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IMAGE: YORK VISION

NOT ALL UNIVERSITY BATHROOMS ARE INCLUSIVE

Half of the gender-neutral toilets in Church Lane have been converted back to gendered toilets, posing questions about the University's inclusivity.

BY **LAURA ROWE (She/Her)** AND **CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)**

Half of the gender-neutral toilets in Church Lane, one of the University of York's newer buildings (open from 2021), have been converted to gendered toilets.

Previously, the Church Lane Build-

ing had two all-gender toilets downstairs and now there is only one. Similarly, on the first floor, there used to be three gender-neutral toilets. Now there is only one all-gender toilet, along with one male and one female toilet.

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feedback from those who use Church Lane, two blocks of toilets have been converted to single sex so we can provide a mixture of toilets in the specific building."

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University Records 6 Student Suicides in the Last 5 Years

BY DAN GORDON-POTTS (He/Him)

The University of York has recorded six student suicides in the last five years, *Vision* can report.

After a Freedom of Information (FOI) request was submitted to the University in October last year, the University has revealed that it does not always receive the outcome of coroner's inquests after a student death is reported and has no legal 'right to know' this information.

This comes after the national campaign for Harry's Law two years ago, prompted by the death of Exeter student Harry Armstrong Evans, which petitioned for the UK Government to make it mandatory for Universities to publish their yearly suicide statistics to increase

transparency about mental health. *Vision* has found that the University does not hold complete records of any student deaths, including suicides.

The University does not know how many of its students have ended their own lives.

When asked if there was any scheme to try to collect more accurate suicide data and make it public in a move for more transparency and honesty, the University said "we hold no records of any such plan."

The FOI also revealed that this extends to staff at the University. The University does not collect accurate data about the suicides of its

employees.

Defending its position, the University commented that "the University has a clear process in place for managing and providing support in the sad occurrence of the death of a member of staff."

Vision also asked if the University held any student or staff suicide data from further back in time, in the academic years 2012-13, for instance. The University said it "does not hold data relating to student deaths on central systems prior to the 2014/15 academic year."

In a right of reply a university spokesperson said: "Any death in the student community is a tragedy for families, friends, staff and

students.

"Promoting positive mental health is an important responsibility for universities, but also society as a whole. This is all about breaking down the stigma associated with mental health and encouraging students and staff to reach out and seek help."

"We continue to invest in mental health, including access to a 24/7 clinical helpline, and we are committed to working closely with departments, our student unions, the NHS and other partners, so that supporting and promoting positive mental health remains a priority for all of us."

New Campus Nursery Cost 8.4m to Build

BY DAN GORDON-POTTS (He/Him)

York Vision can confirm that the University of York's new campus nursery cost £8.4 million to build.

The nursery caters for up to 94 children and is located opposite the York Sport Village on Kimberlow Lane near East Campus.

It is an updated site to the previous campus nursery which was on West Campus.

After a Freedom of Information (FOI) request was sent to the University, it has been revealed that the building project incurred additional costs due to landscap-

ing issues during construction, amounting to £347,613 so far.

More work is to be done to landscape the area surrounding the new purpose-built car park, but due to current soil quality this has not yet been completed.

The new nursery is funded entirely by the University, and has been planned since 2018.

The University has confirmed that the project is intended to generate substantial revenue over the next five years, but has said that releasing exact figures would "pre-

judice the commercial interests of the University and its Campus Nursery."

Despite being a public research university and subject to FOI law, the University has stated that 'release of the information requested would significantly weaken the University's commercial position by undermining the University's ability to compete for resources fairly, establish competitive pricing for its services and promote lawful and open competition.'

The University Nursery oper-

ates in a competitive nursery care environment with many other local and national nursery providers.

The University operates robust commercial and procurement processes, in line with the University Financial Regulations, with the objective of optimising value for money.

"In addition, the University has HR regulations for the employment of staff and information about University Nursery Ofsted ratings are publicly available."

IMAGE: YORK VISION

Editors' Note

Good Morning, Good Evening, Good Afternoon. At whatever time of day you are reading this, we hope you are doing well.

We understand that this is a challenging time of year for a lot of people (final years we are particularly looking at you) but you're nearly there! And hey, the library is nearly back to being open 24 hours a day so, really, what is not to love?

This is our last full print of the academic year (ahhh). This also means that it is our last print as your editorial team... a moment of silence please. We would like to say a huge thank you to all of our writers, members and 23/24 committee. It has been a complete whirlwind of a year and we couldn't have done it without any of you.

Don't worry though, we do have a special Roses print coming out in a few weeks which will cover all the

action from Lancaster. (Roses are white)! You can't get rid of *Vision* that easily.

This issue, as always, is jam-packed. We cover crucial current issues in news and question the University on their inclusivity.

Opinion explores International Women's Day, 'Girl Math' and Sobriety whilst Features looks at the London housing market and includes an interview with *Vision* alumnus Jane Ferguson on her time reporting in Afghanistan.

We have a special column from the three of us reflecting on our time at university, *Vision* and what it is like to be a woman entering journalism.

Our other column is a final edition of Election Year, focusing on the York and North Yorkshire mayoral elections (don't forget to vote next Thursday May 2nd)!

Sport spotlights motorbike racing, whilst our sport editor Jacob headed into town to cover an England Rugby training sessions. Environment covers everything from third places to touching grass.

And of course we can't forget news, which has reports on student suicides, a fundraiser for Palestine, the new international STYC roles in Goodricke, and our headline story considering whether all university bathrooms are still inclusive.

It's a busy final print from us... so enjoy! Thank you for reading along, and keep an eye out for our new committee keeping the *Vision* legacy alive next year.

Much thanks,
Emily and Kaitlyn x



Dep. Editor's Note

Our final print as your editorial team. Wow! Where has the time gone? Before we sign off, I want to encourage all of you to join *Vision*.

It's never too late. Whether you're in your last or first year, you've got time! We've got Roses coming up, and we always want more people to pitch, write and subedit articles for online.

If you're even slightly intrigued, come along. I can promise you won't regret it.

You don't need to know anything about journalism, you've just got to be willing to give it a go!

As we've been saying all year, "We Want Your *Vision*!"

Finally, I want to thank our wonderful team, our editors, our committee, and most of all, Emily and Kaitlyn. It's been a pleasure to work with you all.

LAURA ROWE (She/Her),
Deputy Editor





HANNAH WILLEY
NEWS EDITOR

Palestinian Society Launches Urgent Call to Action

BY ANNA MALE (She/Her)

The University of York's Palestinian Society has launched an urgent call to action due to a university alumnus who is trapped in the Gaza strip.

Fadi Hania, a MSc Computer Science alumni, is stuck with his wife and their five children in the Gaza strip. Since October 2023, Gaza has been subject to Israeli military strikes, with indiscriminate strikes of hospitals, houses and other necessary infrastructure has left 33,000 dead, at the time of writing, and displaced 1.7 million people, over 75% of the population, the UNRWA reports. Hania and his family have spent the past five weeks living in a tent in Rafah, after their home was destroyed in ground attacks.

The fundraiser aims to evacuate Hania and his family through buying their visas to Egypt. The Palestinian Society is calling on the University community to help Hania, and show their support through donating and writing their university affiliation. They have currently raised half of their £50,000 target.

An urgent correspondence has also been sent to the York University Student Union, calling for YUSU to take the case to University senior management and publicly show support through sharing the GoFundMe and for the Student Union to donate to the campaign.

YUSU President Pierrick Roger said "I met with PalSoc the day after their appeal for the fundraiser was launched. We are worried about Fadi as one of our alumni and we should all be hoping for him receiving safe refuge from the Gaza Strip. Happy to say we have been able to facilitate time between them and University Executive staff to talk about how the University could support them. These conversations are ongoing and I have tasked Union staff to continue support PalSoc in this way.

"Unfortunately, we weren't able to support advertising of the fundraiser due to charity law and the recent guidance given by the charity commission on supporting fundraising causes and those impacted by conflict. PalSoc have indicated that they are content with us helping in other ways and we have been doing so in collaboration with them."

Goodricke's new International STYCs

BY GEORGE HOWARTH (He/Him)

The student committee at Goodricke College is to introduce a new role for students that wish to volunteer as Second and Third Year Contacts (STYCs) in Freshers' 2024. Alongside the traditional STYCs that support students making friends and settling in and STYMs that mentor students as they move into studying, this year will see new 'International STYCs' and 'International Head STYCs' that will specifically be focussed on welcoming international students to the University.

Owen Wilson, Goodricke's Vice President of Wellbeing, said that the idea came from listening to feedback from the college's International Students' Officer, Madura Wankhade. Madi, a first-year international student, expressed that there was a gap in support for international students (who tend to arrive a few days before Freshers' Week) after move-in as STYCsing doesn't typically start until the arrival day for home students.

Madi explained that International students have a very different experience compared to the traditional bustling time that other people are used to. While she did attend community events, such as one at Courtyard run by YUSU, she

spent the first few days in an empty flat with few people in the college to talk to, and said she would have appreciated more help with functional things like using the hobs and finding shops, as well as navigating the "differences in culture" like self-checkouts in supermarkets.

International students can arrive up to a week before home students, many on university-funded shuttle buses from Manchester Airport. They are helped by the University's 40-strong International Welcome Team (made up of paid students), who "assist [new] students onto coaches [...] then help them at the various campus drop-off points to their key collection point where they are handed over to STYCs". In response to concerns about what happens if students arrive before STYCs, International Student Support Manager Louise Saunderson (who leads the International Welcome Team) explained that "if STYCs aren't available, where possible, the welcome team also take students to their rooms, although we often have two or three coaches arriving on campus at once so the welcome team may have to leave students at the key collection point for staff to direct [to their rooms]."

Her team also provides other services like a buddying scheme and a programme to connect students with local residents over the winter break. They also produce a booklet to welcome international students with practical advice and with information about different university services.

Owen says that the International STYCs' responsibilities will lie in introducing international students to the university and the city in the week before Freshers' Week, 9th-13th September 2024, to give them an experience which more closely resembles that of home students. They will be asked to organise college-based events, socials, as well as providing more practical guidance, such as about groceries, washing machines and getting set up for the first few weeks of term.

Owen Wilson said that introducing International STYCs will "reinforce the initial arrivals and create a college-based welcoming environment" for international students. He hopes that the new roles will make them feel more welcomed to the University and ease a transition that can be hard for anyone, let alone people who've moved halfway across the world.

He said that after he announced

it in the college's STYC information session, "there was lots of hype for a new role", with Madi explaining that "people were quite happy to feel represented". Owen added that application numbers have been strong, which he hopes will reflect in future levels of engagement in Goodricke, with this an example of the change a college committee can bring.

Other colleges are also experimenting with how they run the STYC programme this year, such as Constantine introducing letting some STYCs represent their academic department, and trialling giving STYMs the responsibilities of Head STYCs (by merging the roles) to make STYMs more active during Freshers' Week. According to Constantine President Emily Eurus-Jones, this will help them "build more of a rapport with their blocks" and "boost the engagement we get for our STYM programme and events". In recent years the University has also been keen to usher in changes to STYC responsibilities, with last year additional staff being present in town in an attempt to ease the burden on STYCs.

"I Don't Regret Egging the King but That's not how Change Will Happen"

BY LAURA ROWE (She/Her) AND DAN GORDON-POTTS (He/Him)

Just over a year ago on the 14th of April 2023, Patrick Thelwell went on trial for throwing five eggs at King Charles III. Patrick was found guilty and sentenced to a 12 month community order and £600 in prosecution costs. Throughout the trial they stated that their defence was "a moral one, not a legal one."

Vision interviewed Patrick soon after the event in the sensational article, 'Why I Egged The King.' But we're sure you're all wondering, what's happened to Patrick since? Vision recently caught up.

"I'm probably the best I've ever been," Patrick told us.

Patrick moved to Hull just after their trial to join a community action group.

"I met a group who are doing it, doing the work to make the world a better place. I was sick of writing about it and I wanted to get involved."

Was throwing the eggs the first step towards their work in Hull? How does Patrick feel looking back?

"That's an action of someone who was angry at the state of politics and seeing a lot of despair and not really surrounded by a strong community to take positive action with. It's not something that I regret doing, but it's not how real change is going to happen, the isolated actions of one individual.

"I ended up dropping out of University... and it was an incred-

ibly stressful year where I was facing six months in prison.

"That's what I believed I would get. And I was prepared to face those consequences. When I had my trial I said 'I'm glad I did it, I'd do it again.'

"I know what I did inspired a lot of people... so it meant something to those people and that's something that I'll be forever proud of."

Patrick feels that none of society's problems will be solved by "writing essays about it... I need to get involved with my community."

"What's different nowadays is that I've got this purpose. The group is called Corporation Hull and basically we set up people's assemblies.

"We work two days a week to pay our rent so we can spend the rest of the time volunteering.

"It's called the People's Land Cooperative and we are gardeners who basically help people to grow their own food. We do private landscaping for people and then we use the profits we make to fund community allotments.

"One of the biggest outcomes we've had so far has been a community meal that we're doing every week.

"And actually the food that we grow in the allotments [goes] to the kitchen for the community meal."

IMAGE: PATRICK THELWELL

Mayoral Candidates Debate Buses, Housing and Local Enterprise

BY **GEORGE HOWARTH (He/Him)**

There were no surprises at this debate - five candidates neatly aligned, notes laid on the table, politely answering questions one after the other. The room was scattered mostly with the more politically-inclined students, which, given the declining faith in democracy amongst young people, barely reached 50.

But it's everyone's voices that the ballot boxes will hear this month, not just the people that care enough about our leaders to sit through two hours of mundane plans that may or may not be implemented.

All of the candidates agreed on the basics:

- There aren't enough student homes in York
- The region needs an integrated public transport system
- Carbon emissions must be cut
- The economy must be grown

Apart from slightly different buzzwords, their ideas were broadly the same. They seemed to be justifying the need for the new York and North Yorkshire Mayor rather than trying to convince the audience that they were the best candidate, although all except one repeatedly emphasised their personal experience in the "business world". All tried to avoid controversy and there was little criticism

of anyone else's policies, which kept the debate civil but also left it feeling like more of a series of interviews than a debate.

The audience — apart from the Liberal Democrat activist sitting next to me — didn't particularly seem invested in the candidates and their policies either. They were more switched on by Independent candidate Keith Tordoff's down-to-earth criticisms of politicians being unrelatable, and by Conservative Keane Duncan's remark that another candidate (Independent Paul Haslam) should stop referring to the future mayor as exclusively 'he'.

The topic of housing featured a few new ideas, with Liberal Dem-

ocrat Felicity Cunliffe-Lister suggesting that more empty rooms above city-centre shops could be converted into affordable homes, including for students. There was also some talk, starting with Keith Tordoff, that modular housing should be introduced for students, with him claiming that they could be built for as little as £60,000.

Two of the candidates, Duncan and Haslam, stressed that they would focus on investment into businesses to create jobs and economic growth in the region. Duncan went as far as to say that he would look to introduce a mutual bank to increase the availability of finance to people who might not

normally be able to access it from private banks, including "graduates that might want to start businesses". The other candidates focussed on talking about access to consumer banks in the remote parts of North Yorkshire, and went on to talk about rural connectivity with transport and the internet.

Absent from the debate was Labour candidate David Skaith, although no reason was stated publicly by the York Dialectic Union, who organised the event.

IMAGE: YORK VISION

York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Elections

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

You may have received through your letter box the campaign leaflets of candidates for the York and North Yorkshire elections or spotted their manifestos in Election Year. If you are confused about what this all means, no fear - *Vision* has put together a small run down of the upcoming election:

What is it?

The "York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority mayoral election" leads the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority. Essentially, a combined authority is a group of councils working together, which York and North Yorkshire have created.

It will have a board comprised of the mayor, two councillors from each council and will be advised by non-voting the Chair of the York and North Yorkshire Combined

Authority Business Committee.

What powers does the mayor have?

In short, the mayor will have power over transport, skills, planning and regeneration, and policing and fire services.

This includes responsibility over the Mayoral Investment Fund, a sweet £540 million over 30 years, and have the power over borrowing against funds. They will have full control over the Adult Education Budget, powers over the supply and quality of housing, as well as development of land and infrastructure, power and funds to improve transport through a devolved multi-year transport settlement, and responsibilities for community safety. The latter replaces the previously elected Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner role -

and gives the mayor power to appoint a deputy mayor to carry out the day-to-day duties of the role.

How did we get this?

In 2020, a proposed Mayor Devolution deal was sent to the government. It was agreed to on the 4 years later, in February 2024, the Combined Authority (CA) was formed, joining the newly formed North Yorkshire and York City Councils, devolving decision making power and funding to the CA.

Should I vote?

The short answer is yes, of course!

The longer answer is still yes, but with a reason behind it. By voting in an election, you're making your voice heard and having your say in what happens in the city you live in - and who wins will have an impact on your life through the

policies they enact.

Voting in elections is also important because it exercises democratic legitimacy and (usually) accountability. These two principles are some of the most important in democracy. Legitimacy gives the council or government the right to rule, by being elected by the people and therefore being able to say that they are making decision on their behalf. Legitimacy is similar to consenting to the person in charge - through voting you are agreeing that they can make laws that will affect you. If this sounds a bit farfetched, don't worry - some political theorists spend their days trying to figure out what legitimacy really means.

Accountability means that the person that's in charge is being held to account and can lose their

job if a majority of their constituents disagree with what they have done. For this election, it doesn't directly apply, as we haven't done this before! But, local elections are often seen as a temperature check of what the country thinks of the government, comparable to the US midterms, so maybe bare that in mind when you're at the polling booth.

To vote, you'll need photo ID. You may have received a polling card - this will tell your polling station. On the 2nd of May get out and vote!

Not all University Bathrooms are Inclusive

School for Business and Society

Half of the gender-neutral toilets in Church Lane have been converted back to gendered toilets, posing questions about the University's inclusivity.

BY LAURA ROWE (She/Her) AND CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)

Half of the gender-neutral toilets in Church Lane, one of the University of York's newer buildings (open from 2021), have been converted to gendered toilets.

Previously, the Church Lane Building had two all-gender toilets downstairs and now there is only one. Similarly, on the first floor, there used to be three gender-neutral toilets. Now there is only one all-gender toilet, along with one male and one female toilet.

A spokesperson for the University told *Vision* that "after listening to feedback from those who use Church Lane, two blocks of toilets have been converted to single sex so we can provide a mixture of toilets in the specific building."

While this may be based on feedback, some student groups are still concerned about the impact this will have on both transgender and non-binary students, who may no longer feel comfortable using these spaces.

The Gender Inclusivity Officer for Feminist Society, Emil Barnard-Blench, has responded to the situation by saying "During a time when British politics continues to target transgender rights, and the prime minister is comfortable openly condemning transgender

individuals and making jokes at the expense of the community, safety and well-being is a very real and increasing concern."

"It is a shame then, that the University, rather than taking steps to support transgender students, is making things more difficult for students who do not align with traditional gender identities".

Chair of the University of York Labor Club (UYLC), Ralph Noble, has also spoken on the situation, saying "it's important that all people, but especially our Trans and Non-binary peers can feel safe and comfortable using these spaces."

It's clear that these changes run the risk of unsettling certain groups of students. Some individuals have spoken out against the university's lack of communication with its students regarding this decision.

The Community and Wellbeing Officer, Hannah Nimmo has raised her concerns about the effect this will have on students. "I am really disappointed to hear about the removal of gender-neutral facilities on campus... To now see the removal of the gender-neutral facilities, especially without setting out any clear rationale in a public forum for students, staff and the wider community to access, is even more disappointing."

"I have tried to contact the Department for Technology, Estates

and Facilities (DTEF) on multiple occasions... I am hopeful of receiving a response from them soon so that students can understand why this change has happened. If the reason is unjust, I will then be proactively supporting our LGBTQ+ Student Officers to lobby for the reinstatement of the gender neutral facilities, or at least to find a suitable alternative."

Likewise, the LGBTQ+ Officer, Freddie Newell, commented "it is extremely upsetting to hear about the removal of the Church Lane gender-neutral facilities - it has taken a lot of incredibly hard work from my predecessors to establish gender-neutral facilities in the first place, and to hear about this closure without any communication or prior warning from the Department for Technology, Estates, and Facilities is very disappointing and unacceptable on their part."

"Myself and Hannah Nimmo have attempted to reach out to DTEF on numerous occasions and we have had no response from them... This university is one that should enshrine itself in equality, diversity, and inclusion but at this moment, this closure represents an affront to our LGBTQ+ community here at York".

The University of York's website states that "designating all gen-

der toilets on campus is a positive and welcoming message to trans and non-binary individuals and provides facilities that are inclusive." The University, then, seems to recognise that all-gender toilets are essential for student well-being.

"This university is one that should enshrine itself in equality, diversity, and inclusion but at this moment, this closure represents an affront to our LGBTQ+ community here at York"

Vision reached out to Jane Fae, Director of TransActual UK, an organisation created in 2017, in response to increasing press hostility, transphobia and misinformation. Jane suggested that this might be symptomatic of society.

"We're seeing an unprecedented direct assault on the rights of trans people in the UK by the Government and this is being picked up sporadically by their supporters in various establishment bodies."

"So it would not surprise me if someone in York University thought this was one in the eye for trans people."

"However, the issue of gender-neutral loos is actually quite complex. Many Binary-Trans peo-

ple are more than happy using gendered loos; whereas Non-Binary Trans people will find their ability to work in the University and to move around freely to be impeded by this measure."

Like Jane, another student group, the UOY Lib Dem Soc, recognised these complexities: "we believe that all gender bathrooms are important in all main university buildings, as they provide a safer and more inclusive space for many; we also believe in the provision of gendered bathrooms for those who prefer single sex spaces. It is important that the university strikes the right balance in provision, allowing all students to feel safe on campus."

In a right of reply, a university spokesperson said: "As part of our commitment to creating a University community that recognises, values and celebrates diversity, we ensure a mix of all gender and single toilets are available across campus. Providing both ensures we are inclusive and that we have facilities for different preferences."

There is no doubt that this is a complex issue and everyone at the university deserves to feel safe. The removal of several safe spaces for university students is troubling. The University's lack of communication, even more so.

OPINION

IMAGE: YORK VISION

The Curriculum Hierarchy has to Stop

BY THOMAS CARR (He/Him)

I've just discovered something very annoying. Once again, the future of the creative industry in England is being threatened. The current Education Secretary, Gillian Keegan, is looking to cut funding for creative and performing arts courses in order to redirect funding into more "strategically important" subjects. This is a fundamentally flawed idea and unacceptable on so many levels; although, it highlights the importance of learning how we can better take care of the industry. The arts have given us so much but we still have a lot to learn. Sometimes I hate the feeling but it's all love.

First of all, the arts are invaluable

in terms of good mental health. It's a source of entertainment and comfort that most people consume on a daily basis. Some of my happiest moments have involved music, theatre, television, film, and museums. Although art can't love you back, I've noticed that, like a good relationship, it rewards you for your attention and observation (not consciously of course). There is so much knowledge to be gained by being attentive to the art around you and, unfortunately, many of us are guilty of taking it for granted. Few things compare to the type of happiness and peacefulness you get from art. I'm reminded of a quote by Robin Williams from the

Dead Poets Society; "Medicine, law, business, engineering, these are noble pursuits and necessary to sustain life. But poetry, beauty, romance, love, these are what we stay alive for."

Children from a young age are already being told that creative subjects are not real subjects, or at least not as valuable as science and maths. However, creative subjects are just as valuable, and students should have the freedom to decide what course they wish to pursue without being persuaded towards a particular path, or being told one is better than the other. Therefore, it is crucial that institutions such as universities are an enabling envi-

ronment that encourages creativity and innovation in students. This is made all the more challenging by the lack of funding and government support.

Importantly, art is an expression of our culture and identity, used to convey complex ideas and emotions that words alone cannot always express. It provides insight into traditions and customs, which prompts a wider self-reflection of our own beliefs and values. By extension, it promotes healthy cultural discussion and an exchange of ideas that cuts across race, class, and gender. Maintaining the flow of creative talent is important to allow this to continue to thrive and

for new cultural ideas to flourish.

It's worth mentioning the significant economic value of the creative industry. The Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport estimated that the gross value added by creative industries was £109 billion and £126 billion in 2021 and 2022 respectively. This has been impacted in recent years, as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdowns. The importance of this sector to the economy as a driver of economic growth is severely understated which is why it is necessary to ensure that it is adequately funded by the government.

The Sooner you Stop Drinking, the Sooner you Will Feel Better

BY THOMAS CARR (He/Him)

I'm well aware this is an extremely controversial opinion but sobriety is honestly one of the best things I have ever done.

After two years I am yet to meet another university student who has abandoned alcohol, but seeing the effect it has on those around me has only convinced me even more; you will feel so much better once you stop.

In my experience, it just seems to trap people in a destructive pattern where they're hideously hungover and left feeling like they've drunk nails instead of vodka. It seems to me that, in the moment, it may feel great and take your mind

off things but the deeply harrowing low afterwards is simply not worth it. Alcohol is statistically linked to increased blood pressure and long-term health issues such as liver, brain, and heart disease. You will feel much healthier once you stop and your liver will be thanking you. I am a student, which is code for bankrupt, and alcohol is very expensive. You save so much money by not drinking, which can be spent on things that improve your well-being and personal growth like your hobbies and interests.

At university, there is often an expectation to drink because it is so ingrained in student culture, which

can make sobriety hard. I am fortunate enough to have supportive people around me who respect my decisions, and whilst having to constantly say "no" can be deeply annoying, I've found that you get used to it. I hear phrases like "just one drink" a lot, and although there is nothing necessarily wrong with that, I prefer not to let it shred my carefully crafted control. Letting people know your boundaries is important and develops healthier relationships with those in your life.

I don't like to step in and ruin people's fun (that's a lie, of course I do), but a common misconception

is that you need alcohol to have fun. Many people seem to rely on it to enjoy themselves at social occasions because it supposedly relaxes them and gives them more confidence. I'm sure that, if I had been drunk before, I would get it (I would turn into a drooling fool). But I think that sobriety gives you a more profound understanding of yourself and a greater gratefulness for those around you. There's no repression. No artifice. Every single emotion is beautifully raw, whilst alcohol robs you of that mental clarity. It also takes away the speed with which you process information and compartmental-

ise your feelings which is such an advantage.

I want to stress that I don't judge those who do drink. It's so normalised for university students that nearly everyone does it. My decision to not drink is purely a personal choice out of concern for my mental health, physical health, and my wallet. I also think alcohol tastes like a sweaty back and soft drinks make for a far more pleasurable experience. The point is that sobriety has worked to my benefit, but you remain your own person. You decide your choices. No one else. You chose yesterday. You choose every day.

THOMAS CARR
OPINION EDITOR

“Girl Math”: It’s not Adding up

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)

First, it was “Girl Boss”. Now it’s “Girl Math”. This popular TikTok trend reminds us of the impact that gendered language has on future generations of women.

In theory, Girl Math is meant to be something that everyone can relate to. The trend is meant to poke light-hearted fun at the small fibs that we’re all guilty of telling ourselves, every now and again, in order to justify our (potentially reckless) spending habits. For example, according to Girl Math, anything under £5 is free, anything paid for with cash is free, and if you return something, you’re making a profit.

Girl Math deliberately ignores all mathematical laws for comedic purposes; it contradicts common sense and, to put it frankly, “real maths”. It seems to me that this trend could just as easily have been called “Silly Math”, “Misguided Math”, or even just “Bad Math”. But instead of any of these, it’s called “Girl Math”.

It will come as no surprise that the majority of people jumping on this trend, by giving examples of Girl Math, are women. For centuries, institutionalised misogyny conditioned women into believing that they were biologically less capable of grasping mathematical concepts than their male counterparts. This might explain why so much of the Girl Math content involves a woman explaining the concept of Girl Math to her money-smart dad, boyfriend, or brother. I doubt many of us have come across videos where a man is explaining the idea of Girl Math to his successful, financially astute wife. We cannot say that this trend is truly for everyone when the evidence shows us time and time

again that only one demographic is being poorly represented.

Perhaps this trend was not meant to be taken seriously; however, it still has serious implications for the next generation of young women. Given that a great deal of university students are chronic TikTok users, it is tempting for us to ignore the fact that a large proportion of TikTok users are under the age of 18.

I downloaded TikTok when I was fifteen, so I know from experience that it’s very natural for a young teenager to look up to older, female influencers (my extensive collection of influencer-approved makeup is good proof of that). That’s why I can speak with confidence when I say that this trend will have a significant impact on young girls, who are watching their beloved role models making jokes about how the female mind works. These clips will start to appear in the backs of girls’ minds when they struggle with a tricky maths question in school. As girls choose which GCSE subjects to prioritise, which A-Level subjects to take, and which university degree to pursue, these words will stay with them.

In March 2024, the Institution of Engineering and Technology reported that women account for only 29% of the STEM workforce. Whilst efforts are being made to improve this statistic, I think a trend like this is setting us back in the wrong direction. However jokey or insignificant we may find this trend as educated and fully informed adults, the three seconds of slight amusement we get from seeing Girl Math videos is not worth making any girl feel less confident in her maths abilities.

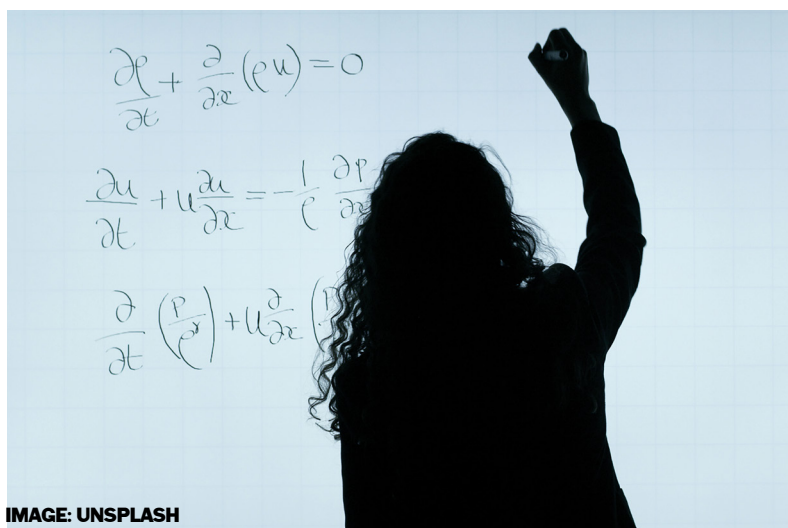


IMAGE: UNSPLASH

Do we Need an International Women’s Day?

BY ANNA MALE (She/Her)



IMAGE: UNSPLASH

In a world that is now so much better for women, do we need an International Women’s Day?

This question feels more prevalent this year, when being surrounded by anti-feminist and anti-trans rhetoric and a 24 hour new cycle makes the need for gender rights fade into the background of ever-changing global crises.

Between the #MeToo movement and today, we got lost. Our changed awareness of sexual assault didn’t change our attitudes towards sex, but we celebrated the individual wins of women and supported women’s choices made in a society constructed around the patriarchy as feminism.

In the time of Taylor Swift being a billionaire and Barbie being the highest-grossing film of 2023, *Vision* declared it the ‘Year of the Girls’. Did the very real need for feminism fade into the background?

Four waves of feminist thinking was meant to have led to the rubble of the patriarchy by now, but has ended instead with choice feminism, an idea coined by Linda Hirshman which suggests that women being free to choose made every choice a liberation, ignoring the social and political factors that affect those choices. Girls supporting girls became girls not question-

ing girls.

When I’m sat watching Alabama declare that a petri dish holds more rights than some women, because that little group of cells has autonomy over itself to not be destroyed, which is more than the body that can’t get rid of the same mass of cells, it doesn’t feel like there’s much of a choice.

This idea of choice, that every choice women make is liberation, shapes both our current understanding of feminism and the sexual politics that surround us today.

A year ago, a friend of mine declared that ‘everything feels like the same sexual dynamics of three or four or five decades ago but we’re told our engagement in this system is, itself, engagement in a third-wave feminism our forerunners fought for.’

It is this quote that sticks with me as I debate the need for International Women’s Day, debate the need for just one day to debate every issue that affects women, every single thing in our society that is impacted by gender.

One day, 1440 minutes, 86400 seconds.

The need for this one day for many is a debate and it might be because it’s not personal for them. But it’s personal to me, and it’s personal every time we ask if the sex was actually consensual, in every conversation about the people who

felt entitled to my friends bodies and in every single story of discrimination on the intersections of oppression.

I try to talk about all of these stories, but there isn’t enough space on a page to describe how much patriarchy seeps into. Because it’s not just in the overt misogyny, the TikToks and Instagram Reels of TradWives, but in the spaces that we make our policies in, and in the international environment that we live in. When we start to dissect every global issue with this gendered lens, the need for feminism becomes even more important.

One day, 1440 minutes, 86400 seconds.

We are told to be grateful that we even get this time to talk. To be grateful that we get the rights our bodies that men take for granted and grateful for when it’s not all men and grateful when we get to consent and grateful that it’s better than it used to be, right?

I don’t feel grateful for this one day, but I do feel angry about it. Angry that women are still fighting for their voices to be heard and I know that my anger in this article pulses through, and it will probably be seen as diminishable as emotion or hysteria or me being on my period.

One day, 1440 minutes, 86400 seconds.

It isn’t enough time.

WE WANT YOUR *VISION*

JUST think about it for a moment.

Every day there are stories being chased, features and reviews being written, millions of photos being taken, and tons of companies out there just waiting to give us exclusive opportunities.

And that's just some of the activities at *Vision*.

So why do we need your vision?

Because there's so much going on in the world, and not enough people to cover it all. So much going on in the world

and not enough people willing to speak out.

But wait. You didn't join. You missed the first meeting. You think it's too late to get involved? If you're thinking this... you're wrong.

If you're interested in writing, design, photography, cartoons, graphics, social media or anything else remotely related to our paper we still very much need you.

Vision prides itself on being a paper of the highest standard. As a close-knit team and society we aim to create a

space that is collaborative, inclusive and a fun environment to be in.

Whatever you want to do we have a space for you. You can play as large-or as small- a role as you like, and you don't have to specialise in any one area.

Needless to say, *Vision* provides an excellent career base, particularly for journalism, marketing, publishing and business management. We have seen first-hand *Vision* journalists go on to work in provincial media.

All you need in order to get involved in *Vision* is interest and enthusiasm. If you have already had an insight into this world great!.. but you don't need ANY experience.

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

We'd love to hear from you. Despite going into the busy exam season, you should get

involved as soon as possible.

Why not take some of that pressure off and do something fun? We all need new ways to blow off some steam.

Vision's success is dependent on both the quality and quantity of people involved.

If you've read this far it means you are interested in *Vision*.

If you've read this far we need your insight. If you've read this far it means you have the VISION we're looking for.

IT'S NOW TIME FOR YOU TO JOIN US

COLUMNS

Women in Journalism

2023/2024 York Vision Editors Reflect

Emily Sinclair - Editor President

The week this prints, we have just handed over *Vision*. As cliché as it is, I really couldn't tell you where the time has gone.

Student media has kept me going this last few years. Don't get me wrong there have been lots, and lots (and lots!) of tears but in between the stresses and panics, it is student media that has really made my university experience.

I joined *Vision* when I first started at York and honestly have never really looked back. I always knew journalism was something I wanted to pursue and *Vision* has given me the confidence to do so. I love people and telling people's stories, something I hope I have done in my role as Editor President and something I hope to continue doing for as long as I can.

My university experience has been better than I could ever have imagined in some senses and worse than I imagined in others. If I'm being honest, the academia has not lived up to my expectations. For the amount of debt I am leaving with, the disorganisation, strikes, and poor communication from my department has massively tainted my academic experience. I am at a point, and have been for a while now, where I cannot wait to leave academia. As somebody who has always enjoyed learning, this is a shame. One day I hope to fall back in love with academia but for now it is time to get myself out of it.

Apart from this, my university experience has been incredible. A complete whirlwind of highs and lows but I can absolutely see why

people say it is one of the best times of your life. I have met friends for life and experienced and achieved things that I never knew I was capable of.

In the week leading up to handover, I have sort of spiralled at points. Blame it on the dissertation, essay deadlines and lack of sleep. Endless questions of 'have I made a difference?' 'what legacy am I leaving behind?' are running through my head and you know what, I'm okay with that. I don't think I would ever get to a point where I am fully satisfied and ready to move on, it's just not in my nature.

But, I am immensely proud of myself which is something I, and I assume a lot of you, don't let yourself feel. We live in a culture, espe-

cially as young ambitious women, where we should always be striving for better and that's great. However, if the last year has taught me anything, it is that I need to get better at acknowledging some of the great things that I'm doing as well as the moments that I really do need to take a break.

At this point in third year, I have been spinning so many plates that it is conditioned into me to keep going. Determination and having large ambitions are great but I have really struggled to switch off. This is to a point where I will even find myself creating problems for the sake of it!

So, take this as a sign to yourself to have a break. Whether that's five minutes outside or a week off, sometimes we all need to put our-

selves first.

There is still so much I wish I could have done for York Vision. From specific events, more socials, a wider reach, an improved website and simply more stories I wish I had more time. However, we have all achieved a lot this year. We have built up a society that has active members, weekly meetings, new merch, regular content and excellent print editions and to be honest that is what I'm going to try and focus on as I hand over the reigns.

It is a privilege to be able to write, edit, manage and focus on *Vision* as much as I have this last year. I am very lucky to have been in a position to do so and extremely grateful for the experiences and lessons that I have learned.

Kaitlyn Beattie-Zarb - Editor Secretary

Committing yourself to a student society, and a media society at that, is no easy task. It takes a huge amount of commitment, energy, time organisation, balancing, and trust. Trust in your team... trust in your work... trust in yourself to balance everything you need to balance. And trust in your team to understand this balancing act.

No it's not easy... but it's also not unrewarding.

My time at *Vision* has been a bit of a whirlwind. From signing up to be Climate Editor during my first ever meeting to jumping on as Features editor in second year, because I was too scared to be News Editor. To taking on the burden of Editor Secretary in third year... a position I truly never thought I would be ready for. I certainly never expected to be elected UN-OPOSED! And yes, I've done a huge amount of incredible, life

changing, remarkable things in my time at *Vision*. Reporting from Venice Film Festival and London press screenings alongside my film critic icons for some of my favourite films (often Marvel!). Covering COP 28, the Queen's Funeral, and the King's Coronation from the streets alongside worldrenowned media companies. Interviewing the Vice Chancellor, the Chancellor, and the Arch Bishop of York (and having my family freak out about this at home).

Trying my hand at everything from sports coverage to theatre reviews, attending virtual press screenings, and yes recently covering the Academy Awards in my pyjamas (a bucket list item - the Oscars, not my pjs).

Vision has given me more opportunities than I could ever expect.

But it has also given me more

new skills than I ever expected. And more new friends.

I am so so proud of the team we have built at *Vision* this year. Both our small editorial team and our large (and ever growing - seriously may we need a new room soon) writers cohort. I am proud of the effort you make, the opportunities you take, your constant appearance at weekly meetings. I remember on our first day as editors back in September we were so so nervous that no one would come. But over 30 of you walk in for wine and food... and over 30 of you have stuck around to write, chat and make journalism come to life at York. I am forever grateful.

I'm not sure if journalism will be my only path in life. I love a good story, I love a big international event (the ones I always dreamed of seeing with my own eyes back home in Aus). I love a good writing

challenge... and as everyone knows I love to write 1000s of words, but I hate cutting it down.

But *Vision* hasn't just been about writing or news. It's been about learning. Learning how to communicate, collaborate, coordinate. Learning how to manage a team, and chat with stakeholders.

Learning how to deal with difficult decisions and unfortunately, sometimes learning how to deal with sexism and a lack of respect for your position. It's not easy being a woman in journalism. It's not easy being a woman leader anyway (as my dissertation will tell you). It's not easy having people talk about you, undermine you, ignore your authority, and face no consequences. But it's something that seems to be ever prevalent in media right now - as one journalist shared at the SPA National Conference recently "entertainment had

it's Me Too moment, journalism is still waiting." So at least I've also learned how to deal with unconscious bias and sexism in the safety net of uni... and now these skills will hopefully led us to ush our way in to the wide and wonderful places of whatever we choose to do.

Student media is remarkable. It is a collective, collaborative powerhouse of energy, enthusiasm and change. It is constantly working to make things happen and tackle big problems. It provides some of the best opportunities and hardest balancing acts, and I don't regret a second of it.

I do recommend tacking more time to communicate, clear the air, refocus your goals and yes DO YOUR DISSERTATION.

But never delay getting involved. Because I do regret the time I didn't spend doing more cool things in York student media.

Laura Rowe - Deputy Editor

Coming to the end of my final year at university, I don't know where the time has gone. It feels like I've blinked and missed it. But looking back on all my memories (and thousands of photos) from my time at York, I know I've made the most of my time here.

I'm so lucky to have had the opportunity to be involved in student media, especially *Vision*. Through it, I have learnt so much about myself and have been able to achieve things I never thought

were possible. I've been able to meet people and experience so many things I'd never dreamed of.

This isn't to say that uni has always been easy. Like most people I've experienced imposter syndrome and felt like I should and need to be doing more than I am. And whilst it's good to push yourself, it's also important to look back and see what you have achieved. It's so easy to compare yourself to everyone else and reach that burn out point. Sometimes

you just need to be proud of yourself for a moment.

Of course there's more I wish I could have done. More stories I would have liked to have told, and more events I wished I could have covered. But I think that would always be the case.

Through *Vision* I have had the opportunity to share different people's voices and experiences. I genuinely feel honoured that people have trusted me to share their stories. Having people thank

you personally for giving them a voice is something I will forever be proud of, and something I hope to continue doing in the future.

I am so proud of the team that we have built this year. We started with the smallest editorial team, and now have an incredible team. I've been able to work alongside some truly talented editors and writers, (I can't wait to see what you all do in the future).

Whilst I know I'm ready to move on from university, I don't

want to just yet. Over the three years I've been here I've made some of the best memories with some of my favourite people. I know I will miss uni life (maybe not the essays...) but I am so grateful for all the experiences I've been lucky enough to have had.

Thank you to everyone who has made working at *Vision* such an incredible experience.

by Alice

SCENE.

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ARTS &
CULTURE

OUR
ARTS &
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 AND THEIR EDITORS**

- COVER**
Alice Pedersen
- EDITOR'S NOTE:**
Dan Gordon-Potts
- SCREEN**
Eddie Atkinson
- STAGE**
Alice Pedersen
Audrey Lawler
- MUSIC**
Clara Downes
- SPOTLIGHT**
ART
Rhiannon C.
- LITERATURE**
Tom Brown
- FOOD**
- GAMES**
Lucy Plant
- BACK PAGE**

MANY THANKS TO:

The lady at Vanbrugh reception who generously gave us the use of their printer/scanner for the front and back cover images at midnight. Thanks to Roger Hansell, Helen Smith at Thin Ice Press, Cherie, for her precious time at the Aesthetica office, Harry Baker, and to our Games Editor Lucy for the excellent step-by-step-vision-newspaper how-to-make-a-vision-boat. Thanks to Tom for sourcing Quality Streets...for the sake of an article, and to Clara (and Alice!) for their photography skillz. Thanks to Shaun the Sheep.



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2: Aesthetica Magazine Issue 115. Cover Image: Fares Micue, Embedded Passion (2022).

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**IN
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What is paper? And why do we print little black inky things on it? Those are good questions. I don't feel qualified to answer either. I am no philosopher, mathematician or linguist. Nevertheless Issue 285 seeks answers, in some form or another. It's my final print, maybe I'm getting philosophical.

I've enjoyed being editor of SCENE this year. It has gone quickly but I have learnt much from the inhumane office in Eric B, slowly freezing my knuckles off and drinking my tenth cup of £2 Nisa instant coffee while the campus lake defrosts and geese quack outside the window.

Something in the asbestos-lined walls, the fusty smell, and the filing cabinets of old issues drew me to this paper - sucked me into its pages, and made me decide that this was what I wanted to do.

Was it the life this paper held, the prowess of the stories? Was it the Wikipedia page? Maybe it was just the red logo; a desire to have my name squeezed into the gaps between the col-

umns, some mark of me on something that quickly got thrown away, wrapped up broken glass, or was sentimentally kept, pages peeling back on a warm windowsill as the inky red faded?

When I first walked through our office doors I saw an empty room of old things (a tape recorder, random cables, notebooks, a cupboard that said 'mugs'). I also saw people. Admittedly most of those people were not actually there (and hadn't actually been in that office ever; we had only recently moved in). But, in all the objects surrounding me, I felt the presence of all these people; in the bundles of papers and in the whirring computers on the desks. It was strange, but I think everyone who joins Vision momentarily realises they're contributing to something bigger than themselves.

A testament to this is the record amount of time I have spent not doing my uni work and tweaking articles instead.

Since those days spent deconstructing pages, dragging text boxes someone else had set in place, and annoying editors (past and present), Vision has

grown. Each week at meetings, under 10 of us used to turn up. Now there are around 30. And I thought newspapers were obsolete?

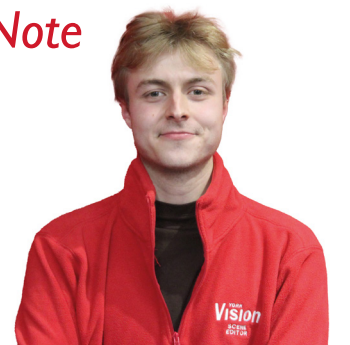
Anyhoo, future's bright for Vision, and you can be a part of it, dear reader, if you aren't already. We also have a delightful new office. I'm pretty sure it still has traces of asbestos, but at least it has heating! And wifi! And a cleaner! Enjoy...

Now. Onto this issue. I've had good fun seeing all our editors put this SCENE together without me really helping and instead eating M&S strawberries and Percy Pigs (delightful). In SCREEN, Eddie has arranged a lovely spread with a Director of Choice by Henry and a TV Pick by Aoife. In STAGE, Jacob and Alice comment on theatre programmes (paper ones, of course), and Audrey steals Alice's infamous column 'these are a few of my favourite STAGES'. In MUSIC, Clara interviews a man who treats violins like paper and...paints on them? In SPOTLIGHT we have two gems, one, an interview with the people behind Thin Ice Press, and another, an interview with the editor of global arts

and culture magazine, Aesthetica, Cherie Federico. In ART, Rhiannon discusses the interesting issue of reproduction and whether or not the Sistine Chapel belongs on a t-shirt in Primark, and in LITERATURE, Tom interviews a slam poet (he wrote this up at midnight for me so hats off). In FOOD, who knows what's in there (I'm writing this editor's note before I've finished laying that one up), and in GAMES, we've got our regular creme-de-la-creme selection of puzzles, courtesy of Lucy. Also, don't forget Le Back Page (i.e. random stuff because why not?!). Farewell, D

Dan Gordon-Potts

**SCENE Editor's
 Note**



WELCOME READER...

SCREEN



Image: Sam Carter

MY SUMMERTV PICK

One of the Funniest Ensembles of All Time

BY AOIFE WOOD



It took me so long to decide on a summer TV recommendation but I have finally come to a conclusion.

My top contenders were *Sex Education*, *Derry Girls*, *Arrested Development* and *Normal People*. And the winner is (drum roll) *Arrested Development*!

The show follows the Bluth family as they go from riches to rags after the arrest of family patriarch George Bluth. The episodes feature family drama and long-running gags - like the failure of Gob Bluth's magic career and George Michael's (not the singer) crush on his cousin Maeby Fünke.

The main reason why I chose *Arrested Development* over these other phenomenal shows is the cast. The casts of *Sex Education*, *Derry Girls* and *Normal People* are also excellent but I think *Arrested Development* has one of the funniest ensembles of all time. This ensemble includes Liza Minelli, Michael Cera, Jason Bateman, Judy Greer, and many other major names.

Arrested Development has a very summery feel to it; it is set in Newport Beach and constantly features sunny weather. Through the plotlines focussed on George Michael and Maeby the show also provokes nostalgia for childhood summers.

And, unlike the other three shows, *Arrested Development* has plenty of seasons to last all summer. *Sex Education*, *Derry Girls* and *Normal People*, though sometimes cheery and comedic, also contain a lot more emotional tear-jerking moments. Meanwhile *Arrested Development* focusses wholly on making the audience laugh - making it a very lighthearted easy watch.

That being said, I will probably be rewatching all of these shows sometime between now and the next academic year. But, if you were to choose only one, I think it should be *Arrested Development*.

"REAL" INTERVIEW

Shaun the Sheep



BY ANNA MALE

SCENE sat down with children's television star Shaun the Sheep to discuss his lucrative career.

Q: You've been on air for a long time, in fact your show is the longest running animated series in British television. How does it feel to have had such an impact?

"Baaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa. Baaaa. Ba baaaaa baaaa. Baaaa.

Q: That's so insightful! When you started the series could you have imagined the impact it would have? I mean, two films, spin off series, a seventh season in development - it's been quite the ride!

"Baaaa baaaaaaaaaaaaa baba baaaaa baaaa. Baaaaa baaaa baaa baa baaa baaa baaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaa.

Q: Wow! I mean, I think you really rose to prominence quite fast - was this sudden stardom a shock to you?

"Baaaa baaa baaaa baaaaa, ba baaaaa baaa. Baaaa baaa baaaaaaaaa baaaaa, baaa baaa baaaa baaa?

Q: I guess you were made to be a star! Now, I think Shaun the Sheep offers something very different to what is on mainstream children's television normally, from its style to its storylines. Where do you think the future of children's television lies? Is there space for other shows like Shaun the Sheep?

"Baaaaaaaaaaaaa. Baaaaaa baaa baaaa baaa baaaa. Baaaa baaaa baaa baaa baaa baaa. Baaaaaaaaaaaa baaa baa baaa ba; baaaaaa baaa baaa baa baaaaaaa.

Q: I agree, I think Shaun is unique in its appeal. What tips do you have for anyone wanting to go into TV?

"Baa."

Editors' Note

Baaaa baaaa baaa... Don't worry I won't do the whole note like that, I just thought Shaun made some interesting points. This edition Aoife Wood brings us ensemble comedy with her regular TV pick and Henry Anderson takes over our 'Director of Choice' column to talk about the crime stylings of Guy Ritchie. In other news (as you may have noticed) Environment Editor, Social Secretary and future Prime Minister Anna Male has popped over to Screen to bring us an interview with one of the great stars of the 21st Century. I told you we wouldn't steer clear of children's TV for long...

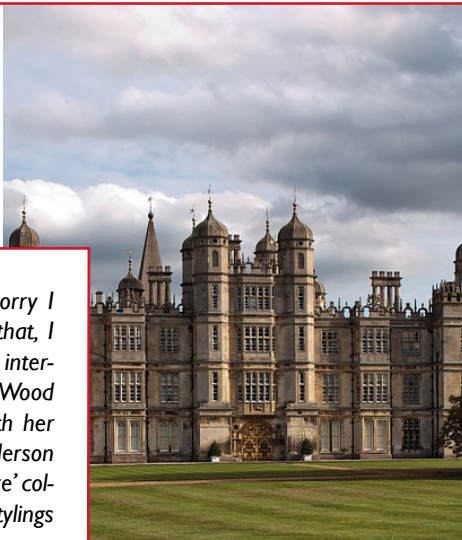


Image: Ron Porter



DIRECTOR OF CHOICE

He is a Genre of his own

BY HENRY ANDERSON

An expert in film making since the early 2000s, Guy Ritchie is still showcasing his expert directing ability with the 2024 hit Netflix series *The Gentlemen*, of which he directed two episodes. Yet all in all, across more than twenty-five years, it's pleasing to see the director has not changed his unique approach to cinematography.

The Gentlemen showcases some of the classic features of a Ritchie piece. Where there is action it is sprung upon the audience without giving them time to

realise. Conflict or compromise between key characters ensues, allowing the plot to transpire in a way easily recognised by the viewer.

The contrast of fast-paced dialogue following the twist, often preceded by moments of calm and controlled conversation providing key details, ensures viewer investment throughout each episode.

Notably Ritchie places his protagonists and antagonists in opposing frames, styling these conversations in a mundane manner, despite the boardroom-esque confrontations and

dialogues shadowing crucial information and twists in the plot. Rather than relying on a multitude of extras or massive showdowns, Ritchie utilises his principal actors perfectly, demonstrating all the skills they have to offer.

Simply put, Ritchie films and television are at their best when he is at the helm. He is a genre of his own, and his unique directing will provide entertainment for years to come.





9th-11th May
 Shakesoc's 'Romeo and Juliet'
 @ King's Manor

31st May-2nd June
 Dramasoc's 'A Midsummer
 Night's Dream' @ The Drama
 Barn

Alice Pedersen



Audrey Lawler



Editors' Note

In this issue, Audrey gives us her first favourite stage recommendation, we discuss the decline of physical theatre programmes, and anticipate exciting productions happening in and around York this Spring!

AUDREY INFILTRATES ALICE'S STAGE COLUMN...

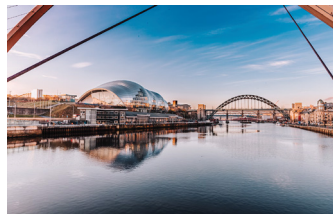


Image by Ryan Booth, Unsplash

Alice: Back by popular demand is everyone's favourite column, where we talk about our favourite stages here at Stage.

Unfortunately, despite the outcry from devastated fans, who await each issue with its new venue recommendations from me, Alice, I am handing over to Audrey for this one (definitely not because Alice has run out of ideas)...

Audrey: Thanks Alice, what a heavy responsibility. This print I've infiltrated the column to talk about *Live Theatre* in Newcastle Upon Tyne (representing the Geordies once again). Located right on Newcastle's Quayside, the theatre dedicates itself to exclusively new work, showcasing local talent. I've visited this theatre personally twice, and each

time found the theatre to have a cozy atmosphere, with a welcoming bar area (my mum was a fan when I took her, which tells you all you need to know).

A standout positive about this venue was comfortable seats, a remarkably overlooked aspect of the theatre. The seating itself is laid out in an exciting configuration, with seating curved around two walls and the stage on a corner. In front of the stage is cabaret seating allocated on a first-come first-served basis, creating an intimacy with the audience.

The theatre is small-scale, and offers reasonable prices for an outstanding experience. It's a definite recommendation if ever you find yourself in the North East. Audrey out.

COMMENT

The Death of the Physical Programme?

BY ALICE PEDERSEN, AUDREY LAWLER, AND JACOB BASSFORD

The rise of electronic alternatives has scared readers, writers, creators and producers alike, as AI, ebooks, and audiobooks populate popular consciousness. But here at Stage, the thing we're most concerned about is theatre programmes.

If, like Alice, you have stacks and stacks of memorabilia from childhood trips out, you will probably also have a collection of programmes somewhere. Whilst my collection is collecting dust in my bedroom at home, buying and keeping a physical programme has always been an imperative part of theatre-going for me; a keepsake of the excellent viewing experience you may have undergone.

The introduction and rise of the digital program, of course, has its benefits for budget productions, meaning more money can be budgeted for the production than having to worry about printing programmes. The writing and compiling of a theatre programme, followed by the organising and paying of the printers is a long process. With programmes printed in advance, last minute changes to cast or production crew could mean that what has already been printed does not line up with what the audience sees on stage.

Certainly too, more pessimistically, the desire to know more about the show at hand adds on more costs to what may be a very expensive evening out at the West End, or so on.

The consequence of the

increase of digital programmes, however, even for smaller productions, is that the visit to the theatre is made even more ephemeral, as many theatre-goers leave the theatre without a physical tie to the performance.

For the cast, the programme may function as a token of their experience and the product of the time and effort put into the performance and production. Furthermore, it is memorabilia for the cast members to sign, digitising a programme reduces interactions between cast and audience after the show from corporeality to ephemerality, and may lead to less interactions itself, as audience members could only have an awkwardly-taken selfie to go on.

Whilst we think that digital programmes are still a beneficial option for productions

functioning on a budget, nevertheless we don't think they should replace the printed programme in wider theatrical production.

The preference for digital forms over printed is not just a problem in the world of theatre, in sports grounds matchday programmes are becoming digitised, or abandoned entirely.

More broadly, this is reflective of issues around the financial sustainability of the theatre, in both running costs and its affordability for audiences. Are electronic programmes the answer to lowering ticket prices? Personally, we feel that they don't, and it is just another way that theatre companies seek to maximise profit for as little product as possible, potentially at the risk of sacrificing audience experience.

Image by Kilyan Sockalingum, Unsplash

Jacob Bassford





For this print I had the pleasure of interviewing the fascinating instrument maker, Roger Hansell, where we discussed his journey from artist to craftsman. If you want to hear more about an Amy Winehouse-sounding violin, then read on!

Clara interviews artist and string instrument maker Roger Hansell for SCENE.

INTERVIEW

'A world of romance and mystery'

BY CLARA DOWNES

Photo: Roger Hansell

Roger Hansell studied fine art at London's Central School of Art, before beginning his career in Italy as a professional string instrument maker. In 1987 he started his own business in the Yorkshire town of Leyburn, Hansell Violins, which he continues to run today.

Hansell begins our conversation by telling me about the book he arbitrarily selected from a shelf in his college library, which ignited his interest in violins: "I pulled out a well-known book by Karel Jalovec about violin makers, and the images of the violins just spoke to me very directly. I was immediately captivated by the shapes and variety of the forms."

We then discuss why Hansell was drawn to a career in instrument making: "It seemed like a romantic and mysterious world to me... There isn't certainty in much of it. People try to make a better sound by varying the contact [of the bow] and the pressure on the string, and both have a tremendous effect as well. Nobody really knows why these effects happen."

I am immediately struck by Hansell's depiction: a craft that

I perhaps categorised as being rather practical, following a set of rules, transforms now into a world of wonder and experimentation.

Hansell now tells me about how his background in fine art connects with his craftsmanship: "I don't quite know how anybody who is not an artist would approach violin making. Of course, they do, and they may equally not quite understand my approach... A painting is also concerned with really not knowing. I am very comfortable with not knowing what the outcome is going to be."

Now comparing his profession to science, he says, "the normal way of progressing in science is to make an experiment and observe the results, and then make another experiment to see what changes can be

made. The problem in violin making is that each time you want to make another experiment, you've got to make another violin!"

The way Hansell relates instrument making to both art and science fascinates me, as he draws in two subjects which, while distinct, both have perception and understanding of the world at their core.

Our conversation now moves to how Hansell approaches making custom instruments: "An important part of making an instrument for a client is seeing how they address the violin. So, some people faced with a violin will play quite directly into it, quite good contact with the bow into the strings, and other people have more of a caressing way of drawing the sound out."

He tells me of how he copes with incredibly specific requests: "Once I had somebody who wanted their instrument to sound like Amy Winehouse... I had to listen to Amy Winehouse and try to figure out what on earth my client was thinking about. There will be a point of con-

tact between the sound that she made and the sound of the violin."

This sparks a discussion on the recent release of the film, *Back to Black*. With the internet flooding with criticism on the poor replication of Amy Winehouse's voice, I can't help but wonder how Hansell created a violin which could mirror such a unique and specific sound.

When asked why he chose to run his business in Leyburn, Hansell exclaims, "A Yorkshireman always comes home!" He tells me of how his childhood as a farmer's son impacted his career: "From early on with violin making – cutting wood, cutting any material – I had no problems, because I'd always worked with materials."

In a brief interlude, Hansell reminisces on an influential figure from his childhood, a homeless man who helped him with his artwork:

"Early on he asked me to show him my paintings, which I did, and he gave me really good advice, all about the light source and the shadows, and how I could make things more realistic. It was a surprising thing in a way, with a normal prejudice I suppose towards somebody sleeping rough in a hedge, you don't always expect them to turn out to be an artist."

Recently, I reviewed a concert in York where Lucy Russell debuted

Hansell's beautiful hand-painted violin; a vibrant instrument decorated with flowers and ivy crawling up the sides.

"At the time that I was making that violin, and painting it, I was living in Italy, so I suppose what inspired me was picking the roadside flowers in Chianti. Conrad Roepel was one of my big interests at the time, and if you were to look at his paintings... you would see a connection with my painted violin."

Hansell's personal connection to his violin leads me to wonder whether it is hard to let go of the instrument when the time comes to pass it on to the client:

"I do often find it quite difficult to part with them... they become so much a part of me. When I see them again after a number of years, even little, tiny areas that I might have worked on particularly intensely, remind me, the moment I see them, of that time working on it. Each one is, in a way, a trigger for all kinds of memories."

Like a scent that takes you back to your childhood, or that one song that flashes you back to the summer before university, each of Hansell's instruments pinpoints his own significant moments in time.



The Book Lives on

SCENE interview Helen Smith, co-founder of Thin Ice Press

SPOTLIGHT

BY ANNA LINDBERG-NEWBY, ALICE PEDERSEN AND LAURA ROWE



Image: Laura Rowe

The University of York's own printing press, Thin Ice Press, was founded in 2017 by Helen Smith and JT Walsch. Vision spoke with Helen Smith who runs Thin Ice alongside being a tutor in the English Literature department.

But why did Helen feel that a printing press would be good for York?

"It was a combination of things. For me, it was an interest in being able to teach students in a hands-on way about how books are made, and how texts have been put together in the past.

"The idea of getting people to think about this idea that a book doesn't come straight out of someone's head and into your hands, that it's been through all these processes."

So how did they go about establishing the Thin Ice Press at the University?

"The University has what it calls strategic capital funding and it periodically sends around

calls asking people to put in for funding."

Helen tells us that this is usually "money which we tend to assume doesn't really apply to arts and humanities departments. But we had a moment where we thought actually, why not ask for a printing press?"

The aim, Helen tells us, was to get a bibliographical press. According to Helen "Bibliography is the study of how books are made and put together, so it is the idea that by working in here, students can get a very different understanding of where a book has come from, how it gets made, and what difference it makes to think about those questions."

The letter press is relatively unique to York, whilst some universities have printing facilities, nowhere else has letterpress as its central focus.

"We're very unusual in thinking about how words and meaning fit together with what gets put on the page and how we can think about those things together."

Letterpress is a type of relief printing which is credited to Gutenberg in the 1450s (despite it existing in China and Korea for longer).

Gutenberg's innovation was having each individual letter separate so that they could be put together to make up a page and then put together to make a completely different page.

"The idea of actually being

able to put letters together to make one book, then put them all back and then put them together on another occasion to make another book and do something different.

"The bigger thing is this idea that letterpress printing is on the red list of endangered crafts. This is about preserving it.

"If people don't act to say that and to pass on this knowledge to new generations, it won't survive to the next generation.

"It is that sense of being part of something, and being interested in something that has been a kind of really long standing and important skill, and knowing that you've got some sort of sense of that and how it works, and knowing what communities have been around it and so on.

"We've had loads of support and it's been very positive. I think what appeals to them is that they do like the idea of preserving history, the idea that it's something very different and distinctive for students."

And everyone can help keep this history alive.

"People are very welcome to pop in and find out more about what we're doing, we're always very happy for them to do that.

"The big thing that we're doing next is that we're launching a centre in the middle of town.

"If any student is really interested, there will be opportunities, potentially for part time employment, for volunteering certainly,

for little internships and bits and pieces, get in touch with us, we're very happy to talk to anyone."

In fact, Lizzie Holling, who now works for the press, started

"You see words differently when you're printing them than when you're thinking about them"

to work for Thin Ice as a student intern and set up Print Soc.

Reflecting on this opportunity, Lizzie said, "It was wonderful. It came at a wonderful moment for shaping my research at the time and my dissertation. That material culture, looking at the book as an object rather than just the words on the page, was very new to me at that time."

Helen too is fascinated by the materiality of a book. "I think there is something kind of fundamental about rethinking what a book is and where it comes from and the kind of work that's gone into it at different levels is really powerful.

"I think it can help people be differently creative, as well, just kind of think about their work in different ways. If you're a writer, you kind of see the words

differently when you're printing them than when you're thinking about them. So it's shifting people's mindset about what they're doing.

"We're in a very lucky position, because we're part of the English department, we do get to work with really interesting creative writers, and seeing people be excited about this has been fantastic.

"That sense of seeing the excitement about what we do, and that that's kind of bubbled over, and you feel that there is a lot of creativity bubbling in York around the English department and more generally."

Helen thinks this feeling of optimism around the physicality of books is feeding into publishing.

"It feels as though we have got past the peak of hysteria about the death of the book.

"It feels like a really positive moment for the whole heritage crafts movement, that there's so much interest in old fashioned skills and traditional skills, and really such an appetite with people for doing something that does take you away from the screen, and that does get you doing something, working on something, and feeling as if you've actually made something and produced something.

"I think we feel that actually it's coming at a very good moment for us."

GHT

AESTHETICA MAGAZINE EDITOR

‘I started this with a credit card when I was 22’

BY DAN GORDON-POTTS AND EDDIE ATKINSON

When Cherie Federico was 22 and finishing uni, she got out a credit card and used it to start a magazine. That magazine was *Aesthetica*.

Now internationally recognised for its art and culture output and stocked in over 20 countries, *Aesthetica* is still run by Cherie, who also hosts the nationally recognised annual *Aesthetica* Film Festival and *Aesthetica* Art Prize. Now she is launching *Reignite*, a programme focussed on engaging with local creatives in York, improving access to arts and culture, and making a case for the economic value of the creative industries to the UK and global economy.

SCENE sat down with Cherie to discuss how the magazine got started, the relevance of print, her love of York, and more.

“When I moved to York there was none of this. There was no art and culture magazine,” Cherie tells us, casually picking up her Guardian-branded mug to take a drink.

When Cherie left her native New York to study English here at York St John as a postgrad in the early 2000s, things were a little different. Large chain bookshops still covered the high-streets of York, including (now defunct) *Borders* bookshop on Davygate, iPhones hadn’t been invented, and the Sugababes, Nelly, and Robbie Williams were top of the music charts.

“There’s something inspiring about the old and the new here, there’s nothing quite like it,” she says about York.



“Magazines are tangible, you can smell the pages”

clash between old and new, the tension and the energy of it, all seem to have contributed to her seizing the opportunity to make something as she was finishing off her studies.

After taking out a credit card and making her first issue of *Aesthetica* in 2003, she tells us “I walked into *Borders* and I brought [it] with me. I asked the guy, ‘how do I get my magazine on your shelves?’”

The guy she spoke to, slightly startled but nonetheless impressed by her forwardness, gave her the details of one of their buyers and, within the year, her fresh-out-of-uni-credit-card-venture paid off as *Aesthetica* hit the shelves of one of the largest bookshops in the country. Simple.

Soon after, WHSmith followed suit and *Aesthetica* cemented itself as a leading UK arts and culture magazine. Now, over 20 years later, the magazine has proved itself to be adaptive, weathering the 2008 recession (which killed off her first stockist *Borders*), and more recently, covid, which killed off many quality art and culture magazines.

When first reading about *Aesthetica*’s history, we were struck by the fact that this was a print magazine founded as digital media was on the rise - beginning a march towards what some have called ‘the death of print’. When we raised this, Cherie paused and then told us we were dead wrong. For her the experience of print publications is irreplaceable, “it’s tangible, you can smell the pages.”

She also emphasised the importance of the curation of print, flicking through a copy of *Aesthetica* while explaining the amount of thought and care that went into the selection and arrangement of its contents - perhaps a welcome contrast to the spontaneity and immediacy of a social media feed.

Aesthetica’s influence is not limited to its magazine. Its associated film festival is national-

ly recognized, BAFTA-Qualifying and a major event in the cultural life of York and the UK as a whole. The festival originally began as a short film competition, where the winning entries would be included in a disc attached to issues of the magazine.

Cherie explains “we had so many short film submissions of such good quality, but you only had 2 hours [storage] on a DVD [...] the medium wasn’t enough to contain it.” She came to the realisation at an industry event in London where she came face to face with a number of great film creators whom she had had to reject. She needed to grow the film festival to showcase all the talent, “I drafted it on the train on my way back to York.”

Cherie is convinced that the host city is part of why *Aesthetica* is so special: “the film festival couldn’t happen anywhere other than York.”

She also feels strongly that there is work to be done to help York fulfil its potential. She passionately says, “people don’t know York is a UNESCO City of Media Arts: I want them to know about it (it is one of only 25 such cities worldwide).”

She explains to us that she feels the arts are hugely undervalued, not just for their contribution to culture, but as a business and economic venture. To this end, and to facilitate growth in the industry away from London, she has set up ‘*Reignite*’ - a project focussed on training young people in York in the creative industries and retaining talent.

As our interview comes to a close and *Aesthetica* nears its 21st anniversary, what stands out to us is the incredible impact of a 22 year old student with a credit card and unbelievable willpower.

From precarious beginnings, Cherie Federico has built a successful print magazine that has survived multiple recessions and the rise of digital media and a BAFTA qualifying film festival that dominates a city. She has been so successful in fact that she has begun to give back, to work to strengthen the creative industries in a city that she came to as a student and now lives in as a cultural staple.

Aesthetica

Cultural Resistance, 24th April - 10th May. A collaborative exhibition by the Norman Rea Gallery and the Palestinian Solidarity Society.

Monet in York! The Water-Lily Pond donated by National Gallery for National Treasures exhibition at York Art Gallery 10th May - 8th Sept.

Free exhibitions at the National Gallery. *The Last Caravaggio*, 18th April - 21st July. Discover Degas and *Miss La La*, 6th June - 1st Sept.

Fragile Beauty: Photographs from the Sir Elton John and David Furnish Collection. Opens 18th May at the V&A.

York Open Studios, 13-14th and 20-21st April, showcased local talent. SCENE's pick is Lincoln Lightfoot's artwork's of our city!
Cut it out to have your very own artwork of the Minster!

CUT THIS OUT



Image: Lincoln Lightfoot

Rhiannon C.

ART



ART



COMMENT

Claude Monet (1840 – 1926), *The Water-Lily Pond*, 1899 © The National Gallery, London

Everyone can own a MONET!

BY RHIANNON C.

Increasing advances in accessibility means culture and heritage are no longer elite interests.

The twenty-first century has seen innumerable advances in technology. These developments have led to an increase in accessibility to arts and culture. With the digitisation of artwork, you can admire artwork located anywhere in the world from the comfort of your own bedroom.

Although art admirers can attest to the fact that a digitised image cannot convey the complete experience of witnessing an artwork in person, this development is the next best thing. We are no longer confined to our local museums and galleries, no longer have to spend great expenses travelling the country, or even the world, to see a da Vinci, a van Gogh, a Rembrandt.

With Google at our fingertips, we can see an artwork in seconds.

This digitisation has led to a greater development: the reproduction of infamous art. While the masters have been studied and reproduced by artists for centuries, the twenty-first century has brought unlimited access to everyone. With infamous artworks now being printed as postcards and posters, you can send a loved one a Matisse and hang a Vermeer in your bedroom.

In recent years, the art world has even become fashionable.

Infamous artwork has continued to appear on posters and canvases, with the addition of clothing, tote bags, and iPhone cases. In 2024, you can see Michelangelo's *Creation of Adam* on a sweatshirt in Primark. You can purchase the National Gallery Masterpieces Tote Bag for only £ 9.95, featuring van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, *The Toilet of Venus* by Diego Velázquez, and Claude Monet's *The Water-Lily Pond*.

In 2024, everyone can own a

Monet.

But is this a positive development?

Ultimately, increased accessibility to the art world is a great advancement but is the commodification of infamous artwork as a stylish accessory diminishing? Are we unconsciously degrading these artists and their masterpieces by plastering them onto an iPhone?

Perhaps the framed prints hung in your homes are perfect examples of where commodified reproduction and admiration coexist. But do notebook covers, canvas tote bags, and laptop cases cross this line between admiration and disrespect?

Society's commodification of artwork as everyday accessories raises many questions.

While everyone should be able to access a Monet, the real debate is whether everyone should own one.

'I am more comfortable in my work than ever before'

Harry Baker on Slam Poetry, connection, gimmicks and finding himself

BY TOM BROWN

Welcome, dear reader! Earlier this month, I had the pleasure of interviewing Harry Baker prior to his third nationwide slam poetry tour. Do not fret if 'slam poetry' is a concept as foreign to you as manners are to a Parisian because this interview gets to the heart of it.

Mr Baker is quite the accomplished poet, having won the 2012 Slam Poetry World Championship and published several books of poems. He found his passion in a slam poetry tradition, begun by the Slam Papi in 1980s Boston, where poets performed to a voting audience or panel to determine the champ.

Q: What is audience connection about?

A: Initially in slams I felt this connection was felt about things in common. But I have found that my favourite performers find a way to connect by sharing their unique experience in a way that allows you to understand something that hasn't happened to you. A large part of slams is being vulnerable yet

finding playfulness in that.

Q: Are most performers in Slam Poetry people who have experienced some form of hardship that they then speak about, or are they just enthusiastic poets?

A: Slams lend themselves towards people talking about their personal experience because it is people in the room judging it out of ten. And this can lead competitions to feel quite heavy and draining afterward. Hour-long shows, however, allow time to share stories in between - they can be open and raw but relaxed. All these events share a spectrum of humanity. They can help lift up the marginalised. What I love is that there is a lightness in amongst the heaviness if you are willing to look for it.

"These events share a spectrum of humanity"

Q: Where does slam poetry sit among the practices of written poetry, spoken word, songs, verse, rap battles and performed drama?

A: For me, slam poetry is used interchangeably with spoken word. It is being on stage, sharing a part of yourself. For others, it might be closer to a rehearsed drama performance to let people absorb the words in the best possible way.

"There is a lightness among the heaviness if you are willing to look for it"

But for me, performing a poem does not have to be the most dramatic thing. Some of the most powerful performances I've seen have been people gently reading a poem off paper.

Q: How much of the slams become about playing to the gallery? Is it about people spreading how they feel, or is it a search for the audience mark?

A: Anyone who has done enough slams knows that the competition is basically a gimmick, a way of the audience feeling involved. It is accepted that if you perform first, you will not win. This stops it feeling too competitive - a way of it being more of an exciting, lighthearted open mic.

Q: Having gone through the different levels of slam poetry, what has changed?

A: When I started I was still working out who I was, and a lot of my poems reflected that. I was often the youngest performer there, but it was a very welcoming space. When I started I thought the slam was everything, but I have since grown to value my poems less by their slam performance. I wrote something that felt quite personal that I really liked and its bad performance led me to think that it wasn't a good poem. But I realised it just didn't fit that format well, and format isn't everything. Some of my best poems now probably wouldn't do well in a slam.

Q: Who are your main influences in slam poetry, or poetry itself, and what have you drawn from them?

A: When I started out, it was a crossover between slam poetry and hip hop/rap music, the rhythm and rhyme, and comment on political issues. These days other poets inspire me more, like Hollie McNish or Kate Tempest. I am as inspired

by the likes of Georgie Jones as I am by Helen Heckarty or Erin Bowlens. These are all people who I've met at spoken word nights who can be as funny as any standup comedian. They can have the warmth and wit to cut under people and get them to put their guard down. People that can give you goosebumps, then make you laugh, then make you cry all in the space of a 5 minute performance. That is what really inspires me.

Q: What is your favourite performance/moment throughout your experience with Slam Poetry so far?

A: On my last tour, I had just come out of COVID and out of a tempestuous relationship with a comedy agent. It was the biggest buildup I had - from not being able to perform to audiences and have that connection, to realising that people are here and want to hear this stuff.

One that stands out was the London show. The last time I had performed there had been socially distanced. To have a show packed full of people feels electric and there's nothing quite like it.

Especially at York's gigs, where I perform with the local poetry organisation Say Owt, you feel like the local community is behind it. There is a sense of coming home and feeling comfortable. With these new venues it's terrifying in the buildup and yet to meet people after and discover that they found you on TikTok and now enjoy poetry is great.

From performing to five people or thousands, it's about that sense of connection - and that's where I feel like my roots are. I am more comfortable in my work than ever before and people are more connected to this.

To be able to trust people to be in a room with you and to say a lot of different things and have them heard - that is where the magic happens and where spoken word is an amazing way of exploring all aspects of that.

Harry Baker comes to The Crescent in York on 20th May. Tickets are for sale on The Crescent website. For those persuaded to try slam poetry, Slam Soc meets every Thursday at 7:30pm in the Vanbrugh Arms.



Tom Brown

LITERATURE

Can we Wrap our way to a Better Future?

Emily Sinclair asks the vital question of our age: what on earth is going on with Quality Street wrappers?

BY EMILY SINCLAIR

I have fond memories of the big purple tin full of glossy chocolates being on my kitchen table at Christmas. Now, I'm not going to name said brand straight away (as I don't want anyone else to feel left out) but here's a clue for you... it rhymes with frivolity cheat. You got it yet?

Anyway, I digress. My point is that one of the main appeals of this chocolate to 5 year old Emily was the shiny wrappers that

coated it. These are no more.

Since 2023, *Quality Street* (I give up with the anonymity!) has said they have entirely converted to single paper wrap.* This is something they initially did in 1936 when they launched. It is recyclable and supposedly the 2023 shift has saved "two billion pieces of packaging material"; that's extraordinary amounts.

From this simple switch, *Nestle* has been able to directly impact how sustainable their business is.

According to *Divine Chocolate*, Britain consumes an estimated 660,990 tonnes of chocolate a year.

Wow.

I mean, I thought I was a chocolate lover but when put like that it just makes us all seem greedy. It equates to around 11 kg per person a year, about the size of a European Badger. To take a big picture view for a second, we can clearly see that a universal switch to recyclable, paper packaging would massively reduce plastic waste and thus improve our planet. But, how does it change the perception of the brand and our experience with it?

I would be interested in conducting a social experiment in which we ask consumers to pick a chocolate off a table, simple really. Except, this table would be filled with different looking chocolates all in slightly different wrappers. Amongst all the paper wrappers I wonder if those in foil would be picked more often? There is something about a shiny wrapper that we, as humans, can't resist. Just think of a *Creme Egg*. Would it have the same appeal on the end of an aisle in a supermarket or at a checkout if it wasn't shiny?

For a brand like *Quality Street*, their reputation means that families, couples, friends and colleagues will always reach for their old favourites, no matter what wrapper it is in. Because of this, and due to the size of *Nestle*,

it makes sense for these global brands to become more conscious about their plastic packaging and the sustainability element of the business. What impression are they giving off and how are they doing their bit to help the planet?

On the flip side of this, I can absolutely understand the logic that shiny = stand out. In the saturated chocolate market, start up brands may find themselves leaning towards plastic wrapping in order to be noticed.

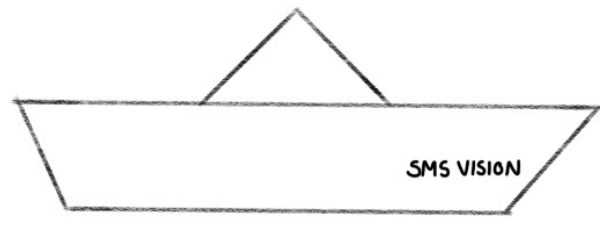
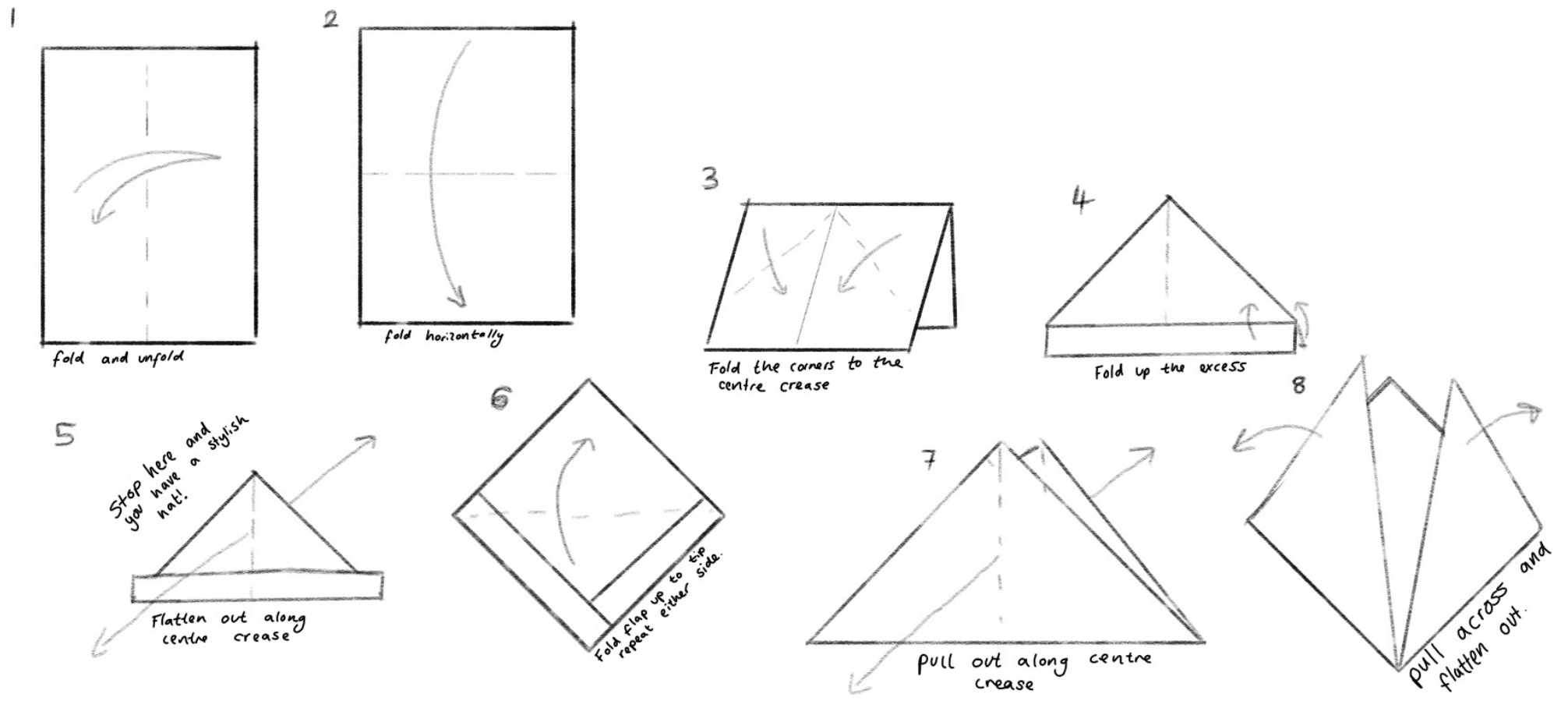
Can we wrap our way to a better future? Probably. Will the chocolate experience be as nice? Maybe not.

*Reading the small print on their website you quickly find that the *Green Triangle* and *Orange Chocolate Crunch* remain in foil... I wonder why?



Images by Clara Downes, Tom Brown and Alice Pedersen





THE LITTLE ONE.

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

- ACROSS**
- 1) SCENE THEME
 - 2) GRAB ____ TO EAT
 - 3) MICHAEL OF MONTY PYTHON
 - 4) CATCH ____
 - 5) LOCATIONS AND PLACES
- DOWN**
- 1) DADS
 - 6) EARLY CALCULATORS
 - 7) TO FLY A PLANE
 - 8) ONE OF TWELVE IN SCRABBLE
 - 9) PULLS APART

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COLUMNS



Election Year

Welcome to Election Year, a 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)

YORK AND NORTH YORKSHIRE MAYORAL ELECTION

This month in Election Year we're focusing on *the York and North Yorkshire Mayoral* election, Yorkshire's first ever democratic race for Mayor. With the creation of the new Combined Authority to ensure devolved powers were given to Yorkshire, the region is electing a new mayor to represent citizens and led the authority for the next four years. The elected mayor will work with local leaders to create a long term vision for York and Yorkshire... and you get to choose who should be Mayor! So be sure to vote on the 2nd of May!!!

Here we have comments sent in by the six candidates running, as well as manifesto points from those who didn't respond to our email!

PAUL HASLAM - Independent (manifesto)

- Securing fair, inclusive and lasting economic growth
- Creating higher paid jobs and expanding opportunities
- Improving public transport for the region and beyond
- More affordable housing to meet the community's needs
- Putting women's and girls' safety at the heart of policing
- Tackling the climate emergency without costing the Earth
- Building a sustainable present to create a sustainable future

KEVIN FOSTER - Green

Kevin Foster is an experienced councillor from Colburn near Richmond where he has lived for most of his life. He was a civil servant for almost 40 years and saw active service as a military reservist. He has worked hard to represent his community and has achieved results at every level of local government from Parish to County. He is the Green Group leader and Armed Forces Champion at North Yorkshire Council.

Kevin's priorities are:

- Securing sustainable jobs in a Circular Economy
- Improving Housing and Public Transport
- Winning a fair share for York & North Yorkshire
- Kevin said, "A Green mayor will set our region on the fast track to a sustainable Net Zero economy with good jobs, decent places to live and a reliable public transport system. People tell me they want change from the tired old parties. Just like them, I want things done differently and better. With a win on 2nd May, I can start to do just that"

KEITH TORDOFF - Independent (manifesto)

Make North Yorkshire an economic powerhouse: a place where businesses can thrive, and residents can find meaningful employment both in rural communities and in its cities.

Improving transport links and connectivity, especially for rural communities.

Make North Yorkshire a safer place to live, work and visit.

Make North Yorkshire a world leader in sustainability, while protecting and advancing its agricultural and fishing heritage.

DAVID SKAITH - Labour (manifesto)

- Housing - Build truly affordable quality homes throughout the region
- Transport - Create a system that incorporates public transport, cycling and private vehicles
- Economy - Support out local business sector and attract greater business investment
- Rural Communities - Showcase the importance of rural areas, especially food production and wildlife

DAYS UNTIL US ELECTION: 250 days

On Super Tuesday last month both Trump and Biden cinched enough delegates to gain their parties' nominations. Yes the lead up to the Trump-Biden rematch has begun, with both candidates racing to raise money, gain support and ultimately, win the presidency. They won't be officially claimed as their party's candidate until the party conferences later this year, but it does seem like this historic rematch is now unavoidable.

Trump's legal actions are also continuing, as he faces the New York Supreme Court in a case which started on the 15th April. This court case is for 34 counts of falsifying business records, in which he allegedly violated election laws.

That's all from us in this print version of Election year. If you want more election year coverage be sure to listen to URY every second monday at 2pm to hear us chat about all things democracy. Coming up there are still elections in India, Mexico, the EU and more, so tune in as we continue the march along the biggest election year in humanity's history.

FELICITY CUNLIFFE-LISTER - Liberal Democrats

My vision for York & North Yorkshire is for the economy to be a vibrant hub for investment research and skills; to achieve its net carbon target, be biodiverse and sustainable; and to get our fair share. My vision for us all is to be able to live in an affordable low carbon home, in a sustainable community and on a salary that supports our own family life and wellbeing.

I am the only candidate with the business experience and as a working Mum I have raised three children who are now 16, 19 and 21.

These are some of my manifesto pledges, which are of most relevance to students and young people:

1. Housing : I will regenerate the High Street in our towns and cities to create one and two bed

flats in current empty premises above retail units.

2. With responsibility for adult skills, I will improve the current apprenticeship schemes to make them more flexible, accessible and more relevant to the skills required in today's economy.

3. I will drive sustainable growth in the region, creating more job opportunities to enable more young people and graduates to stay in the region.

4. Innovation within our economy relies on the strength of our research sector and I will support this, which will in turn support the provision of post graduate courses.

5. I will recognise and support the Third Sector organisations, as valued contributors to the community.

6. With responsibility for pub-

lic transport, I will introduce a single ticket integrated bus service that will run more regularly, reliably and for longer hours.

As Mayor I will also have access in Westminster to lobby for changes in policy and funding, and in particular to resolve the funding crisis facing York & North Yorkshire universities and to return to the Erasmus Plus programme to enable young people to study, teach and volunteer abroad.

KEANE DUNCAN - Conservative

1. More police and safer streets

Introduce dedicated officers for every community with extra patrols to cut crime and keep us safe. Improve 999 and 101 so you can get help when you need it. Take a tough approach to anti-social behaviour, shoplifting, burglary and rural crime.

2. Secure a fair deal for our farmers and fisherman. Seek direct control of farm payments so North Yorkshire is in charge, not London.

3. Protect and promote local food and drink with official 'Made in Yorkshire' labelling.

4. Establish a relief fund to compensate food producers hit by disasters.

Deliver quality homes local

people can afford - Build 'half price homes' discounted by up to 50% to help people get a foot on the housing ladder.

Regenerate brownfield sites and unlock 900 new homes in the first two years.

Support rural communities with new homes so the generation are not priced out of our villages.

Create new jobs and secure investment Help businesses to start up and grow by establishing a North Yorksgure regional mutual bank to provide finance and support.

Open new construction skills centres and establish a regional hospitality academy to support poeople into successful careers.

Better transport and travel

connections

Expand rural, evening and weeking bus services. And introduce flat £1 bus fares for under 21s.

Invest millions extra in road repairs and key infrastructure such as the A64, York Outer Ring Road and A59 Kex Gill.

Ensure communities of every size can thrive Free car parking for every town and city to support retail and hospitality. 100% digital connectivity. Every home and business connected up.

DAYS UNTIL TO LOCAL UK ELECTION: 6 DAYS! DAYS UNTIL TO GENERAL UK ELECTION: ??DAYS!

Anywhere from now until January 2025. There's been rumours about a November election, a summer election, Rishi delaying until Christmas day. Some Westminster voices are betting on a November 15th election, but until it's announced their beat is as good as ours!

FEATURES

IMAGE: UNSPLASH

London's Empty Homes

How our Capital's Housing Market has become a Piggy Bank for the rich

BY ELEANOR SHAW (She/Her)

The residences that line Bishops Avenue in North London, colloquially referred to as Billionaire Row, are more than mere houses; worth a combined £511 million, the properties are comparable to palatial estates.

The avenue and the sprawling gardens surrounding it present a striking tapestry of wealth, in the centre of one of the world's prime financial hubs. And yet, behind the towering facades, imposing gates, and dense hedges, we can observe an altogether starkly different picture. It is estimated that a third of Bishops Avenue properties stand vacant, some slowly descending into ruin.

Vacant residential properties have become a conspicuous feature of London's landscape, and while countless Londoners struggle to find affordable housing, numerous residents remain empty, serving as investment assets rather than homes.

As of last year, an official analysis from the office of Sadiq Khan utilised Council Tax data to reveal that an estimated £20 billion worth of properties designated for residential use may be vacant in London. The borough of Kensington and Chelsea alone possesses vacant properties valued at an estimated £2.2 billion. Additionally, by the number of empty homes, the boroughs of Southwark and Newham lead the list, each with

roughly 2000 empty properties. This evidence highlights that the crisis isn't limited to large properties; insufficient policies and oversight have caused smaller homes and council properties to be similarly affected. According to the BBC, over 34,000 properties were categorised as "long-term vacant" as of March 2022, a term which refers to properties that have been largely unfurnished and vacant for six months or more. As of last year, the number of vacant homes in London has reached the highest level since 2010.

Aside from insufficient regulations and policies, a large propor-

tion of vacant properties, particularly in London's expensive central areas, can be attributed to questionable financial dealings. Criminal entities, seeking to legitimise illicit funds, exploit the anonymity and opacity offered by real estate transactions. For instance, Savills has revealed that over 70% of the most sought after housing in central London was bought with cash just last year. A large proportion of these properties are now registered anonymously to companies based in overseas tax havens. Through a variety of complex structures – including trusts – launderers acquire and dispose of properties, effectively laundering dirty money into clean assets. Property prices are driven up in the process, thereby exacerbating existing housing affordability challenges and pricing out local residents.

Potential solutions and attempts at tackling this issue have

potentially serve as a solution. Additionally, in Westminster, an online service already exists where vacant properties can be reported. However, it is evident that this approach alone will not address the root of the problem.

Alternatively, Green London Assembly Member Siân Berry advocates for increased investment in and expansion of the Right-to-buy-Back scheme, aiming to augment the number of publicly owned residential properties.

Nevertheless, it can be argued that a more concerted effort is needed to tackle the issue comprehensively. In this regard, it is instructive to consider the successful actions taken by many other countries. For instance, both New Zealand and Canada have implemented bans on sales of homes to foreign buyers, demonstrating potential strategies for addressing similar challenges. In New Zealand, the Overseas Investment Amendment Act effectively bans most non-resident foreigners from buying existing homes in the country. Though policies in Canada vary by province, various measures have been taken to address foreign

ownership of residential real estate, including high taxes on foreign buyers. It is clear then, that while the effectiveness and implications of such policies remain subjects of debate and ongoing study, similar policies should be considered to tackle the ongoing issue in the UK.

Undoubtedly, London's relatively lax regulatory oversight has helped facilitate its emergence as a global hub for dubious financial activities, including money laundering. The largely unchecked proliferation of vacant properties not only signals a systemic failure but also poses a threat to London's reputation as a global financial centre. As such, tackling this issue requires a concerted effort from policymakers and regulatory authorities alike. As Boris Johnson surprisingly correctly pointed out in 2015, during his tenure as the mayor of London: "What you cannot have is a city that is being used as a sort of bank account by crooks around the world."

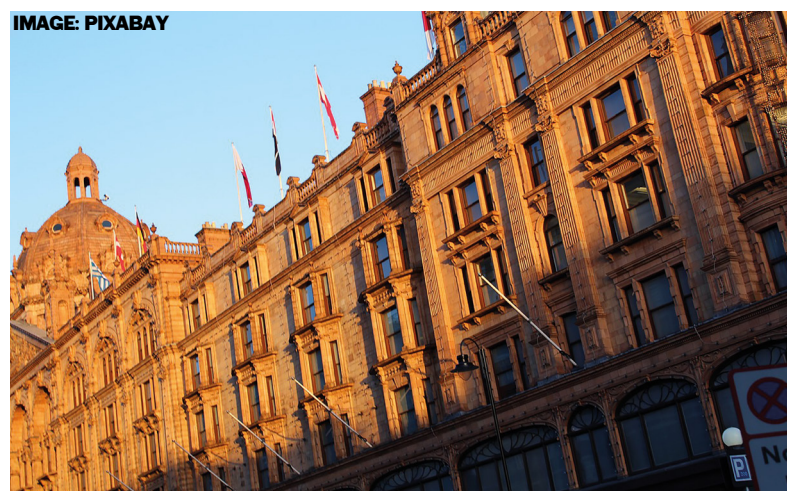


IMAGE: PIXABAY



IMAGE: PIXABAY



ELEANOR SHAW
FEATURES EDITOR

“Finding Human Beings to Tell the Story”: Jane Ferguson on Reporting From Afghanistan

BY **LAURA ROWE (She/Her)**, **DAN GORDON-POTTS (He/Him)** AND **CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)**

“I have in my mind the major geopolitical and macroeconomic impacts of these stories but it doesn’t really feel like that when you’re on the ground.

“When you’re on the ground you’re covering a story in there - whether you are in Yemen covering the fallout of the Houthi takeover of Sanaa, or whether you are in the West Bank talking about the situation there between settlers and Palestinians.”

That’s Jane Ferguson speaking to us over a dodgy connection on Zoom a few months ago. Jane is a Special Correspondent for PBS NewsHour and a regular contributor to *The New Yorker*. She has covered some of the most significant global political events in the last decade, from the Arab Spring to the war in Afghanistan and the battle against ISIS in Iraq in 2016.

“Ultimately it’s my job to cover events on the ground, so the approach has to be a storytelling one. You know, we go in there to communicate, yes, important facts and figures, but we’re really there to tell stories so that people can understand what it looks, feels and sounds like to live through it and why it’s happening.”

For Jane, bringing humanity to conflicts is her goal as a reporter: “A lot of that comes down to getting in there and finding human beings to tell the story for you.

Facing the danger of her job, she is remarkably level-headed: “Risk and fear are two different things. I get scared all the time.

“But,” she says “the experience of being there is not Oh My God I’m covering the crisis in the Middle East, it’s more like, oh, look, I’m in Romala today in the West Bank and protesters are over there and the IDF are over there and I’m going to cover what’s happening right here right now and then I will add context.

“When you’re out in the field the news comes and smacks you in the face. You’re in it as it’s happen-

ing just by the very nature of what it is, so a lot of it is ‘say what you see.’”

I ask her, why do this specific kind of work?

“I think it matters... having eyes and ears on the ground in conflict is very important for keeping checks on conduct in war.

“I’ve always wanted to help people commute,” Jane says.

“That’s essentially what we’re doing, we’re trying to help people around the world feel connected even to those living through some of the worst experiences and worst excesses of human behaviour.

“Conflict happens everywhere to every person, creed, religion, colour. None of us need to go very far back in our ancestry to find somebody who fought in a war and was impacted. I think that better understanding war matters.

“I’m not an adrenaline-junkie and I don’t take my life lightly,” she says, but “people around the world, often without a choice, live in a more precarious situation.”

“There’s always a calculation. No one ever sees the stories that I decided not to do or the road I decided not to travel... but the risks that I take are the ones that I think are worth it to do meaningful work and to live a life that I think has this sense of purpose. To me, it’s worth it.”

On being a woman in Journalism and Broadcasting, Jane reflects on where gender has been a barrier. Despite working and reporting from some of the world’s most conservative countries, she says a lot of the challenges have actually been closer to home:

“In the early days of my career when I was starting to get into broadcasting, it had way more of an impact on my career.

“All the networks were run by men; all the selection of correspondents who were female were seen through a male gaze.

“I remember being under an incredible amount of pressure to be good looking, which I was not.

“I remember being in Somalia by myself being a one-woman-band with my camera. I looked like hell and it mattered. I felt an extraordinary pressure to look a certain way.

“That has improved over the years, thank God, and we’re much less shallow in the way that we assess correspondents.

“There have been times when I’ve been pulled from the field, from a dangerous story, and told it was because I’ve been a woman, but mostly that has been very rare.”

She says that determination is the answer to handling sexism: “The way to handle it is just the way anybody handles any obstacle that’s born of the ignorance of another who happens to have a grain of power over you: just find a way around it and keep going. You know, I’ve moved news organisations, I’ve kept working and things changed and things got better.

“I often think about the women that came before us... the women who were covering Vietnam and the Korean war. There were a lot of women there and it was harder.

“In my 15 years, I have seen things change so much and that has been really encouraging.”

For Jane, starting out in the industry in the late noughties was also challenging because of the Financial Crisis.

“It’s really hard for me to describe how few entry level jobs there were.

“We became that first generation... the first tranche of en masse freelancers.

She recalls, “I was flat broke and I was removing staples from an insurance document at an insurance company at a desk job in London. Before that I’d been pulling pints at the Last Drop Inn in York.”

When a relative was kind enough to give her a cheque, she decided to go to Yemen to study Arabic. “It changed my life.”

“I applied for a job in Dubai and

I moved out there as a reporter. But, all that is to say that the biggest challenge was just getting started.

“All those people would say oh well if you just had more experience we’d be able to give you this job, but like how am I meant to get experience, you know? Like? It was Kafka-esque: that was the hardest thing.”

Nowadays, Jane says Journalism is increasingly elitist and inaccessible.

“With news organisations so squeezed that they’re really relying on freelancers, if you can afford to live abroad and you don’t actually need [to work] to pay your bills, you’re at a great advantage. I was not in that position and so I slept on a lot of sofas, I ate a lot of cheese triangles and I flew a lot of budget airlines around the Middle East and Africa and did my work that way.

Finally, it’s time to address the elephant in the room. Jane (or ‘Janie’, back in 2006, as we found out while looking through our archives), was once News Editor here at York Vision while she was studying English and Politics.

When I ask her she takes a moment to remember (through the whirlwind of her life) what it was actually like.

“I had no idea what I was doing. I didn’t know how to write, I wasn’t studying Journalism, I supposed nobody at York is, but I knew I wanted to be a journalist really badly.”

“The year before I arrived there was a very serious story about a paedophile, a sex scandal - child pornography - something about a professor.

“I remember I started as Deputy News Editor. I wasn’t a very good editor, I didn’t know how to use the online editing computer program but I really enjoyed holding editorial meetings and helping edit pieces.

If Jane hasn’t already given enough advice to aspiring journal-

ists reading this, she has a few more words for you to round things off.

“I think that a lot of people are probably going to give you a really negative [narrative], you know, the industry is so hard, you can’t get a job...but like, I got told that a lot of times.

“I think that you should not let industry situations deter you.

“Changes, the economic climate, don’t think about that too much because you’ll always figure out a way.

“I think it’s getting more relevant nowadays because the internet is awash with AI-generated content.”

Her solution? “Just get really really good at what you do.

She also recommends asking others for help.

“You would be amazed at how open people are to helping you if you’re humble enough to say give me some critical feedback, show me how to do this better.

“Throughout my career I’ve leaned into mentors, but not always just like hey can you get my piece published in the *Washington Post*?

“I got good at my work because I relentlessly wanted to be the best journalist in the room.”

She smiles while reflecting back on her brief time at *Vision*.

“What we loved about *Vision* was that it was very tabloid-ey. It had this great irreverence and sense of humour which we really enjoyed.

“Whether it was campus parties and antics like that, or the ducks (there were always lots of conversations around duck poop and potential health threats).”

I ask her what she means and she explains, “the campus is cement and the duck poop doesn’t really have anywhere to go...”

Jane Ferguson’s memoir *No Ordinary Assignment* (HarperCollins) is out now.


CHARLOTTE AMBROSE
LIFESTYLE EDITOR

The “Real” University Experience

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


IMAGE: YORK VISION

“Hey guys, so today I’m going to take you through my morning routine”, is a common phrase that I am subjected to almost every time I open Instagram. I am a sucker for a nosy into other people’s lives and how they, supposedly, start each day.

One trend in particular has dominated these reels over the past year. Yes, I am talking about green powder. No, that’s not some sort of dodgy drug, it is, in fact, the key to feeling better... or so we are told.

Of course, in true Emily style, I had to jump on this. Any promise of more energy, immunity, and less of a stomach ache sounds great. Is it too good to be true?

You may not believe this but the green powder market is a very saturated one. Whether they are made by start-up companies or already established health brands, there are many on the market, all promising similar results.

Here’s a little secret about me, I’m a bit of a Dragon’s Den nerd. This is relevant because it is

through this BBC masterpiece that I found my new love, Rheal Superfoods.

Charlotte and Sean set up this company after Charlotte was diagnosed with Coeliac Disease. They made a compelling pitch in the Den and got offers from all Dragons. I was sold. I made an order and waited patiently for it to arrive, I already felt more awake!

It arrived quickly in a smooth cardboard box. The packaging is classy, simple and (most importantly) looks nice on my kitchen side.

You may think that what I am about to say is a bit ridiculous but the powder is VERY GREEN. Like neon green, a sort of Apple Sourz green, you know? But, weirdly, this massively appeals to me. The placebo effects of taking a powder with this colour every morning really is incredible.

Okay, so we’ve covered the look but what about the taste? Genuinely, I like it. Like seriously, I enjoy my morning pint of water. It

makes me feel refreshed and it has very quickly become my favourite way to start the day. The taste isn’t that strong so if you’re put off by the slightly super-healthy, almost vegetable taste try not to be.

A lot of people also like to add the powder to porridge, smoothies or even cakes. This way, you can’t taste it but you still get the benefits.

The big big question is, do I feel better for it? I do, I actually do. I admit that some of this may be a placebo effect but I can still hold my hands up and honestly say that I feel more energised, less achy and just overall more awake.

If nothing else, this product means that I start my morning with a pint of water every day and hey, that can’t be a bad thing right?

For many final-year university students, it’s crunch time. Students are trading in their beloved nights out at Salvos for late-night library sessions. As we near the end of the final semester, nostalgia is definitely in the air. But I can’t help but notice that, when graduates are asked to recall their fondest memories from university, they rarely mention anything degree-related.

Being able to attend university and get a degree is a privilege. Many young people can’t wait to experience the university lifestyle, and many graduates treasure these years as being some of the best of their lives.

But what did they actually get out of their time at university?

The degree, that’s the main thing for sure. But that isn’t to say that nothing else is important.

You want to leave university knowing that you have exhausted every benefit, every workshop, and

every student discount that university life has to offer.

Lots of students start university at the tender age of 18, which means that they spend some of their most formative years and celebrate some of their biggest milestones right here on campus. What you consider to be your biggest “university achievement” might very well have little (or even nothing!) to do with your degree.

Returning home from university isn’t just about proudly clutching a well-deserved diploma from a Russell Group; there is so much more to it than this. While the pursuit of academic expertise is definitely worth rewarding, it is the friendships forged and memories made along the way that truly make the university experience.

A Green Army

BY **EMILY SINCLAIR (She/Her)**

IMAGE: UNSPLASH

1 in 10 Women Have Endometriosis: What Actually is it?

BY EMILY SINCLAIR (She/Her)

1 in 10 women who are assigned female at birth have endometriosis. That's a lot of us. It is a condition that has had a lot of coverage in the media recently but, what actually is it?

Endometriosis, or "endo" for those of us who find ourselves using the term more frequently, is a gynaecological condition where cells that are similar to the ones in the lining of the womb are found elsewhere in the body.

These cells react in a similar way to those within the womb. They break down each month. When cells break down in the lining of the womb this results in a menstrual period. For the extra cells outside of the womb they have nowhere to go. Instead, the extra blood, and subsequent pain, builds up. It is a condition that is known

to have flare ups but, for most people, symptoms affect them every single day.

Given that it is linked to the menstrual cycle, endometriosis is a condition that, technically, can only affect individuals from puberty to menopause although for many people its effects are felt throughout their whole lives.

What are the main symptoms?

Chronic extreme pain: Often this is around the area of the uterus in the lower abdomen but can also be in the back. It often gets to a level where no pain killer is strong enough and women can't help but be doubled over in pain.

Fatigue: the main cause of fatigue with endometriosis comes from the human body trying to get rid of these disease, or unwanted, cells. In trying, and failing, to do

this, the body becomes exhausted.

Depression: Endometriosis is a condition in which individuals can quickly feel isolated. Due to the complex nature of the condition, the immense impact it has every single day and the lack of treatment, many people suffer with depression and anxiety as they try to navigate their days with endometriosis.

Pain during sex: Endometriosis is a condition that directly impacts sexual relationships. Pain during sex is common as extra cells cause a build up of tissue, this can be irritated during intercourse. Sometimes this can cause bleeding.

Fertility Issues: One of the most talked about symptoms of endometriosis is infertility. This is because for a lot of women they will only discover they have the condition when they are trying to con-

ceive. The link between fertility issues and endometriosis is not clear for doctors. However, the statistics show that those with the condition find it harder to naturally conceive. This may be due to extra stress and pain on the womb or the vital organ being distorted throughout a woman's life. Doctor's are not sure. For a lot of women with endometriosis, natural conception is still possible.

These are just some of the most common symptoms that come with endometriosis.

Endometriosis takes, on average, 7.5 years to get diagnosed. That is 7.5 years from the initial concerns being raised with a medical professional and getting a firm diagnosis. One of the reasons it takes so long is that the only official way to diagnose the condition is via a laparoscopy. This is an operation, usually performed under general

anaesthesia, in which a camera is inserted into the pelvis via a small cut near the navel (belly button). Most of the time surgeons will be able to see whether endometriosis cells are present with the naked eye but they will have to take a swap to examine and confirm the diagnosis in a lab.

Following this, cells may be removed to ease some of the endometriosis symptoms. This can happen in the initial laparoscopy or in further surgery.

It is important to note that currently there is no cure for endometriosis. It is a chronic condition that individuals have to live with. Treatments, instead, aim to reduce the severity of symptoms and improve individual quality of life. They can include regular surgery, hormonal treatment and therapy.

The Great North American Eclipse

BY ATHARVA INAMDAR (He/Him)

A total solar eclipse took place on the 8th of April, 2024, and millions of people across America stopped to watch it. During this event, the moon fully blocked the sun, creating a twilight zone from Texas to Maine in the middle of the day. This piece discusses the show's interesting facts, its scientific value, and how fascinating eclipses are around the world.

The line of totality, where people could see the sun completely covered by the moon, was about 115 miles wide. Before entering the United States in Texas, it went through parts of Mexico. It then went through several states, including Arkansas, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, and New York, before leaving North America through Maine and into Canada. Along this path, big towns like Dallas, Little Rock, Indianapolis, and Cleveland had times when it got dark, turning a day into a night. People in these places said they felt the temperature drop, heard a sudden silence, and saw stars and planets in the sky.

Not only are eclipses beautiful to look at, but they are also use-

ful for scientific research. Scientists had a unique chance to study the sun's corona during the 2024 eclipse. Only during totality can one see the corona, the top layer of the sun. Studying the corona can help scientists learn more about solar winds and magnetic fields. These things have an impact on Earth's communications and satellites. This opportunity to learn more about the sun's science during this eclipse, helps to potentially improve our predictions of space weather.

In 2024, the eclipse brought people from all over America together as they travelled to see it in totality. Schools, colleges, and community groups held viewing parties and made sure that people could get solar viewing glasses, which are very important for protecting eyes from the sun's harmful rays. Solar eclipses have long piqued people's interest, often regarded as significant signs. People in ancient times made up complex stories about eclipses, and people today are still interested in them because they seem strange. Millions of people



were able to connect with an old human experience during the 2024 eclipse.

Eclipses also have big effects on the economy. Cities and towns along the path of totality often get a lot of tourists as people from all over the world come to see the event. A total solar eclipse is good for local economies because it attracts people to these places, which is beneficial for hotels and restaurants.

If you missed the eclipse in 2024, these events in the future will give you another chance to see one of na-

ture's most amazing shows. Getting ready for the next one; the next total solar eclipse will be seen soon. It will take place in 2044. In the future, eclipses will travel across the world in different ways, giving scientists and enthusiasts who want to observe an opportunity to do so.

On the 8th of April, 2024, there was a total solar eclipse that made us all think deeply about how amazing nature is. It not only gave scientists important information, but it also captivated peoples interest in space again. As we look forward to more eclipses, we must encourage the strong human desire to understand and research space. These brief but stunning times of celestial alignment continue to amaze us and drive our search for knowledge. Both, experienced observers and those who have never seen one before, will remember the eclipse of the 8th of April, 2024, as a major event in the history of astronomy. It will remind us all our shared journey through the vast, starry sky.

ENVIRONMENT



Do you Have a Third Place?

BY ANNA MALE (She/Her)

The coffee shop in Friends, the bar in Brooklyn 99, Luke's Diner in Gilmore Girls - these spaces are all third places, an environment made for community and socialisation that feels foreign to what we, as students and in wider society, experience.

The phrase "third place" might be familiar to you if you're on the same side of TikTok as me, or have read one of the many articles that I have also read. If you have heard of the concept, you might be surprised to see it in the environment section, due to its stark difference to the usual wildlife and climate change articles found here.

But third places are quite literally an environment, and they're one that, as students, we may be unfamiliar with.

If you haven't heard of the concept, the "third place" was coined by Ray Oldenburg in his book "The Great Good Place", where one's home is their first place and their workplace their second. For uni-

versity students, a second place may more accurately be seen as university itself, but at university, the divide between these different places merges in the culmination of residence halls, bars and study spaces.

The third place is meant to be distinctly different from this - a space for community and socialising, where meeting people isn't an added benefit but the purpose of the place.

For students, you might regard socialising as a constant, in our homes, our seminars and in the library, merging the different places to adapt to the student lifestyle where we don't have the separation between our work and life, and we often mix everything we do together without the boundaries different spaces use. But, with all this combination, do we have third spaces to just be a community?

The argument for third places at university might underline the argument for the much-memed student centre, as it attempted to form somewhat of a space for stu-

dents to just be. Unfortunately, as the Centre is delayed beyond almost any of our student years, where do we go?

For students, the divide between our social lives and our study lives is conflated, often meaning that we study and socialise at the same time. One student we asked said that they felt they were unable to give their undivided attention to studying or socialising, as they often did at the same time.

This undermines the point of the third place - it requires that different types of people "hang out" in the same area, with principles of neighbourhood unity and getting to know strangers central to the third place. From this point, the third place becomes an arena of discussion, increasing social cohesion in communities through getting to know each other and debating social and political ideals, increasing democracy.

While we might have some semblance of this at university, without the separation between our study and social lives, we miss

the opportunity to have a space dedicated just for discussion and socialising. In our student bars and cafés, we work and remain with our friends, but the discussion seldom is meant to include other people. Without these third spaces, we undermine the chances we have to be part of a bigger community, especially as part of the wider York community.

Of course, as one York student notes, having rigid barriers between our study, social, and home lives doesn't have to constantly be enforced. But, having an area at university where we are free to discuss, to meet new people and to just socialise feels fundamental to university life.

Card-bon Emissions are Through the Roof!

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)

What might seem like a small, heartfelt gesture could, in fact, be contributing to one of the most serious concerns facing our generation. As we rapidly enter a worsening climate crisis, perhaps it's time to rethink the way we send our seasonal greetings.

According to a study launched by The University of Exeter, a typical greeting card produces 140g of CO₂e (carbon dioxide equivalent). Multiply this by the millions of people sending out mass greeting cards every year, and that one greeting card starts to look a lot less innocent.

But where does this large carbon footprint come from?

Producing the paper that goes into greeting cards uses more energy than you would think. According to WWF, the paper industry has the fourth largest energy consumption out of any industry in the world. Then, the cards are distributed across the country, often by lorries or trains, which further increases the production of CO₂ emissions.

A lot of energy and vital resources go into creating a single greeting card, a card which will likely be thrown away before the month is up.

This leads me to wonder: Is a greeting card really worth it?

In some instances, the answer might be yes. Perhaps you have been sending your grandmother Easter cards every year since you could write, and you know that your cards mean the world to her. Or perhaps you and your friend honour a long-standing tradition of sending each other hand-crafted Christmas cards each year.

But I presume that in the majority of cases, the two minutes of happiness you get from receiving a greeting card isn't worth the 140g of CO₂e used to produce it.

If so, the best way forward would be to switch to virtual greeting cards, which, as a side note, are easier to personalise and generally cheaper than paper cards.



ANNA MALE
ENVIRONMENT EDITOR

SABBS on Sustainability

BY ANNA MALE (She/Her)

After an explosive Instagram joint resignation by the Environment and Ethics Officers in February, we reached out to the outgoing YUSU Sabbatical Officers for their views on all things environment.

Could the 100% Plant Based Catering have come into fruition? Where is our improved environment with a statue of Long Boi? Is YUSU fighting climate change? We asked Pierrick Roger to comment.

What do you feel that you, as a team, have achieved to increase the environmental sustainability of YUSU? Is there anything you wish you could have improved over your term?

“Yes, we’ve done quite a bit! We’ve got a few announcements coming up soon in the next few

weeks: we’ll be publishing our first ever YUSU Sustainability Action Plan, showing our ambitions for sustainability nationally through new work with other unions, and we’ll also be announcing major campaign wins at University-level too. Happy to say we’re in the top 5 unions nationally for Sustainability according to Green Impact as well!”

“I think we can always do more for sustainability though. Personally, I have too many projects I’d like to see executed - finances, resources and time are always the limit though unfortunately. The main project I think I could’ve done more around would have been transport infrastructure, particularly the state of our roads into and out of campus, which aren’t top notch at the moment.”

Plant-based catering became a very hot issue in the middle of this semester - do you think that switching it to 100% plant-based catering on campus is possible?

“I think with the right resources and support, both financially and from industry, it would be possible to get close to 100% whilst taking everyone with us. Unfortunately, we don’t have the resources available to make that happen right now. Regardless, the 100% cut-off mark is really difficult to attain because it can harm our most vulnerable students.”

“I think this is also the same debate we were having a few years ago about plastics in venues when we wanted 100% single-use plastics gone. The debate at the time centred on retaining a handful of

plastic straws behind counters for disabled students who required them. We had to acknowledge that some people will require a provision of plastic.”

“In the same way, we may need to retain a bit of non-plant based foods for those that require them so that we aren’t hurting those already most at risk from the consequences of climate change. I say this as someone plant-based myself, the focus shouldn’t be on the 10% leeway we give ourselves to care for others, but on the 90% we can and should take action on. There was a time when environmentalism was proudly (and wrongly) non-inclusive, and I personally do not want to return to that time.”

How can YUSU become more sustainable? Do you think it

is possible for it to become environmentally friendly?

“Yes, definitely. And we’ve done a lot of thinking around it. We’ll be publishing our first Sustainability Action Plan shortly which will indicate what work each YUSU Directorate will be undertaking in the next two years to become more sustainable.”

“I think it would be too long to write out everything that’s in there, but in short, we’ll be taking a holistic approach to making ourselves more environmentally friendly across the board looking at carbon emissions, waste, and campaigning activity, as well as EDI issues (sustainability is intersectional!).”

Touch Some Grass

BY ANNA MALE (She/Her)

As we approach our deadlines and the end of the uni year, the need to go outside and be in nature can get pushed to the sidelines in the whirl to finish essays, potentially doing our reading and making sure we take advantage of student life as much as possible.

But, the various benefits of being outdoors contributes to improving all of the above. Scientific research shows that being in nature improves our attention spans and cognitive function. As well as our mental health, reducing stress and blood pressure, allowing us to be more vital in exam season.

These benefits have been studied by many, with one study by Manson et al. (2022) showing that nature improves student’s ability to proofread and spot errors in their work, have a more positive attitude, and that taking a walk in nature decreases fatigue and

nervousness. This all improves working memory and cognitive function, making us more able to do our uni work.

Being in nature can offer a small break from all the screens around us, which often decrease our attention span. Studies have shown that nature can hold our attention in ways that calms the prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain that processes input from our surroundings. Screen time can deplete mental energy due to the high visual and cognitive input that is constantly in reach. By taking a break outdoors from this, we give our brains a break from this constant stimulation - so if you’re being told to touch some grass on Twitter (X?) it might be for the best.

Nature also helps to remove stress, particularly through reducing the level of the stress hormone cortisol, which lowers attention

abilities. One specific soil bacteria (mycobacterium vaccae) even triggers the release of serotonin in the brain, which functions as an antidepressant.

The season in the run up to final exams and deadlines can be an incredibly stressful time, which can contribute to more serious mental health issues. While nature is by no means the cure, the charity Mind notes that it can help improve mental health, through being more active, taking breaks outdoors, connecting to nature and other people, and helping reduce stress and anger.

Time in nature also increases vitamin D levels, which contributes to calcium intake and the natural light helps sleep patterns. Although the days are finally starting to get longer, Mind writes on how being outside in nature can improve Seasonal Affective Disorder, a type of depression

thought to be induced by shorter days and lack of light during autumn and winter. Taking advantage of when it is light in winter, such as by taking a walk can help these symptoms, essentially saying to not reduce time outside to just when the weather is warmer. York offers a wealth of places to be in nature, so here are some of my favourites for when I need to take a break:

Walmgate Stray

Directly next to biology, Walmgate Stray offers some great fields for taking a walk in that are convenient for a break in the long uni day. There’s even cows there sometimes!

Rowntree Park

Just on the other side of the river, Rowntree Park has it all, tennis courts, a football pitch, and a lovely little reading café run by York libraries.

Walks along the River Ouse

This is one of my favourite routes. It’s long, there’s lots of paths, plenty of dog walkers with cute pups, and you can walk to the Fulford Ings, where the University of York boat club resides and walk next to some boats. Like Rowntree Park, this does have the unfortunate habit of getting flooded and being a bit of a wet walk though.

Heslington Woodlands

If you’re needing a longer walk, try the Heslington Woodland Trail Circular. Essentially between and behind the uni campuses, this goes all the way down past Heslington and loops back round to Campus East. Perfect for a long afternoon walk after your seminars and lectures.

So go outside, take a walk and read your copy of *Vision* while touching some grass. You might find that it benefits you more than you thought.

SPORT

Vision at England Rugby!

BY JACOB BASSFORD (He/Him) AND EDDIE ATKINSON (He/Him)

York Vision were immensely privileged to have been given media access to York LNER Community Stadium on Friday the 1st of March 2024 when the England men's rugby union national team did an open training session for the public.

The event sold out in a matter of hours when tickets went out online, and it's one of the highest attendances in the 8500-capacity ground since the Community Stadium opened behind closed doors during lockdown in 2021. It was certainly the highest attendance for a rugby football-related event

at the stadium since England rugby league women lost to New Zealand at the 2021 Women's Rugby League World Cup in November 2022.

The training session took place in one of the fallow weeks of the Men's Six Nations, before England's stunning win over Ireland and subsequent last-minute defeat to France. It was part of two objectives, one to enhance the connection with the North in the union code, and also as part of the build-up to the Women's Rugby World Cup in 2025 where York will be one of the host cities.

The session took place after a tough loss in the Calcutta Cup, and rumours of discontent within the squad were floating in the papers. However, the impressive Ireland win at Twickenham went some way to squash such rumours, and certainly the mood at the open training session seemed professional and sincere.

It was wonderful to see loads of families and school kids in the crowd, and one of the highlights was the massive round of applause for Kevin Sinfield as he entered the pitch. Not only beloved across Yorkshire for his stellar career for

Leeds Rhinos in rugby league, but his simply indescribable feats of fundraising as well for his former teammate Rob Burrows, who is suffering with MND.

Of further significance is the fact that this was taking place in a rugby league stadium in the heartlands of the league code. This was not lost on the players, as they emphasised the importance of connecting with the North when speaking to the crowd before the session.

It was an incredible privilege to be pitchside for the session and provide coverage alongside sea-

soned industry professionals, who had worked at World Cups and Premier League football matches.

That the event ran so smoothly and was so eagerly attended bodes well for York's chances to impress as a host of the Women's World Cup in 2025, and we're sure we can take at least a smidge of credit for the men's team's impressive victory over Ireland the week after!



IMAGE: JACOB BASSFORD

Does Esports Need to be a Sport?

BY TOBY CHESHIRE (He/Him)

When I first started writing for Vision, I was unsure what section the editors thought to put my article in. Unless I have been untimely ripped from the section, there should be that distinct green newspaper ink somewhere on the page, signalling their continued choice. Although I'm glad, it was still a question to me – as much as it is a question to the esports community.

The debate for e-sports being a sport has been around for as long as esports have existed. They are distinct in big ways, but the core central themes of intense competition and absolute mastery of the game still applies in full.

Long before esports even existed, chess was having this

debate. Nowadays, the International Olympic Committee have recognized chess as a sport, albeit not for current inclusion in their quadrennial competition. Being a competing grandmaster involves thousands and thousands of hours dedicated to practice, and professionals need to withstand the physical demands of focussing for 7, 8, even 9 hours for a game. To those unfamiliar with esports, it is less obvious that these all apply in equal amounts.

Further, think of sports like darts, pool, or even shuffleboard. Irrefutably sports, but with a focus on technical skill over physical stature. Why can't esports fall into that category too?

Different dictionaries have different discussions surrounding the meaning of sport. Some argue it to be an umbrella term of competition in which traditional sports, esports, and other competitions lives under.

Conversely, it can be considered to be traditionally physical events and activities, leaving esports out of that definition. I like this version! Esports and physical sports are distinct in many ways, from accessibility to cultures.

I can pull as many definitions, technicalities or edge cases as I want. However, there exists a dichotomy between definition and what people genuinely think. Unarguably, the term "sports" has

pre-existing connotations. To try to pry athleticism from the classic dogma of sports is to mutate those baseline ideas that many hold.

I asked my friends (bearing in mind that a lot of them do have an interest in video games) to name some sports off the top of their head. Out of the hundred or so responses, the most common were things like swimming, rugby, and football. Just one person suggested League of Legends, a hugely popular esports, which was immediately questioned by the rest of my friends as to the validity of it being a sport. My point proved itself.

For me, the eventual goal is not to become the same as other traditional sports, but rather to garner

the same respect as them. I wish for a League of Legends or Counter Strike tournament to be treated with the same respect as a football or rugby tournament.

Esports doesn't need to be a sport – it can function perfectly fine as a separate concept. To change that would involve changing a lot of people's preconceived notions around what our culture considers sport to be.

Esports is still young. As it grows, it carves out its own identity within how we see competition in the modern day. Where it will end up remains to be seen.



JACOB BASSFORD
SPORT EDITOR

Nicola Drew on Motobikes, Sociology and Women in Sport

BY LUCI O'DONNELL (She/Her)

IMAGE CREDIT: NICOLA DREW

Vision interviews doctoral researcher Nicola Drew of the Sociology Department on her experience as a motorsports journalist and enthusiast, increasing female and minority participation in sport and what sociology can learn from bike racing.

Before joining the University of York sociology department to complete her PHD, Nicola Drew previously wrote for multiple motorsports publications e.g. GRIP Motorcycle Magazine. When talking to Nicola, I felt the best approach I could take was to just ask the questions I was interested in knowing the answers to.

Honestly, I just wanted to pick her brain and take it all in. Everything she said motivated something inside of me to push myself more and hopefully those reading will feel just as inspired by one York's own as I did.

How did you get into motorsports?

"I'd been a fan of the British Superbike competition for many years before deciding to research it. I ride a sports motorcycle myself and having taken part in lower-level track and race day events, I know how difficult it is ... At the same time, I was developing the idea for a PhD which focused on British motorcycle racing from a sociological perspective."

Have you ever felt "intimidated" by the fact that it's such a male dominated sport?

"Definitely, and in different situations. I think it's obvious that motorsport continues to be male-dominated, and the lack of experience by women in the paddock can leave them believing that their involvement is in some way less authentic."

How did you deal with that?

"My way of dealing with chal-

lenges is to feel the fear and do it anyway!... I'm really inspired by women such as Marjorie Cottle and Beatrice Shilling, who as racers and engineers in the 1920s and 1930's probably faced a lot more barriers than we do now."

The world of motorsports is very much for the rich and wealthy. I asked Nicola how she felt in terms of the sports inclusivity and she highlighted how the sport is changing but still remains for those with affluence.

Obviously, everything going on in the F1 world with Horner at the minute has massively hindered progression for women...

Would you say that there's still a long way to go for motorsports as a whole to be more inclusive? Not just for women, but for every other minority as well.

"I do think that motorsport is taking more steps to be inclusive... Motorsport is extremely expensive... This has been increasingly evidenced, and initial findings from, for example, the 2021 Hamilton Commission, which investigated the lack of young, black people in motorsport suggested that social privilege definitely plays a significant role in accessing motorsport."

After chatting about motorsports I wanted to learn more about her career now and why motorcycle racing was the area she wanted to pursue her research in.

What's the main focus of your research?

"My research concentrates on the experiences of being an elite motorcycle racer. Sportspeople at the top of their game are under immense pressure to get results –for both themselves and their teams and corporate sponsors. There's a relevant motorsport adage here: "win on Sunday, sell on Monday". I'm interested in how competitors negotiate all of this whilst having to

navigate circuits on machines that don't balance themselves, which are capable of speeds of around 200 mph and whilst the riders are literally inches away from others trying to do exactly the same thing!"

From my understanding sociology is such a broad subject and there's so many things that could be researched, so why dedicate your time to motorsports?

"Believe it or not, there's hardly any sociological research which focuses on motorsport... This is surprising really when you think that many of the traditional areas that sociology as a discipline considers are present in motorsport. This then makes it a wonderful context in which to complete a PhD as it's pretty original!"

I then asked what her biggest achievement was and what she went on to say had me very jealous but equally amazed.

"I'd say nominating 3x motorcycle racing world champion Ron Haslam for an honorary degree from the University of Derby, and then providing a speech at his graduation in summer 2023 is a definite highlight... It was the craziest thing I've ever experienced in my life, especially as every time we got back to the start-finish line, he'd pull a massive wheelie!"

After seeing

that Nicola rides her own Suzuki GSX-R750 and given her involvement in the motorcycling cosmos, I wondered if her interests stopped at just bikes.

"I totally respect sidecar and car racing...but my interests firmly lie in two-wheeled motorsport. There is something about the skill in balancing and riding an incredibly powerful machine at high speeds, which for me makes motorcycle racing the ultimate motorsport."

Finally, some advice from Nicola.

"Whether going into motorsport journalism or academia, the first thing I'd advise is maintaining your integrity... My second piece of advice is to be nice to people and network!... And finally, be persistent. Motorsport is a highly competitive field to work...But if you push through, you'll get there. Good luck!"



IMAGE CREDIT: NICOLA DREW

Extreme Ironing: A new Kind of Sport

BY LAURA ROWE (She/Her)

You've heard of esports (especially if you read *Vision*), you might even have heard of Octopush (underwater hockey), but did you know that ironing is a sport?

After I've finished ironing my bedding, I definitely feel like I've completed a workout, but I wouldn't have thought it was a sport.

Extreme ironing combines the mundane task of ironing with outdoor activities.

Participants, known as "ironists," take their ironing boards and irons to remote, challenging, or unconventional locations, where they engage in extreme sports or outdoor adventures while simultaneously ironing clothing.

It originated in England in 1997 when Phil Shaw combined his love for rock climbing with the necessity of ironing his clothes. The concept quickly gained popularity as Shaw and his friends began ironing in increasingly adventurous locations, such as mountaintops, forests, and even underwater. Extreme ironing competitions and events soon followed, attracting participants from around the world.

Extreme ironing involves the same basic principles of traditional ironing, with participants using a standard iron and ironing board to press clothing. However, the difference lies in the location and circumstances in which ironing takes place. Ironists may engage in activities such as rock climbing, skydiving, skiing, or scuba diving while ironing, adding an element of danger and excitement to the mundane task.

Events like the Extreme Ironing World Championships and Ironing Man Challenge showcase the creativity and athleticism of ironists from around the globe.



IMAGE CREDIT: UNSPLASH

