her)** examines the cult classic, *La Haine*, three decades after its release

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GAMING

**M17**  
**Tasha Acres (she/her)** investigates the importance of immersive worldbuilding for video game success

**Joe Richards (he/him)** explains why *Street Fighter 6* is the perfect introduction to fighting games

16



IMAGE: ROCKSTAR GAMES PRESSKIT

TRAVEL

**M18**  
**Issy Armstrong (she/her)** explores the fossils to be found as a beginner fossil hunter on Whitby's beaches

**Emma Staples (she/her)** reveals her favourite places to walk and explore in Cumbria

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FOOD & DRINK

**M19**  
**Grace Clift (she/her)** speaks to wine expert Catherine Fielden

**Grace Clift (she/her)** uncovers the controversies around the world's largest food and drink company, Nestle



IMAGE: ANDRÉ KARWATHA

19

CREATIVE WRITING

**M20**  
**Interview:**  
**Adelaide Maddison** speaks to **Jessica Andrews**, author of *Saltwater* and *Milkteeth*

**Poetry:**  
 'Blue Valley Avenue' **Aun Haider**  
 'Hysteria Husky' **Vanessa Romero**  
 'To Decay Jean' **Akintoye**  
 'Ode to Chalk' **Jean Akintoye**

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PUZZLES

**M21**  
 Sudoku

WordWheel

Crossword

Guess the Film

21



# THE EDITORS RELIVE THEIR *NOUSE* HIGHLIGHTS

ORLA MCANDREW (SHE/HER) AND EMILY WARNER (SHE/HER) SHARE THEIR FAVOURITE MEMORIES OF NOUSE AS EDITORS

**Orla**  
Features will always hold a special place in my heart. Second year Orla walked into the Physics lecture theatre with a speech on a scrap of paper and a lot of nerves. Stepping up as Features Editor was a dream come true, writing about Sappho, Grief, and interviewing various societies - it was a whirlwind but a lot of fun.

2024. He was my greatest cheerleader and quite honestly *Nouse's* biggest fan, always checking in with how lay-up was going and sending me article suggestions (usually for the Sports section because I always felt most lost with that). Grief is strange, (and all the other cliches you can think of) but it is something that will stay with me forever. Balancing being Editor/President of a soci-



A true highlight of my first year with *Nouse* was joining Emily and Chris as Roses Lead, it was a manic weekend, live-blogging a lot of sports that I didn't understand the rules of (top tip for Roses is just stand next to people that seem to know what they are talking about and rephrase what they say). But it allowed me to fully immerse myself in the student media community - which, lets be honest, is the best one!

Jumping from Features Editor to Editor-in-Chief was incredibly daunting. Adding to that none of our computers were working for laying up the Freshers' Edition - it was a tricky start. I will be forever grateful for Dhuha, Emily, and Ellen. We pulled a lot of long days in that office but it was so worth it when the paper arrived. Then we managed to give out almost all of our copies at Freshers' Fair! Even so I still had nightmares about no-one turning up to our Welcome Talk.

Thankfully they did, so much so that we ran out of seats and had rows of people standing in the back. One of my goals was getting new writers and we ended Freshers week with just under 100 members and countless people signed up for InDesign tutorials. Me and InDesign still have a complex relationship but I'd like to think we have a mutual understanding (read as I fear InDesign and say so many prayers every time I use it).

First semester was a blur of print editions, office move meetings and various different online articles - and of course a winter formal to celebrate it all. I am so proud of everyone I got to work with and you know what, I'm really proud of myself.

My year with *Nouse* will be forever marked by losing my dad in January

ety, along with third year, is so much work, but whether you want to be Editor of *Nouse* (which you should), or head of another society, it is so worth it. It is an experience that you will only really get at university, and usually your fellow committee members will become some of your closest friends, trust yourself and trust that you can do it.

**Emily**

When I walked into my first *Nouse* election - a terrified first-year, thinking *Nouse* was pronounced 'noose' - I couldn't have foreseen where the next three years would take me. First as Arts Editor, and then as Muse Editor, this year has felt like a caffeine-induced sprint to the end of my dissertation, punctuated by print editions and a trip to Bristol. It's also been filled with moments of immense pride and gratitude for all the wonderful memories I have made along the way. The highlight of my year has to be when *Muse* lay-up coincided with the Christian Union free coffee event. That big, white tent that landed in the middle of Greg's Place felt like a gift from God. Considering the number of times I went back for another americano, I'm shocked I wasn't a convert by the end of the week. I was particularly grateful for a warm cup of coffee that week thanks to the sub-zero temperature of the *Nouse* office. If next year's committee learns anything from that experience, it's to never give up. Three phone calls to campus maintenance and one strongly worded email is all it took to finally secure some portable heaters. I'm putting that on my CV.

I have also had the opportunity to speak with some fascinating people this year, both for articles and on the radio. Most recently, I interviewed Dr Abi Perrin about the

University's response to the climate crisis which was an inspiring conversation (you can read this interview in the Comment section). On the radio, I spoke to the Director of York International Shakespeare Festival, Philip Parr, Marc Godfrey-Murphy, a freelance artist and animator and Juliet Forster, Creative Director of York Theatre Royal (thanks to Lucy's expert interview-sourcing skills). All of these amazing individuals have connected me to a rich artistic and cultural community in York; one which I will be sad to leave.

Several weeks ago, we moved offices and I can't say this was a highlight. When I became the Muse Editor I most definitely did not sign up to do manual labour. My noodle arms carrying heavy boxes is a recipe for disaster. What was more of a highlight however, has been doing my final print lay-up in the new office, complete with kettle, fridge and a window that opens (I know right, you can tell we're living in the 21st century).

Lastly, I have to end with the SPA Journalism Awards where *Muse* was Highly Commended for the Best Specialist Publication Award. My journey to Bristol was rough - seven hours on a bus - but once I arrived, it was worth the leg cramp. After sitting through hours of awards (and consuming a lot of free wine), *Muse's* win was well-deserved and is testament to everyone's hard work this year. I couldn't have asked for a better committee. At the conference, three days of talks, panels and workshops from journalists reminded me why I do this, and meeting student journalists from across the country reminded me that we aren't alone. Journalism is a community, and that is the most important thing I will take away from my time as Muse Editor.

If I had three tips for next year's committee, they would be: go to socials, if only to save Tom the embarrassment of sitting in a pub with me, Orla and nobody else again (not that we didn't have a fabulous time briefing him on the lesbian experience). Secondly, leave plenty of time for final checks before



submitting a print edition to save yourself from the calamity that was our Freshers' Supplement. Lasty, enjoy it. *Nouse* is, from my entirely objective viewpoint, the best society you can be part of and being the Muse Editor has been the greatest privilege of my time in York.

## EDITORS' NOTE



### EMILY WARNER (SHE/HER) AND ELLEN MORRIS (SHE/HER)

**Emily:**

This is it - the final print edition of *Muse* this year! It's also my final print edition ever as *Muse* Editor, and it's hard to know where to begin with this Editor's Note. Running for the *Nouse* committee in my first year was the best decision I made during my time at University: I had no idea how many memories and experiences it would give me, how many late nights in the office, delirious moments on InDesign and hours spent on a bus to Bristol (which was many). Those are things which may be less tangible than a degree certificate, but are infinitely more valuable.

A huge congratulations to everyone who has participated in this print edition: writers, editors, illustrators, photographers and puzzle-makers. It always amazes me how vast and diverse the talent of our *Muse* committee is. It's been such a pleasure to work with you all and I shall miss that community next year (although I am secretly hoping I might be invited back for an AlumNOUSE interview). I also want to thank everyone for their dedication and organisation: it has certainly made balancing *Muse* Editor with my dissertation far easier.

Despite feeling sad to leave, I am also confident that *Muse* is in good hands. I promise not to be one of those graduates who hangs around their University society forever like an unwanted ghost, but I am excited to see what Alex and Heather do with it next year. I will be sure to check in with the *Nouse* website every now and then. Who can resist a bit of York University gossip after all?

As I move on to the next chapter in my life, I will take with me everything I learnt from this year. And with that, I sign off as *Muse* Editor and hand over to next year's committee - best of luck to you all!

**Ellen:**

I have absolutely loved being Deputy Editor of *Muse* this year; it has brought me so much joy, so many memories, and some of my closest friendships at York. It is deeply rewarding to see all our articles come together, especially in print. The current team in *Muse* are so hardworking, passionate, and will always be keen to lend a hand; we would not be here, let alone successful without all of them.

This year was so amazing for *Muse*! We won Highly Commended for Best Specialist Publication at the SPA National Awards. This was pretty unexpected - we sat at our table, (post-butternut squash soup, gnocchi, and cheesecake) having consumed 5 bottles of complimentary wine between us. It was nearing the end of the night, when our names were called, and all 13 of us galavanted to the stage in various levels of tipsiness. It was a lovely trip and I look forward to doing it again next year with some new faces!

Next year, if all goes to plan, I will be re-elected as Editor-In-Chief, taking over from the great work of Orla and Nadia. I am so excited, and looking forward to something new. Although I am sad to leave my child, *Muse*, I am so excited for Alex and Heather to take over the roles of Emily and I. They are so amazing so make sure to get involved in *Nouse* and *Muse* next year if you are still around.

If you are graduating or leaving us behind, thank you so much for reading and we will see you again soon.





# ALUMNOUSE: THE EMMY-AWARD WINNING JANE FERGUSON

ELLA RAW AND GRACE BANNISTER (SHE/HER) INTERVIEW FOREIGN CORRESPONDENT FOR PBS NEWSHOUR

As war and conflict fall into rotation on the front pages, read with breakfast from the comfort of our homes, it is perhaps interesting to consider the individuals reporting on such conflicts: the risks they take, what drives them, and how they have found themselves in an unstable, tumultuous environment and career. *Nouse* had the opportunity to sit down with Jane

Ferguson, an Emmy Award winning, current foreign correspondent for *PBS NewsHour*, albeit on a Zoom call that bridged across the Atlantic. Jane has also worked for *CNN*, as a contributory writer for *The New Yorker*, as well as recently authoring a memoir about her impressive career

“ So the fact that I found myself in the Middle East at 23 was quite startling. It was a great surprise

that has spanned across the US, and the Middle East. We spoke with Jane about her time at York, as well as her experience as a foreign correspondent.

Though Jane didn't include much on her university experience in her memoir, *No Ordinary Assignment*, we spoke to her about her involvement in student journalism at *York Vision*, in addition to her English Literature and Politics degree.

Jane: “My degree felt like this thing I had to do before I could go off and do what I really wanted to do, which was to become a journalist.”

We spoke to Jane about graduating mid-financial crash and her constant rejection in search of a job. She told us how walking into London networks asking for a job was met with “I'm laying off 500 people this year.”

In 2007 she graduated from York before travelling to Yemen to study Arabic.



IMAGE: JANE FERGUSON

Jane: “So the fact that I found myself in the Middle East at 23 was quite startling. It was a great surprise, but it was me trying to make the best of a challenging situation, which was the financial crisis. And I went to Yemen because I couldn't get a job and I just didn't know what to do.” However, Jane's fascination with the Middle East started well before her move to Yemen. Only 17 at the time of 9/11, Jane saw a war-centred transformation of the news and media.

Growing up in Northern Ireland during the Troubles, Jane was no stranger to conflict and religious divisions, this gave her a genuine desire to understand the human-experience of conflict in the Middle East, rather than just the perpetual “bang, bang” headlines of popular news.

After spending time at an Arabic School in Yemen, Jane returned to the UK to discover the

prospects of finding employment in journalism ill-improved. She quickly moved to Dubai, joining the English-language paper *Gulf News* as an assistant Sports Editor. Knowing more about flak jackets and combat boots than bats and balls, Jane explained to us that “it really wasn't my dream job living in Dubai and living this fancy life”.

Jane pitched herself for a war and conflict foreign posting in the Middle East to the senior editor's desk at *Gulf News*, but was met with confusion and a “why would you want to go there?”.

Meanwhile a climactic presidential elec-



IMAGE: JANE FERGUSON

tion was taking place in Afghanistan. Unable to watch helplessly, Jane booked a flight, walked into the *Gulf News* office and asked to take her accumulated paid leave; omitting the fact that this was actually to independently report on the presidential election and consequent violence.

This experience highlighted to her what the real work of a war reporter should be: gathering stories from civilian victims and revealing the human-effects and catastrophes resulting from war. As a more experienced foreign correspondent, Jane reflects on this now: her ability to provide a “loudspeaker” to share the aspects of war more often neglected by the media.

But Jane still has doubts over the wider purpose of her work, unable to help the people directly in front of her.

Ella: “In your book you talk a lot about the feeling of physical helplessness, and the idea of the nobility of war journalism. I was wondering if you could talk more about that feeling, because it is quite interesting.”

Jane: “I do feel that it's very hard to be in situations where people are in such dire need, and I'm taking notes...I'm standing here with my notebook, you know, and everybody else is doing something much more helpful. Deep down, I believe wholeheartedly in journalism, and I know that many of these situations would be significantly worse if there weren't eyeballs on what's going on in the world.”

Ella: “Everyone watches TV and sees the UNICEF adverts of children who are dealing with famine and being filmed, and sometimes you wonder about the person on the other side of the camera, what it must be like for them.”

Jane: “You know, I'm witness to the worst day of people's lives a lot of the time. And I remember a colleague of mine, who actually works at *The Times* in London, put it much, much better. She said, you know, yes, we're helping peo-

ple, sort of, but I can't help this one person who's standing in front of me. That's a really very difficult reality to be faced with.”

Describing what she calls an “emotional salve”, Jane explained that she is reassured by the work of others: from humanitarian workers, to field doctors and nurses. However, remember-

ing the long-term importance of war journalism conducted by foreign correspondents, also matters, especially when famine and humanitarian crises are predominantly man-made; a direct result of war and conflict. However, feeling like a note-taker is not the only challenge journalists like Jane encounter.

Where people might assume that field reporting in the Middle East has more obvious challenges for female journalists, the corporate world isn't without its smoke-filled, hairsprayed rooms. Having reported from the firing lines in Afghanistan, Syria and Yemen, to the sterile hostility found in the corporate offices in New York, London and Dubai, Jane had some comments on the perceived challenges of working in both environments.

Grace: “You mentioned a lot in your book about being a female journalist and reporting in the Middle East, often you were with an all male team. Could you expand on any challenges you faced as a result?”

Jane: “People say, oh my gosh, it must be so hard to work in those conservative countries as a woman, it must be. But it never threatened my ability to do my job. And they often think that it's the Afghans or the Iraqis or the Lebanese for whom this becomes an issue.

But predominantly, in terms of how it impacts my life, in terms of pressures, in terms of the decisions I have to make, the gender issue is more of a challenge in television, in the industry, at a corporate level than it ever really was in the field. A man in a corporate position, those people can make your life harder than people in the street in Baghdad, who are usually incredibly friendly and lovely.”

Jane: “You know, I'm just trying to, in the book, put forward a very honest account of my life on the road, and being a woman was just a part of that. I really didn't want to write the book about being a female journalist, I really didn't want to entrench a sense of gender identity that was like a grievance. ... For me, what has been really interesting is watching the gender conversation change so much over the years. Things are improving, but you know, ten, 15 years ago it mattered. All the networks were run by men and the executive suites, and those at the very top were men. The reality was it mattered what you looked like. It was a very insipid part of TV because nobody would call you up and be like, well, babe, you didn't get it because ‘such and such’ got the job because they're just spectacularly good looking. And no one really openly talked about looks. It was all just very much inferred. And then you would simply look on, watch the TV and be like, well, okay, I can see maybe where the differentiator was there. And that's incredibly hard to deal with in your twenties, when you're young and you are trying to build confidence and trying to believe that you're going to be assessed on your skills and experience.”

Grace: “You've talked a lot about the challenges and hurdles of being a female reporter especially at a corporate level, but you also have access to all female zones that your male coworkers just simply wouldn't have access to, particularly in the Middle East. So, do you feel that there are also advantages to being a female war correspondent?”

Jane: “Tons of advantages. Tons. You know, I can build relationships with women in really

You know, I'm witness to the worst day of people's lives a lot of the time.

conservative countries. I've had extraordinary experiences, both personal and professional with women in the region, and I'm always overwhelmed with how women kind of enveloped me. You know very often I can get into rooms with powerful men, unfortunately, that's a reality, you know, the military commander, the most senior politicians, they tend to be men, but I get to be in that room too, but I also get to be in



IMAGE: JANE FERGUSON

rooms filled with women.

And, I always say this to younger women: never underestimate what an advantage you're at by being underestimated. You know, I've gone through international borders and not been questioned because I'm not seen as threatening to a lot of people.”

Grace: “You've had so many interesting encounters throughout your career, is there a civilian encounter that you've had with someone that's really stuck out to you?”

Jane: “Oh, gosh. So many encounters, you know, I just, I think that for me, I've been lucky enough to be able to profile people who I think really embody something about what's happening in a country, and really embody the inner struggle. I always try to remind viewers and readers that war is experienced on a personal level... I've loved doing this, finding someone to profile and then returning to them. A gynaecologist in Afghanistan, a female gynaecologist, one of the most senior doctors in the country: Dr Shefajo. She was a pioneer for improving women's



reproductive health in Afghanistan, and she had this incredible clinic in Kabul that she'd built from scratch. I remember being so struck by the fact that when the Taliban rolled in on August 15, 2021, Dr. Shefajo went to work. You know, she did not try to flee the country because she was like, well, I had women who were due to give birth that day. Her story just really embodied so much of what conflict does to people, but also the sense of sacrifice of that second generation."

Ella: "Is she still in Afghanistan now?"

Jane: "My understanding is that she is."

Ella: "You've been to Kabul in Afghanistan in 2014 and 2021 when the US pulled out, and you've been to Yemen quite a few times. I was wondering if you could explain how it feels to visit a country for the second or the third time after it has gone through such drastic changes since you were last there."

Jane: "I would say that Yemen and Afghanistan were the two real threads throughout my career. I first went to Yemen in 2008, and I first went to Afghanistan in 2009 as a very young cub print reporter for a regional paper in the Middle East. A place gets under your skin and you come to love it, you come to be fascinated by it, it's very rewarding to know a place.

And while it's very, very hard, it's wonderful to go back to a place again and again and again. Because you're staying with the story and by this stage, let's be honest, you're really invested in it personally and professionally. You come to love a place and you come to watch it change, which

unfortunately can break your heart. Yemen in particular, it was heartbreaking, because Yemen had a really devastating decade. It was very heartbreaking to be there as people were starving and war had gripped the country. Watching a place decline, you know, I reflect on this a lot at the end of my book that it's been hard, all the places I've made home: Yemen, Afghanistan, and Lebanon, I've watched them really, really struggle."

When reading Jane's book, something that really struck us was her ability to maintain a professional composure when interviewing some of the most extremist groups and individuals, like the Taliban.

Grace: "You now report on countries with wars often fueled by extremist religious groups. Obviously, professionally, it's unbelievable to speak with the Taliban, for example. But do you find it difficult on a personal level?"

Jane: "Well, you know, I think that you have to bring to journalism, fundamentally, a curiosity about the world. I think it's very important that we replace moralism with curiosity to be professional journalists. I just want to understand. I really want to understand because I know, coming from Northern Ireland, that so many of the divisions are only on the surface religious. A lot of it is social. A lot of it is class. You look under the surface in Afghanistan, yes, there is religion, everyone is Muslim, but, there are differences in terms of religious practices, there's also a huge ethnic conflict going on in Afghanistan underneath that. So, trying to understand and having a genuine curiosity, that's how I approach these

things. And I try to take emotion and morality out of it and ask questions in good faith. I really want to understand the motivating factors and where the mistrust comes from and the history of it all."

Having reported on conflicts that consume people's lunch break conversations, and dinner-time debates, it's easy to imagine that her journey to this position has been all smooth-sailing. Jane's response - "Once you've reached a certain level of success in your career everyone presumes everything up until that point was a choice. Like I came out of college and I was like, well, which network will I work at? No one sees you banging on doors and failing and getting rejected again and again and again."

Grace: "What would be your advice to students or people wanting to pursue journalism and foreign correspondence?"

Jane: "I get asked a lot by young people, you know, will you mentor me? Or, could you help me? But very often the younger generation are really just asking you to open your Rolodex, and call your editor, and get their piece published. And I totally get it; I was the same. But if you get a veteran reporter in front of you, ask them to help you get better at what you do. Ask them to look at your writing and give you feedback. Ask them to look at your on-camera work and give you feedback on that. Ask them for advice. You know, I think in an era where it's about followers and a social media presence, and contacts, a lot of people get a little distracted by the game of the career. You know, they can lose sight of the fact that your strongest selling points over the

years is going to be how good you are at what you do. Always keep in mind that, ultimately, you're going to be successful if you are undeniably brilliant at what you do."

Always keep in mind that, ultimately, you're going to be successful if you are undeniably brilliant at what you do."

Thanks so much to Jane Ferguson for taking part in the AlumNouse series. Many thanks also to Shane Tan who managed our correspondence with Jane. If you would like to learn more about Jane's incredible life, read her memoir *No Ordinary Assignment* available to purchase online. To follow her war reporting and journalistic endeavours follow her X (formerly Twitter) @JaneFerguson5, Instagram @janiefeg, or visit her website <https://www.journalistjaneferguson.com/>.

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

# THE IRONY OF IRONY: GEN Z SCARED OF SHOWING SINCERITY?

CHARLOTTE LEGRAND (SHE/HER) DISSECTS THE INTERNET'S CONSTANTLY CHANGING DEFINITION OF IRONY, ITS SIGNIFICANCE WITHIN ONLINE HUMOUR AND THE THREAT IT POSES TO AUTHENTICITY ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The term 'irony' has become an internet synonym for doing something as a joke: being aware of how embarrassing something is, but doing it anyway. Sticking a 'live, laugh, love' plaque on the fridge becomes hilarious if done 'ironically', inadvertently making fun of those who would genuinely live by the sign's mantra. However, this new definition marks a shift away from the original meaning of 'irony', leading to confusion about who and what can be deemed ironic. It also exposes Gen Z's obsession with self-awareness as a shield against embarrassment - begging the question, what makes sincerity so scary?

So much of Gen Z culture relies upon an awareness of a complex web of inside jokes, an often exclusive collective generational humour communicated across the internet. Social media's mass accessibility has made the development of a 'type' of anti-humour increasingly rapid and bizarre, shrouded in layers of irony. The most superficial is sarcasm - saying the opposite of what you mean. This play on expectations and convention is true to the traditional dictionary definition of irony. The next layer is post-irony, when irony becomes genuine again. For example, enjoyment of a trashy reality TV show could be post-ironic - beginning as a lighthearted opportunity for sarcastic critique, and, seven seasons later, ending in genuine enjoyment. The final, Gen Z originating layer, is meta-irony. Purposefully awkward, meta-irony involves difficult to determine irony, intent on leaving the audience confused, almost concerned. Gen Z's use of emojis has become an example of this. The most popular emoji across 75 countries, the "face with tears of joy", used to be a genuine reaction to a hilarious message - provoking uncontrollable laughter to the point of crying. However, its use has developed into a

reply of sarcastic gloating, mocking the humour of those who would use the emoji 'unironically'. In a complex context of inside jokes and multiple-layered irony, it's becoming increasingly difficult to determine the intent and effect of Gen Z's humour.

As a result of meta-irony's purposefully induced confusion, social media comment sections are often filled with debates around the ironic nature of content. "Please say this is ironic" has replaced "Is this a joke?" or "Are you serious?" in demanding intent from the content's creator. In response, internet users have popularised tone indicators - a shorthand way of conveying tone at the end of a sentence, combatting misinterpretation. For example, "/s" indicates that a sentence has been written with a serious intention, or "/j" indicates a joke. Tone indicators have also been widely shut down as killing humour's spontaneity as not knowing a joke's intent often makes it funnier. However, neurodivergent people have found tone indicators particularly helpful in preventing miscommunication - limiting misunderstandings be-

It also exposes Gen Z's obsession with self-awareness as a shield against embarrassment

tween different interpretations of tone. Despite attempts to break down the unlimited layers of irony and inside jokes, Gen Z humour prides itself on its exclusivity and confusion.

In addition, as with most contemporary internet trends, brands and celebrities have attempted to fit themselves into Gen Z's new definitions of irony. Public figures have 'ironically' manipulated unintended mocking attention and misinterpreted campaigns. The Kardashian empire is particularly fond of reclaiming and rebranding awkward moments as opportunities for positive publicity, leaving their audience questioning if it was part of their calculated marketing strategy all along. For example, Kylie Jenner's tuneful "rise and shine" song, sung to wake her daughter as part of her YouTube office tour, resulted in a collection of hoodies with "rise &" and "shine" branded across both sleeves. More recently, Kendall Jenner's embarrassing attempt to cut a cucumber on The Kardashians amounted to her 'ironic' cucumber Halloween costume, which racked up over 20 million views on TikTok.

Using irony as a publicity flipping tool exposes the extent to which celebrities intricately fine-tune their public image, planting an image of false sincerity. However, shrouding genuine intent in irony also makes way for problematic scapegoats of responsibility. Irony has become a mask for harmful trends: engaging in derogatory humour, promoting disordered habits or justifying a bad attitude as being done 'ironically', ridding the blame of bad intent. The 'if you know, you know' attitude of Gen Z humour protects dangerous content creators - if you're offended, you just 'don't get it'. However, can the internet's fascination with irony be a tool for good? By engaging in self-improvement such as waking up early, going on runs, and eating a bal-

anced diet in an 'ironic' way, Gen Z are genuinely forming healthy habits. When the 'it girl' lifestyles of daily yoga and organic green diets seem laughably unattainable, engaging in small acts of wellness as a joke is a logical, albeit unconventional, solution. "Fake it till you make it" has be-



IMAGE CREDIT: GUSTAVO FRING

come "do it ironically until it becomes genuine". However, why is a generation that so strongly demands transparency from brands and public figures so embarrassed of showing sincerity? The new definitions of irony exacerbate the age-old need to present yourself as "cool" and "different" online, more all-encompassing than ever with social media's constant surveillance. The sarcastic layers of meta-irony have reached their limit, with Gen Z humour's pride in confusion becoming a harmful scapegoat for responsibility. By breaking down the exclusivity of internet culture, creators will no longer be able to hide behind a shield of "irony" - making way for true sincerity.



# READING OLIVIA LAING: ART, CONSUMERISM AND SOCIAL CHANGE

GEORGINA SPRIDDELL (SHE/HER) REFLECTS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF ART IN THE AGE OF CONSUMERISM

At my school, in an activity called Enrichment, we were often taken to the local art-galleries on Friday afternoons in an attempt to help us to engage with the timeless. By adhering to the belief of the early twentieth century educational philosopher Charlotte Mason that education is an “atmosphere, a discipline, a life”, the use of visual thinking strategies my teachers encouraged us to use as we examined various art across the years has stuck with me. We didn’t have to like what we saw, but encouragement to ask why, and how, a piece was the way it was inspired an engagement that was more than mere passive consumption. Engendering discussions surrounding what constitutes the beautiful and the good in art, and art as human experience is something that now, I am increasingly passionate about – probably thanks to being encouraged to ask “why?” from a young age.

Our age is ubiquitously digital, there is no

escaping or pretending otherwise. Longing for a bygone past where we “never had it so good,” is unproductive. Nevertheless, the impact that social media and excessive popular consumption thereof has had on the portrayal, and reciprocal reception, of art is undeniable in its majorly pejorative form. Yes, we now have immediate access to material – but has this dulled the way we interpret art?

In John Berger’s *Ways of Seeing*, he discusses that post-Renaissance European practice transforms everything into a commodity – exchangeable in nature – a proof of status within mindless transactions. In the same way, social media has dulled our senses of inquisition. You may have seen the videos of tourists in the Salles des États at the Louvre, phones outstretched with eyes on their screens gathering round the Mona Lisa. They disregard the other works surrounding them, not really even paying attention to the Da Vinci itself, but

desperate to get that photo for their Instagram stories. Consumerism without consideration is present even before our most priceless pieces of art.

Olivia Laing, an art critic and writer published *The Lonely City* in 2016, an account of their relationship with New York City and the artists it produced – Andy Warhol, Edward Hopper, David Wojnarowicz, and Vivian Maier among others. In their own words, Laing describes *The Lonely City* as “a journey through purgatory, the frozen state of alienation and isolation epitomised by the 21st century city.” Laing weaves a semi-biographical account of these artists into the frame of their own time in the city, revealing small parts of their struggles with the concept of urban-induced loneliness in ones’ twenties.

Laing does not always write on art, but most of their essays have an autobiographical echo to them. In their piece ‘Funny Weather – Art in an Emergency’, Laing opens up a discourse on how art can be a talking point amongst different communities as well as a place of comfort in dire situations. In their focus on David Wojnarowicz, who succumbed to AIDS in 1992, the point of art needing to be uncomfortable in form to generate more honest introspection really stood out to me. For art to truly be powerful, one must be able to find a piece of oneself within it. Laing argues that we have become disconnected from really engaging with art in our post-modern landscape.

Galleries are becoming conscious that in order to regain this connection between visitors and art, that there does need to be some sort of hook for their exhibitions – normally by

aligning with trending issues. The Director of the National Portrait Gallery, Nicolas Cullinan, has said with regard to the gallery’s recent renovations that there is increasing awareness, and even anxiety, over the relevance of many of their

“ For art to truly be powerful, one must be able to find a piece of oneself within it.

paintings in today’s cultural-political landscape. Whether or not you agree with curating art in an issue-centered way, the debates sparked through this organisational method have encouraged critical engagement nonetheless.

In an age dominated by consumerism, Olivia Laing’s writing stands as a poignant reminder of the value of introspection and emotional resonance in art. After all, it is only when examination of ourselves has occurred that we can begin to discuss the liberation of the same. The culture of commercial value and digital addiction has been a detriment to critical observation, but one can only hope that with curatorial shifts, art will be viewed for its own sake, and for what it can do for our development, rather than that which looks good on social media.



# A RE-PORTRAIT OF GA: MEMORIES OF MARGARET TAIT

ELENA SAVVAS (SHE/THEY) COMMEMORATES THE POET AND FILMMAKER 25 YEARS AFTER HER DEATH

The 25th anniversary of the death of Scottish cinema’s eclectic grandma was marked on 16 April 2024. For those who don’t know, Margaret Tait was a Scottish doctor of medicine, filmmaker, poet and conservationist, whose dedication to each field persistently manifested in all of her output, despite the practice. Her vast career in medicine financed her poetry, which narrated her films, which captured the landscapes that bled into her impassioned conservationism. Tait’s oeuvre is both expansive and over-looked: in 2021 the BFI named her “one of avant-garde film’s best-kept secrets.” So, what type of films did she make?

Tait is oftenboxed into the Neorealist movement, as the lives of her family, community builders and local wildlife often inhabit her perennial lens, sans plot or script. However, her sequencing of shots, post-impressionist movements

from small details to larger landscapes, and layering of poetry upon celluloid places her between the boundaries of the real and the surreal. In 2022, the VOID gallery in Derry curated a selection of her filmography for an exhibition entitled ‘Being in a Place’. This encapsulates Tait’s cinema: between her photographic emulsions of real space, the spectator can feel something beyond the landscape itself. A sense of home, a depth of meaning, perhaps, a familiarity.

Her most famous film comes from 1952: *A Portrait of Ga*. Both personal and mesmeric, *A Portrait of Ga* is a short documentary about Tait’s mother. Only so many words can capture the affect felt through the passage of these four minutes, so do go and watch it. Obviously, Tait reflects on her upbringing and homeland, capturing her mother’s habits, the cut of her clothes, her means of movement, and her constant smoking. The film brings portraiture beyond the two-dimensional, with its voiceover revealing her connec-

tion to the landscape (and its inhabitants) on which she grew up. Her flitting between images, ever so slow, is inseparable from the movement of her poetry, as breaths, rhythms and sentiments become visual as well as aural. This connection to location reminded me of my own photography practice, and so I offer my own work as a recreation of ‘Margaret’s Portrait’: a portrait to remember her cinematic presence.

Inspired by Tait’s visual imagery, I have devised a photo-narrative of my hometown. From the overhanging trees of the Hertfordshire countryside, to the distant moon, to the feeling of the swarming lights from behind a window, I began to piece together a notably disconnected feeling of home. Tait’s endearment for the landscape and her subjects echoes through her body of work, yet an abstracted sense of detachment still hits the spectator in the face, as according to streams of reviews anyway.

This speaks to my strained relationship with the place in which I grew up. Tait repeatedly angles her camera from below, allowing for landscapes to tower over her spectators rather than invite them in. Markedly, she also forefronts a sense of movement in her hand-held sequences, reminding us that we are perceiving the world through the biased eyes of the filmmaker, rather than forming candid connections to the space ourselves. Despite the indisputable beauty of Tait’s filmmaking, she consistently places a barrier between spectator and landscape: a window, a slanted angle, a jolted movement, a degraded perspective. Most notably, the camera itself stands between the audience and Tait’s Scottish highlands, just as it stands between me and my hometown as

I reflect on my landscape portraiture from the confines of York city walls. I find myself feeling fond for the place I dread to return to. Sometimes a level of disconnect can forge a sense of connection once lost. Rest in Peace Margaret Tait.

IMAGE: ELENA SAVVAS



IMAGE: ELENA SAVVAS



IMAGE: ELENA SAVVAS



IMAGE: ELENA SAVVAS





# REVIEW: THE VISUAL SHAKESPEARE PROJECT COMES TO YORK

EMILY STEVENS (SHE/HER) REVIEWS UNIQUE EVENT CELEBRATING SHAKESPEARE, THEATRE AND THE ARTS

As an English Literature student, I am of course no stranger to William Shakespeare. However, I have never experienced his work explored in such a unique way. This event, part of The Visual Shakespeare Project, opened my eyes to the importance of making the arts more interdisciplinary.

The corridor leading up to the entrance to the event was lined with easels displaying beautiful paintings. I immediately recognised several of Shakespeare's plays, including *Hamlet*, *King Lear* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. At this point, I was unaware of how these paintings would fit into the event, but soon all would be revealed.

The event featured artist Iain Will, actors Rodolphe Fonty, Chelsea LeSage and Christopher Commander, and Shakespeare Society, who all came together to create an immersive event celebrating Shakespeare's work. Helena Cox, the first University Art Curator, opened the event by informing the audience about art projects around campus such as the exhibitions in the Spring Lane Building and the infamous 'Long Biology' art trail.

Cox then handed over to Rodolphe Fonty, who explained the vision behind the Visual Shakespeare Project. The project hopes to unite the visual and performing arts to celebrate the plays of William Shakespeare. Rodolphe then began an interview with Iain Will, the artist behind the paintings I had seen on my way in.

The audience learned that each of Iain's paintings conflate many different scenes from a Shakespeare play in order to create a canvas that encapsulates the full story. In this way, looking at his paintings is a theatrical experience of

sorts. But the part of Iain's process I found most interesting is that he paints his Shakespearean figures live after seeing the play performed. Therefore, each painting not only captures Shakespeare's script, but also a specific performance witnessed by the artist. The poses portrayed in paint were actually struck in real life during a performance. I found this concept fascinating, and Iain's paintings are strikingly vivid as a result.

Next, Fonty gave a short lecture about art and ekphrasis in Shakespeare, which I found particularly interesting. His talk was punctuated by readings from Shakespeare, one of which was from *Hamlet*, given by Christopher Commander, a theatre actor. His performance was excellent, as was the following scene from *Timon of Athens* acted by Rodolphe and Jack Mackay.

During the brief interval, the audience were encouraged to return to the foyer to examine Iain's paintings again. After hearing Iain's talk, I could appreciate the structure of his art much more. On first inspection, the paintings are all so well thought-out that I hadn't noticed they are actually a collage of scenes from each play. But as I looked at them with fresh eyes, I could pick out the different elements of the plays I am familiar with. Iain's art is an entire performance captured on one canvas.

In the second half, the audience witnessed performances from various Shakespeare plays by Rodolphe, Christopher and various members of Shakespeare Society. Whilst we watched the performances, Iain was sketching the scene, his progress projected up onto the big screen. In this way, we witnessed first hand the process Iain undertakes when creating a painting. I par-

ticularly enjoyed Act I, Scene 7 from *Macbeth*, performed by Nick Clark and Freya Leadbetter, who truly embodied their characters. And of course, I can't forget Rodolphe and Christopher's hilarious rendition of a section of *Henry V*. Their performances as Princess Katherine of France and her lady-in-waiting Alice had me and everyone else in fits of laughter – no mean feat when the entire scene is in French!

During each performance, Iain displayed his painting of the corresponding play in the background. Combined with his live drawing of the actors, the audience witnessed live before our eyes the aim of The Visual Shakespeare Project: to unite the visual and performing arts. Bringing together these two disciplines, which tend to be seen as entirely separate, was incredibly effective.

As I walked out of the event into the brisk night air, I knew the event had given me an entirely new perspective on Shakespeare. I am used to studying the language

of his plays, yet Iain, Rodolphe and the other contributors highlighted the significance of the visual side to theatre. 'Shakespeare in Words and Pictures' left me considering the importance of uniting different aspects of the arts, rather than dividing them up.

Writer's Note: 'Shakespeare in Words and Pictures' took place on 18 April 2024 as part of The Visual Shakespeare Project.



IMAGE: EMILY STEVENS

# REVIEW: THE SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL AT YORK THEATRE ROYAL

CARA DOHERTY (SHE/HER) REVIEWS TILTED WIG PRODUCTIONS' TAKE ON RICHARD SHERIDAN'S COMEDY

Any English Literature student at the University of York would surely gasp with horror to hear that I willingly chose to see Richard Brinsley Sheridan's 1777 comedy *The School for Scandal*, what with its infamy as one of the most hated compulsory first year texts. What can I say? Maybe, like the play's cunning Lady Sneerwell, I just love controversy. Or maybe I feel a little of what the original audience felt: that this comedy has so much heart and wit that it merits laughing so loudly a passer-by believes the Drury Lane Theatre is collapsing. In other words, I entered York Theatre Royal hopeful and left, unfortunately, a theatre more stable and sturdy than ever.

*The School for Scandal* is essentially one long round of the childhood game 'Telephone' - Sir Peter Teazle (Joseph Marcell) tries to connect with his young new wife Lady Teazle (Lydea Perkins) as the two become increasingly ensnared in a high society with a gossip obsession. Meanwhile, Teazle's old friend Sir Oliver (Tony Timberlake) uses various ridiculous disguises in an attempt to wade through the scandal and superficiality of his two nephews Charles (Gamon Rhys) and Joseph (Alex Phelps) in order to decide whose true good character will warrant his inheritance. Couples and friendships are tested and strengthened (often in the time it takes to spread a rumour) in a tale of converging sub plots, constant multi-roling and general merriment.

The cast was undoubtedly the strongest part of this production, with Perkins' Lady Teazle a particular standout. Previously I have struggled to connect with the central conflict between the Teazles as I simply couldn't bring

myself to root for them, but when Lady Teazle is played with an effortless charm and brass the couple act as a firm anchor for the play's dramatics.

Another audience favourite was Sir Oliver / Crabtree played by Tony Timberlake, who lit up both of his vastly different roles with ease. The lightning speed script seemed to elasticise when read by him, whereas from others it sometimes felt like a competition to emphasise as many words in a sentence as quickly as possible. Ultimately, however, I blame this more on Seán Aydon's uninspired direction - I doubt Sheridan's text would have maintained its popularity for almost 250 years if it had to be rushed to be enjoyed.

And this is where the problems begin. My overwhelming feeling with this show was a question of why? Firstly, why this play, now? The programme - which, notably, is creative and innovative, evoking the spirit of *Bridgerton*'s gossip-master Lady Whistledown - describe the motivations behind the revival as recognising that "people were in need of a laugh", but this intention falls flat when the laughter is muted.

Simply put, this production is directionless. For one, while Tilted Wig Productions say they are bringing the comedy into the 21st century they actually leave it lost and unmoored in the 1950s, which gives the oxymoronic feeling of trying to take a safe risk.

I should note that both the set and costume design, overseen by Sarah Beaton, were vibrant and handsome. The jewel-toned costumes have a charming attention to detail, and the minimal set design of a salmon curtain, chequered tile floor and 50s style pastel telephones provides a

nice backdrop - nice, but ultimately impractical. What is minimal here starts to feel barren; in a play that is seldom active, the creative team rarely strives to alleviate the audience's restlessness. The most successful scenes were the ones in which the audience were given a bone - even merely the inclusion of a wine bottle and glasses raised spirits as at least, finally, there was something to engage with. Even a couple of chairs would have broken up the endless monotony of walk here, speak, walk there, speak, walk here...

And finally, while I merit the attempt to connect with a modern audience, I can't help

but think the original setting worked for a reason. High wigs, corsets, pantaloons - not only would these have solved the issue of a lack of visual interest, but they also would have helped to really cement the picture of the ridiculousness of antiquated high society that this production was missing.

Ultimately, despite its best efforts, Tilted Wig Productions' *The School for Scandal* isn't anything to write home (or to any gossip magazines) about.

Gosh, I hope I don't cause a scandal!



IMAGE: ROBLING PHOTOGRAPHY



# IF NEOLIBERALISM IS THE NEW RELIGION, THEN TAYLOR SWIFT IS ITS 'FALSE GOD'

ANTONIA SHIPLEY (SHE/HER) ON HOW TAYLOR SWIFT IS DOMINATING THE GLOBE WITH HER ERAS TOUR

Taylor Swift's tenacious grip on contemporary culture is irrefutable, her success is unassailable, labelled a virtuoso, a maestro, a Promethean artist and commander of culture. Even those of us who do not listen to her find her permeating all areas of contemporary life.

Swift has been mentioned in the UK par-

“ Taylor Swift was born a brand

liament and the US Congress on a multitude of occasions, Australian ex Prime Minister, Scott Morrison, even embarked on a 'Taylor Swift bingo'; seeing how many times he could insert Taylor Swift lyrics into his valedictory speech. For many political theorists, this suggests something about political populism, but it is much bigger than just that. Taylor Swift is the zeitgeist of our generation, and it is because of neoliberalism that she is able to do so.

Whilst Taylor has been topping the charts for her hugely successful albums and singles, she has also been dominating the charts for climate change emissions, ranked as the number one celebrity CO2 emitter by UK sustainability marketing agency, Yard. In 2023, she was found to have emitted 138 tonnes of CO2 in just three months, largely to visit her new beau, NFL player, Travis Kelce. These emissions are equivalent to the annual energy usage of 17 American households. In the same period, climate scientists found that the world has - for the first time - exceeded a 1.5 degree Celsius rise in temperature over 12 months, serving as a warning to humanity. I hear the cries of the Swifties: "why aren't you talking about the big corporations? What about Travis Scott? Kylie Jenner? Beyoncé?" And, "She's a global star - it's part of her job!" Et Cetera et Ad Nauseam. This article is not a criticism of Taylor Swift per se, but an analysis. It is worth acknowledging, however, that Swift has pledged to purchase double the required carbon credits to offset emissions from her record-breaking tour (though the efficacy of such remains under-researched).

Taylor's fans have acted as a bulwark against criticisms, claiming that she was being gratuitously scapegoated in order to vindicate large corporations of their climate crimes, and whilst it is true that she is part of a panoply of celeb-

rities causing detriment to the planet, the real question is to do with her 'Reputation' (an irresistible pun). For many devout 'Swifties', criticising her is almost a form of religious persecution; she represents their hopes, dreams and way of life (which, consciously or subconsciously, are imbued with neoliberal principles). And This is where the dots connect. Taylor's image is a paragon of the white liberal feminist, a picture which is often weaponised, and serves as a defence of her persona. She is the utterly relatable "girl next door", and she has often said that she wants to show girls that *anyone* can do *anything*, just like neoliberalism and the American Dream tells them they can. How can anyone argue with that?

Neoliberalism is the pre-eminent economic system in many Western countries, embracing free-market values, globalisation, and deregulation, and may be defined simply by the quote 'the freer the market, the freer the people'. This economic position has been characterised by its phenomenal resilience, even in the face of calamity and catastrophe (i.e 2008 financial crash) it stands utterly unimpeded, leading many to argue it has become 'the end of history' (or 'End Game', if you will); there is seemingly no alternative to this way of life, there can be no other way of living, lending to a 'sacralisation' of the market, creating an unbridled process of commodification, which pervades all spheres of human activity. The traditional separation between politics, economy and society has been eroded, and every sector of life is commodified. Neoliberalism sits in the vacant seat of religion in many Western societies which have undergone secularisation, and Taylor Swift is its 'False God'.

Taylor Swift was born a brand. Her father, a stockbroker, and her mother a successful marketing manager, decided to bestow Taylor with a gender-neutral name as a child, expectant of her future in the finance world, hoping a gender-neutral name would prevent her from set-backs by corporations. When Swift's family became cognisant of her talent, they moved their lives to Nashville, and her dad made no haste, reportedly investing a three percent stake in the company that signed her (for the small cost of around \$300,000). *Anyone* can do *anything* (with a dream and a few hundred thousand dollars). This springboarded her to fame, and there was no looking back.

Taylor has undoubtedly experienced the sharp vicissitudes of stardom as a woman, notably the unforgettable 2009 Kanye West VMA debacle, and particularly her feud with a music manager over the rights to her music. The latter is where her power as a brand and cultural narrative was truly realised. Musical copyrights are

split into two branches, the musical composition, and the sound recording itself (or Master). Taylor Swift cleverly owned the rights to her musical composition as a lyricist, but this meant that she was not the owner of any original audio recordings, meaning she had no control over when and to whom these rights could be sold, and she claimed that her old record label was holding her to ransom over the Masters in exchange for her signing another contract with them. But, as she owned the musical composition rights to her music, she also owned 'sync rights', meaning she held jurisdiction as to whether her songs could be used in advertisement, films etc, thus meaning she could prevent anyone profiting off her Masters in that way. With a fanbase so famously loyal, she decided she could simply re-record her first six studio albums, under the brand of 'Taylor's Version'. Whilst the thought of any other artist commanding their fans in this way is almost unimaginable, the 'Swifties' duly obeyed, abandoning any old versions and devoutly following (and

“ Taylor Swift is the emotional fibre of neoliberal culture. She is authentic, she is real

financially investing) in the word of their icon.

This legal and economic mastery was made possible by her fans, many of whom see their lives as being dictated by her brand, some even developing a 'parasocial relationship' with her, feeling like they truly know her. Taylor Swift is the emotional fibre of neoliberal culture. She is authentic, she is real, whilst simultaneously being an economic construction from her inception. Taylor Swift conforms to the image that many young girls internalise from a young age, she is the perfect girl, she is a 'girlboss', and she is exactly what modern day, *proper* femininity looks like. In modern life, we are made up of cultural material, social mores, beliefs, ideals, and somehow, Taylor Swift complies with all of these values. People feel like they know her as she has lived inside

them, even before they knew who she was. She is the apotheosis of the neoliberal ideal that has dominated the dreams of our generation's young girls. All of her 'eras' are distinct aesthetic productions which have culminated ways of living for many teenage girls, out of *folklore* was born the curated aesthetic of cardigans and cottage core, in fact 'eras' have found their way into contemporary 'Gen Z' discourse, whether you're in your 'academic era' or 'going out era', you're being impacted by Taylor Swift's brand, consciously or subconsciously.

Neoliberalism survives because people *believe* in it, they believe in its transcendent power, its ability to emancipate us all from the shackles of the past, *anybody* can do *anything*, and Taylor Swift keeps so many people believing; she is the reality that the neoliberal agenda promises. Even if people know the deficiencies and inequities of neoliberalism, it supplies them with just enough, be it a Stanley Cup, a scroll, a Taylor Swift album or a dream, there is always something that keeps them believing, and for so many people across the West, Taylor Swift is, that reason. She understands them in a way that any other brand or belief system cannot, she can articulate their feelings, hopes and desires, she is the voice of a generation; and she may not have been heard if not for neoliberalism.

And so what if she (and neoliberalism) have faults, so what if they threaten our biosphere, they do so much *good*, there can be no alternative

Perhaps without intent, Taylor Swift is a key tenet of the neoliberal agenda today, her power can change the way young people vote (i.e the Republicans and Democrats tirelessly vying for her endorsement). She is able to keep Gen Z believing in the power of the sacralised free market, and in spite of trials and tribulations, she keeps them believing, hoping and dreaming, the world isn't burning (yet) it just keeps on turning.



ILLUSTRATION BY EMILY CHRISTIE

LONG BOI AT WORK ON THE NEW STUDENT CENTRE READY IN 2035

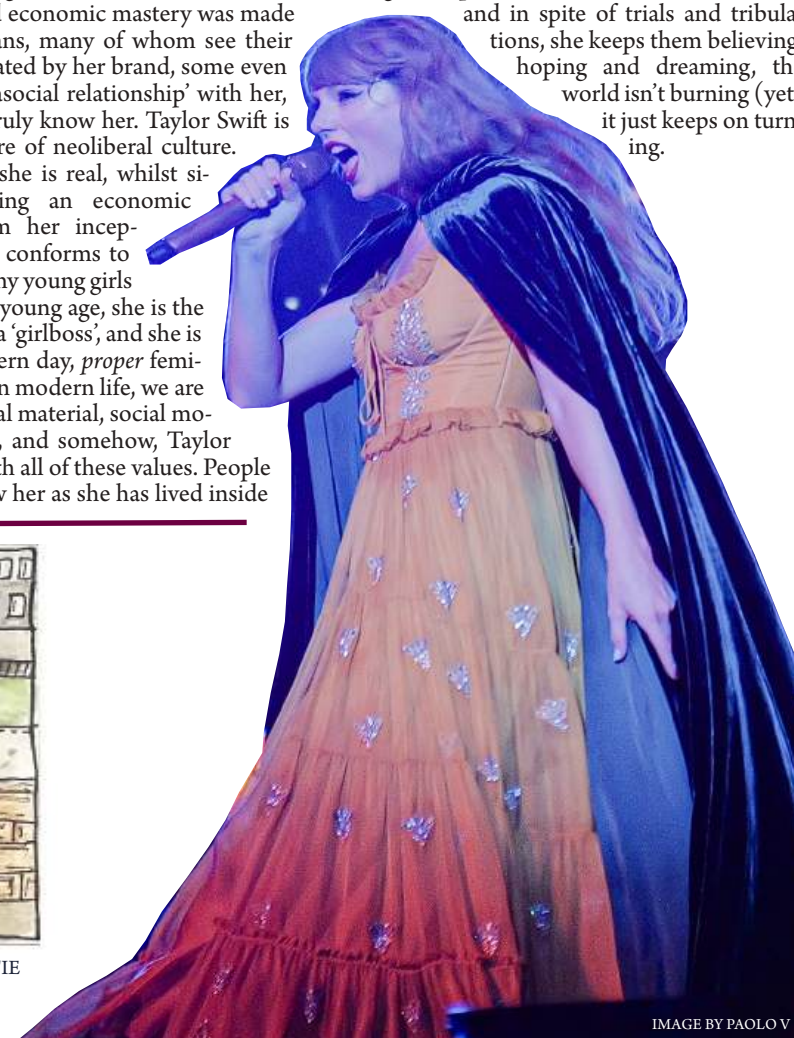


IMAGE BY PAOLO V



# A 2024 COQUETTE SUMMER: THE MICRO-TREND CONTINUES

RAYSA ALLANA SALIM (SHE/HER) WRITES ON THE LATEST CELEBRITIES ADOPTING THE SUMMER COQUETTE AESTHETIC

The girlies were in their coquette era last year. The obsession with the aesthetic gained popularity back in 2021. Then, as 2023 was named 'The Year of Girl', coquette rose back to fame and became one of the main fashion aesthetic trends. By now, almost everyone who follows the currents of social media rage is familiar with the soft, hyper-feminine, flirty aesthetic that is known as 'The Coquette Trend'. Exhibited by the use of pastel colors, ribbons, and frills, this trend resembles the wom-



IMAGE: EMMA SHEEHAN

en's fashion in the Victorian and Regency Eras. Although the word 'coquette' itself was defined as a flirtatious woman, the fashion trend seems to romanticize youth and reclaim girlhood. Before TikTok, coquette fashion has always been around, spreading amongst different pop cultures such as music, movies, fashion, and beyond. Thanks to shows like *Bridgerton* and *Succession* and artists like Lana Del Rey - the queen of coquette music if you will, there are loads of inspiration to take notes from.

Up until Spring 2024, the trend has persevered. Fashion brands are still playing into the coquette aesthetic for their newest release.

Chanel's Spring/Summer 2024 Haute Couture collection, 'The Button,' paid tribute to the House of Chanel by showcasing elegant and dainty pieces. With elements such as large satin bows, tulle, and laces, this collection leans to the fans of the coquette fashion. As opposed to the pastel color palette of the trend, monochrome garments are most dominant in Chanel's version of the aesthetic. Incorporating black and white on ribbons, bows, and laces, gives them a more minimalist and elegant approach to the coquette trend.

If you want to embrace the trend but think you might be too late in the game and don't want to fall behind, you may want to adopt this aesthetic while switching things up a bit to appear casually chic yet still "so coquette". Let's take inspiration from celebrities like Kendall Jenner, Selena Gomez, Sabrina Carpenter, and Ariana Grande for a refined coquette summer aesthetic.

Through her Instagram, Jenner shows off her chic white dress in one of her posts for Easter celebration. Enunciating coquette by wearing big black ribbons on each of her shoulders. Styling it with nothing else but simple black heels, this outfit is just about as minimal as a coquette can be. This is impeccably such a sophisticated way to include the undertone of coquette aesthetic to your everyday wardrobe.

Meanwhile, it looks like coquette is on the mood board for various artist's visuals for their

music. Starting with Selena Gomez in her latest work, 'Love On' music video in which she dresses in Oscar de la Renta's spring 2024 bridal collection. In all white, she embodies coquette in her semi-sheer tulle short gown and massive white bow on top of her half updo. She completed her look with a pair of vibrant pink satin ballet slippers, like a perfect balance between subtlety and saliency of coquette without overdoing it. While we might not wear this to our actual wedding, this fit would still be perfect for this summer's formal balls and occasions. All you need is some comfortable shoes to tie everything together unless you enjoy dancing all night in ballet slippers, of course.

Grande, however, enters her new *eternal sunshine* era with an elusive hint of coquette. Her outfit throughout this era lies heavy on giant puffy sleeves on dresses, adding a tiny ribbon in the middle of the neckline of her dresses, alluding to coquette-ness. Her red sheer tulle glove is also significant in this album's visuals, making a statement for a bold yet demure feminine style. Ariana Grande has been renowned for her puffy dresses and voluminous tulle gowns from her several red carpet looks. After making a comeback from her hiatus from music, she stays on brand by showing just how casual and simple her coquette style can be.

If you are looking for a more summery vibe though, take Sabrina Carpenter's outfit for her latest music video 'Espresso' as an ex-

ample. She draws a lot on frills and laces and plays with monochrome and earth-tone colors such as black, white, and brown. In the first few scenes of her music video, she wears a playful white summer dress with laces at the top and flared frills down the bottom to underline the coquette. She accessories with sunglasses, giving a romantic beachy look. For a more flirty look, Carpenter also wears a sultry one-piece dark brown bikini which is adjacent to the '50s neckline bathing suit. Even though the vintage style screams retro, with the help of the semi-sheerness of her one-piece and the black ribbon headband as the cherry on top, this is by far the best chic-coquette beachy look.

Whatever coquette take you decide to sport this season, it is certain that this 2023 micro-trend is making its way into a staple summer aesthetic for years to come.



IMAGE: JUSTIN HIGUCHI

# EMBRACING NATURAL CURLS AND WAVES: A SUMMER GUIDE

DHUHA USMAN (SHE/HER) GIVES HER TOP TIPS ON STYLING AND CARING FOR YOUR CURLS AND WAVES ALL SEASON

As the weather starts to warm up, lots of us are starting to think about our summer plans and consequently panic about what we are going to wear. What hair goes with the floral midi skirt we all reserve for the first day of sunshine? Will the humidity destroy my frizzy hair? Will my cowboy hat for Taylor's Era's Tour fit over my hair style (for the record, this is a problem I am incredibly excited about)? The list goes on, and for the resident curly hair girls, these worries are nothing new. I know we are all traumatised from the brushes breaking in our hair, the snapped hair ties that we never found again and are possibly still in our hair five years later, but it all seems so much more worth it with the sun on our backs. I'm going to take you through my top tips for caring for your waves and curls this summer as well as giving you all the reasons you need to embrace your natural hair in the upcoming months! Hopefully a sum-

mer of curl-loving will open the door to caring for your hair all year round.

I am not entirely sure what it is about summer or being on holiday that makes lots of us wear our natural curls compared to winter. Perhaps it's practical with summer decreasing the possibility of rainy showers and classic North Yorkshire gails which lessen the amount of tears I shed over wasted wash days. Maybe the beachy waves and, seemingly, effortless curls perfectly pairs with summer dresses, crochet cardigans whilst singing ABBA for months on a beautiful Greek island, you know? All jokes aside, there's no doubt the sunshine encourages lots of us to love our natural hair. Whilst I don't know the science behind that, I most definitely can take you through my top tips.

Welcoming the warmer weather is great for the soul but not so great for the frizz as the sun can dry out hair. It is really important to get a hold on this as early as possible in a styling routine as curly hair has a tendency to be drier than non-curly hair. Frizz is usually just a curl waiting to happen, it just needs a little extra help and if I'm honest, don't we all. Water is a curly girl's best friend, make sure you are styling on wet hair. This is even more important in summer as it is an easy way to hydrate your hair and provides a great base to lock in hydration with products.

Another important step in summer is a leave-in conditioner or hydrating curl cream. Both products come in many different varieties, from liquid sprays to my personal choice, buttery creams. This should be your first product applied to freshly washed hair, giving

your hair extra moisture and helping avoid frizz. This gives your hair a perfect base for your next styling product. If you spot frizz whilst your hair is wet, it will be frizzy dry. My top tip would be to try adding more water to saturate your hair and emulsify any product applied before going in with more leave-in conditioner or your chosen styling product.

Following this should be your styling product. These usually come in a gel or mousse form. You can use just one or you may get the best results with both. With getting to know curly and wavy hair comes a lot (and I do mean a lot) of trial-and-error, the same goes for applying these products. Some like to scrunch, some like to brush style, some like to use methods like 'praying hands' or 'raking'. Toy with products and applications and eventually, you will find your magic combination. I personally enjoy scrunching in a gel and I dabble with the art of the Denman brush. This preference has come after almost 21 years of having curly hair so be prepared to play around and be patient as the curly gods decide your fate.

It's also important to use the right accessories. That means using a microfiber towel for your hair, or even a cotton t-shirt to avoid breakage that regular towels encourage. A game-changer for me was switching to a silk or satin pillowcase. Regular cotton pillowcases rub against your head in the night and cause lots of frizz and can lead to your curls falling out pretty fast. Silk or satin materials are easier on your hair and avoid this issue, not to mention they are great for your skin too. Satin scarfs also double up as a protective and pretty acces-



IMAGE: S. DATTACHAUDHURI

sory, you could weave it into a plait or use one as a hairband for the ultimate summer hairstyle. Don't forget to tie your beautifully styled curls in a loose bun before bed. Sleeping on your hair down will ruin all your hard work, a loose bun keeps you away from breakage and frizz, allowing your hair to be as luscious on day one as it will be on day four.

This might all seem quite technical but I can assure you that this is all part of enjoying your natural hair and learning to love and nurture it. Spending a lifetime hating your natural hair and ignoring it isn't going to make it go away. It has taken me the best part of my teenage years to come to terms with my curls and now, I wouldn't change them for the world. I hope these tips allow you to realise that curly hair does look great in the sunshine, but also in the wind, rain and snow too.



IMAGE: PICK PIK



# APRIL SHOWERS, BRING MAY FLOWERS

Throughout April, it has felt like nothing but showers here in York. Now May is here, the sun is shining, the goslings are chirping and maybe (just maybe) we can finally lay in the flowers. Here we capture the beauty of nature on campus for you to treasure.



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



# CULTURAL RESISTANCE: CELEBRATING PALESTINIAN ART, CULTURE AND HERITAGE AT NORMAN REA GALLERY

The University of York **Palestinian Solidarity Society** and **Norman Rea Gallery** have collaborated on their latest exhibition titled 'Cultural Resistance, Celebrating Palestinian Art, Culture and Heritage'.

The exhibition aims to highlight art as a mode of creative resistance, as well as to raise funds for **Fadi Hania**, a York Alumnus, and his family who were stuck in Gaza.

**After the efforts and donations from students and staff, they have been successfully evacuated to Egypt.**

In these images, we capture what the event had to offer on opening night.

Artists contributing to the exhibition included Seif Hussain, Imogen, Natalie Chow and many more.

Many anonymous contributions from local artists in the community were also included.



PHOTOGRAPHY: OLIVIA WHITE



PHOTOGRAPHY: OLIVIA WHITE



PHOTOGRAPHY: OLIVIA WHITE





## YORK'S BEST RECORD SHOPS

ALEXANDRA PULLEN (SHE/HER) SHARES

HER FAVOURITE PLACES TO BUY VINYL

IN YORK



IMAGE: ALEXANDRA PULLEN

Forty-Five vinyl café is like no other record shop in York, offering vinyls, books and prints as well as being a café/bar and holding live music and other events by night. From Rachael Sage to Red Hot Chilli Peppers, they offer something for everyone and the same can be said for their events. Possibly the most popular of these is their themed music bingo which, according to the employees, is a fun and buoyant event which fills up quickly. Another thing which struck me about Forty-Five was their decor. Each table of the café is decorated with vinyl sleeves by different artists including Queen, The Beatles and Taylor Swift. The walls are covered with tour posters and signed guitars from gigs such as Blondie in Sheffield and Wheatus in Hyde Park.



IMAGE: ALEXANDRA PULLEN

Hidden away just off Goodramgate, Earworm Records is always a stop off for me if I'm looking for vinyls. The shop opened in 2013 and aims to make physical mediums of music more accessible through deals such as three CDs for £10. Walking into the shop, you immediately know you've hit the jackpot with a large variety of genres in their vinyl collections, and you could even find your next favourite album as they play records from a player placed on the till. Upstairs, you can find shelves full of seven inch records and CDs. I had the chance to chat with Joels who works at Earworm Records, and he stressed the importance of vinyls because of how special physicality is for him in music. We chatted about the music scene in York and how it compares to that of other big cities in the North.

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## FALSE PROMISES FROM THE MUSIC INDUSTRY

REUBEN VIRK (HE/HIM) DISCUSSES THE RISE OF INDEPENDENT ARTISTS AND SOME DECEPTIONS MADE BY MAJOR RECORD LABELS IN RECENT YEARS



IMAGE: ERIN MC

In this contemporary climate, the falsities of the music industry and the way it operates have started being exposed. Artists are slowly starting to become independent or sign onto different labels that do not subscribe to unfair treatment of the team of creatives involved in the making of a record.

One instance that came straight into the public eye was the controversy surrounding Taylor Swift and record label Big Machine Records. The opposing sides came into dispute in regards to the ownership of the masters of the entirety of Swift's discography up until 2019, this being her first six studio albums! Essentially, Swift was disallowed independent ownership of her own masters, as the label was profiting off her music greatly. For Swift, she reinforced that it was never about the money for her, it was about proud ownership over her own art, and so the music she made being restricted from her, led to her labelling Scooter Braun (owner of Big Machine Records) an "incessant, manipulative bully". Tensions rose and rose until Swift changed the music game by deciding to remaster all of her previous music, putting the entirety of its ownership under her own name and sparking the "Taylor's Version" records being released.

Fans were overwhelmingly excited for this, not only to hear remasters of their favourite Swift songs, but also to see her come out as an artist who could take control of her own music, rather than let it be owned by a record label who would profit off of it and control its distribution. It really distances the artist from their art, something that they likely poured their heart and soul into, just to be taken from them. Obviously, labels aid the success of the projects, yet it is on their own terms that this is achieved, and when it all comes down to it, one person is making these deci-

sions. One person who is not the creator of the music. Prince explained it quite frankly, stating that "The way I looked at it, I owned the work because I paid for it. I created it, so I felt like it should belong to me", as he compared signing the contract to a major label as a different form of slavery, but slavery nonetheless.

When it comes to the creative teams involved in the creation of a record, the production and songwriting is obviously the foundation of it. Therefore, it feels apt that the producer, songwriter and talent all have somewhat equal profit from its success. However, this is unfortunately not the case. Record labels will state that when a song is released to the public, the songwriters of that song will receive a 9.1 cents of mechanical royalty payments. The royalties of a song are payments that are made to creatives of the track: songwriters, recording artists, labels, producers etc. for the licensed use of their work. What is meant to be the case, is that the publisher will own the copyright and so has to approve composition and then collect these royalties, which are then split 50/50 between songwriter and publisher. All seems fair, how it should be.

26-year-old singer-songwriter RAYE (Rachel Keen) has shed light on why she became an independent artist in 2021, exploring her struggles within this cutthroat music industry, and it is very enlightening to say the least. From her experiences, she displayed how her label Polydor Records controlled the distribution of her discography so much so that they refused to allow her to release a full studio-album. They attempted to box her into the stereotype of a dance-music feature artist, who only supported other artists, and never became one in her own right. She became independent in 2021, and has since then released her first studio album *My 21st Century Blues* in February 2023. It was the best decision

she could have made, as she skyrocketed into the limelight, hugely popular on TikTok and becoming the artist with the most BRIT award wins ever. Through this popularity, RAYE has consistently shared her experiences of inequality, misogyny and even assault by those who work in the music industry.

“The way I looked at it, I owned the work because I paid for it. I created it, so I felt like it should belong to me”.

Beginning as a songwriter, RAYE rightfully feels quite strongly about the mistreatment of songwriters, and showed just how awful it can get. She knows songwriters for artists who made it into the Billboard Top 10, who reaped none of the benefits from their song's success. Explaining it on the 'iluvlive' podcast she said that "For every song that is released in the world, there are 100 royalty points on a record. A songwriter who has contributed to a record, written the record and even crafted the record entirely is entitled to zero points", even worse than that is "record labels are taking eighty points for marketing", artists who have the capacity to build their own platforms on social media, and therefore require less and less external marketing as before.

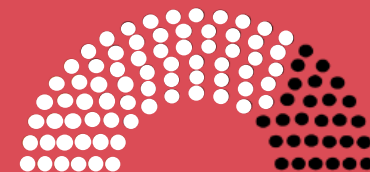
These, and many other artists, truly despise the mistreatment of the creative team in place of the success of the record label. It seems it is the creative teams, either the talent or the behind-the-scenes songwriters and producers, that consistently get the short end of the stick after doing the most work for it. What needs to be noticed is that the industry is getting to a point where representing an artist becomes different to respecting an artist and their wishes. Not in every case, but in some, labels choose to profit from the artist's success and completely disregard the ownership of the artist's art by the people who made it. Labels should exist to help aspiring artists share their music with the world on their own terms, and then the profit given to the label in appreciation of their help will be valid, if distributed fairly. The rise of independent artists is both exciting in terms of increasing authenticity, but also eye-opening to labels who perhaps need to begin treating their talent in fairer terms before their industry becomes exhausted completely.



IMAGE: ALEXANDRA PULLEN

Pitch 22 is a record shop I have been meaning to visit for a while, but have only recently been. The independent shop, situated on Fishergate is home to books and artworks as well as lots of records (including some 78s). Like Earworm, Pitch 22 had a record player where you can request for certain vinyls to be played. It is driven by second-hand vinyls and having a look through them, I was impressed; there were a lot of first UK pressings in the shop and it's safe to say that the offerings certainly drive in a crowd. John, who runs the shop, told me that people come from all over just to visit the shop. He said that sometimes he thinks it would be nice for the shop to be in the centre of York, but he finds that when people visit it is especially to go to Pitch 22. I can say, it is definitely worth it!

POLL: DO YOU OWN ANY VINYL?



YES - 72%

NO - 28%





IMAGE: CHUFF MEDIA



## WHAT EVEN IS AN INDUSTRY PLANT ANYWAY?

GRACE CLIFT EXPLORES THE HISTORY, DEFINITIONS AND CRITIQUES OF THE TERM 'INDUSTRY PLANT'

The term 'industry plant' has been thrown around recently at artists like The Last Dinner Party, Wet Leg, and Clairo. The so-called intentions of the term are to condemn nepotism and recognise privilege in the music industry. However, definitions of the term are vague at best, and harmful at worst. So what does 'industry plant' actually mean? Who is it critiquing? And most importantly, who does it target?

Definitions of 'industry plant' remain vague, and nobody seems 100% sure on what it means. *Vox* describes it as "much like the term 'nepo baby' has been in acting", while *Dazed* defines it as when "an artist or band pretends to be independent, all the while secretly enjoying financial backing and industry support". However, *Vice* calls it "a catch-all term for any artist we negatively respond to, or who we think holds an unfair advantage in the music industry". The main themes across all definitions are a sense of unfairness, nepotism and corporatism.

The term originated in the early 2010s on hip-hop message boards, where a variety of rappers were accused of being industry plants be-

is "blaming artists for the machinations of a system beyond their control".

Further, using all the resources available to you is the main way to succeed within a capitalist system, and *Vox* argues that "the debate about industry plants serves as a reminder that the music industry is just that — an industry". They note that it's the job of record label executives to pick people out of nowhere and to bring them to fame, and that criticisms of industry plants are just criticisms of how the industry works. In a 2018 interview with *New York Times*, Clairo said, "At the end of the day, when people say, 'Oh, she's an industry plant,' I'm like, 'No, I just have representation, like every single other artist you listen to. I'm not the first person to get a manager.'"

Black Feminist scholar Chardine Taylor Stone, notes that criticising industry plants does "draw attention to how the industry patronises audiences and how it only allows women to prosper if they fulfill certain beauty standards". She points out that industry plants tend to be white, and that recognising that the music industry has inherent racism is necessary for change.

The most widespread critique of calling artists industry plants is that it is usually directed towards women, and denies that their skills and work contribute at all to their success. *Dazed* notes that "for a certain kind of male rock fan, [female artists being industry plants is] a more plausible explanation than believing these bands made it off the back of their own talents — particularly as 'being young and good looking' is often a core feature of the complaint." Rising band The Last Dinner Party, made up of all women and non-binary artists, had their talents and promotional work dismissed as the reasons for their quick success, despite there being no concrete evidence of nepotism at work.

Overall, calling an artist an industry plant isn't as simple as critiquing privilege, or recognising a lack of talent. It comes with a complex history that touches on classism and racism within the music industry, and sexism from audiences. Artists' successes should be credited to their work as well as their connections, and criticisms may be more productively targeted at the largely music industry, which supports only some artists while neglecting others. As *Dazed* says, "there are better ways to go about that than cyber-bullying some random band".

“ Blaming artists for the machinations of a system beyond their control”

cause of their journey to fame. It's notable that the term began as a way to target predominantly non-white artists, and dismiss the validity of their success.

One of the major points that the 'industry plant' term is aimed towards is the fact that the rich have a headstart in the industry. Clairo was labelled an industry plant after it was discovered that her father was a successful marketing officer and used his contacts to help her get a recording contract. The target of this criticism, though, went towards the artist rather than the industry, or the hierarchical capitalist business model within it. As *Vice* says, the term 'industry plant'

## CENTRE STAGE: THE BLAZERS

### ELLEN MORRIS (SHE/HER) CHATS TO 'THE SEXIEST SOUL BAND IN YORK', THE BLAZERS

“ Soul is what we all love. If we had a venn diagram, soul would be in the middle.”

The Blazers' music is transcendental - to experience The Blazers is to be totally absorbed in the present moment. Often covering Al Green, Nina Simone, Bill Withers (to name a few), they always seem as enchanted with their music-making as the audience is. The Blazers is undoubtedly a project of authentic passion and flair.

The band consists of the velvet vocals of lead singer, Daisy Kennedy; the effortlessly tranquil Lily Jamieson on keys; the smooth and suave bass of Jacob Spreadborough; Tom Layton, the masterful and meticulous guitarist; Kuba Lambert with his mellifluous hums on harmonica - all tied together with the backbone of the beat: Arthur Frost on drums.

**How did you all start in music?**

With varying answers from a decade to mere months of practice, the band comprises a spectrum of experience with their instruments.

Daisy upcycled her shower singing to become the quintessential sound of the band, and Jacob quit his 11-year guitar hobby to switch to bass.

Lily learned Latin and jazz piano at eight, and Arthur switched from piano keys to drum sticks at 12. Tom received an eighteenth birthday guitar gift, and Kuba decided to pick up the more 'portable' instrument of the harmonica.

**So, how did The Blazers form?**

Lily begins to speak of the band name's influence from Soul Train, and how "you would think of everyone in their suits with trumpets, so we thought 'The Blazers' fits well with what they wore."

Arthur tells the origin story of their formation, hanging out with Tom when he learnt they both played instruments and proposed a jam. Tom informed Arthur he knew a keyboardist, Lily.

Later, Daisy heard about the idea whilst queuing at The Stones Roses Bar and wanted to sing. They put a call out to find a bassist, and analysed the respondents' Google mail profile, choosing the one of a shirtless man sitting on a truck - Jacob. Kuba's involvement was more recent in the wake of The Blazers Collective.

**What is The Blazers Collective?**

The core five members of The Blazers are looking to expand their sound with the collective; to find a larger group of musicians to join them on stage.

"Kuba is part of the collective, and we also

want a couple of people to make a horn section, another drummer; we just want as many people as we can get."

**What is your musical inspiration; who do you look up to?**

Ranging from 1930s blues to 2000s pop, The Blazers have a unique source of influence that gives them that silky rhythm and funky spirit.

Daisy expresses her early obsession with Katy Perry, and Florence Welch, because her hair was long and red - "I always wanted long hair, and now I do." Tom speaks of his soul guitar inspiration, Cornell Dupree, expressing, "He is an expert on fitting the music, not doing too much or too little - he just takes care of business."

Arthur follows, "Sometimes I channel Ringo Starr, his style was diligent, and that's what I try and do - is keep it going, and I don't try to be too flashy". Kuba replies, "There's beauty in simplicity." He adds that, to him, "Blues is just 'bread and butter' music." He enjoys "Muddy Waters, Sonny Boy Williamson I and II, Little Walter, Big Walter Horton, and James Cotton".

Lily's favourite is The Black Keys, "their older records are a bit more 'blues-y'. You can take a lot of inspiration from them - they're super cool, and super sexy too." Jacob shares that he likes "Mac Miller a lot, and Thundercat is the guy - or maybe Allen Woody, but when I was playing guitar it would be more Slash or John Frusciante."

**What has been your favourite performance?**

After discussion of their successful first performance at Micklegate Social, they agree on how great they sounded at Sotano's; an acoustic set they did at the live music staple venue in York.

Arthur remarks his special mention to the charity picnic gig for a collaboration between the Palestinian Solidarity Society and All Should Eat, the gig where they met Kuba.

Upcoming gigs following after 14 May are: a candlelit concert at Holy Trinity Church on 18 May. Fulford Arms on 24 May. The University of York Summer Ball on 4 June. Updates on Instagram @theblaz3rs, and watch out for original songs on Spotify, 'Say Anything' and 'Loving you'. Finally, if you want to get involved in The Blazers Collective, please email [theblazersyork@gmail.com](mailto:theblazersyork@gmail.com)

Other Centre Stage interviews include Upstarts, JW Blake and Tom Sheldon Trio. To read visit our website [nouse.co.uk/muse/music](http://nouse.co.uk/muse/music).



IMAGE: LILLY TURLEY

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OUR EDITORS RECOMMEND:  
FAVOURITE NON-ENGLISH  
FILMS

PETITE MAMAN

From the director of *Portrait of a Lady on Fire*, this delicate meditation on grief and friendship is beautifully crafted.



IMAGE: IMDB

DECISION TO LEAVE

A mesmerising, spiralling detective thriller where Park Chan-wook meets Alfred Hitchcock.



IMAGE: IMDB

BLACK CAT, WHITE CAT

A chaotic comedy set in a Romani community along the Danube River that follows two families as they navigate love, crime and absurd twists.



IMAGE: IMDB

IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE

A tale of forbidden love of two neighbours in 1960s Hong Kong, who bond over their spouse's infidelity.



IMAGE: IMDB

SINGLE BY CONTRACT

A campy German romcom, about a normal girl falling in love with the lead singer of a famous band.



IMAGE: IMDB

ALPS, MAD SCIENTISTS AND SUFFRAGETTES  
VANESSA ROMERO (SHE/HER) DISCUSSES SWITZERLAND IN FILM

While America maintains a dominant position in the film industry, with English-speaking films consistently topping global box office charts, the influence of non-English films on cinematic canon and theory cannot be overlooked. Central European movements like German expressionist cinema, Italian neorealism, and French New Wave have left indelible marks on film history. Yet, in the middle of these big cinematic players, Switzerland is often overlooked as a producer and film subject.

The question of what counts as a Swiss film is certainly not straightforward. What does a film need to have to count as Swiss? Does it need to be included as a country of production like in the Irish war drama *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* (2006) or does it need a Swiss director like Marc Foster's apocalyptic *World War Z* (2013)? A Swiss producer like *The Garden of the Finzi-Continis* (1970) - a film set in fascist Italy produced by Arthur Cohn? A Swiss subject like *Heidi* (1937) starring Shirley Temple? A Swiss actor like *Downfall* (2004) with Bruno Ganz playing Adolf Hitler or Swiss designer like H.R. Giger's iconic special effects in *Alien* (1979)?

It would be logical for a Swiss film to contribute to Swiss cultural production, either to promote Switzerland as a film-producing hub or to influence perceptions of it as a nation. Alternatively, one could argue that the iconic British institution of James Bond could be seen as partially Swiss, given its frequent use of Swiss settings, direction by a Swiss filmmaker, use of Swiss actors, and notably featuring half-Swiss James Bond, whose mother hails from Canton Vaud in Ian Fleming's novel.

Additionally, the linguistic situation in Switzerland comes with representational issues. With four distinct language areas - German, French, Italian, and the minority language Romansh, spoken by just 0.5 percent of the population - there's a complex interplay of linguistic identities. While many Swiss citizens are bilingual, not all are sufficiently proficient and may perceive other languages as foreign, necessitating subtitles. Therefore, regardless of the language chosen for a film, some of the Swiss population will feel disconnected. This raises the question of whether a distinct Swiss film identity truly exists or if it's more apt to discuss films originating from each region, highlighting their unique characteristics. The comedy *Bon Schuur Ticino* (2023) highlights this complex linguistic situation. It follows a German-speaking police officer who must dismantle a resistance group in the Italian-speaking canton Ticino after the Swiss population decides that French should be the only national language.

Another issue is the variety of German spoken in films set in Switzerland. The spoken everyday language is Swiss German, which encompasses Alemannic dialects and lacks standardisation. Unlike Swiss Standard German, which all German speakers understand, Swiss German requires subtitles for non-speakers. Swiss Standard German is used as the written language and is only spoken during formal settings (i.e. schools or parliament). Therefore, a regional dialect would have to be spoken to make a regular conversation authentic. While most Swiss films do this, despite having to dub or subtitle their production if released in an-

other German-speaking country, non-Swiss films often revert to Standard German, as seen in a scene where a Swiss bank is being robbed in Marvel's *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* (2021).

While defining what qualifies as a Swiss film remains challenging, Switzerland's impact on the film industry is increasingly evident. For instance, the Swiss share custody over renowned filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard - who had Swiss heritage, citizenship and residency - with France. Godard's Swiss connection is also evident in his films, such as in his experimental work, *King Lear* (1987), set in Nyon, where Godard attended primary school. Increasingly, the Swiss have started to consider Godard as one of their own. For instance, the documentary *Say God Bye* (2023) recently premiered, following Swiss director Thomas Imbach on a pilgrimage across Switzerland in search of his idol Godard.

Besides Godard, Switzerland has been home to many film stars. Although Charlie Chaplin and Audrey Hepburn decided to live a quiet life in Switzerland, most mentions of it in English-speaking films are flippant. Dirty money is stored in Swiss banks, kids are threatened with being sent to a Swiss boarding school, characters have been institutionalised in Swiss hospitals, or some simply invoke Switzerland's name by cementing their neutrality ("From now on I'm Switzerland," states a fed-up Bella Swan in *Twilight Eclipse*).

Switzerland is depicted as affluent, remote and scientific. Possibly inspired by the rich history of scientific research and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, Switzerland has become the backdrop for unethical scientists in recent years. This yielded projects like *A Dangerous Method* (2011), which follows a fictionalised account of the tumultuous relationship of pioneers of psychoanalysis Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud, and the patient-turned-physician Sabina Spielrein at the Burghölzli clinic in Zurich, or psychological horror film *A Cure for Wellness* (2016) set in an alpine mysterious hospital. Neither of these projects were shot in Switzerland, nor do they seem too concerned with historical accuracy; rather, they use the idea of Switzerland as home to the psychological or subversive. This notion appears to be predominantly international, as few Swiss films engage in Frankensteinian tropes.

Interest in producing a distinctive Swiss film canon, which the government supported, really began in the 1930s. The boost of Swiss film was part of a cultural movement called the Spiritual National Defence that focused on Swiss values and combatting totalitarian ideologies as a reaction to the rise of Hitler in Germany and the spread of fascism, which was also reflected in the content of the films. In the 1970s and 1980s, Swiss films really began to achieve greater commercial and international acclaim. *The Swissmakers* (1978), a comedy about obtaining Swiss nationality, became and remains the highest-grossing Swiss film.

In total, 51 films have been submitted for the Academy Award for Best International Feature Film, two of which have won (namely *Dangerous Moves* (1984) and *Journey of Hope* (1990)). This year's submission was the period coming-of-age drama *Thunder* (2022), directed by Carmen Jaquier, a personal favourite of mine. Perfect for fans of *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) or *Novitiate* (2017), the film concerns itself with themes of budding sexuality, religiosity and transgressive women. After the mysterious death of her older sister Innocente, Elisabeth returns from convent school to her remote home in twentieth century southern Switzerland. As she struggles with the limited possibilities she can inhabit as a woman and the repressed na-



IMAGE: IMDB

ture of her family, she tries to untangle the death and secrets of her sister, leading her to a spiritual and sexual awakening. Accompanied by a powerful and eerie sound and visuals (special praise needs to be given to cinematographer Marine Atlan, who depicts the Alps of Valais in all its mighty and sublime glory), Elisabeth attempts to find sex in god and god in sex.

Another highly recommended acclaimed film is the stop-motion animation *Life of a Courgette* (2016). It follows a young boy who moves into a children's home after his alcoholic mother's accidental death. This heartwarming story explores the power of friendship in times of hardship. Themes of touching family stories and coming-of-age are also taken up in the Swiss box office hit *The Awakening of Motti Wolkenbruch* (2018). Titular Motti comes from an Orthodox Jewish family domiciled in Zurich, one of the largest Jewish communities in Switzerland, and instead of marrying the nice Jewish girls approved by his family, he falls in love with non-Jewish fellow university student Laura.

A lot of Swiss film focuses on Swiss history, spanning from the Swiss reformation (*Zwingli* (2019)) to the end of the Cold War when the so-called secret files scandal overtook Switzerland, in which it was revealed that federal authorities had mass surveilled the population to discover communist affiliations (*One-Way to Moscow* (2020)). Apart from stories that highlight Switzerland's role in World War II, particularly focusing on border crossings (e.g., *The Boat is Full* (1981) and *Akte Grüniger* (2014)), other grim moments in Swiss history have been visually explored. For instance, *The Foster Boy* (2011) dramatises the grim history of the so-called Verdingkinder (literally translated as 'become-a-thing-children'), Swiss children taken from their families due to poverty and placed with new families, often enduring physical and psychological abuse. *Needle Park Baby* (2020) has also received significant attention, based on the autobiography of a child of an addict during Zurich's extensive open drug scene in the 1980s.

One of the most beloved films tackling a harsh reality in Swiss history is the comedy *The Divine Order* (2017), which centres around the Swiss suffragette movement in the 1970s. For a brief history lesson, Swiss men voted in favour of women's rights to vote in a referendum in February 1971. Still, it was not until a 1990 ruling that women obtained complete voting rights in the last Swiss canton of Appenzel Innerrhoden. The *Divine Order* follows a bored housewife who becomes swept up in the women's liberation and sexual revolution movement and drags the women of her small village into women's rights advocacy. Filled with witty dialogue and great performances, the film has become a great hit in Switzerland and is worth watching! (Editor's note: On a very informal study among my Swiss friends, *The Divine Order* was voted the best Swiss film).

Throughout the years, films produced in Switzerland have foregrounded a rich and nuanced Swiss history, moving away from some of the tropes used by international productions. These films are diverse subjects worth seeing for anyone wanting to discover new cultures.



IMAGE: IMDB



# REVIEW: THE RISE OF AFRICAN REPRESENTATION IN IWÁJÚ

JAMES LAPPING (HE/HIM) RAVES ABOUT DISNEY'S GROUNDBREAKING NEW ANIMATED MINISERIES

Disney is facing towards the future with its new miniseries, *Iwájú* (2024-). And quite literally, as in the Yoruba language, *Iwájú* translates to forward facing. With the assistance of pan-African media company, Kugali, Disney has helped imagine a vibrant, Futurist, hyper technotopia in the Nigeria's capital Lagos, where the tale takes place.

*Iwájú* is a first for Disney. Never before have they collaborated with an animation company outside of their organisation. Just a few years ago, Kugali Media was raising a £25,000 Kick-starter to create a pan-African comic collection and now they are co-creating a multimillion miniseries with Disney! How did this happen? In a 2020 interview with the BBC, Kugali co-creator and animator, Hamid Ibrahim, said that they wanted to kick Disney's ass! Days later, Kugali were approached on LinkedIn by a Disney employee who liked the interview, and it turned out they both wanted to create a show from an African cultural perspective. The rest is history.

*Iwájú* is miniseries that intertwines elements of cyberpunk with Afrofuturism. The premise is about a ten-year old girl named Tola, who lives on the affluent Lagos Island. For her 10th birthday, she begs her father, Tunde, to take her to the mainland where he grew up, but he refuses. Instead, he gives her a pet lizard. Disappointed, she is consoled by her friend and family gardener, Kole, who promises her adventure. What ensues is a classic tale of youth in revolt. The series revolves heavily around themes of class, poverty, technology and imagined futures via a black cultural lens. There is a wonderful balance between an enjoyable kid's

adventure series and a serious critical analysis of our inevitable technological future.

Tola's lizard, Otin, is one example of Disney's attention to West African cultural detail in *Iwájú*. In traditional Nigerian storytelling, agama lizards like Otin are trickster figures, known as Agadzagadza. Without too many spoilers, Otin is representative of the potential for change within humans, and can signify rebirth too. She may seem to be on the margins of the plotline, but Otin is fundamental to the fate of Tola, Kole and Tunde.

Throughout *Iwájú*, there is frequent use of pidgin English and the Yoruba language alongside English. Kugali co-founder Olufikayo 'Ziki Nelson' Adeola insisted that Disney used native Nigerians for all the voice acting roles in the miniseries. He has stated that language is essential to his company's values of authenticity. Tunde's voice actor, Dayo Okeniyi, recently explained in an interview with Semafor that authentic Yoruba voice actors such as himself helped create natural variations between the three languages and that it helped ascertain the correct usage of particular colloquialisms. This makes *Iwájú* yet another first for Disney as it is the closest they have come to creating a non-English language animated film or series.

However, don't worry if you are not familiar with Yoruba or pidgin English, these languages don't completely drive the narrative, they are complementary and add a wonderful extra layer for Yoruba speakers and the wider West-African diaspora across the globe. You are not an olódo! But if Kole was here right now, just as he jokingly says to Tola – 'Abeg, make you no speak

Yoruba again!'

Despite the keen attention to some details, Disney has still managed to create its own obstacles. Believe it or not, Disney+ isn't even available in Nigeria! Although in recent developments, due to popular demand, Kugali co-founder Tolu Olowofoyeku tweeted to confirm in late April, two months after *Iwájú*'s release on Disney+, that the series is now available on the Disney Channel in 50 African countries.

Since 2020, Disney have promoted their 'Stories Matter' campaign as a way to create a wider array of stories from previously marginalised communities in the United States and further afield from across globe. It has also been a way to grapple with their deeply problematic history as an animation company when it comes to representation. There is still work to be done,

but with releases in recent years such as the Marvel blockbuster, *Black Panther* (2018), the empowerment from celebrating African narratives is being felt across the globe. Ziki Nelson was partly inspired to create the miniseries after visiting a Comicon for the first time and is delighted that *Iwájú* now offers a wider variety of black Disney characters for fans to cosplay as! He is also happy that the miniseries provides the opportunity for viewers to learn and to have empathy for other cultures.

*Iwájú* is a beautifully crafted miniseries and really makes us hope that the team at Kugali will have the opportunity to collaborate with Disney again in the future. And when we say miniseries, it really is a MINI series. With just five episodes that are each 15 minutes in length, there is no excuse not to go home and binge *Iwájú* tonight!



IMAGE: IMDB

# THE WORLD IS YOURS: WHY LA HAINE REMAINS RELEVANT

ADELAIDE MADDISON (SHE/HER) EXAMINES THE CULT CLASSIC THREE DECADES AFTER RELEASE



IMAGE: IMDB

In the spring of 1993, 17-year-old Makome M'Bowole, was shot in the head at point blank range during police interrogation. He had been arrested in the 18th arrondissement, a district in Paris primarily populated by immigrants, during a major police sweep. "Sweeps" were implemented in order to carry out identity checks in a period that oversaw an increase in police power, and primarily targeted people of colour. The officer responsible for his death, Pascal Campain, claimed that he had only meant to intimidate the boy by aiming a loaded gun at his temple. Nevertheless, civil unrest erupted immediately upon hearing the news. M'Bowole was one of three unarmed youths slain by police officers in a four-day period. After hearing of the shooting on the radio, Mathieu Kassovitz joined the subsequent rioting, or mourning, as he described it. He started writing *La Haine* (1995) that evening.

Set over a 24-hour period, *La Haine* fol-

lows three young men living in public housing projects on the outskirts of Paris. The trio consists of Vinz (Vincent Cassel), Hubert (Hubert Kounde) and Saïd (Saïd Taghmaoui) as they navigate their day amongst the aftermath of a violent riot. Each character offers a different attitude towards their current reality. Vinz is arrogant, hotheaded and unapologetic. After finding a police officer's gun, he vows to "get even" with the cops for the near death of his friend, seeing his new piece as the perfect opportunity to enact revenge. In opposition, Hubert positions himself as the voice of reason throughout the film. He is in constant conflict with Vinz, finding his rage unproductive and dangerous. Prior to the riots, he owned a gym and dreamed of one day making it out of the projects. Saïd is often caught in the middle of the group. He shares Vinz's disdain for the system and enjoys wreaking havoc, yet still possesses many childlike qualities. Easily the most naïve of the trio, Saïd appears to have held onto his innocence in spite of his surroundings.

The first half of the film encompasses the young men's boredom and lack of direction. Their time consists of futile conversations, smoking weed and running away from police, bouncing from one bleak location to the next. Captured through a wide shot, the trio sit beneath the graffitied words we are the future, as Hubert kicks at a discarded needle on the floor. Positioning the characters in this way, trans-

forms an otherwise positive message into a grim reminder; that the neglected suburbs will stay neglected, as will the people living inside them. Kassovitz has expressed this belief before in an interview with the Guardian, claiming that "you don't change society in 25 years. You need society to go all the way and collapse, and then you change it. You can't change a machine that is perfect: capitalism. It's not good, but it's perfect. It's working."

After another near run-in with police officers, the group travel into the centre of Paris. Vinz spends the train journey bragging about his gun and eagerly fantasises about shooting a cop. The camera lingers on a close up of Hubert's face as he looks at a billboard outside, reading, *The World is Yours*. Saïd later writes over these words, changing "yours" to "ours", a demonstration of his hope and naïvety. Hubert no longer possesses these qualities, almost accepting his inevitable demise. Watching his friend become consumed by rage and violence obscures his role of the peacemaker within the group. He is worn down by it and becomes infected by Kassovitz's own lack of hope for the future.

Almost thirty years on, *La Haine* remains more relevant than ever before. In the aftermath of Covid-19, which catapulted the widespread Black Lives Matter protests into mainstream media, France's lawmak-

ers adopted an immigration bill that had a disastrous impact on the rights of asylum seekers and migrants in France. This devastating bill set out to restrict the benefits of immigrants, including housing aid, in which residency requirement is set at five years for foreigners not in employment. People born in France to foreign parents are no longer automatically granted French citizenship and the conditions for family reunification have been made even tougher than before. *Le Monde* reported that, "never before has a government, and the country with it, been so much at the mercy of the far right."

*La Haine* remains a timeless classic because of its brutal honesty. Kassovitz does not offer a solution to hate, but rather, reminds us of how it is built into the systems created to protect us. His illumination of this hypocrisy redefined French cinema and serves as an ongoing protest to the perfect capitalist machine.



IMAGE: IMDB



# ALUMNOUSE INTERVIEWS DUNE FILM EDITOR JOE WALKER

GRACE BANNISTER (SHE/HER) INTERVIEWS OSCAR AWARD-WINNING FILM EDITOR JOE WALKER FOR ALUMNOUSE



IMAGE: IMDB



IMAGE: JOE WALKER



IMAGE: IMDB

It's not often that an Oscar award-winner responds to an interview request from a student publication, but AlumNouse recently had the opportunity to interview Oscar award-winning Film Editor Joe Walker. Joe has edited many films, from *12 Years A Slave* to *Arrival*, and most recently *Dune Part One* and *Dune Part Two*.

Our interview took place over Zoom, with Joe speaking to me from his cutting room in Hollywood, Los Angeles where he's been based for the last 12 years. He held his computer up to show me around the cutting room, featuring the sofa film director Denis Villeneuve frequents!

Joe and I spoke about a few topics, including

“But it's worth saying that the script isn't the film. You have to go through the filming and editing process to really discover what a film will be.”

*Dune Part Two*, how he entered the film industry and his time at York which he described as particularly formative.

Joe: “I'm always happy to talk about York because it really formed me, the people I met there, I'm still talking to. It had a profound effect on me, it always felt like home.”

This is certainly something our current student body can relate to, and it's nice to hear that York pride is so strong for Joe even after relocat-



IMAGE: JOE WALKER

ing to Hollywood. Joe described his Music degree, which he studied at York during the '80s, as “a gateway drug” to the world of film-cutting. But even still, while at York, Joe was “ambivalent whether to go down the film path or the music path”, as his grandfather had been a conductor, and music was a major part of his upbringing. Ultimately, the introduction into the film industry by a family friend and successful film editor made Joe realise that there was a living to be made doing something he loved.

Joe had been excited about the York Music Department since applying to university, and his dedication and enthusiasm for his degree and the department certainly shone through during our conversation. Joe explained to me that he practically “lived in practice rooms”, and that his flatmates were always shocked to see him on his bike at 8am, arriving on campus for a 12-15 hour work day.

Joe: “There was so much opportunity, I was just trying to grab everything while I was there.”

So, while he was not so involved in college life, he certainly made up for that with his dedication to his department. Our conversation then turned to how his music degree has shaped his career as a film editor.

Joe: “I still can't see a difference between people getting together in a small ensemble, and having a passionate commitment to doing something novel in film.”

Joe continued this musical analogy, describing the role of an editor as “closest to being the drummer trying to keep the rhythm, to use time as a way of combining all elements: marrying narrative and rhythm, not just the lead singer at the mic like Timothée Chalamet.”

As an editor, Joe's role is to “respond to the material that's been shot on-set,” normally starting the day after they begin shooting. This material comes from numerous departments: camera, sound, art department and visual effects to name a few. Ultimately to ensure that, particularly in the case of *Dune Part Two*, “even though it's a long film, you're left wanting more.”

But before working as a Hollywood film editor, Joe worked in music for ten years.

Joe: “I thought I was going to stay with music, but then a really good job offer came in”

This was the opportunity to cut *Eroica* (2003), which Joe described as a “combination of a filmed performance of Beethoven's 'Eroica' symphony, and conversations concerning the politics of the time”. Not only did Joe describe this as “something I was really well-placed to do”, but that it was “such a good way of getting back into the industry. Because I read music, and knew the piece.”

Intrigued to know more about Joe's life as a Hollywood film editor, I then asked Joe some rapid fire questions.

Grace: “What's a favourite film, or childhood film, that you've really connected to and stuck with?”

Joe: “That's really tough; that's a killer question, Grace. I think one of my favourite films is one of Denis Villeneuve's films, but one before my time with him. He made a film called *Incendies*. I'd seen a screening of that in 2010, and I remember that everyone who came out of the cinema was shell-shocked. And it felt to me the sort of perfect marriage between brilliant filmmaking technique, craft and art, and a story that broke your heart and was deeply effective. I'm very jealous that I didn't get to work on that one!”

“When I was a kid I was into the things everybody was into. You know, the beginning of blockbusters happened in my teenage years: *Jaws*, *Star Wars*; but I wasn't wild about them. I was more into the much more quirky things, *Monty Python*, horror and animation. I was glued to the television as a kid, unfortunately. I spent most of my time watching the first series of *Star Trek*.”

Grace: “What is it that persuades you to work on a project ... the producer, the concept, the genre?”

Joe: “It's a kind of magic formula between an exciting script and an exciting director. ... I read scripts all the time, and the script doesn't read that well, but it's an exciting director. Are they going to be able to pull it off?”

But it's worth saying that the script isn't the film. You have to go through the filming and editing process to really discover what a film will be.”

Joe: “I find it quite hard to read scripts. I spend so much time imbuing them with mental images as I go. You know, if I was in my comfort

“Joe described his Music degree, which he studied at York during the 80s, as “a gateway drug” to the world of film-cutting

zone I'd be reading a documentary book, something that doesn't require my imagination”

He described this as a hugely creative process, seeing the script unfold into a movie inside his head.

Joe: “It'll take me two sittings, and five or six hours for something that's meant to be on screen for only two hours”

Joe also explained the feeling of “discovery in the editing process” making sure people understand and follow the narrative and characters. So while the script is often “a great place to start”, there's often “upheaval in the cutting room where you try things out differently than how they intended it years before”. Joe explained that he was lucky that Denis Villeneuve, *Dune's* director, also co-wrote the movies making him feel even better equipped to master the aims of the director in the cut.

Grace: “You've worked on a fair few genres, do you have any genres you'd like to work on in the future?”

Despite being “proud to be” so involved in the sci-fi genre, Joe said that “I'm always surprised I don't get that many offers of musicals”, surely a “fantastic way to combine the skills I've got”. But, he's ultimately “very happy continuing in the ‘pigeonhole’ [he's] in”.

Joe: “If I was hankering after any other genre, it would probably be a musical.”

My final question for Joe was whether he'd ever had an actor be annoyed that he'd cut out their favourite scene, and while I was hoping for an anecdote about an A-list celeb diva-tantrum, Joe explained that “the actors have to work with the trust of their director”, particularly in choosing a good editor to “piece together what we interpret as their performance.”

Joe: “The only person who's ever been annoyed at me was an art director.”

Joe explained their frustration at the deleted scene for which filming involved “a massive crane shot and a night up a ladder stapling plastic flowers to an abandoned building that they'd gotten up at 2am to film”.

Joe: “In the cutting room it felt like the best cut would be to go from the scene before to the scene after, without this establishing shot. And of course, you do that with a heavy heart”

As viewers, we often see ‘deleted scenes’ and ask ourselves why it wasn't included in the final cut.

It was interesting to hear first hand about how and why these decisions get made, and how removing a scene can make for a more “impactful edit”.

Thanks so much to Joe Walker for getting involved (and responding to my DM!), it's been so interesting to follow a York alum to the Hollywood hills and we hope to stay in touch with him and hear about his future projects.

Want to get involved? Whether you are a current UoY student and want to write for AlumNOUSE, or you're a York alum and want to share your story, please contact me via my email: [grace.bannister@nouse.co.uk](mailto:grace.bannister@nouse.co.uk). To find out more info on AlumNOUSE previous AlumNouse articles, or feel free to get in touch.



# THE EFFECT OF IMPRESSIVE WORLDBUILDING IN VIDEO GAMES

TASHA ACRES (SHE/HER) INVESTIGATES THE IMPORTANCE OF IMMERSIVE WORLDBUILDING FOR VIDEO GAME SUCCESS

Worldbuilding in video games is one of the most important elements to ensure the player receives the ultimate immersive experience, and it's the developer's job to create a world that feels as real as the characters they've introduced. Have you ever connected the dots between pieces of fictional lore or saw a cleverly placed detail and thought, 'Oh, that's clever!?' In books, authors will construct their worlds with various languages and types of people – both humanoid and not – and will create a timeline of historic lore for their characters to know or learn. Impressive worldbuilding will have rules with no loopholes and historic depth meticulously weaved into the creator's fictional universe. A video game is one of the best forms of media for this to be demonstrated, because the type of worldbuilding can differ slightly from game to game.

In the *Uncharted* series, Nathan Drake keeps a journal with him. During your adventure he will add drawings, pictures and keepsakes to document his travels. While the player will know what Nathan is writing most of the time due to a prompt consisting of a line of dialogue where he will think out loud, the player will notice that extra drawings, jokes and thoughts have been added without prompts from Nathan or the player. Whether a mini caricature of Sullivan or remarks about an observation the group has made, opening the journal will reveal an extra insight into Nathan's thoughts, which in turn creates a deeper look into Nathan's inner world, including his attitudes toward his companions and more intricate lore for the player to absorb as they keep playing. *The Last of Us 2* has a similar mechanism, where most of Ellie's inner thoughts are transcribed into her journal, in-

cluding a song that she tries to write to process her grief. In both *The Last of Us* and its sequel, the player can pick up notes throughout the levels, addressed to and from characters that the player will never meet, yet are still emotionally charged as the impact of the cordyceps virus across the country is slowly revealed – soldiers will leave each other instructions, a lookout who got bored has drawn a picture, families or lovers will write to say they'll be right back, or how they waited for them to return until they couldn't any more, and scouts who have been bitten write that they couldn't bear to turn, and that's how you've found their skeleton. It's not just complex storytelling, but worldbuilding that makes the dystopia of *The Last of Us* convincing. In one instance, Joel and Ellie enter a room with one Infected that they must deal with, only to notice after that a human skeleton lies on the floor by itself, indicating that they must have been bitten as a pair, but one of them made a decision that the other could not. Even *Red Dead Redemption 2* uses the journal mechanism, however unlike *Uncharted*, the player isn't prompted to open it as often. As a result, understanding Arthur Morgan's inner dialogue in the most intimate way is by reading his journal and watching his passion for drawing continue through the pages. This is one of the most significant ways in which the player can get to know Arthur Morgan, as his tough-on-the-outside countenance is countered by his delicate drawings of nature. Even interacting with a mirror contributes to this, as his self-loathing is revealed, evoking empathy and emotional connections from the player.

Notes and collectibles are a common way for games to create convincing worlds, with *Baldur's Gate 3* becoming one of the most

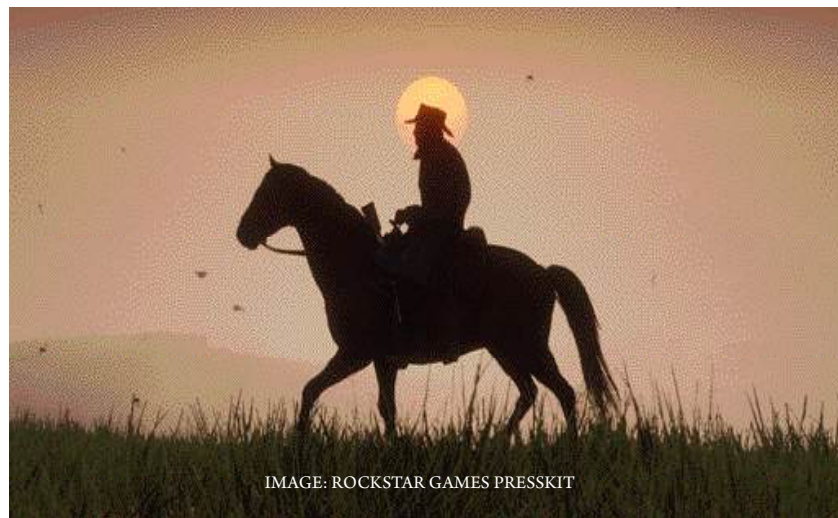


IMAGE: ROCKSTAR GAMES PRESSKIT

collectible-dense games in the industry. This is because many of these notes are completely hidden from the player, and contain lore that wouldn't otherwise be revealed to them. If you don't open Kagher's hidden chest, you wouldn't be able to find a note that opens an entire side quest to the player. The more people you pick-pocket or chests that you lockpick, the more you find, from tiny scraps of paper to whole books, some of which offer quests, but others enrich your understanding of the world that you're exploring. Whether it be the history or the minds of the people who live in it, the sheer attention to detail given to these collectibles probably explains why I'm unable to get rid of most of them; my character's pockets are full of wads of paper and notebooks that they're sure they might need later... right?

World maps are another absolutely crucial element of worldbuilding in fiction. *Baldur's*

*Gate 3* takes the crown with three enormous maps filled with details and interactions, but other games such as *Red Dead Redemption 2*, *Skyrim*, the *Fallout* series and the *BioShock* series also use maps in the menu and mini maps to give

the player a sense of direction in each world. Understanding the space the player has to move around in brings the level design to life, and immerses them in somewhere that feels more real, as if they are interacting with a setting that has its own fair share of history – something that is integral to the stability of its fictional world.

Video Games are a fast growing form of media and different types of games are being developed all the time. From making characters feel as real as people to paying close detail to the setting of their games, developers spend a lot of time adding easter eggs and depth into their works to bring them to life. Next time you spot a genius background detail in a game's environment or through collectibles – whether it be signs, billboards, notes, or eavesdropping – you might spare a thought for the intelligent storytellers that put it there for you to discover.

# LEARNING HOW TO FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT: STREET FIGHTER 6

JOE RICHARDS (HE/HIM) EXPLAINS WHY STREET FIGHTER 6 IS THE PERFECT INTRODUCTION TO FIGHTING GAMES

Having spoken to several veterans, the common consensus is that fighting games are in a better spot now than they have been in a long time. The release of several noteworthy titles over the past year has meant that the fighting game scene has seen a renewed interest by many, with millions upon millions of players picking up the latest entry in *TEKKEN*, *Mortal Kombat*, and this piece's focus *Street Fighter*.

*Street Fighter 6* was released to critical acclaim in June 2023 after nearly a year of trailers and promotion and marked a brand new beginning for the storied franchise, while remaining true to the foundations that have been built upon thus far. New characters, bombastic presentation and slick gameplay all come together to create an experience that feels as cool to watch as it brings to play, restoring the classic spirit of the arcade.

Despite this, Fighting Games are a no-

toriously difficult genre to become skilled in. Even as someone who has been playing games for over half of their life, the task of becoming skilled at even one game is a sport in of itself that – while intensely rewarding – is based on putting the time in and really pushing yourself to do better. *Street Fighter 6* is a game that truly welcomes these new players into the fold and offers a myriad of options to get you upto scratch in a fulfilling and rewarding way. Modern control schemes ditch the classic arcade layout in favour of a more immediately intuitive way of playing that will be easier to pick up and play, without punishing you for doing so. Instead of labelling this new control scheme as "assisted", it's labelled as "modern"! This small but noteworthy use of language helps to say to new players that this is the way to begin your journey up the ladder.

Comprehensive and approachable tutorials give players the ability to jump into playing

as a character without having to scour YouTube for the correct guide for them and again lower the barrier to entry while still maintaining the incredibly high heights of the fighting game community.

Before I knew what I was doing, I was holding my own in fights and making (somewhat) intelligent decisions about how to approach the game and the players I was facing – and I don't think I've ever experienced anything as satisfying as that.

The crown jewel of *Street Fighter 6* as the quintessential starting point for any fighting game hopeful is World Tour. A brand new addition to *Street Fighter*, this mode allows players to create their own custom character and venture beyond the battle ground and out into the world of *Street Fighter* to explore and experience a story all about literally starting from the bottom and working your way up to a seasoned fighter. Your journey begins under the teaching of the new face of *Street Fighter*, Luke, as he teaches you the basics of combat. From there, the story follows a relatively basic but compelling journey of meeting various icons from the *Street Fighter* saga and quite literally learning from the very best. Over the course of World Tour, you'll be given the chance to learn and adapt your very own moveset to suit your own style of combat. In doing so, you learn about the types of character you might gravitate towards and the type of approach you might want to take when you move onto the global stage.

The story of World Tour teaches you that the journey to improvement starts and ends as soon as you want it to, and comprehensively captures the spirit of the fighting game in a nut-



IMAGE: CAPCOM PRESSKIT

shell. Games like *Tekken* feature stories all about godlike fighters duking it out in high stakes conflict, and there's a disconnect between these powerful fighters and the skill of newcomers. The same is true for the vast majority of fighting games, and even other games in the *Street Fighter* series. World Tour marks a new age of the fighting game

story, where the player is put in the spotlight and told that "it's okay to start out at the bottom" and tells them that nothing is impossible if they put practice and thought to it.

While *Street Fighter* might not be winning awards for having the most provocative or mindblowing narrative of all time, this new angle for storytelling sets the stage for a new type of story to emerge, where players take control of their own story and are encouraged. In that way, it might be one of the most resonant stories that has ever been attempted in a game – while making you feel as cool as anything when you finally land that combo that you've spent hours on and land the killing blow to one of your friends.

*Street Fighter 6* is only set to grow more and more over the course of years of new characters and stages to experience. With a constantly changing battlefield and one of the most supportive communities in the gaming space, there's literally no reason to not give *Street Fighter 6* a look. You might find a new passion – and you might come across me on the streets!



IMAGE: CAPCOM PRESSKIT



# IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF DINOSAURS: FOSSIL HUNTING IN WHITBY

ISSY ARMSTRONG (SHE/HER) EXPLORES THE FOSSILS TO BE FOUND AS A BEGINNER FOSSIL HUNTER ON WHITBY'S BEACHES

Since the eighteenth century, Whitby has been a vibrant and popular UK tourist destination. It is located in the North East of England, and has a rich history, with the first Abbey being built in 657 AD. Today, Whitby is famous for inspiring Bram Stoker's *Dracula* after his visit in 1890, and it's annual Goth Weekend, which has been running since the 1990s. However, one of Whitby's main draws takes us back much further in our history, to around 180 million years ago: fossil hunting.

Popular with both amateur and professional fossil hunters, Whitby forms part of the Yorkshire Coastline, stretching from the Tees estuary to the Humber estuary. On the 'Dinosaur Coast', one of the oldest dinosaur bones in the UK (nicknamed 'Alan') was discovered in Whitby in 2015. The sauropod backbone dated back 176 million years to the mid Jurassic period and was discovered after falling from one of Whitby's cliff faces. Most fossil hunters won't usually find anything quite so rare, but Whitby's many bays are home to a range of finds, such as ammonites, belemnites, and jet. One of the most popular is Saltwick Bay, located to the south of Whitby, and accessed by a beautiful coastal walk along Cleveland Way past Whitby abbey.

Ammonites have a particularly strong link

to Whitby history and geography. Their coiled shells are easy to identify, and their rapid evolutions and short lifespans, make them incredibly useful for identifying the age of the rocks they were fossilised in. Ammonites are also famous for the snakestone legend. St Hild was charged with founding the first abbey in Whitby, and first had to rid the area of a plague of snakes; she took one by the neck and threw it off a cliff where it curled up and turned to stone. In Whitby Museum, these histories are brought together with a large number of ammonites arranged to show their evolution, and a sample of 'snakestones' with snake heads carved onto ammonites. For any local history fans, geologists, and fossil lovers, it is part of an incredible collection!

Belemnites were squid-like animals with an internal skeleton, forming a bullet shape feature, that lived during the Jurassic and Cretaceous periods (between 210 million years ago to 66 million years ago!) The fossilised skeleton is a common find in Whitby, especially in Saltwick Bay. Jet is an iconic Whitby found, formed from fossilised monkey puzzle trees, and used by a number of jewellers. Jet is easy to identify by dragging along paper—

if the streak is black, it is coal, and if the streak is brown, it's Whitby jet!

For beginner fossil hunters, fossil hunting tours are a fantastic option for exploring Whitby's beaches, usually priced around £20-30 for three hours exploration with a group and an expert. These are a great way to get answers to many of your questions and can be great fun when you are starting out at any age.

In October 2023, I had the opportunity to go on one of these tours, starting at Natural Wonders, a fossil shop in York. On route to Saltwick Bay, our guide, Steve, gave us a few ideas of what we were looking for on the beaches. Some fossils are exposed on the beach but many of them are enclosed in nodules, unusually round rocks that may be surrounded by broken up shale. These can then be cracked open with a geologist's hammer, often revealing an empty nodule, but sometimes fossilised bone or ammonites.

Steve also pointed out one of Whitby's shipwrecks, visible from Cleveland Way. The MV Cretebook was intended to be scrapped in 1947, and deliberately sunk, however it was struck by the Whitby Scar in shallow water and broke apart. The remains were only partially cleared up and can still be seen at low tide. Saltwick Bay is accessed by a large number of steep downhill steps, but worth the effort once you are on the beach.

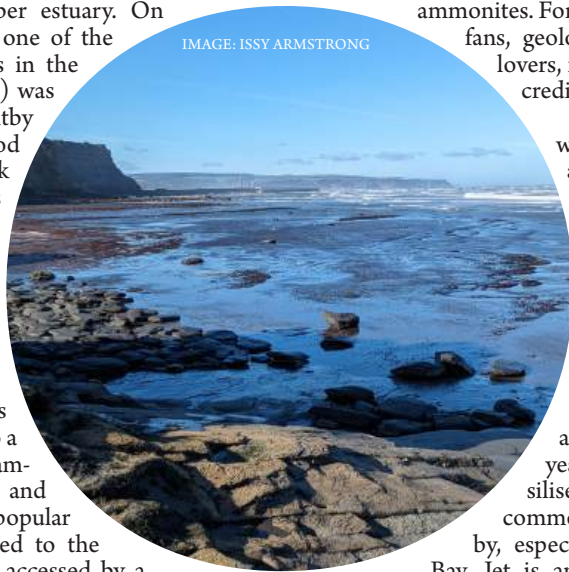
Along Saltwick Bay, Steve stopped the group to show us his favourite fossils on the beach, including a dinosaur footprint that had been left among the rocks. This one, he told us, would stay on the beach because it would be too difficult to move. Between our group, we had

found a number of ammonites and belemnites, most of us coming home with something from the Dinosaur Coast. However, one thing Steve said has stuck with me and it will be something I remember every time I look for fossils:

to remember to leave something behind for the next person on the beach.

When you first begin fossil hunting, all finds, no matter how common, are incredibly exciting and it might seem unfair to have to leave behind what you have found, but half the joy of fossil hunting is being able to share in your discoveries. It could be the next person's first time fossil hunting too! Sharing the joy of the Dinosaur Coast, and leaving something behind for the next person to enjoy is at the very core of fossil hunting.

For those who may have found nothing at all: there are always the wonderful fossil shops in Whitby where you can find an array of ammonites, belemnites and fossilised dinosaur teeth, and support this beautiful town.



# EXPLORING CUMBRIA: SOLWAY COAST AND THE LAKE DISTRICT

EMMA STAPLES (SHE/HER) REVEALS HER FAVOURITE PLACES TO WALK AND EXPLORE IN CUMBRIA

Growing up in Carlisle, Cumbria, my weekends were full of hiking in the Lake District and exploring all the little towns and villages nestled in the hills. Today, I always look forward to my trips home from university so that I can pull on my walking boots and head out to the Lakes, often veering towards Helvellyn or the Langdale Pikes, which are two of my favourite places to hike. Although, during peak seasons – typically the spring and summer months – the Lake District can get quite hectic with flocks of tourists, bringing traffic congestion, noise pollution, and crowded footpaths. According to the Lake District National Park on average 18.1 million people visit the Lake District each year. And whilst tourism benefits the local economy and often generates a great buzz in the area, especially around Keswick, Ambleside and Windermere, my family and I prefer to avoid the hectic crowds and explore some of the quieter (and extremely underrated) places in Cumbria and the Lake District this time of year.

The Solway Coast Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB):

A short and scenic twenty-minute drive from Carlisle City Centre begins the Solway Coast AONB, a beautiful stretch of coastline along the South Solway Firth that is a patchwork of salt marshes, woodlands, sandy beaches and peat bogs. Even in peak seasons I encounter few tourists in the nature reserves and footpaths along this stunning coastline. A small handful of lay-bys dot the road that runs along the coastline, and oftentimes my mum and I will park

our car in one of these spots and traverse the undulating marsh for miles, regularly stopping to admire the huge stretches of sandy beaches and the ebb and flow of the ocean beside us. On the other side of the Firth lies Scotland and small clusters of houses and farms cover the landscape that looks deceptively closeby; my mum and I often wonder how many hours it would take to get there if you could walk directly across the Firth.

My favourite nature reserves to visit in the AONB are Drumburgh Moss, Glasson Moss, RSPB Campfield Marsh and Bowness Com-



mon. I like to explore these places because you can make your walks as long or as short as you desire, with each reserve offering easy-to-follow circular loops that range anywhere from two to six miles. Drumburgh Moss is one of the smaller reserves, but it is no less beautiful, with its earthen footpaths, wooden boardwalks and a viewing platform that overlooks the wild peatland. I love to come here during the summer when

the bog's wildlife is a vibrant array of colour and the air is filled with the sounds of birds and dragonflies. I have learned to be cautious of my step as I always find lizards basking in the sun on the boardwalks. Roe deer inhabit this landscape and wild ponies graze here too, as a way of managing the landscape sustainably.

Glasson Moss and Bowness Common are perhaps my favourite reserves in the AONB due to their network of boardwalks which traverse the peatlands. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature UK, Bowness Common is the largest raised mire remaining in England. RSPB Campfield Marsh is another larger nature reserve and, managed by the RSPB, it has a small Information and Discovery Centre where you can borrow binoculars to observe the array of birds who inhabit the wetlands including Lapwings, Curlews, Wigeons and Oystercatchers to name a few.

These nature reserves are all situated near the village of Bowness-on-Solway, and there are two great little cafes here that I often find myself in after a day of walking. My favourite is Pear Tree Tea Room which offers a delicious selection of homemade cakes, light lunches, coffees and teas. But it isn't open everyday, so be sure to check their Facebook page for their opening hours if you're going to visit! Hunter Leisure Cafe is also great, and they're open every day of the week. Also, if you fancy a proper meal after being out all day, the food in the Kings Arms Inn is fantastic and I really recommend their fish and chips!

Lowther Castle and Askham Fell Loop: Located in the Lake District, Lowther Castle can get quite busy during the day, but if you head there early in the morning you can easily park your car and have the surrounding area virtually to yourself! Lowther Castle is a great starting point for a number of walking routes, but my favourite is the Lowther and Askham Fell Loop, which is a lovely eight mile walk that only takes a few hours to complete. The walk offers beautiful views from Askham Fell of the surrounding hills and is a great start to the day. Also, if you finish by 11:30am, which I often aim to do, you can reward yourself with a coffee or tea and a hot bacon roll from the cafe at the entrance to Lowther Castle. They're delicious!

These are just a small handful of the places I love to go in the spring and summer months when the Lake District can get quite hectic, and if you go, I hope you enjoy visiting them too!





# ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT WINE: FROM AN EXPERT

GRACE CLIFT (SHE/HER) SPEAKS TO EXPERT CATHERINE FIELDEN ABOUT ALL THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS TO KNOW

Understanding wine can sometimes feel like understanding a complex mathematical equation; there seems to be endless rules, with a tone of exclusion to each one. But this doesn't have to be the case – enjoying and understanding wine can be a great way of gaining a new hobby, learning new things, and socialising. I've spoken to certified wine expert Catherine Fielden, Content and Communications Manager at *Slurp* and WSET Certified Educator, to clear up all of the mysteries surrounding wine.

Firstly, what's a note? Well, Catherine defines them as 'aromas and flavour characteristics', and there's three types. Primary notes come from the grape type and fermentation process (e.g. floral, green fruit) and secondary notes come from the post-fermentation process – for example, the effect of putting wine in an oak barrel. Tertiary notes come from the ageing process, and can be anything from dried fruit to leather. There's an element of subjectivity to determining notes – if you just feel like it tastes "tropical", that's okay!

When trying to buy wine in a store, it can be difficult to know what you're choosing be-

tween. Catherine went through each of the most popular types of wine in the UK, and how to distinguish them:

Pinot Grigio – neutral, white grape, straightforward

Chardonnay – white grape, can be made in so many styles and regions (Chablis is Chardonnay in an unoaked style!)

Sauvignon Blanc – white grape, aromatic, herbal, pungent

Merlot – great starter wine, medium body/intensity/acidity

Cabernet Sauvignon – high acidity, blackcurrant, high tannin (which comes from the skins of grapes, and causes a furry feeling in your mouth after drinking)

Pinot Noir – red fruit, earthy flavours (one of Catherine's personal favourites!)

Malbec – black fruit, oaky

Once you've picked your wine, there's lots of guidance surrounding how best to drink it. This is, of course, only a suggestion, based on what brings the flavours out the best according to the experts. For white wines, roses and sparkling wines, it's best to chill the bottle before drinking. You can do this in an insulated container or in an ice bucket, but if doing so in an ice bucket, make sure to add cold water as well as ice to ensure it's chilled slowly and correctly.

Red wines can be served at room temperature or slightly chilled – the light reds, like a light Pinot Noir, can be lovely chilled. The best type of glassware is narrow at the top with a bowl base, to keep the aromas contained within the glass, and holding by the stem of the glass prevents body heat from altering the temperature of the wine.

releases the aromas, and allows one to 'assess the nose' – basically, smell the aromas and find the notes. Swirling can give a lot of information about a glass of wine: you can detect the condition of the wine (whether it's faulty or not, if it smells faintly of cardboard), intensity (a light wine "lifts out of the glass", and the other types are medium or pronounced), development (either youthful, developing, developed, past its best – fresh and fruity wines tend to be youthful, whereas older wines may have notes of mushroom or dried fruit), and characteristics (notes).

Pairing wine with food may seem like a maze of rules, but Catherine says that ultimately, it's up to personal preference. There's no point having a drink you don't enjoy to fit in the rules! Generally, her recommendations are that high acidity wines go well with salty foods (much like putting lemon on fish and chips), and spicy food tends to make alcohol more noticeable, so go for a lower alcohol wine. Sweet foods work best with an even sweeter wine, and deep flavoured foods like curry or casserole should be matched with a highly concentrated or intense wine.

In conclusion, Catherine recommends Pinot Grigio or Merlot for a first time wine-drinker, and notes that if you already like Champagne, Spanish Cava is made in the same way and tends to be a lot cheaper. New tax rules mean that lower alcohol wines are going to become slightly cheaper, so that's a good place to start too. Wine is supposed to be savoured, can be a great way to make new friends, and tends to taste delicious!



IMAGE: KELSEY KNIGHT



IMAGE: KLARA KULIKOVA

One of my personal biggest questions was about swirling – what's it for? Is it just to seem fancy? Catherine had the answer: swirling wine

# THE PROBLEM WITH NESTLE: BOYCOTTS, RIVERS, EXPLOITS

GRACE CLIFT (SHE/HER) UNCOVERS THE CONTROVERSIES AROUND THE WORLD'S LARGEST FOOD AND DRINK COMPANY

Nestle SA is the largest food and beverage company in the world, and controls a variety of companies selling everything from pet care to nutrition. *The Financial Times* recognises their net income at 11.21bn CHF (which is around 9,860,000,000 GBP), and they particularly dominate the sales of chocolate and baby formula. However, they have a murky history of child labour exploitation, drying up creeks and a long battle with Baby Milk Action. So what happened?

The most famous controversy surrounding Nestle is the baby milk boycott, which has been going on since 1988. Nestle has been producing infant milk formulas as healthy for babies, while putting sucrose in some formulas – specifically, formulas sold to lower-income countries. Breast-milk "cannot yet be replicated in a lab", and yet Nestle has promoted their product as closer to breast milk than other companies, and having similar health benefits. All

the while, aggressive marketing of baby milk has broken baby milk marketing policy on at least 107 instances (in Nestle's own report), and Baby Milk Action claim it has caused unnecessary death and suffering.

As well as this, Nestle have allegedly been involved in multiple instances of workers' rights abuses,

including using child labour. A 2019 report from the ALF-CUI alleges that Nestle USA has interfered with organising rights on multiple occasions, and campaigned against unions. In 2021, they were also sued by eight former child workers, who accused them of "aiding and abetting the illegal enslavement of 'thousands' of children on cocoa farms". They also only released their first ever child labour report in 2017, and "could not guarantee that any of their chocolates were produced without child labor," as of 2019. Nestle Waters has been in multiple legal



IMAGE: ANNIE SPRATT

adherence of large companies to ethics policy, are the best ways for individuals to hold power in situations of large-scale injustices. Next time you go to buy your regular chocolate choice, have a look at the other options on display, and what their company prides themselves on on the front of their packets.

## EDITORS' NOTE

Hello, it's Grace, the current Food and Drink Editor! I'll be moving on from Food and Drink to Music Editor next year, and have loved editing this section this year.

This role, as well as all other roles in Nouse and MUSE, are up for grabs in the October elections. If you're looking to get involved in student journalism, or have a particular interest in the Food and Drink section, come run for a position.



IMAGE: CALUM LEWIS



ADELAIDE MADDISON SPEAKS TO JESSICA ANDREWS, AUTHOR OF 'SALTWATER', 'MILKTEETH'

Jessica Andrews was born and raised in Sunderland, before moving to London for university, a huge culture shock that she hadn't prepared for. Now a best-selling author who has lived all over the world, I sat down with her and asked her to reflect on her time as a student and the early days of her success as a writer. Upon the initial publication of her debut novel *Saltwater* (2019), I remember feeling equally shocked and excited to see someone representing a story that felt very similar to my own.

Ever since I was little my family had encouraged me to leave Sunderland behind as soon as I got the chance. There was a certain pressure to take something that I was good at, like English, and be the absolute best at it. Otherwise, what was the point? I'd be sure to get left behind, with no chance of an escape. It wasn't until I got to university that I felt a strong connection and sense of pride to where I was from, being surrounded by people who felt very different to me. These contrasting ideals made my university experience initially confusing and somewhat isolating. Jessica embodies these feelings of fractured identity and conflict beautifully in her writing. She is both comforting and boldly candid. I think she is a very important author for young women and working-class people to read, particularly for those wishing to break through into creative industries.

**Did you feel university was a competitive space for you?**

I don't know if it was competitive. I think I was just completely unprepared for it. I was the first person in my family to go to university, getting in was the goal. I feel like other people were thinking miles ahead, about what kind of careers they wanted to do. They just seemed to know how the world operated and for me, I hadn't thought past getting a space there.

I think a lot of it came from being working class but not knowing that I was working class and then suddenly being in this elite world. I was out of my depth but at the time I didn't feel like there were many conversations about this stuff, so I didn't know how to ask for help. I was embarrassed. I don't think I spoke in a seminar until my third year. I just didn't say a word because I felt so nervous. In my third year I decided I couldn't leave the room until I'd said at least one thing. Right now, I'm teaching at a university, it's mad to think, I'd never have imagined I'd be able to do that.

**Did this ever make you feel bitter?**

Probably not at the time because I internalized a lot of my differences. Later when I developed more class consciousness, I could see that it was systemic and structural and then I started to feel really bitter. But at the time I just thought it was something wrong with me, I felt inadequate. Rather than outwardly projecting those feelings which is probably a healthy way to deal with it, I just turned it inwards on myself. I felt ashamed of who I was. So I think feeling bitter is sometimes a good thing.

**How did you find the quick success of your novels?**

It was lots of things at once. Publishing *Saltwater* was amazing. Before that I just worked in a bar. It changed my life and gave me so much more stability. *Saltwater* is semi-autobiographical, and I started to look at my life differently. I don't know, it's like in one way you're very involved in your life and your memoirs but in another way, it gives you this weird sense of dis-

tance from the world, like you're not totally living your life because you're archiving it and exuviating it all the time. So that was strange to navigate.

**When sharing so much of yourself, how did you preserve parts of yourself for you alone?**

Even if you're writing about your life there's a level of artifice. The thing that I've learned is that everyone will always think that everything written is true, whether or not it is. Now I feel like I can play with that a little bit. Sometimes as a writer the book can feel louder than your lived experience but over time that's felt less and less. My life now feels much bigger and louder than the book.

**Why do you write about characters who are disconnected and fractured? Is that how you view yourself?**

In both of my books the protagonists are from the North East. They both have fragmented consciousnesses that they're exploring. I was thinking about the legacy of industrialization and what it means to grow up in a place like Sunderland. When I was growing up it was really struggling with a sense of identity because the identity is tied to places like the mines and the shipyards, which no longer existed.

I was thinking about the links between social class and gender. There were all these messages like, if you worked really hard you could improve your life and make it better but that was kind of a myth because the problems were much larger and to do with the economy and the closure of these big industries. I guess as a young woman the message that you internalize is kind of like, if you can improve your body and make it better, that's also kind of a social aspiration. You can improve yourself academically, financially, whatever it is but it's also to do with beauty and the body and how a lot of the shame you might feel becomes projected onto your body. That disconnected fragmented consciousness is sort of like a result of all of these other fractured elements in society.

**Did these feelings push you towards entering a creative industry?**

It's a way to kind of find yourself on your own terms. It gives you control over a story. That can feel kind of powerful if you don't feel you have control over the place you came from or the way that you're perceived. It's true about feeling the pressure of having to be the best if you've been rendered access to these spaces or you're going to



IMAGE: SIMON HAMILTON

get thrown out.

I felt like with moving away I kind of lost connection to my culture, like I couldn't really get it back. Writing about the North East has giving me a route back to it and created a new sense of belonging. It's almost helped me reidentify that identity in my adult life.

**How do you define home now?**

The North East still feels like home, that's where my family are. But then I also have family in Ireland, and I've spent a lot of time in London. Places where I've had really formative experiences or where my friends and family are. But it would be nice to be a little more settled somewhere.

It does sort of go back to that thing where, if you leave your community behind, you're always looking for that sense of home. It's like you're trying to get back this thing you left behind, but you can't really find it anymore.

EDITORS' NOTE

Hi everyone! We've had such a fun time as Editors of the Creative Writing Section this year! We hope you've enjoyed all of the brilliant writing we've published.

We hope everyone has a wonderful summer, and to that end, here are some summery book recommendations we would like to share!

**THE BEE STING** -

Paul Murray

A modern Irish classic totalling up to 600 pages exploring various strands of a fracturing family in the ever increasing summer heat. Short-listed for this year's Booker Prize.

**CALL ME BY YOUR NAME** -

Andre Aciman

This 2010's modern classic of heat, power, pools and peaches is just as strangely compelling as the subsequent Timothee Chalamet film set over a tempestuous French summer.

**ROUNDABOUT** -

Phong Nguyen

An experiment in meta-fiction, this 2024 novel is written without using the letter E. Filled with characters who refuse to conform to their narrative, this book is perfect if you want a challenge in the summer months!

**Thanks Again!**

Mia Scattergood

Emily Stocker

POEMS BY JEAN AKINTOYE

TO DECAY

What's so intriguing about broken glass?  
Does it evoke the form a soul can take  
When eroded, struck and bent out of shape?  
Whose face do you see when the mirror cracks?  
Could you still recognise it as your own?

How many flavours of pain have you tried,  
That your tongue tells one from the other?  
Where do you see love, where I only see  
A cutting edge, dripping with affection  
Long-scuppered?

What is so fascinating about dust?  
Where do you see nurture in disrepair?  
Why offer love to a heap of ash?  
What is it that makes it worth sifting through?

ODE TO CHALK

Wrenched from the cliffs like a  
Child in a wooden wagon -  
Honed and trimmed till nothing remains,  
Save the bones.

Slashed away at the concrete pavement  
In the vaguest impression of a soul -  
Like some ethereal imprint of man,  
Less alive than a ghost.  
But still you see it and hear  
The distant cousin of a heartbeat.

BLUE VALLEY AVENUE AUN HAIDER

Let me tell you of a place  
where there is nothing but space.  
Where I like to chase  
butterflies that leave without a trace.

There, the sky is always lavender  
there are farmers of the highest calibre.  
They grow every kind of flower  
and the bluebells go on forever.

Rows and rows of them bloom  
under the light of the moon.  
Their sweet scent in perfume.  
They smell sweet from dusk till noon.

I promised I wouldn't come here  
and their warnings had been clear.  
But they had all given into fear  
so their cries I pretended not to hear.

They said this place was a  
haunted wasteland.  
That the deaths of the ghosts had been

planned.  
It was vast, large, grand  
and  
from it we were all banned.

But I couldn't resist the nectarines that  
grew,  
or the honey from bees that flew  
or how the sky went from lilac to blue.  
I loved to visit blue valley avenue.

I'll visit even if my only company will be  
tumbleweed.  
I'll smell the flowers, I'll plant a new seed.  
On its many fruits I'll feed  
but I'll never give into greed.

Once the fruits have dried  
and all the flowers have died

I will admit I lied  
because at blue valley avenue I hide.

HYSTERIA HUSKY  
VANESSA ROMERO

i want the  
taste of butter  
i'll even serve you some  
scraped my flesh to the  
bone  
embraced the curse i've be-  
come

if i told you about the fruit  
you'd also bear cain as a son  
if i told you the carnivorous  
truth  
you'd take the moon as  
your home

you'll already know how to  
butcher  
but i'll show you how to  
run

out of the attic you've long  
outgrown  
head out the oven but put  
to the gun

if i told you a secret so saw-  
toothed  
you'd eat men whole with  
your hair undone  
if i told you what the incan-  
tation brewed  
you too would become a  
hound uncontrolled





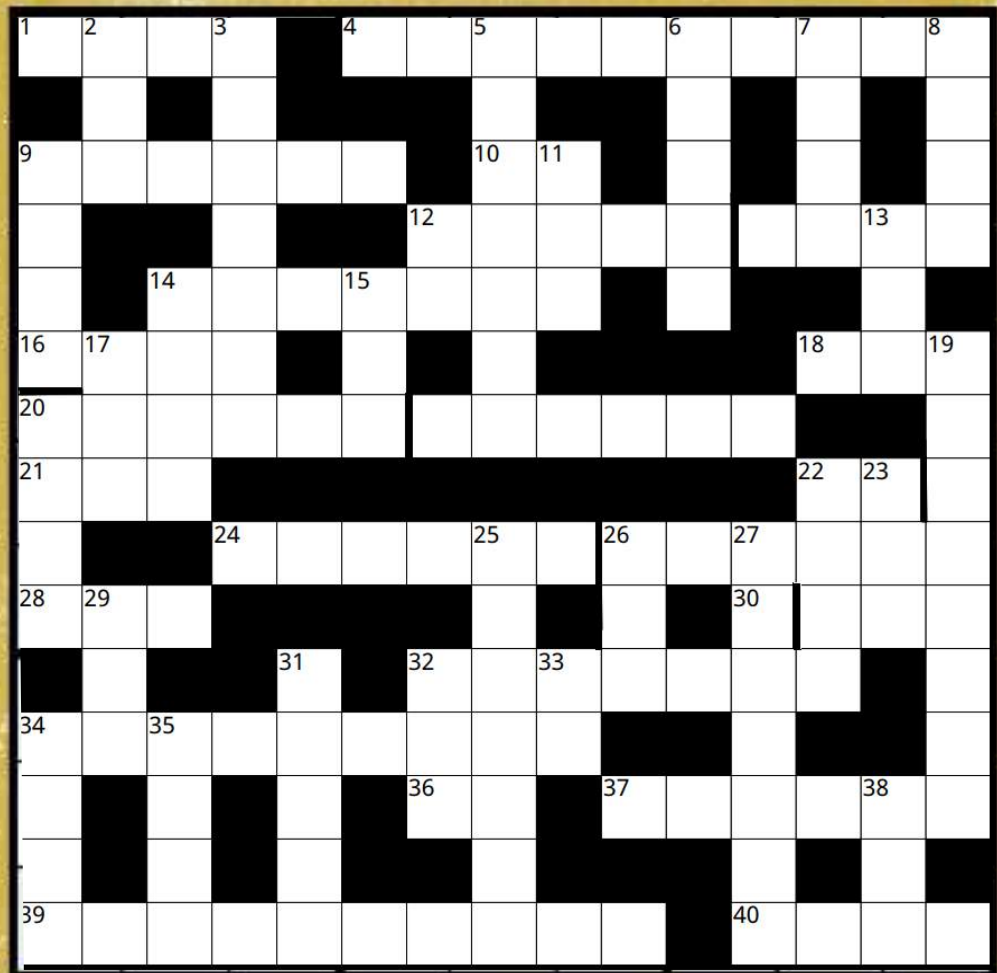
CROSSWORD

ACROSS

1. Facts and figures (4)
4. Not English (Anag.), university area (10)
9. Sign of approval when pointing up (6)
10. Expressing where royalty are from (2)
12. Plant with silver bark (5,4)
14. Lightly rainy (7)
16. Clarified butter (4)
18. Part of "mph" (3)
20. Yorkshire town and lesbian capital of the UK (6,6)
21. Sometimes modern, sometimes fine (3)
22. One \_\_\_ million (2,1)
24. \_\_\_ & \_\_\_, pub and bus stop on Lawrence St (6,6)
28. Place for a napkin (3)
30. Loads (1,3)
32. Bakehouse on Walmgate
34. Could be confused for a minister (9)
36. \_\_\_ top of (2)
37. Coxswain's crew (6)
39. University staff (10)
40. Himalayan legend (4)

DOWN

2. Wednesday around Easter (3)
3. Held in high regard (7)
5. Alert! for film fanatics (7)
6. Salsa holder (5)
7. Hammer-wielding god (4)
8. Tom, Dick or Harry (4)
9. Area in York (4,4)
11. Cook, in a way (3)
12. Well done, as a naval signal (2)
13. Resident of Eden (3)
14. Borrower's burden (4)
15. Peaceful and relaxed (3)
17. She/ \_\_\_ (3)
19. Sunday potatoes (8)
22. Man, for example (4)
23. "The Matrix" protagonist (3)
25. Virginia Woolf Novel (7)
26. Lady bird (3)
27. Famous museum in York (7)
29. Old fashioned cooker (3)
31. \_\_\_ alla vodka (5)
32. Dude (3)
33. Opposite of new or young (abbr.) (2)
34. Extravagantly theatrical (4)
35. Tuesday food (4)
38. Bigger than a mouse (3)



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

SUDOKU

← Easy

Hard →

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



# York and North Yorkshire elect first ever Mayor

**Antonia Shipley** (she/her)  
POLITICAL EDITOR

On 2 May 2024, York and North Yorkshire took to the polls to elect their first ever Mayor. The Mayor will chair the York and North Yorkshire Combined authority, taking on the responsibilities of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner. They will possess powers over transport, housing, adult education, policing and securing land development.

Six candidates took part in the bid for the position: Conservative, Keane Duncan, Labour's, David Skaith, Liberal Democrat, Felicity Cunliffe-Lister, Green, Kevin Foster, and two independents, ex-Conservative councillor Paul Haslam and Keith Tordoff.

Nouse attended the count at the Harrogate convention centre on 3 May 2024. The

Chief Executive of North Yorkshire Council and returning officer for the election, Richard Filton, emphasised the importance of this election to the region: "this new devolution deal that we've pulled together will ensure that politicians in Westminster understand the issues that we want."

Voter turnout was announced at 11:30AM and was 28.89%.

Speaking to Independent, Paul

Haslam, before results were announced, he was "expecting turnout to have been around 15% like previous PFCC elections". When asked about what he thought about the relative success of Independents in council elections across the country he joked "I'm actually worried I may be let



IMAGE: ANTONIA SHIPLEY

ting the side down!" He stated that his biggest achievement in the race was "getting my ideas out there, in the [Conservative] party I found my ideas got suppressed, I don't

mind ideas being rejected and modified, but I don't like my ideas not seeing the light of day".

Nouse also spoke to Green Candidate, Kevin Foster prior to the result who said "I hope we at least get our deposit back, we're a small party, we don't take large donations, but if you look at what we spend per vote, we really get bang for our buck". Regarding what electoral success in the region could mean for the Party he said "it means governments will look at us and say 'they're still coming' and stop U-turning as both parties have been doing".

Independent Keith Tordoff also expressed dissatisfaction with the two main parties, when asked what he thought about the prospect of a Labour or Conservative candidate getting elected he stated "the tribalism between the City of York Council and North Yorkshire Council will continue, people have told me they'd want a Labour Mayor for York and Conservative for North Yorkshire

so hopefully people can see that they need an independent" he also enunciated he was "feeling confident, I'm the only candidate whose been to all the Hustings and I hope that the people have seen that I'm the only candidate planning to serve the people and not the parties".

Speaking to LibDem, Felicity Cunliffe Lister, she said "we've made some really good progress in the party, especially at the grass-roots level."

The results began to be announced at 2:25PM, which were primarily for the North Yorkshire area alone. The results for North Yorkshire saw the Conservatives receiving the highest number of votes with 44,794 and Labour second, with 41,122,

The hall was taut with uncertainty and anticipation as the collated results were duly announced, Cunliffe-Lister received a total of 30,867, Duncan received 51,967, Foster received 15,188, Haslam received 12,370, Tordoff's total was 13,250 and Skaith secured 66,761 votes in total, meaning a prodigious victory for the Labour and Co-Operative candidate of over 15,000 votes. The room swelled with celebratory cheers and exclamations from the Labour team.

The new mayor, David Skaith, took to the stage, characterised by his well known soigné. Harrogate-born Skaith stated his pride in being elected

in his home-town and stated "I think we have a great opportunity to bring York and North Yorkshire together and really grow as one" before finishing with "The message is clear across the country that we want change, I believe with the Labour party and Keir Starmer this will only continue".

Amongst the entropy, Nouse spoke to Green candidate, Kevin Foster, following the announcement, who said he was "relieved we got our deposit back so we can fight again" and claimed "had we not had a Green candidate I would have voted for Skaith, we need to support him going forward together and look to the future for our youth".

Speaking to Conservative, Keane Duncan, he told us: "I'm inevitably disappointed but we fought a fantastic campaign, reaching every single community, I've met people from all backgrounds, all walks of life" and when asked about the future of the Conservatives, he stated "the worst thing we can do is hide away, we need to get out there and seek confidence"

Nouse spoke to Leader of the City of York Council, Claire Douglas, who had been central to Skaith's campaign, she said: "it just shows you what the national swing is, a victory in Rishi Sunak's backyard and David is absolutely the right person to lead the region."

# Sunak and 'Sick Note Culture' in the UK

**Isobel Moore** (she/her)  
DEPUTY POLITICS EDITOR

Ahead of the looming general election, Rishi Sunak and the Conservative Party have planned to remove the power to provide sick notes by GPs. First flagged by Jeremy Hunt in the autumn statement, these plans were mentioned in a recent speech by Sunak and have since caused backlash.

Sick notes are used by those certifying their illness; offering a valid reason not to work and claim sick pay. Sunak has claimed that GPs issue sick notes by default, breeding this so-called 'sick-note culture' and that disability benefits have become a "lifestyle choice" for some people. Last year, 11 million sick notes were issued and 94% of GPs assessed patients as unfit to work.

Those affected by these planned reforms may be reminded of Iain Duncan Smith, then Work and Pensions Secretary, and his 2015 promise to end 'sick note culture', and focus on what claimants "can do." Or, they may be reminded of 2007 and, also then Work and Pensions Secretary, Peter Hain's same promise, and com-

ment that people being in, rather than out of, work is good for their mental health problems.

Sunak's worries are post-covid related, with the pandemic largely pushing the numbers of people in the UK with mental health issues. According to the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) around 20,000 people in the UK made incapacity benefit claims on the grounds of mental health issues. And, of assessments made in the past two years for people claiming disability benefits 69% involved mental and behavioural disorders.

However, whilst highlighting the people he also highlights the economy. He claims there is an 'over-medicalising' of everyday challenges and that this 'sick note culture', as he calls it, is pushing people into economic inactivity. However, the Director of Strategy at disability charity Scope has said that the level of inactivity is more so due to the breakdown of public services, the low level of quality jobs and the rate of poverty in households where people have disabilities. Another expert in employment studies, Tony Wilson, has said economic inactivity is mostly driven by those



IMAGE: XAVIER DONAT

outside of work who have been for a long time.

Sunak mentioned that PIP, Personal Independence Payments, will rise by more than 50% in the next four years. He argues for a new reform to change the responsibility of issuing these sick notes from GPs, who may be overstretched or "subjective", to other health-care professionals who may specialise in diagnoses and make

objective assessments to whether someone is fit, or unfit, for work. Also, if the Conservatives win the upcoming election he says those out of work for 12 months, and have had support from a work coach, will have their benefits removed. However, any point as to who these 'specialists' will be and whether they will need to be recruited was never mentioned.

Although denying a lack of com-

passion in the Conservative's plans, arguing those who do need help will still gain it, his speech did fail to mention the pressure facing the NHS in mental-health related cases. The mental health charity Mind cites the mental health waiting list consisting of 1.9 million people needing support. Another charity, Sense, has called the PM's speech damaging and pulled into consideration the already stigmatised workplace for those with disabilities, with unfair work practices and little to no support.

Labour's Keir Starmer has opposed Sunak's speech, calling it a re-hash of Theresa May's 2017 policy, and instead claimed to be focusing on the issue of getting people back into work amidst the action needing to be taken on the NHS's waiting lists.

With the 13-19 May being Mental Health Awareness Week, talks over mental health are more prevalent than ever. The Director of the NHS Confederation's primary care work network highlights the more complex needs of NHS patients now and that the Prime Minister should be focusing on promoting good mental health and well being.

## GLOBAL POLITICS



### India's Election Commences

India's 2024 election commenced on 19 April and continues till 1 June. It's the largest demonstration of democratic participation in history, with at least 969 million registered voters are expected to cast their ballots over the six week period. Research suggests that the Bharatiya Janata Party, led by Modi will win a third successive term.  
- Antonia Shipley

### Drone Strikes in Myanmar

Myanmar's government in exile claimed responsibility for twenty-nine drone strikes, which targeted military bases across the country. The military Junta in power shot down seven of the drones. The Junta claimed there were no casualties. This is just a recent spout of violence in a country gripped by a three year civil war. - Tom Lindley

### French and Vegan Croissants

The French and vegans: two kinds of people who you don't often find together. This week, vegan croissants have hit the headlines in France as a threat to traditional pastries. Rodolphe Landemaine is ruffling some feathers with his dairy-free boulangeries but it's not that easy to alter the French's taste for buttery layers. - Emily Warner

### Madonna's Free Concert

The final stop on Madonna's latest tour, a free concert at Rio de Janeiro's Copacabana beach. It is estimated that 1.5 million fans attended the show that is celebrating Madonna's 40 year career. There were giant screens across the beach to ensure that everyone could catch a glimpse of the world famous singer.  
- Orla McAndrew



# The Violent Wrangle for Rights in Iran

**Anonymous**  
POLITICS CORRESPONDENT

On 1 February 1979, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, Islamic revolutionary, politician, and religious leader, was invited to return to Iran by its government, following 14 years of exile. This succeeded the overthrowing and exile of Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi in January of the same year marking the Iranian Revolution, also known as the Islamic Revolution. This replacing of Iran's prior, historic monarchical government with the theocratic brought Iran's monarchy to an end - beginning the country's operation under its interpretation of Sharia.

Pahlavi had previously aligned Iran with the Western Bloc. Following Iran's coup d'état in 1953, backed by the US and UK, which displaced elected PM Mohammad Mosaddegh in favour of strengthening the shah's rule, a close bond with the US was formed to secure Pahlavi as an authoritarian ruler. As Shah, Pahlavi directed Iran away from the Eastern Bloc and Soviet Union.

The Iranian Revolution had been marked by one central idea, freedom,

inspiring women to oppose the Shah. However, once Khomeini, and clergy, took power it was swiftly decreed on 7 March 1979 that women must wear the veil in government offices. Khomeini described it as not entering the workplace 'naked'. This swiftly transformed celebrations, and what was meant to be Iran's first celebrated International Women's Day on 8 March, into protests.

Other immediate changes involved the suspension of the Family Protection Law, which allowed men to divorce their wives and notify them only by mail, marry more than one permanent wife, and prevent their wives from going out or working. Child custody was also removed from women.

Despite protests, two years after the revolution, in 1981, it became compulsory to wear the hijab for girls over the age of nine. This move only triggered more protests, all of which were crushed.

Where does that leave us now? In 2005 the Guidance Patrol was formed, an organisation enforcing Sharia Law, most specifically the wearing of hijabs, as a successor to the Islamic Revolution Committees founded in 1979.



IMAGE: IMPAKTER

On 16 September Mahsa Amini died in police custody after wearing an "improper hijab", leading to some of the largest protests the country has seen. In response to the protests, over 500 people were killed by security forces. Although Iran has denied responsibility for Amini's death, a UN human rights report concluded that she had died "as a result of beatings".

Amongst the many reactions to Amini's death was that of rapper Toomaj Salehi, sentenced to death

for "spreading corruption on the Earth". Salehi is known for his music challenging the Islamic Republic, such as 'Rat Hole', released in 2021, in which he rapped "If you play in the middle and ask, 'What is politics? / Know that we don't have a vote to abstain. / Nobody can be neutral in this battle'".

Responding to Amini's death, Salehi released two songs, 'Battlefield', and 'Divination'. Swiftly after the release of the latter, Salehi was arrested in the Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province and two forced apology videos appeared online. Salehi has a jail sentence of six years and three months, and according to *The Guardian* UN experts claimed that he had been beaten in Jail.

In November 2023 Salehi was

released on bail, posting a video to YouTube in which he described how he had been beaten whilst in custody. He was arrested two weeks later for "publishing lies and disturbing the public mind after publishing some false and undocumented comments online," as published by the judiciary's media outlet. The Islamic Revolutionary Court consequently raised Salehi's sentence to death.

Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's speech on Eid Al Fitr, April 10, has seen a resurgence of violence against women, reinforcing the compulsory hijab and actions to be taken on those who go against religious norms. This led to an increased presence of 'morality police' under a new campaign called 'nour', or 'light'.

Iran's parliament has also now passed a Hijab and Chastity bill, which will see women facing up to 10 years in prison under the bill, with people being dressed "inappropriately" being sentenced to a fourth degree punishment. Fines are also included for those mocking the hijab or promoting nudity. The bill still needs to be approved by The Guardian Council to become law, and has previously been rejected twice.

# Labour to Renationalise the Railways if Elected

**Tom Lindley (he/him)**  
POLITICS EDITOR

When British Rail began being privatised in 1994, it was seen as a necessary solution to reduce the bureaucracy and improve the efficiency of Britain's greatest invention: the train.

In the years following, rail usage has soared, leading many to argue that Britain's new system of private enterprise controlling the railways has worked. However, with mounting delays, rising rail fares and a constant string of industrial action amongst rail workers, passengers are looking for a solution. Keir Starmer believes he has this solution. If elected at the next General Election, the Labour Party has pledged to renationalise the railways within five years.

In a move described as "unfunded" by Tory Transport Secretary, Mark Harper, Labour plan to create a public body, called Great British Railways (GBR), which will inherit the rail contracts bought by private operators. This move aims to save taxpayers £2.2bn annually. Labour also plans to automatically refund passengers impacted by train delays and improve internet connection on board under GBR.

Rail Partners Chief, Andy Bagnall, has argued that Labour's plan will only "increase costs over time". He claimed that renationalisation will have adverse consequences on other public services such as the NHS, as the rail service is now competing for funding with the already stretched public services.

MR Bagnall makes a strong point. GBR would have to compete with other public services for funding and with a recent pledge to increase defence spending to 2.5 per cent of GDP, it looks like GBR would lose out on funding down the line. It may not take a great toll on the state coffers however, as roughly one in four of all rail journeys are taken on a service that is government run, so the foundations for complete government ownership are already there.

While it might not have the support of Conservative ministers and rail bosses, it has certainly struck a chord with the public. A YouGov poll released in April 2024 shows that 65 per cent of the public and 77 per cent of Labour voters are in favour of nationalisation. Perhaps this discontent is due to only two thirds of trains arriving on time in 2022/23. Over this period, rail fares also increased by 5.9 per cent; this is now a system that is

now charging commuters more for less.

Despite a rather strong level of support from the public, Labour is doing all it can not to succumb to the stereotypes of the former nationalised rail service, British Rail.

To many, the thought of renationalisation might bring back memories of smoke-filled carriages and the soggy, depressing sandwiches that were sold on board. There is (rather unsurprisingly) no mention of this in Labour's plans. In fact, there is no mention of renationalisation at all.

Shadow Transport Secretary, Louise Haigh, said that the Labour Party "weren't ideologues" and would

continue to use private enterprise on the railways when it could add value. This refusal to call the public ownership of the rail service nationalisation, combined with Labour's willingness to keep the private sector involved in the transition, could create problems for Starmer.

He is arguably juggling too many stakeholder interests and the lack of a clear direction could make him look indecisive and in the pockets of big business. A group he will be hoping to prove wrong with the policy is his party's left-wing faction. Renationalisation of the railways is seen as a relatively cost-effective strategy that appeals to those members who still believe in the public ownership of

industry. At a time when his party are heavily divided amongst the factions, Starmer needs easy wins like this to cement his support across the party.

One thing the Labour Party will have to consider if elected is the power of the rail unions in all this. There has been a continuous flow of industrial action on several lines throughout the past few years and Labour must maintain good relations with the unions if they want to keep these strikes at bay.

Just last year, *Nouse* spoke to striking rail workers outside York Rail Station about their motivations. Those on the picket line said that their main reason for striking was to protect the jobs of those who work at the ticket offices. Last year, the rail companies set out to scrap 974 ticket counters across England but the wave of industrial action that followed forced the Conservatives to U-turn on their backing for this plan.

The Shadow Transport Secretary has promised not to close ticket offices or change staffing levels, but this doesn't necessarily keep the striking workers content. The unions have demonstrated that they have power to alter government policy to such an extent, Labour needs to stay committed to shaping GBR in their image and not the image of the Unions.



IMAGE: MATT BUCK

## LEFT WING RIGHT WING



In the new Left Wing Right Wing, *Nouse* asks the political organisations on campus their view on the following:

**"Do you believe YUSU's new guidelines on impartiality amongst political societies are too strict?"**

**YUSU President: Pierrick Rogers**

"The guidance issued by YUSU in relation to political societies is not something YUSU has unilaterally decided on. The document is only meant as direction on existing Charity Commission guidance, namely guidance on campaigning and political activity (CC9), as well as guidance about elections and referendums from the Commission and specific guidance issued to us on political Clubs and Societies.

We understand the frustration certain groups may feel about the guidance, but the Charity Commission is our government regulator and unfortunately, we are required to comply with the guidance they issue. Clubs and Societies wanting further clarification on the guidance are more than welcome to get in touch with us."

**Lib Dem Society**

The University of York Liberal Democrat Society did not respond to *Nouse*.

**York Tories**

I am happy to say this is a rare occasion for us to see YUSU legislation that we can support and agree with. I would say that by nature we are a Conservative society and therefore will always endorse a Conservative candidate. However, since the association is not officially officiated members are encouraged to use their best judgment when endorsing a candidate.

**Labour Club**

Whilst we respect the requirement for YUSU societies to remain politically impartial, it seems impossible for us to be A-party political due to our membership of National Labour Students. This seems to expose contradictions which exist in UK charity law, not just YUSU policy. YUSU risks punishing societies for supporting parties aligned with their values.



# Tech Stocks: How are they doing 2024?

**David Chu he/him**  
BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

ChatGPT, online interviews, and Bard. Living in the year 2024 means co-existing with the rapidity of technological advancement. Accompanying this ever-changing landscape is a great uncertainty, and in many cases scepticism and anxiety. To accommodate this, the first ever global summit on artificial intelligence took place on 1 and 2 November last year.

The main goal of the summit was to outline the dangers of AI, whilst seeking to attenuate them. Additional objectives centred on international collaboration for safety (namely how national and international frameworks can be supported), and ways to cooperatively evaluate its abilities. This has been deemed a “world first agreement”, reducing competitive pressures between key states like the USA, UK, and China. Other names who were present include: Michelle Donelan (the UK’s technology secretary), Ursula Von Der Leyen (the European Commission president), and Giorgia Meloni (the Prime Minister of Italy). Those who did not appear were Justin Trudeau (the Prime Minister of Canada), Emmanuel Macron (the President of France), and Joe Biden (President of the USA). In many ways, their lack of appearance could indicate something more sinister than merely a busy schedule, suggesting a general apathy towards the

subject matter.

Outside of governmental figures, many technological CEOs were in attendance, most notably Elon Musk. Despite his current development of ‘Grok’, an AI bot intended to challenge ChatGPT, Musk has been transparent in his warning against AI. He stated, “for the first time we have something which is going to be smarter than the smartest human”, rendering such technology “one of the biggest threats”. Acting on his fears, Musk founded OpenAI with Sam Altman in 2018, which is a non-profit research lab that makes its software open-source, preventing it from being controlled by a single person or corporation. This concept of reducing AI as a tool of individual power, whilst also broadening the market to ensure consistent checks and balances, is something that pervades the majority of AI discussions.

Commencing his own speech on the matter, Prime Minister Rishi Sunak declared, “there is nothing in our foreseeable future that will be more transformative for our economies, our societies, and all our lives than the development of technologies like Artificial Intelligence.” With the government claiming to take the risks of AI as seriously as our current climate crisis, one may wonder what its explicit ramifications are.

Over the next one to two years, it could be possible for AI systems to orchestrate cyber attacks on significant infrastructures, subsequently result-

ing in the loss of electricity and water for targeted areas. The potential for AI to construct biological weapons or conduct chemical warfare has also been stipulated. The most commonly suggested outcome of this has been future pandemics, fuelled by the intention of wiping out civilisation. Thus, the summit’s main conclusion was to subsidise safety research. Harking back to the point above regarding the climate crisis, each country will commit to nominating its own experts to conduct such research, inspired by the organisation of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. Adopting a similar sentiment, day two of the summit amount-

ed to the agreed development of an independent ‘state of the science’ report, with this being led by the award-winning scientist, Yoshua Bengio. Working in unison, Rishi Sunak and USA Vice President Kamala Harris will now formulate ‘world-leading’

safety institutes. These will seek to unify governments and AI creators, resulting in state-led testing of frontier models prior to their release. The institutes will also implement preventative measures to impede malicious actors from accessing dangerous AI tools. However, the logic behind this action is immediately flawed. With the outlined plan to reserve advanced AI for purely governmental usages, the threat of war and cyberattacks remains. The similarities between this plan and the one applied to nuclear weapons furthers this unsettling sentiment, intensified by recent nuclear intimidation. Does this then mean

that soon enough, AI will also be utilised as a threat during conflicts? Additionally, will it merely be reserved to intensify certain global powers whilst being cut off from other countries, thus furthering global inequalities?

Further policies will be discussed at later summits, first in France and then in the Republic of Korea within the next six months.

This means that the questions I have raised may soon have answers, no matter how bleak...

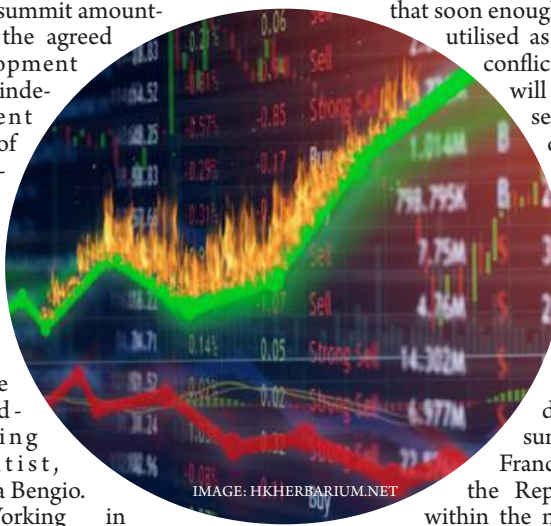


IMAGE: HKHERBARIUM.NET

# Student trip to support small businesses

**Millie Simon (she/her)**  
BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

Just like every other student, my housemates and I were incredibly exhausted and burnt out due to impending university deadlines and external chatter. We decided enough was enough: we were prepared to leave everything behind and go for a retreat...to the Yorkshire Dales.

We grabbed our wellies, a compass and lots of cheap alcohol and took a train to Darlington, where we were greeted by a lovely (albeit initially creepy) gentleman called Ray. The instantly chatty gentleman owns a small, independent book shop, with old and new novels spilling out of the shop along with CDs and Bob Dylan vinyls. After loosely detailing our plans for the next few days, Ray was generous enough to offer us a free guide book on the Yorkshire Dales. If any of you are in Darlington do stop off at The Book and Film Exchange and say hi to Ray for us!

After touring the Richmond hills in the “Little White Bus”, past the shiny new lambs and over unstable bridges, we stopped off for a well-deserved pint at The Bridge Inn in Grinton. A beautifully decorated pub with a splendid outside area and gracious service, you are certain to enjoy a warm afternoon basking in the sun - as we did for three hours whilst we waited for our accommodation to be ready.

On the second day, we packed a bag and travelled into Reeth, which is just a five minute walk from Frem-

ington. There, we bought brick-sized sun-dried tomato cheese from Reeth market for our families, and a tuna sandwich from the bakery.

We purchased large ice creams from the Reeth Ice Cream Parlour, and ate them in the rain because we were too intrigued to interrupt the

stormy afternoon.

We walked for three hours over the vast fields and slightly more sturdy bridges with the distant echoes of lambs, dodging storm clouds and enjoying the undulating pathways along a turbulent river. We petted every dog we could and rejoiced when we saw

and quaint independent shops at our disposal.

On our way back to York, we stopped off in Richmond, where there was a vibrant and colourful market with many independent business owners selling their goods. Aside from the meat, fish and cheese stalls, we particularly gravitated towards the jewelry stalls.

After trying on many differently decorated rings and bracelets, I settled on a silver ring with an orange gem. The owner informed me that she works with her friend to make the rings, and takes great satisfaction in customers buying and wearing the jewellery she makes.

Other stalls at the Richmond market included an assortment of hats, paintings and home decorations. The atmosphere at the market was one of jubilation and we certainly felt welcomed by the residents.

So, students, get out. Go buy an ice cream and walk, as far as you can. Leave your phone on ‘do not disturb’ and explore the Yorkshire Dales. Trust me, you’ll have many tales!

Independent shops are struggling through the cost of living crisis and workers are forced to get by with hardly anything. Students too are facing the same issue. If you do one thing this summer, ditch the chains and opt for the independent stores. You might meet a Ray, or an Ice Cream Man in the rain, or at the very least have some scrumptious sun-dried tomato cheese to munch on.



IMAGE: MILLIE SIMON

older gentleman who was telling us about the time he wrote to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to voice his outrage over the war in Gaza. You’ll find this man sitting outside of the shop, probably with a coffee, probably smoking something, and he’ll be more than happy to talk politics with you, as he was with us, that

our first buzzard of the day. Mercifully, I didn’t have service on my phone and so we relied on local maps, bizarre topics of conversation and catchy George Michael tunes to occupy ourselves. The break from constant chatter and distractions that the university life bring us was essential, and we were grateful to have such stunning scenery

## Business in Brief

A digest of some recent and interesting figures to know:



IMAGE: SCHEDULER

£6.1bn

Shell reported better-than-forecast profits of £6.1bn since January 2024



IMAGE: KAHISU TAI

£200

Average UK worker £200 a week worse off than before 2008 financial crisis



IMAGE: MICHAEL JOHN ARCHIVES

300%

Pink Floyd’s ‘Dark Side Of The Moon’ sales skyrocket 300%



IMAGE: RAWPIXEL

7.1/10

Norway scores 7.1 out of 10 in analysis making it the best country for female workers



# Dyls changes hands after 12 years

**Daisy Couture** (she/her)  
BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

On Sunday 21 April, Dyls cafe threw a party in the park to celebrate the end of its current ownership. The 'Last Dance' ran from 4pm-late and involved free Cresci's pizza, live music and 10% off drinks.

Dyls is a cafe and bar situated in a Grade II-listed bridge motor house on Skeldergate Bridge with four quirky rooms and a terrace overlooking the River Ouse. Jan Dyl opened the cafe in 2012 along with family members, and the business has been in their hands up until now.

On 10 April, Jan announced via an Instagram post that this 12 year period was coming to an end.

In the caption, he said: "After 12 of the best years here at Dyls, the time has come for us to move on and embark on a new and exciting venture!"

"Making the decision to sell Dyls has been one of the toughest we've made. Years of dedication, hard work,

and striving to be the best we possibly can has taken its toll, and we feel it's time to let someone with new ideas and inspiration continue its legacy, which we know many of you have grown to love."

In the build-up to the party in the park, more Instagram content was posted. Jan promised followers that the business was going to "go out with a bang" and said that it would be "lovely to see as many faces down here as possible, we can't wait!"

The 'Last Dance' was a success, with lots of customers in attendance. The terrace was full and many took over the lawns outside of the cafe. Due to the excessive (and unprecedented) numbers, this meant that there was not enough Cresci's pizza for everyone; however, Jan acknowledged this and apologised in an Instagram post following the event.

The party featured live music from Benjamin Beattie, Will Dreyfus and Rupert Engledow, as well as a DJ set from Kodi Kooch.

In addition to the free pizza, Dyls offered a 10% discount on all of their beverages for the entire night. People were encouraged to bring their own

chairs, glassware and many brought their own food and drinks to sit outside with.

Dyls was first put on the market 15 months ago and received offers exceeding £250,000. Jan told *The York Press* that he would miss running the cafe when the time came for handover.

He said: "There isn't a building like this in York - a cafe bar over four floors, in an old motor house, with four completely different rooms with beautiful river views - and the best sunsets in York."

"I will be really sad to give it up and I'd like to make sure I pass it on to the right people so I can continue to come back in the years to come!"

**"Making the decision to sell Dyls has been one of the toughest we've made."**

Dyls will be handed over to Sophie Knight, owner of SOPHiE's cafe on Lendal Bridge. She has agreed to take over the business with the help of her parents, Stuart and Nicky Knight, who ran the Mallyan Spout hotel in Goathland for 20 years. The handover was initially meant to take place on 30 May, but was pushed back to the week

commencing 6 May due to unforeseen circumstances.

Sophie has been running her cafe, similarly situated in a former toll house on Lendal Bridge, for three years. They currently host 'Fizz and Fondue' evenings and 'The Cake & Cocktail Book Club'.

Stuart Knight told *The York Press* that the takeover was an "exciting opportunity", claiming that "because it is a successful business we want to continue along the same lines."

Sophie expressed that she had been wanting to expand her business into a second site for a while, and that Dyls seemed like the perfect opportunity to do so.

She said: "[SOPHiE's] is open from 10am-5pm - 6 or 7pm on a Saturday and sells coffee and cocktails. Dyls is open into the evening. It is bigger than us, and has a larger outdoor area. We are like a baby version of them!"

She added: "It is very, very big shoes to fill. Dyls has a very good reputation and is very well established. The saying goes: if it ain't broke, don't fix it!"

Jan has similarly reassured customers that not many changes will take place to the cafe, apart from the name - it will be renamed 'SOPHiE on Skeldergate'.

He commented: "The staff are staying and keeping the same roles. It will be the same food, drinks, and friendly faces. It's not going to be too different."



IMAGE: @DYLs\_YORK

# York's new mayor owns small business

**Alexandra Pullen** (she/her) and **Daisy Couture** (she/her)  
BUSINESS CORRESPONDENTS

On 3 May, it was announced that David Skaith of the Labour Party had won the first ever mayoral election for the region of York and North Yorkshire. The role will entail him building and developing close links with the government as well as having control over decisions such as those regarding transport, policing and regeneration of the local area.

Speaking on his new role, Skaith commented: "I'm honoured to take on the role of Mayor for York and North Yorkshire. I'm looking to bring York and North Yorkshire together as one."

This opens the potential for the new Mayor to economically expand the region in whatever way they may choose. Speaking to *The Stray Ferret*, Dr Richard Hayton, Associate Professor of Politics at the University of Leeds, explained the impact and limitations of mayoral power in regards to the economy of York and North Yorkshire. He said that while on the surface, Skaith will "only have a limited capacity to directly boost the economy", when looking at the bigger picture and liaising with parliament, he will "hopefully [play] a key role... as a champion for the region who can attract investment..."

Skaith is the owner of a small business here in York and he has taken many opportunities to highlight this. Winstons of York, an independent men's clothing shop on Swinegate was opened back in 2015 and pride themselves on designing their own t-shirts,

sweatshirts, jumpers and accessories.

Speaking with *The York Press* on the day of the election, a sales assistant at the shop, Frankie Hayes, said "I've been following the count on the radio and social media and I'm over the moon that David has won. I think he'll do a really good job, he's level-headed and hard working and has al-

ways championed small businesses."

On his website, Skaith portrays himself as a "value for money Mayor". He is not, he says, a "career politician". Rather, he "run[s] a small business and [is] Chair of the York High Street Forum." Throughout his campaign, he has highlighted how his business has allowed him to connect with the peo-

ple of the city of York but also understand what is needed to improve the wider region.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Skaith's business was affected by the lockdowns.

In an online video, he said: "I knew that Covid was going to affect the business [...] we were probably going to close, being a clothing shop and not exactly essential."

"York is heavily reliant on tourism, especially overseas [...] that was going to have a big effect on how the shop was going to run."

Emphasising the importance of stability, he commented: "As a small business owner, you need to know when you're going to be opening."

"There were times when I didn't think Winstons was going to survive. [...] The fact that I did think we weren't going to open - there wasn't anything to say that we were going to be open in April, May, June time, and what would we be opening up to?"

Skaith promises that he has a "credible plan" for York and North Yorkshire and his experience with his business will aid him in getting the "best deal for our region."



IMAGE: FLICKR

## Business in Brief



20%

The estimated government spending of Singapore's GDP by 2030.



175,000

The amount of jobs positions in the US added by employers in April amid their rising unemployment rates.



1.5 Million

The amount of existing homeowners remortgaging this year in the UK.



£11.44

The newly increased National Living Wage amid rising pricing rates.

Image Credits:  
Pixabay  
Rawpixel  
Flickr



**Science in Short**
**New life-lengthening vaccine for cats discovered**

Japanese doctor Dr. Toru Miyazaki has discovered a way that we can make cats live twice as long. During his research, he noticed that many felines die from poor kidney function as a result of a build-up of dead cells and tissue accumulating and blocking the kidneys. In human and mouse kidneys, the protein responsible for the degradation of these blockages, AIM, is able to move towards dead cells and dispose of them. In cats, however, this protein is unable to move into the urine and hence to the kidneys as it is too tightly bound to its carrier antibody. This new, AIM-based vaccine will help to increase the levels of AIM in cats, hopefully helping to prevent the kidney failure that many cats die from. If all trials are passed and the vaccine proves to be a success, cats should expect to be able to receive this vaccine around 2025, which Miyazaki is currently trying to get globally patented to be sold at an affordable price. In the meantime, cat owners can purchase cat food with high levels of AIM to supplement their cats' deficiency and assist kidney function.

**Total solar eclipse visible in North America**

On 8 April a total solar eclipse occurred across North America, passing over Canada, the USA and Mexico. A total solar eclipse occurs when the Earth is in the moon's shadow, causing a period of darkness where the sun appears completely covered by the moon. Total solar eclipses are rarer than partial eclipses, occurring somewhere in the world around every 18 months. The next total solar eclipse will occur in 2026 and will be visible from Greenland and Iceland, as well as parts of Europe, but North America won't see another one until 2044.

Outside of the total solar eclipse's path it can also be viewed as a partial eclipse; April's eclipse could be seen partially in the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland and Scotland, as well as the west sides of Wales and England. The UK won't see its own total solar eclipse until 2090, but will see a partial eclipse in March next year.

# Social media algorithms: What don't we know?

**Robyn Garner** (he/him)  
SCIENCE EDITOR

With the inescapability of social media in the modern age, the algorithms that organise them have the potential to influence our thoughts, feelings and actions. It's certainly not a part of the internet experience people are unaware of, with swathes of social media users praising or damning it. Every day I stumble across another Instagram reel telling me "the algorithm loves me" because I've stumbled upon a band still small enough to meet fans at gigs or an author still small enough to sign every copy. They're not necessarily wrong - many creators have found their career kickstarts on social



media. But why are they on my feed? The science behind social media algorithms is consistently unclear to the average user. This is in part due to its ever-changing nature; however, social media companies notoriously lack transparency about how they generate the content we see. It is a widespread fear that social media creates political polarisation and extremism through the content it puts on our feeds. It seems important to ask: what exactly is it we don't know about them?

Algorithms themselves are often misinterpreted in modern language usage. In computer science, an algorithm is a series of steps which takes

an input and repeats a finite computation until an output is reached. Much like AI, the word algorithm has become synonymous with any task performed by a computer, which can often confuse exactly how we understand it. Some social media platforms, such as Facebook, use a form of machine learning known as neural networks alongside their algorithms to filter content. Facebook uses these to score posts relevant to a user (collected by a separate software) and create a ranking which determines what a user sees. Neural networks mimic human thought processes in their computation, made up of hundreds of thousands of simple interconnected processing nodes. They learn by analysing large quantities of examples which allows them to find patterns and assign labels. They are inherently difficult to understand, as not even the people who create them are able to decipher exactly what processes lead to their end results.

Despite these somewhat unknowable methods, even Facebook has conceded that there is need for more widespread understanding around algorithms, with their Vice President for Global Affairs, Nick Clegg, announcing that Facebook was intending to make changes to their interface to increase transparency. In an article for *Medium*, he discusses Facebook's "oversight board" who make decisions on content that may violate community guidelines and the addition of the "why am I seeing this button?", although the latter is not yet particularly comprehensive.

Others feel there is still not enough being done. At the 2022 MIT social media summit, former Facebook employee and whistleblower Frances Haugen spoke about the addictive nature of social media algorithms and the various dangers they can pose. Other speakers at the event voiced concerns about the

effect of algorithms on politics and the extent of what we don't know due to refusal by social media companies to release the information behind their algorithms. Haugen points out that there are only 300 to 400 algorithm experts in the world, saying "there aren't enough people at the table."

Social media companies, naturally, aim to provide content that will keep you running back to their platform. This is, of course, reflected in their algorithms, which are tailored around what you engage with, who you follow, what entertains you and what the company has been paid to promote. Social psychologist William Brady has found evidence to suggest the algorithms additionally boost content that we are biased to learn from. This type of information is dubbed PRIME, which stands for "prestigious, in-group, moral, and emotional". Studies have shown that misinformation is often inserted into posts that provoked moral outrage.

This feeds both into the algorithm which picks content based on engagement, something a post that provokes outrage is likely to elicit, and thus into humans' psychological learning tendencies based around emotion and morals.

This shows a dangerous possibility to spiral into further polarisation. Studies have been conducted on if Facebook's newsfeed does polarise people. Differing results have been found. A study in collaboration with Meta took place into 2020, looking into the effect of social media algorithms on behaviour and attitudes during election campaigns. They found there was no change "in downstream political attitudes, knowledge, or offline behavior, including survey-based measures of polarization and political participation." However, a different study in 2021 re-

sulted in the opposite finding regarding polarisation.

Outside of concern for the algorithm creation, polarisation and biases, there is worry surrounding the influence of those who run these social media platforms on what content users see. While it would be preposterous to suggest an individual person caters content to each and every user, the idea that certain ideologies can be pushed forward or removed from sites is a possibility frequently discussed by the many users of a variety of different social media sites.

Recently, on the microblogging site Tumblr, there was a controversy between the CEO of Automattic, Matt Mullenweg and a transgender user of the site who was banned without initial explanation. Numerous users of the site accused Mullenweg of transphobia, claiming that he had removed the user due to deeming her post-transition photos as sexually explicit. Mullenweg responded to these accusations on a blog post on his own Tumblr account, where he said that it was instead due to a hyperbolic death threat that the user had posted about him. While Mullenweg may not have been abusing his power, it certainly demonstrates the potential that exists for CEOs to do so.

Whether a CEO or an algorithm - with good or bad intentions - it is clear that social media has become more and more influential on the way that we think. Perhaps algorithms offer a way to crack the code and boost yourself to fame, or perhaps they simply polarise us, politically and otherwise. Until we achieve more transparency and more research, it will remain a matter of debate.

## JWST deepens cosmological mystery

**Freya Milwain** (she/her)  
DEPUTY SCIENCE EDITOR

Astrophysicists at John Hopkins University have measured a value for the Hubble constant that clashes with the expected value based on early-universe data, meaning that our fundamental understanding of the expansion of the universe could be incomplete.

The Hubble constant is a measure of the rate of expansion of the universe, and has applications in studying both the history and the future of the universe. If our understanding of the universe is correct, data obtained from the ESA's Planck Satellite in 2013 puts the value of the constant at around 67.1 kilometres per second per megaparsec. However, there has been an ongoing discrepancy between this value and the value measured using data from the Hubble telescope, known as the 'Hubble Tension'. It was previously thought that this was most likely due to errors in measurements from the Hubble telescope, but according to recent research led by Adam Riess this may not be the case. Riess's analysis of data recently obtained from the James Webb Space Telescope has agreed with the Hubble telescope's readings, putting the value at around 73 kilometres per second per megaparsec, meaning

that the discrepancy could lie instead with our understanding of the universe itself.

Riess's analysis used pulsating stars called Cepheid variables as 'standard candles' - light sources of known luminosity that can be used to measure large astronomical distances. As JWST produces higher quality results than the Hubble telescope, Riess was able to reject the idea that there were errors in photometric measurements of these Cepheids when using the Hubble telescope that impacted the value of the constant enough to cause the discrepancy between values.

Data from the Planck satellite was used differently, producing a 'map' of cosmic microwave background radiation in the early stages of the universe, dating from about 380,000 years after the big bang. If the value of the constant obtained from these calculations turns out to be incorrect, this may mean that our understanding of the way that the universe has expanded since this early stage is flawed. While the discrepancy between values seems small, the fact that astrophysicists are consistently coming up against the same issue suggests that there is something fundamental that we currently don't understand.

However, the JWST data may not necessarily give a definitive value for

the Hubble constant. In April, astronomers from the University of Chicago led by Wendy Freedman presented preliminary results at a conference in London that put the constant at 69.1 kilometres per second per megaparsec, right between the competing values. Freedman's results have not been officially published and so cannot yet be properly analysed, but they do deepen the mystery of the constant, as both Freedman and Riess used the same methods to obtain their values, and so should theoretically agree on the value of the constant. If Freedman is correct, we might be able to accept our current ideas about the expansion of the universe, but this inconsistency in results raises even more questions about the Hubble Tension.

Far more research using new methods needs to be done into the Hubble constant to find its true value, but the availability of new data from JWST spells an exciting era for new cosmological discoveries. Ideas about the expansion of the universe themselves are fairly new: Riess himself was awarded a Nobel Prize for his work in 1998 regarding the discovery that the expansion of the universe is accelerating rather than slowing down, meaning that it is unlikely to collapse in on itself in the so called 'Big Crunch'. The previously thought. The implication continuing debate about the Hubble

constant proves that there is more

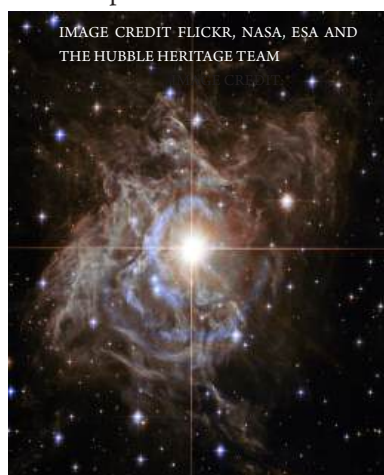


IMAGE CREDIT FLICKR, NASA, ESA AND THE HUBBLE HERITAGE TEAM

to learn about the future of the universe than our current models allow, as astrophysicists have not been able to devise an adequate alternative that explains the discrepancy.

JWST was only launched in December 2021, so findings from its data are still in their initial stages. However, these early discoveries show the promising start the telescope is having. The most powerful telescope ever built, JWST is already making waves in our understanding of the universe, and will hopefully lead to more discoveries in the future.



# Novichok : The chemistry of a modern day threat

**Sam Tiler** (he/him)

SCIENCE CORRESPONDENT

Novichok, a lethal nerve agent, emerged on 4 March 2018 after Russian spy and British double agent Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, were poisoned in Salisbury. This ominous toxin, however, is not a recent development; it has been lingering under the radar since its origins in 1970s Soviet Russia, where it was passed between labs in Soviet Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan for refinement and testing. It was created to be deadlier than its predecessors and marks the beginning of a fourth generation of chemical weapons, with its main objectives being: undetectable, able to bypass 1970s NATO chemical gear, and to circumvent banned chemicals in the Chemical Weapons Convention.

What is understood about the structure of Novichok is widely from testimonies of Russian scientists. It is believed to consist of an organophosphate backbone with alkyl branch groups (carbon chains) containing mixtures of fluorine, nitrogen and oxygen bonded atoms. It is extremely potent, five to ten times more so than previous nerve agents, making it fatal to humans even in tiny amounts. The chemical can enter the body via ingestion, skin contact, or inhalation, making it extremely difficult to avoid and easy to deliver. The main way Novichok attacks the body is by reacting

with an enzyme named AChE which helps the body with neurotransmissions. When this enzyme is denatured, it can no longer help with the breakdown of neurochemicals in the body. These accumulate throughout the nervous system causing overstimulation of nerve junctions, leading to involuntary muscle contractions and loss of communication with key organs. Over time, breathing becomes harder and eventually, if not treated, causes respiratory failure and cardiac arrest.

In 2018, Novichok was infamously used in Salisbury on Sergei and Yulia Skripal in an attempted assassination by Russia, although their involvement has been denied. Both were found on a bench in critical condition seizing with wide open eyes and "slipping in and out of consciousness". They were rushed to hospital and underwent months of critical care. It was discovered that the agent had been administered by contact with a perfume bottle within the Skripal's house that contained enough to kill thousands of people. In order to combat the agent within their bodies, decontamination was paramount to prevent further

damage to nerves. This is then followed by a chemical named Atropine, which works to competitively bind to

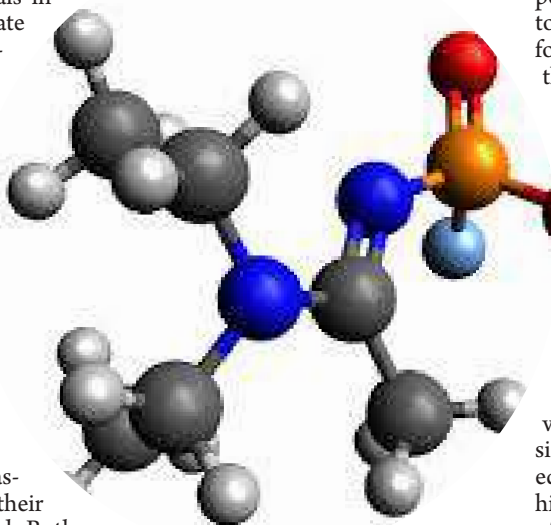


IMAGE: FLIKR CHIRAL JON

ceptors at nerve junctions, namely cholinergic receptors, which then prevents the binding of the accumulated chemicals and subsequent overstimulation, essentially acting as a blocker to the receptors. However, it is not an antidote and may not fully reverse the effects of the poison, and so further medical interventions such as oximes and serious care will help the patient to recover.

Due to the animosity surrounding Novichok, chemists do not have on-site biosensors, able to immediately identify the presence of the compound. Therefore, chemists have had to employ a variation of techniques for detecting Novichok agents within the body. One of these methods takes samples of bodily fluids, such as urine and blood, and subjects them to different analytical techniques known as Mass Spectrometry and Liquid Chromatography in order to identify degradation products of Novichok. Mass Spectrometry deals with the mass to charge ratio of ions in order to determine molecular composition, whereas liquid chromatography separates the liquid mixtures into their individual components for further analysis. By comparing spectra and expected values, chemists can determine, to a high degree of certainty, the presence of Novichok agents. Samples from other sources can be taken before undergoing similar analytical techniques; however, they mainly come from external places including environmental traces of Novichok from around the suspected area. For example - in soil, air and surfaces.

Aside from the difficulty in knowing when Novichok is being produced in facilities around the world, it is also extremely difficult to identify once it has been produced as it is a binary poi-

son. This means that it requires two stable chemicals that when mixed form an active poison. This allows it to be manufactured 'legally', as its components do not violate convention laws, but also makes it very easy to transport unflagged and so can bypass security very easily.

Further research needs to be conducted into active Novichok by looking at potential components that could result in their formation. This will give modern toxicologists the tools to create specialised equipment designed to identify Novichok on site using biosensors containing engineered enzymes, but also the knowledge to identify and flag any potentially suspicious compounds that could be used for these purposes.

Novichok's chemistry embodies a chilling reality of modern warfare. Developed clandestinely and designed for lethal effectiveness, its detection poses an ongoing challenge to chemists. Through the efforts of scientific research, methods of identification have evolved, but antidotes and rapid response poison mitigation are still in serious development.

Novichok serves as a stark reminder of the enduring consequences of chemical weapons proliferation and proves that there are some things we cannot prepare for. What might be the next weapon that science has to catch up to?

# CBD: Is it a miracle drug or just a cash cow placebo?

**Ben Morris** (he/him)

DEPUTY SCIENCE EDITOR

Having been valued at \$7.71 Billion in 2023, the global CBD market is a symbol of the growing use of alternative plant medicine. Its value is mostly owed to the supposed health benefits that many vendors and companies boast. According to mostly anecdotal evidence, CBD is said to help alleviate chronic pain, reduce inflammation, treat migraines, depression, anxiety, and even autoimmune diseases. Hearing this, it is easy to believe that CBD and its derivatives are some sort of miracle drug - akin to diazepam and morphine - but is this really the case? Is CBD the all-round drug of the future?

CBD, or cannabidiol, is a chemical found in the cannabis sativa plant. Unlike its sister drug THC, it does not have any hallucinogenic effects. In the UK, CBD oil must not contain more than 0.2 percent THC or else it cannot be sold, so testing is needed to prove the product does not contain more than the limit. Once tested and approved, CBD products go on the market and are consumed. There are many sellers of CBD such as dedicated CBD shops, alongside big high street brands that sell these products, including Holland and Barrett and Superdrug.

Cannabis-derived chemicals interact with the body through the endocannabinoid system (ECS), one of many sophisticated networks of regulatory communication. Comprising cannabinoid receptors, enzymes, and naturally occurring neurotrans-

mitters called endocannabinoids, this intricate system influences various physiological processes, from mood and appetite to pain perception and immune response.

Having only been discovered over the last 25 years, studies into how these enzyme-made endocannabinoids interact with the body may provide important information on how scientists can better manage issues that are a direct influence of the ECS, such as chronic pain, inflammation and other neurological issues. This new and promising field presents a reason as to why the CBD market is so lucrative.

Cannabis-based treatment for certain seizure disorders gained much traction in the media in 2012, when Charlotte Figi, an American girl with Dravet Syndrome - a rare and severe seizure disorder - was administered oil of a strain of cannabis containing very high quantities of CBD to help manage her seizures. Following the use of this strain, Charlotte's family noticed a large reduction in the number of seizures she was experiencing.

The success of this treatment spread nationwide, leading many families seeking treatment for similar seizure disorders to migrate to Colorado, the state where this treatment was legal.

Many patients reported success in reducing the number of seizures and the strain of cannabis was renamed 'Charlotte's Web'. In the following years, America's medical marijuana debate skyrocketed, and Epidiolex, the first FDA approved, CBD-based, oral anti-seizure medication was pro-

duced.

Despite this, a review paper published in the years following Charlotte's success with CBD for her seizure reduction noted some inconsistencies in patients reporting on their own seizure management using Charlotte's Web.

The retrospective review found that those that relocated to Colorado were three times more likely to report seizure reductions of more than 50 percent compared to those that were already established in the state. The paper interpreted this as over-reporting due to the bias that came from the mental and financial toll taken to relocate.

On the contrary, a different review paper, specifically looking into the effectiveness of Epidiolex, noted that the drug did seem to reduce the frequency of seizures in those with

Dravet syndrome compared to a placebo, but side effects vary, with some studies reporting that it is well tolerated, with minimal side effects and others suggesting that side effects are often moderate.

Another common claim that CBD can help manage anxiety has also been studied. A trial of orally-administered CBD versus a placebo shows a reduction of anxiety levels.



IMAGE: PEXELS ALESIA KOZIK

els in healthy volunteers with Seasonal Affective Disorder - not chronic anxiety, which has yet to be studied. Despite this supposed reduction, the study makes it clear that reduction of anxiety is only a possibility, not a definitive fact, unlike pre-

scription medication.

The rather problematic tie between CBD treatment and slower cancer growth is also often cited by sellers of these products. Good Hemp, one of the largest CBD companies in the UK, suggests that "CBD might even have a role in preventing cancer cell growth", going on to suggest it "could also help to alleviate symptoms related to the side effects of chemotherapy and other treatments."

The link used to back up this claim leads to the Cancer Research UK website that conclusively states that the studies do not convincingly show that CBD limits the growth of cancer cells; some studies have concluded that it does, while others show that cannabinoids may actually encourage the growth of cancer cells.

When researching CBD treatment, it is easy for consumers to become lost in the jargon of cannabinoid research, with many companies providing their customers with rather inaccessible papers to back up their claims. Sadly, as with many strands of alternative medicine, the desperate and less-scientifically fluent are preyed upon.

Inflammatory claims about how CBD products can help limit cancer growth, without actual sufficient research into the mechanisms of this, is completely unethical. The science of CBD is still relatively unknown, so the confidence in this compound that sellers have must not be conflated with medical fact. Cannabis and its derivatives may have a bright future in the world of medicine, but the current trials suggest otherwise.



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WE HOST A RANGE OF EVENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. SEE WHAT WE HAVE UPCOMING AND COME ALONG

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## EDITOR'S COMMENT

**Charlotte Tabearnt**  
(she/her)  
DEPUTY SPORT EDITOR

The last print edition of the year has allowed us to reflect on the many accomplishments of all the sports teams and societies this year at York. From inter-college competitions such as the Battle of the Birds, to individual successes across the university at BUCS.

The *Nouse* sport team has covered a variety of sporting events on both a collegiate and national level this year, finding interest in socially important issues, such as the continuing growth of women's sports. However, we've also had our fair share of laughter and fun with the likes of sport romance novels and looking at how sporting rivalries impact the way we take part in sport.

The key sporting event this semester at York, however, has to be Challenge Week 2024. For the second year in a row, sport teams came together to raise money to fund their future ventures. Raising an amazing £40,468 across the week!

This print has allowed us to further praise our sport teams and gain a greater insight into their talent. Particularly with the women

of the Pool and Snooker Society who have achieved great success while challenging stereotypes.

This print also looks outside of York, with commentary on the upcoming 2024 Paris Olympics and the upcoming competition in women's football, whilst providing a deeper look into the recent controversy surrounding the kit for the USA track and field team.

As an editorial team we have immensely enjoyed working on this print, as it is our last opportunity to work together as a team. We wish the best of luck to the next team and hope they enjoy their time as much as we have.

For myself, I know that I have found this opportunity to get more involved with sport at York, an amazing opportunity, and I have thoroughly enjoyed my first year in *Nouse*. My first interview with the Halifax women's team is a particular highlight, as starting this year I wished to focus on university sport so giving this team the praise and recognition they deserve was amazing.

Returning to this edition, I hope that you find the articles enjoyable and maybe find an article which inspires you to get involved with sport at York.

Thank you,  
Charlotte

## Nouse speaks to Tanisha Jain, 2023-2025 York Sport Officer



IMAGE: TJ

**Charlotte Tabearnt** (she/her)  
DEPUTY SPORT EDITOR

Tanisha Jain (TJ) was reelected in the March Student Union elections to become Sport Union President (soon to be renamed Sports Officer) for the next academic year, following her success this year.

When introducing her role, TJ presented a positive outlook on working with YUSU, stating that it is a "lovely" team committed to finding the best way to provide students with what they want and need. Unfortunately, her reasons for running for the role, which she names "the best job in the world", are not so positive. TJ talks about her experiences growing up in India as a female plus size athlete. She can play 15 different sports and has taken part in national basketball, discus and shot put competitions. Yet still people would say: "well you're fat, so you can't do sport because first of all you're a woman, and then you're fat".

However, these opinions never deterred her, but rather cemented her belief that sport can be for anyone. TJ stated "I wouldn't be here if it wasn't for my sports and I know how much it matters."

"I don't want other people to hear that you can't do sport because you are a woman or... because you have a disability, you can't do sport because you are trans." With this TJ emphasised the importance of diversity on committees such as YUSU Sabbatical Officers as they are evidence that anyone can belong at York. Particularly as, for TJ, sports can be accessible as long as "you have the right people making sure sports can be for everybody and I believed I was the right person for this."

TJ has vast experience with sport at York, being involved in many clubs and currently playing for the women's cricket and basketball teams. "Those clubs are my entire life... I love them both." She also praises the clubs that were open when she wanted to learn new sports. The clubs she has joined during her years at York were "incredibly nice to [her] and they've made [her] welcome which is something [she] didn't feel for a very long time."

To TJ this is one of York's strengths. "I don't believe we are not a sports university... I hear a lot of this. "York is not a sports university, it is a research university." I don't think that's true. I think we are a sports university because we make sure everyone can have a chance at sport... We have college sport which is, personally, a really good amount of

money for a whole year of sport and then we've still got university sports," which allow people of all abilities to get involved with sport.

TJ's love for her role is clear as well as her success but her time at York has not been without its difficulties. "The issues I face I don't think are because of my role but because of the person I am which is worse in some ways." TJ is an international student from India and is not only one of the few diverse members of SABBS but also of the past Sport Union Presidents. While she clearly takes pride in this diversity she brings to the committee she acknowledged "it has been difficult sometimes because the culture I come from, the place I come from... the way I work is different." She praises YUSU for being very "accommodating" as she has always been allowed to speak her mind and champion her beliefs. Yet many of her difficulties have come from outside YUSU.

"It is an open campus, it's an open university and York in general is quite White. I have been racially profiled on campus since I started this and unfortunately nothing was done, which I was really surprised by." It is not only her role that allows her to see the injustices around her but also the many intersectionalities she belongs to as an international student, a member of the LGBTQ+ community, a BAME student and a full time carer. "I've realised that when you come from that many intersectionalities there are so many more issues that you can have."

However, just like those that challenged her participation in sport growing up, this does not dissuade TJ: "It shouldn't be like this but I am hoping that when people like me come into these roles we can change it." She reaffirms the positive effects of representation in committees stating that "you can't be what you can't see." She felt the effects herself seeing Rohan Asher and Deb Dey being elected onto the 2022-2023 Sabbs committee. "I felt represented for the first time in like three years of being at university. I was like damn they look like me, they come from the same place as me, they understand what I've gone through." TJ is not alone in this feeling with many students coming up to her saying that "they've put themselves out there... tried new things because their sports sabb is someone they can relate to."

Because of people like TJ who are determined to make York a more inclusive campus, there has been a massive expansion of South Asian sports this year along with research

being done into trans and non-binary athlete experiences in sport. Research which TJ hopes will go on to guide national BUCS policy which she sees as "outdated" and quite "transphobic." With this success TJ recognises, "I'm not like the other people here, I know I'm different I know I come from different experiences I know that's my biggest strength."

It is progress like this that TJ only wishes to continue next year. However, TJ discussed the difficulties of running in the March election as her father had passed away a month before the election. "I wasn't in a mental or physical state to run." TJ reflected on this difficult period of her life but chose to run again knowing this is what her father would have wanted. "He wanted me to be in this role as long as I could be, he wanted me to help people... What proved to me that I really wanted this role was that this has the power to save lives, this has the power to change lives and I wouldn't want to give that chance away to anyone else."

Over this year, TJ has changed sport at York for the better with her focus on increasing inclusivity and openness within all sports and this is what she plans to continue. "I want to change sport at York, I want to make sure regardless of who anybody is, they can take part in sport, regardless of their age, their sex, their gender, their sexual orientation, their background, their skin colour."

TJ hopes to continue to increase inclusivity, not simply with regards to gender and sexuality, seen in her plans for an LGBTQ+ sports club and changing BUCS guidelines, but also economically. TJ discusses her plans to not only see an increase in the activities grant which can help students with the cost of membership and kit but also setting up a transport fund. "Your jaw would drop when you hear the amount students who pay for transport and I don't think it's fair that athletic clubs have to forfeit their fixtures just because forfeiting the fees is cheaper than affording transport."

Making sport more economically accessible at York has already been a focus and success of TJ, evident with this year's committee's choice to host Colours Ball on campus, an accessible venue which allowed ticket prices to be nearly half of the cost of previous year.

However, with any sport at York the focus comes back to Roses. "To be honest next year's main focus is going to be a home Roses. Nothing comes before a home Roses, we need to win."

## NOUSE STAT ZONE

32

After winning 32 international medals, Britain's most successful gymnast Max Whitlock has announced he will retire after the Paris Games.

72

With 72 points to 48, York wins the York / Durham college varsity.

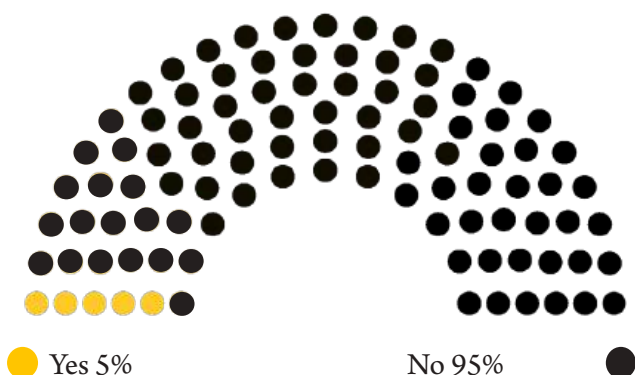
91

Roses are...red! Lancaster won Roses 2024 by 91 points. By the end of the competition, York had 126.5 points and Lancaster finished with 217.5.

17

After coming second in the 2024 World Darts Championships, 17-year-old Luke Littler has secured his place in the Premier League play-offs.

### POLL: Have you ever ran a marathon?





# We Need to Talk About Racism in Women's Football

“No other female player of this generation has had to endure... abuse so consistent and so vicious” as Lauren James.

**Millie Simon** (she/her)  
SPORT CORRESPONDENT

Women's football, rightfully so, has been praised for its inclusivity, particularly in regards to the LGBT+ community. The 2023 FIFA Women's World Cup was dubbed the “gayest World Cup ever” with around 100 openly LGBT+ players competing. But women's football hasn't done enough to combat the reality of racism in the sport. And Lauren James, Chelsea and England forward, is all too familiar with this.

On a number of occasions, James has been the subject of online racial abuse after incidents on the pitch. Most recently, she was racially abused online following a tussle for the ball with Manchester United's Millie Turner, where it looked like James had Turner in a headlock. Both players were subsequently booked for the altercation.

Back in December 2023, James was racially abused again after a game against Arsenal where she appeared to tread on Lia Walti. This prompted Chelsea Manager, Emma Hayes to conclude that James was “not in a good place” and that she is subjected to more abuse than any other player due to her race.

*The Athletic* added that “no other female player of this generation has had to endure a level of abuse so consistent and so vicious” as Lauren

James.

James initially spoke out in 2021 about racist comments she experienced while at Manchester United.

Former Arsenal and England player, Alex Scott, also spoke out about how racist views and comments took her to “dark places” and admitted she was “scared for her life”.

The England team was criticised for their all-white lineup against Sweden in the European Championship semi-final in 2022.

England forward, Beth Mead, rejected concerns of racism in the Euros line-up which only featured

three black players - Jess Carter, Demi Stokes and Nikita Parris. Speaking to

Arsenal teammate and England captain, Leah Williamson, told *BBC*



IMAGE: JAMES BOYES

*The Guardian* in 2022, Mead said: “We put our best 11 and you don't think of anyone's race or anything like that. I think that's more an outsider's perspective.”

*Sport* that “within the squad, this is an important issue and we're all aware of it”.

This message was reinforced by Head Coach, Sarina Wiegman, who

added, the problem is “not going to change overnight”. Williamson spoke passionately throughout and after England's success at the Euros, in regards to woman representation. In reference to women playing football, Leah said: “When you see somebody that looks like you, you think it's achievable.”

“If you can't see it, you can't be it. So that starts with us being women at the top, but obviously then it's about being a diverse group of women.” Surely, the same applies for ethnic minorities.

In 2022, *The Athletic* reported that 10% of 300 players in the Women's Super League are black. Another report shows that the lack of diversity in women's football inhibits “minority ethnic women from presenting their identities to further engage with and support the game's growth.”

Domestic clubs are beginning to address the issue, with Arsenal Women's FC admitting that there are no black or ethnic-minority players in the 27-player lineup, and that they acknowledge this doesn't represent communities and is “a key priority” for the club going forward.

Emma Hayes added: “In terms of the locations, the pedigree of players, they're often coming from suburban belts around the training grounds. If you want a diverse group involved with games at an elite level then perhaps we should be travelling into the cities in a more profound way!”

# Kookaburra Balls: Saviours of English Cricket?

“The Championship has to exist in order to support ... the England Men's Test team.”

**George Roberts** (he/him)  
SPORT EDITOR

ONE OF THE GREAT joys of sport is the variation from one game to the next. Cricket is probably the sport that has most variations, with so many aspects that can change and have a knock-on effect to the game. The climate has a major impact affecting the preparation of the pitch and thus benefiting some and hindering others.

Another is the ball.

More recently, there has been very animated discussion from all quarters of the game – supporters, players, management, and journalists – about what ball to use in the County Championship. To the outsider, this may well seem hilarious that so many column inches can be filled by which ball to use. Both are five and half ounces, the same circumference, red (if not the same shade). However, the ball can make a huge difference.

The ball can impact how much movement there is off the seam, how much spin, and swing. How hard the ball remains is also a crucial factor – as if the ball goes soft it is typically easier to bat. Very broadly, the Dukes ball is a darker red with prouder (bigger) seam and so offers more to the bowlers when it is new, providing a greater challenge to the batters. It also tends

to stay harder, offering more to seam bowlers throughout the innings.

The Kookaburra does swing and seam early on but for less time and tends to go soft. It does however tend to offer reverse swing (where the ball swings in the opposite direction) more often than the Dukes, but only in the right conditions.

The Dukes ball is used in England and the West Indies, the Kookaburra in Australia, India, and the other test match countries. Cricket, as a result of climatic interventions, is often dominated by those at home - at every level both internationally and in the amateur game. Australia are the epitome of this, winning the vast majority of their home tests. The test against the West Indies a few months back was but an aberration.

England have not beaten Australia in Australia since 2010/11 and India in India since 2012/13. The ECB decided, in order to make the test team more competitive, to use the Kookaburra ball for some rounds of the Championship.

The hypothesis is that the Dukes ball produces very talented swing and seam medium pace bowlers who do not need to bowl at high speeds in order to take wickets. But when presented with a Kookaburra ball on pitches overseas, which tend to be drier thus harder and faster, they struggle to take

wickets. Rob Key, the managing director of the England Men's team, has said that he needs bowlers to bowl 86 mph and above for England to be successful abroad with the Kookaburra.

It has been clear from rounds one and two of the Championship that English seam bowlers by and large do not possess the requisite skills to take wickets with the Kookaburra ball. There were complaints that the pitches were not fast enough to trouble batters, that the outfield was too wet to induce reverse. However, those weeks were clearly dominated by the batters.

The other argument about the Kookaburra is that it brings spinners into the game. Less so because it is a ball that spins more but because you need faster bowlers to effect wickets. Faster bowlers bowl in shorter spells. Therefore, you need spinners to pick up the slack. This aspect of the experiment worked with five spinners featuring in the top ten wicket-takers after the first round.

The county purists will argue that it is killing the County Championship. But really how can you kill something that is already dead? The Championship makes no money, appeals to a tiny fraction of the population, typically of the same demographic. The Championship has to exist in order to support the best product the ECB have: the England Men's Test team.



IMAGE: SPÉRONA

The current English management have already implicitly argued that the Championship is no longer fit for purpose. It is currently failing to supply a quality spinner for the national team, instead management were plucking out of obscurity. They did do this successfully but they should not have to. Last summer, they also picked seam bowler Josh Tongue based on his attributes rather than any County Championship form. He took five wickets on debut.

The Hundred may well overtake the England test team but for the time being, test matches remain the

jewel in the ECB crown. They regularly sell out, often making the grounds that host them vast sums of money. They are as much a cultural event as they are a sporting one.

For the test team to continue to be the jewel in the crown, the County Championship needs to continue to produce high quality players. The Kookaburra will help that. The game will have to adapt for it to work successfully. Pitches will have to change and bowlers will have to increase their pace. Spinners need to improve and captains need to be more creative.

But it will only improve the game.



## Sport News in Brief

## UYBC Offer a Successful Start to Roses 2024

On 27th April, the Boat Club kicked off the 2024 Roses tournament. They won a landslide victory of 14 - 2, with three out of four squads winning all of their races. After narrowly losing their Roses last year, the club has trained hard under a new head coach for the chance to prove themselves again.

## Olympic 2024 prize money

It has been announced that at the 2024 Summer Olympics, prize money will be given to gold medalists for the first time in the history of the Olympics. This announcement has caused a divide in the sporting community, with some celebrating the change while others such as Olympic rower Steve Redgrave argues that this money will divide athletes.

## Seine river quality

As we near the 2024 Summer Olympics, questions over the Seine water quality still remain. The organisers of this year's Olympics have admitted that the triathlon event may be delayed or turned into a duathlon due to fears of weather conditions affecting the water quality. There are also still high levels of E coli caused by sewage, a problem common across rivers in both France and England.

## Dame Kelly Holmes

Olympic gold medalist Dame Kelly Holmes took part in the 2024 York Festival of Ideas. Discussing sport and science, weighing up the importance of how science and research can improve athlete performance. While also recognising that the traditional elements of an athlete such as commitment and talent, still make up a large amount of their success.

## Roses

York discovered that Roses are Red this year, the only change from last year is that they discovered their colour in Lancaster. This year the margin was 217.5 against 126.5. Some notable results for York: Women's Bouldering was a close game, rowing was almost a whitewash, underwater hockey was won 10-3, and the Women's 1st Football team beat their counterparts. Next year, Europe's largest varsity will revert back to York where they will look for their first win after Covid-19.

## Women's Football at the Olympics

## Jorgah Herbert surveys the upcoming competition at Paris 2024

**Jorgah Herbert** (she/her)  
SPORT CORRESPONDANT

It is shaping up to be an exciting summer as 12 teams travel to France and battle it out to win the Olympic gold medal. With only 11 days separating the men's Euro finals from the start of the women's group stages, there is a lot to keep you occupied.

Not quite clued up on who is heading to the Olympics? Or how it works? Here is your guide...

So, how have teams qualified?

There has been a mix of excitement and heartbreak following a change to the previous qualification system. It had been decided that the top two teams from the 2023/24 Nations League would claim a spot in Paris, with a similar system being used for the other continent's teams.

Perhaps the biggest upset was the Euro winners, England, and subsequently Team GB, not making it to Paris.

How is it organised?

No alterations have been made to the structure of the tournament, so we will be seeing a familiar format. The top two teams from each group, plus the two best third-placed, will advance to the knockout stages - something slightly different from bigger tournaments.

The groups:

Group A  
France  
Colombia  
Canada  
New Zealand

The hosts, France, will face their last tournament

with manager Hervé Renard after he confirmed that he will not continue after the Paris Olympics. When asked why he is leaving, he bluntly replied that his contract is ending and he wants to return to men's football, something that was blocked during AFCON last year.

Despite reaching the quarter-finals of the 2023 World Cup, Colombia has failed to progress past the group stages in both of their Olympic appearances, in 2012 and 2016. After parting ways with their manager of six years in 2023, Colombia is entering the Olympics under new coach Angelo Marsiglia.

The current gold medal holders,



IMAGE: AILURA

Canada, are looking to bounce back from their defeat in the 'She-Believes' Cup after a thrilling penalty shootout against their neighbors, the US. The US is entering their fifth Olympic games with their manager Bev Priestman, who led them to gold in Tokyo.

This will be the fifth appearance for New Zealand, known as the Football Ferns,

as they qualified with an 11-1 win against Solomon Islands under manager Jitka Klimková. With their highest result being the quarterfinals in London 2012, New Zealand looks to better themselves this year, but face a tough group.

Group B  
USA  
Zambia  
Germany  
Australia

One of the most talked-about managers heading to the Olympics this year, Emma Hayes, is taking over as the interim coach for the USA. They have won Olympic gold four times since 1996 but couldn't make it past the last eight in Tokyo. Perhaps facing the toughest group this year, the USA is looking to put their previous World Cup result behind them, which saw their former manager, Vlatko Andonovski, leave.

Hayes brings a fresh and exciting perspective to the national team, with America being one of the favourites to win.

Known as the 'Copper Queens', Zambia is set to enter their second Olympic Games. To qualify, Zambia entered extra time against Morocco to turn their original deficit into a 3-2 aggregate win. They may not be the favourites in their group, but they are certainly determined to prove many wrong.

Germany failed to qualify for the 2020 Olympics,

but they are set to return this year. They also have a new manager, Christian Wück, who is currently the coach of Germany's Under-17s, but it will be the interim manager, Horst Hrubesch, who leads them to the Olympics. After a shock elimination from the World Cup group stages, Germany hopes to advance further in this tournament and has a group of talented players to do so.

The Matildas (aka Australia) are looking to improve on their fourth place finish at the last Olympics. With their growing fanbase in recent years, Australia will find support from many fans whose teams have not qualified for the Olympics this year. They are definitely contenders to win this year, but may find it tough in the group stage, especially with their captain Sam Kerr unlikely to play.

Group C  
Spain  
Japan  
Nigeria  
Brazil

Starting off with the current World Cup and Nations League winners, Spain, comprising mainly Barcelona players and led by Montse Tome. They enter their first Olympics with perhaps the strongest squad.

However, Japan's shock 4-0 win during the group stages of last year's World Cup shows that anything is possible in this sport. Japan struggles to get through crucial games, so their perhaps inexperienced team will be looking to secure more than the silver medal they earned in 2012.

It has been a while since

Nigeria has been to the Olympics, with their last appearance in 2008. They are a team that is hard to break down and will definitely put up a tough fight, which they will need considering the teams they will face in this group stage.

Lastly, Brazil, who have the joint highest number of appearances at the Olympics, are entering their eighth tournament. After crashing out in the group stages of the World Cup for the first time, Brazil has replaced their manager with Arthur Elis, who will lead them to the Olympics. Despite having a talented squad, this team is still struggling to reach its full potential.

Who are the favourites?

Popular opinion suggests Spain will go further this year, especially since England did not qualify and Australia are missing key players. Spain and Barcelona have been dominating the women's football world this past year, especially when Aitana Bonmati was crowned the top female footballer of 2023. The USWNT (US) have bounced back after their tough year and are also up there as favourites to win this tournament.

Don't be discouraged if your team has not qualified, as there are exciting teams to watch - personally, I am cheering on the Matildas - and will be listening to 'Strawberry Kisses' (the Matildas' favourite song which has subsequently become a fan favourite) on repeat.

So, get ready for a summer of sport and make sure you tune in between the 25 July and 10 August to support women's football!

## Female Dominance of Ultra-running

**Charlotte Tabear** (she/her)  
DEPUTY SPORT EDITOR

Have you ever felt like a marathon was not enough? How about an ultra-marathon?

Ultra-marathons have functioned as one of the greatest endurance events for many years. Yet in March, particular attention was drawn to the physical and mental toll these races take with Jasmin Paris being the first female runner to complete the Barkley Marathon.

The Barkley Marathon is five loops of a 20 mile track with 60,000 ft of ascents and descents. This race is an extreme test of endurance which only 20 people have completed within the 60 hour cut off.

While it is this elevation gain and wild terrain that makes the race so difficult, for most people the ultra-marathon distance - which can range from 30 miles to more than 300 - would be extremely difficult. Yet these endurance events are becoming increasingly popular.

Across social media we see people who have never taken sport seriously before train for endurance events such as ultramarathons and ironmans, despite these events demanding more than 10 hours of training a week.

To reach the levels of endurance these races require, a runner must challenge themselves to not give in and carry on although everything hurts. This trains both physical and mental strength as

the body weakens due to extended hours of movement. This inevitability instils confidence in yourself and what you are able to achieve.

After the completion of her race, Paris stated that she ran for herself and for women across the world. She spoke of how she wished for young girls to believe in themselves and engage in sports from a young age, even though it can often be a male dominated area.

This idea is particularly contested in ultra-endurance sports where women are beginning to compete alongside men and sometimes surpass them.

Camille Herron, an American ultrarunner, not only holds multiple women's ultra-marathon records but

last year Herron set the record, for all sexes, for the trail marathon in Texas. She finished the 42.2 km race in three hours, 49 minutes and 47 seconds. This is almost two minutes faster than the men's record and surpasses the women's by 28 minutes.

This success moves outside of running. Fiona Kolbringer, a German cyclist, was the first woman to win the Transcontinental Race across Europe. She cycled the 2,485 miles from Bulgaria to France in over ten days, finishing ten hours ahead of her closest competitor.

These examples go on. They involve races where there is no need for separate men's and women's records, as on many occasions athletes can race together regardless

of their sex.

Is this a sign that ultra-endurance events are places where men and women can compete as equals? Men can outperform women in many sports as they naturally have larger muscles, which allow for greater maximal capacities. However, in an ultra-endurance race, no athlete works close to their maximal output - shortening the performance gap between the sexes.

Nevertheless, male and female endurance events are growing in popularity. Love of sport only feeds people's ambitions to go on to attempt greater distances and succeed, making ultra-running and ultra-endurance events the ones to watch.



# University Women's Pool and Snooker Team

Daisy Couture and Charlotte Tabcart interview members of the Pool and Snooker Club's women's team

**Daisy Couture** (she/her) and  
**Charlotte Tabcart** (she/her)  
NEWS EDITOR AND DEPUTY  
SPORT EDITOR

On Friday 26 April, *Nouse* sat down with three members of the University of York's Pool and Snooker Club to talk about their recent BUCS success.

Becky Aldred, Beth Hutson and Hannah Green formed the Women's Team at the 2024 BUCS-UPC Snooker Championships, which was held in Woking on March 14-17.

As a team, they reached the semi-finals of the Women's Team Trophy division. Hutson also reached the finals of the Women's Individual division.

Hutson said that the team came third in their division, the furthest a York team has gone in BUCS. This signified a "huge step forward for the club." Green went on to add that "in BUCS [...] the club doesn't usually get too far but it was really successful for everyone - the boys teams did pretty well too."

Green and Aldred had not played pool or snooker at competition-level until they arrived at university. Hutson, on the other hand, has been "playing since [she] was four."

There seems to be a wide range of ability at the club; from people who have never picked up a cue in their life to people who, like Hutson, have been playing since they were children. This points towards an atmosphere of inclusivity and diversity within the club; anyone is welcome to come along and give a new sport a try.

In terms of their own development, they all claimed that the club had been enthusiastic in nurturing their talents. More experienced players are encouraged (and willing) to lend advice to players with less experience.

On the YUSU website, the club is portrayed as a recreational sport, made up of students who play for fun in campus bars. When asked if this damages the reputation of the club, especially in the eyes of would-be competitive play-

ers, Hutson said "I don't think that we would get the recruitment that we do if [the sports were] put across as really serious because you get such a wide range of people joining. Anyone can come along to college pool, and they have the option of going to competitions if they want to."

The club struggles with female recruitment as it is, so advertising itself as a more casual sport "is less daunting for people who just want to come along and try it out."

Green agreed with Hutson, stating that the casual elements of the club mean that "we can have more serious players going to competitions" whilst retaining the ability to "ask [less experienced] people if they want to give it a go and see what comes from it."

Aldred learned with the club and went on to compete at the 2024 BUCS competition, which was the first pool and snooker competition she had taken part in. She described the big step up to BUCS, as the club had only attended smaller competitions before the national competition. She also remarked on the high skill level at this event which made her incredibly nervous. Nevertheless, the women's team achieved great success.

College darts and college pool are both held on Tuesdays at the same time in D-Bar. On Thursdays, the same applies, except both clubs employ a more open-door policy.

The members have been drafted for women's darts teams in the past "because we're there at the same time." They have also taken part in joint socials. Green said "it's quite nice, because you get a few people from darts picking up a cue and a few people from pool throwing one or two."

Only 11 women have ever competed in the World Snooker Championships. Green said that it was because of events like these, where on television we mostly see men, that people have a perception of women as holding a small place in the world of snooker.

Before starting university, Hutson described her worries over this gender divide and if she would be fully accepted in her new team. These worries stemmed from her experiences grow-

ing up around the sport and witnessing first hand people underestimating her because of her gender. When she was growing up, a man even stormed out of the room when she beat him in their match.

These feelings are shared more widely across those who are new to pool and snooker. This is especially evident in recruitment, where women are often more timid due to it being such a male-dominated sport. To combat this, the women's team are hoping to introduce a 'women's only night' to encourage new players.

With any sports society, inclusivity stems from the committee. Hutson, as President next year, hopes to continue this. She argued that, with male dominated sports like pool, having a female president makes the club seem "more welcoming" as it is clear that there is a space for anyone in the time regardless of gender or ability.

The women's team form an important part of the York club as there are many universities who do not even field a women's team. This further contributes to the lack of women at competitions. Because of this, women's pool is held in a smaller standing at competitions, especially in terms of prize money which the women's team observed has been quite little compared to the men's.

However, the women's team at York do not allow this to deter them. Green talked about the confidence she had gained while competing against men. She remarked that it was nerve-racking to be one of the few women in the room, but she found her confidence in the idea not only that she deserved to be there but also that she was proving women had a place in the competition alongside men.

Aldred echoed this thought, recalling how having men on other teams watching her play increased her nerves. She stated that while she knew as a novice she would not be the best player, she felt she had to do well so that they could not perpetuate the narrative that women were not as good at pool.

The need to prove themselves was encouraged further because of the

## US Olympic Kit

▶▶▶ Continued from back

Women's handball teams may now wear "short tight pants" according to new regulation rules. While men's teams shorts have to come to four inches above the knee they do not have to be tight-fitting. Nevertheless, this is a step forward for the women's handball teams.

With incidences like this, more sporting bodies have come forward to revise regulations seen as old fashioned and sexist.

In early 2024, Gymnastics New Zealand also modernised their rules. Athletes will no longer be penalised for visible underwear or bra straps and female athletes are now allowed to wear shorts or leggings over their leotards. Inclusivity is presented at the heart of these changes, as while many gymnasts have stated they feel comfortable in their regulation leotards, now they have the choice - meaning that any athlete can feel comfortable.

However, this is only Gymnastics New Zealand. While the German team chose to wear full bodysuits at the Tokyo Olympics in a statement against the sexualisation of women in sport, athletes can still suffer a penalty, anywhere from 0.30 - 1.00 point reduction, for violation of uniform regulations.

Yet are these changes enough? If the purpose of the Olympics is to have the best athletes in the world compete,

behaviour of some of the men at the BRT (British Regional Tournament). Men from another team not only took over the seating area that was dedicated to their team, but also jeered and laughed at them. Green noted that shouting for your friends often occurs with pool being a pub sport, but the team was disturbed as the men shouting remarks had affiliation with neither of the women's teams.

It is this kind of behaviour that

should they not be allowed to compete in whatever allows them to reach their full potential? How are female athletes impacted by playing in shorts instead of briefs? It is a shame that not only do these archaic clothing restrictions still exist, but also that female athletes continue to be judged by their appearances rather than their accomplishments.

This criticism goes both ways, evident with those athletes who, in recent years, have preferred to compete in sports bras and briefs rather than the more modest vests and shorts.

At the 2021 English Athletic Championships, double paralympic world champion Olivia Breen was criticised mid-event for her shorts that were seen as 'too short and inappropriate'. This criticism was given by an official at the event, though these shorts were in regulation and what Breen chose and felt she performed best in.

We must admire the female athletes who are continuing to compete at the highest standards, while knowing that their appearance or clothing choices will always be a large part of the conversation that surrounds them.

Behind the Nike controversy there is a company who has attempted to work with the US athletes to create the best designs for their use. However, the issue still highlights that not enough is being done to challenge the sexist regulations and opinions that still damage women's sports.

makes the women's team feel such pride in York, as they all agree that they have never experienced this kind of behaviour at their club.

The team hopes that successes of teams like theirs indicate a bright future for women's pool and snooker. Especially with Hutson achieving the status of runner up at BUCS, they hope that this will lead to more success and the club becoming more well-rounded moving forward.

## Darts at College Varsity

**George Roberts** (he/him)  
SPORT EDITOR

College Varsity reverted back to York on the 3 March, seeing colleges from across York and Durham compete in a multitude of sports. This is a wonderful celebration of participation in sport and received its due pomp. To mark such a celebration, there was a very cold looking member of the YUSU bars team selling cans of Inch's cider and Camden Hells out of an unheated shed just behind the athletics track. I did intend to try and visit as many sports as possible, starting with the darts. However, the tardiness of the darts games and the hospitality of D-Bar knocked my plans askew.

I have never sat and watched darts properly before, so decided it was as good a time as any to go. Whilst D-Bar is no Ally Pally, it was still a very enjoy-

able couple of hours.

The darts 'B' game was a hotly contested affair between Derwent and St Hild and Bede from Durham. The Derwent team were decked out in a variety of Derwent stash whilst the Durham team lived up to their stereotype, rocking up in shirts, ties, and personalised club gilets. I do not think the Derwent team would object when I say that Hild and Bede won the drinking - the round of Jäger bombs before one o'clock securing them the gold.

They also secured the gold on the oche, staging a remarkable comeback from 3-1 down against a Derwent team that featured the University darts captain. The teams were made up of seven players each playing one set of three legs. Each leg involves players trying to score 501 points exactly (although the points start at 501 and finish at 0), finishing or checking out

with a double or bullseye.

Harry Brewer took the first set for York 2-0, checking out on a Double 3 in his first leg before winning a closest to bull in his second leg. The closest to bull was used as a method of breaking a stalemate when neither player was able to check out after a set number of attempts. This also gave me my first taste of darts slang, when the Durham players were yelling "straw" (a single digit score from 3 darts), "milk" (no idea, Google has thrown up no answers), and "breakfast" (a score of 26).

By the second set, the sound system was set up and we could hear the not-so-dulcet tones of Alex Yates doing his best Russ Bray impression. Phoebe Fletcher took the first leg for York and nearly checked out on a 90, missing the double 15 in the second leg. Durham won the second leg, forcing Fletcher to play a third. Durham

managed a double two checkout to win the set and even the match 1-1.

Evan Harfield took the third set for York winning 2-1, which may have had something to do with his beverage choice of water as opposed to his opponent's selection of Carling. Fear not, a drinks table was provided on the stage.

Tom "The Mountain" Morris, University darts captain, offered a clinical exhibition regardless of Carling on the table next to him, comfortably winning his game 2-0. With the score 3-1, going into the fifth set, it felt like Derwent's game to lose. And it was. James Pearson was unable to overcome his opponent who downed a pint as he walked on stage. Pearson fought hard losing the first leg, winning the second, before losing the third to a very efficient checkout. Maybe the Carling does help after all. I know Amstel made my watching experience more enjoyable.

Set six brought Henry Ash walking out to "Heaven is a Place on Earth"

by Belinda Carlisle. However, this did little to throw his southpaw opponent off his game, as Durham hit the highest score of the match with 123. Durham checked out on a double 5 with Ash coming back in the second game finishing on double 4. Three straws (see above) in the final game for Ash meant Durham took the set and levelled the match 3-3.

Adam Carr stepped up to the plate for York. Unfortunately, most of the first leg passed the audience by with two Durham players replacing Alex Yates' clarity with some increasingly erratic calls. Durham took the first leg on a stalemate-breaking closest the bull. The callers were replaced, but this did not change the luck for York, with Durham checking out on a double 16. They took the match 4-3 - a stunning comeback.

Happily for York, the rest of the day went much better as they triumphed for the third year in a row. The day finished with James football beating Collingwood.



## An interview with Sport President, TJ

Charlotte Tabcart interviews York Sport President as she prepares to enter her second year in the role **P.24**



## Racism in Women's Football

Milie Simon explores the effects of racial abuse in women's football **P.25**



## Kookaburra balls: Cricket

George Roberts explores whether kookaburra balls will save English cricket **P.27**



# SPORT



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IMAGE: KIRBY LEE-USA TODAY SPORTS

## 2024 US Olympics Nike Kit caught in Controversy

Was the backlash caused by the US olympic kit a misunderstanding or an attempt sexualise female athletes?

**Charlotte Tabcart** (she/her)  
DEPUTY SPORT EDITOR

In early April, Nike unveiled the track and field kits for the USA team, which they will wear in the 2024 Paris Olympics. Nike has designed the USA team kit for many years, yet their most recent designs drew backlash across social media.

The images of the main two designs advertised side by side went viral with criticism from the public and American athletes.

The men's design is a high necked red and blue suit with long shorts. A common design for men's athletics. While the women's design is a red, blue and purple leotard with a high leg design which appears quite revealing on the mannequin.

Initial dislike was focused upon the design chosen rather than the fitting. Particularly the similarities drawn between the women's kit

shown above and the 2020 track and field kit Nike designed for the GB team in the 2020 Tokyo summer Olympics. A similar purple leotard design with white stripes.

However, once these images moved away from the Nike showcase into the public eye, controversy soon emerged along with accusations of sexism. Outrage was widely spread over the contrast of the modesty of the men's suit compared to the smaller women's kit.

Attention was focused on the high cut of the kit's underwear line which exposes the upper thigh of the mannequin, creating a very revealing design which sparked accusations of the sexualisation of female athletes.

These views came not simply from the public but US female athletes who named them needlessly revealing.

Tara Davis-Woodhall, a USA silver medalist in the long jump, commented "Wait my hoo haa is gonna be

out", in reaction to the design. While many saw this as a humorous reaction to the design, it nevertheless highlights the deep discomfort an athlete could feel wearing this in front of a global audience.

Lauren Fleshman, a US 5000m national champion, argued that the designs were sexist as men's teams would never have to accept such revealing designs. She states that athletic wear should be optimal for both physical and mental fitness, as it would be difficult for an athlete to perform their best with "the mental gymnastics of having every vulnerable piece of your body on display".

All these arguments stem from the reality that for many years women's sports were dominated by patriarchal values, some of which can still be found in some sports' rules on female athletes' appearances.

However, despite this backlash these accusations can be challenged. When the Nike designs were first un-

veiled they stated that alongside these options there would be 50 different designs to suit all athletes across different disciplines and body types. Designs that were created not only with the athletes in mind but with their advice and testing. Therefore, while the design showcased on the mannequin can only be described as revealing, Nike can find their defence in the level of choice they have given athletes.

With this level of choice becoming clear the controversy began to die down. However, the freedom given to the American track and field athletes is not shared among all sports, with some teams being forced by sporting regulations to wear more revealing clothing.

A key example comes from the Norwegian women's beach handball team. In the 2021 European Beach Handball tournament the team wore thigh length shorts during their bronze medal match against Spain. In wearing this they acted in violation of

the rule demanding female handball players to wear bikini bottom style briefs in competition. This uniform rule sharply contrasts the Norwegian men's team who compete in long vests and long shorts.

The team was fined 1,500 euros for breaking the uniform rule that demands that women's bikini bottoms have a maximum side length of four inches. The women had petitioned to wear the shorts they were training in at the start of the tournament but they were threatened with a fine or disqualification.

The International Handball Federation first stated it was unable to change its uniform regulations but with open letters for change coming from Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Iceland and Finland the uniform rules went under revision.

Cont.

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