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IMAGE CREDIT: YORK VISION

# UNI ADOPTING A “FLEXIBLE APPROACH” TO INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

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## UoY plans to alter entry requirements for some international students in clearing

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

**T**he University of York is now adopting a “flexible approach” for admitting international students who miss the required grades.

The Financial Times has revealed the University sent an email to all of its departments saying “in response to the

current financial challenges, the University has decided to lower its tariff for all departments and programmes for overseas applicants.”

While prospective UK students (who pay the frozen £9,250 per year) will be typically required to earn A grades in their A Levels to receive offers at the University, prospective

international undergraduates, who currently pay £21,950 per academic year, may be given places on the same courses when they receive only B or C grade A Level equivalents, according to The Times...

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# UoY Taken to Court Over Bullying Charges

BY HANNAH WILLEY (She/Her)

Professor Jim McCambridge is suing the University of York, believing he was treated unfairly due to his anti-smoking beliefs.

The University of York launched an investigation into Professor Jim McCambridge, which concluded he had bullied and harassed three students. McCambridge, however, believes this investigation was a reaction to his anti-smoking beliefs. He argues that his aversion to tobacco companies interfering with policy-making is a “protected philosophical belief”, and therefore is attempting to sue the University.

In 2016 and 2017, Professor McCambridge allegedly criticised the University of York’s ties with Neil McKeganey, a former professor at the University of Glasgow whose company was funded by the tobacco company Philip Morris.

As the chair of addictive behaviours and public health, McCambridge argues tobacco and alcohol

companies should have no influence over policy.

He told The Telegraph: “Public health needs to be protected from policy interference and associated interventions within science by the alcohol and tobacco industries, so that the integrity of science is preserved.”

He believes the association will “impact adversely on the health of some unidentified people in society.”

When he was met with the bullying charges, McCambridge believed these conclusions were directly linked to his beliefs. This is due to what he deemed “serious procedural unfairness” during the investigation after complaints were made by three students. Therefore, he has decided to sue the university on these grounds.

During the initial hearing at Leeds, the University argued the case should be thrown out, saying

there was “no sensible reading” of the charges being due to a protected philosophical belief.

However, the employment judge, Ian Miller, disagreed. He said it is “just about arguable that he might be able to show that he reasonably believed that the information set out in these documents demonstrated that the health of society at large, and consequently the people who make up that society, was being put at an increased risk from tobacco companies.”

When approached for comment, a University of York spokesperson said: “It would be inappropriate to comment while proceedings are on-going.”

IMAGE CREDIT: YORK VISION

## York Staff Recieve New Year’s Honours

BY HANNAH WILLEY (She/Her)

Two academic staff at the University of York have been recognised in the New Year’s Honours list 2024. Professor Julian Richards has received an OBE, and Professor Rachel Cowgill has received an MBE.

As of 2024, Professor Julian Richards has become an Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE), which is the highest ranking recognition offered.

He specialises in Anglo-Saxon and Viking archeology and is a leading expert in his field.

Professor Richards said: “I am thrilled to receive this award, particularly as it recognises the importance of digital archiving. In archaeology when we excavate a site we destroy it and the archive provides the only record of the past, preserving key information for the future. Those archives are increasingly digital, but also very fragile.

“In York we have pioneered digital data preservation for over 25 years and have become world leaders, making our data archives freely available online for all to use. I’ve been fortunate to have worked with some amazing people and thank them all for their support over the years.”

Professor Rachel Cowgill has become a Member of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE), which is the third-highest ranking British Empire level. She is a Professor of Music in the School of Arts and Creative Technologies at the University of York.

She completed research in the relationships between music, culture and history, and has led the InterMuse project and StreetLife, during which she collaborated with the Arts and Humanities Research Council and was funded by the Government’s Community Renewal Fund.

Professor Cowgill said: “I am delighted to receive this award, which recognises the value of culture and the arts at a time when the performing arts in particular are being undermined by funding cuts, and schools are disincentivised from providing sustained and inclusive opportunities for young people to develop creatively.

“I have exceptionally talented, incredibly supportive colleagues at York, and I’m particularly proud of our community-led research drawing on the musical heritage of York to shape its future and our work to put creativity and local communities at the heart of regeneration projects in our city.”

## Editors’ Note

Hello Everyone!

How are we all doing? I, for one, am very cold and extremely ready for Spring. It has been lovely to have a glimpse of the sun the last few days, let’s hope it lasts. For now though, here is our latest print edition which you can cozy up with on the sofa. Grab a hot water bottle (or hot cuddly cow in my case!) and a large cup of tea.

Once again, this is a jam-packed issue which covers some really important topics. News looks at a Professor who is suing the University, questions whether First Bus is ableist and explores how the entry requirements for International Students are sometimes “flexible”. Opinion tries to reassure everyone that it is okay not to know what you’re doing after University in opinion as well as discussing everyone’s favourite pop sensation, Taylor Swift. Our columns come from your Community and Well-

being officer Hannah Nimmo and Academic officer Meely Doherty, as well as a new edition of *Vision’s* Election Year. Features focuses in on York with an article on the booming number of students versus exploitative landlords, before looking forward to the European Parliament elections. Lifestyle dives into the art of minimalism, while science explores the impact of weight-loss drugs. Our always impactful environment section hosts a range of green articles, from a summary of COP28 to a opinion piece on Eco Anxiety. And sport exclusively announces the teams heading to Varsity this year, with a report from a recent Women’s Football match.

And don’t forget Scene our exclusive arts and culture pull out, jam packed with interesting reviews and interviews!

So, please curl up and enjoy this new edition of *Vision*!

## Deputy Editor’s Note

As always, we want to thank all of our amazing contributors.

Looking back to edition 282 where, due to graduations (!), our team had dwindled, we can’t believe how lucky we are to have an amazing team of editors, writers and sub-editors. We’re so proud of each and every one of you! We’ve had a great layup again, and our editorial team is just getting better and better!

But, if you haven’t got involved in *Vision* yet, don’t worry. It’s never too late to get involved. Whether this is writing for us, pitching article ideas or even just coming along to our weekly meetings (and a drink in Courtyard!). There’s absolutely no need to have any prior experience - we’ll teach you everything you need to know!

No matter what you’re interested in, they’ll be something for you in this issue.

So, just one last thing, enjoy! <3



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

LAURA ROWE (She/Her), Deputy Editor





**HANNAH WILLEY**  
NEWS EDITOR

# York Calls for Israel-Gaza Ceasefire

BY ANNA MALE (She/Her) AND KAITLYN BEATTIE-ZARB (She/Her)

Last week, on Tuesday the 20th of February, staff and students protested outside Heslington Hall as part of the National Day of Action for Palestine. This protest called for the University of York to divest away from and end all relationships with the arms trade, and support Gazan universities in a call for academic freedom. Over 200 staff and students attended the rally, with many carrying signs, wearing Keffiyehs, and waving Palestinian flags. A peaceful gathering to share in common concern over the situation in Gaza, organisers were particularly focused on ensuring the safety of the large group, encouraging those gathered to stay off the busy road, and noting that they would move inside Heslington Hall gates if safety did become an issue.

This protest comes mere days after Vice Chancellor Charlie Jeffery responded to an open-letter addressed to him from the Palestinian Solidarity Society. The VC's response in the letter claimed that the University did not "have any holdings in Cisco or Smiths or holdings in any other arms-related companies" and stated that he had asked colleagues to create a "process to discuss different perspectives on these issues." The letter shared that the University was offering support to students affected, and linked scholarships and refugee funds already in place to help academics and students in Gaza directly affected.

Notably, the letter directly mentioned Palestine and Israel only once, through mentioning a November 2023 YUSU statement. It signposted to many links already advertised by the University, but did not offer a new perspective or comment from the VC.

This was in response to an open-letter written by the Palestinian Solidarity Society and signed by over 40 University societies, as well as individual staff and students. The letter made six demands of the University: to divest from Cisco and Smith - both arms groups; cut with the controversial BAE systems - a weapons manufacturer; protect and support Palestinian students; uphold freedom of speech on cam-

pus; and support Palestinian academic institutions.

The VC was heavily criticised at the protest, due to uncertainty over the truth in claiming that the University had "no holdings in arms-related companies". A representative of Extinction Rebellion (XR) claimed that the VC was either a "liar or an idiot" for believing the University had divested from arms-related investments.

Other speeches at the protest included cries that "Your profits are covered in Palestinian blood" and "No justice, not peace."

Some of the students and staff gathered spoke on the inaction of global governments, with one speaker noting "The morality of the international community is an illusion. We have a moral responsibility to ensure that our institution is not complicit. Divest now." Oth-

**"At this stage in history we cannot do enough to stand by Palestine."**

er speakers highlighted the dreams and voices of Gazans, suggesting "They're not asking much from us, they're just asking for us to see and acknowledge what's happening to them." and "(we need a ) safe space for the next generation of Palestine, to live in, not just survive."

The protest ended with a call to action to the large gathering of university students and staff. One speaker shared "I refuse to die before I see a free Palestine. Please keep still showing up for Palestine, recognise your privilege. This is not simply political, this is not religious, this is a humanitarian crisis."

Another speaker summed up: "At this stage in history we cannot do enough to stand by Palestine."

24 hours after the University rally, MPs gathered in Parliament to vote on a national ceasefire between Israel and Gaza. Chaos ensued in the House of Commons after Speaker Stephen Hoyle allowed Tory and Labour amendments on the SNP introduced mo-

tion, with some calling this political games and attempts to take the spotlight, when lives are at stake.

In an exclusive comment to *Vision*, York Centre MP Rachael Maskell elaborated on the commons chaos:

"This week, I have heard from aid agencies which have been unable to describe the situation in Rafah and across Gaza as it is so horrific. Many describing it as more catastrophic than anything they have ever witnessed in a generation. Now with 100,000 people missing, wounded and dead, according to their estimates, they are looking to the next humanitarian stages with horror. Government's own figures is saying that in the next 12 weeks they expect another 41,000 to die and the next six months that figure rising to 85,000 civilians. This is without further atrocities occurring in Rafah. We need to remember that already 23,000 children have died and 17,000 children are now orphaned. The innocent are paying a heavy price.

The spread of airborne and waterborne disease is rising sharply, together with people dying from the lack of healthcare, the failure to provide medical aid and through the lack of water, food and sanitation. People are left to drink dirty water or salty water, and whatever scraps they can find, including animal feed.

Today just 95 trucks are entering Gaza through the Rafah crossing the only border which is open; before the 7th of October it was 500 trucks a day. This is after a period where nothing crossed the border. It is truly horrific, as the fighting has not ceased.

Further to this, there is a very short time period whereby this situation must be resolved. Ramadan commences on the 10th of March, the date the Israeli Government has set for the return of hostages before there is a serious offensive in Rafah, where 1.5 m Palestinians are residing, most having been displaced into the region.

I am glad to hear that there is some movement on further hostage release, and call for all Israeli

and Palestinian hostages to be released.

The concern is that if there is an escalation of violence into Rafah, then not only will the human cost rise significantly, but it could draw other actors into this conflict, and escalation in the region is deeply disturbing as this could rapidly build into a global conflict.

We therefore have to have laser focus on an immediate ceasefire, Hamas and the Israeli Government, a laying down of all arms and a mission to take aid to all who require medical care, food and water. Time is on nobody's side.

I would have voted for both the Labour amendment and SNP motion in Parliament this week, had I had the opportunity to do so, as I would do anything to end the killing and maiming of human life.

Ultimately, there will need to be a political process, however, the shameful spectacle played out in Westminster this week has shown that the UK holds little credibility when people are in a desperate situation and they place political expediency from the comfort of their political privilege over the need to salvage life. The UK has or had an important role in showing leadership in this tragic situation, I fear the damage caused by the political gameplay has now placed a greater irrelevance on the role the UK could have played. I want a reset of our political system, and whatever needs to be done to achieve this followed through so that we can make the case for peace and justice with credibility. Meanwhile the judicial processes are moving forward to determine the role that actors in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza have played."

York Outer MP Julian Sturdy did not respond to request for comment.

The next local march for Palestine will occur on the 16th of March 2024, with groups planning to gather at St.Helen's Square at 2pm. Local groups also currently coordinate coaches to national rallies in London every Saturday.

## York River Poses Health Concern

BY HANNAH WILLEY (She/Her)

Recent research has led University of York's Ms Harvey Dowdy to claim to the BBC that the levels of bacteria in the River Ouse are "very concerning" The River Ouse has caused floods many times in York, and now tests on the flood water conducted by Round Our Way have shown high E. coli and sewage levels. A worrying amount of ammonia has therefore also been found in the water.

The water was been rated "poor" according to Environment Agency bathing water standards.

Yorkshire Water concluded this was due to the flooding and storms that have taken place in York, as storm overflows, used to prevent sewage overflowing into streets, have discharged into the river.

University of York's director of technology, estates and facilities pointed out that this could be "very concerning" for students and staff:

"The University staff and students use the rowing club so we're very concerned about the public health implications."

Back in September 2023, city councillor Tony Fisher reported seeing "disgusting" sewage in the river following storms, spotting condoms, toilet paper and sanitary products. These sightings have now apparently become common, because on the 10th of February campaigners held a protest concerning the river pollution. The protest involved members of Extinction Rebellion, Friends of Earth, York Environment Forum and other locals who swim in the river.

York City councillor Kate Ravilious says it's "clear that sewage discharges pose a health hazard to the public and are therefore unacceptable.

"At present Yorkshire Water allows storm overflow discharges into rivers to prevent sewage backing up into the streets and homes where people live.

With climate change increasing the frequency of flood events, this practice needs to change and... we'll continue to lobby Yorkshire Water to remove unregulated foul sewage discharge from York's rivers."

Yorkshire Water have set about trying to solve this issue, hoping to make an investment of £1.3 billion to reduce storm overflow discharges between 2025 and 2030.

IMAGE CREDIT: KAITLYN BEATTIE-ZARB

# Is First Bus Ableist?



BY ANNA LINDBERG-NEWBY (She/Her)

As the on-going #FixFirst campaign continues, several stories have come out about ableist experiences on the First Bus services.

#FixFirst began on the 15th of November after disputes over increased ticket prices and the removal of free elements of the 66 and 67 services, which several members of staff and students rely on. YUSU have stated these changes were formally opposed by them in March 2023, claiming that they were ignored and excluded from the decision making process. As of the 25th of January, the campaign won, ensuring the return of free bus services between East and West Campus, and the introduction of lower bus fares which began on the 5th of February.

In light of the campaign, the YUSU Disabled Student Network (DSN) came out on their instagram page with six different stories of ableism on the First Bus services. *Vision* sat down with Sophie Mattholie (She/They), a disability activist and 3rd year York student, to discuss ableist experiences on the bus.

“I think generally I’ve had better experiences as a wheelchair user than I’ve had on crutches, which is odd because a lot of people in York have the other way around. But when I was on crutches I really struggled with when the buses were absolutely rammed, it was really hard to get a seat and people just don’t look enough to move. People will be in priority seats and they don’t see you, even though I had two massive crutches, which was really stressful because I can’t stand up on a moving bus like I will just fall over.”

When asked if bus drivers ever

helped Sophie to access priority seating during busy bus hours she replied, “No. Never. And also because they’re always so rammed because I live on one of the student routes a lot of the time I would leave earlier than I had to, so I could get the second bus if all else failed”. This causes other problems, especially if there’s no seating at the bus stop because then, “do you just stand there for half an hour?”

With the National Institute of Health reporting an estimated 1.7 million disabled adults having de-

stressful when you have to plan for the contingencies and know that the backup plans are going to kind of screw you over. And it’s just really odd because generally with crutches and the wheels I feel really hyper visible, people are staring and then you get on the bus and no one moves and you feel absolutely invisible.”

Sophie explains how, even given the opportunity to make bus services more inclusive with the addition of a second wheelchair space, First Bus still chose a route

your way into a really cramped bus. There’s been times where they’ve driven past me like ‘I’m so sorry’ and I’ve held my crutches up and been like ‘what am I supposed to do here?’”

YUSU DSN held similar reports, with examples of bus drivers refusing to stop for students. “The buses refuse to stop as they would have to lower the ramp for entry, they were refused access due to prams being in the accessible area or that they were asked to disembark so prams could board despite this being against First’s own policies.” This has created an environment where many disabled students are feeling let down and apprehensive about positive change for the future.

When asked what accountability Sophie would like to see, she said “I think it’s a really hard question. Whenever a company says they’re going to be accountable I’m always like, ‘but are you actually?’. I don’t trust it. But it would just be nice to see improved services.

“The way they are now they don’t serve people well”.

Operations Director for First Bus in North & West Yorkshire, Tom Bridge, told *Vision*:

“Our drivers are fully trained in procedures for supporting customers in a wheelchair or with restricted mobility, and these should always be followed. We have just completed a refresher course for all drivers as part of this continued development.

“At times when our buses are very busy it can mean that space is limited. The driver will ask other customers to move down the bus or vacate areas providing easy access, where possible, but only if it is safe to do so. And we expect our

customers to help the driver and show courtesy to a passenger with a mobility aid.

“To help customers our app has a map showing buses on a route with seats available and if the wheelchair space is in use.

“We never wish to leave customers waiting at a stop for the next service, especially those with mobility aids, but there can be occasions when this is unavoidable if the bus is already full.

“If a wheelchair user experiences a problem with boarding a bus or are unhappy with the driver’s response they should contact our customer services team with details of the time, location and bus number and this will be investigated.

“The bus design we selected from the manufacturer for our new electric buses meets all disability access requirements. The position of the poles has also been modified after consultation with disability groups to make the wheelchair space easy to use.

“In deciding the specification for a new vehicle we consider the accessibility needs for all customers with restricted mobility to balance the provision of tip seats at the front of the bus together with wheelchair space and overall passenger capacity.

“We are always interested to hear feedback from users to help us consider further modifications in the future.”

**“It’s very anxiety-inducing... It makes life harder, it makes it a lot more stressful when you have to plan for contingencies and know that the backup plans are going to kind of screw your over...”**

bilitating chronic pain, issues like not being able to sit at the bus stop for long periods of time can have significant impact.

The YUSU DSN reported instances of ableism on First Bus which shows just some of the repercussions of busy services preventing students from being able to get on the bus, leaving many disabled students with the option to wait and be late or walk in pain.

When asked how these experiences left Sophie feeling, they commented, “It’s very anxiety inducing because you know you need this form of transport, but you can’t access it properly. It makes life harder, it makes it a lot more

of inaccessibility.

“When they put on the new electric buses they were asked by lots of disabled lobbyists to do a second wheelchair space because it is possible to have two and they refused. Now they have like 40 - I don’t know the exact number - but like 40 new buses with only one wheelchair space when they very easily could have had two.”

Sophie also discusses how reversing the changes to have more consistent bus services would help disabled students.

“Having more regular student services would make it a lot less stressful because you’d know you weren’t going to have to try shove

IMAGE CREDIT: YORK VISION

# Uni Adopting a “Flexible Approach” to International Students

The University of York plans to alter entry requirements for some international students in clearing

BY DAN GORDON-POTTS (He/Him) AND HANNAH WILLEY (She/Her)

**T**he University of York is now adopting a “flexible approach” for admitting international students who miss the required grades.

The Financial Times has revealed the University sent an email to all of its departments saying “in response to the current financial challenges, the University has decided to lower its tariff for all departments and programmes for overseas applicants.”

While prospective UK students (who pay the frozen £9,250 per year) will be typically required to earn A grades in their A Levels to receive offers at the University, prospective international undergraduates, who currently pay £21,950 per academic year, may be given places on the same courses when they receive only B or C grade A Level equivalents, according to The Times.

They also write the same will also apply to postgraduate courses with entries requiring only 2:2 awards or the equivalent, rather than a 2:1.

A University of York spokesperson elaborated: “We want to be really clear that we already do this for UK students after we receive their results. The University has not lowered its entry grades for international students. The change we’ve made is about taking a more flexible approach to offer holders who miss their grades.”

The University has stressed that the changes do not mean grades advertised on the website will change, but rather the University admissions department would

be open to making adjustments for international students who miss their grades.

In recent weeks, controversy has surrounded several universities regarding international student admissions. University UK (UUK) has announced that Vice Chancellors will present reviews of student recruitment. They said: “it is vital that students, their families, and government have confidence that the system is fair, transparent and robust.”

One home student reported they don’t currently have such confidence.

“It seems unfair to me if some students are accepted into the University based on different grades,” the student told *Vision*. “I worked really hard during my A Levels to meet York’s entry requirements, and it’s really frustrating to know that international students might be accepted with lower grades than me. I don’t really know what’s going on, and kind of wish there was more clarity on the issue”.

In response to such anxieties, a University of York spokesperson told *Vision*:

“We want to be really clear that the University of York has not lowered its entry grades for international students. The change we’ve made is about taking a more flexible approach to offer holders who miss their grades. We already do this for UK students after we receive their results.

“This enables us to remain competitive and it also allows us to take context and individual circumstances into account. We know inequalities can limit ability

and potential, and being flexible enough to consider these factors is important for everyone, no matter where you are in the UK or the world.

“It is not the case that UK and international students ‘compete’ for the same place. All applicants come through UCAS but we have separate admission targets for home and international students, and because of the various exam systems throughout the world, we recruit at different times as well. UK students do not miss out to international applicants.

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

The University of York also drew out attention to certain new statistics, including recent UCAS data showing that UK undergraduate applicants grew by 3% from 2022 to 2023, while accepted international applicants fell 1%.

The spokesperson also noted how they have welcomed a review by the UUK, and have signed various pledges to ensure set standards are established for agents recruiting international students.

Returning to the perspectives of students, International student Leanna Lau says she applied through clearing, and said: “they gave me a lower requirement after seeing my DSE results (the quali-

cation exam like A Level in Hong Kong).

“I think the reason why they gave me a lower requirement is because we have different qualification exams, we’ve got different standards.

“For me, I think it’s fair enough for my entry requirements because they didn’t lower them as much as others may think, they just lowered them a bit.

“Another reason I’m thinking about may be because they’ve not got enough people for the course, or maybe they just want to earn more money from the internationals because, you know, we’re paying a very expensive fee on our degree.”

On the 30th of January, UUK released an article on their website confirming that, while they cannot ‘buy their way’ onto university courses as The Sunday Times claimed, universities are financially dependent on international students:

“International students make a significant financial contribution to the higher education sector. The real-terms value of domestic tuition fees has eroded due to inflation following years of funding freezes, and university research funding doesn’t cover costs – this means that universities now lose £1 billion each year on teaching UK students.

“If anticipated growth in international students were to decrease by 20 percentage points below university forecasts in 2024–25, around 80% of institutions in England and Northern Ireland would be in deficit in 2025–26.”

On the 2nd of February, they released another article explaining the admissions process.

“Universities will plan in advance how many UK and international students they hope to recruit,” they explained. “In some cases when they have met their target for home students they may continue offering places to international students, but this does not mean that they are ‘taking away’ places from home students.

“Clearing usually opens in July. Many overseas applicants, including some UK nationals at school abroad, will already have their exam results by this point, and many might not have ended up with the results they expected and change their plans.

“Most UK students will get their exam results in August, which is when Clearing really gets busy.”

Despite these reassurances, UUK is going ahead with an investigation into recruitment practices. This includes making recommendations to enhance the Agent Quality Framework (AQF) and updating the Admissions Code of Practice.

The University of York have said they “are fully committed to working with Universities UK on reviewing best practice.”

Confirming their co-operation with UUK means the University of York will be making any adjustments necessary to the admissions process.

# OPINION

IMAGE CREDIT: YORK VISION

# It's Okay to not Know What You're Doing After University

BY THOMAS CARR (He/Him)

**When it comes to not knowing exactly what you are doing after university, most people tend to think that you are unorganised and unbothered about adult life.**

There are similar stereotypes surrounding taking a masters degree, as it is often perceived as a “panic masters” for people who don’t know what else to do and refuse to move onto adult life. This is not true at all, and there are plenty of avenues to help people figure out what they want to do after university, such as attending careers fairs, having one on one appointments with a careers advisor, reading careers books, and talking to friends and family.

The University has a careers team that can help with a variety of things such as boosting your CV,

applying for postgraduate study, applying for graduate jobs, and information on doing a placement year. Even if you don’t have a clue what you want to do next, these events and information may still prove useful and are a platform for sharing ideas.

This all sounds great in principle. But, speaking to a final-year student recently I was told that “I feel like I didn’t receive a lot of help throughout university to help me figure out what to expect after my degree. I tried to use the careers service but they would just make me feel more stressed and didn’t provide me with any new information. I kind of have a plan now but it has been really difficult because I have had to do it by myself.”

A lot of students are feeling lonely and stressed as they approach the last few months of study.

There is a certain level of pres-

sure and expectation to come up with a plan for what you are going to do after university that begins in second year for many students and becomes a continuous point of stress throughout their degree. But it is important to acknowledge that everyone is different and there is no set path after university.

Kaitlyn, your very own *Vision* editor secretary says “you feel this huge amount of pressure entering third year, no matter how prepared you think you are. The anxiety of not knowing what’s next seems to just linger and with the University seemingly content of ignoring such anxiety, it can be hard to figure out what you’re doing next or, how to get there.

“The careers team haven’t been the most helpful in guiding me... it just feels like their only tip is to research. But, the internet is big and scary and it really is quite hard to find the information you need.”

It is normal to feel a bit lost or confused about what to do next. Whilst applying for graduate job schemes may be right for some, it is equally okay to do that panic masters if you are not ready to leave university. That way you can take the extra time to reflect on what you actually want to do once you leave, as many third year students still have no idea what they want to do next.

Furthermore, a masters can improve job prospects in certain fields, and is often a requirement in order to do a PhD. There is a financial commitment involved with doing a masters, however, there are ways of reducing this. For example, many universities offer alumni discounts, giving students who are doing a masters a ten percent reduction in tuition fees if they did their undergraduate degree there.

Likewise, it is okay to simply move back home and get a job, or

take a gap year and go travelling. Taking the next step after university is not something you should have to rush. It is important to take the time to think and evaluate where you want to live and what you want to do next, as you will feel much more confident and ready for adult life. Everyone will work at a different pace and enter the job market when it is right for them.



IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH

THOMAS CARR  
OPINION EDITOR

# Check-In Codes Impede on Students' Choice

BY MATTHEW ENNIS (He/Him)

**A**t university, I've been promised academic independence, so why do I now feel forced to attend lectures due to the threat of missed check-in codes piling up?

Of course I want to attempt some level of interaction with my course: it's why I'm here after all. But desperately trying to keep my eyes open in a lecture mere hours after having one too many and falling down the stairs in Salvos, just because I'm worried I've missed too many codes, doesn't seem the best way to go about it.

I usually can't hear lecturers, and on the rare occasions I can,

they move at such a breakneck pace that to actually process the information I need to rewatch at home with the occasional pause anyway. Why can't I save myself half the time, and the trek across Campus with its terrifying Derwent geese encounters, and watch the recorded versions from the jump?

I'm sure there's some people (psychopaths) who enjoy the experience of physically attending lectures. Perhaps some prefer their learning to be soundtracked by the ambience of incessant coughing. Maybe they get a rush from the feeling of academic inferiority when you compare your notes to somebody next to you furiously

typing away as if concocting the next Bohemian Rhapsody, before the lecture has even begun (What are they making notes on from a slide containing only the lecturer's name? Nobody knows).

In all seriousness though, for many reasons, in-person lectures can be a difficult learning environment for many students. It seems bizarre that the vaguely-outlined threat of check-in codes should discourage these students from making the most productive choices for themselves.

I imagine the idea is that attending lectures in-person will inspire students to embrace an academic mindset, but I've seen far too

many in-lecture ASOS hauls, and generally doing everything except note-making, to know this isn't happening. If anything, students are just being incentivised to work when they're tired and distracted rather than at their most productive.

Personally, I prefer to cocoon myself in my bed and binge my lectures like it's the new Netflix hit at a convenient time for me.

Is university education not all about making your own choices and managing your time? Surely if I want to fork out nine grand a year to rot in my room, refusing to leave during daylight hours, like a vampire who can only be drawn out of

hiding to blast Kylie Minogue songs at pres, that's my right. I don't even know how many lectures I need to miss before facing consequences or even what those consequences are.

I also know I could just get the check-in code from a group chat but that requires me to:

- 1) be awake when the lecture starts
- and
- 2) get over my paralysing fear that the day I do this will be the day someone actually checks.

All I know is if I'm going to neglect my academic responsibilities, I'd like to do it in my own time.



IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH

# We are Never Ever Getting the Ozone Back Together

BY THOMAS CARR (He/Him)

**As a Swiftie, unfortunately it is becoming increasingly hard to ignore the fact that Taylor Swift has one of the highest global footprints of any human on the planet, and I'm not talking about her shoe size.**

The relationship between celebrities and carbon emissions is becoming more apparent with Taylor Swift in particular coming under heavy criticism for her frequent use of private planes. Most notably, this includes a 13 minute flight from Illinois to Missouri instead of a 28 minute drive, and several flights in order to watch the Kansas City Chiefs play in the NFL.

Taylor has since sold one of her private jets and taken legal action against the person responsible for illegally tracking her flights.

The purpose of this article is to remind people that this issue goes beyond Taylor Swift, as many other celebrities are guilty of similar air travel habits. It is clear that fairly, or unfairly, she has been targeted by the public, and as a general rule, no-one talks more about Taylor Swift than those who claim to hate her. The abuse directed towards her is completely misogynistic and the issue has arguably been taken as an excuse for people to try and tear down a successful woman who is dominating the music scene as there are plenty of older, male billionaires who are guilty of the same thing and are not scrutinised to the same degree. Forget the fact that it is also completely unrealistic for Taylor Swift to fly commercial due to the intensity of her fame and her busy schedule whilst on tour.

Furthermore, Taylor has made efforts to offset her increased carbon emissions during her tour by planting trees which, in theory, balances out the air pollution resulting from her private jet usage. Although we should not condone Taylor Swift's private jet usage and its contribution to carbon emissions, the focus and intensity of the abuse directed towards her as an individual is not beneficial in any way, and does not serve to improve the situation surrounding climate change.

People are rightfully frustrated as often it is celebrities who are telling us to worry about our climate, whilst we are forced to drink from soggy straws. Taylor Swift alone is estimated to emit 138 tons of carbon dioxide every 3 months which is more than many people will pro-

duce in their entire lifetime.

However, aviation accounts for 2.5% of the global carbon footprint, and small private jets are a negligible amount of that.

We need to stop shaming individual consumers, including Taylor Swift, and instead regulate the corporations and industries that are actually causing the problem.

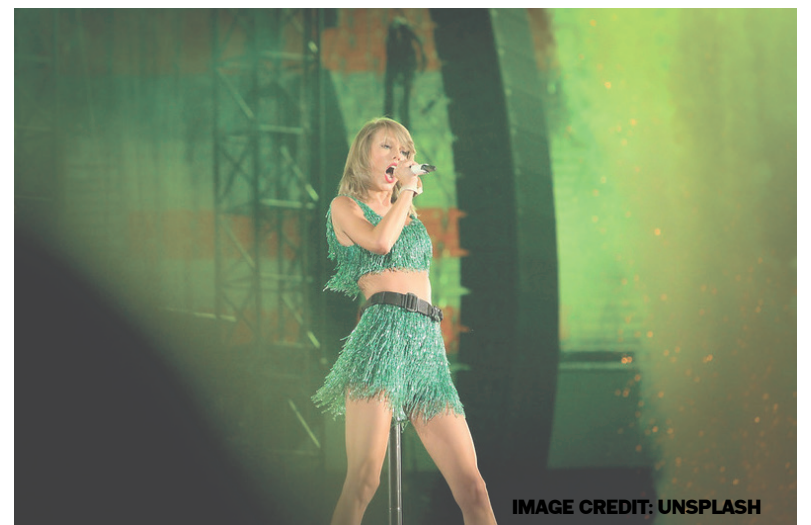


IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH

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# COLUMNS

## “How are we Going to Stop Students Reaching That Almost Breaking Point?”

Hannah Nimmo on her time as Community and Wellbeing Officer

BY LAURA ROWE (She/Her) AND ELEANOR SHAW (She/Her)

Hannah Nimmo, our Community and Wellbeing officer reveals to *Vision* what her role has meant, not just to her, but to the students of York.

“I’m really sad, to be honest, to be leaving the role because, I’ve said from the start, this is the best job I know I will ever have.”

“It’s a huge role and quite difficult to define. I’ve sort of defined it as I represent students on any issues that impact the student community, or have an impact on student welfare and wellbeing. So that’s the cost of living, transport, housing, student mental health initiatives. The list just goes on.”

The role has allowed Hannah to say that at only 22, she has been “a company director of an organisation, worked with 20,000 students and secured £1,000,000 in support of students.” Even more important to her, however, is the roots of why she took this role: to make a difference.

Despite the amazing work Hannah has done, she didn’t always feel this confident. In fact, she’s experienced the same feelings that many of us might have.

“I was from that kind of background where I was told university is not for me, and I never really got rid of that feeling of imposter syndrome. To be honest, when I came into this role, I had no confidence. I really wanted to give it a go, but I don’t know how much I was actually going to be able to achieve.”

“I know there’s so many stu-

dents like me who don’t feel that they belong here.” Hannah explains that in her role she wanted to help students “feel like they belong somewhere.”

When discussing how to tackle imposter syndrome, Hannah recognises that “it’s easier to say than to do, but just get involved and throw yourself into that student experience.”

Again, however, she recognises that the cost of living crisis adds an additional layer, the “student experience has become more challenging because it’s more expensive”.

And the cost of living crisis is something that Hannah has dedicated a lot of time to. Having secured £1,000,000 to support students with the cost of living crisis, Hannah told *Vision* that “we can see the direct impact that has day-to-day.”

“I get students in my inbox week in, week out saying, ‘I’m struggling’, and what I’ve done is make sure that your student experience is what it should be.”

Alongside Pierrick Roger, the YUSU President, Hannah has created the Student Pantry, and Fruit and Root which help with the more tangible cost of living.

They reached out to students to inquire about what they are struggling to afford and “time and time again” it was food.

“We run the Fruit and Root every couple of weeks; even if it just keeps them going for a couple of days or a week, we’re taking that

cost off them.”

“The bags sell out within like minutes. It’s demonstrating that there’s a really significant need for it. So we’ve been able to secure provisional funding for Fruit and Root and the Student Pantry for the next academic year as well.”

Alongside these new schemes, Hannah has also developed the period poverty scheme. Whilst it initially existed as a temporary contract, Hannah tells *Vision* that “we were able to secure more funding to carry it on past the trial period because it was a resounding success.”

“And then now we’ve moved to a sustainable supplier. It’s been really fantastic because we were one of the first universities in the country to roll out free period products campus wide.”

But beyond these schemes, Hannah thinks that Fix First will be her legacy. “Sometimes people talk about what legacy you leave at York and I think the fixed first campaign is what I will be remembered for as an officer. It just mobilised so many students.”

First Bus had made it so that the bus between Campus East and West would no longer be free. With an enormous amount of work, Hannah was able to reverse this decision.

During her meetings with First Bus, Hannah stood her ground, but most importantly, ours. “I’m a Student Union Rep, my opinion never matters in these kinds of forums.

It’s the opinion of my student constituents.

“I was like, I’m gonna make you listen one way or another.

“To make that difference for the community was something that was really special.

“So I think if people remember that in years to come and say ‘the students union ran that campaign and made the bus free again’, even if it’s not tied to me or my role, if people remember it, that’s the most important thing”.

Looking back on her time, Hannah commented that “there’s so many things that I’ve done, and I guess now I’m looking to hand projects over, we’re talking like future proofing stuff”. This will mean that she is securing money for the next academic year so “it makes it a little bit easier for whoever follows us to carry on and build on it”.

Even now, Hannah is sure there’s more work to be done. Namely in inclusivity and accessibility.

“Campus inherently just isn’t accessible. Getting to campus, parking on campus, and moving around campus isn’t accessible, so it’s thinking about the future and pushing that agenda forward.”

And in terms of inclusivity, Hannah wants to help people feel like they belong. “As an example, allowing people to really easily change their chosen names and bringing pronouns a bit more into the forefront so that students don’t feel the need to almost out them-

selves every single day.

“It just creates a bit more of a welcoming environment and I think York is still missing that. But we’re moving in that direction.”

Hannah remains concerned about the impact that semesterisation might have on students. “One [issue] that we’ve really seen this year is academic burnout with semesterisation because the terms are now a lot longer.

“We ran our Keep Your Cool campaign again; the lighter touch things that we know that work, but I guess that fundamental structure of ‘how are we going to stop students reaching that almost breaking point?’ will be key because we’ve seen so many students reach it.

“There is a lot of growth in areas, you’ve just got to push the right button to speak to the right people.

“It’s been an absolutely fantastic journey, it’s been chaos, but I wouldn’t change it for anything.”

As elections for new SABB officers creep up, Hannah’s advice is if you “want to make a change within the community” then go for it.

“I don’t think there is a right fit for a SABB role. I think... it’s having that compassion with other people, and listening to other people’s experiences, because everything I do is led by sort of the experiences I hear from students.”

## Why Care About the APP?

BY MEELY DOHERTY (She/Her)

I have inherited a unique time. As semesterisation is piloted, the crux of my policy has been submitted: the student section of our Access & Participation Plan (APP). For the next five years, the University’s EDI policy will be underpinned by this Plan.

You may be wondering why you should care about some legally-mandated plan that contains some pretty depressing statistics about gaps in York’s system. But the truth is, a lot of the Academic Officer portfolio, whether or not anybody wants to admit it, is underpinned by this delicate web of governance, and the APP is possibly the quickest way to ensure

some of our rather large promises don’t disappear when we do.

For home undergraduates, you benefit the most. It’s written to acknowledge your attainment gaps and the institutional barriers that are in place preventing top attainment. In York, our biggest attainment gap is mature students - those over 21 on their first day. Yet, at WDLM, mature students are not only the norm, but excelling. They have community and a sense of belonging. It is very telling what students can achieve when they aren’t treated as different, and when they are able to see themselves in one another. As TJ (Sport President) says, “You can’t be what you can’t

see.”

But the suggestions that I gave to the University don’t just impact home undergraduates. In total, I gave 54, ranging from the infeasible and radical to the reasonable and achievable. They range from accommodation issues (like the rising cost of rent) to barriers in applying, from costs of childcare to support needed for those on contextual offers. And that was just admissions. We went on to discuss small things like desks in Central Hall to radical ones like letting students choose their own assessments. The truth is the APP is one of the few documents in the ‘academic’ sphere which proves that

everything (from money to family) bleeds into students’ academic lives. I know a number of these won’t be used. They’re financially impossible, or would damage staff wellbeing. Yet, many will find their way into the APP. The joy of the APP is whatever ends up in there, the University has to show how they’re going to do it. They can’t make empty promises, because it’s not just YUSU holding them to account.

The lesson: the student body can achieve some pretty incredible things. YUSU mobilises students in big campaigns, but we’re really just here to assist you. With the APP, students didn’t need me to

explain what their problems were; they needed me to make sure those problems reached the table.

When the APP is released publicly, please give it a read. It shows some very important stories: how we don’t succeed, how we want to, and how the University and Union can (and do) work together for the people we both work for: you.

The APP proves the Uni can have best interests at heart, and how to achieve that, neatly wrapped into a few pages of suggestions.

# SCENE.

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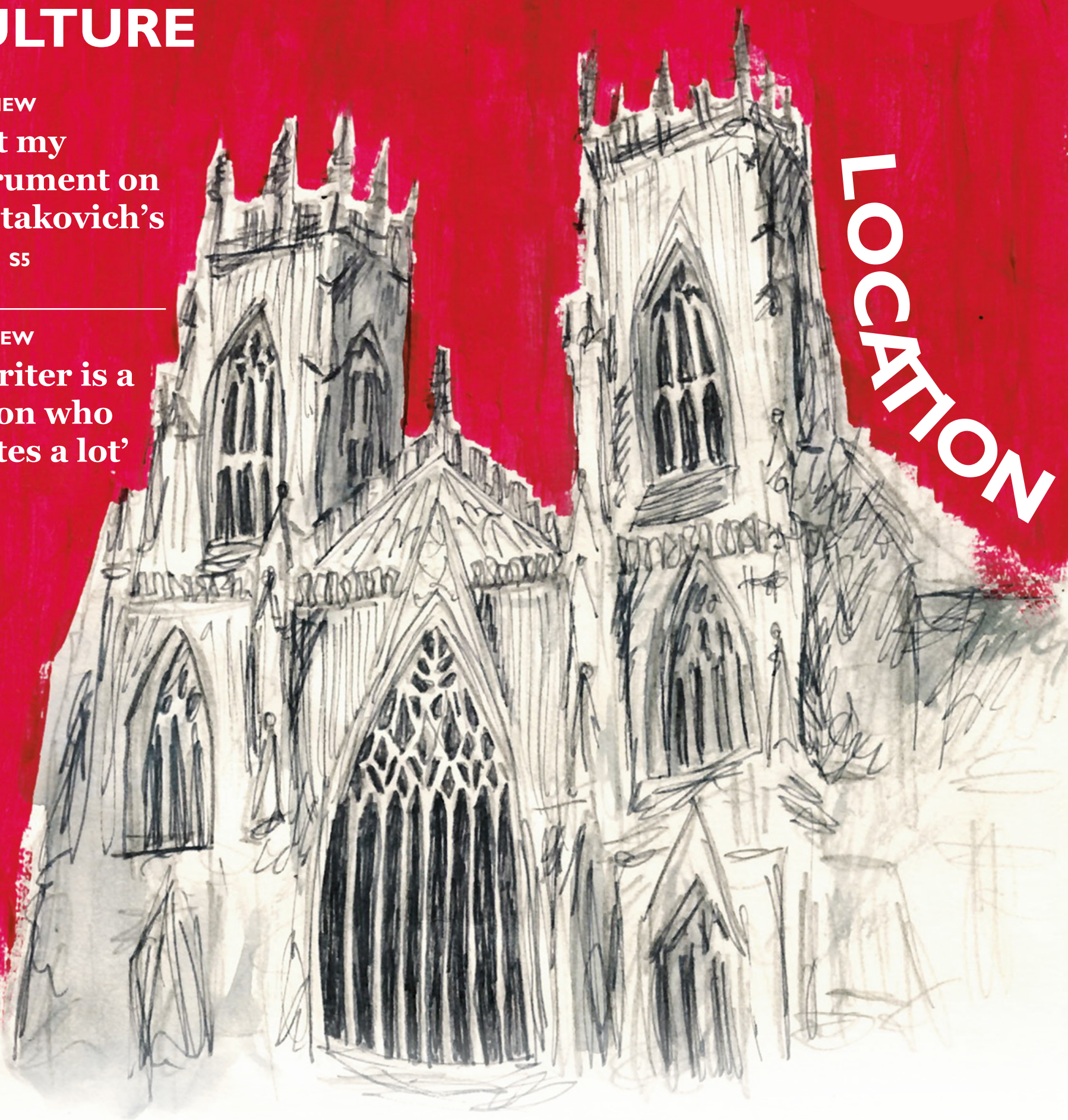
## ARTS & CULTURE

INTERVIEW

'I put my  
Instrument on  
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INTERVIEW

'A Writer is a  
Person who  
Deletes a lot'  
s9



LOCATION

# The Only Show That Actually Makes me Laugh out Loud



One of my all time favourite TV shows is *New Girl*, a sitcom that follows Jess Day (Zooey Deschanel) after she moves in with three strangers.

It is probably the only show that actually makes me laugh out loud - actually laugh, not just blow air out my nose. The combination of this comedy and LA's sunny backdrop makes it the perfect show to get in a springtime mood.

Each episode is about 20 minutes making it very easy to binge - I am somehow already 5 seasons deep - and these episodes focus on relationships, work and friendship problems/successes.

What makes each episode entertaining and sets *New Girl* apart from other TV shows is definitely the characters.

It is quite difficult to settle on one favourite character but after

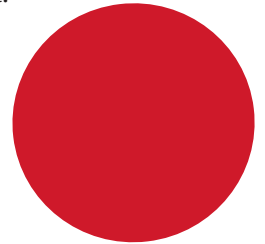
much consideration I would say mine is Winston Bishop. When we first meet Winston he is sporty and serious. As the show goes on Winston becomes one of the most hilarious characters - becoming a father to a cat and adorning colourful bird shirts.

One of his funniest developments is the emergence of his alter-ego Prank Sinatra. He acquired this nickname because of

his enthusiasm for and failure with pranks. These pranks are either way too small - like putting a blueberry in a cereal bowl or hiding a feather in a shoe - or way too big - like unleashing a badger on his friend's wedding or registering another friend as a sex offender.

And if Winston doesn't amuse you there are plenty other characters that are comedic in their

own ways. If you have not seen it before I highly recommend you give it a watch, and, if you have seen it, spring is a perfect time to rewatch it.




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## SCENE.

### OUR SECTIONS

#### AND EDITORS

Screen S3

Eddie Atkinson

Stage S4

Alice Pedersen

Audrey Lawler

Music S5

Clara Downes

SPOTLIGHT S6-7

Art S8

Rhiannon C.

Literature S9

Tom Brown

Food S10

Games S11

Lucy Plant

### SPECIAL THANKS

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## IN IMAGES:



Dan Gordon-Potts

SCENE Editor  
Note



Well hello there, Happy New Year! Bit late, I know, but we only print five times a year so give me a break!

We're currently doing the finishing touches to SCENE on a Sunday evening and it's incredibly cold and dark in our asbestos-office here in Eric Milner B. However, things are looking up as we are (hopefully, YUSU dependent) moving to new offices come next issue, so this may very well be our last print churned out in this lovely lakeside location. Lovely stuff.

Anyway, onto this issue. We're running with the theme of 'location', hence the Minster splashed on the front cover, and the theme runs deep - on every

page, pretty much. From Berlin to Chicago, Russia to... York Art Gallery (?) we've got it all.

A personal favourite is the fascinating interview on page five in MUSIC, where Clara interviews Alan George, who was good friends with none other than legendary composer Shostakovich. We also have more interviews, one in STAGE (another favourite) with the giddlydog herself, known on TikTok as the mother of realistic northern impressions. Another interesting read is in LITERATURE, where Tom interviews a PHD student who miraculously also wrote a book at the same time. SPOTLIGHT beams in Keith, another legend

of The Cowboys, a band that are giving a fresh take on all-American 50s rock n' roll which I have a feeling will become all the rage within the next decade or so.

In FOOD, Faye gives us a historic, city-wall inspired debut, as well as Henry, who tells us about a lovely little Italian on Goodramgate. Can't also forget Matt Davis (MD), who stuns us with the potato nachos you've always been waiting for to (fossil) fuel up for the day!

Enjoy reading and sit somewhere cosy, or chuck this flimsy paper in the bin or (top tip incoming) use it to stuff your shoes to dry them out. D

WELCOME



REVIEW

## 'What is anticipated is soon over'

Will Rowan reviews 'Last Swim' from Berlin International Film Festival

BY WILL ROWAN

**L**ast Swim, which opened the Generation strand at this year's Berlinale, is a confident debut feature from UK-based director Sasha Nathwani.

Set in the old, stuffy rooms of UCL, we meet Londoner Ziba, a determined A-level student. She is about to excel in an interview that will secure her place to study astrophysics, but a shadow looms over her bright future: Ziba is seriously ill, forcing her to live in the immediacy of the present at a time when the only topic is the future. Last Swim invites us to journey with her as she plans a 24-hour post-results day adven-

ture for herself and her friends.

Deba Hakmat is impressive as Ziba, pulling off a finely adjusted internal turmoil, and there's plenty of chemistry with potential love interest Malcolm, played by Denzel Baidoo. However, its attempts to tug at the heartstrings occasionally feel overwrought, bordering on forceful.

Over the course of the day, we are given a whistle-stop tour of London as Ziba ticks off a list ranging from the best sandwich in the world to watching a meteor shower. It's through this that we're introduced to Ziba's circle of friends and the sheer stakes of being young. Awe and excitement is tinged with a nostalgia for the present - what is anticipated is soon over and Last Swim un-

derstands this. It's an authentic portrayal of youth - the shrugs, idiosyncratic phrases, and inherent awkwardness amongst Ziba's friends are all too familiar. However, the chemistry between the rest of the cast is unconvincing and left me cold. There's a fine line between portraying teenage awkwardness and just being awkward, one which the larger ensemble cast struggles with.

Last Swim has a freewheeling style that captures both the freedom and looming uncertainty of life beyond school. It's mostly successful but, as with most planned days, often falls short of expectations.

### Editors' Note

This issue we have some absolute crackers for you. Aiofe Wood brings a dose of laugh-out-loud silliness with her regular TV pick and former editor (wowie!) Will Rowan sends us a review all the way from sunny Berlin. Be sure to check out our 'what's on' section and enjoy this brief break from me writing about 2010s children's TV (it won't last).



### THE FLORIDA PROJECT (2017) Dir. Sean Baker

Pastel-coloured sadness covers this intimate film about family relationships and poverty. Jarringly set next door to Disneyland Florida's iconic resort.

Still chosen by Dan Gordon-Potts



### DIRECTOR OF CHOICE

## Off-kilter Kiwi Humour and Life-affirming Emotional Truth

BY EDDIE ATKINSON

**Taika Waititi has become steadily more controversial as his profile and budget have grown. There are plenty of Marvel fans who shudder at the mere mention of his name, unhappy with his work in Thor: Love and Thunder...**

First off, his second Marvel outing wasn't that bad; he stuck to a focus on humour that, lest we forget, had revived the Thor franchise 5 years earlier in Ragnarok, and in doing so, created a film that struck a different chord to a tired superhero genre. This pleased me a lot and seemed to infuriate everyone else.

Yet it is not in his later, huge budget work that Waititi really excels. Even skipping past Jojo Rabbit (scandalous I know), the films set in his native New Zea-

land are the true jewels in his crown. They are defined by an off-kilter Kiwi humour and a drive towards life-affirming emotional truth.

Boy (2010) in particular captures an essence of childhood, blurring the lines between imaginative play and reality, intercutting shots with animated children's drawings, whilst finding emotional depth in the titular Boy reconnecting with his absent father (played by Waititi).

Whether awkward Kiwi humour plays badly amongst American audiences, or huge budgets hamper some of his charm, Waititi does not deserve to be plastered with a badge of mediocrity. I challenge sceptics to watch his earlier work and not come away filled with a sense of childish, emotionally raw joy.

### STILL FROM A FILM



Alice Pedersen

THESE ARE A FEW  
OF MY FAVOURITE  
THINGS...

## Reviewing my Favourite Stages for STAGE...again!!

BY ALICE PEDERSEN

What's on?



**'Sleuth'**

26th Feb - 2nd March @ Grand Opera House

Dir. Rachel Kavanaugh

The long-running psychological mystery thriller that promises to confuse its audience.

**'Blue Beard'**

27th Feb - 9th March @ York Theatre Royal

Dir. Emma Rice

Adapted for the stage from French folk tale, this story of Blue Beard, the murderous magician, is set to premiere this spring.

**'Dinner'**

8th March - 10th March @ The Drama Barn, University of York

Dir. Elizabeth Winstanley

DramaSoc stage Moira Buffini's sa-

tirical comedy drama, 'Dinner', which centres around a dinner party full of chaos, twists, and revenge...

**'Romeo & Juliet'**

8th March - 16th March @ Leeds Grand Theatre

Dir. Christopher Gable CBE

Catch Northern Ballet's infamous performance in Leeds, as they set the classic love story to dance, choreographed by Massimo Moricone.

**'Cluedo 2: The Next Chapter'**

12th March - 16th March @ York Theatre Royal

Dir. Mark Bell

The second instalment in this comedic 'whodunnit' is set in the 1960s and brings the classic board game to life with the help of a cast of West End and TV stars.

I'm back with another (highly requested) instalment in reviewing my favourite stages, and my second place theatre is The Old Vic.

This not-for-profit gem is located just off the corner of Waterloo Road, London, down The Cut. The theatre emerges with its frontal pillars and unavoidable sign spelling its infamous name. The Old Vic's interior works to make this cosy space feel grand, think architecture in the style of York's Grand Opera House.

The stage itself comes out into the audience, with low level seating surrounding it on three sides, creating an intimate closeness with the action and actors onstage. Even from the higher seats, you get drawn into the performance.

In 2019, The Old Vic staged my favourite performance to date, Present Laughter, in which Matthew Warchus took to directing Noël Coward's much-loved comedy. It was the last production I got a chance to see before lockdown, and so sat with me for a long time after.

Although the play is a classic that has been frequently staged, the freedom that the theatre gave the directors made it possible for Warchus to adapt this well-known performance into a comic play that felt modern despite being created almost a century ago, playing with gender and sexuality in a way that I'm certain Coward would approve of.

Whilst The Old Vic probably doesn't need any extra advertisement from me, there's good reason for me banging on about it. The venue stands out not just for its good looks, but for its contributions to theatre as a craft itself. The Old Vic is known for staging performances you rarely catch elsewhere, taking on emerging directors to assist, shadow, or even direct performances. And this year, The Old Vic will play host to the Live Aid musical, 'Just For One Day'; seasonal classic, 'A Christmas Carol'; and Sophie Treadwell's staged true-crime 'Machinal'.

INTERVIEW

## 'From Making Little Videos in my Room to a big Stage'

BY AUDREY LAWLER



After amassing over 700k TikTok followers for her unique comedy videos, Grace Long (AKA 'gdiddydog') sat down with York Vision (with our equally impressive 136 followers) to chat about online fame, performance, and production.

"I've spent the last couple of years doing my tiktok, and that's sort of become my main job which is lovely.

"I started my videos as a way to get in the room a bit more."

Now, Grace is starring in A Song For Ella Grey. At the time of this interview, the show was running at York Theatre Royal, the second stop on its nationwide tour.

"It's so interesting going into a new theatre, because we've just spent a few weeks at Northern Stage in Newcastle so going into a new space is a bit like 'ooo!'. It's all quite the same but I think it's such a lovely space, it's very traditional."

Post-drama school, this production marks Grace's professional stage debut. Before, her experience consisted of "indie film and a little bit of TV".

"You have to prepare for any job acting-wise but with theatre, I knew I would have to make sure I was in shape and looking after my voice and I was ready to move about and make sure I went to bed on time."

"Going from making little videos in my room to being on a big stage... I was very nervous, which was nice - I was excited for the challenge of it!"

A Song For Ella Grey follows five A-Level students in the North-East, navigating friendships, growing pains, and life. The play has been adapted from Tyneside author David Almond's 2014 novel of the same name, which retells the Orpheus and Eurydice legend.

"I knew of David Almond because of Skellig. David does a lot of bringing the magic alive in the North East. For me, it's a lovely coming of age story that deals with grief. It's about love, loss, and it's set in Newcastle!"

Grace was heavily involved in the play's creation, working closely with director Esther Richardson and playwright Zoe Cooper from its early stages to the final product.

"Working with them in the workshop, it was such a lovely environment and a very female environment which is quite rare. It can make a difference sometimes. I've been in very heavily male rooms."

Grace's career trajectory has taken another step up, from her tiktok career to large-scale productions.

"I've been really surprised throughout the whole process of how big it feels."

A Song For Ella Grey combines mythical storytelling with a contemporary backdrop. The story also features the enchanting Bamburgh beach in the North East.

"A lot of brilliant people coming together, who are brilliant at what they do, letting us have a play was really fun.

"I think it's a very magical show."

Catch Grace and the rest of the cast at Theatre Peckham from the 29th Feb - 2nd March, Hull Truck from 5th - 9th March, and Liverpool Playhouse from 13th - 16th March.



### Editors' Note

I'm Audrey, the new Deputy Stage Editor. I am a first year Theatre student, and I am looking forward to having a role that lets me show my enthusiasm for the topic! One of my favourite shows I have seen is Not Too Tame's rendition of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'.

Audrey Lawler



What's on?

**Yorkshire Bach Choir, Purcell Dido and Aeneas at St Lawrence Parish Church on 16th March at 7.30pm.**

The concert features the incredibly talented violinist, Lucy Russell, playing a unique hand-painted violin, made and painted by Roger Hansell. Lucy will play Biber's Sonata no 3 in F, composed in Nurnberg, 1681; a virtuosic piece for a solo violinist. Student tickets are just £5!

INTERVIEW

# MUSIC 5

HUMAN RECOMMENDS



Do you ever get bored of what Spotify recommends? Or do you want to switch things up a bit from that default shuffle?

We've got you covered with this new section, Human Recommends...

## 'I put my Instrument on Shostakovich's Seat'

When Shostakovich came to York: an interview with Alan George

**A**lan George is a professional viola player who co-founded the world-renowned Fitzwilliam String Quartet in 1968. He still plays in the group today, making him the longest-serving member of a professional string quartet in the UK.

The group were previously the resident string quartet at the University of York, and worked with the Russian composer Dmitri Shostakovich, one of the most well-known composers of the twentieth century. George still lives in York and remains involved with the city's music scene, both as a viola player and as conductor of the Academy of St Olave's, York's leading chamber orchestra.

It's a bright December day as I make my way to George's house. I now sit opposite him at his wooden table, a cup of tea in hand. His cat plonks herself onto my lap. She remains there throughout the entirety of the interview, purring. My mug has two bars of music painted onto it, setting the musical tone of our conversation perfectly.

The Fitzwilliam Quartet was initially founded by George and three other Cambridge students in 1968.

George puts their incredible success in evolving into a pro-

fessional quartet down to a combination of dedication and luck: "We were just lucky! When I was an undergraduate there were lots of student groups in Cambridge, and we were certainly not the best of them... I suppose our main virtue was that we stuck with it." George responds modestly to my suggestion that their musicianship must have played a significant part.

The time the Fitzwilliam Quartet spent at the University of York was of great significance to the group. The quartet began their residency in York in 1971, only eight years into the University's existence.

George praises Wilfred Mellers, the head of the University's music department at that time: "he wanted to teach music through the doing of it, not the reading about it." He reminisces fondly about the "hotchpotch of creativity" the music department constructed. Their focus on creativity, he continues, was made possible because of how new the University was.

George emphasises just how rewarding his time at the University was: "Built into this wonderful new music department was an electronic music studio, and a fantastic concert hall, which was perfect for string quartets. We just felt we were made... We cut our teeth playing contemporary music."

The Fitzwilliam Quartet began playing the music of Dmitri Shostakovich before they arrived at York. George built a friendship

with Shostakovich when he wrote to him to ask for the music to his most recent quartet, so that they could play it in a concert at the University of York.

"He sent the music, and he said, 'If I'm in England at the time, I'll come and hear it.'"

In 1972, Shostakovich travelled to York to attend the quartet's concert in the Jack Lyons Concert Hall which remains on the University's West Campus today: "Whenever I'm playing in that hall, I put my instrument down on the seat where Shostakovich sat."

George now pauses, seemingly in disbelief, as though the passage of time has done anything but dissipate his astonishment.

After the concert, George remained in touch with Shostakovich for the rest of the composer's life: "I've got loads of letters from him... he sent the next quartet and the next one... and I suppose that would have carried on had he lived longer." The Fitzwilliam were among the first groups to record all fifteen of Shostakovich's quartets.

The quartet planned to visit Shostakovich in Moscow in September 1975, but the

composer sadly died the previous month: "We would have had even more of a connection, but we're grateful for what we had."

The group eventually visited Moscow the following year for a Soviet Union tour organised by Irina, Shostakovich's widow: "We went to his study, we went to his flat in Moscow and spent the afternoon there. He wasn't there, but his spirit was!"

George begins to speak of what Shostakovich himself was actually like: "He was just kind, generous, caring and humble. No ego, none of that stuff."

He had an unforgettable presence: "You can't quantify or explain it... he had this amazing aura of greatness."

George once again pauses; a look of amazement fills his face.

"It's hard to forget", he concludes.

**DIDN'T KNOW WHAT I WAS IN FOR**

By Better Oblivion Community Centre

Before Phoebe Bridgers hit the mainstream (Indie-people don't fight me), she was in this band with Conor Oberst. The result? 10 times better than *Stranger in the Alps*.

Song chosen by Dan Gordon-Potts

George's recollection of his first-hand experiences with Dmitri Shostakovich astounds me. I sit for a moment in astonishment at being only one step removed from one of the greatest composers of the twentieth century, but I quickly refocus when George's cat paws my hand, a polite reminder to continue to stroke her.

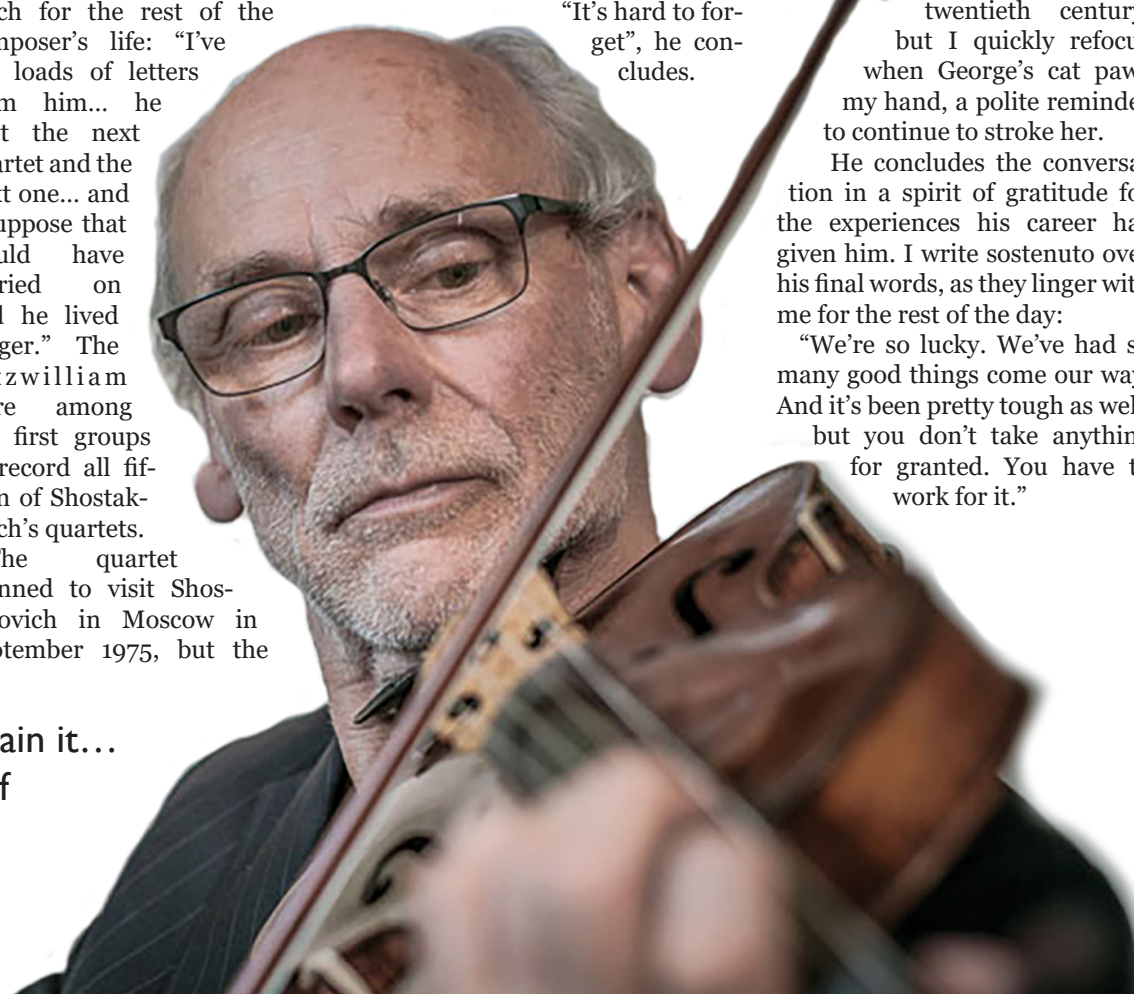
He concludes the conversation in a spirit of gratitude for the experiences his career has given him. I write *sostenuto* over his final words, as they linger with me for the rest of the day:

"We're so lucky. We've had so many good things come our way. And it's been pretty tough as well, but you don't take anything for granted. You have to work for it."

"You can't quantify or explain it... he had this amazing aura of greatness."

Clara Downes

MUSIC





INTERVIEW

# ‘I actually don’t really like playing’

BY DOM BEST &amp; DAN GORDON-POTTS



“I like everything except the 45 minutes,” says front-man Keith of eclectic all-American band *The Cowboys*

**I**’m a beer delivery driver, I deliver beer. That’s the day job. A faceless voice – we were told this was ‘Keith’

speaking – flew from Chicago to York Campus in a matter of milliseconds, crackling through the laptop speakers. It was an unexpected answer, but we hadn’t been expecting convention from the American band *The Cowboys* either. They possess an ineffable sense of the weird, a je ne sais quois that makes them largely undefinable.

Formed in Bloomington, In-

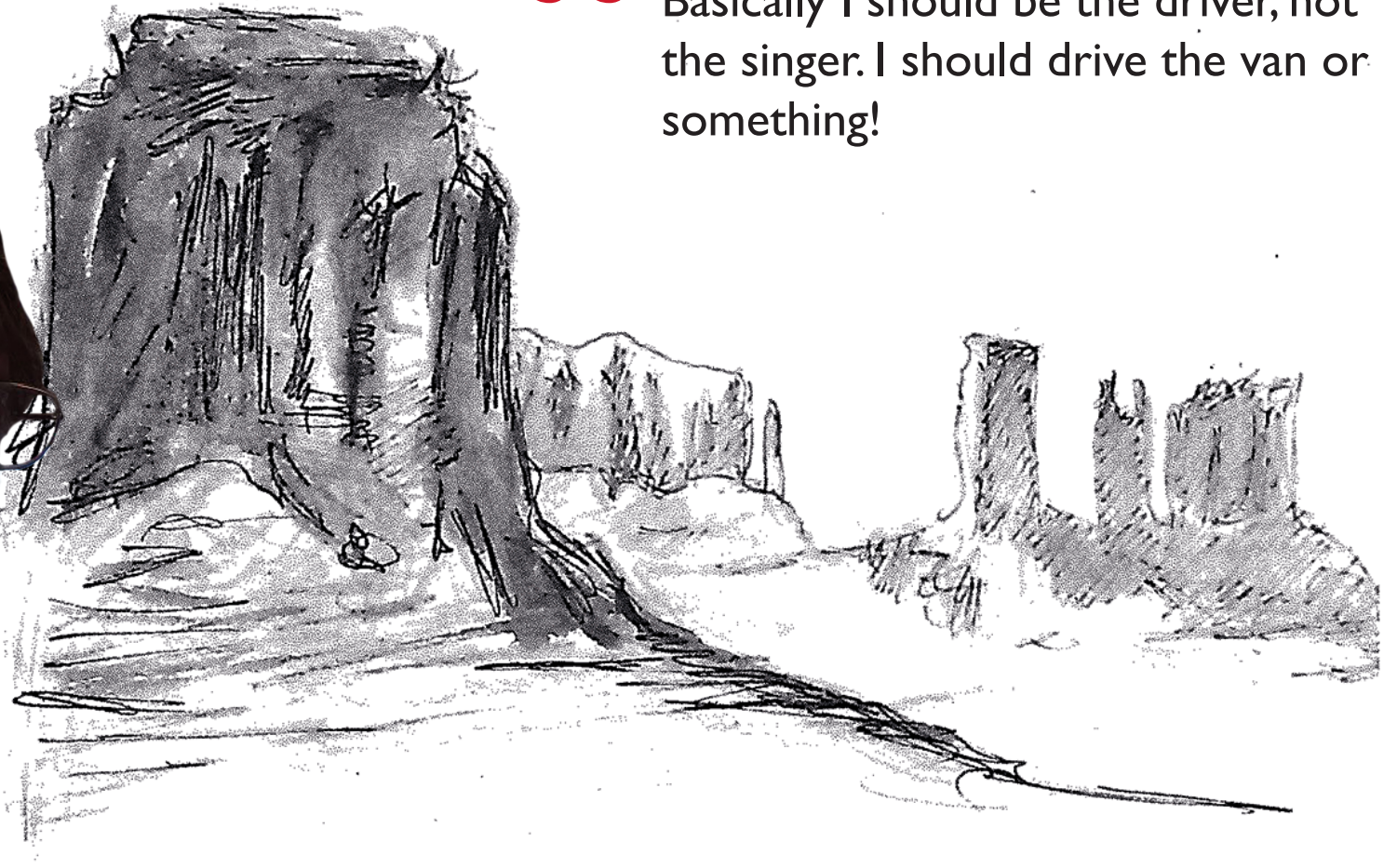
diana, there is a certain nonchalance as Keith traces the band’s origins: “It was just in my early twenties. I thought: ‘I guess that’s the time to start.’”

A successful basement show marked their first performance: “I just remember, the people were pretty stoked from the beginning.... the town really took to it.” Shows soon turned to online cassettes, and soon *The Cow-*

boys had their foot on the ladder. Again, Keith downplays any notions of stardom: “I mean, it was very organic and very...just normal. Just how it happened.”

Naturally, we asked about where the name came from. “I just said it as a joke, thinking it wouldn’t be taken seriously but he [bandmate Mark] actually really liked it and I was just ready to squash the whole debate because

ATT



“ Basically I should be the driver, not the singer. I should drive the van or something!

I just wanted to get out there and play shows.”

It's hard to believe an image as ubiquitous (and American) as the cowboy hadn't already been used, but Keith claims: “at that time, there was no other band called The Cowboys, but what you don't think about then is, now, when you're naming your band or product or whatever, it's gotta be easy to Google.”

A detectable trace of antipathy seeped through as he spoke – this was not a frontman, or indeed a band, particularly enthralled with the commercial reality of music. “I wish actually I could get away from relying on physical media, but the reality is that when you're a smaller band on a smaller label, physical media is still actually really important.” Physical copies are not treasured but inconvenient.

Keith recounts: “I dated someone that worked for a major record label, *Dead Oceans*, a big indie label...and just hearing how the sausage was made - so to speak - just the advertising and marketing, I was just like ‘ugh’, I don't know if we're cut out for that, posting on Instagram as much as bands do.

“We try and keep it like, here's the information you need, this record's coming out, here's the dates, fuck off.”

Here was the cavalier energy that so fits their name and characterised their early sound – frenetic, punky songs that leap out of the speakers then quickly vanish. If their attitude has remained the same, their sound has not.

Keith claims “songwriting is really just like a sponge...y'know, I love it all, pretty much.” Disparate names from Roy Orbison to Tom Verlaine to Mozart are grouped into one, and in Keith's words “that's all contributing to the stew.”

Equally, the band's experience has increased their breadth: “Yeah, I mean, what I was writing about when I started was very different to what I'm writing about now. I'm 32 now and when I first started I was like 23, so a little bit of mellowing has happened, I suppose.”

Fitting with their small town garage band origins, The Cowboys started out “a little faster and a little more punky.”

“I still love that style of music,” he tells us, but “you can't run from who you are. At the end of

the day, I'm a guy from the American Midwest, so I think the music reflects that.”

He mentions some of the early music he put out with the band, including one of their first albums which featured a man with a fishing rod caught in a compromising position: “those early covers are funny, that's just kinda that thing where you're not really thinking about this stuff long term, y'know.

“Those first cassettes were more debauchorous times in those days, just kinda soaking that up.”

Now, he says “we're probably a little more tasteful.”

Tasteful is one way to describe the band's latest albums, *The Bottom of a Rotten Flower* and *Sultan of Squat*, both boasting slick production quality and a more established sound.

Keith isn't entirely in love with them though, he still has reservations about instantly endorsing their most recent work as the best they've ever done: “we went in thinking we're just gonna be straight, y'know, microphones on the instruments, not a lot of dirt or stuff.”

But, he says, “we think it maybe is a little too clean?”

The band have no struggle moving, it seems - there's a dynamism to their all-American stew of a sound.

*Johnny Drives a Beater*, from their latest album, “could've been on the first record or something,” with its clashy punk energy. Meanwhile, the jarringly slow ballad, *She's not your baby anymore* has “not even an ounce of humour or irony” and reverberates with enough 50s rock and roll riffs to make you nostalgic for an era you never lived through.

Talking of nostalgia, there's one thing Keith's not particularly bothered about: touring.

“I actually don't really like playing,” he says to us down the microphone. At this, we pause for a moment, not quite knowing what to say.

“I don't, I'm probably the only one,” he says.

“I like being in a different city; I like seeing a new place, new faces; being in a different weird bar, or venue. I like everything except the 45 minutes.”

“Basically I should be the driver, not the singer. I should drive the van or something!”

Keith mentions Bowie, trying to explain himself: “he didn't like

it. And that was surprising, because he, more than anyone, was the consummate, the showman and stuff. You'd think that someone like Bowie would have to like it. But he said he didn't really like it, so, there's a lot of them.”

A lot of them are his favourites, he tells us, mentioning the likes of Jimmy D, XTC, and Brian Wilson.

After chatting about the band and its influences, and Keith's hatred of actually being frontman, we then move onto the inevitable question of what the band will be up to next.

“Uh, it's gonna be an album first before touring.”

We then ask the question on all our readers' lips: are The Cowboys ever coming to the UK?

“I've heard, if I'm being honest, that the UK is kind of tricky... I've heard it's not like the rest of Europe in that people say, just play London.”

Tentatively, we float the idea of York: “Well, actually, since I'm talking to you maybe I will.” Can the hallowed gates of V-bar get Keith to finally relish the ‘45 minutes’? Only time will tell.



# Ruined? The Exhibition Experience

*Not for the impatient. Not for the claustrophobic.*

BY RHIANNON C.



What's on?

1. EOS: John Singer Sargent: Fashion and Swagger at York City Screen on 16th April
2. The Aesthetica Art Prize 2024 at York Art Gallery until 21st April
3. The Grande Finale: Art of the Extravaganza at Norman Rea Gallery on 6th March
4. Free exhibitions at The National Gallery, London: Pesselino, A Renaissance Master Revealed (until 20th March) and The Last Caravaggio (from 18th April)

**Café Terrace at Night**  
By Vincent van Gogh  
Painted in 1888, *The Cafe Terrace on the Place du Forum* was first exhibited in 1891. The painting, although not signed by van Gogh, was identified as one of his creations as it was described in three letters written by the artist.

## MY ART PICK

A great benefit of museums is that their general collections are free to the public. Of course, this does mean that they have to charge for other features, such as exhibition entries and memberships, making them much more exclusive - or so you would think!

Whilst memberships can be an expense (approx. £70 a year for just exhibition entry, and £100 plus for extra benefits), they are also of great value to the regular museum and gallery visitor.

Memberships typically allow visitors into (sold-out) exhibitions without prior booking; while this is the great advantage of having a membership, it has directly impacted visitor's exhibition experiences.

Most galleries and museums control entry to exhibitions, ensuring that the space will not become too congested. Typically,

there will be two lines of entry, pre-booked tickets and members - pre-booked tickets are allowed within their time slots and members are 'sprinkled' in, in small groups. Unfortunately, these efforts have proved insufficient. In entering the exhibition space, visitors are advised to remove their coats - not for the reason that you would perhaps think - not to avoid knocking any items on display but because the crowd generates so much heat that it is fair to assume a few people have passed out.

Once in the exhibition, it is mayhem.

Inside, the temperature is indeed unbearable. With sweat pouring from you and a constant need to fan yourself, you will follow the line of people through the displays. And when I say follow, I mean foot shuffle, and stop, foot shuffle, and stop. The crowds can be so big and overwhelming that

in many cases visitors are unable to experience the full offerings of the exhibition.

If you are the type of person who wishes to read every plaque, every information sign, and devour every aspect of the exhibit, you will indeed feel the pressure of being in the way of others, of being an inconvenience.

Pushing and shoving occurs in between the foot shuffling and abrupt halts. The entire experience is more reminiscent of a herd of cattle being steered to a final destination than members of the public observing culture and heritage.

Between experiencing the sheer temperatures of hell and what being cattle feels like, you will be begging to leave!

Ruined for visitors. Ruined for members.

So much for a relaxing day out!

“

*The experience is more reminiscent of a herds of cattle than members of the public observing culture and heritage.*



Rhiannon C.

What's on?

York Literature Festival is back from the 28th February, featuring engaging talks, walks and workshops from the likes of Lemn Sissay, Grace Dent and Ian Dale. Tickets are for sale online, and the festival continues until early April.

### DECLINE AND FALL

By Evelyn Waugh

Waugh's debut novel has the absurd fanaticism of Voltaire's *Candide* and the mock aristocracy of the film *Saltburn*. Immensely funny and sagacious, it follows the trials and tribulations of Paul Pennyfeather after he is dishonourably discharged from Scone College, Oxford - based on some of Waugh's own undergrad years at Hertford College, Oxford and his years as a schoolteacher in North Wales. The characters met are caricaturesque and brilliant.

This may be the only novel that has made me really laugh - a ruthlessly witty satire of 1920s England.

### A GOOD READ

Forget Amazon-owned Goodreads. Here's a good read recommended by our Literature Editor, guaranteed to get you thinking...



9

LITERATURE

### INTERVIEW

# 'A Writer is a Person who Deletes a lot'

BY TOM BROWN

Recently Adriana Murad Konings published her first novel *Los Dias Leves* - the writing project of her undergrad and masters. I took the opportunity to have a conversation with her about her novel, her process of writing and publishing it, the lessons learnt, her PhD, and the creative inputs that shaped it. The following is the result.

For Adriana, "it all started with a character". A big reader of novels, especially American and British, Adriana's reading of Flannery O'Connor sparked a creative urge to feature the American novelist in her own story.

Winning a grant from the Spanish government to write a novel, Adriana was given a period of 6 months to finish her novel. This made writing a "priority". Drawing influence from Nabokov's *Pale Fire* and Siri Hustvedt's *The Blazing World*, the novel created is a somewhat academic amalgamation of literary comment, absurdist humour and a thought experiment.

The bare bones of the novel are as follows: in a small town in the Spanish Guadarrama mountains, a naive literature student reluctantly embarks on the project of writing an article about an old, grouchy author Frances Donnell (based on O'Connor). And from there the story unfolds, using Frances as an exploratory device for the post64 world in a "funny clash".

At the book launch, Adriana's novel was described as "a book about the action of writing a novel." Konings accepts the post-modernist diagnosis, adding that her novel is "about the passion of

reading and creating stories, but also the power of literature to distract you from other things."

Adriana is a morning writer: she limits her writing time to "2-3 hours in the early morning", before starting her PhD work. But ideas about the novel absorb her entire day, especially on walks with her two dogs. This creative process has enabled Adriana to write not only *Los Dias Leves* but, to my complete surprise, also another novel.

I asked Adriana if at any time she felt like throwing her writing projects away. "All the time!" she joked. But the frustration and exhaustion of deleting and refining a piece of work into something that you can feel proud of is met by the pure enjoyment and



passion of actually writing, of the end product. For her, the experience is "liberating".

"A writer is a person who deletes a lot", she quipped.

But something else is needed to complete this writing journey: the publishing house. Examples

of brilliant writers having immense difficulty publishing are numerous. Adriana had her own struggle.

Met by a publishing industry that preferred (for marketing reasons) to publish pseudo-creative books by the already famous, Adriana was left with the "unpublished manuscript in her desk" feeling at odds with the literary world.

The novel had been shortlisted twice for prestigious Spanish literary awards, such as the Premio Herralde de Novela, and yet there was not a publisher to be found. This seemed a contradiction in terms. "I got angry at the publishing world", doubting "whether it made any sense." Despite this, she learned then that she "needed it".

Interest in the novel's publication was only piqued again once she embarked on the publishing journey for her second novel. With contract in hand, the publisher recollected *Los Dias Leves* and, in a shocking twist, ventured to publish that instead. And there Adriana conquered what has also almost stopped *Animal Farm*, *The Wind in the Willows*, and *In Search of Lost Time* from being published, in quite the journey.

Writing a novel is a daunting task - one exacerbated in this case alongside the writing of a PhD on the

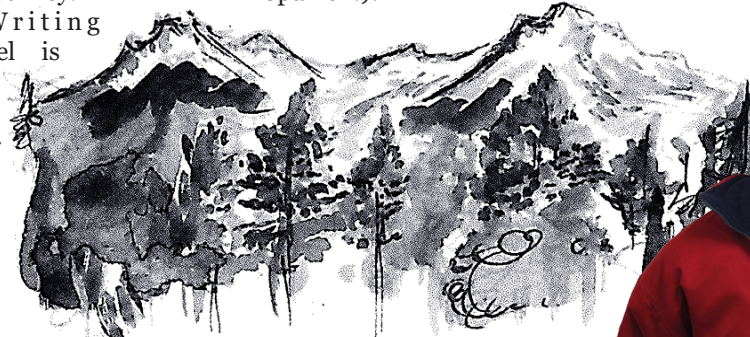
theme of 'suspicion' in the post45 novel. But it was made easier in a few ways. She took inspiration from the authors and themes discovered throughout her education. Her passion and inclination towards stories "always imagining" egged her further. Her ultimately relaxed attitude towards writing - focusing on enjoying the process - allowed her to endure the hardships.

"Literature is something playful for me", she added.

Interestingly, Adriana noted that having written a novel she now has a different perception of literature, and has found the task of her dissertation far "less daunting". Writing a novel has rewarded her with the endurance for writing "page after page, chapter after chapter".

The publishing of her novel comes at a good time for Adriana as she is about to finish her final dissertation. The entire journey is an inspiring one. Adriana acted on an inspiration and an impulse to create something new.

Nearing the end of the interview, Adriana said that for those with a creative urge, "reading will naturally lead to writing" (as all writers begin), and therefore she recommends that you should read excessively (possibly even her novel if you are fluent in Spanish!)



Tom Brown

LITERATURE



REVIEW

# La Piazza Antica: a Little Italy in the Heart of York

BY HENRY ANDERSON

Friday afternoon - entertaining the mother on another one of her regular check-ups to make sure I have not been kicked out of university in my first year - always a daunting task, especially when it comes to food. However, I think she was pleasantly surprised when my rather rogue shout of *La Piazza Antica*, nestled away in Goodramgate, turned out to be a really enjoyable dining experience. Although, saying this, I doubt she was as pleased about footing the bill.

We started off by ordering two of the tomato bruschetta from the main menu. Between the crispness of the grilled bread and the juicy tomato and olive oil drizzled rocket, the starter really lived up to expectations of a classic Italian plate. Following on from that, mum settled on the Pollo Imbotido, a chicken breast stuffed with mozzarella that was by all accounts exquisite; while for myself, having scoured through the

menu, I thought the Linguine di Mare too good to turn down. The selection of calamari, mussels, clams, and king prawns, nestled in a bed of linguine pasta, was cooked and plated to perfection. But it was the white wine and Napoli sauce that made the dish, leaving a rich creamy and tremendously deep flavour in my mouth that would blissfully remain there, surprisingly surviving the couple Burns Hotel lagers I had later on in the day. And of course, when in Rome, a chilled bottle of Pinot Grigio to complement was a no brainer that really made this meal one for the scrap book.

More than anything, the service was fantastic. As well as swift delivery for food and drink, respectful and invested staff, and a willingness to answer any questions we had, our waiter Gianfranco was absolutely stellar; from everything related to Italian culture and cuisine, to anything related to York and the hidden experiences of this city. I enjoyed conversing with him about AC Milan and his home region of

Calabria, and every little chat we engaged in went as smoothly and pleasantly as the wine down our throats. So grazie Gianfranco, I (selfishly?) hope you're not returning to Italy any time soon!

Overall, the bill came to just under £70. Worthwhile for such good food, but obviously an expensive meal at what should be seen as a premium restaurant. However, La Piazza Antica does offer quite a reasonable set menu, which comes to £24.95 for a three course meal, disregarding any money you wanted to spend on drinks. Is the set menu any good? Well, that requires further probing.

In terms of value for money, I think La Piazza Antica is more than worth it. Delicious food in a convenient, accessible location within the city and especially brilliant service makes this restaurant a solid 5 stars in my opinion. I would sincerely recommend it to anyone searching for an afternoon lunch spot in the city of York.



## RECIPE

## Bored? Try Matt's Potato Nachos to #spiceupyourlife!

BY THE RT. HON MATT DAVIS

**After being a participant in my sister's psychology experiment, I went back to her house and tried some Potato Nachos for the first time. If I say too much more this will become one of those incredibly long introductions where I tell you about how this recipe changed my life. The important thing is that it tastes good and is really easy, and flexible too if you need to change it.**

**Equipment:**

A small dish that can go in the oven

An air fryer

If you don't have an air fryer:

Baking tray

Tin foil

**Ingredients:**

Necessary stuff:

Potatoes (either one really big one, or two normal sized ones)

Oil (vegetable oil, not petroleum!)

Kidney beans

Sweetcorn

Soured cream (Greek yoghurt will do)

Hot sauce

Cheddar cheese (grated)

As humans, we love using crude oil for everything, but today Matt tells us "DO NOT PUT CRUDE OIL IN YOUR AIR FRYER! VEGETABLE OIL DOES THE JOB MOST DELIGHTFULLY WELL!"



Nice to Have:

Paprika

Jalapenos

Guacamole

If you do not have an air fryer, use an oven (make sure to preheat it to 180 degrees celsius)

Slice up the Potatoes thinly like crisps, don't worry if they are not too thin.

Either put them in the air fryer at 180 degrees celsius and add a splash of oil (and paprika if you have it) and cook them there for 15 minutes. If using an oven instead of an air fryer, line the potatoes on a baking tray lined with tin foil.

Once they're cooked, take them out of the air fryer/oven.

Get out your dish, put down the first layer of Kidney Beans, Sweetcorn, Hot Sauce and Soured Cream (add guacamole and Jalapenos if you have them). Then add a layer of potatoes, then add some grated cheese. Repeat this step again until your dish is filled

Then put it in the oven at 180 degrees, or use a grill to melt the cheese, this should only take about 5 minutes

...nomnomnomnom!! xx

What's on?

**FOOD WRITING: NINA MINGYA POWLES & ELLA RISBRIDGER**  
IN-DISCUSSION at The Mount School on 7th March, York Literature Festival

Join award-winning writers in conversation on all things food writing. Discover that there is more to the genre than just delicious cookbooks.

## The Royal Dish we Need to Bring Back to York in 2024...



**Looking to spice up your uni meals? Why not take inspiration from the iconic York City Walls to create a dish with a historic twist using this 14th century recipe for Chastletes; a delicious castle shaped pie.**

Created for Richard II, these turreted treats were designed to create a spectacle at the banquet table, especially as a celebration for knights after a long day of jousting and festivities, and could often be two or three layers high!

However, honouring the limitations of the humble uni kitchen, I recommend these measurements for a single tier pie:

175g Flour

85g Butter

2-3 tbsp cold Water

(or a pre-made pastry sheet of your choice)

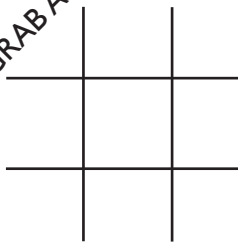
It's as simple as this; roll out and bake your pastry as usual, but instead of a typical crust, cut the top of the pastry into square battlements before placing it into the oven, as can be seen around York

BY FAYE ASKEW

on the City Walls and Clifford's Tower. As for your filling, pork is traditional, but you can use whatever you want. Just like the city of York itself, whilst the castle walls this pie is encased in have stayed the same for a long time, it's vibrant interior is ever changing, and I'm sure whatever you do with it will wow your flatmates just as it wowed the esteemed knights of Richard II's court 600 years ago.

# G

GRAB A FRIEND!



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# M

## Blurble.

**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 your answers to  
games@yorkvision.co.uk)

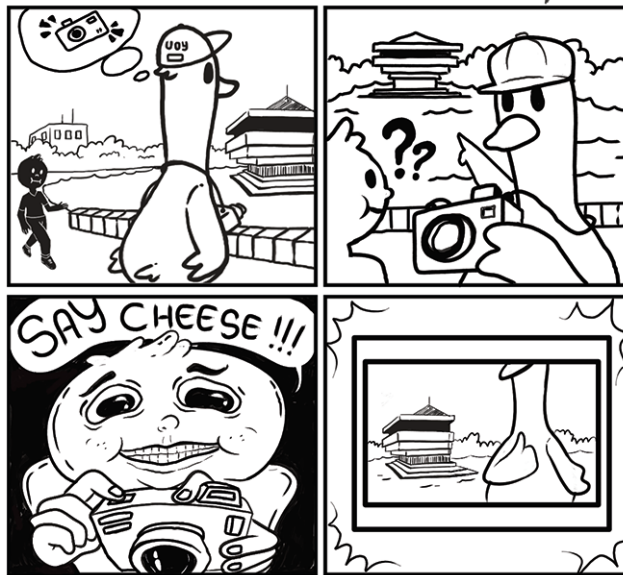
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### JIGSAW SUDOKU

RATHER THAN NORMAL 3X3 REGIONS, THE PUZZLE IS SPLIT INTO 9 REGIONS VARYING IN SHAPE. THE NUMBERS 1-9 CAN ONLY APPEAR ONCE PER ROW, COLUMN, AND REGION. THE REGULAR 3X3 REGIONS CAN BE IGNORED.

### LONGBOI: LANDSCAPE



Ayman Zahir

### Cartoonist

Ayman returns for yet another charming old-skool cartoon! Long Boi isn't dead. He lives on inside York Vision as our proud mascot, along with Central Hall, our favourite location on campus!

If this cartoon teaches you anything, it's that you should never trust cameras...



Like Ayman's work? For more, see ayman\_ish on instagram.

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

22 people gather in Scotland to play a game of *Among Us*.

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### CONNECTING WALL

THE 16 WORDS BELOW CAN BE SORTED INTO 4 GROUPS OF 4 WORDS, CAN YOU SORT THEM CORRECTLY?

BEAR	LUDO	AMBROSIA	NECTAR
FRUSTRATION	TWISTER	BADGER	CROSSWORD
LOTUS	PENGUIN	NEWSPAPER	POMEGRANATE
BEE	UNO	DOMINOES	COMB

# E

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

TURN OVER TO THE BACK PAGE FOR SOME MORE PUZZLES!

**GAMES**

### KILLER SUDOKU

FILL THE GRID WITH THE NUMBERS 1-9 AS PER USUAL SUDOKU RULES, 1-9 CAN ONLY APPEAR ONCE PER ROW AND COLUMN AND ONCE PER 3X3 BOX. NUMBERS WITHIN A CAGE MUST SUM TO THE VALUE PRINTED IN THE CORNER. NUMBERS CAN ONLY APPEAR ONCE PER CAGE.

||

# A

# THE BIG CROSSWORD.

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## ACROSS

- 1) "ONE SMALL STEP FOR \_\_\_\_" (1,3)
- 5) CODEWORD FOR G (4)
- 9) COST \_\_\_\_ AND A LEG (2,3)
- 14) EAR PART (4)
- 15) "YOU'VE GOT A FRIEND \_\_\_\_" TOY STORY SONG (2,2)
- 16) NEW \_\_\_\_ INDIA'S CAPITAL (5)
- 17) CAPITAL OF SLOVENIA (9)
- 19) MAN OF \_\_\_\_, SUPERMAN (5)
- 20) FOOLISH, STUPID (3)
- 21) LONG, LONG TIME (3)
- 22) RED WEARING NINJA TURTLE (7)
- 24) PLANTS TO BE (5)
- 26) ANONYMOUS SURNAME (3)
- 27) DIRTY LOOKS (6)
- 30) PARTICLE WITH NO ELECTRIC CHARGE (8)
- 35) ACTRESS RAYMONDE OF LOST (5)
- 36) EVENT FOR CINDERELLA (4)
- 37) SCIENTOLOGY'S FOUNDER \_\_\_\_ HUBBARD (4)
- 38) PAINTER MONDRIAN (4)
- 39) HUGH \_\_\_\_ (FRENCH KING BEFORE LOUISV) (5)
- 40) \_\_\_\_ AND CRAFTS (4)
- 41) CALIFORNIA'S NEIGHBOUR: ABBR. (4)
- 42) SIMPSON SISTER (4)
- 43) MUSE OF MEMORY (5)
- 44) BROAD-MINDED (8)
- 46) A GUI COMPONENT (6)
- 47) SPRINTED (3)
- 48) UNLOCKS (5)
- 50) GEORGIA'S CAPITAL (7)
- 54) SMALL BATTERY (3)
- 55) NEEDLE HOLE (3)
- 58) BROADCAST AGAIN (5)
- 59) ICELAND'S CAPITAL (9)
- 62) HOLE \_\_\_\_ (5A FEAT) (2,3)
- 63) "A DEATH IN THE FAMILY" AUTHOR JAMES (4)
- 64) READY TO EAT (4)
- 65) IS UNDECIDED (5)
- 66) BAVARIAN RIVER (4)
- 67) SKEDADDLED (4)

## DOWN

- 1) "\_\_\_\_ WELL THAT ENDS WELL" (4)
- 2) MAGIC CHARM (4)
- 3) BORDER ON (4)
- 4) BIRD'S BEAK (3)
- 5) U.S. SOLDIERS, IN SLANG (2,6)
- 6) \_\_\_\_ OFF (INTERMITTENTLY) (2,3)
- 7) JOINS K TO O (3)
- 8) TERROR (4)
- 9) TV COMMERCIAL (2,4)
- 10) AMSTERDAM'S COUNTRY (11)
- 11) EPIPHET OF ATHENA (4)
- 12) FIRST PRESIDENT OF SOUTH KOREA (4)
- 13) GRAIN GRINDER (4)
- 18) "ONE-EYED" FUTURAMA CHARACTER (5)
- 23) OVER 18 (5)
- 24) BERN'S HOME (11)
- 25) STOPS DAYDREAMING (5,2)
- 27) MARCH 17 HONOUREE, FOR SHORT (2,3)
- 28) EGYPT'S CAPITAL (5)
- 29) NINJA TURTLES' ALLY APRIL \_\_\_\_ (5)
- 31) HOME OF ZENO (PHILOSOPHER) (4)
- 32) DISORDERED. ABBR. (5)
- 33) "I'M INNOCENT!" (3,2)
- 34) BEGINNING (2,3)
- 36) FRENCH BATH (4)
- 39) FAMILY GROUPS (5)
- 43) RAPPER NICKI \_\_\_\_ (5)
- 45) ARISEN. ANAG (6)
- 46) A MINNOW IN THE WEST COUNTRY (6)
- 49) CHECK RECIPIENT (5)
- 50) FALL (4)
- 51) ITALIAN WELL (4)
- 52) TONY STARK'S ALTER-EGO \_\_\_\_-MAN (4)
- 53) WRATH IN LATIN (4)
- 55) SINISTER (4)
- 56) "EGAD!" (4)
- 57) SQUEEZED OUT (4)
- 60) HUMPTY DUMPTY (3)
- 61) CARTOON BARK (3)

What's on?

### White Rose Historical Fencing

DIL/028 Tuesdays 4pm  
 Boules court Fridays 4pm,  
 Boules Court Saturdays 1pm  
 Sessions are open to all!

### Dungeons and Dragons

Wednesdays 7pm-10pm

### Board and Sword games:

Board Games in G/N/020  
 Mondays and Thursdays 6:30pm onwards  
 Cardgames in G/N/001  
 Mondays and Wednesdays 6:30pm onwards  
 War Games in G/N/001  
 Thursdays 6pm-10pm, Saturdays 10am-6pm

## THE LITTLE ONE.

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

## ACROSS

- 1) CURVED SWORD
- 6) SOCIAL INFLUENCE
- 7) -LOOMPA (WONKA'S EMPLOYEES)
- 8) CHECK IN POKER
- 9) DUEL TOOLS

## DOWN

- 1) RHYMES BONE OR GONE
- 2) THROW FOR
- 3) TURING'S MACHINE
- 4) INDIAN CURRENCY
- 5) LES \_\_\_\_-UNIS, AMERICA IN FRANCE

# THE BACK PAGE OF SCENE.

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You might have spotted us around in our red fleeces. We're very proud of them.

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But, we don't want to stop here so we're on a mission to design some new merch.

We've got a plan to create some amazing T-Shirts, but we need your help. Or rather, we want your *Vision*.

We want to see what design you think captures the essence of *York Vison*.

This can be anything you like, but try to think about filling the back and the front of the t-shirt.

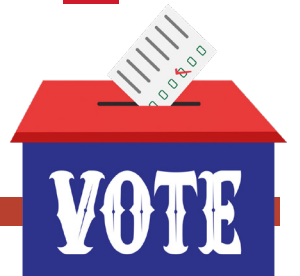
Be creative!

Email your submissions over to [vision@yusu.org](mailto:vision@yusu.org) before the 14th of March.

As always, we can't wait to see your *Vision*....



# COLUMNS



## Election Year

Welcome to Election Year, a new series covering all things world elections, democracy and the future of global politics, as the planet enters its busiest election year in history

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

### UNITED STATES - Caucuses and Court Cases

The US primaries for presidential nomination are officially underway, marking the start of the 2024 election cycle. Iowa was the first to vote on the 15th of January, with former President Donald Trump winning half the delegates for the state. Only Nicki Haley and Trump are remaining in the Republican race at the moment, with Trump leading by a significant margin. It may seem a given that he will secure the nomination, but a wealth of federal and civil lawsuits against him continue to place a large barrier in his second Presidential run.

Amongst these charges are 37 felonies for the Mar-a-Lago documents removed from the White House on leaving office including documents relating to national security. Other charges include election subversion charges, for attempting to remain in power,

defamation and sexual assault, paying hush money to women he had sexual relationships with, and fraud, a civil suit. This cocktail of legal wrongdoing has a timeline that will span at least the next six months, haunting Trump until and undoubtedly past the 5th of November.

On the Democrat side, incumbent President Biden leads, having currently won every delegate available. His only rival is Dean Phillips, a current congressman running on a platform of increasing Police funding, affordable healthcare, new affordable housing, and tuition free college. Marianne Williamson, an author and spiritual advisor, dropped out February the 7th, after running a campaign on her Economic Bill of Rights, campaigning for a living wage and right to unionise, among other pledges.

Third-party candidates are also drawing attention this year, with the Green Party and Libertarian party having candidates for the election. Robert F. Kennedy Jr. is running as an independent, recently gaining attention for an American Values Super PAC Superbowl ad mirroring an ad run by his late uncle John F Kennedy's in 1980. Kennedy apologised for the ad that was not officially run by his campaign, but is still polling highly for a third-party candidate.

With the potential Trump-Biden rematch looming, the primaries and elections of the Senate, Congress and Governors are being swept to the sidelines. After two years, the House of Representatives is going to the ballot boxes again, along with a third of the Senate (Senate terms last 6 years, with a third voted every two years), and

state governors in 11 states and two territories. The current makeup of Congress, with a Democrat Senate and Republican House, has a lot of potential for change, significantly impacting the President-elect's ability to influence domestic policy.

As we sneak closer to that November the 5th tension point, domestic court cases, foreign wars, ongoing calls for ceasefire in Gaza and endless memes about the age of both leading candidates are prepping the stage for a very tense year.

With a Trump campaign almost guaranteed, Biden doesn't need to convince the country to vote for HIM, he just needs to convince them to vote at all.

Or we're in for another 4-forever years of Trumpian hell.

### I'm confused - what's a primary?

The concept of voting for candidates is very alien to the UK system of just showing up to vote once, so what actually is a primary?

Unlike us mostly Brits, Americans can vote for their candidates for the general election and in the general election. But it's not as simple as just showing up to vote. Rather voters vote for their preferred candidate who are assigned delegates chosen to represent them in party national conventions, where presidential nominees are officially chosen. The Democrats do this by proportional allocation of delegates for ballots in every state, providing the 15% threshold is met.

Republicans continue prioritising state power through letting every state do it differently. Broadly, states hold primaries or caucuses. Caucuses are meeting-based, where candidates are chosen by secret ballot or by dividing participants into groups, which give speeches to try to get participants to join them. At the end, delegates are divided based on the number of caucus votes received. Other states hold primaries with proportional allocation, some are winner-takes-all, and some are hybrid. Not every state votes on the same day either. Rather, from January until June, states hold these, most importantly on Super Tuesday, the 5th of March, with 874 Republican Delegates to vote for.

### Indonesia

#### February the 14th 2024

With 200 million eligible voters and beloved incumbent president Joko Widodo (Jokowi) unable to run for a 3rd term, the recent election in Indonesia - the globe's 3rd largest democracy - has been as dramatic as it has been surprising. A tight race, it's Advanced Indonesia Coalition's Prabowo Subianto who is poised to become the next leader. This rich, 72 year old, former soldier, and current defence minister, has taken on national grandpa status, and is accompanied by Jokowi's own son as running mate. However, concerns about past war crimes and unsolved kidnappings, seem unknown to the younger voting demographic of the nation.

### Taiwan January the 13th 2024

The results of the Taiwan general election returned the Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) to power, with the Kuomintang (KMT) remaining as the main opposition party. The Taiwan People's Party (TPP) were in a solid third place position with over 25% of the popular vote. The main two parties, the DPP and the KMT have slight differences in their approaches to the China question. The KMT supports a closer economic relationship with

China whilst following the current legal relationship whereas the DPP believes in eventual Taiwanese independence by-law not just de facto independence under the current arrangement. The TPP views itself as more open to cooperation with the People's Republic of China than the DPP has been in recent years while stressing that it is willing to be confrontational if necessary.

### TUVALU January the 26th 2024

Tuvalu is a small island nation with a population of 14,000 people (~10% of the population of York!). As a result of this there are no political parties and every candidate stands as an independent, this means that people vote on personal political leanings.

The previous Prime Minister who is known for his support of Taiwan lost his seat making him unable

to lead the country for another term.

Due to the lack of political parties any member of the parliament could be appointed in an election that may decide the future of China and the United States' influence in the Pacific along with Tuvalu's own relations with its closer allies such as Australia.

### Pakistan February the 8th 2024

Pakistan went to the ballot box on the 8th of February to elect members of the 16th National Assembly. After a tumultuous two years, this election has been surrounded by controversy. Two former prime ministers declared victory, as jailed former PM Imran Khan won the popular vote, and protests broke out over the country. A six-party alliance between the second and third winners of the popular vote agreed to a coalition government.

Khan was removed as PM following a vote of no-confidence in April 2022, before being convicted in January 2024 of leaking state secrets and stealing state gifts, along with his wife. He is the founder and co-chair of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), one of the country's three big parties, the other two being Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP).

The PPP is run by a father-son duo while the PML-N is run by Nawaz Sharif, a three-time Pakistani PM who was ousted from every term. His latest in 2019 ended due to the disqualification from public office by the Supreme Court of Pakistan, due to the Panama Papers revealing links between his family and eight offshore compa-

nies. Sharif left Pakistan in 2019 after serving 12 months of a 7 year sentence to receive medical treatment in the UK. In January of this year, the Supreme Court said lifetime disqualification for violating the precondition that members of parliament to be 'honest and righteous' was unconstitutional, in violation of fundamental rights, setting the limit to a 5-year ban instead. Luckily for him, this meant Sharif could run again.

The PML-N and PPP have agreed to a coalition government. PTI refused to hold talks and were unable to form a government as their members ran as individuals, not a group. They claim the vote was rigged to prevent them from winning.

Liaqat Ali Chattha, the election commissioner of Rawalpindi, admitted to rigging the election, implicating the chief election commissioner and chief justice. These were shockingly rejected by the Election Commission of Pakistan, but said that they would investigate the allegations.

DAYS UNTIL US ELECTION: 250 days

And closer to home Sunak still refuses to pick a date, hinting a possible November election, although a surprise Spring election to coincide with local and mayoral elections of May 2nd might occur. As Tory poll numbers drop, and Labour call for ceasefire in Gaza in a chaotic, yet effective poll raising, commons meeting last week, Rishi might delay the election as long as politically possible... or at least until bad Autumn weather can deter Labour voters from turning out.

DAYS UNTIL TO UK ELECTION: Spring, Summer or FALL?

# FEATURES

IMAGE CREDIT: YORK VISION

## York: An Anti-Student City?

*Vision* explores building restrictions, exploitative landlords and booming student numbers

BY MATT DAVIS (He/Him)

**Everything from local policy to exploitative landlords, and an irresponsible university admissions team seems to be making the crisis worse. *Vision* explores the student housing crisis in York and the impact it is having on local residents...**

There is without a doubt a national housing crisis, however in York particular difficulties are present that make it hard for students to rent affordable, decent quality homes. So, what are these difficulties?

The most pertinent housing issue in York for students is cost. There has been a significant increase in rent in recent years. This is in part due to landlords having to take into account the cost of living crisis, but also due to pressures on the supply of student housing, specifically in York.

**“No buildings taller than the Minster”**

One reason for the pressure on the supply of student accommodation is the local policies in the city. These state that there is a preference for new buildings to only be a maximum of four stories high. The policy applies to most places around the centre of York, with other similar restrictions in areas further out like Heslington village. This is because a large amount of the space in York is marked a ‘Conservation Area’, which is designed to protect the visual character of the area. Consequently, it is more

difficult for private developers to build larger blocks for students. Additionally, House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) licensing was previously only necessary for houses of five or more people from two or more households. Now, additional HMO rules brought out in April 2023 mean that landlords will also need to apply for a licence for properties housing three or four people from two or more different households.

**So, how much do we pay in rent?**

The results of a questionnaire sent out by *Vision* have found the average rent was £169 per person per week, counting only properties with bills included (as they appeared to make up the largest number of student properties). This adds up to £8,788 over the course of the year. The maximum maintenance loan is £9,978, so if the average rent is subtracted, £1,191 is left for someone for the year, only about £39.70 per week over a 30 week year.

Areas close to the University charge rents as high as £200 per person per week, which would be £10,400 over the course of a year – far higher than the maximum maintenance loan, leaving students at a deficit before even considering other costs such as food, transport, and buying equipment for university such as books. With rent taking up such a significant amount of people’s income in York, prospective students may in-

creasingly start taking this cost into account and decide their university simply based on where they can afford to live. The only other options may be cheaper areas, commuting, or dropping out. As other areas outside of London have crept up in cost, there has been no adjustment to maintenance loans outside of London, treating the rest of the country as a monolith when it very much isn’t.

**Is increasing student intake perpetuating the problem?**

The last 5 years have seen a general increase in overall student numbers from 18,040 in 2018/19 to 21,140 in 2022/23 with undergraduate students making up 74.89% and 72.26% of these figures respectively. The University of York and the Council expect these numbers to increase over the next five years. Even if there are periods of time where there is enough accommodation, the constant need to increase the number of students in York will lead to constant pressures on the supply of student housing.

**Are students dividing local communities?**

Another issue with student housing in York is how it affects the local community. In York’s HMO licensing rules, 20% of houses of a given neighbourhood can be student houses and only 10% of houses on a given street can be student houses. As a result, it is im-

possible for ‘student areas’ (areas with a majority of student housing) to exist. In an ideal world this would lead to harmony between the student community and the local community. However, it often results in a situation where no one is happy and there is a risk of increased friction between these two communities. This has been seen in a number of local news articles showing the controversial increases in HMOs in certain areas. One councillor, talking to the Yorkshire Post said that “HMOs can cause a massive negative impact to the existing community”. One of the issues with having student rentals interspersed with local communities is that students are only in York for part of the year. In addition students are temporary and not permanent residents, typically only in York for a few years before leaving – either to go back home, or to move on to live in other places. This could be leading to communities becoming fractured and divided between ‘the students’ and the local residents. People have been concerned about this for a long time. York City Council discussed this in a document from 2012. Additionally, there have been a number of news stories of local residents objecting to the increase in the number of student properties in their areas for these reasons. This is not to mention the downsides of a lack of student areas, making it more difficult for students to socialise and making the student body feel more disparate after first year. As the Uni-

versity is already a huge provider of accommodation in York, should it not be possible for everyone to have access to on-campus accommodation throughout university if people want it?

**University for the public good or private interest?**

All of these issues lead to students being in a difficult situation. One where we are stuck between a council that at times seems to wish that we were not there, a university property management system and private landlords which appear to extract as much money from students as possible, and an admissions department recklessly increasing student intake, with no regard about how any of this affects the quality of our educational experience.

We are already in a situation where people are considering dropping out of university as a result of high rents we have to pay. If this continues for much longer the University of York may soon become the University of the Rich instead of the University of Public Good it was founded to be.

It is possible that the new Landlord appraisal scheme that is coming in this year will help prevent students from having issues with difficult Landlords who live miles away but it won’t be able to fix the structural issues that have led us to this situation, and if you need a house to live in, you might have little choice but to consider options with more difficult landlords.





**ELEANOR SHAW**  
FEATURES EDITOR

# Germany: Erdogan-Affiliated Party Causes Alarm

BY **ELEANOR SHAW** (She/Her)

**A** newly formed party has entered the political playing field in Germany – one with a noticeable link to the Turkish government and particularly to its president, Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Created in January 2024 with the intention of putting forth candidates for the upcoming European Parliament elections, the party has been increasingly criticised as being a tool for regional influence and propaganda by the regime in Ankara.

The Democratic Alliance for Diversity and Awakening – DAVA for short – has been subject to much discussion since the release of its manifesto. Apart from a series of relatively popular, albeit vague, declarations, such as increased spending in the fields of education and healthcare and a sustained focus on the impact of climate change, the manifesto overwhelmingly prioritises social and religious policies. A pledge to fight for “people with foreign roots” makes little reference to non-Muslim minority groups, of which Germany contains many. The party aims to fight anti-Muslim hate crimes and the spreading of malicious rhetoric by influencing the German education system and encourag-

ing a more “realistic and positive image of Islam”. Despite a general acknowledgement of the extensive presence of Islam in Germany, critics have voiced concerns regarding the extent to which this promotion of a neutralised view of the religion may conceal the party’s more radical beliefs on Islamic conservatism.

To determine the truth in this it is beneficial to turn to the party’s senior members: Fatih Zingal, the lead candidate, is a former spokesman of the Union of International Democrats, a group with close ties to the current governing party. Through the utilisation of mosque communities Zingal promoted Erdogan’s election campaign. The party’s third in command, Mustafa Yoldas, is a senior member of a religious organisation which has been placed on a watchlist by German domestic intelligence services. The manifesto itself mentions the party’s position on upholding the model of the traditional nuclear family and supporting “pro-life positions”. As such, the socially conservative ideology of the party is clear and in line with President Erdogan’s own views. Turko-German relations, however, have been excluded from the party’s stated policies; it is interesting, then, to consider the less obvious aims of the party in line with the upcoming European elections.

On the 9th of June this year,

96 parliament members are set to be elected through a traditional system of proportional representation. As the first post-Brexit European Parliament elections and a possible defeat for current European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen in her campaign for re-election, the uncertain climate of the upcoming elections is unmistakable. Parties such as DAVA are sure to benefit from this uncertainty, and the Turkish government would undoubtedly like to see its indirect influence increase Europe-wide. With the powers to decide on international agreements, pass EU laws, and scrutinise EU institutions and their budgets, the appeal of possessing leverage in the European Parliament is undeniable.

In order to be clear about the proposed connections between the party and the elections, as well as the -affiliation between the party and the Turkish government, it is helpful to look to the figure central to the debate: Erdogan.

Originally the mayor of Istanbul, Erdogan became Prime Minister in 2003 before subsequently assuming the role of President in 2014, a post he has held ever since. The term Erdoganism has been coined to describe his political agenda, and the significant impact of his personality on cementing his support base; as such, his rule



IMAGE CREDIT: PIXABAY/MARIUS OPREA

is defined by a sustained focus on conservative centralised leadership. It was under his tenure as Prime Minister that negotiations began for Turkey to join the European Union, and he has expressed keen interest in increased collaboration with the EU. The fact that an overwhelming majority of the Turkish diaspora in Europe lives in Germany makes a focus on improved cooperation with one of the EU’s biggest powers an attractive option. In a 2020 survey by the Center for American Progress and the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS), 45% of respondents were German Turks, and of the 1.5 million German Turks who voted in the presidential elections last year, 66% voted

for Erdogan.

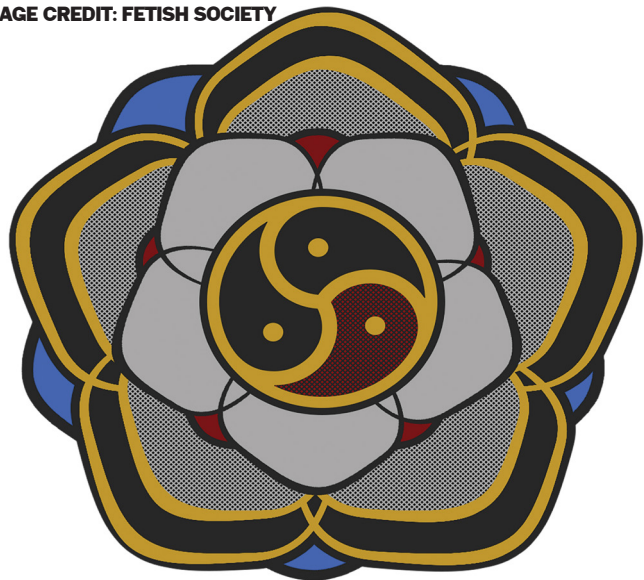
As a result, it is clear that Erdogan has a lot to gain by expanding his indirect authority to the nation with the biggest diaspora – apart from securing votes in his own nation, he can hope to use Erdoganism to influence the representatives of another. DAVA’s proposed policies and choice of their senior candidates illustrate a clear link between the party and the Turkish government. To many in Germany the creation of this party is a worrying development, especially in light of the numerous death threats received by German politicians and activists who have spoken out against human rights violations in Turkey under the current regime.



IMAGE CREDIT: PIXABAY/GERALT


**CHARLOTTE AMBROSE**  
LIFESTYLE EDITOR

IMAGE CREDIT: FETISH SOCIETY



# “Flogging and Rope Bonding can be Incredibly Dangerous”

BY **CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)**

**E**xploring all things kink-related, the University of York's Fetish Society (Fet-Soc) has over 100 members and stands as the longest-running fetish society within a UK university.

For most of us, our first encounter with Fetish Society happens when browsing the list of societies during Freshers' Week. Out of curiosity, you may find yourself stopping to read their page. You may even check out a few of their Instagram posts. As a quick tip, it's best to check that your mum isn't standing behind you when you do this!

FetSoc's non-social events are exclusively restricted to paying members. For that reason, the

society has developed an air of mystery over the years. Until now, non-members have only been able to speak about it in vague and largely generalised terms. To finally unmask what really goes on in this secret society, I spoke to some of FetSoc's committee members.

## 1. What kinds of events do you run as a society?

FetSoc organises all sorts of events including things like panels, workshops, socials and guest speakers. Lili, the Secretary, spoke enthusiastically about the Birmingham Bizarre Bazaar. “It is the biggest fetish market in Europe. We do an annual trip there with all our members to introduce them to the scene (the wider fetish community)”. Ben, FetSoc Marketing

Manager, also told me that they are soon hosting a rope suspension workshop. During this event, members can try being suspended off the floor by rope, under the careful supervision of Christina Red, one of the most accredited rope teachers in the UK. FetSoc also enjoys mixing with other societies. One of their most successful collaborations was with a Scouts and Girl Guides group, in which the attendees were able to bond over their mutual interest in rope-tying and knots.

## 2. What's something you wish non-members knew about FetSoc?

People don't consider the huge amount of health and safety precautions that are taken before and

during each session. “Our number one priority is safety”, Lili told me. Things like flogging and rope bonding can be incredibly dangerous if done incorrectly, so a large portion of FetSoc events involve educating people on how to do these manoeuvres properly. This element of technical training is significantly overlooked by non-members.

Luca, the Chair, explained that choking someone incorrectly can break their windpipe. Similarly, the method used to tie people up in porn can cause permanent nerve damage if it is re-enacted in real life. Ben summarised that “a lot of our events are aimed at getting new people in and if they come to a couple of sessions and they learn a thing or two about how to be safer, then FetSoc has kind of done its

job.”

## 3. Thoughts on the film *Saltburn*?

“In terms of the sexual aspect, it is a terrible representation of many people in the kink community,” said Ben, “it's a great film but not for kink”. It is rare to see freely given, well-informed consent being shown in the media. FetSoc quartermaster Artemis explained that “the entire consent side is often skipped over because there is this idea that it will slow down the narrative.” Whilst a film like *Saltburn* can still be valued as an artistic production, its inadequate portrayal of consent should not affect our understanding of what it means for consent to be valid.

# This is why Less is not More

BY **CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)**

## Minimalism.

The popular interior design craze is otherwise known as the philosophy of ‘getting rid of stuff’. Minimalists severely limit the amount of possessions they own, with the belief that doing so will give them a higher level of mental clarity and sense of control over their lives.

This might sound like a fairly reasonable idea. After all, it seems to offer an escape from the world of consumerist madness.

However, I don't think adopting a minimalist lifestyle is the right way to do this, at least not for students. For one thing, a lot of us struggle with homesickness from time to time. You cannot convince

me that a room resembling an IKEA catalogue will be more comforting than a room that looks like your childhood bedroom.

It's easy to forget the reason that we keep stuff in the first place. Photographs; random pens; that old jumper that you keep saying you'll throw away but never do... these things are way more valua-

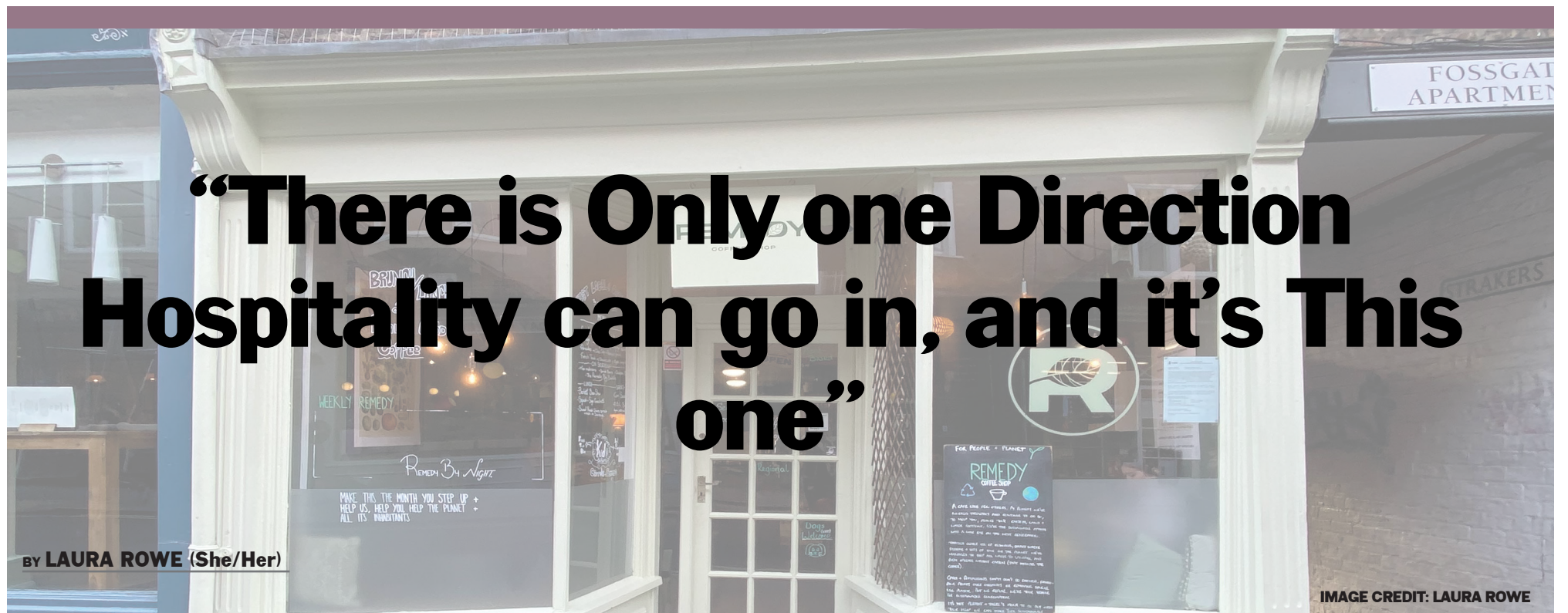
ble than their retail price. This is because they're your things. They carry memories which cannot be replaced by a new, more aesthetic-looking version.

I don't think minimalism is the answer to our problems. In the same way that over-consumerism is bad, minimalism tries too much to counteract this and ends up on

the opposite end of the spectrum. ‘Light Academia’ and ‘Parisian Interior Apartment’ are two other interior design styles which try to concoct a blend between the two extremes. But personally, I think the best aesthetic your room can have is one that is authentically you.

IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH

# SCIENCE



**S**ustainability has become increasingly important to people. But how do we change to be eco-friendly without sacrificing our lifestyle?

Vision spoke to Remedy Coffee shop, a sustainable café in York, about how they have managed to create a nearly carbon-free place, and why this is essential.

“There is only one direction hospitality can go in and it is this one.” Sebastian Geczy, the front of house manager, tells me. “There isn’t going to be a place for hospitality in the world if we keep using meat and dairy all the time.

“We are a Pro-planet café above anything else.”

Sebastian argues that Remedy’s choice to be sustainable and vegan is good for the environment, and people. “10% of people go to bed hungry every single night. Yet 70%

of the crops we grow goes to feeding cows and chickens and pigs, and that just doesn’t make any sense. We can feed like 300 billion animals, but then we can’t manage to feed the 8 billion people that are on the planet.”

Sebastian made me an oatmilk hot chocolate in an edible cup. Naturally I was curious about this.

“Because paper by nature absorbs water, with paper cups, there needs to be a plastic lining in between the cup and the liquid. It’s been proven that those micro plastics go into your drink and go into your body.

“So, we’ve got one of two options. You can either have a mug which you takeaway and then bring back. We’ll wash it, put it back on the wall, and then somebody else can use that mug the next day. Our edible cups are very similar to ice cream cones. It will keep liquids

hot for 40 minutes and be watertight for about 8 hours.”

I, of course, tried the cup and while they aren’t packed full of flavour, I would definitely have one again. But, as Sebastian explained, “You can either eat it or you throw it in the bin and within two weeks it completely disappears with no plastic left behind.” So even if you



choose not to eat it there’s no waste.

“Two million plastic cups are used every day in the UK. 95% of them don’t get recycled”. Remedy has big plans to change the way takeaway cups are used in York. “What we plan to do is go around to almost every café in York and give them mugs”. This would mean that no matter where you went for your coffee, you would take the mug with you and be able to drop it off at any café. “We want to make it so it’s easier to find a café to drop your mug off in than it is to find a bin to throw away a takeaway cup”. And it’s not just the cups that are edible. So are the straws, and the cutlery. Even their containers are lined with seaweed instead of plastic. In regard to other cafés, Sebastian explains that “I’m sure they’re gonna realise it’s better for the planet if you don’t use as much plastic.”

Sebastian is confident that “at

some point, the cafés around are going to say, well, these guys are the busiest ones on the street, and they must be for a reason. It’s because people care about the planet they live on.”

“As a café we show that we care about the planet we live on. But I think a lot more people do need to start showing that they do.”

Their coffee is as close to carbon neutral as possible. But they aren’t satisfied with ‘nearly’. “We do have plans in the future to use hydrogen to roast our coffee beans, and that will make it a hell of a lot more carbon neutral. But until then, we’ve got a pretty good system.

“It could always be improved. And that’s a big thing for us. We realise that we’re not perfect. We’re doing as much as we can. We’re not perfect, we can improve, but we’re very open about it.”

## Semaglutide: Miracle Weight-Loss Drug?

BY CONNOR SZULIST (He/Him)

In the weight-loss industry there are many so-called miracle workers. Diets, exercise regimes, and pills all claim to dramatically reduce your weight, yet seldom few do. This may have changed with the introduction of the new drug ‘semaglutide’ which seems to be able to match the claims many drugs of this kind make. A study by The New England Journal of

Medicine found that over 68 weeks, nearly a third of their 2000 sample size lost 20% of their weight. This left the two pharmaceutical companies who hold the patents

(the Danish Novo

Nordisk and American Eli Lilly) rubbing their hands as both have sought to capitalise on it.

Novo Nordisk’s value exceeded the GDP of its origin country for some time in 2023, and comprised the two thirds of the country’s economic growth the year before. Yet with the incredible commercial performance of the new drug, how does it work?

Semaglutide isn’t a new drug. Originally, it was used as an anti-diabetic medication to treat type 2 diabetes by prompting the growth

of insulin. However, patients who were using the drug reported substantial weight loss. After an investigation, the drug was shown to affect the brain in a way which reduces the appetite of its users. It is unknown how the appetite is suppressed, but the drug also seems to suppress other desires. A small trial overseen by Neuroscientist Praticia Grigson claims that the drug may have an effect on certain drug addictions. Her trial on rats showed a reduction in “heroin-seeking behaviour.” This area of research is still in its infancy, but many are

optimistic about semaglutide’s potential.

The drug, though, is not without controversy. In Illinois an Ozempic (Novo Nordisk’s brand of semaglutide) a user vomited so much that they tore their oesophagus. This comes as thousands of other users launched a lawsuit against the company for the alleged undisclosed side effects of the drug. This raises the problem as to how the drug is currently not being used for its designed process. Semaglutide was created for those with type 2 diabetes to increase their insulin,

not as a weight loss or anti-addiction drug.

The long-term effects of the drugs on healthy bodies are unclear. Will the body adapt and mitigate its effectiveness over time? Are there some unknown risks with the constant use of semaglutide? These questions will remain unknown for the time being, but with the lawsuit in America, and greater research into the effects of this drug it will become clear if this truly is a miracle drug.

# ENVIRONMENT

IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH



## Eco Anxiety

BY ANNA MALE (She/Her)

**W**hen we think about student mental health, it usually concerns grades, employment or rising costs. But, another source of stress seems to come from the current climate crisis and wider action, or lack thereof, around it.

A recent Student Minds study showed that 72% of students were quite or very concerned about climate change. This phenomena, of stress about the degradation of the planet, has been dubbed climate or eco anxiety by journalists and researchers.

Eco anxiety is defined by the American Psychology Association as a chronic fear of the impacts of climate change on current and future generations. It puts the sense of dread that comes from seeing and experiencing environmental

disasters into words, especially it feels as though we cannot do anything. These environmental disasters include seeing extreme weather, losses of biodiversity and the overexploitation of natural resources, among other crises.

For young people, this stress is increased. Young people have always been found to strongly care about the environment. A 2021 study by The Lancet showed almost 80% of respondents thought the future was frightening, with 82% believing people had failed to take care of the planet and 65% believing governments are not doing enough to avoid a climate catastrophe.

Among students, a similar sentiment is shared. Student Minds found that 72% of respondents were concerned about the environment. The survey found 68% view intergovernmental bodies as responsible for climate change, and 55% think that the UK government

is not doing enough. Only 20% got information about their environment from their university course, with 69% getting information from social media, documentaries and TV. While students may not have a lot of trust in government structures to deliver on climate change, they are motivated to get information about the environment in different formats.

This discrepancy between concern about the environment, information and view of governments, on a state level and international level, spells out why ecoanxiety may be high among students and young people. While the care is there for the environment, and young people want a more sustainable future, the way that this will happen seems to frustratingly lie within spaces that most young people cannot access or aren't part of, like the government.

A University of York student commented that climate change is

“a desperate situation”, while another said that it feels “hopeless”. The University itself is generally seen as quite sustainable, with a student commenting on initiatives, such as YorCup and the use of solar energy. These initiatives are supported by the student body, but students are still viewing climate change as very concerning as a whole.

Anxiety around climate change is detrimental to the mental health of many, especially students. With a problem as big as the environment it is easy to feel like there is not anything that can be done. As students, we are often not able to buy more sustainably due to rising costs and usually not the ones taking private planes everywhere Taylor Swift style. However, that does not mean that we cannot do anything - there are still plenty of ways to take environmental action.

The simplest are actions like re-use, reduce, recycle. Although this

sounds like it's for primary school children, it is easy to sort recycling, and reducing consumption helps to tackle some of the biggest polluters, like fast fashion. It can also be helpful to talk to others about the climate - this can raise awareness and alleviate stress and, through talking with your MP, you can also hold representatives accountable for their action or lack thereof on the climate.

Of course, it can be hard to feel like these actions make a change when it feels like so many large polluters are not making the changes needed for climate action. This feeling of hopelessness is what causes eco anxiety in so many, but converting this into actions and creating a discourse around climate serves as a reminder that we are not helpless against climate change.



**ANNA MALE**  
ENVIRONMENT EDITOR

## UoY's 10th Sustainability Week

IMAGE CREDIT: DAN GORDON-POTTS

BY **ANNA MALE (She/Her)**

The University of York has announced their tenth sustainability week will be held from the 4th of March to the 8th of March 2024. They aim to raise awareness about “environmental and social issues”.

Events during the week are “sustainability-themed”, with a range of information sessions, workshops and other events available. Included in this is a tour of the Institute for Safe Autonomy, which *Vision* previously visited, and its solar farm which aims to make the University Net Zero by 2025. Other events include role-playing games, information on the University's Sustainability Plan, walks, bike doctor sessions and Zumba, stretching the meaning of ‘sustainability’ to include to sustaining physical and mental wellbeing.

These events all link to wider actions that the University promotes in relation to sustainability, such as sustainable travel, reducing, reusing and recycling, and reducing our carbon footprints when working from home. Of course, this only extends to staff and students - the theme of sustainability does not seem to extend to the Campus East Energy Centre *Vision* previously found to be running on fossil fuels.

# COP28 Catchup

BY **ANNA MALE (She/Her)**

IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH

This year's COP28 was held in Dubai, and the talks covered wide-ranging environmental issues.

Notably, the talks ended with the need to transition away from fossil fuels. After controversy surrounding the presidency of Dr Sultan al-Jaber, he commented that there was “no science” to support fossil fuels' link to climate change. He quickly refuted that his comments were taken out of context to undermine his presidency, but as CEO of Abu Dhabi national oil company, his conflicting interests stained his ability to lead on need-

ed change.

The UN Secretary-General's commented that fossil fuel phase out was ‘inevitable’ and a global agreement to ‘transition away from fossil fuels’ did represent a global change in mindset around the causes of the climate crisis. Almost 200 countries committed to tripling renewable energy capacity and doubling energy efficiency by 2030.

Despite this commitment, how this inevitable transition was going to take place was not outlined, and the wording ‘phase-down’ and a progressive move away from fossil

fuels left ambiguity about how this transition would take place.

A global stocktake assessed how countries were faring in keeping their 2015 Paris Agreement pledges to limit heating to well below 2°C. It noted that many countries were not on track to meet these Paris Agreement goals, and parties agreed to submitting updated climate plans by COP30.

The global loss and damage fund was formally agreed to by delegates. This fund would support developing nations that face the effects of the climate crisis, despite contributing the least to climate

change. Britain committed at least \$51 million, with the EU pledging \$245.39 million, Germany \$100 million, the US \$17.5 million and Japan \$10 million. However, plans for continuation of finances was not certain for the fund, as well as who the recipients will be of it.

Despite some wins, the wording used and lack of certainty surrounding implementation of agreements suggests greater action on the international stage is still needed to cause the change needed to prevent further climate degradation.

## What's Happening With the Unused Road on East?

BY **JACOB BASSFORD (He/Him)**

IMAGE CREDIT: DAN GORDON-POTTS

East Campus: spacious, new (ish) accommodation, walking distance from Greggs or the York Sport Village, a very high chance you will get blown off your feet by the gusts of wind, a big queue at the bus stop at the Interchange to get to West Campus where there is a semblance of student life, and the unused road that is doing not so great for the environment.

So what is it, why is it bad for the environment and how is it symptomatic of typical great planning by the University?

Before COVID-19 and the construction of Anne Lister and David

Kato Colleges, Lakeside Way, its official name, connected York Sport Village all the way to the junction by Heslington Church. Its primary use was by the 66a, a bus service never resumed since the start of the first COVID lockdown in March 2020, hence the apocalyptic-looking abandoned bus stops behind Piazza and Ron Cooke Hub.

Lakeside Way sits at the bottom of the hill, right beside the lake. In hindsight, the construction of a road on marshland was not the best decision. The road is sinking slightly and, combined

with its position at the foot of the hill, easily traps rain water.

It does not take much for the road to become completely flooded, as it prevents surface runoff into the lake and keeps the land around it as too marshy to be used as a footpath, cycle lane or indeed a road.

A University of York spokesperson commented: “We recognise the deterioration and are conducting a series of investigations to determine causes. It is anticipated that repairs will take place to replace and improve the existing road, in phases over a pe-

riod of time, and focus on drainage and additional pavement access routes.”

If the University intends to not reopen Lakeside Way as a functional road in the long-term, questions have to be asked as to what they are planning to do with it.

But, like with all constructions on East, what is directly university owned, and what is leased from Heslington is complex and not necessarily very clear. It's very possible that the University is unable to fix this environmental damage they have created.



IMAGE CREDIT: DAN GORDON-POTTS

## SPORT

# Why are Esports Forgotten?

BY TOBY CHESHIRE (He/Him)

**I**t's not uncommon that people ask about how I follow esports. This is understandable, after all, it's hardly like you read about it in the news, or watch it on television, or read about it in (most) newspapers. But, why is that? Why should it be that video games eludes the spotlight of these mediums?

Maybe it is that video games are just too niche of a subject, let alone the competitive components. However, you might be surprised to find video games take up a huge slice in the UK's entertainment industry's pie. The digital entertainment and retail association (ERA) reported that in 2019, the UK's games sector was valued at more than the music and video sector combined.

Although video has caught up with games as of 2023, there's still billions of pounds spent every year as well as being a huge cultural ex-

port. All of the biggest games out-sell the biggest movies with ease.

An obvious culprit in our investigation is that age plays a huge factor in how people consume and produce media and entertainment. The younger generation grew up with video games already established as a huge industry, and the internet as a cornerstone of our society. In contrast, older generations didn't have the overwhelming access we take for granted now.

Adults have busy lives. Jobs, children, and everything else results in less time to start the hobby of getting into video games. Juxtapose this with the young-

er generation – they have the time to get invested in games. Consequently, some think that way about video games in general – it's a children's hobby and should be treated with that attitude.

Unfortunately, it has to be said there are negative ideas towards video games, and further esports,

especially from those that didn't grow up with them in their lives.

Tetris nears 40 years since release on NES, and just had a major breakthrough. Willis Gibson, age 13, won the race to become the first player to ever complete the game in that he played for so long without failure that the game broke before he did. Sky News picked up the story, where newsreader Jayne Secker remarked "Go outside, get some fresh air. Beating Tetris is not a life goal".

In my opinion, this incident is indicative of a wider opinion I have

heard firsthand. Negative opinions perpetuate a cultural barrier, and I can only hope that eventually esports and games as a whole garners the same respect as other hobbies and other traditional sports.

It's not all doom and gloom though - if esports are confined to digital consumption, is that all it needs? Internet usage continues to soar, with no signs of it stopping.

There's a very real proportion of the children who grew up with video games and the internet that won't shed these hobbies - these people will lead brands, infrastructure, and cultural attitudes.

I am a simple man, and my dream is a simple one – I just want to watch an esports match in a sports bar without being judged.



IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH

IMAGE CREDIT: THOMAS CARR

## Women's Football Varsity Qualifier Final

BY THOMAS CARR (He/Him)

**Sunday the 18th of February saw James and Goodricke take to the sunny 3G in the final of the women's football Varsity qualifiers. With Goodricke thrashing Vanbrugh 7-0 and James beating Alcuin 4-0 in the semi-finals prior, both teams were confident and a fiery game was expected. Such intensity wasn't present in the first fifteen minutes as neither side were able to break the deadlock.**

James would soon begin knocking on the door with a free kick in the 24th minute, but it whistled over and solid defending from the Goodricke back line kept

the score level. James' dominance would continue as they continued to lay siege to the Goodricke goal and the 28th minute saw a close-range shot go begging, wrapping up a promising half.

The second half began and Goodricke began to play the style of football that the 3G was made for. Chances began to appear, and a questionable foul on Goodricke's number 20 led to a free kick in a dangerous position. A delightful cross found Peggy Lee who rifled one in the corner to put Goodricke 1-0 up, the midfield maestro's second of the day after scoring in the semi-final prior, the pitch erupted and spectators could only watch in

awe.

However, the limbs of the celebrations were quickly derailed as James equalised two minutes later following a brilliant pass into the path of number 25 Lucy, who lashed one home into the bottom corner showing the composure of a player who plays on the 3G weekly.

Once again the match began to dance to James' tune, but they failed to capitalise on chances to extend their lead. Safe hands from the Goodricke keeper would prove frustrating for the James wingers, but James' push for a winner was nearly rewarded, as near the end of the second half, Goodricke almost rolled the ball into their own

net following a short clearance. A final chance came in the form of a James free kick in the last minute, but it was calmly headed away by Goodricke's number 11.

The whistle blew and both teams took to the bench for a rousing team talk in preparation for the penalty shootout. Goodricke's number 7 opened their account with a tidy finish. Following Goodricke's early success from the spot, James' number 5 slotted it into the bottom right corner. Goodricke's number 18 would then line up to take but a clawed save from the James keeper kept the shot out. James' number 13 then fired into the left corner giv-

ing them the advantage. Two more well-taken penalties from both sides meant that the score was 3-2 to James. Tragedy struck as a miss from Goodricke's number 12 meant that James' number 17 was able to seal the win with a 4-2 victory on penalties meaning they will be A seed at Varsity.

JCWFC commented "this Sunday showed an outstanding performance from the James girls...we put 100% effort throughout both matches, battling for every ball, and showing great determination to get the results we deserved in the end."





**JACOB BASSFORD**  
SPORT EDITOR

# Varsity 2024 Teams Confirmed

BY JACOB BASSFORD (He/Him)

IMAGE CREDIT: YORK SPORT UNION

**I**t's the first *Vision* print of the new year, which can only mean one thing... the annual Varsity article!

Since the end of exam season and the start of semester two, college and campus teams (men's, women's and non-gendered) have been back in action to decide who is going to be representing the University of York in their Varsity

competition against the University of Durham. With fixtures rounding off on Sunday the 18th of February, *Vision* can confirm the teams who are going to be representing the University in the table below.

In a post-COVID era of limited sporting success for York, with two heavy Roses defeats in a row, Varsity has become a source of comfort for the York Sport Union. Last year York won Varsity back-to-back for

the first time and it was also their first win competition away from home since the intercollegiate tournament began in 2014. Durham have now not won a Varsity since 2019 as York is set to host on Sunday the 3rd of March 2024.

The York-Durham Varsity Intercollegiate tournament works as follows: each sport is competed between the two universities in an A Seed and B seed fixture. These col-

legiate sides (sometimes merged colleges or Campus sides depending on the sport) are determined by Varsity qualifiers that happened in mid-February (based on league standings). A Seed matches are worth 5 points to the victor, B Seed matches are worth 3 points, and according to the YUSU website, there can be no drawn fixtures. Hence, matches tied at full-time will have to be decided by a penalty shootout

or some other way of determining a victor depending on the sport's rules. Whichever university wins the most points overall will win Varsity. Last year, it was a close result finishing 63-65 to York, so it will be interesting to see if home advantage leads to yet another consecutive Varsity triumph.

Information correct as of 26/02/24

SPORT	A SEED	B SEED
BADMINTON	Derwent	James
BASKETBALL	Constantine	James
DARTS	Constantine	Derwent
HOCKEY	James	Goodricke & Vanbrugh
LACROSSE	Heslington East	Heslington West
MEN'S FOOTBALL	James	Goodricke
MEN'S RUGBY	Heslington East	Derwent
NETBALL	Goodricke	James
POOL	Langwith & Anne Lister	Derwent
SQUASH	Langwith	Goodricke
TENNIS	James	Heslington East
ULTIMATE FRISBEE	Heslington East	Heslington West
VOLLEYBALL	Alcuin	Vanbrugh
WOMEN'S FOOTBALL	James	Goodricke
WOMEN'S RUGBY	Vanbrugh	Lister & Kato

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**LIFESTYLE**

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**SCIENCE**

IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH



# ECO ANXIETY

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