



York floods

What will be the long lasting impact?

Ed Byrne

"Only a comedian would say it out loud"



Nouse



Est. 1964

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Tuesday 19 January 2016

Campus upgrade prioritised over staffing shortages, says Course Rep

Understaffing "could be avoided" using surplus money

Amy Gibbons
DEPUTY EDITOR

THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT is still six members of staff short despite the University sitting on a £20m surplus in 2015/16, a Course Rep has told *Nouse*.

Following discussion with Pro Vice Chancellor John Robinson, third year Course Rep Benedetta Pusateri reports that funding is being distributed in a way contrary to the interests of current students.

Pusateri claims that in an NSS Review meeting Robinson refused to address the issue of a significantly higher than average student to staff ratio (SSR) in the English Dept. He said that the surplus money is likely to be invested instead in the development of the Heslington West campus ten years from now, long after current students will have graduated.

The University budget surplus has increased significantly over the past three years, from roughly £8m in 2013/14 to £20m in 2015/16, although figures fluctuate according to anomalies every year.

Pusateri reports that since 2012 there has been a 32 per cent student number increase in the English Dept but action taken has fallen short of staff and student requirements. In 2013/14 the Dept were nine members of staff short compared to 2012, but only three were hired. In 2015/16 the Dept is still short by six members.

Jim Watt, Senior Lecturer and

Researcher in the English Dept was also present at the meeting, and agrees that staffing shortages should take priority.

Speaking on behalf of the Dept, he told *Nouse*: "We recognise the need to renew the Heslington West campus. At the same time we share our students' concerns about the Department's staff-student ratio, and we are in ongoing discussions with senior management about ways of improving it."

Thomas Ron, YUSU Academic Officer, hopes too that understaffing will be taken seriously.

In a statement issued to *Nouse*, Ron wrote: "It is very important that as the University grows they do not allow the staff-student ratio to fall as that will only damage the student experience."

When asked for comment, Robinson said: "In response to [Pusateri's] question about what the University's budget surpluses were being used for, I gave a list of things that included enhancing student services, supporting research, academic development in general, and, yes, renewal of the physical estate on Heslington West."

He added that: "At the time there was a strategic proposal from the Department that included a request for some academic posts. I said that was currently being considered and I could say nothing about whether it would be approved. Subsequently it was approved."

It is true that one new position was created in the English Dept in

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Wintour is coming: Iconic Vogue US Editor will be on campus for charity fashion show 'The Northern Youth' P.3

Societies unhappy with "horribly outdated" room-booking system

Chris Owen
EDITOR

MULTIPLE SOCIETIES have slammed the University's online room-booking platform, Planon, in a survey conducted by *Nouse*.

A significant majority of the

society heads who took part in the survey felt that the online system, which requires the applicant to search for specific room numbers one at a time to check availability, is in need of significant modernising and streamlining.

Societies also reported instances where their bookings had not been registered, had been repeatedly imputed, or had simply disap-

peared without their being notified.

UoY Concert Orchestra's Zac Kahn described the current room-booking method as "cumbersome and inaccessible". He highlighted a number of flaws, including that "there is no clear way of viewing available times for specific rooms, the room descriptions have not

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Est. 1964

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR...

As the eagle-eyed campus media enthusiasts among you will have noticed, *Nouse* has had a facelift.

Now don't judge – when you're pushing 52, things aren't as taut as they once were. We've ironed out some creases, added more definition - a nip here, a tuck there. But don't panic; we've steered clear of fillers.

And I'm sure you'll agree that campus' oldest society looks years younger, revitalised and replenished. You might say it's got its mojo back. But you probably wouldn't.

Regardless, it's been another week spent in top gear to get this edition out, which has meant consecutive 15 hour shifts for some of our Editors in our little office behind Vanburgh. Inevitably these shifts involve lots of late night trips to various vending machines and coffee outlets and, as I was wondering campus at 3am just last night, I had a startling realisation. Campus comes alive in the dead of night.

You have to be sober to get the full effect of this; if you're lumbering from the bus stop on the way back from Revs you're unlikely to pick up on the nuances. Late night library goers will know what I'm talking about. When campus is deadly dark and silent, you see things. Scores of rabbits collect in the strangest places. People you would surely never see in the light of day stroll through Derwent, completely alone, with the nocturnal energy of a bird or small mammal. And there seem to be twice as many trees.

Watching the lake freeze and then thaw over the course of the last 72 hours was like being on a different planet. I felt like Christopher McCandless in *Into The Wild*, or Leo

in *The Revenant*, or those blue aliens in *Pocahontas*. Or was that *Avatar*?

By morning, it's back to being grey and dreary, weighed down by books and bodies. If you've never soberly experienced a 3am campus walk, I urge you to get out there. It's like a moon walk, but with more gravity and geese.

December was a month to remember at our University. Our mighty city walls could but watch, helpless, as men's rights Twitter trolls and record flood waters bore down upon us, engulfing us in poisonous, semi-diluted excrement. Did the University make a hash of handling the International Men's Day situation? Probably. Did everything get a bit out of hand? Absolutely. It's the nature of the student bubble that universities are the concentration points for issues like gender, rights and equalities. It falls to us to uphold each other's right to disagree, and right to be treated with respect in disagreement.

But you didn't come here for last term's news, so let's crack on. In this edition we have the details of a proposal that would see college fees rise year on year to subsidise sports funding (p. 3). We also have the inside line on ongoing staff shortages in the English Department, and how they could very easily be prevented (p. 1). Finally, in my undisputed favourite story of this edition, Dr. Andy Marshall of the Environment Department is looking for a name for a new species of tree he discovered by accident while researching monkeys in Tanzania (p. 5). Almost as good as finding a stray tenner in your pocket.

Chris Owen

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Anna Wintour is the editor-in-chief of *American Vogue* and the inspiration for the film *The Devil Wears Prada*

Anna Wintour on campus for charity fashion show

Amy Bishop
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

ANNA WINTOUR, editor-in-chief of *American Vogue*, is to come to York to attend the Northern Youth Fashion show. The event will include a Q&A with Wintour that is to be conducted by Katharine Viner, Editor-in-Chief of *The Guardian* News and Media.

Wintour has been in the position of editor-in-chief since 1988, with a brief stint at *British Vogue*. She is regarded as one of the most powerful people in fashion and has been recognised for supporting young designers.

Following the Q&A with Win-

tour, there will be a showcase of creative work from across the north of England and Scotland, as well as musical performances. Billie Marten, Sound of 2016 nominee, will be one of the acts on the line up.

Adam Curtis, BAFTA-award winning British film director, has worked with film and television students at the University to create a soundscape video montage of northern images for the show.

The event is aiming to raise £50,000 to support refugees through the Xavier Project, the Two Ridings Community Foundation and Refugee Action York. It is also hoping to raise money for the York Food Bank.

A silent auction of the five most exclusive pieces from the showcase will take place on the night, as well

as a raffle including a Mulberry bag and a spa break, with all funds raised going directly to the charities.

Ellie Wintour, Anna's niece and Digital Editor of *HARD* magazine, told *Nouse*: "It's been a wonderful opportunity to work on an event which combines northern creativity with the refugee crisis which is such an important cause."

The event is taking place in collaboration with BlackBox who will be hosting the after party at Fibbers, with Friendly Fires and Metronomy performing.

Sponsored by Yorkshire Living magazine and Grand Central Rail, the show is to take place on Friday 29 January in Central Hall, starting with a champagne reception at 17:45.

College fees may increase to subsidise sports

Chris Owen
EDITOR

NOUSE HAS LEARNT of a proposal by YUSU to increase the college membership fee by £5 year on year until 2018, to cover lost funding for college sport. The proposals, which have been submitted to the University's Student Life Committee, put forward the college fee increase as a possible solution to the issue of how YUSU pays for college sport.

Money from Sport England had been allocated to pay for college sport until 2015, and a one-off grant of £15,000 was provided by the University to cover the 2015/16 year. Now YUSU is exploring further options to cover the cost.

The proposals would see a £5 increase next academic year, and a second £5 increase for 2017/18, putting the overall college membership fee at £40 for three year students, £30 for two year students, and £20 for one year students by 2017. The Graduate Student Association reports that this would bring in an additional £25,000 to cover college sport funding.

The GSA issued a statement to *Nouse*, highlighting that "while the benefits of college sport are well known and documented in the proposal, engaging in sport is a personal choice and to ask all students to fund the chosen activities of a few students is wholly unfair."

"Going from the statistics provided by YUSU in the proposal, only 10 per cent of the overall student body is engaged in college sport," the statement reads. "The GSA and many postgraduates already feel that the college fee is unfairly charging postgraduates in order to subsidise the undergraduate college experience." The GSA also pointed out that the increase

would disproportionately affect single year and masters students, as a £5 increase equates to a 50 per cent rise in the college fee.

YUSU President Ben Leatham pointed out that College Sport has grown significantly over the past few years, and that "College Sport is a really attractive prospect for students coming to York and it encourages participation from students who might not otherwise be attracted to University Sport."

"In order for YUSU to continue to run their elements of the programme just under £25,000 is needed on an annual basis," Leatham said. "This is to pay for, among other things, facilities, coaching and equipment."

Leatham said that the Student Life Committee – chaired by him and University Secretary David Duncan – will meet this week to discuss college sport funding. The Committee is a forum to begin discussions on these issues, and the college fee increase is "one suggestion" to resolve the funding gap.

"Students have already raised concerns at the introduction of the college fee and so a decision of this magnitude requires large levels of student consultation," Leatham continued. "As chair, I intend to raise the paper as a discussion point, gather thoughts from others on the committee including GSA and College representatives, and then take the issue to the student body after the meeting."

"I want to find out from students their thoughts on College Sport, what issues currently exist, and how students would feel about raising the fee in order to fund an expanding programme. I expect there to be strong opinions on the issue and welcome all discussion. The feedback we get will inform our stance on the matter and any actions we take."

To book certain rooms "a year in advance is not enough"

>>> Continued from front

been kept up to date, and the login system is fractured at best."

Kahn also said that the lack of a "sensible display", the failure of the administrators "to keep the records current" and "the poorly explained 'how to' sections" are all frustrating.

York Student Think Tank identified that Planon had the potential to be made more user-friendly, claiming that it is at present "a horribly outdated and very difficult to navigate system", concurring with York Student Cinema that the sys-

tem is in desperate need of "serious refinement".

York Student Cinema felt that Planon has in principle the basics of a good system for its breadth of information on campus spaces, but that in its present state the system is "confusing" with "too many hoops to jump through".

Only UKIP Association and Poker Societies were mainly favourable towards the current system in their responses; the President of the latter saw no need for an overhaul, claiming that "it's not pretty but

it works". UKIP Society Secretary Thomas Turton felt that most of the time Planon seems to work, but also noted that the society had once been "accidentally double booked" and ended up disturbing an LFA class.

York Student Cinema also reported breakdowns in communication. Society Chair Laura Brame claims that porters had once not registered a room as booked and only opened it after a crowd of customers turned up.

She also told *Nouse* that for rooms like P/X/001, one of campus'

largest and best equipped venues, booking a year in advance is sometimes not enough to secure the space if it has been set aside for a careers or academic event.

Another concern raised is that Planon currently allows a single society to book any number of rooms for the same date and time, meaning that it is possible to reserve multiple spaces from which to later choose. The University's Head of Accommodation and Timetabling Matt Burton told *Nouse* that Planon, which has been used as a room-booking

platform "for the last decade", has not grown in accordance with campus' growing number of rooms.

"We have been actively exploring alternatives for the room booking element of Planon and the underlying space systems that operate," Burton said. "A project to take this forward, incorporating a replacement room booking tool, digital [room] signage and general enhancements has been submitted for consideration in the University's planning round for the next financial year."

Library to open up new study space in Burton building

James Hall
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

IN RESPONSE TO growing concerns about overcrowding in the library during peak times, another 50 study spaces will be made available and construction of additional facilities is being considered.

David Duncan, Registrar & Secretary, commented: "We are aware of pressure on study space in the library at peak times, and are taking steps to alleviate this.

"In particular, over the Easter holidays we will relocate an under-used reference room in the library to create an additional 100 study spaces; we have also implemented card checks at the entrance so that we can prioritise study space for York students at peak times. In the medium term, we are developing plans to extend the library and create more study space."

Card checks were introduced to the library from 24 December and have frustrated many students. The official reason for the checks is to collect data on busy periods and use this to improve services.

Rossi Redgrave, a first year Psychology student said that: "I often find that there isn't enough room

in the library at peak times to work, and I think priority should be given to introducing more relaxed study spaces like those in Fairhurst with comfortable seating and computers. In response to the card checks, I would say that I don't mind at all, in fact it makes me feel safer.

"Extending the library is a really good idea as it is always crowded during peak times."

With over 15,000 students currently enrolled at the University, and with the library being open to members of the public, many students feel that existing facilities are at full capacity.

Eden Whitehead, a first year History and Politics student said: "Student cards can be annoying but it's no problem if it makes the library quieter. Increasing space is a good thing because it gets too busy at peak times."

The total operational costs for the University of York library was £5,637,225, with a net budget of £5,288,274 in 2010.

The JB Morrell Library and Harry Fairhurst building are open 24 hours a day and 362 days a year. The Raymond Burton Library is open from 8am to 10pm, seven days a week. Statistics on the busiest times to visit the library can be found on Google.



JB Morrell gets busy at peak times - the new rooms will take the strain

Staff shortages in English Dept

>>> Continued from front

2014/15, but plans to hire were never fulfilled.

When asked to clarify this, Watt said: "A new post in Literature and the Creative Industries was held up during the last academic year for various reasons, but we are about to advertise it and we expect to make an appointment for 2016/17."

Should this post be filled, the English Dept would still be five members of staff short.

Furthermore, Pusateri claims that the SSR is misrepresented online. According to *The Complete University Guide 2016*, the SSR for the English Dept is 14.8:1. The true ratio is, allegedly, 20:1, far above the University's average of 15:1.

Reported student to staff ratios are, however, dependent on circumstance. David Duncan, University Registrar and Secretary, told *Nouse*: "Reported SSR is for a snapshot in time; at any particular time the Department may be at full staff complement or may be between appointments."

Neither Robinson nor Watt chose to respond to the allegation of misrepresented ratios.

Mysterious email concerning an incident at Halifax College



Ainsty Court is part of Halifax college and was constructed back in 2001

Ben Rowden
NEWS EDITOR

THERE HAVE BEEN concerns this week over a "serious incident" that took place in Ainsty Court, Halifax College.

In a mysterious e-mail, sent by a College Tutor to residents of Ainsty, students were reminded

about some basic safety information. This included a reminder to: "not let [people] into the building unless you know for certain that they live there" and that students should "lock [their] bedroom doors, particularly before [they] go to bed at night".

The e-mail, which stressed how the incident is "being investigated" and has "been taken very seriously by the college" didn't give

any sort of indication as to what the nature of the incident was.

Students were, however, understandably left with a sense of bewilderment and worry. One first year student living in Ainsty said how "it is worrying that the e-mail didn't explain the nature of the event. Who knows what exactly happened, but you can only assume that someone has tried to break in and that is a worrying thought."

YUSU's advice is: "Student safety is an absolute priority. If you have concerns that a stranger is trying to access accommodation then please contact your college tutors, and utilise the University 'Safe Zone' app which can allow security to be called to your location on campus in case of emergency."

Students were reminded that if they ever had concerns about their security then they should contact security as soon as possible on the following numbers; 01904 323333 (non-emergency) or 01904 324444 (emergency).

Concert for flood fund

A WIDE RANGE of acts will join together to perform a concert at the York Barbican in order to raise money for the York Disaster Fund in March.

The fund which was set up in 2000 supports people whose homes have been flooded giving them temporary accommodation and trying to replace household goods that have been damaged by floodwater. Acts at the event will include the Steve Cassidy Band, Sam Webster and the York Civic Youth Choir. Jonathan Cowap and Adam Tomlinson from BBC Radio York will host the event which has aptly been named "Hold Back The River".

Holocaust Memorial

NATIONAL HOLOCAUST Memorial Week is to be honoured in the city of York in a number of events from 25 January.

The series of events will start off with a talk by the author Patrick Woodhouse. Other key events will include a touring exhibition by the Anne Frank Trust and a special screening of *The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas*.

Commenting on the Minster's programme of remembrance, Canon Chris Collingwood said: "This year's commemoration of Holocaust Memorial week provides an acute reminder to people of good will, people of faith and people of compassion everywhere that we must continue to raise up our voices and fight inhumanity."

The full in-depth programme and timings can be found online on the website of York Minster.

Drink safely by river

THE 'DON'T Drink and Drown' campaign launches this month to promote awareness of keeping safe around the river on nights out.

The campaign was launched by the Royal Life Savers Society UK (RLSS) with support from Jackie Roberts whose daughter Megan died in January 2014 after drowning on a night out in York.

The campaign will release 400 balloons on 29 January to signify the number of people who die in the UK every year by drowning. The University of York is working with the charity to assist students by handing out bottles of water on nights out, sharing beer mats, and being involved in social media campaigns.

YUSU's housing fair

A STUDENT HOUSING fair will take place on Friday 31 January from 11am-3pm in James College Dining Room and YourSpace. Properties of University approved landlords and University accommodation will be showcased.

Students often rush into signing accommodation and are encouraged to attend to widen their accommodation choices.

Scott Dawson, Community and Well-being Officer, said: "It is a brilliant opportunity for you to meet landlords and properties from all areas surrounding the University, covering up to 1000 rooms/beds."

Campus Unity Health surgery service improved

Ben Rowden
NEWS EDITOR

IT HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED by Scott Dawson, YUSU Welfare and Community Officer, that Unity Health Care, the on-campus healthcare provider, has increased its staffing provisions following student criticism.

The criticism, which came as a response to recent student feedback, was centred around waiting times and appointment shortages in particular.

According to Dawson: "As a result of the feedback from the student patient participation group (PPG) and general comments and complaints from students, Unity Health has increased its provision for the early morning drop in sessions. This includes introducing an extra nurse and an extra doctor throughout the morning.

"They are also opening their doors at 8:30am again instead of 8am as the new set up simply resulted in the queue starting earlier as opposed to more students being seen.

"Unity Health staff are keen to continue improving their service and I would recommend all students to voice any further concerns with myself (s.dawson@yusu.org) or the Unity Health feedback form on their site."

One first year student who recently visited the service commented how she "still had to wait outside in freezing conditions" only to be told that she would have to

come back another day, due to the fact that the service didn't have the necessary gender of doctor.

"After being told that I was unable to make an appointment anytime soon I asked if I could see a female doctor, to which I was told that only men were working that day and that I would have to return another morning to see if I could be seen."

She went on to say that, "generally the service was great once I saw a doctor, but the process doesn't seem to have improved at all from these recent changes, from what I can see."

The news comes after this paper wrote a piece highlighting students having to wait outside and facing large waiting times on appointments, among other complaints.

It remains unclear as to whether the waiting times for appointments have changed as a result of the changing in staffing provisions. However, another first year student at Halifax College stated that, "despite this being welcome news, I think it is clear that the causes are much deeper than just having one more member of staff".

There are currently plans under consultation for a new doctors surgery to be constructed on the Heslington East campus. From their research, Unity Health said: "The general feeling from patients is that they support the new Health Centre proposal and understand the need for larger premises." Information on opening times and contact details for Unity Health surgeries can be found on their website, www.unityhealth.info.

League Tables Survey now open to 3rd years

Amy Bishop
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE NATIONAL Student Survey is now open for entering until 30 April. Students in their final year of study can enter the survey where questions will be asked about what was good and what could be improved about the course to help prospective students with their choices for course and university.

John Robertson, Pro Vice Chancellor, told *Nouse*: "We encourage all final year students to complete the National Student Survey. It's one way to give feedback on your experience at York, and make your voice heard. Respondents' open written comments are particularly valuable.

"We study the results very carefully at programme, department and University levels, and alongside our internal mechanisms

for staff-student liaison, we use what we learn to go on improving."

The NSS was founded in 2005 and surveys the opinions of students who are in the final year of their undergraduate studies. Questions range from the quality of teaching to levels of personal development.

Thomas Ron, YUSU Academic Officer said: "The NSS is an incredibly important survey that has a huge impact on the University. The results of this are discussed at every level of the University.

"I hope that many students will avail themselves of the opportunity to leave feedback about their entire university experience."

In 2015, the University of York came 128th for overall student satisfaction.

The results of the survey are publicly available and can be highly influential in informing the decision of potential new undergraduate students.

Student Cinema celebrates 50th with special screenings

Niall Whitehead
NEWS REPORTER

ONE OF THE University of York's oldest societies, York Student Cinema, celebrates the 50th anniversary of its founding this year. Initially known as the York Film Society, the organisation showed its first movie, the Peter Sellers comedy *Two-Way Stretch*, on 28 April 1968. It has since maintained an active presence in the University up to the present day.

Initially, the society showed its films from within Heslington Hall, using the economical if grainy 16mm film format. Joining required a membership fee of £15, whereupon members could see three films every week and attend meetings held regularly at Langwith Bar. In 1970, it created its own student magazine, *Much Acclaimed*, which has also continued into the present day (now under the name of *Exposure*).

In 1980, the British Federation of Film Societies declared York Film Society the 'Film Society of the Year', an award they won again in



IMAGE: DAVID JOYCE

York Student Cinema was founded in April 1968 as the York Film Society

1988. Retaining their 16mm projector, they also moved their screenings to P/X/001 during the 1980s. However, despite this success, the society was beginning to struggle economically. The University had vetoed their requests to train their own projectionists or buy their own equipment, meaning these had to be hired and rented externally.

This ultimately left the society £1500 in debt (£5745 today, adjusted for inflation), and only showing one film a week. They were also facing serious competition from

York Film Theatre, a rival student cinema operating out of Central Hall.

However, by 1988 the society was able to afford a new 35mm projector, which showed its first film (coming-of-age tale *Hope and Glory*) on 22 May.

In 1990, a new screen was installed in P/X/001 worth £4000, and a Dolby surround-sound speaker system was installed along with it in 1991. Once again, the society won BFFA Film Society of the Year in 1992.

Lecturer needs help naming new tree he discovered in Africa

Chris Owen
EDITOR



IMAGE: CHRIS VICINO

THE ENVIRONMENT Department's Dr Andy Marshall made a surprising discovery while conducting research into Tanzania's rare kipunji monkey back in 2011.

His attention was drawn while trekking through mountainous forest regions by a curious tree, "as large as an oak", that he was unable to identify. After checking in with records at the National Museums of Kenya, Marshall realised he had an entirely new species on his hands.

Now, the Conservation PhD is asking UK schools to submit potential names for his new discovery in collaboration with the charity campaign Schools for Forests.

"The Schools for Forests campaign is a fantastic opportunity to get students involved in charitable work while also having the opportunity to win an amazing range of prizes, including naming this new tree species," Marshall said.

Schools for Forests is a unique competition and education scheme to raise funds for the conservation of tropical forests. The school that raises the most money will have the 20-metre tall tree named after them.

Dr Andy Marshall is asking British schools to help him name the new tree

IMAGE: CHRIS OWEN



Three 66 buses travelling in convoy through the Heslington East Campus, a feature of the service often criticised

University “pleased” with 66 bus service despite complaints

Elliott Banks
NEWS REPORTER

THE UNIVERSITY procurement office have justified their controversial decision to switch the campus bus service from Transdev to FirstGroup, *Nouse* has learned.

A letter sent to Ben Leatham by the University’s head of procurement, Rob Hunt details how the decision was reached by the University, after consultation with various stakeholders.

The letter explains in detail that the cost was not the main reason for the switch, stating that only 30 per cent of the criteria related directly to cost and subsidy, mean-

ing that the other 70 per cent of the criteria related to quantitative data. However, the letter does state that FirstGroup’s bid for the contract would present a £1 million saving in subsidy for the University over the life of the contract, based on the current fare levels. Indeed, the letter says that the reduction in subsidy is to be used to fund other campus improvement but no further detail is provided.

The University does concede that they are aware of some interruptions to the service to the UoY66 and state that they will have regular meetings to rectify any issues. The letter concludes that the University is pleased with the new service operated by FirstGroup and that the University believes that First will

provide “an improved service compared to this time last year and better value for money”.

However, the decision was controversial with students at the time with many claiming that the quality of the service has declined, with poor time-keeping being a common complaint.

A particular complaint by students has been UoY66 buses arriving at the same time and not every six to seven minutes as is advertised.

YUSU president Ben Leatham compiled a list of complaints from students, which were published on his official Facebook account, ranging from arriving late to rudeness of FirstGroup staff which were presented to FirstGroup at a review meeting.

York Refugee Week commences

James Hall
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

A WEEK OF activities to highlight the current refugee crisis will take place at the University of York from the 18th to the 22nd of January. Organised by the Environment and Ethics Committee, its aim is to raise money and awareness of the issues faced by refugees.

There will be a talk by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) on Monday, followed by a number of activities throughout the week, culminating in an Open Mic night in Courtyard on Friday.

In 2015, more than a million refugees crossed into Europe fleeing

conflicts and disaster zones around the world. Ellie Miles, an organiser of the event commented that: “With over 19.5 million refugees worldwide, and inadequate governmental responses to this growing crisis, it is imperative that people are made aware of what they can do to help, in whatever way possible.

“York Refugee Week will educate, spark debate, and raise money in order to promote positive change.

“There will be several experts and practitioners throughout the week who can further educate people about different aspects of the crisis, as well as several interactive events, such as a workshop on Wednesday that will teach people how to respond to the refugee crisis through a human rights framework. Beyond this, there are more creative

events, such as mural painting and an Open Mic night in Courtyard on Friday.”

YUSU President Ben Leatham said: “I am incredibly proud of the work the Environmental and Ethics Officers, Tess and Jacob, have done in organising Refugee Week.

“They are incredibly passionate about educating people and raising money for those affected by the current crisis.

“I will be attending as many of the events that I can and helping to promote what is going on wherever possible.”

More information can be found through the York Refugee Week Facebook page and individual event pages, where tickets can be booked to secure a place and avoid disappointment.

Philosophy becomes more international

Amy Bishop
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE COURSE CONTENT of the department of Philosophy has changed to have a more international approach to teaching.

Dom Smithies, Department Representative for Philosophy told *Nouse*: “The changes were brought about for a multitude of reasons. At the heart of the change is the belief that diversity is invaluable, especially in academic disciplines as broad as philosophy.”

Dom Smithies continued: “It appealed to those interested in philosophy of religion but wanted breadth beyond Christianity modules. As well as ensuring diversity and a degree of representation in the course the reasons for which have been well established by the

‘Why Is My Curriculum So White’ campaign.

“The Course Rep team is always happy to hear any and all suggestions for improvement and concerns and the department is immensely responsive to the views of its students.”

Thomas Ron, Academic Officer said: “I’m not sure that philosophy students were initially unhappy, they were merely making recommendations to improve the course, ones that the department made quickly. Making the curriculum more diverse has been a campaign that our excellent BME officers Liz and Tamaki have headlined.”

The changes may not have been significant to the course content as one philosophy student commented “there is still a European focus within philosophy at the University”.

SOC BOX

YUWake included in Roses competition

THE UNIVERSITY OF York’s waterski and wakeboarding club will be competing in this year’s roses in Lancaster for wakeboarding.

Because it is the first time that the watersport has been included in the competition, participants will not be contributing points towards the overall tournament.

The President of YUwake, Jemma Allman said: “Having the opportunity for YUWake to be part of Roses is brilliant for the club and any students who want to get involved.

“The competition will not be for points, so there’s no pressure and it’s a brilliant way of trying something totally new while being part of Roses. We love having new people of any ability, and I’m so excited to have Roses on our events calendar for the first time!”

The club was founded by its former president, Lara Mackey and has seen an increase in membership since.

The society is planning multiple trips before the competition to train students who are new to the sport to competition level.

To avoid the water in cold weather and maintain core strength, there will also be numerous climbing trips.

More information and a timetable of upcoming YUwake trips can be found on their Facebook page.

UYCC introduces Presidents Challenge

UYCC, THE UNIVERSITY of York’s Cycling Club, has started a new initiative to encourage students to get on their bikes.

The aim of the President’s Challenge is to introduce some friendly competition into the Club.

There are currently no regular BUCS fixtures or races for cycling during the majority of the academic year and the competition was introduced for members who felt that they were missing out on the competitive aspect that most University sports clubs have.

The competition runs from October through to June and it entails a variety of challenges including: time trials, hill climbs, mileage competitions, club circuit races and strava segments, as well as social events such as the famous Pedal and Pudding baking competition.

The club is welcoming new members and is holding a meet and greet session for new and current members in P/T/005 on Thursday 21 January.





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1 in 10 students using food banks to survive

Niall Whitehead
NEWS REPORTER

ACCORDING TO A recent survey, nearly a third of undergraduate students have gone without food for a day or more to help cope with the costs of living at university, while one in ten have been forced to rely on foodbanks.

The study, performed by online forum The Student Room and using a sample of 860 students between the ages of 16 and 25, suggests that many students are struggling to meet the challenges of the rising cost of living, as well as tuition fees that are “the highest in the world” (according to the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development).

Some students are turning to drastic measures in an attempt to make money. 41 per cent of respondents claimed they had either sold drugs on campus to cope with living costs or knew someone who did, and another 35 per cent said the same about working as an escort or exotic dancer. 13 per cent admitted to entering into a relationship with a “sugar daddy/mummy” to make ends meet.

The survey also revealed that 13 per cent of students also admitted to stealing to make ends meet. Again, hunger was reportedly a common

motivator: the most common item stolen was food, which 79 per cent of these students confessed to taking, followed by alcohol and money (51 per cent) and electrical equipment (40 per cent).

Further data from respondents showed that one in 10 students have used payday loans to get by, while 12 per cent of students have turned to gambling and 20 per cent have been forced into moving back in with their parents. Other students have tried to save money by sharply cutting their reliance on utilities, with one in five saying that they use no electricity or heating for a week or more.

President of YUSU, Ben Leatham said: “Students who are struggling to make ends meet while at University should get in touch with the advice support centre team here at YUSU. The ASC team can provide guidance in financial support, and in applying for University support grants such as the Hardship Fund.

“We are increasingly seeing this becoming a nationwide issue and we need to be doing more to pressure the government into taking action against a clear lack of support for this new generation of students.”

Hannah Morrish, university community manager at The Student Room, said that their findings proved that many students were “vulnerable...not just financially,

IMAGE: GRATISOGRAPHY.COM



There are over 400 foodbanks in the UK with over a million people receiving food according to the Trussell Trust

but socially as well”, with one in five students taking on more than one job in an attempt help with paying the bills.

Morrish added that “for any students who are struggling to make ends meet we want to stress that there is an active and easy to access support network available”. The University offers emergency loans if needed due to “unexpected financial hardship at any point in

the academic year”, which students can apply for online.

The Student Room’s research follows a new decision from the government to withdraw maintenance grants awarded to the poorest students, instead replacing them with loans that will have to be paid back once the recipient earns more than £21,000 a year. This decision has drawn fire from the National Union of Students, who claim that existing

grants are “not keeping pace with the rise of living costs”.

Megan Dunn, NUS national president, has argued that “the scrapping of maintenance grants is an enormous change that would affect thousands of students, but the government has failed to recognise just how widespread the impact would be. The most marginalised students would be the worst affected.”

Warwick Uni FoI might be dropped

Isabelle Scott
NEWS REPORTER

IN NOVEMBER 2015, the Green Paper on higher education reform was released by the government. Within the paper, it was proposed to remove universities from the Freedom of Information (FoI) Act, which means they would be exempt from FoI requests and in turn students could no longer find out where their money is going or hold their universities to account.

This attempts to “level the playing field” with private education providers. English universities would be kept out of the public domain, aiding the provisions set out by the Green Paper to make it easier for new, private providers to enter the “market”.

In a report released by *The Independent* last month, it was said that this comes after the UK’s elite universities asked to be “exempted” from providing information under

the Act. Russell group university, the University of Warwick, seems to have also taken this stance.

Warwick’s student paper, *The Boar*, was leaked a copy of their University’s green paper consultation responses last week, stating its position that “universities should not remain within the scope of the Freedom of Information Act”. Being so close to the deadline for submitting consultation responses to the government on Friday 15 January, it seems likely that this was Warwick’s final position.

The Green Paper proposal could have disastrous effects on student journalism and campaigning, and the student editors at *The Boar* are particularly worried, calling for the University to alter its position in favour of “transparency, openness, and democracy”.

The Russell Group’s director of policy, Dr Tim Bradshaw, stated that the Freedom of Information requirement has created a “competitive imbalance in the UK higher education market.”

Durham students “outraged” over accommodation fee rises

Niall Whitehead
NEWS REPORTER

A MAJOR STUDENT protest has occurred in Durham over the planned rise in college accommodation fees.

The protest, titled ‘a funeral for accessible education’, saw a reported 350 students march down the Bailey, a key area for half of the Durham colleges, led by the Grim Reaper himself.

Students dressed as mourners and helped carry a coffin along the way, in an act of symbolism which certainly struck a chord with many of the University’s students, and with students around the country.

The fees, which organisers of the march claim would leave students over £2000 worse off than their counterparts at York for similar catered accommodation, are opposed by a large number of students at the University, particularly due to the fact that in just five years

fees have rocketed by more than £2500.

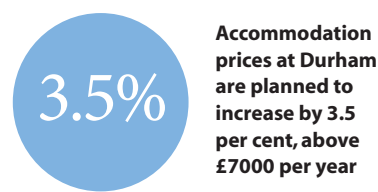
One first year student at Durham raised her particular concerns over the future of the demographic at the University. “I quite frankly think it is an outrage that the University feel as though they can keep increasing fees at such a rate. For me I’m incredibly concerned that they risk making Durham an elit-

simply the wealthy.”

Many supporters of the protest simply feel that their voice isn’t being listened to; despite opposition from the Student Union and various interest groups and societies, the University continued in their decision to rise the fees for the next academic year.

The protest raises questions over accommodation fees here at York as well, where many first years are currently living in accommodation on 51 week lets, paying upwards in the region of £6,700 for some single en-suite self-catered accommodation in Halifax college for example.

Ben Leatham, YUSU president said: “Rising accommodation fees for students is a national issue. Here at York we are lobbying the University to ensure that all future builds include a variety of accommodation bands so students have options based on their price range. We are also pushing for value for money on campus, particularly with the laundry service.”



ist University, especially given that many poorer students will be losing out on grants in the future.

“I’m curious to see if it keeps on increasing at this rate because I simply won’t be able to live in college in my third year if so. University should be accessible to all, not

Half of students skip on vaccine

James Hall
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

ENGLISH STUDENTS COULD be putting themselves at a higher risk of contracting a particularly deadly strain of meningitis, according to the charity Meningitis Now, as figures suggest that less than half of eligible 17 to 18 year olds have received the potentially lifesaving vaccine.

There is a greater risk of infection during the winter months and bacterial meningitis can lead to septicaemia (blood poisoning), which can be fatal.

Not all strains of the disease can be vaccinated against, so it's important to be aware of the symptoms, which can include fever, vomiting, confusion and irritability, severe muscle pain, severe headache, pale and blotchy skin and a stiff neck. Medical advice should be sought urgently and immediately if there is a suspected case.

Meningitis Now is a charity that aims to increase awareness about the potentially fatal disease and has called for all students to receive the free vaccine.

Sue Davie, Meningitis Now chief executive said: "Up to a quarter of students carry the bacteria that can cause meningitis compared to one in ten of the general population."

"Over 12 per cent of all cases occur in the 14 to 24 age group,



The vaccine does not offer protection for all variations of the disease

with first year students being at particular risk.

"It's vital that students are not complacent about the threat of meningitis - we urge them to take up this lifesaving vaccine." The disease is spread by prolonged close contact with a person who is infected. Because of this, students are at a higher risk of infection.

Since August last year, all 17

and 18 year olds are eligible for a free meningitis vaccine and first time university students aged between 19 and 25, can claim a free vaccination, which could potentially save lives.

More information on meningitis can be found at meningitis.now.org. To find out how to receive your free vaccination, contact your local GP's surgery or practice.

UK universities top for satisfaction internationally

Amy Bishop
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

A STUDY HAS found that international students that study in the UK are more satisfied with their education than those in other English-speaking nations.

The study of 365,754 students found that 91 per cent of those surveyed said that the UK was the top for student satisfaction. Universities in the UK scored higher in 75 of the 84 measures ranked.

In addition, at 85 per cent, international undergraduate students studying in the UK were more likely to recommend their university experience than those studying elsewhere.

However there has been a decline in UK student satisfaction since 2011, with the main concern among students being financial support. Removal of maintenance grants for undergraduates could see a further decline in this.

Vivienne Stern, UK HE International Unit director, said:

"While the UK's improving results and higher satisfaction with their education than those in other English-speaking nations suggest we are heading in the right direction, we cannot remain complacent."

"Other countries are increasing their efforts to attract international students and are enjoying faster growth. The UK must jointly capitalise on its obvious strengths in order to drive sustained growth for this critical component of the UK's higher education system and its broader economy."

The primary alternatives for international students if they had not gone to study in the UK was the United States at 44 per cent, then Australia with 24 per cent, followed by Canada where 19 per cent said that they would have gone to study.

Responses from the students surveyed found that the top four reasons for international students choosing to study in the UK were: the reputation of the selected institution, the specific course of study, earning potential and personal safety.



IMAGE: CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY

22.1 per cent of University of Cambridge students are international

Less part-time study

THE NUMBER of part-time students has fallen for the third year in a row, coinciding with the trebling of tuition fees in 2012.

Initially falling by 22 per cent in 2012/13, the number of part-time students entering university fell by six per cent in 2014/15, according to the Higher Education Statistics Agency. Overall, the number of students entering university has not increased, indicating that the result is not simply a consequence of students instead opting to partake in full-time study.

The National Union of Students has blamed the government for the decline, stating that while the government "tout out that student numbers have not been affected or have increased...[they] fail to acknowledge that part-time numbers are in dramatic decline."

Students' dog therapy

A SHIH TZU and his owner have been awarded for the help they give to students in therapy sessions at the University of Bournemouth.

Jack and owner Carolyn Atherton were given the award by Caring Canines, a voluntary organisation who work with dogs in hospitals, nursing homes and schools, where dogs have been said to have helped pupils have the confidence to read.

At the University of Bournemouth Jack sits in on therapy sessions to help students relax and relieve stress and anxiety. The University is currently investigating how dog-assisted support can help the learning process.

The pair were awarded with the Peg Otway Memorial Award for helping students with learning difficulties, medical conditions and mental health issues.

'Give extremists voice'

THE UNIVERSITY OF Oxford's first female vice-chancellor, Professor Louise Richardson, has said that extremists should be allowed to speak at universities.

She told *The Daily Telegraph*: "We need to expose our students to ideas that make them uncomfortable so that they can think about why it is that they feel uncomfortable and what it is about those ideas that they object to."

Richardson claims that to not permit such views in universities, would be to stifle free speech and that students should learn to argue against opposing views rather than ban them. She also called the Bullingdon Club 'unacceptable' and denied the links between the university and the infamous club that both David Cameron and Boris Johnson were members of.

First class degree high

RECORDS NOW REVEAL that one in four students are receiving the top honour at degree level.

The number of students achieving a first has almost doubled in the last decade according to the Higher Education and Statistics Agency, and 72 per cent get at least a 2:1.

This has raised questions among academics that the current degree classification system is no longer fit for purpose. There are other systems currently being tested to replace it, according to Nicola Dandridge, chief executive of Universities UK.

Jo Johnson, Universities Minister, said: "The UK's standard model of classes of honours is on its own no longer capable of providing the recognition hardworking students deserve and the information employers require."

Increasing gender gap

THE GENDER GAP between male and female students has almost doubled in the last eight years, according to statistics published by Universities and Colleges Admission Service (UCAS) this week.

The statistics reveal that in the United Kingdom, women are 35 per cent more likely to attend a higher education institute than men. In 112 out of 180 subjects, females outnumber their male counterparts. The gender gap between students from working class backgrounds is more startling still, with working class female students being 50 per cent more likely to attend university.

In terms of degrees, the gap between men and women was widest in nursing; 90.5 per cent of UK students were female, whereas men outnumbered women in computer science.

In Turkey, you and I would be “traitors”

Academics and journalists are being silenced. Turkey’s totalitarian media laws show how precious our own freedom of speech is



IMAGE: MEG RUTHERFORD

Sam Lees



Today, as per usual, while scrolling down my Facebook feed I came face to face with a number of posts denouncing the British government, insulting both individual ministers and the government in general. One in particular caught my eye, this time of Jeremy Hunt, the Secretary of State for Health, depicted as a cat sat on a table, happily swiping a mug labelled ‘NHS’ onto the floor while no one appears to be looking.

We take our freedom to insult the government and just about every individual in the public sphere almost as a duty in the UK. With petitions for a vote of no-confidence in our Prime Minister David Cameron reaching over 198,000 signatures, it is quite clear that the people of Britain do not fear any sort of repercussions from the government when they insult or otherwise berate them.

Sadly, in Turkey, this freedom to insult the state or public figures does not exist.

On Friday last week, 21 academics from the University of Koçaeli, near Istanbul, were arrested as a result of having signed a petition denouncing government operations against Kurdish rebels in the southeast of the country.

Those arrested face charges of “terrorist propaganda”, and far

more worryingly, “insulting the government”. This is because under Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, it is illegal to insult the Turkish nation, country, or any government institution.

Understandably, this has been condemned strongly by a number of prominent European human rights agencies.

While this group of 21 academics is only a small proportion of the 1,200 individuals from 90 Turkish

In Turkey, the freedom to insult state or public figures doesn’t exist

universities who signed the petition, it is a worrying precedent that is being set here by the Turkish government against freedom of expression.

President Erdogan himself spoke out against the academics who signed the petition, labelling them “traitors” and “fifth columnists” in speeches on Thursday, essentially declaring them enemies of the state purely for speaking out and stating their beliefs and opinions.

Since the government has so far denied that the offensive has caused any threat to civilians in the country, over 170 have been documented as

killed and the academics appear to have grounds for their complaints.

This is a worrying development even for Turkey, a country currently well known for its authoritarian stance on the freedom of speech and press. Of 21 journalists killed in Turkey since 1992, the Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ) believes that nine were killed by government officials. As well, journalists are not allowed access to the government run refugee camps, a clear sign that the government does not trust them to report stories as desired.

This is not an isolated case of targeting individuals under Article 301 either. Back in early December, a court case briefly reached global attention and the government was forced to hire an academic panel of experts to determine whether comparing President Erdogan to Gollum from Lord of the Rings should be counted as a crime. While this trial has yet to see a verdict, it is clear that Article 301 most certainly has a bite to match its bark.

It is likely that this is only the first wave of yet another crackdown on freedom of expression in Turkey. When a government prevents academics and journalists from speaking out against them, then it is depriving the public of the opportunity to hold that government to account.

If President Erdogan and the AKP continue down the path that they have embarked upon, then freedom of speech and the freedom of the press will be crushed beneath an authoritarian regime.

Do we really want ‘principled’ politicians?

In British politics conviction politicians are a fantastic commodity, if you agree with them. If you don’t, they’re disastrous

Luke Rix-Standing



Particularly in the past few years, ‘principle’ has become a highly-prized political commodity. After the lies surrounding the invasion of Iraq, Nick Clegg’s tuition fees debacle, and a general feeling of disgust at the fudge-filled spin doctors patrolling each party HQ, the public is ready for some straight-talking political conviction. Assessments of Jeremy Corbyn generally take one of two forms: ‘he’s principled and...’ (if you like him), or ‘he’s principled but...’ (if you don’t). The one thing everyone can agree

on is that his conviction is one of his good points.

He’s not alone in this. While surfing videos on the BBC (as you do), I recently found myself watching Mhairi Black’s much-lauded maiden speech to the House of Commons. The 20-year-old SNP MP spoke with passion and eloquence, but one excerpt in particular caught my attention: a political analogy attributed to a personal hero of hers, Tony Benn. “Weathercocks”, she mused “will spin in whatever direction the wind of public opinion may blow them, no matter what principle they may have to compromise.” She added that “signposts will stand true and tall and principled.”

If Mhairi Black became Prime Minister, are we therefore to assume that the lady would not be for turning? I couldn’t help but notice that

her eulogy for single-minded leadership came just minutes after she had denounced Margaret Thatcher in the strongest terms. Tony Benn was indeed a signpost, but Thatcher was an even more successful one. Both of these signposts are only good if you agree with what’s on them; directions to Essex aren’t much use if you’re trying to get to Surrey. Indeed, later in the very same speech, Ms. Black attacked the current Conservative government for being ‘uncompromising’.

‘Conviction politicians’ can sometimes carve a path that others could not, but at what cost? When the unstoppable force of Margaret Thatcher came up against the immovable object of Arthur Scargill, we did not get constructive discussion, we instead got a turf war. Politicians should be pragmatic public

servants, willing to serve the will of the people and compromise when it is in the interests of the nation. Too much personal idealism is a hindrance to this process.

As for Jeremy Corbyn, he was brought into the Labour party leadership race to ‘broaden discussion’, and now that he has won he finds himself trying to force into line a parliamentary party that he himself voted countless times against. By taking so many principled stands he’s given recalcitrant Labour MPs the perfect template for disobeying his leadership. Hilary Benn recently voted with his principles over military action in Syria: he now faces calls for deselection and finds himself on probation in the shadow cabinet.

Furthermore, there seems to be something about ‘principle’ that

automatically polarises the political spectrum. If an election were called right now, the country would most likely have to entrust its finances to either George Osborne (a neo-Thatcherite), or John McDonnell (a neo-Marxist). Both men of evident ideological conviction, the words ‘rock’ and ‘hard place’ spring to mind. In the economy perhaps more than anywhere else, this country is desperately missing the pragmatism of moderation.

Thus Tony Benn’s weathercock analogy is perhaps in need of rephrasing: where weathercocks can each turn a little and point to a mutually constructive middle ground, signposts are resolutely incapable of doing so. Thatcher’s ‘principles’ divided a nation; so would those of Jeremy Corbyn, Nigel Farage or Tony Benn.

IMAGE: GARRY KNIGHT



Call off the Hunt, stand with the junior doctors

Government demands on our junior doctors are unrealistic and untenable

Anand Goyal



A stark reminder as to why we need to criticise the government, not the people on the front line in hospitals, was delivered this week. Junior doctors in England have walked out in their first strike in forty years, backed by 98 per cent of those balloted by the British Medical Association (BMA).

Normally, politicians would attempt to question the integrity of those who decide to take industrial action, but not in this case. The overwhelming support for action clearly shows the state of discontent, anger, and frustration with the government's (namely Jeremy Hunt's) efforts to undermine the service, safety, and working conditions within the NHS. The message is clear, they are trying to push the NHS in the wrong direction and junior doctors will not stand for it.

Junior doctors make up one in three medical workers; they are not students in their early 20s. They are qualified professionals who are 'junior' doctors for 10-15 years after

they graduate from university.

They do not stand around watching 'real' doctors save lives, it is them on the front line in surgery and them walking the wards. They are paid less than many other graduate professions, especially those that work in the city, and often have to work ridiculous antisocial hours. They make up the majority of cover on the weekends and on night shifts. In summary, they work damn hard.

So what is their reward? A new contract proposal that slashed unsociable hours pay by 25 per cent, made Saturday a normal working day, and extended the normal working day from 7am to 10pm. Unsafe maximum shift lengths are now 13 hours as is the possibility of working four 13 hour night shifts in a row.

The government's new contract proposals go much further than decreasing the pay that junior doctors receive. They force junior doctors to work even more antisocial hours, with longer shifts if they want to make up for lost income. People, who more than anyone, deserve a good work-life balance. Who wants to be treated by a tired, overworked, and despondent junior doctor? This strike is about protecting the core of the NHS.

The contract endangers the

safety of patients and reveals a disregard for the people who dedicate their lives to treating them. Rather than focusing on ways to retain the 50 per cent of junior doctors that do not complete their training after their first two foundation years of training, Jeremy Hunt's only response is to make the situation worse, delivering a poorer working environment and irregular hours.

Thankfully, the public are behind the action, with two-thirds backing the strikes. But then how can you argue with almost the entire workforce of junior doctors? Possibly the most intelligent and compassionate people this country has to offer, they are public servants who deserve respect. It is clear that the trust between the Health Secretary and the medical profession has been entirely broken.

40 per cent of junior doctors worked on Tuesday, the day of the strike, not because they ignored the advice of the BMA like Jeremy Hunt tried to make out, but because they had to. They had to keep the NHS functioning, because they are willing to put others before themselves every day. So when you hear from the government that these strikes are "totally unnecessary", remember what the strikes are about and why they are doing it. They are fighting for our NHS.

Criminals are criminals. Leave refugees alone

Equality must trump xenophobia post-Cologne

Maria Munir



Let's get one thing straight: nothing ever excuses sexual assault. No one should excuse perpetrators of sexual assault, just as no one should silence victims and tell them not to speak out.

Now that's clear, let's discuss why the world felt uncomfortable yet outraged to learn of the attacks in Cologne. Depending on which newspaper you read, migrants/immigrants/asylum seekers/refugees have sexually assaulted and robbed around 700 people. Most of the 1000 or so alleged attackers identified by victims are young men of Middle Eastern or North African origin.

It's obvious why Germany, the land of "Wir schaffen das" (we can handle this), is divided in its relationship with the camps of people waiting to be processed. Over 1.1 million people came to Germany in search of safety in 2015. Of this figure, an unknown proportion are suspected to have registered under false identities or registered multiple times. This has caused considerable tension, with far-right groups such as Pegida demanding Angela Merkel gets rid of the asylum seekers and puts Germans first.

One way the government is taking perceived control of the situation is by issuing identity cards for all refugees as of February. This includes information such as fingerprints, health status, and qualifications, and will be accessible to all German government agencies. People have targeted asylum seekers in revenge attacks. I can't help but feel ID cards

won't solve their grievances.

Why are refugees dehumanised so often? We should not accuse all men of being future rapists, nor all refugees of being future criminals. Germany needs to stop pandering to far-right groups who undoubtedly see Mutti Merkel as being weak. It is necessary to have policy based on protecting the displaced without

Integration can't happen if you separate refugees from citizens

being lenient on serious crimes, but the point of an immigration policy is to monitor citizenship. Germany must prove itself by trying people fairly in court once their status is recognised.

The way we view consent is a problem, not just one specific to a certain community. Germany has already announced steps to broaden the outdated definition of sexual assault as currently it is only classed as such if the victim fights back.

Attitudes need to change throughout Germany; no one can claim to be morally superior. Remind people that if they are in Germany, they are subject to German law, but no one group should be accused above another. The only way Germany can dispel xenophobic sentiments is to act with confidence and authority. Integration can only happen if you stop separating refugees from citizens.

There is no doubt that everyone is capable of committing a crime. However, the people involved should be tried in court, rather than on the front pages of tabloids. It should not reflect upon German border policy when it comes to refugees and protecting individuals based on humanitarian beliefs.

The current rhetoric is falling towards assuming that all refugees are criminals or criminals in the making, when in reality, we are all capable of breaking the law.



IMAGE: GLYN LOWE

EDITOR'S OPINION

New Year, same virtue-signalling

Ciarán Morrissey



Everyone's main goal in life should be to better themselves. There's no better time to do that than now.

University is an extremely transformative time, where huge blocks of free time occur alongside access to some of the finest minds in the world.

It is also a place in which people from all strata of society are thrown in together and told to get along.

It's just so full of people, of things, of stuff, that it is simply impossible to make it through the three-or-more years you'll spend here without broadening your horizons and changing some of your views on the world.

Yet, as with most things, self-improvement has, for many people, become relegated to something they blog about, consider in the abstract, or merely feign to do.

New Years' Resolutions are the absolute worst example of this. If you need a socially-sanctioned start date to begin modifying your habits, you're probably not serious about changing them to begin

with.

It's endless, crass, 'New Year, New Me' verbal diarrhoea that you see strewn across your news feeds in the fortnight following Christmas - often by those with literally no desire to change their lives and are instead hungry for a pat on the back.

We're turning the practice of self-improvement into a sort of spectator sport, inviting acquaintances to watch from the sidelines as we run for the goal. Except we've stopped running, and the pageantry has become the main event.

The worst example of this was journalist Michelle McGagh's November declaration that she would buy nothing for the next 366 days. Not only is that absolutely, utterly, palpably untrue, all that's being done there is a declaration of an idea, hungry for approval.

There is certainly a danger when we start putting self-indulgent, masturbatory declarations of virtue on a higher pedestal than proven acts of competence or morality. It becomes even worse when this becomes a competition.

So set your goals for 2016; run a marathon, stop smoking, or even just improve things between you and your partner. But ask yourself if you're doing it for your own sake, or to enhance how others will see you.



IMAGE: BEACON



IMAGE: MARK RAMSAY

We should be honest about alternatives to university

Young people need to be empowered to make decisions about their futures

Frances Carruthers



When stating my choice to go to university, I was surprised by the number of people that made negative assumptions about what student life would entail. People were pre-occupied with the 'social side' of university: the long holidays, lie-ins, and low contact hours, assuming them to be some kind of luxury that would be afforded to me.

While it's true that some opt for this lifestyle, the majority are far more likely to be hard-working, concerned about money, and spend more time working than socialising. Indeed, with 26 per cent of students in part-time work to supplement their studies, it's clear that students are actively seeking to improve their finances.

Following George Osborne's reforms to higher education last summer, including the scrapping of maintenance grants, young people

are facing an increasingly tough set of options when it comes to university. With the government estimating that 45 per cent of graduates will never earn enough to pay off debts, comes an urgent need for every young person to make a more informed decision about their further education.

It's the 'why?' that is an obvious, yet unasked question when it comes to university. It's only looking back on sixth form that I realise my teachers never asked why I was applying to university, only where.

It's only from the world removed from college that I was asked, and began to ask myself, these crucial questions. It surprised me how many sneering comments about university have come not just from the older generation, but people of my own age who have chosen not to go. The main concern is always student debt. Is it really worth it? Do you really want that hanging over you? No, I don't. But I'm going to do my best in spite of that, because I recognise the importance of having a degree in today's career market. At the end of last year a record number of graduates were in

employment six months after leaving university.

Ultimately, in an economic climate where higher education is a commodity, and student debt is a reality, we need to be making sure that young people are both provided with and informed about the options for their career paths. Furthermore, with Osborne's cuts to housing benefits for 18 to 21 year-olds, the pressure is on for young people to 'earn or learn'.

45 per cent of graduates will never earn enough to pay off debts

We need to be sparking these conversations about whether university is the right choice for us - and if not, addressing the options of placements, apprenticeships, vocational courses and full-time work.

The University must invest more in staff

Understaffing in the English department is seriously damaging its future prospects. Immediate action is required to change this

Jacob Miller



York's English Department is understaffed. Since 2012 there's been a 32 per cent increase in student numbers in the English Department, but staffing levels have not risen at the same rate. In 2013/14 the department was nine members short, but the

University only allowed three new members of staff to be hired. This year, the department is still six staff short.

The English Department at York is highly successful and a great department to be a part of. The University's 2013 financial report states that the University had an £8.695 million surplus. The 2014 report announced a £10.474 million surplus. Pro Vice Chancellor John Robinson responded to concerns about staffing levels by explaining that the University is saving money to reno-

vate Heslington West over approximately the next 10 years.

York's English Department is famed for its outstanding research. This success is reliant upon their broad range of staff. Modules from Victorian Literature through to Modern Arabic are only available because of a multiplicity of staff coalesces in the department.

Last year's National Student Survey revealed that in general students were positive about the department - with 97 per cent saying staff made the subject interesting,

and 90 per cent saying library resources met their needs. However, 57 per cent said feedback helped clarify things they didn't understand, and 60 per cent said feedback was prompt. It is hardly a surprising trend given that workloads of marking are stretched over staffing levels inadequate to cope with higher student numbers. Indeed, the debacle over lost exam papers last year could certainly be attributed to a lack of staff.

Understaffing is undermining the education of current students.

They are paying £9000 a year for increasingly cramped office hours. Tutors are doing a marvellous job in spite of the pressures they are facing. The purpose of a university education is to develop the ability to think critically about a range of issues, and office hours enable this.

The English department's reputation for excellence is important because it designates the department as a place perfect for the nurture of critical thought. If we wish to maintain that reputation, issues of understaffing must be addressed.

The dangerous precedent of pulling down Rhodes

If Rhodes must fall then so must others. How much can we destroy?

Jack Staples-Butler



Oxford.

These discussions are being had elsewhere, but one thing should be considered when making the decision to remove or preserve the statue of a figure blamed for the theoretical and political implementation of oppression. In London's Highgate Cemetery, a large cranial bust of Karl Marx was erected by the Communist Party of Britain in 1956, the same year the Hungarian Revolution was brutally crushed by

The Rhodes of Oriel College isn't an imposing, omnipresent monolith ”

the Soviet Union. Millions of people who are alive in 2016 suffered under regimes that were avowedly Marxist in their orientation, whether their right to claim status as 'socialist states' was legitimate or not.

The irony of Rhodes Must Fall, influenced by the myriad of 'theory' which proliferated through Western universities under the direction of New Left thinkers and ultimately by the mantle of Marx himself, is that it must turn against its own forebears if it wants to be logically consistent. The statue of Marx in Highgate can be a painful - indeed 'triggering' - reminder of a hated

ideology for anybody who has lived in a communist or ex-communist country, such as millions of Poles, Hungarians, Lithuanians and Ukrainians. And it does not stop with Marx. Perennial student pin-up icon Che Guevara was both a revolutionary hero and a state executioner responsible for the murder of thousands of Cuban political prisoners. Michel Foucault, beloved of post-structuralists and people whose favourite words are 'intersectional' and 'experience', naively analysed and shamelessly grovelled at the feet of the Iranian theocrats who would become famous for lynching gay people and trade unionists from cranes.

Indeed, it is difficult to postulate the existence of totalitarian and history-destroying post-colonial regimes like those of Iran, Zimbabwe and the Khmer Rouge of Cambodia without the 'theory' of the Western far-left.

Unlike the communist statues removed at the Fall of the Wall, the Rhodes of Oriel College is not an imposing, omnipresent monolith erected in every city park. If Rhodes Must Fall is morally serious, it should commit not just to the removal of a symbol of Victorian imperialism but to all monuments to oppression and the ideologies which create it.

Of course, we could leave the statues where they are, perhaps adding some explanatory footnotes, and accept that the solution to humanity's problems do not lie in destroying the past.

EDITOR'S OPINION

The church must let itself expand

Maria Munir



It's bizarre to think that the Anglican Church saw fit to punish a liberal church in the US, which had a gay bishop, for getting with the times and accepting same-sex marriage.

What is even stranger is that a four day meeting went ahead in Canterbury where the elite of the Anglican Communion (a union of churches throughout the world) decided to restrict the US Episcopal Church's decision-making for three years on a voluntary basis, and saw fit to restate that marriage can only be between "a man and a woman".

Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said that they can't impose sanctions as it doesn't fit the jurisdiction of the Communion, but they will enforce the ruling on a voluntary basis. Everyone has the right to believe what they believe,

but surely it is overreaching to demand all churches fit exactly to the same doctrine? Religion is personal, and indeed, many countries with Anglican churches still criminalise homosexuality, unlike the UK.

Same-sex marriage is indeed divisive among church-goers. However it's small-minded and damaging to the church to stop branches from, well, branching out. In the same way, other religious organisations ruling with an iron fist aren't so much a religion as a political power. Instead of using politics to shut down a fellow Anglican, maybe the Communion could let Anglican branches decide for themselves. Isn't that the spirit of the Anglican Church?

Welby has expressed "pain" at the fact that LGBTQ people are suffering. Maybe something should be done about it, Welby. Rather than resting on your laurels, do something about the suffering you empathise with so much. Sounds like an attempt to get away with being authoritarian or popular, to me.

God save us all, even the Archbishop.

EDITOR'S OPINION

Education is the route to equality

Luke Rix-Standing



All I want for Christmas is the abolition of the imperialist, white supremacist, misogynistic, capitalist heteropatriarchy, announces the widely-circulated photo flashing across my news feed; apparently the new battle cry against systemic privilege.

Quite apart from being patently untrue (next post: 'new iPad selfie'), I feel that this kind of statement misses something very important about privilege in practice (#mansplain).

Unusually for a critique of this sort of thing, I'm skeptical not of what it includes but of what it leaves out. There is no doubt that I - and many of you - are extremely privileged, but race, gender and sexuality aren't really the issue. The culprit is surely education, both in school and at home. Educated parents, educated peers and educated exam results: these are the things that give someone societal advantage.

It isn't a question of gender (women are now 35 per cent more likely to go to university than men),

or of race (white males are now the least likely ethnic group to attend university). The suggestion that privilege comes from demographic rather than individual background is profoundly unhelpful when trying to tackle inequality. In the overarching pantheon of privilege 'white-', 'straight-' and 'male-' are surely minor deities when compared with educational status.

I feel that this may be because it's harder to complain about - it is akin to sexuality in that it's forced on you during your teenage years, generally without your consent - and it's much more difficult to establish coherent demographics. Bad private school; good comprehensive; grammar school; fee-paying nursery; everyone has had a different experience. It's hardly a case of black and white.

Furthermore, it is firmly intertwined with background. Some parents read to their children at bedtime and help with their homework, while some work two jobs just to put food on the table.

Education may be a political hot potato, but if you really want to level the playing field then educational awareness and improving state schools in deprived areas should probably be your focus. Education first. Heteropatriarchy second.



IMAGE: DUNCAN HARRIS



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17 Jan 2016

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Chinese GDP report starts traders' week
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CLASH OF COMMENTS

Are we becoming too sensitive about cultural appropriation?

YES.

Luke Rix-Standing



Despite my sub-heading, I totally understand that cultural appropriation can be bad. Every Halloween some idiot decides it would be suitably 'edgy' to black up as part of their costume (*cough* DERWENT *cough*), and every year the backlash is predictably uniform.

However, we already have a word for this sort of thing: racism. We're now starting to condemn things as 'cultural appropriation' even if they have no racist undertones whatsoever. Take the recent sombrero ban at UEA, which prohibited local restaurant Pedro's from handing out the hats to non-Mexicans.

Rather than thoughtful reflection, the result was that locals and students alike posted sombrero-laden selfies all over the internet to combat the tyranny of 'sombrorogate'. Online reaction has been suitably hilarious, one gentleman pointing out that some Mexicans actually wear rather narrow-brimmed hats (#NotAllMexicans). I'm not sure they'd be as apt to hand out; their brims are clearly not wide enough to bear the weight of all that prejudice. The banning was even criticised by Richard Maudsley, head of the British Mexican society, perhaps a better spokesman for Mexican communities than UEA's all-white SU.

'Cultural appropriation', perhaps ironically, is merrily spreading across national boundaries.

The University of Ottawa recently banned a series of free campus yoga classes, amid fears that they could offend local Hindus.

Instructor Jen Scharf gave a commendably mild-mannered interview to CBC, outlining the Catch-22 that she found herself in. If she removed the yoga affiliations from her class she would be whitewashing her cultural influences, but if she embraced the spirituality of yoga then she would be accused of misappropriating them. Once again, Hindus at the local temple couldn't understand the fuss.

To round out this triumvirate of triviality we have a stellar offering from the University of Oxford, who recently faced criticism for promising 'smooth jazz' and 'spectacular Mardi Gras' at a New Orleans-themed May ball. They were accused of 'glorifying an era of racism'. Given that any era before about 1950 could be classed as 'an era of racism' that leaves you banning a lot of things.

By extending the reach of 'cultural appropriation' to an absurd degree we risk losing the cultural exchange that should be one of Britain's greatest assets. There's also the simpler danger of just taking ourselves too seriously. The fact that these bans often speak over the sensible disinterest of the relevant minority, simply exacerbates this point.

If something is racist we can call it racist, if it isn't then there shouldn't be a problem. The lines between cultures are often vague and subjective, and as a liberal part of a global world, you have to be pretty careful when telling people what to wear, what to play, and how to stretch.

NO.

Maria Munir



Cultural appropriation is misunderstood. People's experiences are denied and boiled down to politically-correct feminist activism.

Simply put, cultural appropriation refers to the borrowing of another culture, as opposed to harmless activities like enjoying local curry nights, or going abroad. While the term is widely debated, and better terms could be used instead, the most common understanding of cultural appropriation illustrates how someone can benefit from culture or take it out of context without having to suffer the discrimination involved. It's about having a conversation, not policing or banning culture.

Some find it difficult to identify appropriation or think it's 'just' racism. Racism is discrimination using unfounded prejudice. An example of appropriation can be racist or not racist depending on context. The retail industry fashions random patterns into "tribal" garments; the industry can be accused of appropriating African culture, and depending on the clothes, may even be racist. It's crass that the assumption is tribes are always African. Africa is a continent. Tribes vary from country to city to town. By pandering to a stereotype, or reducing culture to an accessory for financial gain, people can misinterpret a culture. The industry and consumers are appropriating, maybe even unknowingly.

It's about intentions and knowledge. If someone is invited to participate in the culture, or feels connect-

ed to it and part of it as a result, then they cannot be accused of cultural appropriation. Maybe they make mistakes, everyone does, but it's the element of respect which makes the difference. Culture is not about the colour of your skin, but your inter-linked experiences. Understanding the intricacies of culture would help lessen stereotypes harming people who participate in the culture.

Think Native American head-dresses, bindis and cow outfits, and cornrows. Playing dress up perpetuates stereotypes, and even if you understand that, it doesn't give you a free pass to be ignorant. One might object and say it's just a way to enjoy people's culture, but we must recognise an uncomfortable conversation to be had over people's entitlement to take from others without having to face the repercussions.

Cultural appropriation hasn't gone too far. In this world people are silenced by people from other backgrounds and told that they cannot be unhappy with the way their culture is being portrayed or exploited. Some feel targeted and feel they are second to the feelings of black and ethnic minority people. This leads to more assumptions and aggression. It's not just about calling out what you see based on your own assumptions of an individual, it's about challenging societal stereotypes.

Culture will never be homogenous to one group. You can't look at someone and just define them. Maybe one day, we won't have to talk about cultural appropriation as we'll have more cultural education and willingness to respect each other. But until we accept that it's okay to challenge the misrepresentation of culture and its significance, we must not stop talking about cultural appropriation.

#minstergram

Nouse takes a look at what you've been Instagramming recently in York



@rogerdodsworth

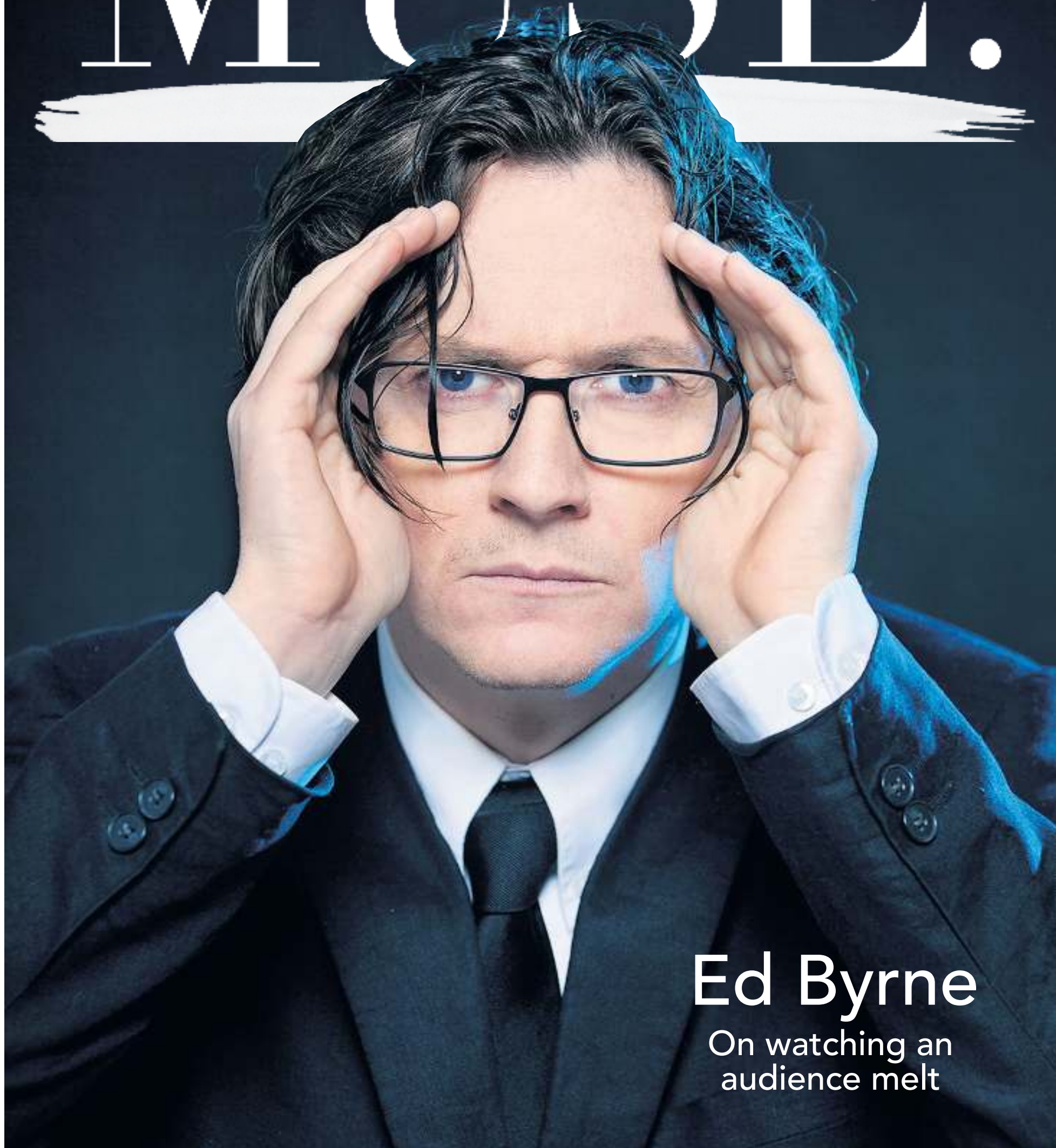


@uniofyork sunrise on campus this morning #sunrise #uniofyork



@uoy_grounds_and_gardens Black headed gulls at Central Hall #uoy #nature #university-of-york #lake #habitat #environment #gardener #uniofyork #birds #gulls

MUSEE.



Ed Byrne

On watching an
audience melt

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FILM & TV

M13 The forecast for 2016's movies looks bleak according to Film & TV, who take a more positive view of last year's television in their second feature

MUSIC

M14 Foals, Blur and Kendrick Lamar feature among Music's top albums from 2015

M15 Our Music Editor pauses for reflection to recover from the shock of David Bowie's death, as Jack Davies listens to the icon's hauntingly dark final release



06

ARTS

M6 Ella Barker proposes a change of perspective on an Oxford bust while Rory Kelly takes a look at the (not so) soft side of extremism: its poetry

FEATURES

M4 The Muse Editor has a few burning questions for comedian Ed Byrne amid his latest tour

M16 A newly opened acupuncture centre in York provides sharp insight into the benefits of alternative medicine for Connie Shaw

M18 Features face up to British fascism

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FASHION

M8 As designers begin to think about the planet, Fashion look at clothing with a conscience. In contrast, Kylie Jenner's lack of a moral compass is queried



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GAMING

M12 James Lees examines the buzz of excitement surrounding the release of virtual reality console Oculus Rift, and the touching and tear-jerking *That Dragon, Cancer* is awarded high praise



FOOD & DRINK

M17 Amy Norton examines the benefits of a new diet that puts the emphasis on sirtuins - including wine and chocolate, before Leah Huws gives the top culinary apps a test-run

Editor's note



Deputy Muse Editor
Joel Down looks
forward to looking back

Little under three weeks in, and 2016 looks like a shocker already. At least for North Korea it started with a bang when they teasingly dropped the 'H-bomb' (not literally of course), but that hardly bodes well for the rest of the year, or the rest of us. Closer to home, there comes the sad news that two of Britain's cultural icons have passed away suddenly and unexpectedly, having lost their respective battles with cancer. And, as Niall mentions (M20), for some of us, the flooding in York just about ruined any expectations of a dry January. It's fortunate, in that case, that Niall's column and Muse as a whole has plenty to do to remedy our less-than-perfect New Year.

In the former, York's Yik Yak couple of the month make us all feel better about ourselves, while in the latter, Ed Byrne doesn't fail to dish out the one-liners as we chat to him about his tour, soon to arrive in York (M4).

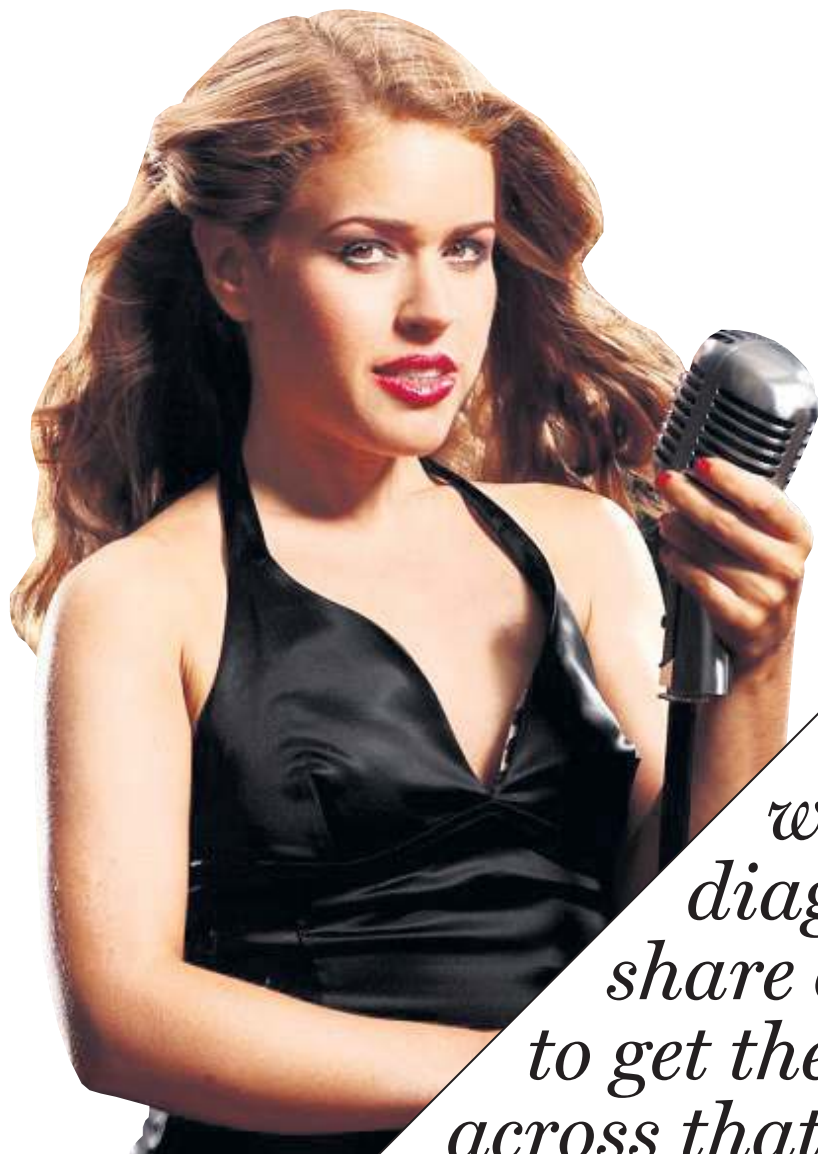
But if comedy isn't the answer to the season of woes, then you might just want to stick your head in the clouds and settle for virtual freedom courtesy of Oculus rift (M12). If, like me, you've been far too easily defeated by the curse of the common cold, then perhaps the answer lies in the direction of acupuncture, which turns out to be surprisingly beneficial, according to Features (M16). I am less convinced, partly because at the moment I have enough pins and needles already - just one of the ways my immune system likes to let me know that it is completely useless and that if I got hit in the face by a stray goose, I probably wouldn't notice for a couple of days.

What is more likely to strike you about this edition is that we spend much of it looking back. Fashion take this the furthest, for their 60s inspired shoot (M8), while Ant Noonan reflects on what makes David Bowie a man that we simply can't forget (M15), aside a reminder of last year's top albums (M14).

On the other hand, looking to today, the very present threat of extremism is explored from different angles first by Rory Kelly, in relation to ISIS poetry (M6), and later by Jack Davies in an encounter with Britain First (M18).

Image Credits.

Cover: Roslyn Gaunt
Opposite, from top: Daisuke Nimura,
Julian Broad



*"I was 21
when I was
diagnosed. We
share our story
to get the message
across that it doesn't
just affect older ladies."*

Soprano and Boobette Joanna Forest talks musicals, EPs and feeling yourself up

What inspired you to follow a professional singing career?

I have always loved singing and used to sing all the time as a child, I just couldn't help it. My ambition however was to be an actress and I begged my parents to send me to stage school. I was accepted and it was while training there in all aspects of theatre that I had my first singing lessons. After working in musical theatre, plays, TV and film, as well as singing many different genres, it's now classical singing that is my passion and the direction I am heading in.

What are your experiences of theatre schools?

I loved my school years; I am so lucky to have trained at Italia Conti - it really was like Fame. I feel like I totally got out of going to school! I made lifetime best friends and learnt so much. There is an agency attached to the school so we were sent out to audition and got to work on professional jobs, my first being Bernadette the Musical at The Dominion Theatre in the West End.

I have lots of fond memories of my time there, and wow, it was very stagey. I can remember at lunch times we would all allocate ourselves a part in a musical like Miss Saigon and act our hearts out, pretending we were really in it.

It's great to see fellow 'Conti kids' doing really well; I love it when I see a familiar school friend's face pop up on TV, in a stage show, or even a film.

What motivates your desire to make music?

I love taking a song that is not in the classical genre and then singing it in a classical style. On my forthcoming EP, a good example of that is with Slade's song 'How Does It Feel?'. Originally, this was an extremely powerful glam rock 70s song, relentless with guitars, drums and Noddy Holder's unique voice; we have turned it into something very different from this with a fantastic arrangement by musical genius, Robert Emery, and an accompaniment by the Prague Philharmonic Orchestra. I can't wait for people to hear it.

What are your defining live singing moments?

Singing in front of 30,000 people and the Sky TV cameras on the pitch at Brighton & Hove Albion Football Club was amazing and definitely an adrenaline rush! It was also great to be asked by Duncan Bannatyne to sing recently at his charity ball, just a few days before he entered the *I'm A Celebrity* jungle. I also sang a duet with Paul Potts at the Palace Theatre, which was brilliant. It's not just the big venues and awards ceremonies - some of my favourite moments have been performing for charities, most recently with the incredible Missing People Charity in some of the UK's most beautiful churches.

What has been your favourite role?

Wendy in Peter Pan. Can you believe I have played Wendy for 14 Christmas seasons? I

never dreamed I would have so many flying visits to Neverland, probably around 600 in total, but it was always the best fun!

Tell us about your work as a Boobette ambassador.

A Boobette has had a breast cancer diagnosis young. I was 21 when I was diagnosed, and we share our story to get the message across that it's not just a disease that affects older ladies. I first heard of them through Twitter and love being a Boobette volunteer. The role of a Boobette involves raising awareness of the signs and symptoms of breast cancer and encouraging young people to make checking themselves a habit that will last a lifetime. We do this by going out and talking to young people at all sorts of venues - schools, mother and baby groups, festivals and businesses.

How can people find out more about your work?

The University have what is called a CoppaFeel! Uni Boob team who are busy spreading awareness at the University, headed up by Lara Swan. You can also visit the CoppaFeel! website, follow the charity on Twitter and like the Facebook page.

Finally, if you text 'BOOBS' to 70300 you will receive a handy reminder each month to check for lumps and bumps and any changes, so now there is no excuse and it could save your life.

Interview by Lucy Furneaux

Byrne baby Byrne

Comedian **Ed Byrne** speaks to Jack Richardson about panel shows, children's shoes and the normality of David Bowie

Ed Byrne could not be described as a clown. "I guess I'm an observer," he says, hesitantly. "As I've become older I've become more of a storyteller, but when I was younger I was just someone who genuinely did have that thing of 'is it just me, am I just crazy, or...?'" The 43-year-old comedian has just begun his latest tour, *Outside Looking In*, which promises to deliver the same degree of dry observational wit for which he is known.

While studying Horticulture at Strathclyde University in Glasgow, Byrne's role as the student union entertainment convener led to his founding of a comedy night. He eventually dropped out and moved to London to work as a full-time stand-up.

He says he was drawn to observational comedy out of a love for the "laughter of recognition" that he describes as the basis for a good performance in that style. "Whether you're talking about an argument you've had with your girlfriend or the way your child acts or something some guy said to you when he was trying to start a fight," Byrne says, the fact that the audience laughs with the comedian means that there is a "kind of tacit understanding based on 'Yeah, that happened to me too' or 'Yeah, that's how I would have handled it'".

The best observational comedy, he argues, comes when one manages to vocalise an observation that's so odd that "only a comedian would say it out loud." Then, the laughter of recognition turns to "laughter of relief, when you realise

that you're not crazy and that other people have thought that too".

However, the real issue with observational comedy is that it has been around for such a long time that there are very few truly original observations left to make. Especially with the rise of Twitter, Byrne says, "any observation that you think is off-kilter or weird or niche has already been made. The only thing you can do is try to make it as personal to you as you can."

The subject matter is not the only thing that's become harder since Byrne first started. It is with a note of sadness that he observes how much harder it is to get into comedy than it was in the 1990s. "There was still an eight-month waiting list to get an open spot at The Comedy

Store [in Soho], for instance, or a couple of months to get into the lesser but still important circuit clubs like The Cartoon in Clapham or The Mecano Club in Islington," he says, but as the comedian population grows and the comedy club population shrinks, both parties suffer. Waiting lists get longer and longer, so that experience as an "open mic'er" is less active than it was.

Byrne remembers that his two years on the open mic circuit gave him "two or three gigs a week at least," but now they're few and far between. He thinks with (only slightly) mock horror about "nights where it's all open mic'ers and you're just playing to each other's pals. It's not all like that but there are just more and more gigs like it."

Most of this he puts down to the prominence of TV comedy. The fall in numbers at comedy clubs has been matched with a meteoric rise in audiences for bigger tours by TV comedians. Although most certainly a part of the latter group, Byrne admits that he wonders where the next generation of comics will come from.

The solution, it seems, is to support local comedy as much as possible.

With impassioned sincerity he urges people to go to their local comedy clubs. "And see me," he adds, cheekily. "Make me the exception."

The joke may stand, but it's certainly no lie that stand-up tours are the bread and butter of a comedian's life and income. "Everything else, like appearing on panel shows, is all really just so more people will come and see you live. That's the honest truth."

The exposure gained from appearing on television drives more people to the tour dates, but it's not just this that makes television

appearances useful. The lifecycle of a joke is a complex one, but its development can often take place across both spheres.

“ Gender stereotypes have been the thorniest issue since Jesus was fitted for a hat

While a tour script is obviously written over a longer period, jokes will occur to Byrne "while sitting in the dressing room or even sitting on set".

Once a joke has been made into a routine and delivered on tour, "you kind of get rid of it by crowbarring it into a panel discussion on a TV show." He notes that "a lot of the stuff that gets said on panel shows is either a routine in short form or something that's been left on the cutting-room floor, and then that becomes the bones of the next show that you develop."

But Byrne's career and skill become evident as he remembers an exception to prove this rule, in the form of a joke which started on *Mock the Week* when the prospect of benefit capping came up. "It seems like a good idea," he says, "but actually work is the worst place for the work-shy to be. Really, you want them on the couch where they belong. As long as they're on the couch they're not losing our luggage or derailing our trains." The quip was later turned into a five-minute routine that followed him on tour.

Some comedians are notoriously hard to interview due to the serious, even grumpy demeanour that becomes necessary if they are to maintain such a cheerful persona onstage. Ed Byrne is not one of them. Jokes and quips flow in and out of the interview in a fashion many will recognise from his japes on *Mock the Week*.

One of the advantages of having a cast comprised entirely of comics is that each can build on and riff off the others. With some nostalgia Byrne notes that some of his best moments on *Mock the Week* have been "completely unscripted, where no-one knows where the conversation's going and suddenly you're talking about playing the harp with your cock." He admits that no other panel show has made him comfortable enough to be "literally crying with laughter".

If there is a challenge for the comedians on *Mock the Week*, it's the format, which is much freer in comparison with other shows like *Have I Got News For You*.



IMAGE: ROSLYN GAUNT



“They say to six stand-up comics, ‘what does anybody think of this subject?’ It’s like throwing a fucking steak into the air above six hungry dogs.” Particularly with subjects that can quickly become tired, one needs to sharpen one’s elbows. After all, observes Byrne, “everyone wants to be the first one to say something about David Cameron sticking his dick into a pig’s mouth.”

Of course, there are some things that one shouldn’t necessarily jump into freely. Especially in the last couple of decades, gender and related stereotypes have become, as Byrne calls it, “the thorniest is-

It’s like throwing a fucking steak into the air above six hungry dogs

sue since Jesus was fitted for a hat”. Looking back, he admits that he had a lot of pretty “ladsy” material when he started. “I would be guilty of doing material that took broad strokes about the behaviour of the sexes and the differences between men and women.”

Now, though, as an “older person,” he likes to think that he’s doing something a bit more intelligent. “Not,” he hastens to add, “that there’s any harm in having a gentle pop at the way men or women act, or the whole notion of the courting ritual, but I think it’s become more and more of a hot-button topic. I think people will switch off now more if you sound a bit too hackneyed discussing the battle of the sexes.”

Nevertheless, he is not entirely regretful: he stands by his mockery of a univer-

sity feminist society poster, but he remains sensitive to the fact that “there’s having a pop at militant feminism and there’s being sexist. It’s a thin line to walk and I hope I’m nuanced enough to walk it.”

Byrne describes his current tour *Outside Looking In* as his “most right-on... certainly my most ‘feminist’ show to date,” including as it does much about the gender roles involved in parenting. Obviously unwilling to give away too many of the jokes, he does reveal that he talks about the injustice of slut-shaming and the unfairness of complaining about public breastfeeding. Later on, he has a routine about a pair of pink shoes owned by his youngest son, then aged four, and their implications (or lack thereof).

For comics such as Byrne, who rely so heavily on anecdotes, sometimes a subject can hit close to home, particularly when it comes to his children. And, of course, almost all of it is on camera. “There’s a joke in the last show I did,” he remembers, “that implied I didn’t love my second child as much as I did my first, and I would imagine I’ll have to be very careful at what age my second child ever comes across that particular bit of material.”

Fellow comedian John Bishop has spoken in interviews about how his fame and his children’s age is such that it isn’t appropriate to talk about them on stage anymore. Byrne is sure “that will come, but at the moment they’re still young enough that I can talk about them. And even when they are old enough to look back at what Dad said about them on stage, I was talking about them when they were so young that it doesn’t really, shouldn’t really matter.”

It’s not just his children who might have to watch out. After all, there are plenty of adults who are perfectly capable of watching his shows. A joke he made about the invitations for his wedding caused a little bit of intra-marital upset when it was delivered. “I’m standing up at me and my wife’s wedding,” Byrne recounts, slipping easily back into the role of stage comedian even over the phone, “with the woman I love more than I ever thought it possible

to love somebody else, and we’re standing up in front of all the people she likes best and all the people she likes best of the people I know. It always works so well, but she always denies it.” He also admits that he used to be “vicious” about his mother, especially with a joke about Freud where he said “I don’t know about any of you but my ma’s an absolute fucking boiler! Hideous old crone!” I remember her standing up and taking a bow.”

Parents may be important role models, but an advantage of comedy is the chance to meet many more heroes than one might expect. For Byrne, that came in 2004 at a live television show in Melbourne, when he appeared on the same set as David Bowie. They both took the floor together, and Byrne remembers him and his band “standing there, next to the audience while I did my set on live TV. So I did my stand-up in front of David Bowie, and he watched and he applauded and gave me a big thumbs up, then I got to stand there and watch him sing *The Man Who Sold The World*, then he did his interview.

I had a chat to him afterwards and he was really, really nice, and really down to earth and funny and charming and self-

deprecating. In a way you just expect him to be a freaky fuck and he was just a really nice bloke.”

Meeting rock stars is all very well, but comedy is far from an easy ride. Taking a shortened version of his current tour set to last year’s Edinburgh Fringe Festival,

Bowie was really down to earth and charming and self-deprecating

Byrne found himself in a venue so stiflingly hot that the laughs died away quickly after the first half an hour. “It kind of knocked the wind out of my sails,” he admits, “but then the first date I took it on tour in an air-conditioned theatre, I suddenly realised ‘It’s not just the first half an hour that’s funny, it’s just that the audience were melting.’”

To even reach a stage where one can worry about the immediate reception of their material is often far from an easy ride. Writing a new hour-and-a-half show for a tour every two years is no mean feat, and Byrne admits that he is “still amazed every time I do it”. The Fringe may provide something of an opportunity to ‘test drive,’ but he points out that the show still needs to be “knocked into shape” before it can be performed, then lengthened for the actual tour.

Writer’s block is a common student affliction, but Byrne’s career ups the stakes: “When it’s January and you’ve got nothing, or one new joke that isn’t really a joke yet, that’s very scary. The wheels are set in motion, and they’ve already started selling tickets and booking venues by that point. You start thinking, ‘I’ve already sold tickets for this tour and I haven’t even written it yet!’”

It looks like the pressure has yet to get to him, however. Byrne assures me that the new tour is written and that he’s very happy with it. If his past successes are anything to go by, the audience is in for a treat. **M**

Ed Byrne will be performing Outside Looking In at the Grand Opera House, York, on Sunday 24 January. Tickets are still available.



War of words

Rory Kelly takes a look at the poetry of the jihadist groups whose ideologies have been spreading chaos across the Middle East

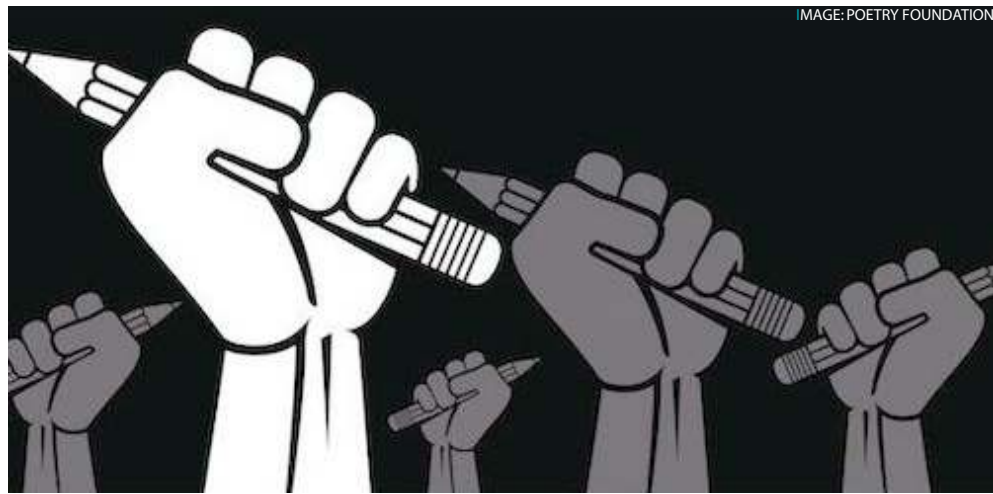


IMAGE: POETRY FOUNDATION

Of all the things that the Western World will come to remember Osama bin Laden for, it seems unlikely that his poetry will top the list. In the extremist world, it is quite the contrary. Bin Laden's skills as an orator and rhetorician, as well as his poetic talent are famed among militants. In light of the knowledge that bin Laden's command of language may have been the greatest that he lent to al-Qaeda, the United States' relentless pursuit of this one man makes considerably more sense.

This should serve to illustrate that the role of poetry within extremist culture is a

central one, and provide some context as to why it has been adopted by the heir apparent to al-Qaeda, ISIS. Circulating on the internet, and being removed as quickly as it appears, jihadi poetry explores theology, extols the pursuit of the caliphate, and calls for Muslims around the world to join the struggle that ISIS are committed to.

The extremist poet Ahlam al-Nasr praised the group's capture of the Iraqi city Mosul, writing "The land of glory has shed its humiliation and defeat and put on the raiment of splendour." Al-Nasr moved to live under ISIS' caliphate and the effect of her poetry was not

lost on ISIS as she has since been made an official propagandist for them, praising their conquered territories as an "Islamic paradise." This pursuit of poetic beauty with which to praise the pursuit of a Sharia State crossing the borders of all Arab countries does, however, reveal a deeper anxiety at the heart of the Jihadist project.

ISIS are utopians. Like the Soviet Union and the Fascists before them, the brutality that ISIS inflicts upon its victims is in pursuit of a perfect society. Their dream is a world perfected by the institutionalisation of their fundamentalist theology. Like all utopias, however, the caliphate is a fantasy world. It is predicated on the denial of the legitimacy of any borders within the Arab world, and it remains unrecognised by the government of any nation state. Moreover, contrary to the "land of glory" as presented in Al-Nasr's poem, the caliphate remains a rigidly totalitarian society. It is within this context that ISIS have positioned poetry as a central part of their culture.

The history of poetry within the Arab world shows the poet as a celebrated figure, central to a society's self-examination. Jihadist poets draw on this tradition to legitimise the caliphate. Poetry is malleable in all the ways that the world ISIS fight against is not, and allows them to better construct their fantastical utopia, if not in reality then at least in art. Poetry allows ISIS to imbue the society that they have thus far created with all the

meaning that, in reality, it lacks.

Such correspondence between extremists must be removed from the internet quickly to ensure they are not found, and this too creates a greater demand for the work of poetry – to commemorate that which passes away too quickly. Much extremist poetry is written for

“ Poetry allows ISIS to imbue the society they have created with all the meaning that it lacks

posterity: one of bin Laden's most celebrated verses was a commemoration of the 9/11 hijackers.

This too is born out of an anxious need to forge a cultural identity while the perfect world they seek remains beyond the horizon. The poetry of ISIS strengthens the shared vision of the group, but does so because this vision can be achieved no other way. Instead, it reminds us that no matter how much damage these extremists do along the way, they can never reach the paradise that they seek.

Rhodes to nowhere

With students at Oxford campaigning for the removal of a statue of Cecil Rhodes, Ella Barker discusses the risks of whitewashing our past

In the same week that Amsterdam's Rijksmuseum was famed for remedying a series of racist terms in the titles of its paintings, Oxford's Oriel College found itself at the epicentre of a furor over its life sized tribute to Cecil Rhodes. The two scenarios may seem similar: the former is eradicating an archaic form of discourse, the latter is seeking to

“ A willingness to rip Rhodes down exposes our reluctance to atone for Britain's colonial past

eradicate, well, an inherent portion of its past. Titles are not intertwined with artwork. Irksome or not, Rhodes however is undeniably bound up in the University's past.

After the self-proclaimed Rhodes Must Fall movement succeeded in toppling a statue of the white supremacist at the University of Cape Town in April 2015, attentions were turned to "decolonis[ing] the space, the curriculum and the institutional memory" at Oxford.

Attending Oriel College in the 1870s, Rhodes returned to South Africa, emerging as

the godfather of the diamond emporium De Beers. Coined 'The Hitler of Southern Africa', Rhodes is more readily remembered today as an unrelenting enforcer of racial segregation, once articulating his beliefs as "equal rights for every white man south of the Zambezi".

Although Oriel College has been coaxed into removing a plaque dedicated to Rhodes and conceded a six-month consultation period concerning the removal of Rhodes' statue from February, the discussion does not end there. Oxford's chancellor Chris Patten commented this week: "Our history is not a blank page on which we can write our own version of what it should have been according to our contemporary views and prejudices." Should we similarly shun the progressive reign of Queen Victoria and tear down her memorial on The Mall as a figurehead of British domain who delighted in the title "Empress of India"? The activist group, Rhodes Must Fall, argues that Britain's reluctance to remove the statue demonstrates its "imperial blind spot." But, isn't a blind spot an implicit refusal to recognise one's past – free from the partisan attitudes that pervaded the day – rather than an insistence on annihilating such a past? A willingness to rip Rhodes down in fact exposes our reluctance to confront, let alone contemplate and atone for Britain's colonial past.

Writing for *The Guardian*, David Olu-soga is astute to highlight that statues are not the primary means by which we consume history: literature, TV documentaries and heritage sites perform that function. Instead, their



IMAGE: MONCEAU

role is largely commemorative – or, at the very least, they acknowledge the existence of pivotal figures in our past, irrespective of their heinous or wholly integral contributions to history. Life-sized sculptures might not always whet our historical appetites, but if in the case of Rhodes they were permanently contextualised, then perhaps passers-by would acquire a sense of why such a savage imperialist is at the forefront of a seemingly liberal and inclusive institution.

Maybe the public would learn of how the £6 million that Rhodes bequeathed to Oriel was used to fund a scholarship programme, facilitating the fellowships of over 8,000 international scholars at Oxford. Maybe students and tourists alike would realise how these acts of atonement by the Rhodes Trust continue to go against the grain of his inequitable viewpoints. Scholarly groups such as Redress Rhodes aim to present an impartial and critical picture of the imperialist, while the Mandela Rhodes Foundation crafted a partnership in 2003 that "closed the circle of history". Subsidising postgraduate study in South African universities and providing further leadership development opportunities for their scholars, former Rhodes graduates have conversely helped to fund the foundation. Maybe we should share in Mandela's "generosity of spirit", as Lord Patten suggests, and commemorate these reparative actions that ultimately subvert the legacy of such a controversial supremacist by funding myriad scholarships for multicultural students.

Less is Nimura

Cartoonist **Daisuke Nimura** talks to Jack Richardson about Austrian Expressionism, his favourite films and the difficulties of animation

“When I’m drawing, the most important things for me are laughter and harmony.” These are not the first words one would use to describe the work of 19th Century Austrian painter Egon Schiele. They are, however, perfectly applicable to the work of Japanese illustrator Daisuke Nimura. “Nowadays I don’t use him much,” Nimura explains, almost sheepishly, “but he was my biggest creative ‘shock’ and influence when I was at school. I really tried to imitate his drawing style, and even did a little oil painting.”

Thankfully, Nimura’s work is less grotesque than his Austrian forebear. What might have been Expressionist and emaciated figures, contorted into hideous poses are instead simplified, charming examinations into humanity and our relationships. Nimura says he was also greatly influenced by the work of *mangaka* (Japanese cartoonist) Taiyo Matsumoto.

Certainly we can see a more direct influence in the expressions and activities of the subjects. But Nimura’s work is pervaded by a sense of peace and tranquility. Most of his works deal with static, portrait-style figures. Their simplicity makes them unmistakably drawn and immobile.

The cartoonish appearance of his work is unsurprising, given Nimura’s childhood. Born in Osaka, he started drawing early in his childhood, and at elementary school set his heart on *manga*. However, come high school the comic panels became newspaper pages and with them came an interest in design. “It was at high school that I decided I wanted to draw for magazines and adverts,” he explains, “so because of that I decided to go

down the path of illustration.”

Commissions, understandably, form the backbone of Nimura’s professional life. He has drawn for everyone from IBM, to promote a new server, to municipal governments issuing earthquake warning notices. When asked if he has any favourites, he argues that as he likes all of his projects, choosing between them is difficult. “If I had to choose, though, it’s a toss-up between my newspaper advert for *Gyunyusekken* (Cow Brand soap) and the poster for *Umecha Matsuri* (Umecha Festival).”

In doing so, he highlights the two extremities of his surprisingly varied style. The former, showing a group of people (mostly) wrapped in towels pares down Nimura’s style into its component elements: humanity in all its slightly cheeky joy. There is no extraneous detail beyond those needed to show the age and sex of the people, and no colour beyond the characteristic thick black outlines — Nimura finds this level of detail “satisfying, and easy to understand”. Compare this with the festival poster, which

portrays a huge crowd of revellers. Tourists, musicians, trick-or-treaters, designers, artists and cats all vie for attention in a tree-lined park overshadowed by skyscrapers in the distance. Selective use of colour adds to the visual onslaught, but keeps it from becoming uncomfortable. “I wanted it to be lively and packed full of fun little details,” Nimura says.

For his most recent commission, for the Kansai University of Welfare Sciences, the focus has been on friendship and childhood. While this subject matter is not exactly uncharted territory for Nimura, the fact that these works are animated is. “Animation is hard! I still have a long way to go before I can be very good at it,” he admits. Like most of his work, the animations are simple, but effectively portray the original idea. As an adult, Nimura says, “one ‘forgets’ everyday life. But when one is a child, they do all sorts of interesting things with normal objects.” The series is saturated in the block colours and sense of fun found in the Umecha Festival poster, but with an extra edge of childlike naughtiness.

Although he is clearly able to vary the content and colour to great effect in his work, Nimura’s style remains largely constant throughout his portfolio. He cites an early criticism for this: “When I started working as an illustrator but wasn’t yet at the point when I could live off that work, I drew in all sorts of different styles. A designer who looked at my work told me that it was good generally, but that as my style was inconsistent it would be difficult for people to rely on it if they wanted to commission me.” This advice was a turning point, and Nimura worked on putting his design experience into his illustration.



“In design, I like simplicity, without unnecessary lines or embellishment,” he says. “That’s how I created my style today.”

This simple style is mirrored by a simple workflow: first he draws in pencil, then outlines in thick pen and scans, to create images that are clean and strong but still unmistakably hand-drawn. But despite his rather defined style, Nimura doesn’t attach any particular message to his work. Instead, he is happy “if people can look at my pictures and laugh, or feel peaceful or happy.”

He takes this free approach to the message further, to his inspiration: “I get it from all kinds of places. Television, music, the internet, walking down the street, talking to my friends... If someone has an idea that they think would work for an illustration, they tell me about it.” To this end, many of Nimura’s personal works feature references to popular culture. Among his portraits one can spot tributes to the album artwork of Nirvana’s *Nevermind*, as well as to the characters of *Trainspotting*, *One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest* and *A Clockwork Orange*. “I watch a lot of films,” he explains.

The human connection underpins all of Nimura’s work, but is particularly evident in his recent project *Lovers HYMN*. The series, which is ongoing,

features male-female couples in various poses. While at times not even touching, they are unmistakably together in their various scenes, be that an elementary school PE lesson or dressed up as *Star Wars* characters. The simple drawing style helps here, as Nimura claims that “*Lovers HYMN* is not about someone specifically, but people generally, so that the viewer can recognise something and chuckle despite themselves, and find harmony in the everyday. To this I’ve tried to portray the love between two people.”

To laughter and harmony, then, we should add ‘love’ as a further aspect of Nimura’s work. At his own admission, his art style may be “very Japanese-person style,” but the concepts he portrays are universal. M



ALL IMAGES: DAISUKE NIMURA

Sustainable fashion

Zohra Shahana explores the upcoming brand Auria and their fresh, playful designs



IMAGES: JULIAN BROAD



Sustainable fashion is in. Fashion designers are now choosing to put ethics at the forefront of their creative innovations. Sustainability is something designers these days care about. Quality, it appears, quashes quantity and comes up trumps in the creative field process. But why should we care about this?

We should care because the windows of Selfridges in London's Oxford Street are now a tribute to the yearly 'Bright New Things' because of an exciting collaboration with Diana Auria and Margot Bowman's brand 'Auria'. Selfridges chose the designers who are making a name for themselves by creating products in a clean, transparent way for

Sustainable Fashion while additionally being mentored by them.

So who are some of these brightest, newest things and what have they got in store for us? A crochet lover, Katie Jones, a 2013 graduate from Central Saint Martins spends hours creating original items, fusing together upcycled leather and denim. Jones makes her masterpieces in a studio in Stratford; her approach of tackling fashion design this way stems from her belief that the planet can no longer take much more overconsumption and waste. She also reckons things are much less likely to be wasted once you know who made it and the process behind the individual piece.

Diana Auria, a swimwear designer has

collaborated with Bowman to create Auria, a swimwear collection that allowed the designers to be the first individuals to use the fabric Econyl. An exciting endeavour, the material is made of 100 per cent recycled polyamide from fabric from all over the world to create a look that is "really playful, contemporary and sexy".

Auria and Bowman launched their swimwear brand after Auria completed a degree at the London College of Fashion in 2012 specialising in lingerie and swimwear design. The course consisted of an opportunity with Speedo to upcycle its LSZ swimsuits, which had been banned by the swimming governing body Fina in 2009. Auria recounts: "From swimming trunks I made a bikini with inflat-

able cups," while her flatmate Bowman was working as a graphic designer promoting sustainable fashion designers showcasing their creations at London Fashion Week.

Joining forces, both women aspire to give women the opportunity to "feel great in their bodies". Bowman describes how "the swimsuits have good karma because they are made from recycled thread" and that "many people don't even know it's 'eco'. It needs to be colourful and playful and sexy if we want to get people to engage with climate change. Auria swimwear looks good enough to eat - it is really high on life." Sustainable fashion is making waves across the UK - be sure to have a gander.

What Kylie did

Victoria Roffey asks why Kylie Jenner glamorises rather than engages with minority issues



IMAGE: STEPHEN KLEIN

Instagram, since its launch in 2010, has birthed a new way to share fashion photography, with models and photographers sharing editorial photo shoots to a much wider audience than was previously available in print. Kylie Jenner pioneered the method of using Instagram as a platform for self promotion and has experienced exponential growth in her followers during 2015 - going from below 20 million at the start of the year to over 47 million at the end of it.

For Jenner, Instagram has provided the exposure that *Keeping Up with the Kardashians* did not, and with the growth of her social media, Jenner as a personality of glamour and excess has been birthed. Some of the biggest trends of 2015 can be lifted straight from Jenner's Instagram (ombré hair dye, lip plumping and coffin shaped false nails) and she also uses Instagram as a platform upon which to share stories of bullying and people who have overcome it.

So, if Kylie Jenner has the amount of influence she does, why does she choose to glamorise minority issues with posts of her in cornrows, dressed up in implied blackface and looking fashionable in a wheelchair?

A photo shoot released in December 2015 by Stephen Klein for *Interview* magazine de-

pictured Jenner in a gold wheelchair while wearing latex, and was immediately denounced by disabled people and campaigners alike for promoting ableism (discrimination against disabled individuals in favour of able bodied people) rather than urging photographers to engage with disabled models.

The justification offered by *Interview* for the glamorisation of disability was that the intention of the photo shoot was to "unpack Kylie's status as both engineer of her image and object of attention." She is restricted just like a person in a wheelchair by her fame. Glamorisation is intrinsically linked to Jenner's nurturing of her own public image as one of excess and glamour as by crafting herself as a personality who is known for trend setting fashion. Her latest fashion statement is a glamorised version of disabilities.

Kylie Jenner's glamorous Instagram boasting Rolls Royces and red carpet events engages primarily with her public image. So, maybe her followers prefer for her to be glamorous instead of using her influence to raise awareness of sensitive issues.

The public image that she has crafted for herself is someone who is seductive and exciting, not political. It simply doesn't fit her celebrity persona.



IMAGE: KYLIE JENNER

Best and worst trends of 2015

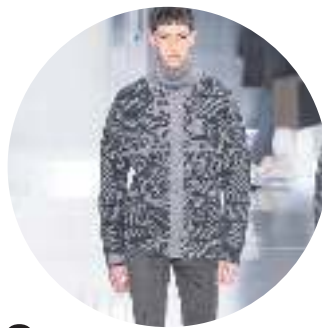
Highs

A-LINE SKIRTS



With another year complete it's time to take a glance at the previous year's 'on trend' looks. Mini or Midi skirts were often styled with bare legs, usually in a geometric print and bold colours, finished with a shapeless jumper on top. This skirt carried an outfit and made a very dressed down look appear entirely put together. Catching that difficult balance between smart yet casual, the A-line skirt was perfect for nights out and for workwear, as well as lounging around in.

POLO NECKS



From Paris Fashion Week to Drake's 'Hotline Bling' video, polo necks became the unlikely winter wardrobe staple. Whether sleeveless or part of a high neck dress, the polo neck made a very bold appearance in 2015. A practical item with its impermeable neckline, it's a step up from the ordinary crew or round neck. It can be worked seamlessly into a look by being paired with jeans and trainers, making you in the process look like you've made a conscious decision regarding what to wear.

NUDE PALETTE



Khaki, nudes, browns, sands, and beiges, not the most explored of the colour palettes in fashion, last year made a prominent appearance. A prime example was Kanye West's 'Yeezy' AW 15 collection, which conjured slightly dystopian future vibes with a rich earthy, one all-over colour. The latter case made clothes appear as if they were rationed but when applied to more everyday items such as a trench coat and t-shirts, if an outfit was to be one colour then nudes were the new black.

GHILLIE SHOES



Fancy in name and in nature, these delicate, soft, lace up shoes were first designed as dancing shoes, for Scottish and Irish country dancing. The ghillie shoe was a new favourite over the summer months, dominating the shelves of women's footwear. Although the intricacies and time required in crossing and tying strings around your ankles just right, without restricting blood flow and yet not being a tripping hazard, may be off putting, the result is admirable and elegant.

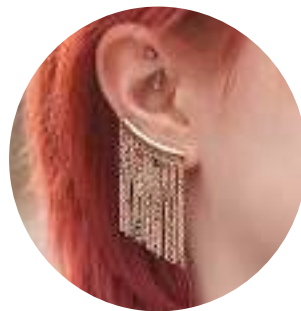
Lows

RIPPED JEANS



Love them, hate them, they proved popular over the autumn season. They added a rough, unkempt appearance to an outfit which spoke of regular wear and travel. Who would foresee the tears gained from falling inelegantly would be à la mode? However, when surrounded by a smart jumper, and topped with jewellery, it seems very out of place.

ONE EARRING



Heavily adorned ears were a popular choice in 2015. Though the most questionable could be the one earring look which made a reprisal from the 80s on to AW 2015 catwalks as seen at Céline and Fendi in the form of one long feathered earring. It eventually filtered down to the masses to become an autumn/winter trend.

CULOTTE TROUSERS



Not highly wearable and differing in length from mid-calf to ankle, culottes fell rather awkwardly between 70s flares and cut off trousers. The voluminous full legs of the trousers' cut are immediately recognisable and give the wearer a striking silhouette, yet the billowing, balloon-like shape make them very easy to style wrong.

SLIP-ON MULES



Similar to the ripped jeans in the way that they look incomplete. The mule made a comeback but a branch of that trend was the slip-on mule. As a slipper or shoe to be worn indoors this seems ideal but when made out of leather with embellishments and heels and thusly shaped with rear and sides of the shoe missing, the finished look seems wanting.

CLOCKWISE IMAGE: NEIL RASMUS, KIM WESTON ARNOLD, ELIZABETH HILTON, TOPSHOP, ASOS, MARIO DE LA RENTA, PETITEPANOPOLY, MAEGAN TINTARI

York style icon

Words: Melissa Cundill Images: Nimah Sahib



NAME Melissa Cundill

YEAR Third year

COURSE BA Social work

SOCIETIES Well societies can be a strange one for me. I mean, I love to stay up to date with the Feminist Society, Poetry Society and even faith societies, but do I attend? That's another question entirely. I mean I intend to, but just never get round to it. Life of an introvert, I suppose.

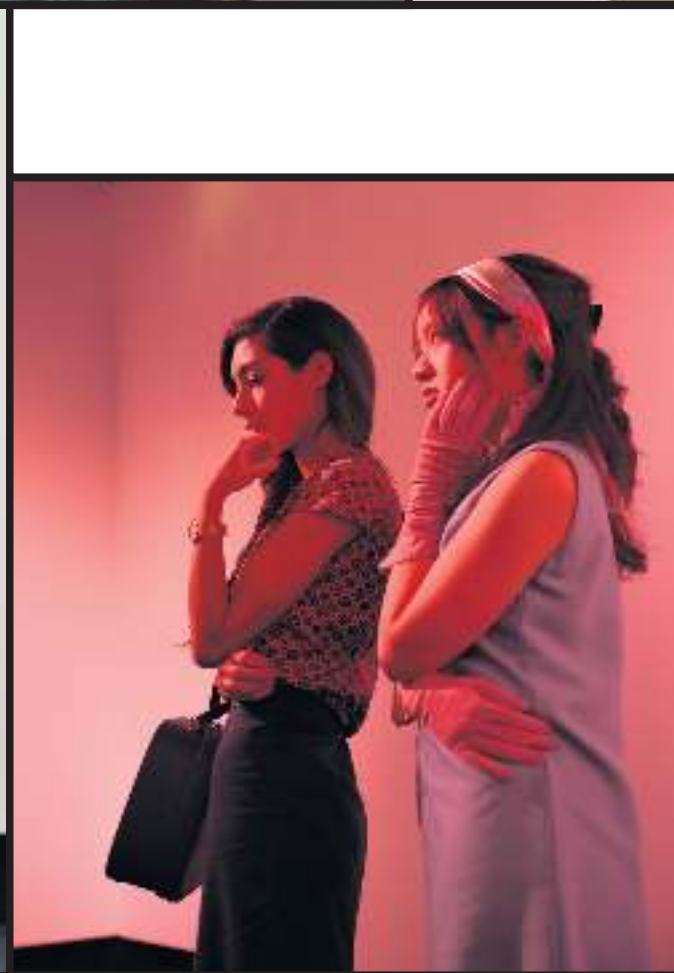
I AM WEARING White Air Force trainers from Schuh, a grey ribbed turtleneck top from Topshop, black knee-patched skinny jeans from New Look, a long brown waistcoat from Zara and a fashion pink and gold ring from H&M.

MY FAVOURITE ITEM is such a tough one right now. My new Nike airs and oversized brown jumper from New Look is such a winner at the moment. They're probably the most comfy and stylish items I own at present.

MY FASHION ICON Well I suppose it's a little cheesy but I would say Dina Tokio especially for funky turban styles. Generally I find inspiration everywhere. Especially my friends. If they can rock it then I just think, 'why can't I?'

THE BEST THING ABOUT LIVING IN YORK Well, I love to write and York is the place for it. Coming to university you learn, you discover. My most favourite places are where I pass daily. Cute vintage coffee shops and random river walks, now that's what I love about York.







A stroll through the 60s



Fashion Editor: Grace Howarth, Photographer: Rob McConkey, Fashion Assistant: Zohra Shahana, Models: Jamila Hamze & Chloe Lau, Make up & Hair: Beth Larkin, Jamila & Chloe wear clothes courtesy of Bowler Vintage - 52 Fossgate York. www.bowlervintage.co.uk

Game Review: *That Dragon, Cancer*

Platform: PC, Mac, Ouya
Release date: 12 January

It's tough to talk about *That Dragon, Cancer*. In so many ways it defies what games are, and through its unique and propelling gameplay, it carries you through an intense and beautifully intimate story of parenthood, love and hope.

And one of the most interesting things about the story is that going in, we know the outcome. *That Dragon, Cancer* tells the tale of Joel Green, the son of the game's creators, who was diagnosed with cancer shortly after

he turned one, and died four years later in early 2014. Because of this, all of our interactions with Joel are painted with the poignancy and importance of the last moments with a young child. Never before had a game made me cry in its opening 15 minutes.

The game flashes between various vignettes, some absolutely real and others totally surreal. An early scene, for example, takes place in a park, where we control a duck, approaching the shore as Joel feeds us pieces of bread, and as we hear chatter between Joel's family, parents Ryan and Amy and brothers Caleb, Elijah and Isaac, about

the mundane and the not-so-mundane.

Perspectives frequently switch throughout the game, seemingly controlling the wind at one point, as we swing Joel on the swingset and push him down a slide. These sweet, quiet moments are accompanied by a quiet solo pianist, aptly adding to the personal tone of the whole game.

Yet as the title suggests, the game also has surreal and fantastical elements to it, certain scenes depicting and describing the greater fight that many have fought against cancer.

In one particularly stirring section, we find dozens of messages in bottles, floating in a vast ocean, containing letters by a variety of people, both those close to cancer and cancer sufferers themselves. Hearing other people's battles with cancer elevates the game from being a singular tale to a tale of humanity.

One of the reasons this game is so special is its minimalist gameplay. There is no difficulty or combat in the game, but it is still able to cause distress and discomfort. In one scene, we inhabit Ryan, sitting in a worn hospital chair as Joel lies on your chest, hooked up to a vague and scary-looking life support machine.

When the machine starts blaring a harsh red and screaming beeps, the game perfectly captures what it's like to be a concerned and scared parent in that moment. We frantically press several confusing and generic buttons, having no idea what they would actually do, but we continue to press them anyway, waiting and hoping that we've pressed the right

one, or in the right order.

This sort of gameplay perfectly immersed me in the moment, pushing me to try my best to keep Joel happy and safe for a while longer. Like this, the rest of the game has simple and elegant controls that fit the scenarios well. Early on, the game playfully says on screen "tap go" to push Joel down that slide; you can push any button you want.

There are, however, some pacing issues with the game. While some slow sections in the game work perfectly, being reflective and melancholic about cancer and about family, there are a few scenes that feel aimless and without direction.

In a game as tightly authorially controlled as it is, these few scenes drop the ball on keeping you wholly engaged throughout. These are, though, minor problems, and don't take away too much from the whole experience.

It's also worth commending the presentation of the game. The art style, one that is minimalist and low-poly, is still vibrant and colourful, and fits fantastically with the quiet piano-and-strings score. The writing, too, is outstanding, in some moments poetic and grand and in others refreshingly naturalistic and intimate, making me smile as I hear the family chat on a road trip.

That Dragon, Cancer is made for everyone to play. Never have I played such a deeply personal and entirely relatable game. It does what other mediums could not have done, and through its interactivity we learn to mourn for Joel just as his family and friends have. *Naveen Morris*



A Rift in the community

James Lees goes through the VR looking-glass and finds it a bit expensive

A fair number of people are heralding 2016 as the year of VR (virtual-reality), and it's not hard to see why. This year will see the release of three consumer VR headsets, the Oculus Rift, Valve/HTC's Vive and Sony's Morpheus. And with the annual Consumer Electronics Show taking place in Las Vegas last week, a glut of new information has entered the market regarding all three of these devices.

Of the three, the Oculus Rift dominated proceedings. Not only did it reveal the most information but it was also available to preorder by the end of the conference. Many people - including myself - were very excited about this. So at 4pm GMT on the 6th of January, techies around the world took to the internet and let loose a collective "wait, HOW MUCH?!"

As it turns out, pre-ordering the Oculus will set you back £529, significantly more than most speculators were expecting. While no official price had ever been mentioned before, Palmer Luckey, Oculus' founder, had previously suggested that the Rift's price would be in the "ballpark" of \$350 (£240). This had led many to believe that the price would be lower than its final figure, which was further implied by the Kickstarter responsible for crowd-funding the Rift's development. There, it was only £300 to buy a development kit, which included a consumer version of the Rift itself as well as various tools to create programs for it.

Mr Luckey has defended the change in price, saying: "I made the infamous 'roughly in that \$350 ballpark, but it will

cost more than that' quote. As an explanation, not an excuse: during that time, many outlets were repeating the 'Rift is \$1,500!' line, and I was frustrated by how many people thought that was the price of the headset itself. My answer was ill-prepared, and mentally, I was contrasting \$349 with \$1,500, not our internal estimate that hovered close to \$599 - that is why I said it was in roughly the same ballpark."

But how surprised should we really be at the price change? The Rift, after all, is the first of a new technology. Sporting some very high resolution screens, and top of the line motion-tracking technology, it isn't exactly a cheap piece of kit to make. The company has already claimed that the profit margins on each sale are relatively small (in fact, Luckey recently

claimed on Twitter that the company will "not be making money" on hardware sales).

It's also worth noting that the Rift is currently sold as a bundle that comes with the headset (including the motion-sensor and relevant cables), along with an Xbox One controller and a couple of Rift-compatible games. In all likelihood, it won't be too long before you're able to buy the Rift without all of these bits. However, the impact of this should be minimal: even removing all of the extraneous parts will likely only lower the price of the Rift by around £60.

And even if you can afford a full bundle, you're not out of the woods yet - actually having it work with your computer requires a top of the range PC. With minimum recommended specs requiring a Nvidia GTX 970 (or equivalent), Intel i5-4590 (or equivalent) and 8GB of RAM, the requirements are well out of reach of an average

PC user. Steam's annual hardware survey recently estimated that, at maximum, only eight per cent of its users will be able to use the Rift on its recommended settings with their current hardware.

Buying an Oculus Rift-ready PC will set you back about £1200. Speaking from experience, I own a higher-end budget PC, and I still needed to spend several hundred pounds to make my PC compatible with the Rift. Many other people are in the same situation.

It's fairly clear, then, that the Rift is currently out of reach for the average consumer - and, in fact, so is virtual reality in general. That's not to say that nobody will buy it. With over one million pre-orders in less than twenty-four hours, it seems to have been successful among enthusiasts, but that may well be the entire range of its market.

While details about the Vive and Morpheus are still fairly thin on the ground, it seems like the Oculus will be placed at the higher end of VR technology. The Morpheus in particular shows potential - being aimed for use with the PS4, which has lower specs than an Oculus-compatible PC and more of a consumer audience, it should most likely be cheaper while maintaining an adequate level of graphical quality.

If you like VR, this year will be exciting. With a variety of headsets being released, there will be an explosion of games, apps and stuff we can't even fathom right now. Trends will be set, new ground broken and fantastic new experiences forged, but most of us won't be able to experience it. Will 2016 be the year of VR? Maybe, just not for everyone.



Sick of sequels

Luke Rix-Standing wonders why 2016 seems poised to be the year of the derivative

Welcome to 2016 and another year of overpriced popcorn! Many would agree that 2015 was a stellar year for film, but from the current vantage point 2016 looks bleak. A critical mass of reboots, sequels and unnecessary adaptations is coming to get you, and there's nothing you can do to stop it. It has been bad before. Remember, the year of live-action fairytales in 2013? But, 2016 may be the year you finally have to put 'the original' after all your favourite movies.

So, what's the damage? First, we have Marvel's continuing campaign to rehabilitate that most marginalised and oppressed sector of society: the comic book fanboy. The latest superhero tsunami is spearheaded by *Captain America* and *X-men* but also features debuts for *Deadpool*, *Gambit* and



Doctor Strange. Long-time followers will be delighted to see *Spiderman* finally join the Avengers (with Tom Holland becoming the third iteration since 2002). For those of us who have tired of the Marvel monopoly, please don't expect it to end soon: their commercial calendar is already planned until 2026. But it's DC that is set to provide the crowning turd in the water pipe. For awaiting us in 2016 is *Batman vs. Superman*, a movie that will not be the film we deserve and certainly will not be the one that we need. *Alien vs. Predator*, *Freddy vs. Jason*, *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla*: the cautionary tales are endless.

Next we have an avalanche of sequels and spinoffs, including but not limited to: *deep breath* *Zoolander 2*, *Bridget Jones 3*, *Bourne 5*, *Star Trek 3*, *Rocky 7*, *Independence Day 2*, *Divergent 3*, *Alice In Wonderland 2*, *Kung Fu Panda 3*, *My Big Fat Greek Wedding 2*, *Snow White and The Huntsman 2*, *Olympus Has Fallen 2*, *Ice Age 4*, *Finding Nemo 2*, and add-ons for both *Star Wars* and *Harry Potter*. Though some of these are completely legitimate (*Divergent* has every right to finish the trilogy), the 20-years-late *Independence Day 2* stands out as the sequel that no-one asked for. I await with bated breath the announcement of *Blade Runner 2: Return of the Replicants*.

The much maligned remake category is also well-represented: The Jungle Book receives another live-action makeover (there was a live-action version in 1994), *The Magnificent Seven* gets the treatment too (it's already a remake of Kurosawa's masterpiece *Seven Samurai*), and we even have a re-imagining of *Point Break* (it

only came out in '97!) I reserve particular bile for the remake of the 3-and-half-hour Charlton Heston 1954 best picture winner, the all-time great 10,000-extra *Ben-Hur*. Incidentally 1954's *Ben-Hur* had been a remake of the 1925 silent-film, which was itself based on a 19th century novel. Timur Bekmambetov takes the helm; the esteemed director of *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*. Throw in an *Angry Birds* movie and that is about your lot. Oh dear.

I am aware that incessant complaining about Hollywood remakes is something of a remake in itself. There are enough memes to prove it. But the million-dollar question beneath the shrugging acceptance of the status quo is: why? Why, with so many talented individuals (Scorsese, Tarantino, PT Anderson and Wes Anderson, the Coens) trailblazing strongly as ever, are all the institutional movies becoming so exceptionally derivative?

Much comes down to risk. With so much invested in each movie, it's a commodity that very few Hollywood bigwigs are still willing to trade in. Thus, panicky studio executives who have only just recovered from John Carter fall back on proven formulas, profitable franchises, and familiar characters. Crucially, many movies have pre-existing brand awareness. A few proven directors still get to push new ideas, but only because they themselves are reliable brands.

Even Steven Spielberg and George Lucas, popcorn blockbuster royalty, have publicly lamented this trend in an interview with CNBC. "The pathway into theatres is getting smaller and smaller" says Lucas, "marketing is the biggest issue...you can't take a chance on small groups of people. If I make a movie for \$1 million dollars, it costs \$15 million to market it." "Lincoln was this close to being put on HBO" chimes in Spielberg, holding his fingers just an inch apart, "Ask them. It was this close."

A lot of this is in the nature of global filmmaking. The marketing budgets are not the only things affected by globalisation, content is too. With China now the second biggest box office, Hollywood's biggest releases cannot afford to displease the Chinese consumer. Trying to be all things to all men tends to end up being bland. Dumb action movies sadly work everywhere.

Technical 'progress' plays a part too. Think back to the days of 'the pictures' - the 'Golden age of Hollywood' when everything was still made in black and white. The 'Production Code' viciously enforced by the infamous censors, stopped filmmakers from dazzling their audiences with sex and violence and even if there was an element of ordered creation, there was at least an attempt at more creativity.

Hitchcock famously fought a clandestine war against these

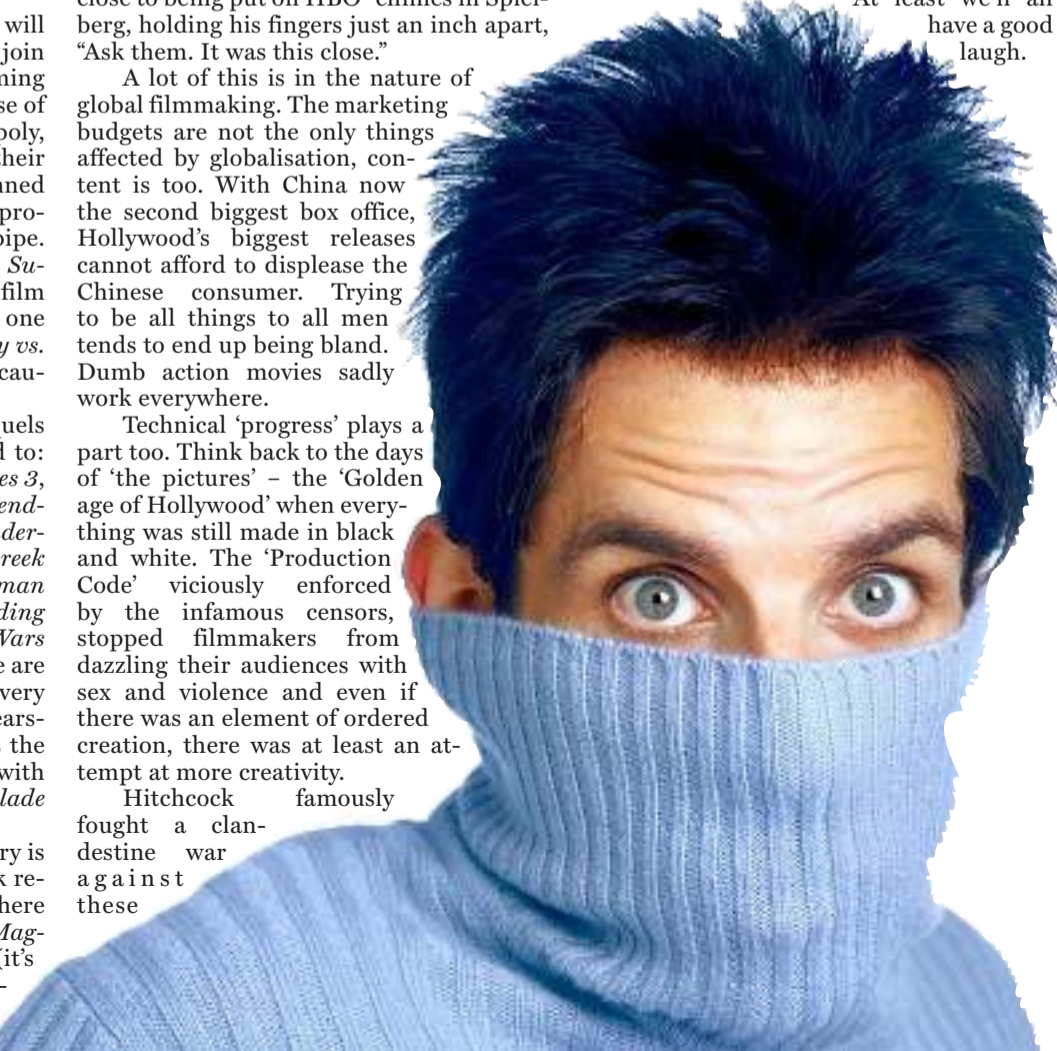
censors for most of his career; in *Psycho* (1961), they took issue not just with the notorious shower scene, but with the unmarried status of two characters shown in bed together, and the "aural and visual presentation of a toilet". Unable to hypnotise their viewers with pulse-pounding action or lascivious thrills, directors were forced to rely on story, character and script.

The advent of CGI makes for formulas which sell popcorn but not originality

However, the smokescreen of sex and violence has been used since at least the early 70s. The new smokescreen is CGI; films can now wow an audience with a vast fireworks display of visuals and action that delivers basic thrills without resorting to plot. In most Marvel movies for instance, the last 40 minutes or so is pretty much the same - practically no script, very little real acting, lots of explosions.

And so 2016 may prove to be the year to catch up on those foreign movies you should have watched years ago. Maybe 2017 will be better: I predict a remake of *Casablanca*, the complete works of Lars von Trier re-imagined by Michael Bay, and perhaps an M. Night Shyamalan adaptation of *Mario 64*.

At least we'll all have a good laugh.



Best of 2015 Television



Jessica Jones

Jessica Jones's Kilgrave is perhaps the most frightening villain in the Marvel universe. This has less to do with his powers themselves (tarrying as they are) and more with what he represents. To many people, Kilgrave will be horribly familiar. Unlike other Marvel villains, he isn't an alien or somebody intent on world domination. Rather, he is a controlling, entitled ex-boyfriend who will go to any lengths to get back the woman he feels belongs to him. What makes him so frightening is the fact that he is somebody many women (and men) will have met in real life, only endowed with super powers. When you strip away the superhero element, Jessica Jones is the story of a woman trying to rebuild her life after an abusive relationship. The show deals with issues like PTSD and rape in an unflinching and yet sensitive way, emerging as one of the most progressive, feminist shows ever made. Indeed, in a series whose main cast is entirely made up of women and people of colour, it's pretty telling that its villain is a white man who feels the world owes him something. *Lauren McNeilage*

Mad Men

Last year, we waved goodbye to *Mad Men*. There are many things that made this show so great over the years, including the original writing, the fantastic performances and the gorgeous set design and costume. But what has really made *Mad Men* great is something that I find hard to describe. The best way that I can put it is that it is inherently *Mad Men*. That *Mad Men* has created a style unique to itself through a combination of all the things it does well. It will be used as a reference point for years to come by other filmmakers and show-runners when they want something done right. It has a consistency you see very rarely over a seven-season period and it never overstayed its welcome. There were a few flickers, namely Peggy's profession of love to Stan in the final episode. It was a rare misstep for a show that usually tends to dodge such moments of melodrama, though this was more than made up for in the final touching conversation between Don and his daughter Sally. What is remarkable about the conclusive season of *Mad Men* is that while we did get an ending, it also allowed room for the characters to continue existing. There are not many shows that treat its characters with such respect. *Fraser McHale*

Best albums of 2015

The Music editors pick their highlights of what last year had to offer



Sleaford Mods - *Key Markets*

In 2015, Sleaford Mods were pissed off. After the omnishambles of the May general election, a lot of left-leaning Britons felt angry and betrayed but didn't know how to voice this. But oh, Sleaford Mods certainly did. Lyrically, *Key Markets* is a shot of vitriol in a Nottingham working man's club with Jason Williamson barking and spitting dark poetry like a dog who's just been stepped on. Lyrics that have a pop at anyone related to Westminster pollute this claustrophobic and bruising punk release thudded along by Andrew Robert Lindsay Fearn's migraine bass and drums that hock up disgust. If you're pissed, so are Sleaford Mods and *Key Markets* is your musical brick that is waiting to be hurled. **AN**



Jamie xx - *In Colour*

This kaleidoscopic debut from producer Jamie Smith – who goes by the name Jamie xx – acts as a showcase for all that he could not express in his years as a member of indie-pop number The xx. Across *In Colour* we move seamlessly from introverted reverence to floor-filling, pulsating anthems. Opening track 'Gosh' builds infectiously to euphoric climax, while album highlight 'I Know There's Gonna Be (Good Times)' smoothly blends an amalgam of styles into glorious harmony. Even after a dozen listens, the beauty of this album forever lies in its clashing intricacy that effortlessly falls into enraptured sound. **EL**

Another year sees another 'best of' list and it's safe to say that 2015 delivered a mixed bag of quality releases. Highlights included the world of hip-hop witnessing the release of Kendrick Lamar's magnum opus, *To Pimp a Butterfly* causing critics worldwide to truly acknowledge his place in contemporary music, while British artists battled it out in the annual Mercury Prize seeing Benjamin Clementine's debut, *At Least For Now* take home the gold. As well as this, artists including Drake, Grimes and Tame Impala stormed

back into action, each with incredibly varied and different releases that impressed and surprised both critics and listeners. We at *Nouse* also ran our Top 50 records of 2015 poll featuring a plethora of opinions and highlights from across the musical spectrum which you can find online in an article discussing the ins and outs of each release in the list. All in all, 2015 was a brilliant year showing us that music continues to move forward in an exciting and socially important direction we can all look forward to. Here's to another brilliant year.

Bring Me The Horizon - *That's The Spirit*

Never has reinvention been delivered in such epic form. The success of *That's The Spirit* marks a new era both in Bring Me The Horizon's career and in the future of rock in British culture. Oli Sykes and company have supplied us with a sound ready to destroy any arena, namely the anthem-esque 'Throne' and addictive 'Happy Song'. Though many have been disappointed at the band's change in direction, it cannot be denied that their music embodies the energy of the genre that birthed them, with a style and voice that appeals to the masses. One can only imagine which direction they'll take us next. **EL**



Kamasi Washington - *The Epic*

For a lot of listeners of popular music, jazz seems like something alien, something people struggle to understand while maintaining a certain respect for the importance of its legacy. Kamasi Washington's *The Epic* blows this out of the water. Twisting and turning through a modern jazz conglomeration of power and weight, three hours long, *The Epic* harkens back to elements of swing, be-bop and even 20th century classical music qualifying the obvious title of such a release. With breadth, depth and accessibility all morphing together to display true virtuosity and style, it is clear that *The Epic* is signifying Jazz's relevance in the modern music sphere and displaying that true musicianship can never die. **AN**

Slaves - *Are You Satisfied?*

Basic, bare, but brilliant, Slaves' fantastic debut *Are You Satisfied?* is comfortably one of 2015's albums of the year. Sounding distinctly different to anything else in the musical landscape at the moment, the duo from Tunbridge Wells in Kent have managed to produce an exquisite, stripped back amalgamation of punk and grime. Think Sex Pistols if they'd first come on the scene in the era of garage circa 2001. Listen to 'Sockets' for a standout moment, but just buy the whole album. *Are You Satisfied?* was well deserving of its Mercury Prize nomination last year for its breakneck speed songs that even a momentary listen to will leave the hairs on the back of your neck standing on their ends. **JD**



Kendrick Lamar - *To Pimp A Butterfly*

If *Good Kid, M.A.A.D City* was a film, then *To Pimp a Butterfly* is a novel. Full of nuanced detail and thematic intricacies, Lamar's third LP depicts celebrity, capitalism and most importantly, contemporary blackness, creating something more than just a record but a political statement defining what it's like to be a black man in a society that crushes African-American individualism and culture. Lamar's performance crackles and sparks while the album's production pulses and breathes, highlighting how *To Pimp a Butterfly* is not just an album, but a signifier of the greater black movement that continues the drive towards equality. **AN**

Blur - *The Magic Whip*

When Blur announced they would be releasing their first studio album in 12 years, they left an armada of fans feeling a mixture of extreme excitement, but also a slight fear that it might not live up to 12 years of anxious waiting. Any worries were unnecessary, as *The Magic Whip* proved to be yet another successful musical transformation by a band that have become experts in changing their sound throughout the years. Recorded in Hong Kong, the album at times can feel like a musical postcard from the orient. But, importantly, it's still distinctly Blur (look no further than archetypal singalong 'Ong Ong'). Another impressive album from Cheltenham's finest. **JD**



Foals - *What Went Down*

Oxford rockers Foals make our 'Best Albums of 2015' for their brilliantly rocky *What Went Down*. The band managed to follow up 2013's fantastic *Holy Fire* with an album packed with heavy rock rage interspersed with frontman Yannis Philippakis' high-pitched, melodic vocals. Similarly to their previous albums, *What Went Down* is another example of gradual change, rather than a drastic transformation. 'Mountain At My Gates' is a nod to their previous, jangly indie rock, but title track 'What Went Down' is the best example of the band's successful transition to an enjoyably heavier sound. The band have engineered a much bigger sound that will be a welcome addition to their already widely-lauded and intense live shows. **JD**



Grimes - *Art Angel*

You will never find Grimes pandering to the Top 40 charts and industry fatcats in her life or in her music. The utterly striking *Art Angels* is a fearless fuck-you to those that have tried to define her, a fierce fight to be seen on her own terms. With this album she shows her strength as a producer, toeing the line between the pop we love and the pop she is. Her sound is blown out and colourful while also synthetic and unreal, capturing her struggle to define herself in an industry that whitewashes female artists. From the sickly sweet sound of 'California' to the heated 'Kill V. Maim', Grimes proves she is more than a pop product. **EL**



SHIT MUSICIANS SAY.

David Bowie - 'Quicksand' 1971

"I'm not a prophet or a stone aged man, just a mortal with potential of a superman. I'm living on."

Ashes to Ashes

With his passing fresh in the world's mind, Ant Noonan delivers a personal reflection on the music, the image and the legacy of David Bowie

It's the morning of the 10th of January and I'm sitting in my room. Around me lies the typical mess of beer cans, crisp packets and academic papers all fighting to be noticed and to have something done about them but I do nothing, I just continue to sit. The phone rings and I hear my editor asking me about the articles needing finalisation and confirmation, his voice buzzing into the space between my ears and I sit there for a few minutes before I acknowledge what he's saying and what is required of me. The phone clicks off and I'm once again dropped back into the silence of my thoughts. David Bowie is dead, and that's all that will be seen to for a while.

For most people, the music of David Bowie was something they grew up with, the soundtrack to long car-journeys to Dorset that meandered through English countryside and valley leaving little to focus on except for the equally mobile sounds coming from a strange, man-alien thing that their dads liked for some reason.

Bowie's music was something played by the hip kids with Berkshire bank accounts at house parties in Victorian houses in Dulwich or Dalston, thudding and jiving along to the blur of adolescent intoxication that filled the heavy air. Bowie's music was a lot of things to a lot of people, but Bowie's music was everybody's and for this reason, we should mourn.

Born in Brixton in 1947, David Robert Jones showed great artistic talent at an early age, commonly seen singing or dancing or creating something individual that he cared about. As Jones got older and delved into the world of music and art, he soon realised that he wanted to be a part of it. From here, Bowie experienced the hardships of breaking into an artistic world that was populated by normality. Blue-eyed boys with bobs singing songs about girls and going out surrounded him and a young Jones, going by the moniker of Davy Jones followed such a pattern before realising that something wasn't right. Here, an epiphany occurred, one that will never be forgotten and will never be tarnished.

Jones became Bowie, a chameleon, post-modern prince morphing in and out of styles, personas and images displaying shocking sights to a small and uncertain world tentatively transitioning into the 1970s. Colour, sound, and power burst onto people's TV screens with David Bowie's blood red hair and lightning strike displaying a man who was something higher and something alien but



at the same time something so human and raw that would swallow up popular culture for over 50 years with 27 studio albums, over 22 credited film roles and a golden legacy that will simply never be surpassed.

For me, Bowie was something a little bit different. My parents had never played his music to me as a child but I remember clearly my first discovery. On a family holiday to Madeira I'd grown bored of listening to the same old music I'd always listened to. Early Arctic Monkeys and The Strokes had drip dried my musical horizons leaving me thinking that real music consisted of guys in Chuck Taylors and jeans talking about pixie-girls and Marlboro Reds. Here I looked at my primitive iPod touch and taking advantage of the hotel's free wifi I downloaded Bowie's 1972 magnum opus, *The Rise and Fall of Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*. From here, nothing was the same.

Bowie thundered open the doors of music for me, grabbing me by the pre-pubescent bum fluff that inhabited my face and flinging me down the hall of artistic, experimental and emotionally honest music. The way Bowie morphed his image and sound so lucidly made me look at artists who had played the same three chords for their entire careers and think of them as lazy and base in comparison to the boundlessly broad sounds that were laid before me by the man himself. In short, I felt like I had experienced an epiphany, with this moment in particular being a memory I know will remain with me until the day I die.

This is what made David Bowie an icon. Bowie had the power and presence to look down at any person and show them a world outside of their own through sound, image and presence. People tend to forget that despite Bowie's universal acclaim, he is one of the most personal artists of all time. No other artist captures so many moods, time frames, people and places like David Bowie did and that's what makes him perfect: his universal humanity.

As I sit here now and put the finishing touches to this piece of writing I think not to Bowie or his music, but to people like me. For millions, Bowie was not a musician or an image but a being that simply understood what it is like to be human, to desire to understand the true beauty and variety of life that sits before us and to simply immerse yourself within such a world. David Bowie did that, and took us all along for the journey.

David Bowie - *Blackstar*

David Bowie's swansong release sits among his finest, concluding one of music's most inimitable careers, says Jack Davies



★★★★★

Released: 8th January 2016
RCA

This review is an incredibly unusual one to write, because, it was as I was applying the finishing touches to my evaluation of David Bowie's *Blackstar*, that the news broke of the man born David Jones passing away from cancer aged 69.

But Bowie's passing has also given a completely new context to *Blackstar*. The gift he bequeathed the world of music before leaving generations of fans devastated.

Bowie has produced a brilliantly dark, engaging and inventive album that will sit as one of his most experimental in an outstand-

ing, diverse career. *Blackstar* itself comprises just seven songs, each track exhibiting the lyrical genius that Bowie was renowned for over the years. 'Sue (Or In a Season of Crime)' sees Bowie call upon motifs of death that are present throughout *Blackstar*, adding to its powerfully morose feel as he sings of pushing a woman named Sue "beneath the weeds" and kissing her "good-bye".

The album is one of the best arguments anyone could put forward for claiming that popular music is an art-form as powerful and relevant as any painting or poem. Aside from Bowie's distinctive voice, the album is a whirlwind of experimentation, seeing him explore life, death and the boundaries of popular music in the unique way that only

Bowie could – there's even a song on the album sung in Nadsat ('Girl Loves Me').

However, the album will always be thought of as his swansong. The eulogistic feel is best captured on the biblically named 'Lazarus', as the opening line sees Bowie sing "look up here, I'm in heaven", before the epic song continues with spine-tingling key changes and sullen brass as a background.

The harrowing video for the song has Bowie, gaunt, writhing on a sickbed with outstretched hands, before another Bowie appears, dressed in black, eventually disappearing into a coffin-like wardrobe – a man leaving *Blackstar* as one last gift to the world before ascending to his place among the gods.

Acupuncture for all

Acupuncturists **Karen Charlesworth** and **Elaine Hildrick** speak to **Connie Shaw** about York's new Love Community Acupuncture clinic

Nestled on the corner of Museum Street, York's newly opened Love Community Acupuncture clinic could easily be missed by the average passer-by and yet inside it boasts nothing but space and serenity.

Set up only a couple of months ago by two friends and acupuncturists, Karen Charlesworth and Elaine Hildrick, the clinic is one of only 40 in the UK. Its unique selling point is low-cost acupuncture for the community – the premise being the ability to treat several patients simultaneously in the same room for a fraction of the price of private care.

Having never been someone who buys into the benefits of alternative medicine, it was with trepidation and a degree of scepticism that I knocked on the door of the clinic where I was to embark on an hour of treatment.

Once greeted by Elaine and Karen, however, I felt immediately at ease. They have both lived in York for over 15 years

“**We're not just treating the body, we are treating the mind and the soul as a single entity**”

and became acquainted when training together at the Northern College of Acupuncture on Micklegate. After graduating they moved into private practice.

Karen explained the principal behind community acupuncture. “We were both seeing patients who wanted to either continue regular treatment or increase the number of treatments they were having, but couldn't afford it.” In the largest cities in the UK, patients can pay between £50 and £70 for their first session of private acupuncture, with subsequent appointments costing between £35 and £50. In contrast, Love Community Acupuncture charges just £12 a treatment for the same quality.

Elaine carries out my treatment, which involves a 20-to-30 minute individual consultation to assess the nature of pain before inserting several needles around my wrists, forearm and knees. Karen is keen to get across the fact that, despite the treatment taking place in a community setting, she and Elaine only ever work with their patients on a one to one basis; “My attention is only ever focused on one patient at a time, so the quality of treatment is exactly the same as it would be if you came to see us in a private session,” and “the hygiene standards are ex-

actly the same.”

Acupuncture was discovered as a medicinal practice in China between the first century BC and the first century AD. The therapy is based on the Meridian system and the balance and flow of energy in the body known as ‘Qi’.

It is believed that energy flows inside us in lines called meridians not unlike the electrical circuits in a house, and that illness and pain occurs when the meridians become unbalanced or blocked so that energy can no longer flow freely around the body.

During treatment, fine sterile needles are inserted into specific locations on the body to regulate this flow of energy, encouraging a healing response and restoring the balance of energy. The focus is on the root cause of the problem, not simply the symptoms.

I asked Karen how acupuncture stimulates positive chemical changes in the body. “There is a theory in Western medicine hypothesising that when you insert an acupuncture needle, you are creating a local, minor trauma in the body that triggers parts of the brain particularly in the limbic system which then sends extra resources to that area and then in turn activates other parts of the brain to help the body as a whole.”

Karen informs me that the University of York has researched the effects of inserting a single acupuncture needle on the brain, “which is how we know that the limbic system is affected using functional MRI scans to detect changes.”

Karen explains how community acupuncture is “quite unique among the alternative or complementary therapies in that once the needles are in, your patient is left to relax and you are then free to move on to the next.” This means that unlike massage or other more manual therapies, patients at Love Community Acupuncture are left for 20 minutes after consultation. Therefore, “it really lends itself to that community setting.”

Indeed, for both Elaine and Karen the biggest positive of their new venture is the “real buzz” of the communal treatment centre. “A lot of patients really value the atmosphere of being in a community clinic. For instance patients have got chat-



IMAGE: LOVE COMMUNITY ACUPUNCTURE

ting and discovered they have similar interests.”

It is this distinctive atmosphere at Love Community Acupuncture that has, Karen believes, contributed hugely to the overwhelmingly positive feedback the new clinic has received since opening. “People come in looking for pain relief and they are reporting good clinical outcomes, but what is also really interesting is that they are reporting good personal outcomes in terms of lifting spirits and mood improvement because of the nature and environment in which they are being treated. That's something that Chinese medicine in particular really picks up on because it is a holistic medicine. We're not just treating the body, we are treating the mind and the soul as a single entity.”

I questioned Karen about the sceptical criticism that alternative medicines like acupuncture sometimes receive, and whether she thought attitudes were changing in our society. “In Western medicine, the body is often thought of as a machine. When parts of it start to malfunction, you go to the doctor and there are two major ways that they can help: one is pharmacology and the other is surgery.” Karen suggests doctors are slowly coming

round to the thought that changes in one's lifestyle can contribute hugely to the healing process.

Therefore health professionals no longer automatically reach for the prescription pad, but instead might suggest ways to alter a patient's lifestyle, for example changing one's diet, sleeping habits or exercise routine.

In contrast, Karen explains how Chinese medicine “sees your body as more like a garden; when you garden you do a little bit of pruning, a bit of weeding and watering, you create the optimum conditions for the garden to flourish and that's a little bit like how acupuncture works.” It creates a “balance of energy in your body which gives you the optimum conditions to live your life in a positive and healthy way.”

Patients of all ages come to Community Acupuncture to treat a huge variety of conditions, ranging from headaches to muscular skeletal problems, IBS or IVF support. “Typically it will be symptoms that Western medicine struggles to make sense of. Just this morning we've seen one particular patient who has chronic fatigue syndrome, but as a result of that they've been experiencing lots of muscular pain and hot flushes which are not typical symptoms of chronic fatigue.

The only thing a doctor can do for that patient is to offer medication, which so far has been of no help. Acupuncture gives this patient more energy and takes away some of the pain so they are able to live a more normal everyday life.”

Most interesting, Karen notes, is that “people come in for one thing and in fact notice many other positive effects on their body, for example they may be sleeping better or their energy levels may have improved”.

For years the true benefits of acupuncture has generated substantial debate. However, having now experienced the positive effects for myself I cannot hesitate to recommend it as a low-risk, alternative when conventional medications fail to improve chronic pain. **M**



IMAGE: LOVE COMMUNITY ACUPUNCTURE

The sirtfood diet

Is a diet which encourages red wine and dark chocolate too good to be true?
Amy Norton explores the latest craze of the sirtfoods

First things first: what, can we ask, are sirts? The word is short for the group of proteins known as sirtuins, which play an integral role in regulating the chemical processes said to kickstart fat burn. They're involved in cell processes which encourage DNA repair and help decrease vulnerability to disease. What's more, research shows that sirtuins imitate the effects of low-calorie diets thus replicating the results of fasting and exercise. Moreover foods rich in sirtuins are cited as being able to extend lifespans. 'sirtfoods' - including buckwheat, dark chocolate, green tea, olives, kale and even red wine - are so-named for their high levels of polyphenols, natural chemicals which activate sirtuins. When we consider that sirtfoods feature heavily in lifestyles with low rates of disease

The Times, tested the potential of these wonderfoods by putting a group of volunteers on a specifically designed meal plan. Each person consumed three sirt juices and one sirt meal (cauliflower couscous and salmon, for example) for three days, followed by four further days of two juices and meals. According to results, the average weight loss within a week was half a stone; participants claimed to feel rejuvenated; and some purported to have increased muscle mass.

Goggins and Matten themselves stress that it's not a starvation diet, but one to improve well-being, increasing overall nutrient intake. After the initial week, the regime relaxes into something more of a normal diet, although the primary focus remains on juices packed with greens, such as kale, matcha, parsley, and apples.

So, the sirt diet seems to achieve credible results. But, as with every new dieting craze, there are other things to bear in mind. Consider the main cause of the participants' weight loss: their diets provided them with 25 per cent fewer calories than a woman's recommended daily allowance. Anyone restricting calorie intake in this way is bound to lose pounds, even though the dieters didn't feel hungry: evidently, some properties of the sirtfood react to produce the effect of both satiating and satisfying appetite. Furthermore, the main component of the diet - the juices - spell out a bleak future for those with preferences for solid food.

Of course, if you're the sirt dieter David Haye, you can have your juices delivered ready-made, no problem - but for the rest of us, this involves hefty investment in a stuffed



IMAGE: GAIL

Goggins and Matten themselves stress that it's not a starvation diet, but one to improve well-being

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- in the Mediterranean diet, for example - it seems plausible that there's something to be said for incorporating more of them into our diets.

Authors of *The Sirtfood Diet*, Aiden Goggins and Glen Matten, in an interview with

fridge of vegetables. Juicing also breaks down fruit and vegetables to the extent that they lose valuable nutritional fibre. Also, with the majority of sirtfoods weighing in on the expensive side of the spectrum - strawberries, walnuts, soy - this isn't perhaps the most student-friendly diet.

Finally, as fresh warnings on alcohol consumption tell us that a glass of wine a day is absolutely not safe, we receive the conflicting message that drinking sirt-friendly Pinot Noir will help us to lose weight. Met by inconsistencies everywhere we look, we must always be

wary of any new diet or health craze.

All points considered, one can question just how different the sirt diet really is. Ultimately the diet seems to encourage the same thing as any health expert under the sun: promoting eating a wider variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts, pulses, and healthy fats. As this is a feat which can be performed on any budget, with no requirement to adopt a semi-liquid diet, perhaps we should rather opt for the classic diet of moderation and balance, which we know at heart is the best route to health and happiness.

Satisfying your app-etite

Leah Huws takes a look at some of the top food and drink apps for all skill levels

Type in 'food' or 'cooking' into your phone's app store, and the likelihood is you will be confronted by a swarm of calorie counting devices or restaurant promotional apps. However, hidden among this guilt-inducing crowd are an increasing number of apps dedicated to developing the culinary skills of cooks of all abilities and getting the most out of your food. While there's nothing like a good cookbook, in the modern age the mobile device can offer more than just recipes. These range from handy ingredient suggestions to video tutorials on handling

daunting kitchen utensils. Also worthy of note are 'food networks' to share tips and experiences with other cooks around the world. As well as the likely candidates - Jamie Oliver, BBC's Good Food, and of course, Nigella - there are a number of nifty independent apps that aim to put a twist on your routine recipes and food shopping. Here are a selection of four of the best new recipe apps, all free, available on Android or iPhone and definitely worth a try to make the most of your weekly shop.

The Beginner: Kitchen Stories



There is a reason this app won a 'Best of the App Store' award in 2014: not only does it have 520 recipes and video preparation guides, but it also offers an automatically

generated shopping list feature, and a customised preference list regarding dietary requirements. The food calculator allows the user to enter the ingredients they already have, and suggests some recipes using that data, meaning you can postpone the food shop even longer and avoid wasting ingredients. Along with the ability to comment on recipes with the integrated notepad, the app encourages the development of food networks, where friends on the app can share recipe tips and queries.

The Experimental Chef: Foodpairing



This genius little app is like a dating app for food: it matches foods based on the similarities of their aromas. Enter the main ingredient that you have to

make dinner - say steak - and the app will suggest a list of ingredients that make an unusual but tasty pairing - for example, adding a splash of Dutch gin to your steak sauce to improve the flavour. Likewise, parmesan shavings on strawberries are a match made in heaven. A definite must for those who would rather stay in marathoning Netflix rather than go all the way to the supermarket, and are wondering what they could possibly concoct from the mismatched ingredients lurking in the fridge.

The Drinks Enthusiast: Mixology



Mixology is a great app for every drinks enthusiast out there. By selecting everything from the ingredients, beverages and even the glassware you have, the mixology app

calculates a cocktail for you to make from this. For every student who is tired of the vodka and lemonade combination already, mixology is a fantastic way to spice up your pre-drinks. For a fun evening gather up the drinks of all your housemates and experiment with classic recipes and innovative new mixes. The only downside is recipes often require spirits that most student kitchens don't hold. The app also teaches you bartending terminology while you mix which is sure to impress your friends and family.

The Experienced Cook: Chefsteps



Useful for those wishing to develop their culinary technique, Chefsteps offers easy to use step by step video guides, directing the user through the trickier aspect of culinary

preparation. What makes this app unique however, is that through mastering and preparing increasingly difficult dishes, more recipes and tutorials can be unlocked. Although the recipe collection revolves primarily around American cuisine, the meals are genuinely delicious and varied. Chefsteps provides an accessible guide to advanced kitchen utensil usage such as sous vide machines and knife honing - not very useful in a student kitchen, granted, but their macaroon recipes are fool-proof.

Land of hate and fury

Jack Davies investigates the insidious nature of far-right hate group Britain First



To those of you who have not yet heard of Britain First, there are three key things which essentially summarise the fledgling far-right political party: they're becoming immensely popular on Facebook, they consider themselves supremely patriotic, and they really, really don't like Muslims – but this is just the tip of the iceberg.

Before writing this article, I had heard of Britain First, who describe themselves as a "patriotic political party", but I had always dismissed them as something of a fad, thinking their support would dwindle over time just as the BNP has over the last decade. I never realised just how dangerous and indoctrinating their extreme brand of Islamophobia was before I finally took a scan of their Facebook page.

What I found was nothing short of shocking: a slurry of hateful, offensive posts litter their timeline. Amid this, they sandwich a number of posts praising the British Armed Forces in what appears to be a thinly-veiled attempt to disguise their incisive racism as patriotism.

As I continued to scan through their deluge of hostile posts, I was shocked time and time again by the content: quotes from infamous racist and former Conservative MP Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech, branding their political opposites (particularly Jeremy Corbyn) as "treacherous swine", calling for Britain to close its doors to the Syrian refugees who they view as either benefit scroungers or Jihadis, seemingly depending on whatever day of the week it is.

There are even posts calling for supporters to join the "Britain First Armed Forces Di-

vision". I do not even want to consider what the "division" concerns itself with, and one can only hope that it's as hollow and pathetic as it sounds.

The group itself was set up in 2011 as an offshoot of the British National Party by Jim Dowson, a far-right activist and former lead-

“ More likes on Facebook than Labour, the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats combined

ing figure in the BNP. However, even Dowson left the increasingly-fascist group in 2014 after members began taking part in what they dubbed as "mosque invasions" whereby groups of individuals "stormed" various mosques around the country, deliberately riling Muslim worshippers inside by inviting them to "reject the false prophet Muhammad" and handing out copies of the Bible.

Their ability to shock and surprise with

their predominantly blind ignorance knows no bounds. Coupled with their "mosque invasions" are what they have dubbed "Christian Patrols". One such patrol which took place in East London was recorded by Britain First and a video of it posted to their Facebook page.

In it, one "patroller" comments "we're in Brick Lane in East London, a predominantly Muslim road, and we've had lots of hostility so far". This, as they march in an overwhelmingly militaristic fashion, brandishing a large, white cross in a not dissimilar style to those used by the Ku Klux Klan, chanting "Britain First" and handing out Bible booklets.

The most shocking factor is that it was happening directly outside the homes and businesses of Muslim people, thus deliberately tailored to intimidate people on the grounds of their faith. The fact that they were surprised at this being met by hostility is perhaps only testament to the deluded nature of their beliefs. That said, perhaps we should not be surprised at such delusion from a group that has described global warming as "non-existent" and "a load of Socialist dribble".

In a transition that moves them even further into the extreme grounds of right-wing politics, Britain First is now led by Paul Golding, a former amateur boxer and member of the neo-Nazi National Front. He also intends to run in this year's London Mayoral Election. Now, obviously, there's more chance of the Chuckle Brothers staging a last-ditch election campaign and winning than there is of Golding becoming Mayor of London; he once turned up at a service on Remembrance Sunday drunk and sporting a pair of women's

knickers upon his misinformed, vacuous head.

Thankfully, I have enough faith in the voting population of the UK to be certain that only a minuscule percentage of people will be hoodwinked by these fascist bigots. But then, there is one particularly stark fact that perhaps suggests Britain First could be slightly more dangerous than the more rational on-lookers might presume: they have more likes on Facebook than Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats combined, equating to almost 1.2 million people.

Likes on Facebook do of course not necessarily mean votes, and it's fair to assume that a large proportion of these "likes" will be from people who do not actually agree with Britain First's ideology, but have only liked the page in order to keep up-to-date with their stream of obscene and often hilarious posts. However, a look in the comments sections of their posts reveals that thousands upon thousands of people actually do agree with their extreme ideas – and the more people who agree with them and share their posts, the more support they will attract.

What stands out is the way in which Britain First orchestrate their social media operations to draw people in; in this respect the organisation is remarkably intelligently run. Amid the eyebrow-raising posts, the page regularly posts links to articles on its own website. These articles can range from scare-mongering about immigrants to the UK potentially being criminals or terrorists, to blaming immigration for forcing down the wages of British workers.

These points often appeal to popular

opinion; people read a one-sided article on their website about how influxes of non-British workers drive wages down across the economy, feel disillusioned with immigration and end up liking Britain First's page. The Facebook page is particularly prolific, posting up to 50 times a day. Once an individual has liked the page, they will be bombarded with a barrage of posts varying in their levels of racism and Islamophobia. And perhaps the more posts they see, the more people find that they begin to agree with them.

Gradually, this is how Britain First indoctrinate people who don't really hold any racist or fascist views into thinking in the same way as them. Eventually, anything foreign or remotely "un-British" becomes a target for hatred.

Furthermore, they never miss an opportunity to capitalise on major news events, which they can twist to garner support for their own cause. This is an integral part of the way they gain supporters, because major news events that paint immigrants or Islam in a negative light, such as the attacks in Paris in November last year, give them facts to root their loathing in.

Our world's fragile situation, regarding the multitude of terrorist attacks and spread of ISIS, has provided an ideal breeding ground for such extreme politics to gain momentum and, as Britain First would argue, a degree of validity.

For example, when a post condemns Islam and calls for the deportation of immigrants or the closing of borders to refugees,

0.003 per cent of the Islamic population is responsible for these crimes

and people point out that Britain First are being heartless or unfair, the group can then refer to the fact that Islamic extremists were responsible for aforementioned terrorist attacks, and state blindly that this justifies their hateful stance on the entire Islamic faith.

They find it far too easy to blame the many real-world problems that this country suffers, from low wages, to housing shortages, to the sometimes lacklustre care of war veterans, entirely on immigration. What's more, because these issues are ones which affect a great number of people in Britain, the group is able to exploit them and gain many disillusioned supporters who want to find something to blame for these problems and something to direct their anger at.

Immigration is a controversial topic in general, and Britain First occasionally make the odd valid point, even if they do express them in a terrible fashion. But there is never any acknowledgement of the very many positives that immigration also brings to Britain, Muslim immigrants included. For instance, Muslim refugees from Syria and Iraq helping Britons affected by the floods over the Christmas period was never recognised by Britain First. Nor is there ever any consideration that the problems they all attribute to being caused by immigration might actually be the result of other factors.

The group affords a lot of attention to what they perceive as a Muslim paedophile epidemic, citing the discoveries of Asian paedophile rings in the likes of Bradford and Rochdale as evidence. This is another example of Britain First cleverly manipulating news stories to their own advantage in vilifying Muslims; they know how emotive a sub-

ject child abuse is among the public, and any connections that can be made between Islam and paedophilia only allows the hate group to gain more support.

I wanted to see for myself just how much Britain First's anti-Islam agenda is believed in by their supporters. To do so, I set up two false Facebook accounts: one as a white, British man with a photo of myself as the profile picture, under the name of Tony Collins, and the other as a British Muslim man named Mohammed Alam with a generic Arabic symbol as the profile picture.

With these two accounts, I then proceeded to comment on a series of posts on the Britain First Facebook page. The comments I made were identical in content, differing only in their wording in order to see how people reacted to the different accounts under which the comments were made.

For example, on a status Britain First had posted calling for the British government to stop all aid for Syrian refugees, I commented using both accounts that the refugees did not deserve to be punished for the actions of a small number of terrorists who have destroyed their homes.

Both comments were met with disapproval from Britain First's supporters. However, a handful of supporters were so incensed that a Muslim man had supposedly commented in support of refugees that they decided to directly message the Mohammad Alam account with their views. One such individual messaged the following (please note, the anonymous messenger's spelling mistakes have been corrected for ease of reading): "fuck off Islam is responsible for all the hate in the world right now!"

I replied using Alam's account: "I don't think you can possibly say this is true. 0.003 per cent of the Islamic population is responsible for these crimes. The vast, vast majority of the Muslim faith resents ISIS and what they represent."

The response was, shockingly, as follows: "It is, look at the refugees coming over here to attack Europe. Won't be long before they get us if we keep letting the scum in, they want to destroy the West with refugee armies. Islam is

based on evil to destroy the West."

I think the alarming nature of such blind ignorance and hatred is apparent without me commenting further on the content of the messages Mohammad Alam's account received.

The attitude of the group itself also became apparent as I continued to comment on their posts using the two accounts. Invariably, the comments would be removed after short intervals of time, demonstrating a determination to disallow anyone from disagreeing with their opinions.

In an act of obvious prejudice, Britain First then proceeded to block the Muslim account from commenting, sharing, or interacting with any more of their posts, but did not block the account of a white, British man from doing so. If their hateful agenda was not crystal clear to me before this, it was now. Britain First declined to comment on the matter when asked.

Hilariously, the group's solution to prevent being branded as racists is to completely deny that racism exists whatsoever. They have publicly branded racism as a "made-up word" on their website and refuse to "recognise the validity" of it as a concept.

Naturally the group has also garnered much criticism. One such critic is Gareth Arnoult, who set up the Britain First parody page known as Britain Furst, which focuses on mocking and thereby devaluing Britain First's offensive posts.

"About a year and a half ago, I saw Britain First's Facebook page, and I laughed because I thought it was a super-serious parody" he says of the first time he noticed the extreme party. "Then I saw more of the posts that they do and I thought 'oh shit, this is real' and I wanted to take the piss out of them."

Arnoult's "piss-taking" quickly gathered momentum, which has seen his page Britain Furst gain almost 200,000 followers who share the page's mantra of laughing at the ludicrousness of Britain First's claims.

This is the core of Arnoult's attitude towards Britain First; he sees them as "impo-

tent" and "entirely unelectable" because of the completely over-the-top nature of their posts. However, he does recognise that Britain First perhaps serve more of a purpose than we give them credit for.

"I used to really detest them. Now I think what they do is actually really important, because I think, in doing what they are doing, they're basically showing how silly a lot of the arguments against immigration and Islam are. It serves a very powerful purpose to remind the country and the rest of the world that we actually don't want to be like that and don't want to think like that."

Nevertheless, he still has plenty of reason to detest Britain First, considering the way

A thinly-veiled attempt to disguise their incisive racism as patriotism

its supporters react to him and his parodying of the group. "I do regularly receive death threats," he admits, but they usually lack any degree of substance. "One guy kept telling me if he ever saw me, he'd kill me" he tells me. "I lost patience with it all, gave him my home address and told him what times I'd be in, and he never even replied."

What is clear from this, as well as from the reactions I received in my Facebook experiment, is that while the threats Arnoult received lacked any substance, people are still so taken with Britain First and their ideas that they are willing to verbally assault anyone who disagrees with them.

Ultimately though, I thoroughly advocate anything which, like Arnoult's Britain Furst page, sets out to undermine Britain First's extreme views and laugh at the ignorant ways they express them. Their anti-Islam, extreme right-wing stance has become almost in vogue in a society that has seen so much extremism in recent years, and Britain First have abused this to appeal to a select group of small-minded people. The best way to limit their impact is to laugh at them, painting their incisive hatred as the misinformed nonsense that it is.



IMAGE: UNICEF

Niall Whitehead: ANTHEM FROM A DOOMED YOUTH



What did you get for Christmas, kids? Well, if you were in York over the holidays, your answer was probably “the River Ouse”, followed by “a few thousand gallons of water seeping into my prized possessions, mingling with my tears which ironically drive the floodwater higher because the universe personally wants to spit in my mouth”. And a partridge in a pear tree.

Everything kicked off when our flood defences got flooded (mmm, taste that irony, spit harder, universe) and what followed was a quick-fire round of Man vs. Sea. This being the new game-show format that I came up with: famous celebrities take on famous seas in rounds of sprinting, boxing and deposit-

“ **The whole thing gave David Cameron the chance to learn about an exciting new direction, called “North”** ”

ing sediment onto a beach. The Foss Awakened, the Ouse ran loose and the end result was a raw stream of toxic effluence pouring in from all sides, the likes of which had never been seen in York since International Men’s Day. And Breitbart probably blamed FemSoc for that, too.

It might have just been an act of God. In my capacity as a *Nouse* journalist, I tried to reach out to God for a quote, but shockingly He didn’t seem to be available for comment. Maybe He disagreed with my last *Doctor Who* review. It’s possible that Jesus just wanted a minor natural disaster for his birthday this year – when you’ve turned 2016, I guess some body

wash and a stripper in a cake just doesn’t have the “wow” factor anymore. At any rate, the whole thing gave David Cameron the chance to learn about an exciting new direction, called “North”. Having presumably talked with his aides, to see what the exchange rate was over there and to make sure that he didn’t need any jabs, our laminated leader bravely ventured upwards. Resolved to send up a bit of money now, and then a lot more later, sometime, probably, Cameron declared that he’d single-handedly driven back the floods and that the North would be a great place for the Conservatives to visit again, based on the cries of “Tories come” and “you massive Cnut” being yelled at him from across the road.

Maybe this is just the future, happening now. We all saw the photos of sad-looking polar bears and dwindling little icecaps in Antarctica, and this is the next step. Underwater cities. Rapture’s Britain. Wait until Christmas 2045, when little Timmy’ll be getting an oxygen tank and a harpoon so he can fight off the goose-man hybrids for the last bottle of clean water.

With the weather providing fifty shades of grey, it’s only fitting that Week One ended up being a vicious cycle of beatings from which there was no escape. Or “exam week”, as it’s commonly known. I didn’t have any myself, but I also had 10,000 words to write, and I’ve been told that just because a picture’s worth a thousand words, it doesn’t mean I can drop a few photos of cats in there and call it a day.

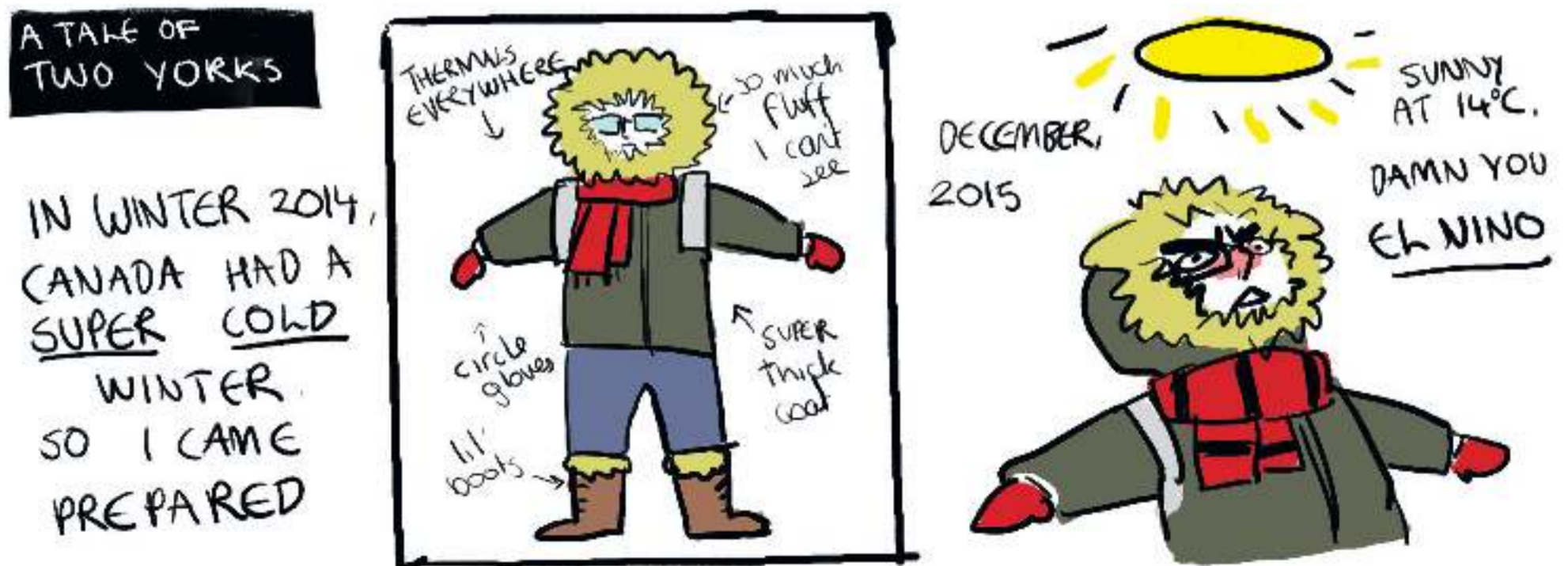
So I’ve just had to power on through, while all around me friends who actually have exams have been talking about deadlines and late-night revision in the same way that shell shocked veterans talked about “the guns”.

But things got a bit lighter near the end. Over on YikYak, all eyes turned to the anonymous poster who got caught by a housemate while vigorously enjoying himself to one of her photos. Beat that for drama, Netflix! ...or don’t beat that. I guess that was the problem in the first place. 50 replies later, though, events ended happily. The housemates talked it over and they’re dating now, so at least they’ll have a nice story to tell the kids.

Callum McCulloch: 10 THINGS I’VE LEARNT THIS WEEK

- 1 I love Justin Bieber. Buying my little sister Bieber tickets for Christmas was as much for me as it was for her. I’m not even ashamed.
- 2 Term begins with such good intentions. My aims to eat more healthily and be less of a terrible person have already gone out of the window. At least I tried.
- 3 January is the best month. All mistakes officially happened last year, which in mistake terms, is bloody ages ago. Clean slates are popping up all over the place.
- 4 I’m still a child. I recently signed up to LinkedIn in an attempt to feel more mature. I did however do this while watching *Toy Story 3* and playing with the *Star Wars* Lego that I got for Christmas. I heavily suggest giving LinkedIn stalking a go, it is so in this year.
- 5 There are so many people at University who I will always say hello to on a night out but will never even acknowledge when on campus. If I’m in a good mood you may get a smile and an awkward mumbled “hey”, but don’t bet on it.
- 6 I hate people who actually make you guess when using the phrase ‘you’ll never guess what?’ You are the worst kind of people. I hope that something you love catches on fire.
- 7 I miss Christmas. December 25th is the only day of the year when you can drink spirits in your pyjamas and pass out in front of *Downton*. The annual ‘red wine and resentment’ with the family is always particularly exciting.
- 8 Don’t ask me if I did any work over the holiday. We both know the answer to that. If you spent all of your time working over Christmas, you are wetter than Fossgate. Just cram last minute like the rest of us.
- 9 Starting the term without money doesn’t bode well. If running out of money counted as exercise I would be absolutely ripped.
- 10 I hate people who make you move out of a reserved seat on the train despite the whole carriage being empty. Just sit in a different seat like everyone else.

HARRIET CHESHIRE ON HER EXPERIENCE AS AN EXCHANGE STUDENT IN CANADA





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The new politics: Our predictions for 2016

British politics as 'chaotic' as 2015

Ben Reid
POLITICAL REPORTER

BRITISH POLITICAL parties look more different at the start of 2016 than anybody could have predicted. There's been two major leader changes and an unexpected landslide victory for the Conservatives. 2016 promises to be just as chaotic.

Conservatives face inward battles over the EU Referendum as Cameron allows ministers a free vote, quietening the strong Euro-sceptic Conservative backbench. With their landslide victory, the party is unlikely to face too many splits, until the battle between George Osborne and Boris Johnson commences as Cameron will start to make plans to bow out after the referendum.

This year will see Labour diverge further leftwards before snapping back to a New Labour center-left position. Depending on the local elections in May, Corbyn's Christ-like entrance into leadership could soon unfold into political crucifixion.

Corbyn's inexperience, seen in his blunder-ridden excuse for a reshuffle, will probably be further

revealed by his handling of a vote on Trident this year. Expect splits, shit-storms and coups.

The Lib Dems however present a unified British opposition to leaving the EU, so if the referendum goes in their favor and Osborne or Johnson prove too bitter a taste for certain Conservative supporters, then the party's fortunes could reverse after electoral defeat last May.

The SNP won't take center-stage this year. They will oppose most of the government's policies, present a case for another Scottish referendum, and support EU membership heftily.

UKIP have a lot to live up to with the looming EU referendum. They present a unified advocacy for leaving the EU and have more to lose if the referendum supports an ongoing EU membership. Even Farage's position as leader remains uncertain as dissent is creeping through the party.

The Green Party definitely has opportunity for success this year. The Trident vote could be capitalised as a Green issue very easily. Furthermore, disappointed Corbynites suffering from splits may well channel into the Greens, with the intention of creating their left-wing utopia.

Early EU referendum for 2016? Britain would still say no



IMAGE: DAVE KELLAM

An early EU referendum remains unlikely as Cameron's renegotiations falter, with a Brexit still unlikely

Finn Judge
DEPUTY POLITICS EDITOR

WITH A REFERENDUM on Britain's membership of the European Union promised by David Cameron to take place before the end of 2017, unproductive negotiations have rendered a vote this year unlikely. The result is looking to be just as mundane, no matter how close the polling may seem.

The vote took the political arena by storm in May when Andy Burnham called on the Prime Minister to

bring forward the newly mandated EU referendum to 2016.

There is a mounting case for an early referendum: as speculation runs rife, with HSBC having suggested it would vacate the UK in the event of a Brexit, the Prime Minister would be compelled to provide reassurance to multinationals operating in Britain. Crucially, a great number of them have become reliant on the free movement of capital within the EU.

Although the process has been held in secret, *The Telegraph* exclusively revealed last month that Cameron "will campaign to leave"

if his demands of curbing in-work migrant benefits are not met. The renegotiation process has already been reduced to the Prime Minister's last resort, suggesting the need for a change of strategy as his diplomacy falters. Ending the renegotiation process now would bind Cameron to abandon his vision of a reformed Europe.

Nonetheless, were such a referendum to take place today, trends indicate that the UK would vote to remain in Europe.

So expect the expected in 2016 - no matter how anticlimactic that may be.

Destruction and decay develops in the Middle East

Habib Nassar
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

ISIS DIDN'T JUST dominate the headlines in 2015: it baffled the world's superpowers. Western states' reluctance to deploy ground troops is appropriate due to the complexity of the region, and we don't know if the airstrikes are actually making a difference as conflicting statements emerge on ISIS' lost territories.

World leaders have not taken on ISIS by halting their income and 2016 offers nothing new. The region will remain in limbo and ISIS will continue to extend its influence worldwide. In war-torn Libya, we can expect ISIS to join the battle for governance of the country much more directly. Due to Assad's relentless grip on unconquered parts of Syria and intense, destabilising air strikes across the country, refugees will continue to flee.

Growing tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran will continue but neither country wants a full scale war, so we will see an end to this alleged 'cold war' within the year. The USA would not want to

IMAGE: FRANCISCO ANZOLA



The Middle East remains an unequal and volatile region in 2016

waste the effort that it has put in consolidating relations with Iran, and given that Gulf States trade with Iran, it wouldn't be in their interest to get involved either. Qatar especially will stay clear since it shares a border with Iran and relies on natural gas reserves in the Persian Gulf. Yemen, paralysed by its own conflict and the ongoing onslaught of Saudi bombing, is already a site for a proxy war between the two regional heavyweights and surely at this point only seeks peace within its own borders. The international disapproval surrounding Yemen is another reason for Iran

and Saudi Arabia to put their differences aside.

For Israel and Palestine, violence is intensifying. The phrase 'Third Intifada' has been thrown around a lot. Although the use of this term may be valid, the specific tragedies haven't been presented appropriately: as the effect of deep rooted injustices. Efforts by the international community on the Boycott Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) Movement, addressing the root causes of the problem invites optimism. 2016 will see this movement grow and bring positive changes.

The year of the first female President

Alex Davenport
POLITICAL REPORTER

AS WE ENTER the New Year, the wars of Republican and Democratic invisible primaries are almost at an end. The Republican contest has dominated headlines for months thanks to Donald Trump. However, on both sides, the party favourites have lost ground to more radical campaigns, leaving both races wide open. Here, I take on the task of trying to predict the unpredictable.

In the Democratic primary, self-described socialist Bernie Sanders will emerge victorious in the opening contests of Iowa and New Hampshire, giving Clinton a run for her money. Yet, as the

campaign moves from the northeast, Sanders will find his support base of young, white, educated voters will not bring him victory, entrenching Clinton as the favourite.

The Republican nomination is difficult to call. Trump leads in the polls, dominating Iowa and New Hampshire along with Ted Cruz. Yet, the first two contests will lead the party to support the moderate candidate which gives the best showing, probably Marco Rubio.

The narrowing of the field will narrow Trump's lead. Despite this, Trump's support will secure him the nomination.

A presidential election showdown between Clinton and Trump will therefore commence. While Trump commands loyalty, the controversy surrounding him means he will struggle to expand beyond his support base. Thus when the US goes to the polls on 8 November, it will certainly elect its first female President.

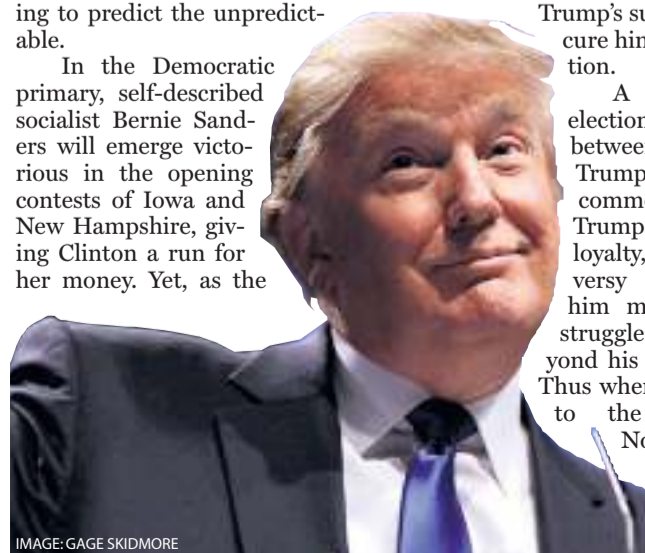


IMAGE: GAGE SKIDMORE

Obama's last stand

Finn Judge
DEPUTY POLITICS EDITOR

IN HIS FINAL State of the Union address to Congress, President Barack Obama created an image of his legacy and appealed for bipartisanship to carry it forward.

Key achievements of the Obama administration were branched to the Republican-led chamber. This included the stimulus package that aided the US out of recession; healthcare reforms that GOP presidential hopefuls are now fighting to repeal; and state-provided healthcare for veterans.

Nonetheless, the President took a fiscally conservative tone of acknowledging "outdated regulations that need to be changed" and "red tape that needs to be cut". This is a manifestation of Obama's longing to repair his relationship with an unproductive Congress.

Obama invoked the words of Pope Francis to undermine Donald Trump: "To imitate the hatred and violence of tyrants and murderers is the best way to take their

place." A quip on Trump's proposal to ban Muslims from the United States, the President then stated "when politicians insult Muslims... it diminishes us in the eyes of the world." This doubled as an assertion of US global leadership in the fight against ISIS.

More poignant was the chair beside First Lady Michelle Obama, left empty to honour the lives of victims of gun crime. Despite this, the issue of gun control was only mentioned once. He referred to it eight times in his 2013 address, months after the Sandy Hook elementary school shooting, but Obama now seems to be prioritising bipartisanship at all costs.

However, employment items such as paid leave and a higher minimum wage were forwarded as the President's end of the bargain. The refrain "this new economy" was cited to pose a need for federal intervention.

"I won't let up until they get done," Obama claimed, unwilling to become the stereotypical "lame duck" as he ends his term. Expect 2016 to be one last rush of bills and executive orders.

Feminism revived

Mel Kennedy
DEPUTY POLITICS EDITOR

FOLLOWING A LENGTHY campaign, the government has announced that Feminism will remain in the A level politics syllabus.

On 19 November last year, the Department for Education released a draft which would have eliminated Feminism from the AS and A Level syllabus. The changes, which would come into effect in September 2017, discarded the ideology and key feminist ideas of sex/gender, patriarchy and gender equality. Particular outrage was directed at the fact that Mary Wollstonecraft would have been the only woman in the new syllabus' "key political thinkers". The suffragette movement was to be assigned to the "pressure group" part of the curriculum.

The draft, which the depart-

ment were consulting and proposed, sparked uproar and annoyance, culminating in protests from campaigners and students nationwide, begging the public to stand with them in the open consultation of the syllabus running to 15 December.

Fawcett Society member and politics teacher Eleanor Reahn described the move from the Department of Education as demonstrating "the uneasy relationship our political system has with women generally; they are not seen as integral".

She argued that 'to remove feminism as a core political ideology for study is to deny its contribution to modern politics, but also acknowledges its challenge to the male-dominated status quo'. Education Secretary Nicky Morgan has been heavily criticised for the proposition, particularly given her position as Minister for Women and Equalities.



Merkel faces pressure from Germans to turn away Syrian refugees in the wake of sex crime in Cologne

Cologne attacks: Merkel stays strong with refugees

Johannes Huber
POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

IN COLOGNE, a group of about a thousand men, of North African and Arab decent, systematically circled and sexually assaulted women. Over 100 reports have been filed with the police, from theft, to sexual assault, to rape. Police in Hamburg state that they received at least a dozen such complaints. They come from scenes grimly echoing those which occurred in Egypt's Tahir Square in 2011.

Germany has led Europe's effort to aid refugees and the vast majority of Germans were in favour of this. Yet, as numbers grew and the absence of any strategy became apparent, public opinion began to shift.

It is admirable that the chancellor stuck with her beliefs. For years she chose to let her cabinet deal with more divisive political issues. On the question of migration, however, Angela Merkel has utilised her political capital, pursuing

a policy which she truly believes to be morally just.

Merkel has put a lot at stake for this policy, not merely her own career; it has increasingly become a European project led by Germany. The nation has long been the moral compass of Europe, guiding it through tumultuous issues. In the Greek crisis, Germany sought and found allies. While the headlines always read "German demands", they were as much Lithuanian, Polish and French demands.

The refugee crisis then has become as much of a crossroads for Germany as it has become one for Europe. Cases such as those in Cologne and Hamburg strengthen the far right, but they also create very legitimate concerns for all. Why was not a single person arrested; where was the immediate police presence akin to Munich? Why did it take days for the government, police and media to even acknowledge the events in Cologne and Hamburg? Had this been a mob of neo Nazis sexually assaulting migrant women, the immediate reaction would have been different.

There is then an issue I wish

to highlight. Horrific situations like those in Cologne strengthen opposition, but more importantly weaken the core, moderate base in Germany which fundamentally has little issue with immigration or refugees. Without a swift and competent response by German authorities, reasons will continue to accumulate for a strong anti-refugee policy. Should this occur, should Germany begin constructing walls, I believe the rest of Europe will follow without hesitation. Europe's core principle, the freedom of movement will effectively cease to exist.

Lastly, while these comparisons are used far too liberally, a far right shift in Germany would ultimately remove the last influential moderate centrist government in Europe. Most European governments have in the last five years either shifted far to the left or far to the right. Germany has remained a hope for centrists. As long as it remains this way, authoritarians in Hungary, or increasingly Spain, will remain influenced by liberalism. Should Germany fall, Europe will fall with it.



LEFT WING RIGHT WING

Happy New Year! Welcome back to your favourite post-apocalyptic, nuclear-grey campus.

We recently celebrated the life of David Bowie by telling politicians that they're not allowed to feel sad about things like that, because they're all unfeeling lizards. Since only feelings sanctioned by Nice People are permitted, I've decided

to stop pretending, order a top hat, a truckload of orphans and a factory, and properly go to town on being Scrooge.

This seems fitting as our glorious government has been see-sawing between benevolence and mania. We're a great country, bombing religious fanatics who threaten the world! But if you're not from the

UK or EU, and earn less than £35k, then piss off.

This seems to be part of Operation 'Kick'em while they're down', following Home Secretary Theresa May's speech at the Conservative Party conference, aimed exclusively at the angry, elderly and rich. May, a colourful dresser, clearly prefers the elegant "wigs and beatings" theme of *The Hunger Games* for her dystopias.

Over in Labour, Corbyn's magnificently incompetent leadership of the party provides daily opportuni-

ties for mockery. The longer it drags on the more stale it seems to get. A Stalinist communications chief who can't even get a purge right?

In America, they do things bigger. Trump has only got Trumpier, and has one-upped Mrs May by deciding that he'd ban all things Muslim from the States for a bit. President Obama has the look of needing a good decade of scream-

ing into a soundproofed room.

In international news, the ever-benevolent Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and state of Iran are engaged in a war over who can execute more people. The contest is literally neck and neck, with Iran's approach of condemning the Saudis, then hanging people from cranes.

You'd admire their chutzpah, if it weren't for the suspicion that both sides might have a problem with the word.



IMAGE: UK HOME OFFICE

The York floods 2015: What's the damage?

Elliott Banks
BUSINESS EDITOR

ACROSS NORTHERN ENGLAND and Scotland this winter proved to be a washout with numerous severe storms battering the region. York was unfortunately one of the worst affected areas by the flooding with images of water-damaged furniture, christmas decorations and carpets on every national news channel and newspaper. Now that the water has receded and the clean-up operation is underway, the economic cost of the floods to the city and the surrounding area is starting to be assessed.

Householders face a difficult time waiting for insurance payouts to fix their flood damaged homes. The final bill for the approximately 600 flooded homes along the Ouse and the Foss will not be known until the loss adjusters have calculated the cost of the damage to households. Sadly, due to the speed at which the water rose, many residents could not defend their homes with sandbags, with many in the Huntington Road area being evacuated soon after the Foss barrier was raised.

One thing that is likely to happen is an increase in home insurance premiums both in York and nationally. Given the failure of the flood barrier on the River Foss, it is likely that home insurance premiums will rise in the areas around the River Foss, the worst affected by December's flooding. This is because the risk to insurers has increased, with this additional cost likely to be passed onto householders. Nationally, the Association of British Insurers estimate that this winter's storms are likely to cost upwards of £1.3 billion.

For businesses along roads such as Walmgate and Fossgate, many of whom are small retailers, the flooding will have damaged thousands of pounds worth of stock and the cost



King's Straith, from Low Ousegate Bridge, inundated by rising flood water

of replacing this will prove an expensive headache for retailers.

This is coupled with the fact that most businesses which were flooded are small, independent retailers who may not necessarily have the capital available to replace the lost stock. York, as a commercial and tourist destination, is also highly dependent on footfall from visitors to the city. Footfall declined

significantly, with retailers missing out on the Boxing Day rush, but it is slowly increasing again.

One of the biggest issues for retailers according to the York Retail Forum, has been the negativity following the flooding. Many businesses have raised concerns that York Council and the media have made the situation for York's retailers more difficult by telling people

to stay away from the city centre.

Frank Wood, Chairman of the York Retail Forum, was recently quoted in *The Press* as saying that "It wasn't helped by the police and the council asking people to stay away" and this negativity has led to calls from the retail and hospitality sector that people spread the word that York is still open for business. Many of the flooded businesses on Fossgate and Walmgate have reopened and are trading again.

However, some good news for businesses and householders is that they can receive financial assistance from City of York Council. Householders who have paid council tax can receive a one off cash payment of £500 to assist with the clean-up of their property.

Flooded properties will also receive a council tax exemption until 31 March 2016. Additional support is available to those on a low income from York Disaster Fund, a charity set up after the 2000 Floods. Businesses can also receive a £2,500 assistance package from the Flood Recovery Fund.

In relation to students, at the time of going to print, City of York Council were unavailable for comment in regards to any specific provisions for University students affected by the flooding. This is particularly concerning for students given that many are council tax exempt and uninsured; their right to claim assistance from the council could be in question.

For Westminster and local government, the flooding in York and its widespread media coverage has already raised significant questions for the Environment Agency, City of York Council and the Flooding Minister.

In 2014, City of York Council's flood consultation found that an extra £2 million needed to be spent on the Foss barrier, which had to be raised due to water entering the pumping station.

In addition, approximately £10 million is needed for new flood de-

fence schemes in York.

David Cameron, when he visited York earlier this month, pledged an extra £10 million for York's defences but given that the current defences have failed to cope with levels it has previously dealt with, a rethink is almost certainly bound to happen in the foreseeable future.

The Press has reported that the Foss Barrier's electrical systems may be placed on the roof to avoid flood water damaging the electrics, the main reason the barrier was raised, further adding to the expense of defending York.

The issue of flood defence funding has created a major political issue for the Conservative govern-

In 2014, the council's flood consultation found that £2m needed to be spent on the Foss Barrier ”

ment. The former head of parliament's environmental watchdog said in an interview with *The Yorkshire Post* that £2.3 billion planned for flood defences over the next six years needs to be matched with a similar amount for maintenance. Indeed, across Yorkshire and the country, criticism of underfunded flood defence schemes has placed increasing pressure on the government.

York will obviously recover from this latest round of flooding just as it did in 2000. However, with the failure of the Foss Barrier, the widespread damage to homes and businesses and the need for upgraded defences, it is likely to be a costly time for the city's residents and its representatives.

Bosses granted the right to snoop on their staff

Elliott Banks
BUSINESS EDITOR

THE EUROPEAN COURT of Human Rights (ECHR), of which Britain is a member, has ruled that employers do have the right to read personal messages in work hours. The case was brought by a Romanian engineer, Mr Barbulescu, whose private messages were accessed by his employer through his work computer.

He was subsequently fired

from his job, as his contract stipulated that personal messages were not allowed on company time. The employee believed that this was a breach of privacy and sort redress within the Romanian courts.

Mr Barbulescu, after failing to win in Romania, decided to take his case to the European Court to challenge the Romanian court's judgement.

However, the European Court concurred with the Romanian decision saying that as the messages were sent on company property and during working hours, his employers had the right to terminate his

employment.

The European judgement, in which only one of the seven judges dissented, believed that this did not contribute a breach of privacy and the judgement will now become case precedent across the ECHR's members.

But the judgement has been met with condemnation in Britain with both bosses and trade unionists warning that they should not start wholesale snooping on employees, despite what the ECHR may rule.

The Director-General of the Institute of Directors Simon Walk-

er said: "Employees should not be subject to Stasi-style surveillance at work," with Mr Walker going on to say that employers should not read private messages.

The judgement is unlikely to change much in Britain, however, as most business groups have already urged moderation.

However, the precedent

set by the ECHR could make sending a cheeky message from a work computer or network that little bit more rebellious.



Northern Powerhouse: the story so far

Luke Rix-Standing
BUSINESS CORRESPONDENT

IN THEORY, the 'Northern Powerhouse' is really rather a good idea. When George Osborne introduced the phrase in a 2014 address in Manchester, he set out an impressively ambitious vision of a co-ordinated, mostly urban Northern economy, strong enough to 'take on the world'. He described "a belt that runs from Liverpool to Hull" with modern transport links; improved universities; creative clusters (tech etc.); and increased devolution. The North, he said, "can be stronger than the sum of its parts". Powerful stuff, but vague.

Some detect the unseemly odour of a press stunt. Osborne's speech did appear geared towards inserting the words 'Northern Powerhouse' firmly into the media lexicon, and the fact that I'm writing this article at all is a testament to his success in doing so. But he's playing a dangerous game; this isn't a piece of manifesto small print that can be quietly disowned as such strong rhetoric has a tendency to backfire. The Tories are already unpopular in the urban North, and failure to deliver could become Osborne's 'tuition fees' moment.

So with millions of Northern-

IMAGE:MRGARETHM



Mr Osborne will have to convince the North that it's not just media hype

ers waiting expectantly, what's happened so far? To be honest, not a lot. We have a new 'Northern Powerhouse' minister – James Wharton – and Jim O'Neil, former chief economist for Goldman Sachs, is to oversee economic devolution. Manchester has a new elected mayor, and as of October, Sheffield will get one too. Good appointments, but only appointments.

More tangibly, a new organisation called Transport for the North has been set up to connect major cities, while recent pledges include a £400 million investment fund to assist small businesses. All progress

is progress, and these improvements should be celebrated. But most on-lookers agree that one ingredient is missing: actual new money.

Some of these plans are obviously long term (such as HS3, a high-speed Trans-Pennine rail link), but there is still a definite consensus that more should have been done by now. Mr. Wharton didn't allay any fears over finance when he stressed "using the resources we already have" in an interview with *The Financial Times*. Declining to reel off a list of new developments, he stated that "flexibility of policy... is key". He backtracked further on

Osborne's rhetoric by declaring that "it's not about North versus South", defending the recent delays in Northern electrification as "a pause not a stop".

Of course, there is a sense that any Conservative plan was always going to be a tough sell in the urban heartlands of the North. Labour councillors have been climbing on top of each other to declare the initiatives 'not enough', while many commentators have pointed to specific areas of neglect. What about Carlisle? Has enough been done for Leeds? I rarely feel any sympathy for George Osborne, but one wonders how he is supposed to respond to the twin criticisms of 'why have you neglected Birmingham' and 'Manchester isn't North enough'.

Online reaction has focused more on Mr. Osborne's perceived untrustworthiness: "traitorous Westminster monkey" says one post, while another accuses him of "funding his chums in Cheshire". "Load of fucking bollocks" asserts one poet.

Overall, public perception was sceptical at the time, and has become more so as the year has ticked by. With financial backing being the elephant in the room, the Conservative government have four years to convince the electorate that the so-called 'Northern Powerhouse' was more than just a shameless exercise in hype.

BUSINESS BULLETIN

Domestic

Jeremy Corbyn has announced a plan to stop companies paying dividends on shares if they pay less than the living wage. The plan is designed to encourage companies to increase wages to a fair level. However, Mr Corbyn's ambitious plan has come in for criticism from the CBI whose chief of staff has said "The idea of politicians stepping into the relationship between a private company and its shareholders would be a significant intervention, and not one that we would support." Labour moderates will be concerned that Mr Corbyn's latest announcement will damage the party's credibility in the City.

British Telecom's takeover of mobile network EE has received approval from the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA). The £12.5 billion deal will combine the largest fixed-based landline service in Britain and one of the largest mobile networks. The CMA said that as BT's market share of mobile was not a major player in mobile that the deal can go ahead.

Ofgem, the energy market regulator, has said that energy firms are overcharging customers for energy. This is due to the falling wholesale price of energy, which has declined by a third in the last 18 months. The regulator has said that the vast majority of consumers are not benefiting from this decline in price, despite half of the value of an energy bill being made up of the cost of the wholesale price.

York café responds to 'Rip-Off' claims

IMAGE:MICKEY



Bennett's Cafe and Bistro on High Petergate hits back at 'rip-off' claim

Elliott Banks
BUSINESS EDITOR

A LOCAL YORK café, Bennett's Café and Bistro on High Petergate, responded to a customer who stated that the business was "absolutely awful" and a 'rip-off' on TripAdvisor. The customer objected to being charged £2 for a fruit infusion.

The café's manager retorted in hilarious but polite fashion by explaining the exact costing structure

of her afternoon tea which prove that she was not being 'ripped-off'.

The café manager ended his cost breakdown with "I accept that it makes the price of a cuppa in a city centre café look expensive compared to the one you make at home but unfortunately that's the cruel reality of life."

Despite the departure from the 'customer is always right' philosophy, Bennett's have been praised for the response. Indeed, it has reminded irate customers that being a keyboard warrior can be a risky business.

China stock market descends into crisis

Laura Henrique
DEPUTY BUSINESS EDITOR

FOLLOWING DECADES of steady economic growth, the Chinese stock market has hit a downward spiral after peaking in June 2015. Since then the Shanghai Composite Index has declined by 43 per cent, wiping billions of Yuan from Chinese companies.

Last week, Chinese markets experienced the worst start in history when the CSI 300, an index of the largest companies listed on the Shanghai or Shenzhen stock exchanges, plunged by five per cent within the first thirteen minutes. In an attempt to "prevent panic selling", a 15-minute cooling-off period came into effect as a result of the newly-installed circuit breaker. This proved to be of little comfort as anxious traders rushed to sell forcing the index to decline by a further two per cent. This led to trading being suspended for the remainder of the day, with a similar situation occurring earlier in the week.

The circuit breaker is a new policy designed to suspend trading if the index falls by seven per

cent in a single day to help promote market stability. However Wu Xi-geng, president of the Longteng Asset Management, says that the mechanism contradicts its intended purpose, as it only intensifies feelings of panic. Traders worry that the circuit breaker will be triggered after the index drops by two or three per cent, leading to frantic panic selling by worried investors. As a result the China Securities Regulatory Commission decided to suspend the breaker mechanism in order to maintain market stability but this is proving difficult in such an uncertain market.

Globally, China's stock market instability could have serious implications with the fear of a "domino effect" on global markets. Across the world stock markets have seen falls because of China. Germany's DAX Index has lost nearly three per cent with FTSE and the Dow Jones falling by two per cent. George Osborne warned that 2016 could be "the year we look back at the beginning of the decline". Osborne cited China and the fall in commodity prices which have led to a drop in the cost of crude oil, as part of the "cocktail of threats" to global prosperity.

IMAGE:DNCNH



International

The Venezuelan Government has announced a 60 day economic emergency as the economic situation grows steadily worse. The measures include tax rises and emergency financing to pay for the country's welfare payments. The edict also increases state control over industry and places limitations on electronic currency transactions. The worsening situation in Venezuela has led to shortages of basic food and consumer goods, with inflation running 141 per cent. The country has been hit particularly hard by the global oil price collapse, as oil exports account for 95 per cent of its income.

Dry January: Time to give your liver a break



Giving up alcohol for a month has some dramatic benefits for your health

Eleanor Mason
DEPUTY SCIENCE EDITOR

A MONTH OF abstaining from alcohol may result in decreased liver fat, cholesterol, and weight loss, but does ditching the drink for only one month have any actual impact upon our health, or for that matter, our wallet?

Sober October is an established tradition and for many, Dry January is a cleansing period after the festive season. No alcohol is to be consumed in an attempt to compensate for the excessive amount that many drink over Christmas and the New Year.

However, Dry January could be more than just a rest for the body. There is evidence that refusing alcohol for a month does benefit your health, at least for the short term.

The liver is a vital abdominal organ used in many metabolic processes. It filters toxins from the blood, regulates blood sugar and cholesterol levels as well as helping to ward off disease.

Being one of the most complex organs in human physiology, the liver is very sensitive to alcohol, as cells are killed every time alcohol-infused blood is filtered through it. Until recently there has been no scientific evidence that giving up

alcohol for short periods has dramatic health benefits.

However, a recent study carried out by a team at *New Scientist* has gathered valuable information on the subject.

14 members of staff teamed with Rajiv Jalan at the Institute for Liver and Digestive Health in London. The volunteers, all of whom considered themselves to be “normal” drinkers, answered questions about their health and drinking habits.

Their physiology was examined using ultrasound scans which can create 3D internal images. Blood samples were taken to analyse levels of metabolic chemicals linked with the liver and general health.

Ten members of the team gave up alcohol for the following five weeks, while four members continued to drink as normal. They then repeated the physiological tests after the study was over.

Firstly, it was found that there had been no significant changes in any of the parameters measured for the four people who didn't give up alcohol.

Of those who abstained, liver fat fell by 15 per cent on average, and by almost 20 per cent in some individuals. This is highly significant as fat accumulation on the liver is known to precede liver damage.

The blood glucose levels of the

abstainers dropped by 16 per cent on average, from 5.1 to 4.3 millimoles per litre, when the normal range for blood glucose is between 3.9 and 5.6 mmol/l. High blood sugar levels, or hyperglycaemia, can create problems with insulin regulation and diabetes.

Self assessment of sleep quality rose by just over 10 per cent, improving from 3.9 to 4.3 out of 5 in those who did not drink. Ratings of how well they could concentrate soared 18 per cent from 3.8 to 4.5. Despite these health benefits, it is unknown how long the improvements are likely to last on a long term basis.

The downside to not enjoying a tippie was that those who ditched the drink confessed to feeling less social during the study. This is most likely because alcohol is considered as a means to socialise, removing this pleasure means that you may feel left out at certain events. This data also comes from a small sample size and other lifestyle factors are also relevant.

The premise of Dry January is a good one. It gives people an excuse to not drink without feeling any social pressure. Some are even sponsored to take the plunge. This initial move to cut intake could then continue long after the month as some highly value the benefits and can feel comfortable with their new social milieu. So, let's make a toast to Dry January!



WIRED Science
@WIREDScience

Mosquitoes are spreading a rare virus called Zika around the world

6 Jan 2016

Space.com
@SPACEdotcom

Far out! @NASAJuno sets distance record for solar-powered spacecraft

14 Jan 2016

Scientific American
@sciam

Coal production in the U.S. hits 30-year low

14 Jan 2016

The chemistry of Christmas fatigue

Jessica Pound
DEPUTY SCIENCE EDITOR

MANY OF US have heard that drinking a glass of warm milk before bed will help sooth one to sleep. This common myth is based on the fact that foods containing the amino acid tryptophan can cause tiredness.

This is a main candidate for why the family wide snooze after Christmas dinner is an annual tradition. Our favourite Christmas roast of turkey with all the trimmings is rich in tryptophan, the large and rather rare amino acid that can cause drowsiness. However, it cannot do this alone as it struggles to pass through the blood-brain barrier due to competition with other amino acids.

To cause its sleepy effects, tryptophan needs a transporter to carry it across into the brain. This transporter comes in the form of a small dose of carbohydrates (< 30g). Once inside the brain, tryptophan is involved in serotonin synthesis

which is eventually converted into melatonin. This chemical is a main candidate for inducing sleep.

The turkey you eat at Christmas increases the amount of tryptophan in your bloodstream but it's that carb encrusted mince pie that helps tryptophan along into the brain and sends you into a dozy state. The other factor that contributes to tiredness at Christmas is the sheer amount of food that many people indulge in over the festive period - it is Christmas after all.

The blood providing oxygen to the brain gets partially redirected to the digestive system. The redirected oxygen is needed for digestion as muscles around your stomach and digestive tract contract and relax in a movement called peristalsis.

Here the blood also receives glucose from digested food to carry around the body for respiration further afield. You may yawn in an effort to increase the oxygen to the brain that is lost to the digestive process yet that sleepy feeling persists, at least for a few hours.

But it's not all 'a second on the lips, a lifetime on the hips'. If you



IMAGE: PIXABAY

You may yawn to increase the oxygen to the brain that is lost in digestion

were revising over the Christmas period, a lot of the glucose from those Quality Streets went into brain function. The brain uses 20 per cent of our resting basal metabolic rate when we are doing nothing, about 300kcal. This is the same amount of energy used as swimming backstroke for 30 min-

utes! With a Quality Street being 44kcal, and more glucose needed during stressful activities such as making a mind map and maintaining uninterrupted concentration in exams, it's worth treating yourself to those extra sweets at the end of the day.

Key to 'Appiness



IMAGE: BESTRESSFREE



IMAGE: DRUNKMODE

A psychologist in your pocket

TECHNOLOGY has infiltrated all walks of life from scrolling Facebook in between reps at the gym to watching YouTube clips while waiting for the bus. Many companies have built themselves to be reliant on our constant obsession with our phones for both entertainment and information purposes.

Uber, Spotify and CandyCrush are among a few. This year, two leading consultant psychiatrists and a game developer have partnered to develop an innovative app in the field of mental well being.

The 'BeStressFree' app was launched on 13 January at Exeter and Falmouth Universities and the company is in talks with many more universities in the UK. The app 'gamifies' exercises that are aimed to help prevent, manage and treat mental health conditions. Apps such as 'BeStressFree' provide a good resource for those who may be suffering as they are so accessible.

If these resources were widely available and socially acceptable, many would benefit from having an additional tool literally in their pockets to cope with any everyday stresses they may face.

For those prone to anxiety and stress, and for those who may find the pressures of studying or jobs getting them down, the opportunity to map these tendencies in an innovative way is a rather exciting prospect.



IMAGE: JOHN WATSON

THE NEW DrunkMode app may just be your next saviour.

With four main functions to keep you out of trouble (and help clean up the mess), this app promises to be a friend to students. The app's four functions are as follows:

One - 'Find My Drunk' allows you to track your friends via GPS. You can also send them your location in a text message if you're the one stranded in a dustbin.

Two - 'Stop Drunk Dialing' hides selected contacts so you cannot text or call them for up to 12 hours. Long enough for you to make it through the tipsy breakfast of coffee and leftover pizza to sober up.

Three - and possibly the most interesting of functions, is 'Breadcrumb'. The app uses GPS to track your every move. So if you've lost your keys, wallet or pinky toe on the way home, you may just be able to reclaim it.

Four - a panic button. Developed by FABRIQ, this can be added to the app for free by users. Pressing said button alerts verified contacts with an option to notify local authorities.

With over one million users DrunkMode is the most popular drinking and safety app. It's also absolutely free, and available for both iPhone and Android.

Brilliant for walking your friends home from afar - for your peace of mind as well as theirs - DrunkMode represents technology's increased capacity for not merely convenience, but also for your everyday safety.

It's not for everyone, but if you are prone to forgetting your drunken nights, the opportunity to re-live them may prove revealing and, quite possibly, sobering. DrunkMode takes reviewing your blurry club photos to a new and detailed level.

Sparrows and dinosaurs: are they partners in time?

Liz Alexianu
SCIENCE REPORTER

FOR DECADES, comparisons between dinosaurs and birds have been made in an attempt to feed our imaginations of the long extinct creatures. Until now most evidence concerning their behaviour has not been concrete enough to be taken seriously.

However, the recent discovery at four paleontological sites in Colorado, USA have linked Theropod dinosaur mating behaviour with that of today's living birds, of different shapes and sizes.

We know that both dinosaurs and birds lay eggs as part of their reproductive cycle, but now we have physical proof that they even tried to score a partner in the same way as many avian species do.

Many birds, including plovers, puffins and ostriches, try to attract females by dancing in the dirt, resulting in trademark, face-off scrapes.

Think of it like shuffling in Mansion, although potential mates would actually find it attractive.

You may ask, why would a few scratches in the dirt determine a good candidate for mating? When the fossilised scrapes are compared to those made by birds, they appear to be created by movements similar to those used in nest-making activity. So, the males are trying to prove that they will be able to provide for a family.

Given that birds are thought to have evolved from dinosaurs, it's logical to observe their mating conduct to hypothesise how the extinct beasts may have behaved.

Researchers deduced that this



IMAGE: M. LOCKLEY

Dr. Martin Lockley (right) and Ken Cart with an example of the scrapes

behaviour is purely for social interaction after eliminating other tasks that the patterns may have alluded to.

The theory of searching for water or food by digging into the ground was debunked. Water sources can be found underground. However, if the scrapes were for this purpose the marks would have surely been washed away upon discovery of ground water.

Additionally, Theropods are carnivores, i.e. meat eaters, there-

fore they wouldn't be digging for fruit, vegetables and food sources buried underground by other animals.

It was also speculated that the marks were used to set out territorial claims. However, this behaviour is not found in birds, a close relative of the dinosaurs, therefore this explanation has been discounted.

So next time you pull out your favourite dance move hoping to attract a new mate, maybe try a shuffle?

TECHNOLOGY SNIPPETS

Gene-editing

Biologists in the UK hope to be the first outside of China to perform gene-editing in human embryos.

CRISPR technology can be used to manipulate human genes, with the potential to treat and prevent hereditary diseases that arise from genetic mutations like cancer.

The UK-based researchers want to use CRISPR to identify which genes control early development in humans.

The findings could possibly lead to better ways of selecting embryos for IVF, resulting in many more potential success stories.

Robot cat for elderly

A functioning robotic feline companion that feels "exactly like a real cat" has been developed by Hasbro, the games conglomerate behind Monopoly, Furbys and Play-Doh.

The robot cat purrs and meows realistically, and could go a long way towards combating the more severe side effects of dementia, and also loneliness in elderly people.

However, it may take some convincing before any of us find ourselves welcoming robots into our homes - recent surveys find that the majority of us would not consider having a robot in the house.

News from CES 2016

If last year was the year of the wearable, this year's Consumer Electronics Show marked the coming-of-age of virtual reality.

Preorders for the public release of Oculus Rift, the first widely-publicised VR system, opened after the show, while competition from Samsung, HTC and others proved that the tech industry is convinced that it will be the next big thing.

Elsewhere, imaging technology took another significant leap into the future with High Dynamic Range and 8K TVs featuring, as well as screens so thin and flexible that they can be rolled up like a newspaper.

Ballon Snore: Football's brightest prize is boring

The Ballon D'or has become a stand off between Messi and Ronaldo

Rob Middleton
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

With all the inevitability of a goalless Manchester United game, the result of the Ballon D'Or was announced last week and to the surprise of absolutely no-one – perhaps with the possible exception of Cristiano Ronaldo – Lionel Messi took the honour for a record fifth time.

The award, which was once a tussle between the best players of the footballing year, has turned into an appraisal of the years of Messi and Ronaldo, and a shootout between them, if you'll pardon the pun.

As scintillating as their performances may be, their monopoly on global accolades has become as tedious as it is undoubtedly impressive.

Neymar, who has enjoyed an outstanding year, must have felt like his nomination was a courtesy rather than an honour, that it was his turn to watch one of his con-

temporaries add to their collection rather than feeling he had a genuine chance of success.

Of course, you cannot ignore the ability of these two players. They inhabit a separate planet to those they play against and along-

”
What makes sport so gripping is not just the skill but the uncertainty

side – players such as Luis Suarez, Gareth Bale and Neymar are simply satellites, hoping the waves emanating from their teammates can somehow improve or elevate them.

In light of this, the absence of variety over the best part of a decade is completely understandable, but that's not to say it isn't boring. Much like Michael Schumacher

dominating F1 for several years, or Novak Djokovic's stranglehold on the majority of men's tennis, the outcome feels predetermined, no matter how exciting the journey. It all makes for a series of anti-climaxes. Sitting and admiring is the only option.

What makes sport so gripping and addictive is not just the skill on show, but the uncertainty. The unpredictable nature of watching a match is the very essence of it, and the same goes for these kinds of awards. It is, after all, sports fans who follow such things as the D'or, and sports fans love a photo finish.

Many of the great sporting stories are borne of triumph in adversity and other such tales of the underdog.

No such thing will be happening for the foreseeable future, certainly not at the Ballon D'Or ceremony. While it will be a great shame when one of football's greatest individual rivalries comes to an end, many will be happy to see the fight to be named the world's best player return to a war rather than a duel.

IMAGE: FELIPE QUINTANILHA



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TEAMMATES

60 seconds with UYRUFC's Ed Suttle

I'm Ed Suttle I am a third year studying Accounting and Finance and UYRUFC 1st XV captain.

Practical joker: Ewan - he is a funny a guy. The best joke he has played this year is convincing us that he plays rugby.

Gym rat: Oli Morgan - practically lives in the squat rack and has so many supplements he is like a pharmacy.

Most intelligent: Ollie Martin - this guy has been through Hull's elite schooling system and has an incredible IQ of over 130.

Best motivator: Arun Keens seems to do a great job of giving chat on the pitch.

However, more often than not it is directed to-

wards the ref!

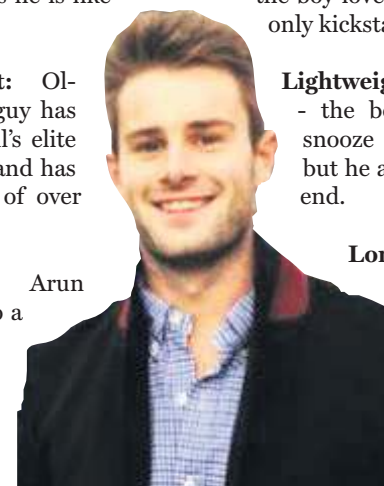
Best trainer: AD - you have to give it to him, he trains well week in week out, however ill he is.

Worst trainer: Matty Barton - the guy seems to leave every weekend for another Scouse night out.

Most hardened drinker: Alex Lee - the boy loves to sink a few which only kickstarts his dancing.

Lightweight: DJ Mally Males - the boy seems to have a snooze on every night out, but he always makes it to the end.

Longest in the shower: Iffy Chukwulobelu - this one is easy; not only does he take forever in a shower, he takes 20 minutes on his hair, and always redoes it!



Is lad culture really a bad thing?

Joe Etheridge and Ben Kendall debate whether 'laddish' behaviour is ever really acceptable

IMAGE: FACEBOOK



NO.

Joe Etheridge
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

It's easy to dismiss 'lad culture' entirely - certain aspects of it are truly repulsive. The encouragement of misogyny or the often disturbing acts performed in the name of 'banter' are two things that draw attention.

Rightly so - they're disgusting trends that are associated with a lads'-night-out. I am never going to argue that either are justifiable, but I can argue that perhaps lad culture is too harshly examined, even misrepresented. It is all too easy to criticise something you don't fully understand, and I believe that 'lads' fall prey to sometimes unfair judgement.

Many men find a need to form a close group of male friends. It's something that is often familiar, comfortable, reassuring. While they may not admit it openly, these relationships form an important part of their emotional support network, if constructed successfully. There are countless examples of positive influences that meaningful male friendships can provide. They are a constant reassertion of a man's sense of his own masculinity, more important to some than others, while creating a safe outlet that is external to any problems in one's

emotional life.

It is this camaraderie that I believe 'lads' are looking for. Where the culture goes wrong is that many men see lads' nights as chances to blow off steam in an environment where they feel they don't have to control their testosterone levels. It becomes a form of escapism; somewhere to release pent up frustration where side-effects are apparently minimal.

While that isn't necessarily a bad thing, it does lead to actions that don't help their cause. Boisterous enthusiasm is often misread as arrogance or over-dominance by onlookers, and it's this translation into the outer world where 'lads' find their downfall. In isolation there is nothing harmful about a group of lads getting together and blowing off steam. It is in fact healthy to express an excess of masculinity in this way, as long as it is contained to that environment.

Instead of being relentlessly attacked for the expression of many men's needs, lad culture should be encouraged and nurtured so that men can understand what they are looking for.

If they are better educated emotionally so that they understand why they feel a need to blow off steam then I believe it will enable them to isolate their actions more successfully, and decrease their destructive image.

YES.

Ben Kendall
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

Lad culture is a term that's thrown around a lot these days, mainly at universities and colleges.

It usually carries a substantial weight of negative publicity, and a disappointing story about a group of lads from somewhere is never far from being labelled as such in the news.

Whereas lad culture is not wholly a bad thing, some aspects of it gain negative press for good reasons. Lad culture was born from anti-feminism back in the 90s and although this is largely not the attitude for most groups of lads today, there are still some that insist on hurling sexist and misogynistic abuse at girls after they've had a few beers.

A quick Google search will give you pages and pages of examples of sexism at universities up and down the country from groups of men and boys alike. These examples range from sexist comments all the way to sexual-harassment, and have even put pressure on the National Union of Students (NUS) to investigate the issue.

They conducted a poll in October 2015 and found that as many as two thirds of the 2,000 students

that took part have experienced unwanted sexual comments at some point. Another topic often mentioned is homophobia. Frequent stories claim that LGBT students are becoming the victims of hurtful outbursts and taunts.

I've seen this myself a few weeks ago on a bus where some drunk lads gave a series of chants: first about paedophilia, then necrophilia and then homosexuality, as though the three were as bad as one another.

This kind of attitude alienates people from groups of young men and can often lead to violence once somebody becomes offended or upset. It is not uncommon for a small altercation to lead to something more serious on such a night and a punch-up at 4am is becoming a much too regular sight. Whereas for most men fighting is usually a last resort, the influence of an ultra-masculine attitude within the group can make the venting of testosterone all too easy and all too common.

It's this kind of insensitive and offensive behaviour that gives lad culture a bad name.

Most of the lads I know are very nice guys; they get a bit loud after some drinking but it's never with the intention of bothering other people. If having a homophobic and sexist attitude is an integral part of lad culture then I'm pretty happy not being involved.

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Anna Coughlan
SPORTS EDITOR



The new term, like the new year, is full of fake promises. The favourite 'get fit' resolution leads to new trainers, new gym memberships and new diets...but not necessarily new habits.

The gym, as it is only at the start of the year, seems unusually busy for the first two weeks, and regular gym-goers comment on the sudden influx of people at the Sports Centre.

Runners stare each other down on the route around Hes East in a bid to determine whether they'll still be there in February.

Only time will tell who will survive the freezing cold, icy route to health in Heslington.

In light of this, the sporting members here at York can only be held up in greater esteem as they traipse out to 22 Acres and the 3G to train.

Or rather, as is more likely, wait for the weather to let them train as the JLD freezes over and fields amass to mud.

Despite this, enthusiasm for sport at York outshines the harsh winter sun in anticipation for the thaw.

Sun and rain can be expected in Spring bringing about rainbow laces at College Varsity, the Colour Ball and Roses.

With all the biggest sporting events of the year fast approaching and BUCs continuing there is even more reason to get involved.

It is also good to see how much involvement and inclusivity is being encouraged. The Equal Opportunities scheme at York is ever growing and constantly launching new schemes.

Campaigns like 'This Girl Can' however prove just how much of a difference these things make.

According to the BBC, independent research says 1.6 million of 2.8 million women aged 14 to 40 who recognise the campaign have now started exercising because of it.

This shows how important it is to remove barriers in sport for all. So not only will more people achieve their aforementioned dreaded resolution but a welcoming environment and an atmosphere of participation is created.

There is a reason why so many people every year pledge to exercise more and get involved in different sports, and it extends past the realms of fitness to that of friendship and support.

Top sporting moments of 2015

Jack Davies looks back at some of sport's most talked about moments from last year

1 Great Britain's Davis Cup victory

The most important competition of the world of tennis, the Davis Cup, is held between men's international tennis teams annually.

Described as the 'World Cup' of tennis, it's organised by the International Tennis Federation, and follows the classic 'knock out' formula which makes for some nail-baiting moments.

You could be forgiven for not realising that the Davis Cup is on, as unlike the equivalent rugby or football tournaments, the competition isn't played across just four or five weeks, but rather matches are played on four interspersed weekends throughout the year. This makes the tournament something of an epic.

However, this year, the Davis Cup came into the spotlight as Great Britain triumphed over the four weekends, beating the US, France, Australia, and, in the final, Belgium to become the world

champions of tennis.

The team, captained by tennis veteran Leon Smith and dominated by Andy Murray and his brother Jamie, succeeded in giving GB their first tournament win in 79 years, and were also crowned as BBC Sports Personality's 'Team of the Year' last December as the final icing on the cake.

Murray's career seems to be one of permanent flux, with him winning the Olympics and Wimbledon one minute and slipping down the world rankings the next.

However his Davis Cup performance was arguably a return to his world beating form of 2012/13, which saw him consolidate both his outstanding technique and his stamina.

Murray will likely be remembered in years to come as an iconic name in British sport, and this Davis Cup victory is perhaps the jewel in the crown. The rest of the team did well, too.



IMAGE:YAN CARADEC

3 Wales and N. Ireland qualify for Euro 2016

Something tells me this one will be a bit of a sore point for any Scottish football fans out there, but the fact remains that 2015 served as an unprecedentedly successful year for British men's national teams.

Wales and Northern Ireland have qualified for their first ever European Championships, with Chris Coleman's Welsh side beating the world's number one ranked team Belgium in the process, and Michael O'Neill's Northern Irish side finishing top of their own qualifying group.

England managed to make history and qualify for the tournament with a 100 per cent record by winning every game, with young stars like Harry Kane, John Stones and Ross Barkley sparkling along the way. A year to remember.

New Zealand defend their Rugby World Cup crown

2



The autumn of 2015 saw England play host to the Rugby World Cup, which, from the moment of the opening ceremony - feat giant Easter egg-cum rugby ball - proved to be a memorable one to say the least.

We saw one of the biggest shocks in the history of Rugby Union as minnows Japan triumphed over South Africa in the pool stage, England managed to become the first principal host nation in the history of the tournament to fail

to make it out of the pools, and the other home nations all fared slightly better by reaching the quarter-finals.

But the tournament belonged to New Zealand, who rampaged to the final, doling out a humiliating 62-13 defeat to France in the process, and beat Australia to defend their world champion status earned four years earlier in 2011, claiming their third world title.

England prove they're good at football

Well, the England Women's Team did anyway.

2015 saw the seventh FIFA Women's World Cup held in Canada, and while the tournament was won by the USA, the England Women's Team reached the semi-finals, with captain Steph Houghton and right-back Lucy Bronze shining throughout as the team earned memorable victories over Norway and hosts Canada.

England ultimately came third in the tournament, giving English football its best tournament performance since the men's team won the World Cup all the way back in 1966.



4

Usain Bolt dominates the World Athletics Champs

5



IMAGE:DR CLIFFORD CHOI

The World Athletics Championships were held in Beijing in August, with Usain Bolt grabbing the headlines and proving he's still the best by winning yet another three gold medals, in the Men's 100 Metres, 200 Metres and 4x100 Metres events.

The Beijing Bird's Nest Stadium proved yet again to be a successful venue for the man dubbed Lightning Bolt, where he had previously announced himself as the world's fastest man at the Beijing Olympics of 2008, when he also

won three gold medals.

Elsewhere, Jessica Ennis-Hill and Greg Rutherford flew the flag superbly for Team GB, with the two athletes winning gold in the Women's Heptathlon and Men's Long Jump respectively, as did Mo Farah, who won double gold in the 5000 and 10000 metre events.

Our athletes are a force to be reckoned with; a cohort of rising stars emerged from the 2012 Olympics. However, there will only be one face of athletics in years to come, and it will be Usain's.

6 MayPac is the biggest pay-per-view event in sporting history

It was a matter of much deliberation whether this should go in at all; I, like many others, was a much disgruntled boxing fan back in May last year when I sat up till 5AM to watch what was a disgustingly underwhelming fight.

But, after all, when Manny Pacquiao and Floyd Mayweather Jr. met at the MGM Grand in Las Vegas for what had been billed as boxing's 'Fight of the Century', it broke records in becoming the most successful pay-per-view event in sporting (and television) history,

IMAGE: VER EN VIVO



taking in a total of \$410 million.

As already mentioned, the welterweight title bout was massively underwhelming, with critics citing Mayweather's impenetrable, defensive style as the reason why.

The fact that this fight happened at all though was massive; promoters had been trying to arrange it for six whole years, between what are arguably two of the greatest fighters of their generation.

Mayweather eventually won over the Filipino Pacquiao on points at the end of a long, uninteresting and uninspiring battle. Despite the lacklustre performance by both fighters, Mayweather adding to his unbeaten record of 47-0 at the time was a massively impressive feat, proving that he is one of the greatest pound for pound boxers ever.

Since the fight, a lawsuit has been filed against the Pacquiao camp for failing to disclose Pacquiao's injury before the fight, the Las Vegas residents felt that they and other pay-per-view customers had been deceived.

It seems conclusive that Mayweather's significantly bright light has only gently dimmed over the years - he's still swinging the punches to earn him his big name status, even if his heyday has passed.

7 Lewis Hamilton claims his third F1 championship

2015 proved to be another good year for British Motor Racing, with Mr Personality Bypass himself Lewis Hamilton becoming the outright winner of his third Formula One Drivers' Championship, defending his title from 2014, and claiming victory with three races to spare.

Hamilton came first in 10 of the 19 races in the F1 season, finishing atop the table an entire 59 points ahead of his Mercedes teammate Nico Rosberg who was in second place.

Hamilton and Rosberg also helped Mercedes claim the 2015 Constructors' Championship for the second time running.

Rosberg can often be found on his YouTube channel walking on a wire in Ibiza, doing memory games while doing press-ups and racing a shopping trolley down a

hill in Monaco. The strains and stresses of being a professional Formula 1 driver must get too much at times. Hamilton is generally quieter and seems to be shirking back from his tabloid profile since his on-off relationship with Nicole Shirzinger started eclipsing his racing profile.

Now he's back in the driver's seat and beating the world.



IMAGE: DAVE

8 England triumph over Aus in Cricket's Ashes Series

The summer of 2015 saw England play host to the Ashes Series, in which they reigned victorious by three tests to two across five test matches.

It was a stylish victory, and one that has arguably re-booted the ashes in England's favour - the side has a renewed vigour.

After the first two tests were shared one apiece, England claimed the third and fourth tests in emphatic fashion, and Australia's humiliating defeats in these tests saw their captain Michael Clarke retire at the end of the series.

The fourth test was the most

notable of the series, not only being the one that secured victory for England, but seeing Australia's first innings of 60 runs become the quickest ever first innings in test match history, much to the detriment of the Australian side.

Is cricket still estranged from most of the British population? Yes. Is the Ashes still cumbersome, lethargic and, even for those who follow it, at times a bit of a drag? Probably.

Yet the Ashes brings out a different kind of passion to that of Wimbledon and the World Cup. If you've got the time to invest, you'll find the Ashes has a lot to give.



IMAGE: WILL



IMAGE: LOWKICKMMA

9 McGregor becomes UFC Featherweight Champion

The UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) has come a long way since the only reason people had heard of it was thanks to Monica's boyfriend Pete, played by Jon Favreau, wanting to become the Ultimate Fighting Champion in the third season of *Friends*. It was quite aptly named 'The One With the Ultimate Fighting Champion.'

In *Friends*, Pete was beaten to a pulp by, well, a bloke cut from the same cloth as McGregor. In fact, it's probably not too much of a stretch to say that McGregor is the cloth itself.

With there being a marked lack of interesting superstars in

the world of boxing at the moment, UFC and its brand of edge-of-the-seat mixed martial arts has become immensely popular.

Cue Conor McGregor, enigmatic Irishman, in a hotly-anticipated Featherweight Champion bout with the then champion from Brazil, José Aldo.

What ensued made UFC history; McGregor managed to deliver a knockout blow to Aldo within 13 seconds, in the quickest title fight ever seen in the UFC.

He's since become a significant name both in and out of his own sport for his snarling yet charismatic persona.

The honourable mentions

It was tough to whittle down the year's top sporting moments to just 10, and as such there have been numerous omissions. Elsewhere in the year's sport, Britain's Chris Froome won cycling's Tour de France for the second time in three years, and in women's tennis, Serena Williams won three majors but failed to complete her "Serena Slam" after not winning at Wimbledon.

"The Special One" himself José Mourinho was sacked by Chelsea just seven months after guiding them to a Barclays Premier League title, Stuart Bingham surprised pundits by winning Snooker's World Championship, and in international football the Netherlands flopped spectacularly in Euro 2016 qualification, failing to qualify.

Golf saw the rise of the 22 year old Jordan Spieth, who claimed the Masters and US Open titles, Rugby League saw Kevin Sinfield's Leeds Rhinos complete a historic treble by winning the Super League Grand Final in October, and finally, Rugby Union's Six Nations championship saw one of its most exciting competitions as Ireland eventually claimed the title in the final week of play.

All in all, a year to remember. 2016 is shaping up to be just as

promising, with an Olympics and Paralympics taking us to South America. Superbowl 50 kicks off on 7 February. It's going to be a showy year.



IMAGE: JACOB MERRITT

10

James move up after a strong assault



James Fourths 3



Constantine Seconds 1

James: Angus, Grechi, Lübker, Edge, Axford, Staddon, Wright, Martinez Bachofen, Mitchell, Blackmore, Fardon (C)

Constantine: Crane, Barton, Spraggs, Banks, Lamyman, Noon, Loveless (C), Chambers, Shove, Miernik, Clay

Subs: Baxter, Killen, Gray

Subs: Onyeama, Gibbs, Uddin

Player of the match: Fardon

Jake Tattersdill
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

EACH SATURDAY the pitches are contested by the teams of York football's 3A and 3B divisions, half hungover, malnourished and clinging to last night's takeaway, sharing cigarettes. This is not the pretty face of college football. Today then, of-

fers a rare chance to escape from the bottom of the league system to the veritable paradise that is Division 2, complete with Sunday games on the heavenly 22 Acres.

It's ironic then that both play-offs were on the JLD. The wind was howling across the pitch, conveniently blowing directly towards one goal. The pitch is sandy, hazardous and doesn't believe in consistency when regulating friction on through balls. To top it off there was an inconsistent drizzle that fluctuated to reduce visibility and left the benches miserable and cold.

Kick-off was a melancholic affair. Constantine captain Loveless opted to play with the wind and so it fell to James to start the game. It was a tense affair; the weight of the occasion lead to an even mix of possession in the middle of the field. Both sets of players, though liberated from the mud, had yet to puzzle out the finer mysteries of the surface. It took 10 minutes for the first chance: James' captain Fardon was left without a centre back and turned freely, narrowly putting his shot to the right of goal.

The game started anew and Constantine started to pile on the pressure, winning the first corner

of the game, which lead to nothing. Then Constantine's Chambers got away on the wing, darting into James' penalty area (in reality a hockey semi-circle) and went down under pressure. Referee While saw nothing in it and waved play on.

Both teams were showing urgency in getting what could be a crucial first goal, when injuries started to slow the game down. Miernik came off for Constantine, replaced by Uddin resplendent in Adidas casual trainers. A similar change occurred for James when Martinez Bachofen was forced off and Killen came on.

However, James restarted with impetus and Staddon found himself through on goal and lobbed Constantine keeper Crane with ease at distance. 1-0 James.

The remaining 30 minutes of the first half were evenly battled out. James were pushing for a second but were denied by Crane and a bit of bad luck; substitute Killen's through ball was sublime but nobody managed to get on the end of it. At the other end, there was a goal mouth scramble following a Constantine corner but Angus was equal to it. The half ended with James introducing Kris Gray to their attack,

replacing the injured Blackmore.

After the break it didn't take long for James to double their lead. Constantine had just narrowly shot over, but James moved the ball quickly from the goal kick and the fresh Gray slotted the ball with some force into the bottom right corner. 2-0 James.

Needing a change, Constantine introduced Onyeama and Gibbs who made an instant impact. Gibbs held the ball up in the centre of the park before releasing Onyeama who narrowly shot wide. Constantine maintained the pressure and left-back Barton cut into the box but was slide tackled before delivering his cross, in clear violation of the no-slide policy on the JLD.

The referee was unmoved by Constantine's pleas and play continued, with Fardon's shot at the other end skimming off the wrong side of the woodwork. Further pressure from Constantine was rewarded with a free kick halfway into James' half, which Gibbs stepped up to take. The resultant ball was flicked down almost straight to the towering Spraggs, who was wrong footed and couldn't direct an effort towards the goal.

Miernik came back onto the

pitch desperate to change Constantine's fortunes, Clay making way for him. Yet it was James in the ascendancy, Crane only just managing to tip a vicious free kick over his own crossbar.

Banks was also called upon to block a stinging shot which was a part of the same move, which Constantine broke well from. Shove collected the ball at the halfway line before curling a half-volley into the back of James' net. 2-1 James.

Constantine appeared to be back in the game, but all their hopes of promotion were dashed when Gray struck again, his chipped shot easily finding the far side of the goal putting James 3-1 up.

Constantine in desperation switched to three at the back and pushed men into James' half and penalty area but they never looked like scoring, despite having the majority of possession and a few tame shots.

At the full 90, James fourths had secured a place in the second division with style, leaving a wearied Constantine seconds to try to repeat their league success next term, still to overcome the ever-present danger of the final hurdle of the playoffs.

UYNC & UYRUFC Charity Netball

IMAGE: AMY ROSS



The UYNC, who organised a charity match in aid of British Skin Foundation, sport their BSF custom made t-shirts

Anna Coughlan
SPORTS EDITOR

THIS SATURDAY AT the Sports tent, the University Netball Club hosted a charity tournament alongside the Rugby Union and Football Club in aid of the British Skin Foundation and Macmillan.

One of the organisers and member of the netball team Amy Ross said that "around 60 people came down to the tournament" which was a "great" turnout and an excellent way of raising money for the two charities. Netball is one of the University's most established clubs, and this is not the first time that such a game has been hosted, having previously supported charities including the Motor Neurone Disease Association.

The idea behind the event is that anyone can come along with a team of either beginners or University players, with room to play for both girls and boys. This freedom of competition allows for a singular focus on the charitable aspect of the event.

The boys of the UYRUFC put on an impressive display, mastering both the rules and technique to put on a decent series of games. Notably

it was the UYRUFC seconds who won despite playing against the girls of Alcuin's College Netball team.

Across the country, university sports teams are well known for their charity fundraising, holding various charity events and using their influence socially among communities. Most recent successes include tasteful naked calendars with the Warwick Rowers leading the way for boys and Birmingham's netball team setting a standard for the girls.

It was such a profitable student project that not only has it kept the Warwick Rowers team and society afloat but it has also made a considerable amount for charity. The University of Birmingham's netball team took inspiration from the Calendar Girls creating classy black and white images that went on to sell well.

Perhaps a York calendar is in sight - nude teams, geese, sixties concrete buildings or otherwise. Fundamentally though the focus of these projects is making money for charity. Calendars have the added benefit of expressing the spirit of sport and the teams themselves.

This charitable weekend ends with a well deserved black tie dinner for the two clubs at the Grange Hotel in York to celebrate the money that they raised.

Cold conditions pave the way for determined Langwith side



Halifax Seconds fall foul to a superior Langwith Firsts team on a January afternoon. A strong first half for Halifax was not sustained throughout



Langwith Firsts 7



Halifax Seconds 1

Langwith:

Vasilu, Ahluwalia, Leach, Benney, Grindell, Hamill, Parsonson, Tennant-Fry, Maney, Gohil-Patel (C), Eniretyan
Subs: Morton, Van Den Brande

Halifax:

Blessed, Scanlon, Ali, Swallow, De Guzman, Meckin, Jones, Tattersdill, Matharu, Farrington, Thomas, Siriwardena,
Subs: Arulufela

Player of the match: Hamill

Jake Tattersdill
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

IT WAS A FROSTY morning when Langwith and Halifax took to the 3G for their premier division game. Halifax were resplendent in their new kit, sporting a black diagonal stripe à la Tottenham, while Halifax hadn't quite got their kit order

in and took to the field in a wide array of whites and blues, as well as a Juventus strip.

Halifax kicked off but surrendered possession too easily to a Langwith midfield that looked comfortable in possession the entire game.

A succession of Langwith throw ins led to the first chance of the game, Hamill combining well with the front two but the shot was eventually wide.

Halifax weren't winning enough balls in the middle of the park and found themselves under pressure; centre back Leach came close when his header from a long free kick was flicked towards the goal but the Halifax keeper was equal to the task and gathered the ball with ease.

Langwith were still confident in position, Benney proving key in slowing down the game and not allowing Halifax to break, yet couldn't find an opening. A searching through ball found Maney, but he was shepherded out.

Halifax started to step into the game for the first time with some good linkup between Arulufela and Farrington that pushed deep into the Langwith third but ultimately

didn't create a decisive chance.

Yet Halifax left themselves over-extended and Hamill played in Eniretyan, whose shot rolled in despite the keeper getting a hand to it. 1-0 Langwith.

Langwith had the chance to go through the gears, they'd had the majority of possession and Halifax's lone striker Farrington looked isolated. It seemed only a matter of time till they put the game to bed, but a Halifax long ball caused a small scramble in the box, which fell to Halifax 9 whose shot powered into the bottom left corner, 1-1 and game on!

Langwith restarted the game with renewed energy, determined not to be behind at the break. Eniretyan drove forward and rolled the ball across the six yard box, but Langwith's onrushing midfield just couldn't touch it into the net. Maney proved the difference however, when he was quickest to seize a loose ball and tap it into the open net. Langwith were 2-1 up at the break.

At the restart Halifax looked disheartened and Langwith soon took charge. Speculative efforts from Parsonson and Gohil-Patel, paved the way for a bullet from

Eniretyan which was saved but left a tap in for Hamill, 3-1. Hamill was on great form and at the heart of the Langwith attack, which was relentless.

Minutes after his goal he was instrumental in sweeping into the Halifax box and shooting, the rebound falling to Eniretyan who laid it off to Maney. Easy finish and a goal, 4-1. Langwith were just going through the motions and Halifax rarely threatened, bar from Farrington beating his man, only to be recklessly challenged by Langwith keeper Vasilu.

The tireless Halifax striker was forced off the pitch but no foul was given. Halifax's best creative outlet was blunted and Langwith pressure was constant. Halifax conceded three more times, Tennant-Fry notching first, followed by deserving striker Eniretyan. The captain Gohil-Patel finished a downtrodden Halifax off, 7-1.

Langwith emerged clear winners. Halifax came into the game with a clear plan that contained Langwith for a while, but they let the Hes East team have far too much possession and as the cold and time wore them down, Langwith picked them off with ease.

Icy courts stop sports

RECENT TEMPERATURES in York have dropped to as low as -1 degrees causing significant problems for College Sport. The likes of 22 Acres are completely unusable and therefore sports such as rugby and football are struggling to train, never mind compete. Even the JLD became an ice-rink this week and was deemed unsuitable to play on because of health and safety. Luckily it is still early days and hopefully the weather won't be too much of a set back.

Roy Hodgson returns

HODGSON IS SET to return to Heslington West to receive an honorary degree from the University on 22 January. He will also be giving a short talk on leadership and hosting a short question and answer session. The present manager of the English National football didn't have the best year but here's hoping with an honorary degree from York things will be on the up for him.

Outdoor tennis tables

AT LAST THE promised tennis tables have arrived, though Grace Clarke tells *Nouse* that they were inconveniently delivered to the YUSU office. Nevertheless they are en route to their chosen locations. An opening event is in sight which is earmarked for Week four, but is yet to be confirmed. You will find one table at Courtyard (conveniently placed for revellers to enjoy a pint with their ping pong) one by the YUSU Costa, and one in Halifax along the new and upcoming York Active Trail.

York Active Trail

FIVE DIFFERENT COMPANIES have been enlisted to create the greatly anticipated York Active Trail. With various pieces of equipment planned for all the stages it promises to be a new adventurous aspect of the campus. This is part of the same scheme which offers a loyalty card for £5 which gives you access to five fitness classes, as well as swimming for £1.50. It comes under a three year Sport England funded programme "that aims to increase sport and physical activity among students and staff at the University of York", according to its website.

Facilities at York

YORK SPORT'S TENNIS Centre is being recognised with a special commendation as 'LTA Yorkshire Higher Education Centre of the Year'. Yet improvements are being made, beginning with Tent refurbishments from the end of February. There are also extensive plans to develop the athletics stand and pavillion. Of course, with the recent flooding, there will also have to be improvements to the boat house.

Debating lad culture

Joe Etheridge and Ben Kendall discuss the contentious term



Sporting Moments

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Rainbow laces for all at Varsity, says Sport President

YUSU wants “every player, participant, and spectator” to lace up

Anna Coughlan
SPORTS EDITOR

AT THIS YEAR'S ANNUAL College Varsity on Sunday 28 February, the whole campus will hopefully be sporting rainbow laces to “promote the inclusive nature of sport at York”.

Grace Clarke, YUSU Sport President, and Scott Dawson, YUSU Wellbeing and Community Officer want “every single player, participant, staff member and spectator at College Varsity” wearing them in their continual push for equal opportunities in sport.

Even the Vice-Chancellor of the University has reportedly declared his willingness to don the brightly coloured accessories as part of the initiative.

The laces primarily symbolise “kicking homophobia out of sport” but Clarke has declared that YUSU also “want to make this a broader message, and make Sport inclusive to all regardless of disability, race, gender or sexuality”.

The plans will be rolled out at the annual Varsity with Durham University in an attempt to put YUSU's aims at the forefront of the sporting community.

However the practicality of the initiative has been called into question by some who feel that the measure is a little inconvenient and ambitious.

Third year Politics student George Nanidis told *Nouse*, “I'm perfectly happy to show support for inequality issues, but relacing shoes for one day seems a bit like overkill.”

“It's nice to make the gesture and raise awareness, but there are surely more purposeful ways to put these issues at the forefront of the student body and the York Sport community.”

Regardless, the day promises to be eventful for all, with mascot races, new sports such as tennis and chess, and competition from Durham. The darts will act as the closing ceremony on the Sunday, with hopes for the kind of atmosphere generated by Roses' popular darts evening.

The qualifying weekend takes places in Week five, when the top fourteen teams will be battling it out to the last two in or-

der to play against Durham on the day. This year there will be 13 sports in total, the most ever to have played at the event.

The rainbow laces have been pioneered by a number of groups and charities in the wider world of sport. Stonewall launched the initiative ‘Right Behind Gay Footballers’, encouraging local and national sides alike to adopt the laces.

Back in 2013, Everton FC and Queen's Park Rangers players, including Joey Barton, put their support behind Stonewall's campaign.

Manchester United chose not to don the laces amid disagreements between Stonewall and Football v Homophobia that ‘Right Behind Gay Footballers’ reinforced “stereotypes that ensure homophobia exists” and “blurred the territory” between homophobic language and football banter.

By continuing to focus on Equal Opportunities at York hopefully the line between acceptable and insulting comments will remain clear. The laces are an outward expression of a certain level of respect expected from the wearer.

If everyone sports the laces, they will visually deter homophobic and sexist comments from the event and add to the grander statement being made.

This is only one aspect of diversifying University sport under the Equal Opportunities scheme.

Building up to the day of College Varsity there will be sessions in Weeks three, six and nine run by LGBT and Women's officers.

The introduction of women only York Active classes last term received an extremely positive response, according to Clarke, and she is therefore keen to explore this further. With more classes and opportunities, YUSU hope that women's involvement in sport will continue to grow at York.

A new addition to the movement is a consent campaign, using sport as a forum to discuss the issues associated with this topic.

Clarke is also pursuing the introduction of self defence classes, focusing primarily on teaching college officers first, and then feeding lessons through to all. The idea is to equip those interested with basic combat skills and techniques.



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