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BY **HANNAH WILLEY (She/Her)**

**W**hile students at the University of York have rallied to support mental health, the University has presented many challenges. Some students are still experiencing negative effects of the Marking and Assessment Boycott, and find themselves relying on support from fellow students rather than the University, who actually have been a cause for needing support. This time of the year already presents its challenges to everyone, but the Marking and Assessment Boycott that took place in the summer term of last academic

year has not made it any easier.

Though the boycott was called off in September, the unmarked assessments from the summer have carried student anxiety across into this year. Students have received their assessments later than they were told, and some have received their results and feedback weeks later than others....

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IMAGE CREDIT: DAN GORDON-POTTS

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# York Central MP Calls for Ceasefire

BY HANNAH WILLEY (She/Her), KAITLYN BEATTIE-ZARB (She/Her) AND EMILY SINCLAIR (She/Her)

**Following the House of Commons vote on the 15th of November calling for a ceasefire in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, York Vision interviewed the Labour and Co-operative MP for York Central, Rachael Maskell.**

**What are your reasons for supporting the ceasefire?**

Obviously, at this time our hearts go out to Israelis and Palestinians in the way that they are having to all deal with this horrendous grief and the loss regarding the casualties and the uncertainty, not least over the hostages and as a result of that; that's why I want a ceasefire.

I mean, (aid providers) haven't got the ability to take fuel into the country.

The infrastructure, the roads... you can't just drive up to your destination. It is impossible to pass so it's going to take time to make places safe and secure and indeed to bring casualties into a place where they can get the help and support that they need. Not to mention obviously heading into winter the need of food, need of water, need of wider aid.

**Can you think of any kind of motivations or reasons that [MPs] might be abstaining?**

Ultimately, I think on such issues of moral magnitude and of the ethics you bring I think you have got to do the right thing and I think you have got to vote with your con-

science on these issues no matter what whips are trying to persuade you to do. And I was very upfront with my whips right from the beginning to say that I would be voting for a ceasefire.

The civilians in the land are calling for a ceasefire on the whole, you know we've got world leaders, 120 countries have called for a ceasefire, you've got the Pope and the Archbishop calling for a ceasefire. You know, this is a kind of universal principle.

**Are there other suggestions that you think will push the process along?**

...seeing so powerfully at [a vigil at] the Minster the Jewish community, the Muslim community and indeed the Christian community, and we must not forget that the Palestinian Christians are very much caught up in this as well, standing side by side..., how powerful is it to say as a city we can stand as one, so I think this is really important [for] how we talk about that future as we go forward.

**Do you think there is a good amount of awareness in York or do you think it could be improved?**

I think education is really, really important. 15,000 people turn up at the Minster and so that's a really good sign of mobilisation. I think residents are very aware, I've been stopped so many times in the street because people want to talk about

it more than most issues.

...If we all stand in that place and call for peace it's more likely to happen.

...But, of course, education is so important and being able to put forward good sources of information is really crucial. I've been spending a lot of time with different communities across York, listening to people's perspectives and often they are very similar but nuanced and it is so important that I hear that as well as what I'm kind of hearing down here, going to government briefings every single opportunity because I think it's really important just to listen. Often we can do more by listening than actually speaking, and that's a really important juncture as a politician.

**As ceasefire pauses begin, [do you think these can] ... actually make some change for the future?**

Everytime somebody talks [about what is happening] it helps.

...so I'll say to all the students; just look around you, you all have platforms in order to change the world and you may feel small - we all do. But use those platforms to their maximum to make the difference you can make.

*Interview conducted on the 23rd of November 2023.*



## Students' Union Rejects Plant-Based Catering

BY HANNAH WILLEY (She/Her)

York Students' Union voted not to transition to 100% plant-based catering following a proposal put forward by the Plant-Based Universities campaign.

On the 14th of November, Students' Union officers discussed whether all union-led catering should become completely plant-based, and voted 6-3 to reject the motion.

This proposal was put to them by the Plant-Based Universities campaign: an international student-led movement trying to convince universities to convert to 100% plant-based catering.

In March, York students voted for a Students' Union in favour of 100% plant-based campus catering by a margin of 142 votes, and earlier in the year 30 academics from the University of York joined staff from other universities in signing an open letter in support of the campaign. Because of this, the rejection came as a surprise to Plant-Based Universities:

"It is extremely disappointing to see this straightforward and sensible motion turned down by a handful of Students' Union officers today," said Claire Sheldon, Plant-Based Universities York Coordinator. "I would go as far to say this result is anti-democratic. The University of York Students' Union must prioritise what matters in this conversation: food accessibility and inclusivity, student representation."

The campaign is active in 75 institutions, and when they put forward the motion in November, 7 other universities agreed to make the transition.

Community and Wellbeing Officer, Hannah Nimmo, responded:

"Officers were overwhelmingly in agreement that York needs a campus-wide move towards becoming more plant-based. Officers raised concerns about committing to a 100% plant-based campus, making references to worries about freedom of choice for students, the potential cost implications, ... food allergen requirements, and accessibility of food and catering options for students. [The] Officer Group resolved to reject the policy in its current form ... but still resolved to want the policy reviewed by myself as the policy lead, in collaboration with our E&E Officers, to ensure we still commit to becoming a more plant-based campus.

As such, the Union is still prioritising food accessibility and inclusive student representation, and we hope to bring a revised policy back to Union officers for approval in the near future."

## Editors' Note

Hello all! Hope everyone is doing well (and that your heating is working!!) brrrr.. it's certainly gotten cold. As always we have a jam-packed issue full of some incredible stories to keep you warm over the holidays. We cover some really important issues, and ask big questions in News talking to York Central MP Rachael Maskell about her support for a Israel-Gaza ceasefire, York businesses about pedestrianisation, and staff and students about mental health. Our features hosts interviews from Deputy VC Ken Badcock and Just Stop Oil. On the theme of climate, environment looks at COP28 and all things ducks! Our lifestyle, science and opinion sections focus on winter wellbeing, covering sleep, SAD and Circuit Laundry, amongst other important issues. And our sport section looks at a range of sports, from rugby to cheer, and discusses questions of transphobia in sporting institutions.

Grab a cup for tea (or a hot choc) and enjoy! x

## Deputy Editor's Note

We're so excited to introduce our lovely new section editors (P.S. science is still vacant, so if you're interested in anything STEM related get in touch!). We've had a great layup working alongside our new team and we can't wait for you to see what they've done.

Not only are we welcoming new section editors, but we've got a whole new team of wonderful writers (and subeditors!). They've helped us cover just about everything this issue!

Thank you to all our contributors for making this such a varied and exciting print.

Now it's time for you to take a look at everyone's hard work! <3



EMILY SINCLAIR (She/Her), Editor President & KAITLYN BEATTIE-ZARB (She/Her), Editor Secretary

LAURA ROWE (She/Her), Deputy Editor





**HANNAH WILLEY**  
NEWS EDITOR

My name's Hannah and I'm a third year studying English and Related Literature. Being News Editor for *York Vision* has presented me with so many fantastic opportunities so far, such as interviewing the Labour and Co-operative MP for York Central, Rachael Maskell, for this issue. *Vision's* News section keeps students up to date with current affairs and aims to make voices heard, which is why it's a privilege for me to oversee it.

# Sexual Harassment in Higher Education

BY **HANNAH WILLEY (She/Her)**

The University of York's Dr Anna Bull has led multiple research reports into sexual harassment and how it is covered up. In June, she released findings of this happening in higher education, and more recently has investigated its occurrence in the film industry.

Dr Anna Bull from the University's Department of Education produced results in June 2023 from her research report which outlined the difficult process victims of sexual harassment must go through to be heard. In October, she followed this up with research into the film industry, where she found evidence of employees being punished and victimised for speak-

ing up.

As the Director of The 1752 Group, Anna Bull campaigns for sexual harassment in higher education to be addressed more effectively. She collaborated with Erin Shannon to produce a report this summer on instances of sexual harassment reported between 2016 and 2020.

She said, "the exhausting and sometimes ineffective nature of reporting processes – which I have documented previously, and which was also very evident in this study – remains a major issue. For example, the most common outcome for a formal report among this sample was responding parties (both staff

and students) moving institutions or graduating during an investigation / disciplinary process.

"It should not be this hard to report sexual harassment. The good news is, we've come a long way since 2016. The bad news is, it's not nearly far enough."

Her following report on sexual harassment in the film industry reveals that employees are actively silenced or punished for reporting it.

One of the interviewees, Sarah, reported that when she raised an incident of sexual harassment with her boss, they replied: "look, it would be very bruising if you raised this formally. You know that, right?"

Bull concluded: "Sexual harassment can occur in many different workplaces, but it is more prevalent where there are greater levels of inequality between staff.

This study shows us that six years on from the #MeToo movement, sexual harassment and violence are still occurring in the industry... in many workplaces, the minimum legal requirements for addressing this issue are still not in place."

She also outlined her motivations and plans for the future to *Vision*: "I was surprised that, even though the #MeToo movement started in the film industry with the revelations about Harvey

Weinstein, there wasn't any interview-based research with the people most affected by this issue – i.e. people targeted for sexual harassment. It seemed crucial to hear the voices of victims and survivors on this topic.

I've been pleasantly surprised by the level of engagement and commitment from industry organisations in the research.

I'd like to do further work looking across creative industries, as there are particular factors that can create a context that enables sexual harassment to occur in creative occupations."

## Harry's Law: University has no plan to Make Student Suicide Data Public

IMAGE CREDIT: DAN GORDON-POTTS

BY **DAN GORDON-POTTS (He/Him)**

The University of York recorded 6 student suicides in the last 5 years, but say they do not have complete data; citing lack of "right to know"

After 21-year-old Exeter third year student Harry Armstrong-Evans took his own life in June 2021, Harry's parents claimed he was let down by his university, and that he did not receive adequate mental health support while he was there.

Last year, they launched a parliamentary petition to make it mandatory for coroners to inform universities of student suicides, and calling on all universities to be required, by law, to publish their yearly suicide statistics.

They also asked that it be made

law for universities to be placed into 'special measures' if their suicide rates exceeded that of the national average.

Dubbed 'Harry's Law', the campaign received widespread media coverage from Exeter's student media, Exposé, national student media group, The Tab, as well as gathering momentum in national coverage from The Mirror, The Times and The Guardian newspapers.

Alice, Harry's mother, explained the law to Exposé saying, "What university would want their numbers of suicides to be published? Of course they don't.

"We would like it because hope-

fully there might be a competition between universities for the least number of suicides."

The hope was that this law would force universities to be more open about suicides at their institutions, and that having this data would help make them more motivated to improve the mental health support they offer to their students and make student suicides less common.

However, after 6 months, the petition gained just 5,135 signatures, not meeting the minimum threshold of 10,000 to get a government response, nor managing to be considered for debate in Parliament (100,000 signatures).

It seems now that Harry's Law is growing further and further away from being made into law, and that the broader conversation around universities and holding them to account in their duties of care to fee-paying students seems to be slipping off the agenda.

While we can ask the question of what has happened, *York Vision* decided to ask the University of York to open up about whether or not they collect suicide data.

After a Freedom of Information request (FOI) was sent to the University, they confirmed "The University does not always receive the outcome of coroner's inquests and has no "right to know" this in-

formation.

"However, where the information is reported to us, we do record it."

When asked for the number of student suicides they have recorded for the past five academic years, the University said "there have been 6 recorded student deaths for which the University has been informed that a coroner returned a verdict of suicide."

When *Vision* asked via FOI if the University has any plans to voluntarily implement Harry's Law by making their annual suicide data public, they said "we hold no records of any such plan."





# 'Free Fossgate!': York Businesses Campaign for Pedestrianisation

BY DAN GORDON-POTTS (He/Him), MOSES CIRELLI, HANNAH WILLEY (She/Her) AND MATT DAVIS (He/Him)

**Local businesses and members of the public are campaigning to get cars off a street in York.**

'Free Fossgate', a petition started by owner of The Blue Bell pub, John Pybus, is calling on York City Council to restrict cars from accessing the picturesque street of Fossgate throughout the day.

The street is home to numerous independent cafes, shops, restaurants and bars.

The petition has already amassed over 1,600 signatures and has widespread support from a range of local businesses, including Marzano, a popular Italian restaurant, and independent cafes such as Cosy Time, Remedy, and Kiosk.

Its supporters claim the move towards pedestrianisation will improve access, make the air cleaner, and improve café culture on the street by allowing more outside seating for local businesses.

John, the driving force behind the campaign, told *York Vision*, "I wrote a letter to every hospitality business on the street and posted it through everyone's doors saying I was going to put this pedestrianisation campaign up...it was an open invite."

He says that trying to free the street of cars has been 38 years in the making: "the first pedestrianisation campaign was in the year of my birth, 1985...successive councils have just not run with the idea, even though it makes perfect sense."

*Vision* asked other local businesses in Fossgate for their thoughts.

As well as wanting to improve street culture, managers explained how they'd lost their outdoor seat-

ing licences after Covid-19, and that along with pedestrianisation, they would like these licences back.

"We all had outdoor pavement licences then around last year in December, they just sent out a letter saying they were taking everyone's licence away from them," Jordan, manager at the cafe Cosy Time told *Vision*. "It's not as if we're cutting off access from anywhere - delivery drivers would still be able to deliver at the end of the street; they're just gonna have to walk down."

"We are supporting it because it's going to help a lot of businesses," the manager of Marzano said. "It'll bring more people to the street, making it something special."

Christopher Walkin, manager of the cafe Remedy, told *Vision* he set up his business with a view to having outside seating, which he currently isn't permitted to have.

"The price of this site included the cost of seating outside," he said.

"When we spoke to the council about it, they suggested it was a 'first-come, first-served' basis."

He says that prioritising constant car access over pavement licences for seating is preventing potential business. If the street were pedestrianised, seating wouldn't have to be as closely monitored.

Other businesses on the street also expressed frustration with the specifics of these pavement licence rules, including the need for barriers and certain maintaining distances.

Russell from the cafe Kiosk said "we've had to make sure our barriers are in place. I had to make these barriers. It took a lot of time and money."

Without pedestrianisation

though, there's only so much of the street they can take up as cars are still permitted access on the road.

"Let's face it, it's York Council," he continued. "You know, they're not that lenient. They've proved to be not that forgiving."

The campaign hasn't come without resistance. Some business owners on the street have raised a number of difficult questions about the logistics of implementing such a policy, including Ken from Mamselle's Hair Stylist.

"The thing is, deliveries," he said. "We are obviously small shops and have deliveries and we do them in the day."

Ken also points out the issues around accessibility that pedestrianisation could bring: "I have disabled customers. If taxis can't bring them in, when the barriers were up we couldn't even get disabled vehicles in."

The concerns don't end with mobility. Ken goes on to say: "They did actually have a survey done with blind people who didn't know where to go. There's all sorts of little things to worry about."

Accessibility can often be overlooked when it comes to projects such as pedestrianisation.

Within York, a campaign group known as Reverse the Ban - comprising a number of disability rights and allied organisations - have recently raised concerns over the previous Council administration's approach to similar schemes on other streets, which effectively banned Blue Badge holders from the City Centre.

After successful campaigning, the new-Labour Council Executive have now voted unanimously to overturn the ban.

Of the conflict between pedestrianisation and accessibility, John Pybus commented: "You know, I wanted my chairs and tables, they wanted wheelchair access, and that was the fight, so taking it away from that, saying 'right, let's just pedestrianise the whole street, let's work together on this', that's where we're at. That's where we want to be."

Councillor Pete Kilbane, Deputy Leader of the York City Council and Executive Member for Econ-

omy and Transport told *Vision*: "In 2017, the Council reversed the traffic flow as part of half a million pound investment in the street and this has greatly improved the environment for residents and businesses. At that time pedestrianisation was considered but there are significant challenges due to the access of properties off Fossgate, the availability of Blue Badge parking and ability to turn delivery vehicles around in the street."

Though the Council have issues with pedestrianisation, they are not unsympathetic.

"We will of course review those decisions in the light of this campaign," Kilbane continued, "I have discussed this with local councillors and will continue to explore all possibilities with residents and businesses. The campaign will also be taken into consideration as we develop a transport and movement plan for the whole city later this year."

John responded to the wider conflict in Fossgate as a result of the campaign: "Pubs have never ever wanted to divide people. That's not what we're here for, do you know what I mean? It's like pubs are all about unity."

"You've got all of those businesses that want chairs and tables outside, but we all need big wagons to deliver the beer, so it is complex, you know what I mean? It isn't just a black-and-white 'let's just pedestrianise it', so there's going to be a lot of back and forth, but hopefully this petition will get the council talking."





IMAGE CREDIT: DAN GORDON-POTTS

# Mental Health: Is the Uni Doing Enough?

Students Raise Money for Mental Health, Whilst  
University Support Remains “Unclear”

BY **HANNAH WILLEY (She/Her)**

While students at the University of York have rallied to support mental health, the university has presented many challenges. Some students are still experiencing negative effects of the Marking and Assessment Boycott, and find themselves relying on support from fellow students rather than the University, who actually have been a cause for needing support.

This time of the year already presents its challenges to everyone, but the Marking and Assessment Boycott that took place in the summer term of last academic year has not made it any easier.

Though the boycott was called off in September, the unmarked assessments from the summer have carried student anxiety across into this year. Students have received their assessments later than they were told, and some have received their results and feedback weeks later than others.

In the English and Related Literature department, some assessments that were received left students imploring the University for re-marks. Following this, the Chair of Examiners shared an email with students admitting they had “noted that moderation hadn’t been performed as accurately in one marker’s batch”.

They also allowed a two-mark increase in these contested assessments, and announced to students in an email they would attempt to ensure students’ averages weren’t brought down by assessments submitted during

the boycott.

An English student told *Vision*: “I think some of the ways the English Department has handled the release of marks following the boycott has been disorganised. For example, my Critical Practice module mark was released via the feedback form rather than eVision, then taken away, then put back up. Ultimately, the vagueness and lack of communication since the boycott has been lifted is what has caused me the most stress. Equally, I have friends who are still waiting on module results, which I believe is completely unfair. How come some people have had all their grades for months while others still have nothing?”

“We know that many of you continue to be affected by the national Marking and Assessment Boycott,” the Academic Registrar Wayne Campbell said in an email to students. “We are very sorry that you have been affected this way.

“There is still important and necessary work to do on processing the results, before we can inform you of outcomes. We do understand that waiting for clarification on this may feel frustrating.

“We also understand there is some confusion why some students have received marks already. This is due to the fact that we released marks and feedback on a module-by-module basis when complete.”

But a student pointed out that this explanation doesn’t necessarily help: “I find it disgraceful how the uni can try to justify such disparity in releasing its marks to students, particularly after the

period of anxiety-inducing waiting caused by the Marking and Assessment Boycott. I have seen how it creates a sense of frustration and panic when some have had marks back and others haven’t, knowing it is fully avoidable if all marks are received at the same time.”

In an interview on the 27th of September, Deputy Vice Chancellor Ken Badcock told *Vision*: “I guess we need to try and avoid anxiety where it’s not necessary first, so I think communication is important, and I think the Vice Chancellor sets a good example on that.”

Since then, the student dissatisfaction means the department is working hard on this communication. They hosted a Student Staff Forum on the 15th of November and have set up a ‘Frequently Asked Questions’ document for students to use if they need further support.

However, some students haven’t found this communication effective. One student said: “the University has been very unclear throughout the whole process. We have rarely been given dates and when we have been, they have sometimes not been met. Despite reaching out several times, I have still not received a clear answer.”

While many students see the University’s support as “unclear”, events organised and supported by students have been successful this November.

For Movember, 61 sports teams at the University of York held events to raise money for men’s mental and physical health, surpassing their target of £35,000 and reaching £41,000.

Stevie Scott has raised the highest individual amount and been sponsored £950 to do a 60km swim. Meanwhile, the highest-raising team is Anne Lister & David Kato Football, responsible for raising £5,750.

On an Instagram post, they wrote: “Men’s mental health is an important topic often overlooked, so this November, use your mo to raise awareness and understanding for mental health issues.”

The Mental Health Awareness Society has also provided support and advice. They hosted a Men’s Mental Health Panel, where Dr Paul Galdas, Grant Denkinson, Kelly Walker and Alan Chambers answered questions about the social pressure that affects men’s mental health.

“You see it in hyper-masculine environments: the police force, sports stadiums, those sorts of things,” Paul Galdas from the Department of Health Sciences said. “For example, retirement is a really big thing for men in terms of their masculine identity... the highest rate of suicide in men is between 40 and 49.”

“There’s a lot of difficult stuff out there,” mental health nurse Kelly Walker said of negative influences on masculinity. “They get drawn in and they engage in those kinds of behaviours... It’s about educating people on what’s online.”

Coach and Counsellor Adam Chambers added: “I think it’s impossible not to be affected by it and pretty much impossible to avoid.”

They also responded to the stigma that can be attached to ad-

vocacy for men’s mental health; for example, International Men’s Day which was celebrated on the 19th of November is not officially recognised by the United Nations, while International Women’s Day is.

“It’s understanding what led to that behaviour,” Open Door practitioner Grant Denkinson told *Vision*. “It’s not zero sum. There’s a system that affects everyone.”

The Mental Health Awareness Society’s Instagram page also provides information through posts about Seasonal Affective Disorder and International Stress Awareness Week, which was from the 30th of October to the 3rd of November.

With less emphasis on students struggling with mental health, in his email Wayne Campbell said: “I hope this email explains the process we are going through.”

Meanwhile, students’ extensive work into understanding, explaining and supporting the complexities of mental health has enabled students to have a safe space to talk about and be supported regarding their mental health.

While the University may have caused extra stress for students this semester, students have taken the initiative in raising awareness and support for their own mental health. With the comparison to the efforts students have gone to for mental health support, one finds themselves asking: is the University doing enough?



# OPINION

## Putin's War or the Public's?

BY LUCI O'DONNELL (She/Her)

**'Dad, the police almost caught me. I drew a picture' - Masha Moskalev, age 13. In April 2022, the young girl was seen drawing a picture in her school's art class. Not a big deal, right?**

The supposedly 'anti-Russian' picture contained 2 flags- Russia and Ukraine. With 'нет войне, слава Украине' (No to war, glory to Ukraine) written above it. Since then her life has drastically changed; over a few scribbles on a page.

She is now confined to a social rehabilitation centre completely alone. Her father, Alexey Moskaev, faces up to 3 years in prison and has been stripped of all parental rights. He vividly recalls how he and his daughter were treated like terrorists by the FSB (Federal Security Service)- "They said they would take her away from me, and put me in jail." This was sadly the case.

Hate between the two countries has existed well before recent years- mainly due to the very long and futile fight over Crimea but now because of Putin's merciless bombardment of Ukraine. Yet, is it also well understood that this hate exists towards those at the top, those with power and those with influence. Said hate is never, or rather 'was' never, di-

rected towards the 'enemy' countries' civilians.

Over the last few months the dictators at war, as they often do, have seemingly avoided all of the responsibility for such devastation. Here we see a shift of blame at the expense of the ordinary citizen.

"Russian society as a whole is responsible, not just Putin", claimed Maria Popova, a political scientist at McGill University. What Popova fails to acknowledge is the question: What actually awaits you in Russia for opposing the war?

Very simply, to voice your anti-war opinions will lead you down many different paths, all equally as horrific. Punishments include: imprisonment, unemployment, homelessness, fines, detention and the termination of all parental rights. But we (Russians) should be doing more, right?

Western media loves to use an 80% opinion poll with the main and only question 'Do you support the war?' to villainize regular people for 'not doing enough'. In reality the vast majority of the population are patriotic out of neces-

sity rather than choice.

Of course, there will always be people in Russia with imperialistic views- however this is not a representation of the majority.

In terms of repression and ideology the Putin regime is similar to that of Stalin's, with soldiers who surrender to Ukrainian forces likely to face up to 15 years of imprisonment.

Alexi Navalny, an anti-corruption activist, lawyer and prominent figure in the anti-war movements, currently spends his days in a 'prison within prison', denied access to adequate medical care and basic human rights. He will

remain in a maximum security facility at Melikhovo for the next 19 years. But why?

After being poisoned and attacked in 2020, Navalny went on to use his platform to 'expose' the inner workings of the Kremlin, rightfully accusing Putin of 'sucking the blood out of Russia'. He was later imprisoned for embezzlement and fraud with little to no evidence to support such crimes.

It is more than obvious that his influence over the public posed a real threat to Putin's power and by punishing the innocent and outspoken the president intimidates the millions.

So, what can we learn from this? The progression of both sides allows us to understand who we are and where we are going.

The future, and even the present, for both countries is so terrifying that there is this strange comfort clinging onto the past- the USSR way of life.

However, as humans we cannot help but be fragile. It is only a matter of time before this comes to an end and inevitably repeats itself again somewhere down the line. Despite this inevitability, we hold on to the hope that we have learnt from the millions before us- even if it is all in vain.



IMAGE CREDIT: MASHA MOSKALEV

## The Serious Spectacle of York College Elections

BY HENRY ANDERSON (He/Him)

**On Monday the 20th of November, I found myself sitting in D Bar, with a pint of Carling and good company, to watch the hustings of our Derwent College elections. A couple of hours later, I left feeling entertained, intrigued about the future and a little befuddled – but I'll blame that on the lager. Such is the nature of York College elections, and in the days that followed (bringing me to write this article) a number of thoughts flocked to my Fresher mind regarding how this entire process unfolds.**

I was pleasantly surprised by how cordial and light-hearted the whole affair was. Having sauntered around the colleges in the last couple of weeks or so, I saw a number of posters on various college notice

boards of prospective candidates making their case for election, all positive and enthusiastic, and no evidence of slander or criticism. As someone who takes politics, it is nice to see that the political culture of demonisation, defamation and derogation surrounding elections has not invaded the York University bubble, where candidates can strive for votes without having to go on the, often nasty, offensive. And even social media, often condemned by the press as a hotbed for vindictive behaviour, displayed similar respect in the various campaign posts that popped up in my feed. This affable run-up was mirrored in the hustings themselves – at least in my Derwent-based experience. Supporting friends when they ran for roles, asking questions to the future college committee hopefuls and overall just enjoying a

couple drinks with mates and discussing the proceedings with the fellow voters. Hearing stories from friends from other colleges, this looks to have been the norm. University should always be an amicable environment, and this was pleasantly demonstrated in both the build-ups, and college elections themselves, of York University.

However, a few issues come to mind when I look back on my involvement in the college elections this year. Sport and societies are a massive part of York University life, but canvassing for block votes within these groupings, with the hope of financing or favourable treatment from a successful candidate, seems an obtrusive entry to the electoral saga. A vote should be made freely and on the basis of your own perception of the process and the candidates, and pressure

of this nature, to vote a certain way, should surely be avoided. Additionally, it should be noted that a committee member, when they are all announced for each college, is an entirely different kettle of fish, to a committee candidate.

A number of promises were made in the Derwent hustings - at least in the case of the central committee roles like Chair or Head of Sport- and at times it was hard to recognise the joke candidates from those seeking genuine office. In my opinion, no matter who gets in, given the quality of all those who were determined to get elected, a system of accountability amongst the wider college, ranging from measures such as regular Q&As with the Chair and his inner committee to petition-based impeachments, would offset the negative effects of a candidate who fails to live up to

his promises.

I would like to conclude with a few insightful words from Derwent Chair candidate Ben Harris, who told me that he "found the campaign process thoroughly enjoyable", was delighted to stand "against such excellent candidates" and that "hustings was a rewarding opportunity to challenge our positions on why we ought to be Chair and I am happy I got to partake". Hopefully, you can gauge the warm and friendly atmosphere of the College elections from Ben's words, and whatever happens in future elections, and whether changes are made to the wider system; I can truthfully say that this an exciting aspect of university life that all should get involved with because the future of your college starts with you.



**THOMAS CARR**  
OPINION EDITOR

As a third year History and Politics student, I'm motivated to write for the opinion section because it's important to persuade, challenge, and have your voice heard on issues that matter to you. Being a bookworm, I also love to write creatively and this is a fantastic space to do so.

# Why do I Feel out of Place as a Northerner?

BY **MATTHEW ENNIS (He/Him)**

**T**he overwhelming majority of people I interact with here are Southern. I have Southern friends who know multiple people from their hometown in their college alone, while I've had one interaction with another Scouser in my time here. While this disparity is not itself problematic, it still feels bizarre when almost everyone you talk to sounds different to yourself.

There's a sense of impostor syndrome, most noticeable in seminars. Here, my eloquence and articulation (which haven't previously triggered insecurity) suddenly seem at odds with my peers. Though my arguments hold the same strength, southern accents often dominate discussion, with presumed academic superiority. There's a constant feeling of subtle dismissal. When people incessant-

ly 'push back on' everything you say before you've had a chance to finish saying it, or try to debate by repeating your exact point back to you (showing they never really listened) a pattern of condescension emerges.

Differentiating between systemic issues and the occasional rude class-mate is difficult, but I repeatedly find myself saying the same things as others but receiving different responses. As an English student, I can't offer my opinion on or, god-forbid, dislike a text without the insinuation that I've not appreciated or understood it properly.

Northern accents are often belittled, with depictions of Scousers delaying sentences

with the phrases 'like' and 'erm' presented as a reflection of unintelligence. Yet, when Southerners do the same thing, there's an understanding that this is a natural way of formulating your next idea while talking. Just look at previous PM, Boris Johnson, for how people with certain accents are allowed to pause and stutter, while maintain-

ing respectable positions.

These divisions aren't restricted to the social politics of seminars; they are depressingly reflected in the real world. Consistent underfunding resulted in an estimated £1,300 less per student in northern schools than in London in 2016.

In conversations with Southern peers, they have described

opportunities such as extracurriculars that assisted their university applications that didn't exist for me. Hence, Southerners are more likely to attend better-funded schools that both help students enter prestigious universities like York, and prepare them for dominating discussion once they're here. This culturally saturating divide al-

ters students' perspective and aspirations.

There's a certain confidence in those who have heard their accent in media and positions of power. Clearly, some people haven't had to disguise accents to be taken seriously, limit career options due to inability to commute to London, or contend with a narrow framing of future prospects exclusively asking who you will work for without considering that people may work for you.

This is reflected in jokes made by students. While I wouldn't take offence to individual jokes, the themes in jokes aimed at Northerners (which often reference illiteracy and underdevelopment) are too frequent for them to just be 'light-hearted'.

It's not that the jokes themselves that are disturbing, nor the overwhelming presence of Southern accents, but rather the weight they hold in the real world.



IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH

## Circuit Laundry and the Cycle of Exploitation

BY **DAN APTED (He/They)**

**S**tudents are plagued by many malevolent forces in their time at university: negligent landlords, pressing deadlines and a constantly empty bank account to name a few. However, there is one that stands head and shoulders above the rest, one constant presence that taints my days and haunts my nightmares: the evil and cruel Circuit Laundry.

On top of paying nine grand a year in tuition fees and the best part of ten grand to live in over-

priced and underwhelming student accommodation, students are also expected to shell out up to hundreds of extra pounds a year simply to wash their clothes. What has the world come to?!

This is without even mentioning the fact that in an accommodation of several hundred people, the Circuit Laundry gods (or lack thereof, for surely the very existence of Circuit Laundry proves that if there ever was a God, he's long since dead) see fit to bless us with about 5 washers and dryers

between all residents. I am forced to either get up early or wait till ri-

diculously late just to have access to clean underwear (if you see me in the laundry room at 2am, no you didn't!).

Although Circuit Laundry can seem like merely a mild (if extortionate) irritation, it is emblematic of a wider issue. Higher education is becoming increasingly marketised, with students being expected to pay more and more in fees, rent and other costs. All whilst workers are denied fair pay and working conditions. It seems that universities and their business partners see the student population as nothing more than a money-spinner, and

wring as much money out of them as they can justify, to the benefit of those at the top (anyone who's ever attempted a weekly shop in Nisa can attest).

Profit is valued over the well-being and education of students. This results in not only the evils of Circuit Laundry but also teaching strikes. Students are left without weeks of teaching every academic year as faculties attempt to combat this money-driven system.

Considering the cost-of-living crisis is already placing strain on many students' finances, the University should be taking steps to

help students save money where possible, rather than allowing a private company to milk them for cash every time they need to wash their clothes. With the thousands of pounds students are already paying to attend York, it should surely be possible for the university to offer those living in colleges more budget-friendly laundry options. This could be as simple as subsidising the laundry fees of students living in their accommodations or including free-to-use washing machines and driers in all colleges as part of the basic utilities, in a single investment that would save all future students money over time.

Although it is a symptom of a much deeper issue, the fact remains that Circuit Laundry is the very worst aspects of human nature manifested. I will not know peace until it is eliminated. All my homies hate Circuit Laundry!



IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH



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# COLUMNS

## The Impact of Legislation on Gender Liberation

BY NINA SLATER (She/Her)

Key legislative milestones have dismantled barriers, emancipated communities, and transformed cultural attitudes around gender. In the realm of gender liberation, laws have been instrumental in challenging traditional gender roles, promoting inclusivity, and dismantling barriers to equality. Today, as we continue to witness the evolution of socio-legal frameworks worldwide, we are continuously reminded that legislative measures not only reflect changing societal attitudes but also actively contribute to reshaping cultural norms.

In the 19th century, early feminists fought for women's property rights, access to education and professions, and the right to

vote. Landmark legislation like the Married Women's Property Acts enabled women to own property, mitigating financial dependence on husbands. The right to vote gave women a political voice. This progressive epoch laid the groundwork for future advances. Anti-discrimination laws of the 1960s and 70s were vital in expanding opportunities for women in education and employment. Title IX of the Education Amendments in 1972 prohibited sex discrimination in federally funded education programs, vastly increasing women's access to higher education and athletics. Bans on sex discrimination in the Civil Rights Act and Equal Pay Act helped reduce barriers in the workplace.

However, today we have reached a turning point. Now the community has expanded, we face more barriers to liberation in a sea of identity politics. New restrictive legislation on reproductive autonomy fails to uphold the safety or agency of women in the US, as evident in the wake of a global outcry following the Supreme Court decision to overturn Roe vs Wade.

Recent years have seen gains for LGBTQ+ individuals, including anti-discrimination protections, hate crime laws, and same-sex marriage recognition. But prejudice persists, and marginalised communities remain vulnerable. Legal recognition and protection of transgender rights have gained momentum in 2023 as talk of

changes to the 2010 Equality Act sparked controversy. In the UK today, members of the trans community have their identities affirmed in healthcare through the option to apply for a gender recognition certificate. Although this is not expected to change, redefining what 'sex' means in healthcare will change. Transgender people face abolishment from single-sex spaces, such as hospital wards. Legislation that addresses issues like access to healthcare and protection against discrimination provides a framework for affirming the rights and dignity of transgender individuals. The UK government's talks to redefine 'sex' in healthcare fails to allow the Transgender community the dignity they deserve.

Laws send a symbolic message that once-acceptable prejudices are no longer tolerated. But legislation in itself cannot instantly erase deeply embedded biases and inequities. True liberation requires changing culture, education and allyship, which is no mean feat. When combined with grassroots activism, it can precipitate social transformations over time. Though the rate of progress may be frustratingly slow, the journey towards gender justice relies on both cultural evolution and political change through legislation. Each generation must take up the cause and bend the arc further.



IMAGE CREDIT: DAN GORDON-POTTS

## (BAME) Students in Higher Education

BY MAISZE CHENG (She/Her)

(BAME) Students in higher education deserve our attention. It is a huge accomplishment for every (BAME) student to start university. It is commonly felt that the education system is fundamentally flawed. It often restricts students from expressing oneself in critical thinking or learning about their strengths and weaknesses, let alone the inconsistent standard of education across the UK.

Reaching university is a place for students to engage in critical thinking while cultivating life skills in preparation to be an independent adult. Students often feel inadequate and question their abilities and worth while they discover themselves and their subsequent

strengths. This is something that all students go through, but a lack of representation can really hinder interpersonal growth.

Lacking the 'people who look like me', 'people who sound like me' or 'people who think like me' within higher education can be disheartening for (BAME) students where it cultivates pre-existing feelings of inadequacy and insecurity. These feelings stir questions like 'Do I deserve to be here?', 'Is my voice lesser to my majority peers?', 'Will I ever be able to make something of myself?'. These negative thoughts, and the isolating environment, can have very damning consequences for our (BAME) students' wellbeing and attainment.

Following the university's 'Decolonising the University' event, it is clear that structural inequalities, like lack of diversity in the curriculum, have a negative impact on staff and students. (BAME) students can feel unmotivated to live up to their full potential as there are no people 'who look like me', 'speak like me' or 'think like me' being celebrated for academic contributions. Many feel as though it is easier to assimilate to our current ways and accept that as a (BAME) student, this is what higher education looks like. (BAME) students are left at a crossroad between being overlooked for who we are, or assimilating quietly by neglecting what we are in order to fit in.

However, the days of higher education for future (BAME) students are not all doom and gloom. The University of York is engaging in Decolonial work to start deconstructing inherent biases. Although this is very dependent on who is in what department to push for this change, it's stepping towards making higher education more representative.

It proves that within institutions there are staff members who care about having a representative space in higher education, and that (BAME) students have allies within the institution who are willing to push for structural change. (BAME) students are often overlooked and lumped into the wider

student demographic, despite being an under-represented student body. (BAME) students deserve to be acknowledged for their heritage, culture and interpersonal qualities as (BAME) students are still students. And just like every other student, they deserve to experience university without any exacerbated symptoms other than being a student.

Nonetheless, there is hope and there is change occurring all around us students, no matter how overlooked one may feel. It is important to retain faith and keep using our student voices. We are all in this together as students in higher education.

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first-hand *Vision* journalists go on to work in provincial media.

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Make sure to follow us over on our Instagram @york\_vision. As well as this, be sure to let us know when you have purchased a membership through the YUSU website and we can get you set up on our mailing list and Slack channel.

Your current editorial team are as follows:

- Emily Sinclair. *Editor President*.

- Kaitlyn Beattie-Zarb. *Editor Secretary*.

- Laura Rowe. *Deputy Editor*.

- Dan Gordon-Potts. *SCENE Editor*

We'd love to hear from you. Despite going into the Winter Holidays, you can get involved as soon as possible. Why not get your new year off to a good start!

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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

# Someone

*Tessa Rose Jackson talks to SCENE.*

Read on  
SCENE  
Page

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# My Winter TV Pick

*Aoife Wood recommends this BBC classic...*

BY AOIFE WOOD



**TV is at its best in the winter time, with Christmas specials and classic films filling the screens. Choosing a favourite is hard, but I think *Outnumbered* perfectly captures the magic and gloom of the season.**

The show, which spans a total of 5 series, is not always set in the winter period, but the accurate representations of British weather means we rarely see a

sunny day and the characters are often decked out in coats.

I think the most comforting aspect of *Outnumbered* is how close to real life it is. There are some absurd plotlines, but none of them seem completely impossible.

The mundanity of the show is ever present in its Christmas specials. We get to relate to the Brockman family as they deal with Christmas stress and

awkward conversations with family members. For example, the mother's oddball sister, Angela, is an amalgamation of all the family members, nosy neighbours and distant friends that make Christmas an exhausting holiday.

Best of all, though, is seeing Christmas through the children's perspective. It reminds me of my childhood experience; the winter holidays when I was younger - making decorations in the final

weeks of primary school, writing to Father Christmas, and that pure excitement for Christmas day.

With this year's rewatch, I plan to focus mostly on the Christmas and Boxing Day specials to get myself in the festive spirit, but I also highly recommend a watch from start to finish - particularly if the show is new to you.



Image: BBC

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## SCENE.

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Eddie Atkinson

#### Stage

Alice Pedersen

Audrey Lawler

#### Music

Clara Downes

#### SPOTLIGHT

#### Art

Rhiannon Cockerton

#### Literature

Tom Brown

#### Food

#### Games

Lucy Plant

### SPECIAL THANKS

Many thanks to all of our writers and sub editors for this issue, as well as all of our other contributors Spotlight Mag and Circulation, and our press and PR people who gave us opportunities. Thanks to Ayman Zahir for the lovely front cover. Thanks to Jed for the Blurble.



## IN IMAGES:

Dan Gordon-Potts

## SCENE Editor Note



Hello, didn't see you there, I was just recovering in A&E after Mr Tumble dropped from the sky and broke my spine.

I joke (please feel free to laugh), the real reason I didn't see you is because I'm busy looking at all the faces of our new team - gorgeous headshots. This SCENE is a good one, so grab yourself a beverage and get comfortable! To give you a speedy run through, we have a nice winter watch in SCREEN, as well as the debut from our new section Editor, recounting a (traumatising?) experience at CBeebies, and a (pretentious) new section called 'Director of Choice'.

In STAGE there's a cracking review of underground indie writer, Shakespeare, and the section Editors' favourite thing, where she takes her role a little too literally (then again, she's a literature student, to be expected). In MUSIC, we hear the latest from Album Soc, and witchy musings - who am I to keep them down?

SPOTLIGHT features Someone (who?) who chats changing identities and how everyone's changing all the time and nobody can keep up. We also have a play review of a spotlight issue.

ART has primary colour madness (grey in this newsprint but appears

great as I write this on the computer). Here, our new section Editor chats about fearful men. LITERATURE details a refreshing literary account of scenic Whitby (never been myself...and I call myself a writer!), as well as a book recommendation (who reads books anymore?). In FOOD, we have a delightful page-filler about a sandwich, and (an essential read) the debut of smallcoffeecups467, giving you all the latest in the tiny cup world. Finally, we have our planter of puzzles showing off skills in rotational symmetry with the best games page Vision has ever seen. Enjoy, D



Image: Yannis Drakoulidis/HBO



**DIRECTOR OF CHOICE**  
**Luca Guadagnino**

## REVIEW

# Dodge the Dog, Mr Tumble, and Climate Heroism

*New Screen Editor Eddie Atkinson reviews Robin Hood, CBeebies' latest panto for SCENE.*

BY EDDIE ATKINSON

**F**or my first assignment as the new Screen Editor I had the privilege of attending a press screening of the CBeebies' 2023 pantomime, the tale of Robin Hood.

As the 'Fun in the Foyer' section of the morning began in Cineworld Leicester Square, and I was faced with the colouring-in sheet that had been left out for me and a photo opportunity with Supertato, it became clear that I had maybe been expected to bring a child.

However, while I was (obviously) not the target audience, I left the screening imbued with a great sense of optimism by the way the film was encouraging children to view the world: with hope, humour, and respect.

The entire production was filled with joy and did not let its cinema venue detract from the audience participation expected

of the medium, frequently calling on the traditional boos and calls from the audience as well as briefly teaching us an arrow themed dance.

Also apparent throughout was the joy of representation, the opportunity for diverse children to see themselves represented and celebrated, clear in cuts to the enraptured live audience of the production.

The story of Robin Hood itself was adapted to become an educational tale of environmental protection and provision, with archery's primary function the harvesting of acorns, and the defence of an ancient oak (played by Ben Faulks) the central conflict.

The original songs were excellent and catchy, likely to bring out toe-tapping in even the most serious parents / York Vision Section Editors.

Dodge the Dog, who readers may remember from his days as a presenter on CBBC, put in a star

turn as Tiny, a woodland squirrel who, like a Shakespearean fool, would frequently turn to the audience to comment on goings on and to be distracted by the smell of cinema-goers' popcorn.

The familiar face of Justin Fletcher (Mr Tumble) was delightful, if not ever present, when taking on the archetypal pantomime role of the Dame, playing a narcoleptic Queen Bee who spent much time flying across the stage suspended on wires and was at one point handed a pear-pudding as her sole sustenance to fly an entire human being to the North Pole.

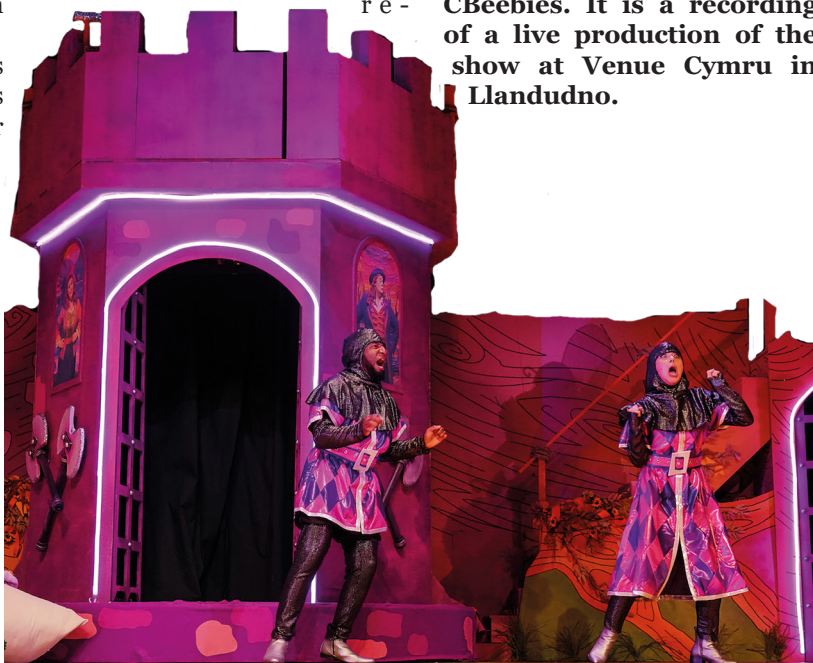
The rest of the cast, who may be less recognisable to a student population, also brought great skill and energy to their roles, an energy that was very important in

taining the fairly fickle attention of their audience.

Also entertaining was a repeated theme of encouraging the protagonists and audience to take long deep breaths in and out which, while certainly intended to teach mindfulness, had the additional bonus of keeping a rowdy audience of 6 year olds calm.

All in all, while 'CBeebies panto 2023: Robin Hood' is unlikely to be a dominant presence in the Christmas viewing schedules of most York students, I would highly recommend it to anyone with young family members and to anyone looking for an hour of unadulterated joy and hope over the winter period.

**Robin Hood will be released in cinemas from the 1st December and broadcast on CBeebies. It is a recording of a live production of the show at Venue Cymru in Llandudno.**



Images (top left, bottom): CBeebies, BBC

Eddie Atkinson  
**Editors' Note**

Hil I'm Eddie, and I'm a second year English student. I love TV and Film, whether it be auteur cinema, The Muppets, or 20.0 Megaquake (a real film that I have really watched). I'm excited to discover new things with the help of a crack team of Screen writers.



It's all about pacing with acclaimed director Guadagnino, most known for *Call Me By Your Name* starring now everywhere actor and heart-throb Timothée Chalamet, and Armie Hammer.

That film is, to many, a testament to good storytelling - it has slow, lingering shot sequences, and wide landscape views of Italian countryside that stretch like impressionist paintings.

However to me it is Guadagnino's most recent, though far lesser-known and respected HBO series *We Are Who We Are*, which exemplifies the breadth of his natural style and range.

His goal, it seems, throughout this 'coming-of-age' piece, is to use the camera to get as close to his characters as possible, to make the line of light between us, the viewer, and them, the fictions, disappear.

He wants his worlds on screen to breathe slowly, rhythmically, and carefully. He is a director who knows his timings and has no fear holding a moment longer than others would dare.

Yet that, that two seconds for Guadagnino is not just necessary but crucial to his films, to life. That moment that momentarily drags. That sweetness that stretches out long enough to make you start to think that it will last forever - you are held, and then ...cut.

By Dan Gordon-Potts

## NEWS

**UoY's film and TV specialised magazine is back!**

Publishing critical articles, opinion pieces, reviews and art submissions, *Spotlight's* first issue, *Cinema is Back*, is scheduled for January 2024. To get involved as a writer or artist, follow our socials or email us!

IG: spotlightuoy  
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spotlight@yusu.org



Image (below  
right): Marc  
Brenner

## Editors' Note

I'm Alice and I'm the new Stage Editor! While I, like most people, enjoy the odd musical, I am most interested in theatre. I'm a third year English Literature student, and as part of my degree I've often written on plays, from Shakespeare to Sheridan. I'm excited to get more experience with this type of writing and reviewing in this role.

Alice Pedersen

&amp;

Audrey Lawler



BY ALICE PEDERSEN

Literally  
Reviewing  
my Favourite  
Stages for  
STAGE...

This new column will talk about, surprise, surprise, all things theatre, stage, and performance, and in this issue, I'll introduce you to my favourite theatre: RSC Stratford.

There is a reason for this potentially obscure pick and that is all to do with the balcony-style second level, that rests in the backdrop behind the main stage.

Maybe at this point you're

thinking, 'Shakespeare, balcony, I know exactly where this is going', you'd be wrong. RSC's *Romeo and Juliet* (2018) moved away from a typical staging of the performance and rejected the use of the second level that is already in place at Stratford.

While Gregory Doran's *Measure for Measure* (2019) made use of the balcony feature in staging the play, Polly Findley's *Macbeth* (2018) made it feel as if the fea-

ture had been installed for the production itself.

The use of the set feature in *Macbeth* was haunting, with it staging the witches and, most memorably, Lady Macbeth, as she assumes a spectral quality in the infamous sleep-walk scene.

This aspect, and the use of it in some of my favourite performances, gives RSC Stratford its title as my favourite theatre.

## REVIEW

A Fascinating Update to a  
Shakespearean Standard

Dan Apted reviews *Merchant of Venice* 1936 for SCENE.

BY DAN APTE ★★★★★

**D**irector Brigid Larmour's contemporary take on Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice* makes several critical changes to the play's original setting and characters. Rather than the titular location of 1500s Venice, Larmour situates this production's events in 1930s London on the eve of the Battle of Cable Street.

The 1936 conflict occurred when Londoners attempted to block a march by the British Union of Fascists through a Jewish area of East London, and proves an auspicious setting for the play, though arguably more could've been made of the Battle's events by the production.

The character of Shylock, previously played exclusively by men, is here portrayed by Tracy-Ann Oberman in a move that has been a unique selling point for this production. The Venetian moneylender is reimagined as a single mother living and working on Cable Street.

The play translates surprisingly well into these markedly different circumstances, helped in no small

measure by the excellent costume and set design.

The setting is well articulated, with the projected footage of newspaper headlines and news clippings creating an increasingly claustrophobic atmosphere of dread as the fascistic leanings of the play's characters become more overt.

The fact that this production is set less than a decade before the Holocaust is clearly not lost on the production or its performers.

However, I was somewhat disappointed by the decision to leave the stage unobscured while the antisemitic graffiti and posters were applied to the façade of Shylock's house in the interval, as this reduced their impactfulness when displayed in the second act.

The cast all deliver authentic and engaging performances. Oberman is especially captivating as Shylock, taking on a role for which she clearly has great pas-

sion. As well as injecting moments of humour into the character's vendetta against Antonio (Raymond Coulthard), reimagined as one of Oswald Mosley's blackshirts, Oberman expertly captures the ruthlessness and sadism of Shylock as well as the deep layers of hurt and trauma beneath, with both seeming to drive her actions in equal measure. These moments of raw vulnerability are made all the more powerful by the production's skilful presentation of the growing prevalence of fascism.

The wider cast also shines.

Coulthard's Antonio is presented as something akin to a sugar daddy to Bassanio (Gavin Fowler) in a lecherous moment in the opening scene; this is an interesting take on their dynamic, though one the play fails to invest in throughout.

Hannah Morrish's Portia is another strength, reimagined here as an

extravagant socialite, with great chemistry with Jessica Dennis's Nerissa enhancing their scenes.

Overall, the production provides a fascinating update to a Shakespearean standard, making it even more relevant to a contemporary audience with its alterations to setting and presentation that clearly speak to modern politics.

This culminates in an impassioned if slightly confused climax. Despite dealing with heavy themes and an increasingly bleak plot, the play ends on a hopeful note, calling for collective action against fascism and its enablers.

Though there are some small details which require ironing out, this is an accomplished production which largely justifies its own ambition.

Thanks to York Theatre Royal for this review.

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# MUSIC

5



NEWS

## Album Soc: We are Back!

BY WILL CAVANAGH

*"The reports of my death are greatly exaggerated"*

– Mark Twain

To mark the glorious return (that being, of course, Album Soc rising from their ruins like a phoenix from its ashes), the society voted to listen to the 1989 album *The Stone Roses* by ("you've guessed it") **The Stone Roses.**

A debut album for their debut event. What could possibly go wrong?

When the day came, the doors to the *Norman Rea Gallery* were flung open and in poured the eager masses. An expectant hush descended upon the room. The excitement was building, mounting, climaxing.

But it was met with disaster! There were no speakers! Somehow, it would seem, the music society had forgotten that they needed music.

Had they fallen at the first hurdle? Had they snatched defeat from the proverbial jaws of victory? Chaos descended. Panic ensued. Feet began shuffling. Eyes darted toward the door in futile hope of escape. Terror gripped the room. Screams. Convulsions. In that darkest hour, it seemed that all hope was indeed lost. They had resigned themselves to a fate worse than death: mild social embarrassment.

But, mercifully, *Courtyard* swooped in to save the day. After some wrangling and jangling, Album Soc convinced them to let the society hijack their speakers. So, down to the bar they trooped—we few we happy few we band of brothers—down they trooped into *Courtyard*.

The hockey players in their suits and ties eyed them suspiciously. But soon Ian Brown's dulcet tones blared from the speakers. Drinks were purchased. Cups were raised to lips. Conversations were had. General merriment abounded. Socialising, it would seem, ensued. And the night had only just begun.

That great many-turned odyssey meandered into town and, in truly cyclical fashion, the merry band all ended the night at York's very own *Stone Roses* bar. There they all stood, arm in arm, shouting, screaming, yelling from atop the balcony: 'I am the resurrection and I am the life'. A triumph.

**We meet every Wednesday. If you would like to find out more, please follow us on Instagram @uoyalbumsoc!**

*Disclaimer: they aren't always this useless and they do have speakers now!*

NEWS

University of York's revived music magazine, *Circulation*, is preparing to release its first edition with the theme 'Metamorphosis.' It will cover features such as fashion, music trends, and the music scene in York, all in relation to this theme. To get involved, visit their Instagram page @circulationzine

COMMENT

## The White Witch: Fleetwood Mac's Stevie Nicks

BY ARABELLA GREEN

**A**t 75 years old, Stevie Nicks is one of the most beloved Seventies icons. Twice honoured by the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, firstly with Fleetwood Mac and then for her solo career, Nicks' work is imbued with a transcendental quality that still resonates with modern audiences and will continue to resonate for decades to come.

Nicknamed the White Witch for her mesmerising lyricism and vocal depth, Nicks should be revered for this status of enchantress — as a woman in a male-dominated sphere, the aching feminine power she draws upon, of being 'witch-like', is simply wonderful.

Of her songs, Rhiannon established Nicks with the moniker, the White Witch. This song affects the freedom of "a bird in flight," with the brutal undercurrent of being utterly untameable; you are at Rhiannon's mercy, though there is not a cruelty here. Why should she be concerned with Man when there is the depth of the skies to explore?

As a tale of female empowerment, in this moment Nicks redefined what a witch could be. She was a trailblazer. I would also highlight Silver Springs, written about Nicks' failed love affair with Lindsey Buckingham, and a song of such personal significance that when cut from Rumours' final lineup (though appearing on the B-side), Nicks resolved to leave

the band. The lyrics are haunting, entertaining the passage of time and the endurance of love's memory, the depth of heartbreak and the cruel magic entwined to it.

Recently I saw a clip (from Fleetwood Mac's 1997 performance at Warner Bros. Studios) of Nicks performing the iconic line "you'll never get away from the sound of the woman that loves you". As if Nicks were casting a spell upon Buckingham, there is such a pain and richness to her voice. Buckingham even appears entranced. Indeed, her stage presence is famously captivating.

The Japan 1977 performance of Gold Dust Woman exemplifies how her music is also a matter of physical storytelling, the reach of her arms outward hinting at some simmering wilderness within. The lyric "pale shadow, she's a dragon" affirms the potential of female ferocity and aligns womanhood with the supernatural. One can be simultaneously feminine and also formidable.

And though Nicks herself has rebuked the idea she is a witch, it is not an aesthetic she shies from. Draped with hippie shawls and flowing skirts, Nicks rocks an iconic Gypsy-coded, bohemian look that riffs on traditional ideas of European witchcraft. As well, she even cameos as the

White Witch version of herself in award-winning American Horror Story.

Through her consistent cultural relevance, Nicks has certainly cemented her status in pop culture as a figurehead of this rebranded, innate womanly power.

Many successful contemporary artists have cited Stevie Nicks as an inspiration — a couple examples being as disparate as Courtney Love and Beyoncé. Florence Welch even credits aspects of her own 'Pre-Raphaelite sorceress' look to Nicks' style. And Nicks is still creating and performing to this day, collaborating with modern musical giants like Taylor Swift, Lana Del Rey, Gorillaz. Heck, even Barbie just released a Nicks doll, tambourine in hand.

Nicks redetermined what a witch was, what a wild woman could be. No longer just a misogynistic idea rooted in genocide, 'witch' was something intangible and beautiful. A character to be feared, yes, but also revered. A creature of the wind and earth, of outstanding emotional depth, closer to a deity than Man. In short, a woman.

Clara Downes

### Editors' Note



Hey! My name is Clara and I'm the new Music Editor. I'm a first year Philosophy student, and in my spare time I love reading and writing as well as playing music and going to live concerts, which is why I'm really excited for this new role!



# Four Women, One call to Action SPOTLIGHT

*Audrey Lawler reviews  
a stage show inspired by  
Sarah Everard's death*



BY AUDREY LAWLER

**Y**ork-based theatre company *Next Door But One* shone a light on the all-too-familiar experiences women face in *She Was Walking Home*, which came to the University of York last month.

*She Was Walking Home* was conceptualised following the case of Sarah Everard, who was murdered by a Met Police Officer whilst walking home in London in 2021. The tragedy, which prompted the social media tag ‘#shewaswalkinghome’, unleashed a wave of anger and grief about women’s lack of safety.

Everard grew up in York, and her name became a call to arms for change. *Next Door But One*’s piece, which is touring schools and colleges, directly responds to these events and seeks to keep these issues relevant years later.

Director Sarah Veysey brought a staged approach to stories of alarm, harassment, frustration, and optimism.

The stage-dressing was bare with only a single white block reused in different contexts: a bus seat, a kitchen counter, a table in a police office, a lectern.

Lighting remained stark, and sound effects created a sense of location. The limitations of performing in schools and colleges required adaptability.

Less is more, and the focus

was placed less on technicality and more on the message.

The company gave the issue of women’s safety all the anger it deserved, curating their piece out of 33 real-life testimonies from women living, working and studying in York. From here, four different characters emerged, and with it, four monologues.

One young woman, Millie, is on an early morning walk to work, haunted by warnings about walking home alone. A mention of walking down ‘rape alley’ struck a particular familiarity with the cautionary tales we internalise as women.

Cate is a student, home from a night out, explaining the lack of safety she felt walking, and crucially, her anger at the blame for feeling safe being solely placed on her by authorities, rather than those who are at risk of causing harm.

Jackie gives an older woman’s perspective recalling the humiliation she felt after being assaulted by younger boys in the street. The piece places its focus on the repercussions this event had on her life, ripple effects from a pebble in a pool; emphasising that harassment can happen to anyone and affect them regardless of circumstance.

Joanne tells her story of being attacked walking home, giving a speech in front of a setting, fitting considering the piece’s tour

around schools and colleges in York. By the end of her monologue, a cry directed to the audience begs us not to leave the performance and not to forget about what has been said. We are called upon to share the weight of the ‘block of granite’ atop women’s shoulders and be understanding, willing to support change.

“I think you’re all capable of doing something amazing... The challenge now is to not walk out of here and forget all about it, I’ll leave that choice with you.”

An added personal touch towards the audience after the show was the encouragement to give feedback on a post-it note, sticking it on the block onstage: sharing aspects we enjoyed, or which spoke to us. In doing so, we felt invited to join the conversation.

In a post-show Q&A, whilst many schools and colleges were glad to invite the company to perform the show, a considerable chunk were hesitant for fear of male students feeling targeted by how it so directly addresses the issue.

Much to the contrary, I see *Next Door But One*’s piece as an essential message to be shared, placing women’s voices at the centre of the conversation around women’s safety and making a firm stand against gender-based violence and harassment.



Images by Bibian Bingen (right), James Drury (left)

*“Everard grew up in York, and her name became a call to arms for change.”*





# “A Name That had no Expectation”

*SCENE interviews musician, film composer and visual artist, Tessa Rose Jackson (aka Someone)*

BY CLARA DOWNES



Image: David Spear-  
ing. Taken from the  
music video for I  
Guess I'm Changing



**T**essa Rose Jackson spends twenty-six weeks of her year in Amsterdam, the other twenty-six in London. It is the month of October 2023, and she is currently touring the UK with her band.

Jackson's career as a musician developed quickly in her early twenties – but, being young and with a desire to experiment and compose eclectically, her headspace quickly became clouded. She felt an expectation to remain within the realms of the style her new followers were captivated by: “the problem is, when something is successful a lot of people get on board, and a lot more pressure arose to repeat myself.”

This feeling was impacting her ability to create, and so Jackson decided to rewrite herself using a name which erased her personal identity from her work.

She chose Someone: “It's not even gendered, there's no indication as to what you should expect...and I kind of liked that because it paved the way for me to be able to do whatever I liked.” It brings to mind the renowned pseudonymous Neapolitan novelist, Elena Ferrante, who has spoken of the freedom that disguising her identity affords her – she can explore things in her art that would otherwise seem off-limits. Jackson can put her identity into her artwork without being directly attached to it.

Jackson uses a strikingly poetic analogy when she describes the constraints she felt before becoming Someone: “I always compare it with a painting... I was standing too close and all I could see was the brushstrokes and technicalities... I sort of lost track of the beauty of it and the bigger picture.”

I now imagine Someone as more than a name, but rather a blank canvas – much more so than Ferrante, whose chosen name echoes other existing Ital-

ian artists, not least the novelist Elsa Morante, thus creating context for her readers. Jackson deliberately eschews this. Jackson launches bright acrylic paint at this canvas of her own creation, before using a touch of muted watercolour – then comes sharp glass, silken wool; hers is a masterpiece of great depth.

She explains that her most recent album, *Owls*, was inspired by a road trip with her partner through America, where they drove the infamous ‘Music Triangle,’ New Orleans to Memphis to Nashville: “You don't have to change the channel, it just does it by itself. If you're around New Orleans it's like Jazz and Fusion, and then you get to Memphis it's bluesy and swampy, and then once you start nearing Nashville it's like country.” The amalgamation of genres within *Owls* was stimulated by the diversity of music encountered on the trip; I can't help but draw a link between this style synthesis, and her initial motivation for becoming Someone.

Jackson uses her composition as an outlet for emotion, for things she struggles to articulate through speech: “I find myself on stage, and I'm singing words that are just so deeply personal... If I was saying this to you [the audience] in person I would never be able to say this. But somehow, I can sing it.”

Her songs often centre the vocal, which is melodic and dreamy. Her explanation resonates: “I believe you can make more impact when you whisper something than when you shout it... it's about the power of subtlety and delicacy.”

When she is asked about her lead single on *Owls* – ‘I Guess I'm Changing’ – Jackson delves into her struggles with accepting that she herself is continuously evolving and growing: “It's about embracing change, especially when it's scary and you're not sure... The idea of breaking out, that was a big thing.” Grappling with identity seems to be a significant struggle, but something which her musical outlet has helped her

come to terms.

Jackson's platform is continuously building, but at a pace she is more comfortable with. The suffocation she felt from her original success when releasing music under her own name exposed her true preferences: “I'm a slow burner. I really like it now that I'm building a little group of people that are enjoying the fact that every album is slightly different.”

As for the future, Jackson plans to gradually write and release more music, with hopes of touring the UK with her band in 2024. As for Someone, the name provided time for Jackson to experiment freely within her compositions, without living up to the expectations of echoing her initial work, but she is now ready to return to performing as Tessa Rose Jackson from January 2024: “It feels good. It feels like I've bridged the period of time I needed it for... now I'm at a space where I can sort of take it from here.”



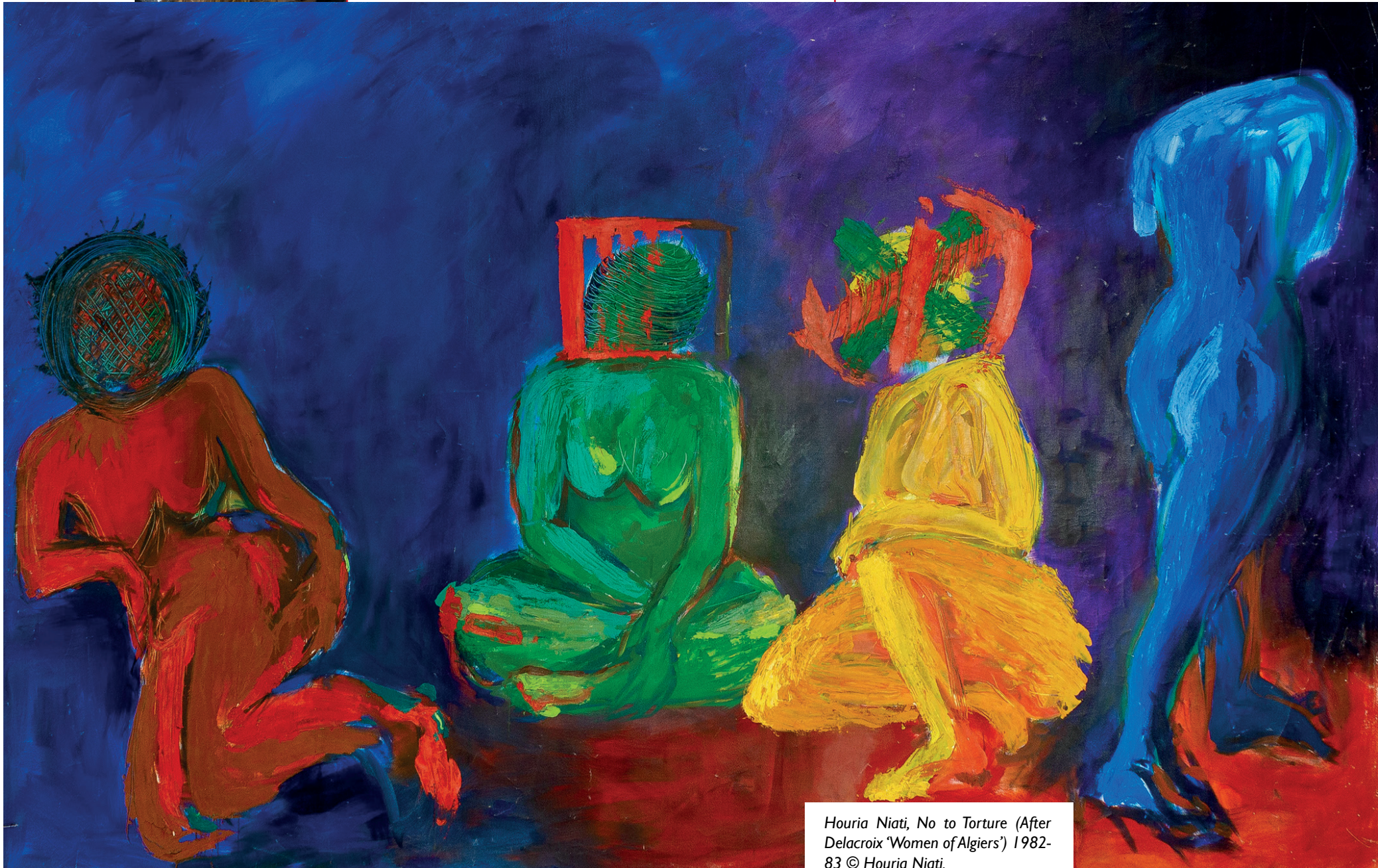


Rhiannon Cockerton

## Editors' Note

I am a second year History of Art student. I love exploring art and culture beyond my degree. With this section I hope to give you a little taste of the art world. I am constantly being surprised and inspired, I hope you will be too! My favourite art piece is Edward Hopper's 'Nighthawks', 1942.

# ART



Houria Niati, *No to Torture (After Delacroix 'Women of Algiers')* 1982-83 © Houria Niati.

## REVIEW

# Men Flee Feminism!

*Tate Britain's 'Women in Revolt!' exhibition sideeffects:*

*Women - pride, inspiration, hope.*

*Men - discomfort, potential nausea, a strong desire to flee to safety.*

BY RHIANNON COCKERTON

**I**t was powerful; it was eye-opening; it was fantastic!

Tate Britain's *Women In Revolt!* tracks the historical oppression of women with feminist artists restating this history and liberating women from it. It was thrilling to see so many women being heard!

But not everybody had the same reaction.

About halfway through the exhibition layout, I witnessed a couple bickering. The woman was admiring *No to Torture* by Houria Niati and was interrupted. Her husband, clearly flustered, could barely form speech. Finally he managed: "I'm done. I'll be waiting in the cafe".

His wife looked at him, "You've barely looked at anything, practically ran through it!"

Following this was an exchange of agitated mutterings and arm-gesturing. Right there

in the middle of a feminism exhibition was a woman confronting her man about his discomfort.

It became obvious that the man was embarrassed - not by their very public rift - but by his being surrounded by such ideas.

His wife gave a final gesture - a final "Fuck off then!" - and continued to make her way around in her own time, taking it all in.

A massive exhibition - featuring the history and future of women and only a handful of men there to view it. It was clear that even fewer men were there for their own interests. One - or perhaps two - men truly inspected the artworks, actually seeing them. Not a quick glimpse or - the even funnier to witness - head down strategy, "Look at the floor. Walk quickly. Do not make contact!"

*Women in Revolt!* was for everyone. But men - as a whole - were not comfortable. This got me thinking, what exactly was it about the exhibition that inspired

discomfort for men? Were they uncomfortable about the content? And what about the content: the nudity, the empowerment of women, or simply the artworks that boldly called out the patriarchal society that oppressed women for centuries? Is *Women in Revolt!* not popular with men because they deny this past, or did this exhibition open their eyes to a reality they are too ashamed to take responsibility for?

As a young woman, I found the exhibition deeply emotional, enlightening, and empowering. It allowed me to witness the challenging history we women have faced, and despite our advancement, we have so far to go. For instance, the people visiting these exhibitions are already aware of the struggles and they can be proud and inspired by the efforts made to vocalise these challenges. The people who need to see *Women in Revolt!* the most are the ones waiting in the gallery coffee shop.



# Exploring Echoes of Literature on the Yorkshire Coast

9



BY PATRICIE ŠPERKOVÁ

**No place on the Yorkshire coast has been visited by such a range of significant writers as Whitby.**

Yes, the “red roofed fishing town below the green slopes with the ruined Abbey and church on the hill above” Whitby, just a two pound journey from York.

As an English student, I seized the opportunity to explore what makes Whitby so special that it has inspired writers for centuries.

Picture this:

On an early Saturday morning I leave York behind and embark on the famous Coastliner 840 route marketed as the “Most Scenic Bus Route.” To be honest, I think, they probably aren’t lying because waiting in a double-decker for sheep to cross the road in Goathland is only a sprinkling of what is to come.

“We are now approaching Whitby,” announces the recorded bus speech, the town’s scenic beauty now unfolding before me.

I begin wandering between cute shops on the west side of the town, but my literary exploration really starts at The White Horse, and Griffin Restaurant on Church Street. Here dined Charles Dickens. Nearby, Elisabeth Gaskell stayed and likely set her novel *Sylvia’s Lovers*.

However, something more exciting catches my eye – The Whitby Bookshop, right next to the Restaurant, so

charismatic! Their local books section overflows with various editions of *Dracula*.

Passing independent shops in the tiny vibrant quarter I can’t help but empathise with the authors’ choice of a place to stay. If only I had known that the streets are nothing compared to the coast!

As I stand by Whitby Harbour East Lighthouse, I alternately look up at the silhouette of Whitby Abbey and far away to the roaring sea, feeling as if I exist inside a Dixit card. For real!

The salty “spray-laden air accompanied by the echo in the cry of gulls” is trying to break into my ears, lamenting waves madly beating up the cliffs.

I send a text message to my friend: “No wonder Whitby is literary.” No wonder.

The boundless expanse and tireless strength of the sea evoke a sense of both humility and awe and gets me immediately contemplating.

Bram Stoker vividly describes Whitby Harbour in *Dracula*: “Masses of sea-fog came drifting inland – white, wet clouds, which swept by in ghostly fashion, so dank and

damp and cold that it needed but little effort of imagination to think the spirits of those lost at sea were touching their living brethren with the clammy hands of death.”

199 steps (another inspirational spot for writers) lead me to Whitby Abbey.

I resist paying twelve pounds to get closer to the ruins, but meandering through St Mary’s Church is more than satisfactory.

For those unfamiliar, Whitby served as an inspiration and ingredient for Bram Stoker’s Gothic novel *Dracula* (even for its name!) partially centred around the Abbey. Not surprisingly! The abbey ruins and the windswept churchyard on the cliff almost awakened up the poet inside me.

As if this isn’t reason enough to believe in Whitby’s charm, I remember Caedmon, the first named English poet,

found his muse when he resided here on this

East Cliff, caring for animals. Oh to be a sheep on the Yorkshire coast!

According to National Geographic, this tiny city offers the best fish and chips in the UK. Enjoying them, I sit on a bench in front of the hotel where Lewis Carroll was a frequent guest.

Well, I think, no wonder he found creative fuel for writing *Alice in Wonderland* when he could absorb this view of the entire East coast, port and the lighthouses!

After a long and cold day, I head back to York, looking for the cosiness of college. While taking notes about what I have just experienced, I realise that unfortunately I am simply no Bram Stoker, unable to vividly capture Whitby’s essence on paper.

But let me tell you: the atmosphere really is something else. For writers, if you haven’t already, you really should explore the place personally – whether from a literary, culinary or purely scenic perspective.

Just be ready for the brisk wind and, perhaps, catching a muse too, because the town has the power to spark creativity.

Images:  
Patricie  
Šperková



## REVIEW

### Digital Minimalism By Cal Newport

BY DAN GORDON-POTTS

**I have a constant compulsion to pick up my phone. Is it making me depressed and anxious? If so, why?**

If you have any of these questions, or you think other people are glued to their phones and it’s annoying you, read this book, it will help...probably.

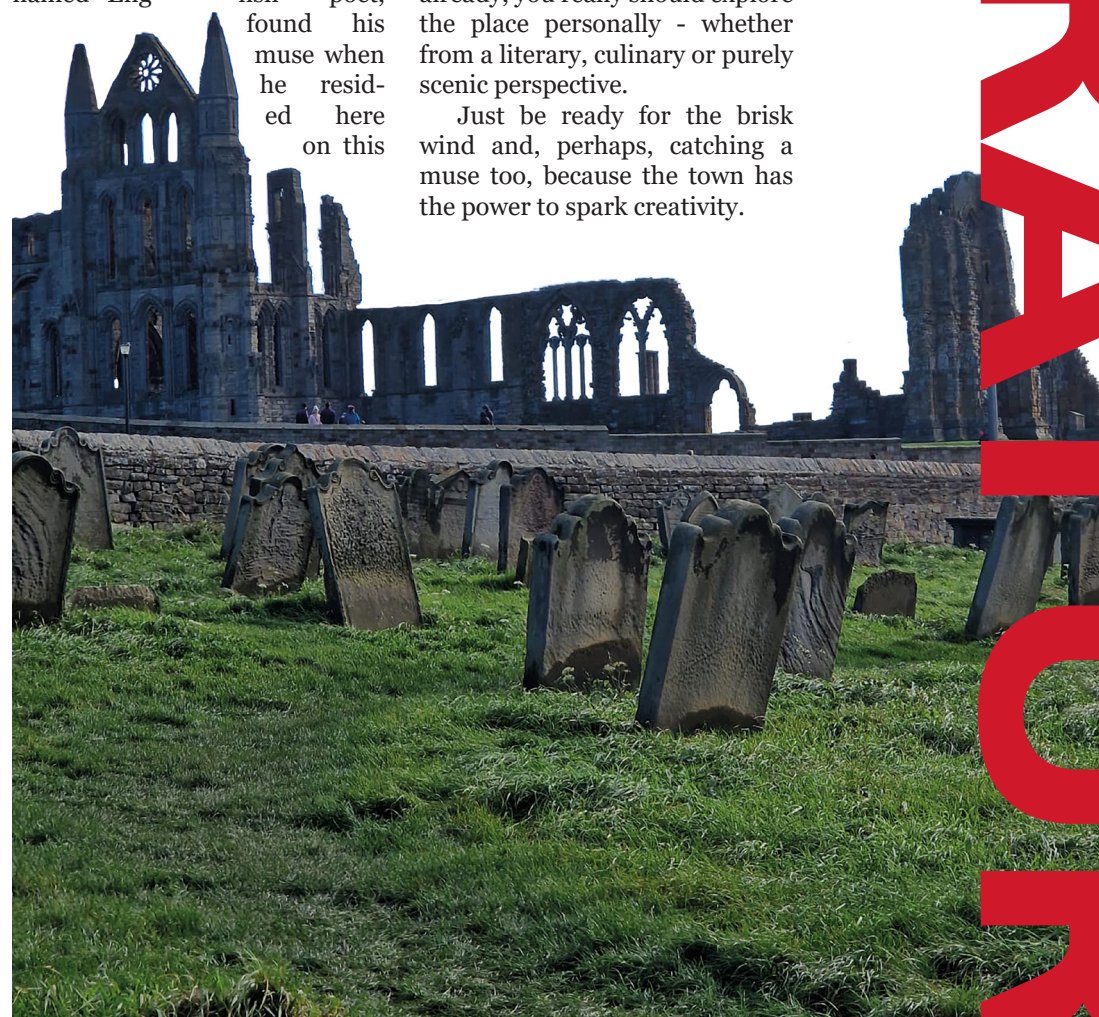
American Computer Science professor Cal Newport guides you through the history of smartphones, the story of who invented the Facebook ‘like’ button, and what impact our constant digital habits are having on our lives.

He provides practical advice

for reclaiming your free-time by overcoming social media’s (intentionally designed) addictive pull, with simple practical steps, and a clear actionable philosophy.

While this book was published back in 2019, it still remains starkly relevant today, as it tackles one of the most pressing issues of our time: the effect of technology on our lives and whether or not it’s actually making us any happier.

(If you have the attention span to still be reading this review right now, you’ll probably be able to read this book)



Tom Brown

## Editors’ Note

Second year PPE. My first word was ‘man’. I really enjoy reading literature. Trying to get through the classics. Last book read: ‘Ecce Homo’ by Nietzsche. Favourite book last summer: ‘A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man’ by Joyce. Derwent. Anticipating a busy literature section.



LETTER



DAN DINES: PIG &amp; PASTRY

# Time to Totally try This Tasty Toastie Treat...

*I had a toastie craving. This place delivered the goods, along with the cosiness my cold heart didn't even know I wanted...*

BY DAN GORDON-POTTS

**A**ll the leaves are brown and the sky is grey. I am slipping on my favourite pair of leggings every day now, and I am donning my long winter coat as I leave the house into the cold merciless northern winds of York.

Swishing my checked scarf and getting my pace on out of Tang Hall ASAP I now wear my knee-high leather cowboy boots and play Taylor Swift's Mean out of my wired headphones on the regular. As I wait at the traffic lights on Hull Road, cars drive by and splash me but I just stand and smirk to myself: nothing can possibly stop me right now, autumn is my moment, I am happy.

"One Pumpkin Spice Latte please yah," I find myself regularly saying to the guy at the local starbies a little too often!

But not today. Today, I de-

cided to do something different. I decided to go to Bishopthorpe Road, or, as the locals call it "Bishy Road" (or Bisheh Rurd, depending on who you ask). Why, you may ask? Toastie, if you're so interested. Toastie craving, toastie love. All I could think about this morning was toasties.

My original plan was to go to *Dark Horse Espresso Bar*, as I heard it is run by a few Aussies who sell delicious toasties (and coffee, shockingly). However, as luck would have it, as I skipped down Hull Road and thought maybe I should figure out where this place actually is? I found it on Google Maps, and also that this place which I so longed to visit was, in fact, closed today.

Oh well, I thought to myself, Bishy Road is the finest street in York, I'll just go there and see what else I can find. Find somewhere else I did - *Pig & Pastry*, in fact (after I spied someone in there as I walked past, taking their first bite of what could unmistakably be a toastie, the toastie that I so longed for).

A quick change of plan, I said to a friend, we go in there - I pointed at the lady now probably half way through her other slice of toastie. And so we went in.

I did not make the wrong decision. With its immediately cosy interior and warm charm, *Pig & Pastry* was a delight. We sat down after we were (moderately warmly) offered menus, and I chose a toastie called the Reuben. I saw it had cheddar in it (solid choice), sauerkraut (which sounded interesting) and some kind of cured meat (ok, fair dos). At the end of the day, I wasn't particularly bothered about what I chose, I was already happy with the knowledge that I had secured an inevitable toastie.

All I can say about the toastie is this - from the moment I ate a leaf of the side salad (with its beautifully mild and well-balanced dressing), I knew that this would be the best toasted sandwich of my life. I was not wrong. As soon as I raised the crispy sourdough bread to my mouth and took the first bite I was shocked, shaken

(if you will) by the intensity of the flavour - the saltiness of the meat balanced perfectly with the sauce (a gherkin-ey mayonnaise, I found out later) and the delightful tang of the cheddar cheese, melted of course, this is a toastie after all.

To conclude this saga, and to confirm that I am not actually a Christian autumn girl who frequents coffee chain Starbucks, I would like to recommend *Pig & Pastry* to you - whether you eat meat or not (they have a veggie version of said sandwich) and tell me your thoughts at [scene@york-vision.co.uk](mailto:scene@york-vision.co.uk).



This little number was very little indeed. With its striking red, this small cup is the perfect debut for smallcoffeecups to hit the big press. The espresso, only a single, was of the Roost blend, locally roasted and with a solid reputation for quality (it was the same blend served at my beloved *Cafe Frida*, gone but not forgotten). All in all, it went down well I think - a clean rich taste with a smooth finish. Could do with more crema.

*Pig & Pastry, 8/10*

TRY THIS!

## Stam and Maria Greek Corner Cafe

BY RHIANNON COCKERTON

**With a city flooded with chain coffee shops, try an independent, one with delicious coffee at an affordable price.**

Stam and Maria Greek Corner Cafe is an independent coffee shop located at the Shambles Market entrance on Parliament Street. It's the perfect place to grab a takeaway coffee to take a stroll around York with.

Alongside their perfectly frothy cappuccinos and delicious Greek coffee, the baristas have crafted a chai latte that is to die for - a seasonal fix that will definitely hit the spot.

Stam and Maria Greek Corner Cafe is a great place to get that much-needed caffeine hit without breaking the student budget!

the **biga+**



@thebigaplus



coffee, pizza al taglio and more...

Find us on Walmgate  
Open Mon-Sat  
9:30-18:00



GRAB A FRIEND!

## FREE CINEMA TICKETS YOU SAY?

Watch any movie at City Screen York (Picturehouse) with **TWO FREE TICKETS** for you and a friend!

If you completed the Blurble, then be the first to let us know and we'll get you tickets! Simple as that. (Just take a pic, or send the answers to [games@yorkvision.co.uk](mailto:games@yorkvision.co.uk))

# Blurble.

You have a 150 word blurb describing a Film, TV show, Theatre production, or, well, basically anything. Guess the title and fill in the blanks.

After a magic trick goes wrong, a teenager turns into three people and causes freaks to appear and then disappear. Chaos ensues as one of those three people is attacked by bread, the other re-unites with an old octopus friend of his and the remaining one does some maths. All whilst destroying a national monument.

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ - □ □ □ □

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

## SUDOKU.

Easy

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Medium

	4	6					2
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Hard

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## SET SQUARE.

Fill in the numbers 1-9.  
Equations work left to right and up to down.

	+		÷		= 11
-		x		+	
	-		x		= 10
+		÷		-	
	+		÷		= 6
= 8		= 8		= 4	

## LONGBOI: RECYCLING



Ayman Zahir

## Cartoonist

Our new cartoonist Ayman is back again, this time with a cheeky bit of satire, featuring Vision's second favourite Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, or as we call him, Vishi Sunak (also what we christened our office rubber plant). Mr Austerity himself (and close personal friend of my grandparents) David Cameron also surprises us (not that we asked) as a special little Chrimbo gift.

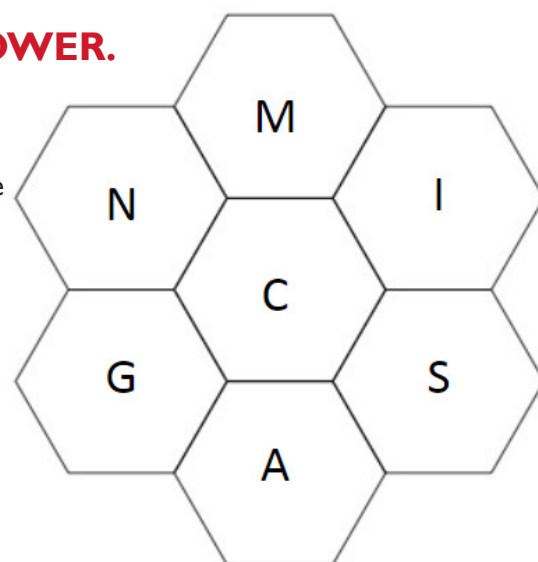


Like Ayman's work?  
For more, see [ayman\\_ish](https://www.instagram.com/ayman_ish) on the instagram.

## WORD FLOWER.

Find as many words as you can using the central letter, use the letters as many times as you like.

<10 OK  
10-19 GOOD  
20-29 GREAT  
30+ AMAZING!



I'm Lucy, the new Games Editor! I'm a first year Maths student who loves making puzzles, so be prepared for lots of the answers to be about maths. If you have any puzzles that you'd like to see, send me an email and I will attempt to fulfil your wish.

Lucy

## Editors' Note

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ANSWERS, STUCK ON A PUZZLE, OR JUST WANT A CHAT, FEEL FREE TO EMAIL ME:  
[GAMES@YORKVISION.CO.UK](mailto:GAMES@YORKVISION.CO.UK)

TURN OVER TO THE BACK PAGE FOR SOME MORE PUZZLES!



# THE BACK PAGE OF SCENE.



## ANONYMOUS 50 WORDS

Do you have 50 anonymous words you would like to share with our readers? Email [scene@yorkvision.co.uk](mailto:scene@yorkvision.co.uk) with yours. Please include 'Anonymous 50' as the email subject, otherwise your writing will not be seen.

### DOWN

- 2) The Negative (2)
- 3) Ring Result (3)
- 4) Exists (2)
- 5) Caesar's Vidi (4)
- 6) Parents' Mums (5)
- 9) Grandpa Simpson (3)
- 10) Mother Colloquially (3)
- 12) Paired With (7)

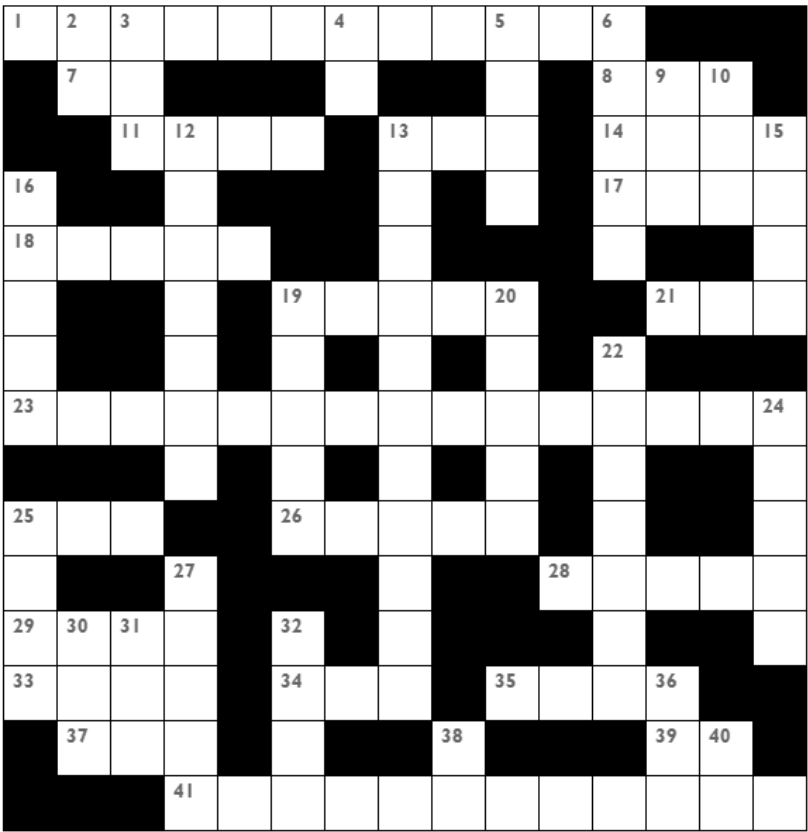
- 13) At a State of Balance (11)
- 15) \_\_\_\_ And Columns (4)
- 16) Frequent As a Ghost (5)
- 19) Ascend A Peak (5)
- 20) Capital For the Kings of Ceylon (5)
- 22) Place Of Refuge (7)
- 24) One Of the Senses (5)
- 25) Sense (4)

- 27) Take Over with Force (5)
- 30) \_\_\_\_ Wiedersehen (3)
- 31) PO Graveyard, Old (anag) (3)
- 32) Let Me Think (4)
- 36) "\_\_\_\_ The Force Luke" (3)
- 38) Spanish Yes (2)
- 40) On Demand (2)

## THE BIG CROSSWORD.

### ACROSS

- 1) Reporter's Chat (12)
- 7) All Right (Informal) (2)
- 8) Animal of the Zodiac (3)
- 11) Capital Is Muscat (4)
- 13) When Will You Get Here? (3)
- 14) A Man Walked Into \_\_\_\_ (1,3)
- 17) Verne Captain (4)
- 18) Sharp and Severe (5)
- 19) Quick, Sharp Sound (5)
- 21) Possesses (3)
- 23) Doctor Who, Outnumbered Etc (10,5)
- 25) A Handful (3)
- 26) Thick Build (5)
- 28) Hide Away (5)
- 29) George \_\_\_\_ CSI (4)
- 33) To Sir, With Love Singer (4)
- 34) \_\_\_\_'s The Word (3)
- 35) Spiritual Advisor (4)
- 37) To Vote in Favour (3)
- 39) That \_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ (2)
- 41) Grows Jack-O'-Lanterns (7,5)



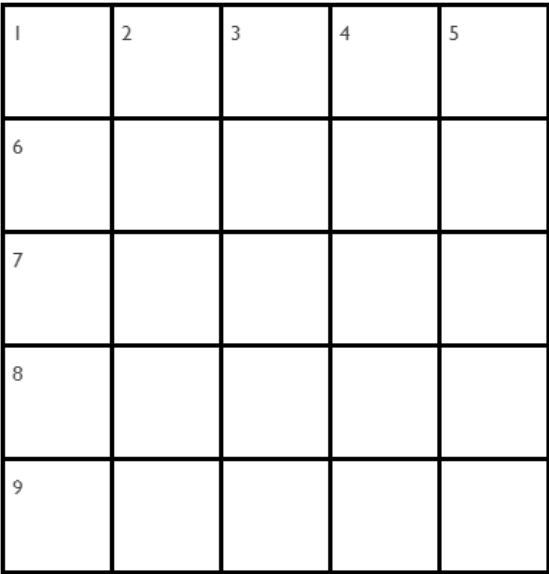
## THE LITTLE ONE.

### ACROSS

- 1) Nonchalant
- 6) Pig Sounds
- 7) Grandmothers
- 8) Related to Mum
- 9) Common lock

### DOWN

- 1) Skeleton Like
- 2) Rainforest Vine
- 3) The Years Record
- 4) Rajidae, TAKES (anag)
- 5) Before Tees



### I took the night bus.

Condensation on the windows  
made the red headlights only smears,  
the world a mere smudge.  
A man walked past as we stopped at the lights  
an orange coat, crutches.  
To LET sights in dark shop windows,  
reflections of reflections, a fleeting image,  
pub window smiles.

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# COLUMNS

## Election Year

BY KAITLYN BEATTIE-ZARB (She/Her), MATT DAVIS (He/Him) AND ANNA MALE (She/Her)



Welcome to Election Year, a new series covering all things world elections, democracy and the future of global politics.

Why now? Why this year? Well, 2024 is predicted to be the biggest year for democracy in history, with more than half the world's population heading to the polls.

Some of the globe's biggest populations will vote for governmental change (or lack

thereof) including India's 1.4 billion, Russia's 144 million, Brazil's 218 million and Mexico's 129 million. And it all leads up to the November election that may determine everything, as predicted nominees Donald Trump and Joe Biden return to the United

States election ballot for the rematch of the century. A rematch that may define the next century of global politics as well.

A little closer to home we're watching the lead up to the United Kingdom's next general election-if we ever get an election date

that is!

But for now it's been a busy few months of elections globally, as we creep towards the end of 2023 and into the start of the biggest election year ever seen.

### NEW ZEALAND - October the 8th 2023

New Zealand isn't a country typically known for dramatic elections or controversial politics. A small island nation of 4 million, New Zealand has made a name for itself through the leadership of Jacinda Ardern - the nation's second female prime minister who managed to sweep a historic majority win for her Labour party in the 2020 election. After Ardern's impromptu resignation in January 2023 - unwilling to fight an election campaign she couldn't or didn't want to win - in stepped Chris Hipkins. His friendly character and affectionate nickname Chippy won him comradeship during Covid-19, however, burdened by Labour's long reign and waning policies, and up against a fresh, new National party opponent Christopher Luxon, this

impromptu incumbent struggled to gain momentum. Under the mixed-member proportional system the Labour and National parties were also up against a range of smaller parties, with everyone stretching for enough seats to avoid messy coalitions (a commonality in NZ). With crime, housing, cost of living and foreign policy all on the agenda, it was Chris Luxon's strong reform plan and promise of change that managed to separate the two largely centralised parties. As the indigenous focused Te Pāti Māori won a historic 6 seats, in the end a governing coalition was formed between the right-wing Nationals, ACT and NZ First parties, as Luxon earned 43% of the vote share and New Zealand headed right for the first time in 6 years.

### AUSTRALIA - October the 8th 2023

As New Zealand headed to the polls to elect their new Prime Minister, across the Tasman Sea Australians were also gathering to watch democracy in action. Polling day was scheduled for a Referendum, asking Aussies whether they'd be willing to change the constitution and allow an official and permanent First Nations (Aboriginal) representative body in Parliament. The Voice was first suggested by First Nations elders in the 2017 Uluru Statement of the Heart, and when Anthony Albanese's Labour party returned to government in 2022, this referendum was first on his agenda. However, the campaign and subsequent outcome weren't as straightforward as he, nor most of Australia, perceived. With voters asked to answer sim-

ply 'yes' or 'no' to the establishment of the Voice, Australia was greatly divided as misinformation, misdirection from the opposing Liberal National party, accusations of racism or wokeness, and a vague and ill-prepared 'Yes' campaign filled the political and internet landscape with noise. In the end the 'No' campaign's simple "If you don't know, vote no" message rang strongest, and Australia watched all six states and over 60% of voters deny the representation change. An early loss for Labour and a surprising win for an increasingly conservative Australia, the important takeaway is that regions with predominantly Indigenous populations seemed to have overwhelmingly voted yes.

### THE NETHERLANDS November the 22nd 2023

In mid-November in the Netherlands Geert Wilders' PVV (the freedom party) - a right wing populist party - won 37 seats (out of a total 150), well ahead of the nearest party, a left-wing grouping. Policies he'd like to bring in include, banning the Koran, leaving the EU and removing all foreign aid. The electoral system is a party-list system meaning that each person votes for a political party and the seats in the Parliament are proportional to the number of votes cast across the country. As a result of this, the post-election coalition building is an important stage of the electoral process. Despite justified alarm about some of the party's policies, the extent to which they can be carried out is not set in stone. A recent appointee, brought in to scout for potential coalition, quitting due to an alleged fraud, which may make Wilders' difficult job of building a working coalition even harder.

### ARGENTINA - October the 22nd 2023

The recent presidential election was won by the right-wing chainsaw-wielding Javier Milei. It is not overall surprising that his opponent Massa, a former finance minister and member of the formerly leading Peronist movement lost this election against a backdrop of incredibly high inflation and an illegal 'blue market' where people can exchange dollars at a

much better rate than via normal exchanges, as a way of bringing dollars into the country, due to them being less volatile than the Argentine Peso. It does not mean that the situation will improve under Milei but it is hard to argue against a change candidate when times are tough.

### POLAND October the 15th 2023

In Poland, the nationalist Law and Justice (PiS) party lost their majority and 8.2% of the vote. The Civic Coalition, Third Way and The Left pledged to form a coalition government with 248 seats, just over the 231 seats needed to form a government. PiS has been under fire in the past for their anti-abortion views, politicisation of the jury. In its place, the pro-EU coalition are looking to 'repair democracy' in Poland - and to legalise abortion, a long contested issue.

### SLOVAKIA - September the 30th 2023

The 30th of September saw Slovakia face an election, with pro-Russian, left-wing Smer coming out on top. Key election issues were the Ukrainian war, reproductive rights and the rule of law, and Smer pledged to stop military support to Ukraine. Smer is joined in coalition with the So-

cial democrats Hlas, formed by dissidents of Smer in 2020, and former Conservative Populist government SNS.

Second place went to Progressive Slovakia, a pro-EU party wanting to create an open and tolerant Slovakia.

### DAYS UNTIL US ELECTION: 334 days

With just under a year left, the US election is already looking like one to watch. As republican long shots battle it out in debates over abortion, cancel culture and who is best able to balance Trump populism with Republican sense, polling results show that Trump is almost guaranteed the Republican nomination at this point.... that is if he isn't in jail. As criminal and civil cases follow Trump across NY, Georgia, Florida and Washington DC, it seems his biggest issue isn't whether he will campaign but how much time he'll have to do so. And let's not forget, there is no constitutional rule against a President governing from prison.

On the Democrat side the nominee is clear, if not particularly confidence filling. Incumbent Joe Biden seems eager to return to the campaign trail, where he shines chatting to voters and kissing babies. However, polls show many democrats fear for his health as he hits 81 years of age. Younger voters are equally frustrated by his lack of action during the Israel-Gaza conflict. However, unless the Democrats can decide on a powerful-enough understudy to go up against a near guaranteed Trump campaign, the old dog - with a notably strong trick of reelection - is all they've got.

### DAYS UNTIL TO UK ELECTION: Who knows at this point?

Will Rishi ever choose a date? Or will he just wade through indecision and in denial until it's too late...He has until January the 28th 2025 to call the election, and gosh is that clock ticking.

Labour have been flying high in the polls and largely focused on remaining the party of good sense for the time being. Keir Starmer's speech (and quick recovery from protestor glitter) were hits of the Labour National Conference earlier this year. However, recent party conflict over whether to support a ceasefire in the Israel-Gaza conflict led to a small but not unnoticed rebellion from select frontbenchers and party members.

The Tories are facing even more chaos. Suella Braverman's insensitive and riot-inducing comments as Home Secretary led her to be forcefully removed from said office in November, just days before the Supreme Court ruled against the government's Rwanda refugee transportation plan, placing the government at war with the international legal system apparently? At least Jeremy Hunt's financially uncontroversial Autumn Statement seems to be reigniting some semblance of a plan - and maybe a hint of election dates? May election anyone?

And well, David Cameron is back... and that's only good news for David.



# FEATURES

## Just Stop Oil: “Putting Pressure Where Pressure Needs to be Applied”

BY ARABELLA GREEN



IMAGE CREDIT: JUST STOP OIL

**J**ust Stop Oil, founded in February 2022, is a climate activist organisation infamous for its controversial protesting methods. Despite honourable intentions to prevent further gas and oil licensing and lower carbon emissions, many people criticise the organisation as unnecessarily disruptive to the public.

Just Stop Oil is currently holding student events in York. I attended a meeting in the hopes of better understanding the organisation's methods.

Here I met Alex, a third year English Literature student.

On considering the origins of his activism, Alex traces it back to programmes like that of David Attenborough — the final message of so many episodes being the guarantee that the natural world is dying.

“These beautiful systems that don't exist anywhere else in the universe ... they will be destroyed” and “there's really nothing you can do” on an individual basis.

This feeling of hopelessness

was only catalysed for Alex by the outcome of the 2015 United Nations Climate Change Conference.

Almost all countries involved, having agreed to limit their carbon emissions — and to a degree “that's still not good ... [though] should save some of the island nations from going under water” — have not made “any meaningful change in their energy sectors”; “have just lied, broken their promises and we can't trust them.”

Alex has no trust in government sincerity, his involvement with Just Stop Oil empowers him with “the sense that an individual can make a difference”.

On Just Stop Oil's methods, Alex cited the history of civil disobedience as the template they follow, referencing the success of the Suffragettes and civil rights activists who used these same methods.

Glueing themselves to roads, slow marching, throwing soup at Van Gogh's Sunflowers — these are all examples of the organisation's non-violent direct actions.

The effectiveness of these actions though is something many question.

But, Alex argues Just Stop Oil is

“putting pressure where pressure needs to be applied”.

Just Stop Oil have so far forced the Met to expend an estimated £4.3 million on policing. This is likely with a view to overwhelming the Metropolitan Police to a point where the government must negotiate.

However, green energy industrialist, Dale Vince, recently withdrew his financial backing of the group in favour of throwing his resources at Keir Starmer's Labour's electoral campaign.

This was supposedly due to not seeing results at a fast enough rate.

“It seems a bit ridiculous,” Alex said, unimpressed with Vince's decision.

“He's backing a party that is going to make things happen in the future, when we need stuff to be happening now ... We don't have time to wait.”

This was Alex's main justification of Just Stop Oil's methods; the necessity.

Public opinion of Just Stop Oil is certainly polarising, even gaining their own hate-organisations like Just Stop Pissing People Off.

Alex thinks this isn't detrimental

for their cause. In fact, he claims it is even beneficial.

By occupying public consciousness, he says Just Stop Oil is forcing people to confront the realities of environmental collapse.

Alex spoke of the overton window — the concept of shifting “what [the public] perceives as radical and outside of the normal.”

“There have been statistics that have come out over this year which have essentially said because of Just Stop Oil and what we do, more people have signed up for Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace; more people have committed money to those organisations that aren't as perceived to be as radical as we are.”

However, the upholding of an eco-friendly lifestyle is not something Alex views as essential on an individual scale.

“I don't subscribe to this idea that we as individuals need to micro-manage our lifestyle and our consumerist habits in order to benefit the climate.”

Referencing George Monbiot's ‘Regeneration’, a book which explores the food revolution and how we can restore the natural world, Alex

outlined two things we can do: switch to a plant-based diet and stop flying.

Beyond that, “action through civil disobedience” is what is important.

“As a person, there's so much more value to yourself in the system by stepping up and facing the law and taking on the powers that are doing the destroying.”

Although acknowledging the personal risks involved in protesting, Alex maintained “this is the end of the world we're talking about”, which he thinks it's certainly worth breaking minor laws for.

“We're talking about the collapse of society, and in all these struggles we were talking about before, people have had targets put on their backs.”

Whether or not Just Stop Oil's methods are indeed necessary and productive, only time will tell. Though I do wonder, if this really is our Armageddon, will I be content in fifty years time with how I acted now?



**ELEANOR SHAW**  
FEATURES EDITOR

Hi everyone, my name is Eleanor Shaw and I'm a First year History and Politics student. As *York Vision's* Features Editor my focus is engaging and creative long-form journalism on any subject you can possibly think of. Whether popular culture or politics, if a story has a unique angle, I'm interested! A unique features section is one of the most memorable sections of any newspaper, and *Vision* is no exception!

# Introducing New Deputy Vice-Chancellor Ken Badcock

BY **HANNAH WILLEY (She/Her)**

**I**n May 2023, Ken Badcock was appointed as the new University of York's Deputy Vice-Chancellor. *Vision* met him for an interview on the 27th of September to get to know him a bit better.

**I was wondering if you could give me a brief statement of what your role is as Deputy Vice Chancellor?**

Yeah, so first of all, literally just deputy to the Vice Chancellor, so if he's away on holiday, I hold the delegated responsibility for his role when he's on holiday, so that's one part, and then planning and budgeting, so making sure the University has a plan that delivers on the strategic objectives, the public good objectives, but also allows us to operate in the coming year, to deliver the education and the research and so on and within our means.

And then, responsible for estates planning, and planning how the University digitises its operations, and I'm also responsible for elements of the staff environment, so for example, the promotions process for staff, and a whole set of other things.

**When I met you last, it was at the English Department meeting, and you said some-**

**thing then about your motivations for the role. Could you just re-iterate that for me?**

I have a degree in Maths and I wrote a doctoral thesis on calculating fluid flows, and then made my career as an academic engineer at the University of Glasgow and then Liverpool, and then I got into leadership positions and so I spent three years as Head of the School of Engineering at Liverpool and then five years as Head of the Faculty of Science and Engineering at Liverpool, and then I went to Royal Holloway as Senior Vice Principal there, and I was there for just short of five years.

I guess the thing that attracted me to York was first of all the academic standards are really high. You can see that in all of the publicly available data and rankings and all of that sort of stuff, so that was an attraction. I think there's lots of potential there for York, and for the University and the city to work together, so that's what I see.

**Is there anything you're particularly looking forward to?**

Yeah, I think there's a huge amount of talent at York, so I think the things I'm excited about is how can we make the best of that talent, and allow people to contribute in

ways that add up to a successful university overall, so I think I'm excited about that and the potential for that. I think budgeting and planning is kind of one element we need to get right to enable that and help people to kind of focus on the right things, rather than worrying about things that we can probably get the organisation right for, and then we don't have to worry about.

**Are there any particular things you've seen, now that you've been here for a few months, that you didn't know before you came to the position?**

Yeah, I mean I had high hopes of what I was going to see in the academic departments and kind of see what the outcomes are in all the metrics and everything are, but I've sort of been blown away, actually, by how good the academic departments are. I've been to the twenty-six departments now. I've been around them all, and I was really impressed with the Heads of Department. I think they really came across well, I think unusually strong compared to other places I've worked. I think that stands out. I was impressed with the energy and how much each of the departments was taking responsibility for what they were doing, the academ-

ic work, but I think I was particularly struck by how outward-looking the departments were.

**In terms of student anxiety, are there any plans going forward to ensure student welfare?**

The industrial relations is obviously a problem and it's not good that we have the action every year, and I think we all need to work towards resolving what's at the heart of that, and again I think the Vice Chancellor does a very good job on the national stage, because it is a national dispute ultimately, to try and move the dialogue onto a more constructive footing. There needs, for example, I think to be a dialogue on sector finances, so that you reach a sheer position between the unions and the employers on what's possible.

**So, we're moving up in the league tables and we were nominated for University of the Year, so what would you attribute that success to?**

I would call out supportive and creative staff, I think that is absolutely critical, so I think that is what the measures in the leagues tables are partly about... derived from student feedback on what they think of the experience and I think generally speaking if our staff, ac-

ademic and support staff, are attentive and motivative and trying to support the students to get all that you're looking for in coming to study at York, I think that generally tends to end up with good measures.

**Have you seen anything at the University of York that you'd really like to change, or that you thought actually wasn't very good?**

Well, okay. I mean, I'm laughing because I think that people coming into a senior leadership role and say "oh no, actually all that's wrong, so it's all off and we'll make it like this and that will all be great", that doesn't tend to go well. You've got to work with the institution. One thing is, I think some of our estate is not helping the academic work, so I think some of the original buildings are not in great condition, so I've seen they're hot in summer. I imagine they're not so hot in winter, and the space isn't set up very well. It's not very accessible. I know it's costing us a lot to maintain, and to provide utilities that are energy-efficient and it's not providing a great lay-out for the co-operative academic environment that we need today.



IMAGE CREDIT: UNIVERSITY OF YORK



Hi, I'm Charlotte and I'm the Lifestyle Editor! I'm always on the lookout for new ideas and perspectives on life and I can't wait to share them with you. I'll be giving tips on student living, ponderings on the world, and social commentary on life at the University of York. Hope you enjoy!

# Boys and Girls: Can They be Friends?

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)

'Boys and girls can never be friends': This age-old myth would have you believe truly platonic boy-girl friendships are unattainable. Specifically when it comes to friendships between heterosexual boys and girls, shooting down questions like 'are you sure they're just a friend?' can be a daily occurrence.

It's puzzling why the word 'just' is always added here. This seems to suggest that platonic boy-girl friendships are second-tier to amorous relationships. Not only does this word diminish the sincerity of boy-girl friendships but it also perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes.

Boy-girl friendships are often viewed with suspicion by observers. The girl is often seen as a naive creature; she is incapable of seeing

the sexual nuance which forms the basis of his friendliness towards her. Or, on the opposite side of the spectrum, she is slut-shamed and villainized for 'taunting' the boy with the prospect of something more than friendship. In boy-girl friendships, the boy is also presented unflatteringly. He is seen as someone who only maintains the friendship out of hope that one day, it will turn into something more. It couldn't be possible that he enjoys her company without wanting a return on his romantic investment!

Similarly, the idea of a "Friend Zone" is often alluded to when discussing this type of friendship. The mere mention of a boy-girl friendship often conjures up an image where one person is involuntarily trapped in the dreaded "Friend Zone". This phrase, as insignificant

as it may seem, reinforces the idea that relations between men and women can't be truly meaningful if they're platonic.

Endorsing this archaic view is especially harmful when one of the people in the friendship is already in a monogamous relationship. We can see plenty of examples of this in the media. For instance, Outer Banks actor Rudy Pankow (JJ) toned down his public friendship with his on-air love interest Madison Bailey (Kiara), because the shipping fan edits made his off-screen girlfriend uncomfortable. This example might seem niche, but cases like this are in no way limited to the celebrity sphere. Similar things happen every day as a result of the normalised (il)legitimisation of boy-girl friendships.

In a way, it's understandable



why people come to think of boy-girl friendships as unobtainable. After all, the whole slow-burn, friends-to-lovers trope is admired in multiple sitcom-style TV shows, like Jim and Pam in The Office and Jake and Amy in Brooklyn 99. But it's important to remind ourselves that whilst we can all appreciate this familiar (if not slightly overdone) format, it isn't illustrative of ALL boy-girl relations. Many boy-girl relations can be strictly platonic friendships of equal calibre and value.

So, in short, the answer is yes. Of course, girls and boys can be

friends. Great friends, I might add.

Having a diverse variety of friends is a positive thing, not something which someone should be shamed for. Making friends with people of all genders can teach us new things, allowing us to practise empathy and gain insight which we might not have otherwise considered. There are lots of benefits which come from having a mixed friendship group and for those who have enough emotional maturity, boy-girl friendships can be very rewarding.

## How to Reduce Seasonal Depression

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)

**S**easonal Depression is real - but here are 5 tips on how you can reduce it:

### 1. Embrace the cold:

Walks by the lake, high-intensity sports, morning runs: these outdoor activities can be exhilarating and alleviate feelings of coldness, which is a huge part of Seasonal Depression.

### 2. De-stress during the evenings:

The earlier nights don't always have to be a bad thing. You could spend an evening unwinding by writing poetry, journaling or reading by candlelight. Alternatively, you and your friends could organise a spa night; full of self-care and face masks to create the ultimate relaxation experience.

### 3. Activities with friends:

There are plenty of group activities which help maintain a warm spirit, even during the colder months. Decorating gingerbread biscuits, baking cookies or sharing mugs of hot chocolate can liven up your kitchen's atmosphere.

### 4. Natural Light is your Friend:

Keeping your curtains open as much as possible during the day maximises your daylight exposure, improving your mood.

For those who especially struggle with waking up in a pitch-black room, perhaps consider buying a dawn simulator alarm clock, which slowly adds more light into the room to make it easier to wake up.

### 5. Volunteering:

Helping others can be a great way to practise gratitude and also give back to the community. Small acts of kindness like volunteering at a soup kitchen or local food bank can turn someone's seasonal depression into seasonal joy.



# Slacking on Sleep

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her) AND EMILY SINCLAIR (She/Her)

**E**veryone always tells you that sleep is important. But, did you realise how much we are all slacking on our sleep schedules? We are letting our bodies down, really we are! Why is sleep so important? For us, it's very easy to not prioritize sleeping as, more often than not, the real world is more jam-packed than our dream world. Sleep tends to be sacrificed during busy times. However, if you look at the science you will realise that really we should start taking more care of our sleeping patterns.

Wave goodbye to your afternoon naps that very quickly turn into hours of shut eye. It turns out they're not that they're not always good for you! *York Vision* has done its own research and spoken to Psychology PHD student Emma Sullivan to get to the bottom of how to fix your sleep.

Let's start with the basics. Research shows that humans need 7-9 hours of sleep a night. Now, this is just a recommendation but studies show that if we are able to achieve this regularly then our brains, heart and overall quality of life will be better. Unfortunately, it is a common myth that you can just 'catch up on sleep' (don't worry, we've all tried it!) but in reality, this is not the case. Here is what Emma had to say when we asked, in simple

terms, what happens to the brain as we are sleeping?

When we are asleep, our brain shows distinct patterns of activity depending on what stage of sleep we are in. Each night, we will progress through around 4-5 sleep cycles, and each cycle consists of 4 stages of sleep, lasting between 70-120 minutes. The first 3 stages are composed of what we call non-rapid eye movement sleep (NREM), which consists of stages 1, 2, and 3. Stage 1 is short and reflects the transition to sleep, here your brain waves start slowing down considerably. In Stage 2, the body and mind begin to slow down even further. Stage 2 includes specific brain pattern activity such as sleep spindles and k-complexes. It is thought that sleep spindles play a role in helping to consolidate memories overnight. Stage 3 is otherwise known as deep sleep. Here overall brain activity slows and this stage of sleep is characterised by big slow waves. Stage 3 has been shown to be important for memory but also for other things such as reducing next-day anxiety. Finally, we enter rapid eye movement sleep (REM). During this stage, brain activity actually ramps up and looks quite similar to that when we are awake. This heightened brain activity may explain why our dreams are most prevalent and intense during this stage of sleep. REM sleep is thought to be important for memory and also for regulating our emotions overnight.

Wow! That is definitely a lot more complex than I thought. The brain is always working on multiple levels to ensure we function the best

we can. All stages of the sleep cycle are beneficial for different reasons and so it is important that we allow our body to experience them all.

**We know by now that 7-9 hours is the goal. But, is that actually the optimum way of sleeping? Is it better to get all our sleep at once?**

So biphasic/polyphasic sleep refers to sleeping for two/or more segments per day, whereas monophasic refers to having only one segment of sleep, usually during night-time hours. As you said, due to societal norms, most people tend to have monophasic sleep. In terms of what is better, it likely depends on individual preference. As long as you get the recommended daily amount (7-9 hours), some people find that splitting that across the day works better for them whereas others find they feel better on a monophasic sleep schedule. Personally, I feel extra groggy after a nap and don't sleep well that evening so I prefer to be a monophasic sleeper. Nonetheless, historically, there is evidence we naturally follow a more biphasic sleep pattern, and this is also the norm in some cultures (e.g. having a siesta in the Spanish culture). There are also proven benefits of napping for cognition, memory, and emotion regulation so I'd say whatever works best for you.

**Phew! So, naps aren't completely ruled out. What actually happens to the brain when we nap? I want to explore a bit more why it can be beneficial.**

During napping, the brain goes through the same sleep stages

as it does overnight, it will just go through fewer cycles overall as the time asleep will be reduced during a nap. And yes, naps have been shown to be beneficial for brain health, some research even shows that napping for as little as 5-15 minutes can improve how you perform on a cognitive task. Recently, researchers at UCL have even shown that more frequent napping is associated with a larger total brain volume. Therefore, napping may compensate for inadequate sleep during the night and preserve brain health. However, as mentioned above, some people may benefit from naps more than others, so it is important to find a sleep schedule that works best for you.

**Ah, I see. So effectively be careful when napping! Instead, it is suggested that you find a pattern that works for you and your body. Don't change this too regularly and try not to oversleep! Are there any general, scientific differences between the way that men and women sleep?**

So, men and women actually have different circadian rhythms. Circadian rhythms refer to our 24-hour internal clock that regulates our bodily functions including sleepiness and alertness. It has been shown that women's internal clocks are typically a few minutes shorter than men's. This means that women often have an earlier circadian timing, so they prefer to go to bed and wake up earlier than men. One study also found that men sleep longer during the night and during a nap than women do. Regarding the effect of not sleeping

on mood, it is thought that women might be more vulnerable to the effects of sleep loss on mood. This is because they have a greater impairment in the brain regions responsible for controlling mood following a lack of sleep compared to men.

**With all this in mind, how can we get the best optimum sleep at night?**

There are useful techniques we can take from Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) that can help to improve our sleep. For example, the 15-20 rule. The idea here is that if you are lying in bed trying to sleep (at any time of the night) and you feel it has been around 15 minutes and sleep is not coming, then you should get out of bed. You should go and do a quiet activity outside of bed e.g. reading, knitting until you feel sleepy again and want to go back to bed. This will avoid associating your bed with lying awake and trying to sleep. In addition, there are some cognitive distraction techniques you can engage with to prevent a racing mind when falling asleep. For example, counting backwards in 7's from 1000. However, if your sleep is severely impacting your day-to-day life you might want to seek professional advice from a GP.

**Hopefully this has allowed you to think a bit more about your sleeping pattern and how it directly affects your everyday life. If you want to take away anything then take this as an excuse to sleep more! Night! Sweet Dreams!**



# ENVIRONMENT

IMAGE CREDIT: ANNA MALE

## The Real Ducks of York

BY ANNA MALE (She/Her)

**Long Boi's unfortunate demise shed light on the importance of looking after our duck companions.**

Long Boi's origin was a mystery, as are the origins of many of the campus ducks. The emergence of a second, less-long Boi, brought this issue back into the mainstream.

York's two campuses are home to a plethora of different waterfowl, who have many, many different dedicated Instagram accounts (see @keepingupwiththequackdashians, @LongboiYork, @goldengirl\_york).

These campus celebrities are attracted to the University for a number of reasons other than their adoring fans, and there's a variety of reasons as to why they chose York as their home.

"Originally, there was a set of ducks released on campus, a long time ago... There are a few species that we think are nesting on campus only because of those original introductions".

Prof. Colin Beale is an ecologist at the University of York, who specialises in conservation patterns and spatial biology, particularly focusing on birds and waterfowl. In conversation with *Vision*, he

enlightened us on the behaviours and origins of campus waterfowl.

Some ducks who were originally released on campus can be seen in their descendents, such as the pochards, a rare nesting bird. These diving ducks are on Birds of Conservation Concern Red list - meaning their place on campus holds great importance.

Other birds are species that "will come to any pond anywhere" such as the mallard duck, and species that were previously introduced have since disappeared.

While the University does not hold records on duck breeds, ecologists such as Colin are able to observe which of them nest, feed and breed on campus.

Colin said that ducks need "somewhere safe from predation" where there is "plenty of food". Campus provides the perfect space - students and staff happily oblige in keeping them well fed.

Other than that, many species just look for good water with vegetation to hide from predators, and the opportunity to nest.

Estate services play a large role in maintaining the water and the vegetation, through initially designing the lake to ensure that ducks are kept to manageable numbers.

Although they are very cute, this ensures that the waterfowl don't overrun the campus as in high numbers they are more susceptible to disease. Bird flu is one such disease that globally affects waterfowl. Colin believes Bird flu has already been amongst the campus ducks.

The grounds team do not actively manage the population of ducks, but they do sup-

species (and control the "faecal matter" produced), the University applies to DEFRA for a licence to dip some of their eggs in paraffin which prevents too many geese chicks hatching.

New species come and go to campus as they please.

Long Boi II, the slightly shorter boi who gained fame after Long Boi went missing, is one such duck. Although he only reached internet fame recently, expert Colin confirmed that "he's been around for a couple of years".

Long Boi gained more popularity due to him being "more aggressive and more obvious", but his second iteration unfortunately is not a Long Boi replacement.

Colin speculated that he could be a Long Boi descendent - but this question is yet to be answered for certain.

The reason as to why we see different species in different places has long puzzled ecologists. The question of "why aren't all species found everywhere?" underpins Colin's research, especially as the distribution of species has changed in recent years.

Campus is not exempt from changing species - in fact, certain duck and bird species are already arriving due to changing habitats. Cetti's Warbler is one such species which was present on campus throughout the last year for the first time and probably tried nesting.

But how do we support our waterfowl residents in their changing numbers?

Aside from keeping up the steady stream of good duck food, Colin recommends leaving them alone to nest.

Despite nesting near students and accommodation, this is a stressful time for the waterfowl and they don't leave the nest until the last minute. Keeping your distance and allowing them to get on with things means they remain happy.

Long Boi left a (tall) duck-sized space in the centre of campus.

But, in his wake, there are so many species still left to discover.

Although why they like the University so much may be puzzling to ecologists and students alike, they sit at the centre of the 1960s architecture as York's best - and cutest - residents.





**ANNA MALE**  
ENVIRONMENT EDITOR

I am the new Environment Editor and I am so excited to be able to highlight climate change and the environment in this issue. It's something that concerns the world around us and, at the moment, is hugely important in politics and society due to the climate emergency. I hope you enjoy this section!

# Oil Spills Over COP28

BY ANNA MALE (She/Her)

Oil companies (and CEOs) are casting a shadow over this year's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP28) in the UAE, from the 30th of November to the 12th of December.

COP28, standing for 28th meeting of the Conference of the Parties, is a meeting of the member states of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It brings together 198 countries (or parties), including the UK, and other experts and stakeholders, such as business leaders, climate scientists and young people.

COP28 is presided over by Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, CEO of Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (Adnoc), a state-

owned company, an already controversial decision due to the conflicts this could cause.

The Centre for Climate Reporting (CCR) with the BBC found documents showing Sultan Al Jaber was using COP28 as a means to lobby for oil and gas deals with at least 27 foreign governments, including the UK.

The investigation confirms that Al Jaber planned talking points on expanding exports of Adnoc's oil and gas for COP28 meetings, but could not confirm how often these were brought up.

In response, the COP team said to CCR that "private meetings are private" and Al Jaber's other positions are "public knowledge".

Internal emails and meet-

ing records raise issues of independence on the COP28 team from ADNOC. The team has denied the influence of oil companies over COP28 although allegedly being in contact with oil company employees.

The concept of sustainability and national oil companies already contains a conflict. Impak Analytics reported on the lack of transparency around state-run oil companies energy transition, without which the move to sustainable energy is not possible.

State-run oil companies do not attempt to reduce their carbon footprint and often lack any transparency and credibility commitments. They also hold 65% of the world's hydrocarbon reserves,

Oil supermajors - ExxonMobil, BP, TotalEnergies, Chevron, Shell and Eni - are highlighted in the report as having a negative impact on 10 out of 17 UN Sustainable Development goals. 94% of these impacts on average are mitigated.

But 94% of emissions are also from indirect effects of exploration and production of raw materials (upstream of their value chain) and refining it into a marketable product (downstream of their value chain). The main reduction measures don't include this, and a few majors don't have a goal to reduce this emission at all.

Climate commitments in the past few years have been noticeably reduced, as BP re-

duced its target to reduce oil production by 25%, down from 40%. New oil and gas reserves have been approved for Eni.

These issues, and national oil companies being unclear on their energy transition strategies, the role that states play in ensuring a clean energy transition is more important than ever.

With such a large influence of national oil companies, COPs ability to resolve issues like sustainable energy and the use of natural finite resources is brought into question.

Without every state, and their oil companies, being on board to transition to clean energy, COP28 may present more challenges than it solves.

## Is York's Pollution Above WHO's Levels?

BY ANNA MALE (She/Her)

York's air pollution is above World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended levels, according to the 2023 Air Quality Annual Status Report (ASR) by the City of York Council (CYC).

ASR shows the two main pollutants are nitrogen dioxide and particulate matter (PM).

Nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) levels are highest in Gillygate in 2022, with the annual mean increased from 2021 to 2022 by 6%.

Roadsides, such as Fishergate, Lawrence Street and Fulford Road, showed some improvement, but the continued breach of the health based NO<sub>2</sub> areas of the city centre present a danger to public health, especially for vulnerable groups.

This is because NO<sub>2</sub> can increase asthma in children and the elderly, and potentially increase chances of respiratory diseases in them and people with asthma.

It also has an adverse effect

on the environment, increasing chances of acid rain, contributing to nutrient pollution in coastal waters and making the air more hazy.

Particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub>) and micro-particulate matter (PM<sub>2.5</sub>) is monitored daily in York, and falls below national air quality objectives. This is above the WHO's recommended guidelines, recently strengthened.

Particulate matter presents a threat to heart and lung health, and contributes

to a range of environmental problems, such as making lakes and streams acidic, acid rain, and depleting nutrients in soil.

The City of York Council has plans in place to reduce climate change in the city through their Climate Change Strategy. They are aiming to reduce congestion and encourage use of walking, cycling and public transport.

Of course, this is not possible without reliable and affordable public transport,

particularly pertinent with the many recent changes to First Bus.

Extinction Rebellion York called on the Council for free public transport and to stop plans to dual the outer ring road, among other proposals, on the 23rd of November.

Reducing pollution, especially in city centres, is of utmost importance in creating a more pleasant urban environment and in regards to climate change as a whole.



## SPORT



# Sabbs Accuse BUCS of “Mass Transphobia”

BY JACOB BASSFORD (He/Him)

IMAGE CREDIT: EMILY SINCLAIR

**P**resident of the Sport Union Tanisha Jain, and YUSU President, Pierrick Roger, have openly attacked British Universities and Colleges Sport - the governing body of higher education sport in the U.K. - over their stance on trans rights.

YUSU took the opportunity in an Instagram post announcing the creation of a limited-term paid role at the Student Union, called the Student Researcher looking into Transgender, Non-Binary, and Gender-Queer inclusion in sport. This role is reputedly the first of its kind in British universities, even arguably in British sport itself. It is designed to have someone with specialist knowledge in this area of intense and complex debate to look at how we can be more inclusive of Trans, NB and gender-queer people in sport. This is happening at a time when there are a lot of reactionary blanket bans being put in place by national and international bodies on trans-participation, usually aimed at transgender men. Tanisha and Pierrick did not hold back on their criticisms of BUCS trans-policies saying in the Instagram post: “In this atmosphere of general transphobia in sport (don’t want to name and shame or anything, \*cough cough BUCS)\*, this work is more than necessary, it’s long overdue.” Included in the post were memes highlighting the

position of BUCS on trans-policies, including an Anime gif of a character slapping another character captioned: “Us discovering the mass transphobia in BUCS”.

BUCS guidelines on trans-participation are varied and can be viewed on their website, but notably the guidelines stress: “Where the National Governing body for the sport where the activity is taking place has a policy on transgender participation in sport this shall be followed.”

Furthermore, in a ‘Sabbs in Short’ email to students on the 1st of November, Tanisha announced that the Sport Union was “in the process of launching the first ever LGBTQ+ sports club [at the University], a safe place for anybody and everybody to take part in sports at York.”

This is part of York’s expanding social sport program and is a mainstay policy as Tanisha promised to make York sport more inclusive.

Whilst these are initiatives are designed to make the sport more accessible, YUSU have run the risk of side-tracking from what is a well-thought through scheme by diving head-first in a finger-pointing competition at BUCS. They are also at risk of defamation, although a muted response by BUCS to these allegations suggest otherwise.

YUSU have gone for a Hail Mary and it could work. Maybe

BUCS trans guidelines are intrinsically transphobic and this policy announcement could make real headway into making sport at the University, and universities UK-wide more accessible for all. But, I feel that YUSU have gone about this in the wrong way, and are in serious danger of appearing to be tokenistic rather than achieving genuine equality at York.

BUCS commented to *Vison*: “At BUCS, we recognise that the participation of a transgender athlete in competitive sport must not be restricted unless it is proportionate to the aim of securing safe and/or fair competition. BUCS relies on the expertise of National Governing Bodies, and follows the policy on transgender participation relevant to the sport and location where it is taking place. If the National Governing Body doesn’t have a policy on transgender participation, the International Federation policy on transgender participation is followed. More information on what to do if the NGB or International federation do not have a policy and our full regulations can be found on the BUCS website.”

Tanisha, York Sport Union President commented:

“This research role was launched to start a conversation and look into the lived experiences many of our students face when trying to participate in sport. We hope it will be the basis of a policy

that we can use on campus to make sports more inclusive but also to submit a proposal to BUCS for them to review their policies. Prior to launching the role we consulted the network and students who are part of the community and we had an overwhelmingly positive response, and we hope that the community feels safe and supported when speaking to us.”

Pierrick, Union President also responded:

“Calling BUCS transphobic is not defamatory. This statement is based on literature referenced in the original post which indicates BUCS regulations regularly and consistently discriminate against certain type of bodies, transgender people amongst the most seriously affected. Currently, some of our players are unable to play sport at a competitive level like their peers because of these outdated policies. We find this unfair and unjust and we wholeheartedly call it what it is: transphobia. We do not view trans, non-binary or gender queer people as tokenistic and hope that the research we produce will directly contribute to ameliorating the experience of all athletes. This is research BUCS, as the specialist in the room, should have commissioned themselves a long time ago.”

# Rugby Teams to Merge

BY EDDIE ATKINSON (He/Him)

*Vision* can confirm that Heslington East is set to merge its Men’s and Women’s rugby clubs by next academic year.

The move will see the two sides operate as a single club, and is the latest in a series of concerted efforts towards the merging of men’s and women’s college sporting teams, with both James and Constantine College merging their football teams last year.

Heslington East Women’s Rugby Club President Bailey McIntosh said that, “working with everyone involved has been a great experience, and I can’t wait to see what opportunities it brings for both sides of the club. We are all looking forward to seeing how this decision can help grow women’s rugby at the University, building upon the solid foundation the boys have built”.

Ruaidhri Madagan, president of Heslington East Men’s Rugby Club, said: “We, as a club, are very happy with this step forward. Both teams are very successful, and now unified, will be even better than before. I look forward to working with Bailey and the girls over the rest of the year”!

Timothy Woodford, Constantine College President, thanked both presidents for their work, saying “working with both Ruaidhri and Bailey on this project has been awesome. It’s been such a welcoming and collaborative space, which has really allowed us to find the optimal way to move forward with both clubs”.

In terms of the opportunities the merger will provide, Tim said that “taking this action to solidify the great relationships the clubs already have is a really positive step, and will hopefully provide greater charitable, social, and competitive opportunities for all members of ‘Heslington East Rugby Club’. I’m especially excited to see both teams sporting playing kits moving forward”!



IMAGE CREDIT: HES EAST RUGBY

# A Legend Once More: World's 2023

BY TOBY CHESHIRE (He/Him)

One of esports pinnacle tournaments concluded in late November, complete with one of the greatest comeback stories esports has ever seen. Scintillating storylines, heroic highlights, and record-breaking results made this year’s clash of the titans into a thriller. The 16,000-capacity arena for the finals sold out in less than 10 minutes after sales went live, and with over 6.4 million peak confirmed viewers online, the tournament knocked it out the park once again.

For those unaware of League of Legends it’s a 5v5 fantasy-inspired combat game in which teams de-

fend a side of an arena while trying to control their opponents side.

This year’s tournament was defined by the battle between JDG and T1. JDG is nothing short of a juggernaut. The team was built to be the best in the world, combining the best talents that China had to offer. They have had a dominant 2023, taking titles with no sign of slowing down before Worlds.

T1 by comparison, were debatably not even the best team from their region, the last event the Koreans won was in early 2022. With rumours of personnel changes in 2024 this was their last chance to

win as a unit. But you can never count T1 out, in large part due to their flagship superstar performer, Lee “Faker” Sang-hyeok.

Faker is a legend of the game and is regarded as the best player of all time. His technical ability is unparalleled – he’s the face of League, and arguably esports itself. He won Worlds in 2013, 2015, and 2016. Despite a lull in results over the years, he’s never given up, always setting sights on another win at Worlds.

Both teams fought through the group stage and their respective quarter finals before meeting in the

semis. All eyes were on the two – over 4.3 million confirmed viewers online plus thousands in the arena. Blows were traded, but T1 defied the odds and took the series in a huge upset win.

This culminated in a grand final between T1 and team Weibo and the latter just couldn’t stand up to the inexorable force of T1’s might. They dominated the series, winning in brutal fashion. Finally, Faker got the win he had been chasing for seven long years, proving once again that you never truly lose till you have given up.



**JACOB BASSFORD**  
SPORT EDITOR

Welcome to the Sports Section. I'm Jacob and I am a third-year History student. I have been the Sport Editor for a year now and it's so good to see the section go from strength to strength. In this section we welcome new contributors, Eddie Atkinson and Anna Male, and Toby returns with another great esports article. Meanwhile, I talk about recent comments made by YUSU regarding the transgender policies of BUCS. Hope you enjoy, JB.

IMAGE CREDIT: EMILY SINCLAIR

# Is Cheer a Sport?

BY ANNA MALE (She/Her)

**Think cheerleader and you think blonde, popular mean girl, wandering the locker-clad halls of a US high school. Or you think Cheer, the 2020 Netflix series that showcased the lives of elite college athletes.**

The latter shot to fame but the realities of cheerleading in the UK are still widely misunderstood. Cheerleading is still seen as regulated to the sidelines, there to cheer on the “real” athletes, usually synonymous with men. Saying that cheer is a sport perplexes because how can it be, when cheerleaders are only there to support men? Both competitive university cheer and All-Star cheer evades public knowledge because few know that it actually exists. 70 universities in the UK offer cheerleading as a sport, and these compete at a national level in multiple different competitions. This includes the York Hornets Cheerleading Club, which contains six cheer teams and three dance teams across the sport.

All-Star cheer, that is cheerleading that is at private clubs, has its own competitions, nationally and internationally. UK teams regularly compete at these and succeed, with Surrey-based Unity AllStars Black winning International Level 7 non-tumbling. For non-cheerleaders, that's the highest cheer level there is.

Team England competes at the International Cheer Union Worlds, and in 2023 came 7th in the world in one division. Cheer-

leading isn't just restricted to the US anymore, but is a global sport. In 2021, the Olympic Committee recognised cheerleading as a sport, with the goal to get it to the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics.

So why, despite its success, is it but is now a worldwide sport. so hard to recognise cheer as a sport? Cheer, despite its history, has overwhelmingly been seen in the past as a women's sport. While it started at Princeton in the USA as a male-dominated discipline serving to control and to hype up the crowds at sports games, in WW2 it became female dominated and has remained that way since.

As a sport, cheerleading requires strength, flexibility, excellent teamwork and, maybe most importantly, resilience and the ability to keep trying skills. When these skills are performed, the difficulty required, as well as the athleticism that goes into cheer, is minimised, particularly when they are performed by women.

Speaking to Hornets President Tilly Finch, she comments on the difficulty of All Star cheer, saying:

“All Star cheer is very wholesome and it's a lot more sessions, so I would train, my team would have two or three training sessions a week. One of them was purely conditioning so just getting that fitness level up and then one of them was a tumbling session so we used to have separate sessions for our tumbling and that was mandatory for our team, and then we would have stunting sessions, and that would be- I would have to have a second dinner when I got home

because I was so tired from it. The intensity of All Star training is just so much higher than uni training.”

Her experience on All Star, and cheer as whole, is remarkably positive, compared to the stereotypes of cheer as a whole. Her experience of telling people that she is a cheerleader is that people don't associate her personality with cheer - rather, they expect cheerleaders to be “very preppy and like woohoo!”. This isn't the personality that most people associate with athleticism - but it might be what they associate with more feminine thoughts.

The misconceptions that surround what cheer is isn't just regulated to cheer but rather concerns all women's sports and sports that are perceived as “feminine”. Women athletes are typically paid less than male athletes, their sports are covered up to 20 times less than mens, and sports coverage is dominated by male sports.

This is changing - 2023 saw the biggest FIFA Women's World Cup, breaking even for the first time by bringing in \$570 million, and 62% of England football fans now supporting the Lionesses.

The rise of other women's sports is important but does not change the perception of sports typically seen as feminine or for women. Cheer, despite its roots, remains strongly in this category, with the required athleticism being ignored.

Tilly comments that part of the reason why it's so hard for many to accept that cheer is difficult is due to the performance aspect of it, as well as the certain look that is associated with cheer. Cheer, like every

other sport, has an associated uniform, which usually includes heavier makeup and the big cheer bow. Tilly says that “But other people, they think well, what other sport would you do that for? And it's that, it's why you feel the need to do that, surely it's about looking pretty then. And it's like no, it's so the stage lights don't wash you out.”

The performance aspect, the need to look a certain way while doing it (cheer unfortunately isn't exempt from issues about what a cheer body should look like), creates a misconception that cheerleading is (a) easy and (b) just for looks.

This performance requires big facials and a strong dance aspect - which goes against traditionally masculine ideas of sport, of values of strength and a lack of emotion. The stereotypes, as with anything in a societal view of gender, mean men are not exempt from it. Men that participate in cheer are often seen as emasculated and stereotyped as gay, no matter what their sexuality may be. Cheer is feminised, seen as attention seeking and bitchy, traits often given to gay men and confident women.

Ideas of how to perform gender still seep into the space of sports, and ideas of what sports are and aren't are subsequently impacted. Maybe it's the struggle to have cheer accepted as more than cheering other athletes on that furthers ideas of being ‘bitchy’ and unwelcoming, a performance but not a showcase of athleticism. Cheer is seen as attention-seeking, and in a society where women's sports are

routinely ignored, this has manifested itself into being the trademark of the mean girls in western media. Tilly comments that people assume she is ‘very gossipy and lives of the drama’ when she says she's a cheerleader, despite her experience of cheer being anything but this.

Her experience of competitions also may surprise some - despite the connotations, her experience has been largely positive, commenting on how ‘it's actually very friendly and encouraging... everybody's so nice to everyone and it's such a nice vibe’. Cheerleaders tend to literally and metaphorically lift each other up, but media stereotypes mask this.

Sport, much like other areas of society and culture, both continue to reproduce and reflect the hierarchies within society. Typically masculine values, like toughness, power, strength and competitiveness exist within sports and can continue to reproduce through sports, in participants and spectators.

Cheer being recognised as a sport aims to further the sport itself but it also helps to redefine what we see as athleticism and worthy of being called a sport. ‘Looking pretty’ while performing or playing a sport shouldn't prevent it from being considered anything else, especially not one that relies on close teamwork, insane levels of trust and highly skilled technique, not to mention the strength needed.

Values like these, that prioritise social bonds and skill, shouldn't be put to the sidelines. And neither should cheer.



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# Sabbs Accuse BUCS of "Mass Transphobia"



IMAGE CREDIT: EMILY SINCLAIR