

The Unstoppable Power of Self-Growth

Underfunded into Non-Existence

A Love Letter to a Homophobic Queer

The Not so Beautiful Game

term.

Life On Pause | Tarporley Sixth Form





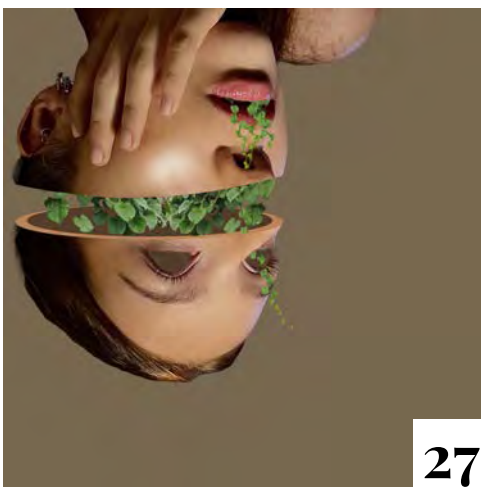
Editor's Note



After the first TERM meeting in February 2021, which took place on Teams, looking at the blank screens, the glitching faces, and being cursed with bad internet connection, the journey of being TERM'S seventh Editor began with a rocky start.

However, during the first meeting back, I was finally able to sit down with the team; we shared our experiences of lockdown and all felt as if we had been frozen in time over the past year. We could all equally put both a negative and positive spin on this experience; this is where the 'Life on Pause' concept fell in place.

The past 18 months have been difficult for everyone. People have been silenced in so many aspects of society and I wanted to ensure that TERM remained a safe and open space. Both the Deputy Editor and I were more than prepared to support the journalists, artists, and photographers in their journey of embracing their individuality. The publication has taken a turn in a whole new direction this year and I believe every sole member of TERM has been given the opportunity to have their voice heard.



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Underfunded Into Non-Existence

By Emily Taylor

‘IF THEY KEEP PRETENDING THE COUNTRY DOESN’T NEED ANY CREATIVES TO SUCCEED,
THEY’LL RUN THE COUNTRY INTO THE GROUND FASTER THAN CATS PLUMMETTED AT THE BOX OFFICE.’

The arts are one of the most influential, important, integral parts of society, so why the hell does the government want to underfund them into non-existence? Each and every one of you reading this article rely on the arts every day of your life, whether you’re aware of it or not; even if you are a nuclear engineer, or an astrophysicist, you need the arts. You wouldn’t be reading this without them. Every person involved in TERM is so grateful for the opportunities this magazine provides, and love being a part of it, because they love the arts. But the current government have very different ideas about the importance of the arts... They don’t think they are.

Underfunding of the arts has been happening for decades in every corner of the world, but recently the UK government have made it a mission of theirs to shit on the arts, like it’s an old rug in their Grandma’s house. Let’s start with probably the biggest punch in the stomach that every dancer, performer and actor could ever receive. The Fatima ad. You know the one. The one where the government tell the ballet dancer to give up and go into cyber - yeah that one. Ok, so they don’t explicitly say that, but it’s very heavily implied. The 2020 ad has the words ‘Fatima’s next job could be in cyber (she just doesn’t know it yet)’ alongside a picture of a ballet dancer putting on a point shoe. I guess I get where they were going with it: no matter what you’re into you can always end up in cyber because they’re hiring and it’s a great area to go into, but the execution was poor. Like broken-before-it was-made poor.

The message it conveyed was that dancing isn’t a real job and it won’t take you very far, so give up now and join cyber because that’s reliable. So much for chasing dreams. Admittedly, being a dancer isn’t the most stable job in the world and, unless you’re doing really well with it, it’s not the greatest pay... but that doesn’t matter to people who love dance. They just want to do what they love for the entertainment of people who love watching them. Think of all of the young kids who dream of being on a stage every night, but saw that advert and thought their dream was impractical and stupid: it’s heart-breaking. Even as a teenager, who understands that it doesn’t matter what other people think, as long as I’m doing what makes me happy, it hurt to see the government have absolutely no respect for something I enjoy so much. An element of the advert that especially didn’t sit right with me was one of the words in the campaign’s slogan – ‘rethink’. Almost as if those who have pursued the arts have made a mistake and need to ‘rethink’ their life choices to make the ‘right move’ into cyber. But anyway, what I do know is that I enjoy dancing, so take the dancers away Boris, have fun watching The Greatest Showman.

Government attacks on the arts didn’t stop at pointless propaganda. Gavin Williamson, Education Secretary, decided, in January 2021, to spread this hatred out to all the humanities and tell them outright that they won’t receive the same funding as STEM subjects.

Fatima's next job will be on stage.

(and she knows it)

Inspire. Imagine. Influence



HM Government



Mr Williamson was worried about wasting taxpayer's money on those useless subjects like media studies (as that doesn't actually benefit the country, right?) so they decided they will allocate more funding to courses that 'align with the priorities of the nation.' In other words, STEM is great, humanities can do one. His exact words were "support for strategic subjects such as engineering and medicine, while slashing the taxpayer subsidy for such subjects as media studies". A direct attack on all media students, from the government itself that their education and training is a waste of money and therefore a waste to society. Not only does this make those studying media or any liberal art feel like a waste of space, it discourages younger students from studying it further.

Whether that be a 14-year-old choosing what to do for GCSE or an 18-year-old choosing a degree, anyone would be tempted to choose a career that's better funded, better valued, and more respected. But Mr Williamson, who's broadcasting your all-important announcements, who's writing up Boris' super easy to follow corona rules, who's on the PR team that helped Dominic Cummings out of that Durham trip scandal.

If that wasn't enough bullying of the arts... since the government is having to pay back an increasing amount of student finance debts, due to graduates not earning enough to pay back their loans, the government have had to think of a way to save themselves money.



As they absolutely cannot make university free - or even a little cheaper - they decided instead that the most logical answer was to cap the number of students that universities can emit onto "low quality degrees". Yes, they're the real words the government used. A tad rich coming from a low-quality government. By 'low-value courses', they mean degree programs with low graduate earnings. This not only reinforces the idea that money is the only determiner of success, but it also undermines the significance of the course. Not only does this create a multitude of class problems but it's yet another hinderance to the arts and social sciences. Such course graduates are often paid poorly, and the government know this, so they want to create another way to limit the number of graduates for these degrees. Interestingly, Gavin Williamson's own degree could have been affected by these cuts - he studied social sociology at Bradford university, which would now be considered one of the low-quality degrees he mentioned. Nice one Gavin, undermine your own education. It's these small changes that are being made that will affect the arts in the long term and this needs to stop before art departments in schools start having to share a fiver between themselves due to the size of the budget.

I make a joke about the government not caring about the arts, but this is a serious issue. If they keep pretending the country doesn't need any creatives to succeed, they'll run the country into the ground faster than *Cats* plummeted at the Box Office. Don't get me wrong, I fully appreciate the STEM subjects and how important they are; without them we would have really struggled our way through this pandemic. STEM may be what helps us function on a basic level, but arts are what create a society, a culture, a lifestyle. Whether it be dance, literature, film or even social studies - art is used everywhere you look, and have art to thank for making life exciting. As a person who studies liberal arts and humanities, wants to study liberal arts and humanities in the future and enjoys the liberal arts and humanities as entertainment, this is something important to me. I will not sit and watch the government disrespect them and pretend they're not relevant when I know how important they are in society. Let's make the government appreciate them before its too late.

I know you care; you're still reading.

Gen Z: Why the Future is Ours to Shape

By Jemima Dodwell-Cooke

Generation Z is possibly the most diverse generation to date. In today's polarized world, Gen Z has discovered the value of unity. Due to ethical diversity, our cooperation with digital technology, and acknowledgment of pressing issues within society, we are the most empowered generation; the future is ours to shape.

As a generation, we've been born into the age of digital technology. From phones, to Wi-Fi, to games consoles, we've never known any different; technology is a fundamental part of our lives. We are living in the most interconnected time humanity has ever seen, and this is only growing. Going into the future hand in hand with technology, effective communication has become second nature to us. Online conferences and Zoom calls are staples of our daily lives now more than ever before. The opportunities this holds are endless, because with good communication, no challenge we face as a generation is impossible.

Resilience. After the year we've all had, I think it's safe to say we have all developed some level of resilience. Whether that's enduring hours of tedious online lessons, not being able to have that extravagant 18th you've always imagined, or having to suffer alone in hospital without loved ones, it's not been the easiest year for any generation. However, as the COVID finishing line approaches, it's clear Gen Z has adapted to develop an overwhelming resilience, and this new-found strength is something that we will never lose. Although physically separating us, COVID has ultimately united Gen Z, forming bonds that would never have been made without it, even if it were over FaceTime!

Not every day will be your best day. Not every day will be your worst day. As a generation, we understand and accept what this means. Not every day is going to be a good day; you can't always be the most hyperbolic and amplified form of yourself, and that is okay. Mental health knows no age, no gender, no generation; however, the empathy we have developed as a generation will set us in good stead for any challenges we face in the future. Our experiences and demolition of the mental health stigma means that no more generations will have to feel embarrassed, unworthy or 'not normal' for not feeling themselves. It's okay not to be okay.



Generation Z, and the generations following us, will bear the brunt of climate change. This is no fault of our own, however, to maintain the world we live in now, we need to make a stance. And we have. Protests and awareness continue to expand worldwide, and with increasing amounts of young people joining the fight against climate change, there is hope for a brighter, more eco-friendly future.

For any generation, the future can often seem daunting. It feels like only yesterday when you arrived at high school for the first time, in a massively oversized blazer, your backpack full to the brim and butterflies fluttering in your stomach. Now adulthood is fast approaching, and sometimes it feels like the only option is to shy away from it all and hide behind a good Netflix series and some chocolate. But Gen Z is in a better position than any other generation. As the years have gone on, it seems more opportunities have risen to the surface, and Gen Z has been provided a bigger array of courses than were previously possible; many more careers and pathways have been created; it seems the future is ours. Your life can be anything you want it to be. With technology progressing by our side, the world is our oyster, and however daunting this may feel, we really are left with an advantage over every previous generation. The future is ours to shape.





The Not So Beautiful Game

By George Oldroyd

"BUT THIS OUTRAGEOUSLY VIOLENT PLAGUE IS NOTHING OF THE PAST AND CONTINUES TO TEAR THE CONFIDENCE OF YOUNG ASPIRING FOOTBALLERS. "

There is no doubt that football is one of the most popular sports in the world, with multiple top flight divisions all across the globe, while England's Premier League remains the fans favourite with an astonishing 4.7 billion viewers annually and being televised on live television worldwide. After being founded in 1992, the Premier League has produced some of the most memorable moments in the entirety of sporting history and continues to provide endless entertainment to fans globally. Despite being an important part of the modern-day sporting world, football has also become a community that racism has impaired and appears to provide one of the largest communities in which racism is openly expressed. But how and why is it such a big issue?

Aside from being so valued by many, the beautiful game is infested with a small minority of "fans" that pollute football community and abuse the players that dedicate their lives to improving the levels of entertainment that football provides.

Racism is extremely difficult to put to a stop with the only efforts to reduce it being, seemingly, pointless t-shirts and pocket money fines along with short bans from games for people who have proven themselves as the complete opposite of a fan. Although, in recent months there has been many movements and gestures in place to help prevent it as much as possible; one being the Black Lives Matter movement (BLM) which has been put into place since the tragic death of George Floyd in May of 2020.

The BLM phrase was made into "no room for racism" in terms of the premier league in attempt to combat discrimination, the players and match officials all taking the knee before the start of a match to show their support for the movement for racial equality. Despite many players across all leagues refusing to perform the gesture, while Zaha stated that "it's just become part of the pre-match routine". The players will also have patches on the sleeves of their kits with the quote "no room for racism".

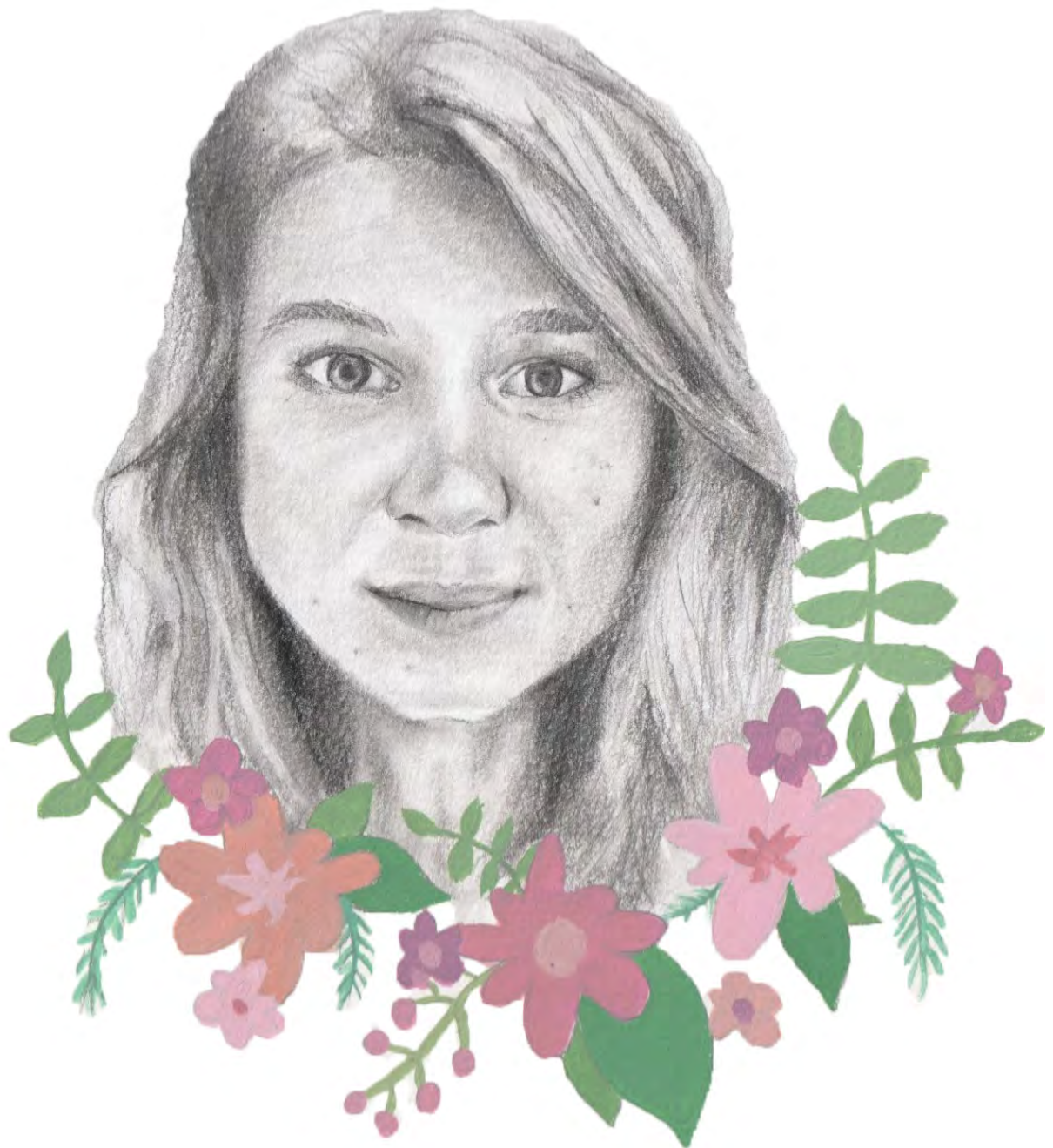
There is no room for racism in football - or anywhere for that matter!

Recently, there have been multiple accounts of abuse via social media platforms targeting Manchester United players. This occurred after an unfortunate defeat to Sheffield United on Wednesday 29th January 2021, having the most extreme cases aimed towards the prolific talents, Axel Tuanzebe and Marcus Rashford MBE-who has rapidly gone from a fan favourite and national hero, to twitter abuse from haters despite displaying some astonishing performances that everybody (even rival fans) can sit back and appreciate, yet one fault has led to his own "fans" subjecting him to "humanity and social media at its worst", as described by the player himself. He shot back at the internet trolls when he tweeted: "I'm a black man and I live every day proud that I am, No-one, or no one comment, is going to make me feel any different. So sorry if you were looking for a strong reaction, you're just simply not going to get it here".

The number of players that suffer from racial abuse is nothing to be disregarded, but there are multiple players that are exposed to incessant injustice, such as Wilfred Zaha, Mario Balotelli, Paul Pogba, Romelu Lukaku, Mohammad Salah, Dani Alves and not forgetting Raheem Sterling. The list is endless. Whether it be from fans at a game or on social media, you just cannot escape the perpetual hate.

Almost identical to Sterling's situation but in the 1990's, was that of Liverpool and England's number 10, John Barnes (born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica) who was a victim of many counts of Racism. One of his most unforgettable moments being when he bravely stepped up to take a corner kick in the Merseyside derby and had to ignore the banana peel that had just landed at his feet and that the away fans were screaming at him and making monkey sounds towards him. It was extremely difficult for a black football player to defend themselves in the 90's, but this fuelled many groups to make a stand against racism as they saw Barnes as "the voice of reason to make a change" he claims. Even though Barnes faced such demoralising moments during his career he still believes that racism in football is just a fraction of that in other industries because he believes football is one of the very few industries that allows young black players an opportunity.





The Devastating Case that is Hitting Close to Home for Women Everywhere.

"Beautiful, thoughtful and incredibly kind"

By Meg Morrison

Since the 3rd March, I have seen a face popping up on my Instagram more times than I can count; Sarah Everard. Posts from friends, family, and people from all over the country shared stories and posts in a collective urgency to find her. When you hear of a missing person case it is always devastating, but there was something about Sarah Everard's disappearance that felt different.

Sarah was walking home at 9pm and did everything right – she wore sensible shoes. She called her boyfriend. She walked on lit streets. She wore bright clothing. She walked past CCTV. She followed all the unwritten rules, and that still didn't save her.

What's so disconcerting about this case is that it happened during lockdown, a time we have mostly been isolating inside the safety of our homes to protect ourselves and loved ones against an entirely different risk. It is one thing to fear a virus in the outside world, something invisible to the naked eye but to add a further seed of dread to the list – a real and valid fear of danger at the hands of other human beings – is a burden no woman needs right now, or ever for that matter.

It's disheartening – but not surprising – that recent data released by UN Women suggests that 97% of young women aged 18-24 in the UK have been sexually harassed. Women are scared, they have always been scared and it's cases like this that validate our long-held fears. Sarah was missing for a week before a man was arrested on suspicion of her murder.



This man was a serving member of the Metropolitan Police, a trusted armed guard at Westminster, Downing Street. He was in a position where he was supposed to protect us.

I can't image the indescribable horror that Sarah's friends, parents, boyfriend, loved ones must be feeling right now it is overwhelming and feels crushing. It weighs heavy on us all. I can't stop thinking about them and her, and I know I'm not alone.

Sarah's tragic case has shaken every single woman in the country. It not only reminded us of everything we have been taught to fear since we were children is real, but that we are also blamed for the fear we feel by society. By encouraging victim-blaming, we are not only showing abusive men that there are no consequences to their actions, but we are telling female victims that they won't be believed and they will be the ones condemned, side-lined and ignored.

The problem with saying 'not all men' in response to harassment and violence against women is that no one actually thinks it is all men. It's just that there are too many men. It's just enough men to make women feel afraid. It's just enough men that 97% of women have a story. It's just enough men to make it a social problem not a personal one.

Women shouldn't have to plan carefully chosen, well-lit routes when walking home. Women shouldn't have to carry their keys between their fingers as the only way of self-defence. Women shouldn't have to text their friends the details of their route home 'in case something happens'. Women should be able to walk home at 9:30pm without fear of attack or harm. Women should be able to walk down a street without crossing the road because they feel uncomfortable about the person walking towards them.

But it's time to act. Make a change. If we continue to tell women to adjust their actions to stay safe, we are not addressing the problem. We are not solving anything. So why don't we educate men on the importance of respecting women? In 2021, we surely cannot be playing the 'but how short was her skirt' card.

By Anonymous

In 2019 I became, what some may say, a 'victim' of sexual assault. Being a 15-year-old girl I believed I was invincible, I believed I was strong, I believed when I said the word 'no' I could not only be heard but would also be listened too. I felt embarrassed, dirty, and ashamed. I placed the blame onto myself and never felt more alone.

For 16 months I remained silent.

I was asked why, and this is the answer...

I had convinced myself I made it up and that if it did happen, I owed him, I wore a skirt, so I asked for it and because I'd been drinking underage it was my fault. I was condoning what happened because he was a boy who wanted something. I told myself he had his own life, a family, friends – many of them probably girls – and they all knew he wasn't a bad person so, who was I, a complete stranger to judge.

After speaking up and getting the help I needed my one regret was not telling someone straight away. Over approximately 487 days of silence I faced shame, denial, and an identity crisis. My life was being consumed by a tiny moment. A tiny moment that seemed like forever. No more believing I was invincible – especially in a skirt, no more believing I was a strong individual, and no more believing the word 'no' mattered.

Talking of my experience now, although anonymous, I feel I am reclaiming my life back, reclaiming what was taken away from me and reclaiming my pride of being a woman. Although difficult I am coming to the realisation that I have a future to look forward too rather than a past that defines me.

We are going to shout Sarah's name until change is made - for Sarah, for all the girls and women who have ever felt afraid.

Please share her story and make yourself a part of the change.



Feminism in Tarporley- Patriarchy, Periods, Pain- Tackling Period Stigma in Tarporley

By Becky Ashworth and Rebecca Leonard

Can you name a time where you or someone you know has been a victim of misogynistic, sexist attacks? Sexually harassed? Verbally abused due to gender? Exploitation of your sex? Ever heard misogynistic phrases and tones? Are you sure you're going to wear that? Well, what were you wearing? Oh, gross don't talk about things like that! Are you going to eat all that? Why are you being so aggressive? Are you on your period? Be more ladylike. You should smile more. Sounding familiar?

I am sure we all feel isolated and lost when it comes to responding to these comments. But who could we talk to this about and how can we make a change?

Tarporley Women's Liberation Society discusses these 'taboo' topics and is working towards making a lasting change, not only in this college but society as a whole. TWLS is one of Tarporley's earlier steps in educating students in inequalities women have faced throughout history in a relaxed, informal and friendly environment with open discussions.

Tarporley Sixth Form is taking large steps into creating a more equal school life, however the education curriculum is not. This offers information on issues that may be brushed past in the news and celebrates key women who changed the course of history.

Picture the scene: you're in school and just started your period. No tampons, no pads, nothing. Panicking that you have leaked, you ask a friend for a pad. That slick move we all know and have done, the slipping of a pad from sleeve to sleeve. Why is it we feel we have to hide this? Are we afraid? Embarrassed?

We should not be judged by something as common as a period. This is normal. TWLS advocates for this.

Did you know, 1/10 people in the UK alone can't afford to buy menstrual products?

Did you know, up to 500 million people worldwide either can't afford to purchase these products or don't have access to these products?



Why?! You may protest. Why don't people have access to medical equipment? Why can't people afford products to aid with something so naturally occurring that they have no control over? Stigma. Stigma by definition is "the mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance" so there you have it, a natural cycle has been deemed a "disgrace". Because of this any education other than the biology behind a period is shunned and locked away and any time a mention of free or at the very least, reducing the price of menstrual products are suggested they are laughed off because it is "gross".

But hey, it's not all doom and gloom! 1st January 2021 the tampon tax was removed in the United Kingdom - you know, the thing that decided that menstrual products are a luxury.

But I'm sure we all agree with the tax in the first place! It is such a luxury to bleed for a week every month. To have to: pay for products, deal with raging hormones, mood swings, bloating, aches, breakouts, fatigue and the as if that wasn't bad enough. The cherry on top...muscle cramps that are as "painful as having a heart attack" (this has been scientifically confirmed by the way). You could compare having a period to taking a joy ride in the newest sports car or maybe going abroad in a private jet because these are all things that have luxury tax.

Although the UK has taken a step towards reducing the cost of menstrual products worldwide, the price is still astronomical. Help make a difference by doing your own research or donating sanitary products.

Tarporley Women's liberation society helps take a stand in all issues including period poverty; this club is helping our school become one step closer to a fairer social life.





Clinging to Sanity

The Monotonous Cycles of Lockdown Life

By Rebecca Leonard and Becky Ashworth

You stayed up until 3am watching TikTok, you slept for a maximum of 5 hours, now are you ready to endure an additional 6 hours of screen time? You force yourself out of bed - the warm, inviting bed - into the brisk, cold air of your messy room. The laptop is once more turned on as you change your top in an attempt to look presentable and put together; whilst the bottom half of you, well that says otherwise. The bottom half says you're over it, sick of it, tired of it. From the chiming sounds of emails rolling in, to convincingly neatening up your hair and face, you prepare for the hours of screen time to come. "Cameras and mics are compulsory for today's meeting", the dread kicks in, and the repetitive cycle begins...

The cycle goes on and on and doesn't stop. We try our hardest to make every day feel distinct and feel separate. But somehow it always ends up the same and inevitably blurs together: curled up in bed with binge-worthy snacks, a social media black-hole and the unending feeling of loneliness.

Although that over-whelming feeling may attempt to tell you 'you're alone', we don't buy into it, if we did, why would we all relate?

Although that over-whelming feeling may attempt to tell you 'you're alone', we don't buy into it, if we did why would we all relate?

Why would we all feel the same way if we were truly alone?

The day never seems to end; it becomes a monotonous cycle: work, chores, social media, self-care, clinging to sanity, hope, work, chores... We've all seen the movie Groundhog Day, now it's as if we are all living it. A continuous cycle. A never-ending day.

But it's not all bad! We find ways in which to fracture the norm and feel excitement again. Like the original lockdown; trends like baking came about, TikTok became a safe space to create and enjoy content, we exercised more, hosted zoom quizzes and ate a load of junk food!

I know you all did it, a somehow awkward yet enjoyable night on zoom with friends and family, baking cloud bread and cheating to win that quiz all whilst dancing to savage love in the kitchen.



Of course, a newfound love we all developed over lockdown, baking! From traditional family recipes, to TikTok life hack recipes that were plastered all over your 'For You' page, we all tried to replicate the food from restaurants that we were all missing. You're going to look me in the eye and tell me you really never even considered making whipped iced coffee, cloud bread or even banana bread? (an acquired taste).

Ah, those were the days. We took a nationwide lockdown and turned it into something positive: a chance to learn a new skill, to master an old one or to spend hours aimlessly scrolling on social media instead.

Well, the fun isn't over yet, there's always tomorrow to make another batch of bread and trial the new recipes. I guess that's the perk of the Groundhog Day. All the time to yourself you could ever want or need. But perhaps 7 months may have been a little too long.

But you held out another day, you made it. Once again fooling your boss with the 'WIFI's down' or 'cameras bust' trick just so you could make a brew or scroll through your socials. Time yet again to change back into the comfy clothes and curl up in bed. What shall it be tonight: a Netflix binge session, another TikTok craze, or dare to be bold and venture through twitter? Settling in for the night once more with your healthy dinner of ice cream and crisps with the same sentiment every night 'it's lockdown I deserve to eat crap'.





The Litter Virus

A Growing Epidemic

By Ella Chang

Litter. The growing threat that communities around the world are having to find solutions to overcome and suppress. Studies have found that a huge 62% of people in England frequently drop litter, despite only 28% of people admitting to it.

It is unsettling, that many people don't seem to understand the connection between levels of local litter and the impact on the planet's environment. Most (if not all) of the litter in the sea comes from the land and, as the recent Netflix hit 'Seaspiracy' has highlighted, there is a lot of litter in the sea. Approximately 10 million tons of litter ends up in the world's oceans every year without fail and this doesn't just come from coastal regions. Any litter dropped has a chance of making its way into the water systems. Additionally, local littering attracts rats and flies that present health hazards not only to humans but also to native wildlife. Invasive rats are regarded as one of the most significant global threats to sea birds. Through predation of eggs, chicks and some adult birds, brown rats can cause some bird species to go extinct.

But litter is not just an environmental problem. With the recent increase in awareness around the topic of mental health, it is easy to see how the two societal problems can be interlinked. Studies have shown that people living in cleaner, greener spaces have better mental and physical health than people who live in dirty, urban areas.

There are many explanations for the rise in levels of littering however none excuse that this particular environmental issue is an undeniably human problem. There is no natural explanation for a mattress dumped in a lay-by, or empty Haribo packets floating around the school carpark. Some people potentially, don't realise that what they are dropping is litter. Chewing gum, apple cores and cigarette butts are all things that do not belong in Cheshire's grass verges, yet people think that they are too minor to cause any damage. It could be thoughtlessness or laziness that prevents people from responsibly disposing of their

rubbish, however this is difficult to believe when you consider the fact that thousands of people contribute to the litter problem by throwing things out of their car; surely it would be much more convenient to leave it in the car cup holder.

Another possible contributor to the rubbish crisis is the widespread use of fast fashion and the excessive packaging that comes with it. Especially during lockdown, online sales have risen sharply and therefore the amount of unnecessary single-use postage bags have increased. Packaging is an issue in the UK generally as well as globally. It's strange to think that people once put their vegetables in paper bags and chips were wrapped in newspaper, not polystyrene. The most relatable and noticeable explanation for the litter problem lies with the fast-food industry. How many of us have been forced to order a takeaway out of complete boredom during lockdown? The packaging and therefore waste that this industry generates is phenomenal – think about all those plastic straws and empty ketchup sachets that you have used.

The future of this pressing issue will ultimately be left to the younger generation to determine. As a team, TERM realises the enormity of not just the litter crisis, but the global environmental threat in general. To mediate and actively combat this issue, the TERM team have taken part in an organised litter pick of our local area and are making efforts to be more environmentally friendly going forward. When paper printing can resume, post-pandemic, TERM will use recycled paper to reduce the magazine's carbon footprint. As environmentally conscious citizens, many students at our sixth form now bring their own lunch to school in a re-useable container, to avoid buying single-use plastic that could potentially make its way into the oceans and cause problems for future generations. The main environmental goal of TERM is to reduce its carbon footprint and impact on others. Future generations should not inherit this burden. The cycle of environmental damage and littering needs to end.



Dark Side of the Light

By David Quinn

No song. bring me
destruction with the dawn.

Nothing happens here.
Blindness on the TV.
Line upon line of static blur.
A singular melancholy.

Outside rain splatters,
Barely observed,
Muffled by dirt on glass,
Drowning out the words.

One moment now
lost in time forever,
Too loving for hell,
too broken for heaven.

To wander so much,
Yet wonder so little...
Turn and turn and
turn only on the self.

For I have seen it all,
Yet felt nothing at all.
What better restraints
Than the knot of heart string?

All they do is unravel,
All questions dissolving,
Leave an echo of longing,
with no one left to hear.

I am a Survivor.
But of what exactly?
Let me sleep. Dream.
I can't face the memory.

These are people,
Places, without names.
Distilled in this time,
And lost what to say.



The Unstoppable Power of Self-Growth

Why letting yourself go may be better than you thought.

By Rosie Marsh

Realising that from discomfort comes growth, is one of the most powerful things you can teach yourself.

The concept of self-growth can come in many different forms, whether this is continually wanting to improve yourself each day, or even recovering from past experiences to heal deeply ingrained doubts about self-worth.

Perception is a powerful thing.

I never realised how powerful self-awareness could be. I thought I had achieved optimum self-growth until I put myself first, and now, I see life in a way that I have never thought possible.

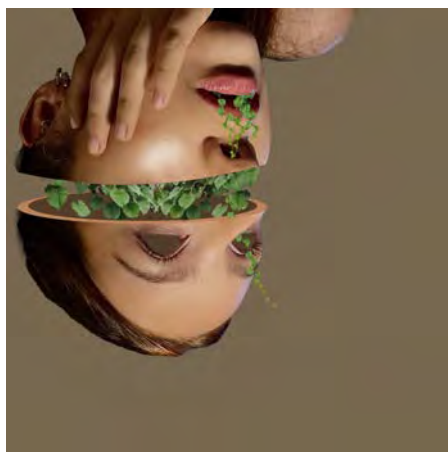
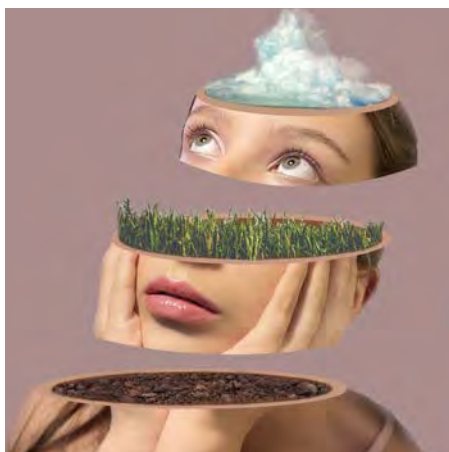
I went from feeling an immense loss of control over almost every single aspect of my life, to feeling content with knowing that I can't control everything – and accepting that that's just life. This realisation is what made me prioritise self-growth and focus on the things in my control, rather than unfortunate turns of life that often you have no responsibility over. Pushing through negative self-talk is never easy, but it is easier in the long run than feeling trapped in your own reality.

Acquiring emotional intelligence is not something that everyone works towards, but once you strive for it - I can bet that almost every aspect of your life will start to improve.

The most painful experiences are the ones that will shape you into the person you were always meant to be. If you are living a life that you feel is not worth living, you are at the optimum point to start making a change. And no, I'm not just talking about starting meditation or going to yoga once a week.

Anything worth having, you often need to fight for, as difficult as it may seem. For me, this was a mind free of constraints and constant doubt surrounding every tiny detail of my life. Maybe I'm not where I want to be, but now I wake up every morning with the appreciation that I get the chance to transform my life and work on continually becoming a better version of myself.

**“There’s only one part of the Universe
we can all be certain about
improving, and that’s ourselves.” –
Caitlyn Roux.**



Wanting to get better, whether this be internal struggles or external circumstances, is such a powerful realisation which you may not even appreciate until years later. I didn't. You have the capability of reclaiming your life through letting go of everything that is no longer improving your life, removing anything that is holding you back from becoming the best version of yourself, with the promise of a better quality of life. Start putting your time into things that benefit you, rather than drain you; even if this means distancing yourself from people that have been present in your life for years. You are finally getting a hold of something that has affected you for years, you may even become unrecognisable to those closest to you.

Fearing what other people will think and how they will react is completely normal but is only keeping you trapped in the cycle of procrastination and low self-worth. Breaking through this will not only transform your own perspective of life, but almost everything you choose to do going forward.

3 tips on how to start reclaiming your life.

- Put yourself first, prioritising working on yourself and agree to commit to yourself. You are the only person who will never let you down. We are told that putting yourself first is selfish, but putting yourself first will not only improve the help you give to others but assist you in discovering what you truly want out of life. Sometimes you need to be selfish, it is one of the best things you can do to help yourself.
- Find your why. Your why will go deeper than wanting to look a certain way or attract a certain person into your life, your why will distinguish the difference between motivation and determination. Your why is what will keep you going when all you want to do is give up. Knowing your purpose is at the core of change.
- Become aware of your thoughts, behaviours, and reactions. Realise what is benefiting you and what is no longer adding value to your life, this may even be actions within your own life. More significantly, the people you surround yourself with, influence your growth enormously – affecting your beliefs and actions within your day-to-day life. Letting go is often the hardest, but most beneficial thing you can do to find the person you were always meant to be.

Growth is painful, but it can also be an incredibly beautiful thing. Realising that you have grown from past mistakes holds so much power, acknowledging that your perspective has changed will hold more significance than you will ever realise.

I first integrated small changes into my life through identifying my good and bad habits, asking myself what is benefiting my life in the long run, versus the short run, and coming to terms with habits that are no longer serving any benefit to my life overall.

Podcasts. I only discovered them in lockdown and now I can't see myself ever going a day without listening to one. I listen to my favourite celebrities as well as numerous self-help speakers who focus mainly on anxiety and mindfulness. For me, it's a form of escapism. There is also something incredibly relaxing about listening to a podcast whilst walking - my favourite thing to do when I feel like I need space.

Reading. Self-explanatory but whether it be novels or again, self-help books, I believe simply educating myself and widening my knowledge has been life changing.

Affirmations, expressing gratitude, and journaling. I feel like these are typically some of the expected things to do when you are feeling low that you know are going to lift your mood, even if this is a small change. Writing down even 3 things that you are grateful for each day may help you see a different perspective and begin to appreciate the things you do have, rather than the things you don't.

Stop procrastinating and start growing.

There is no greater pleasure than being truly content with your life – feeling alive and wanting to live.

Let go of the things out of your control. Focus on the things you can control, such as your beliefs, attitudes and how kind you are to others around you. You will notice that immediately the battle you are fighting with yourself will become more manageable - quicker than you ever imagined.

Decide today to start prioritising you. I doubt you will ever look back. It's in your hands to change your future.



Lockdown 1 vs Lockdown 3

By Emily Donaldson

After experiencing three national lockdowns, many of us are now subconsciously comparing them. Although none of them; although none of them were exactly fun. Personally, I would definitely choose to relive lockdown 1. This lockdown in particular gives me a sense of nostalgia, the carefree life that I would happily return to. As dramatic as it sounds, it was almost like a different life that we were all living together. Not being allowed to leave the house almost felt like a strange sense of freedom; it gave people the break we didn't think we needed. The initial disappointment of not sitting exams gave way to a big sigh of relief after the realisation that exam season was really starting to creep up on us all, and many of us had done as little as make a Quizlet set. However, then along came the no prom, no long summer, no festivals.

Despite this, I'd say Summer 2020 was one of the best yet. Spending the nights in a random field with the people you grew up with and jumping in dirty rivers. As boring as it all sounds, it felt like all the stress was gone, our life was put on hold for six months. Boris gave us time to think about what we had all been wasting time on. If lockdown 1 taught me anything it's that you don't always need people to feel happy, but it also taught me that we take everything in our 'normal lives' for granted.

Lockdown 3 however, didn't promote the same carefree attitudes that everyone had back in March 2020. After almost a whole year of being in and out of lockdown, everyone was sick of it. Christmas celebrations were well spent but not long after ground-hog day returned. Online lessons, rainy dog walks and the constant wish for Summer 2021 to arrive somewhat became part of our normality. New year's resolution plans and "2021 is a new start" felt abolished on the 4th of January when Boris, yet again, announced national lockdown: number 3. When I said I would relive lockdown 1 this was not quite what I meant!





9 Types of People in Summer

By Harriet Dyke

Golden Hour Girl

Even if you don't personally know this girl, you will have seen her on your social media platforms. Her posts are an array of sunset colours, each and every one a different shade of orange. Probably also because of her St Moritz fake tan from two summers ago.

The Festival Goer

Reading? Leeds? Park-Life? You name it- they've got a ticket. The sheer thrill of choosing festival outfits with an excuse to coat their face in a thick layer of glitter. And they won't hesitate to slap it all over their social media as well. They know the line-up for each and every festival, artist for artist. If only they could recite the periodic table as well as they could for the lyrics of Ladbroke Grove.

The Flip-Flop Fanatic

Maybe they don't know how to tie laces, maybe they don't like the restrictions of the common shoe. Whatever it is, this person refuses to wear anything other than flip-flops. Rain or shine. They are displaying those toes to all of the elements.

The 'I swear, I don't burn'

A phrase commonly uttered by the person who is burnt to a crisp by sunset. Not stereotyping- but generally this person is a red-head. Their friends will tell them 'Put some sun-cream on before you burn!' and they ignore, block, delete. Only to regret it later on. They'll blame it on the sun reflecting off the water or the clouds disguising the sun's glare- but really, it's fact that they've chosen SPF 5 over 30, kidding themselves.

The Disappearing Act

This person isn't in attendance for a large chunk of the summer holidays- the majority of the time they are living it up on the Welsh coasts. They'll return, end of August, with some kind of Caribbean style tan that baffles everyone. Did they actually fly to the Bahamas secretly? Or was the Welsh sun working wonders? I guess we'll never know.

The Hermit

You may not come across this person during the summer months, due to the fact that it is most probable that they won't leave their room. Whatever the weather, 2 degrees or 30 degrees - X-box is life. Either they are season-blind, or their black-out curtains are blocking out the sun. Whatever it is, they aren't letting the weather ruin their gaming plans. No sun block needed.



The One Who Cries Over Pollen

Imagine being defeated by pollen- what an embarrassment. This hay-fever victim dreads the summertime, their battle with the plants begins in the spring period and gets more and more difficult by the day. They have the helping-hand of antihistamine but still suffer the long-lasting effects from the flowers. These summer months are a challenge for these people, but a challenge they can overcome.

The BBQ Abuser and Over-User

Whatever the weather, if it's summer, each and every meal will be cooked on the BBQ. They are getting their money's worth of this spontaneous B&Q purchase- even if they charr the food a little along the way.

The One Who Can't Hack The Heat

This person will claim that summer is their favourite season, but when it comes down to it, they spend most of their days seeking the shade. They're skin hasn't had the recommended vitamin D levels since their family holiday when they were 12.

10 Ideas for Another British Summer

By Ella Chang

As the UK painstakingly rids itself of COVID one vaccine at a time, summer can't come any quicker for us. We can finally wave goodbye to freezing on another miserable walk and start saying hello to parties, festivals and (hopefully) sunny trips away. Here are 10 memorable ideas to help you make the most of summer 2021:

- 1) Drag yourself out of bed at 4am to watch the summer sunrise. If you're feeling adventurous, walk up your closest hill or mountain and throw a nice view in there too.
- 2) Get a midnight train to a city you're never been to before and enjoy the city lights and unusual accents.
- 3) Have an outdoor Mamma Mia themed movie night with your friends and make a fruity TikTok inspired punch bucket. Bring Greek summer nights to your back garden.
- 4) Make a slip and slide using fairy liquid and tarpaulin. If you fancy spending a few hours in A&E you could do this on a trampoline!
- 5) Get the designated driver of the group to take you to the closest beach for a disposable barbeque, campfire type of day. Go swimming and place bets on who will be the first one to be stung by a jellyfish.
- 6) Walk a marathon with your best friend and be sure to fuel the day with drinking (water of course!).
- 7) Relive your childhood and buy an ice-cream from an ice-cream van. Nothing like the desperate scramble for spare change as you leg it out the door to flag it down.
- 8) Do the nacho table TikTok trend. Cover the table with tin foil, bags and bags of nachos, toppings of your choice, and dig in!
- 9) Watch the meteor shower on the 12th of August from the boot of a car. Lay the seats flat, stock up on blankets and snacks and you're set.
- 10) Buy a big inflatable and head to your closest lake for a go-to last minute plan that will leave you tanned and in the full summer spirit.

Whatever the restrictions, this list has got you covered. Make sure you enjoy Summer 2021 because you deserve it.





A Year Without the Fundamentals of Development: Lockdown babies

By Alex Sygut

2020 – the ‘Corona babies’ were born, but apart from the nickname and the stigma that will be associated with their generation, how have these babies been affected by lockdown? In England, more than 200,000 babies were born during lockdown. That’s 200,000+ babies with reduced social skills, communication skills, independence, confidence, the list goes on.

In the early stages of a child’s life social interaction is crucial for building character and initial concepts of friendship. Along with that, comes healthy communication skills and a basic understanding of how to act within a social environment in the presence of others your age. ‘Corona babies’ have missed out on these crucial life skills from a young age and now have little to no concept of understanding facial expressions and basic social interaction skills.

The first years of a babies life are intended to lay the foundations and fundamentals for a happy and healthy life. But the ‘Corona babies’ haven’t had a chance to experience moments where these skills would come in handy or ever put them into practice.

The babies born during this time would have only seen the faces of their family members and possibly siblings, with lockdown being the only way of life they know and have experienced. In usual circumstances, before COVID-19, regular mum-baby classes would be held in order for those crucial life skills to start developing naturally within children. Not only that, but a large number of these babies would have never in their lives seen another baby before, imagine their confusion and realisation when finally seeing another baby for the first time.

With most people working from home during the lockdown period, these babies had nowhere else to be, no nurseries or day cares were open so it was all up to the parents to care for them at home. The issue is, as children grow older they need to understand the concept of independence, but if they were only surrounded by mum and dad all these months, can you imagine how clingy and attached these babies have become? Completely dependent on their carers and lacking all sense of self-resilience and awareness.

For the slightly older children in early primary school, a big chunk of their social interactions have been online via zoom, putting them also at a disadvantage in terms of their social skills and confidence development.



As-well-as social interaction skills, around the 12-18 month period children usually start developing language and speech skills. I can personally say at 16 years old my own social skills have massively declined during the lockdown period and these babies have never before in their lives had any proper face to face language interaction apart from their family members, putting them at a huge disadvantage from the very beginning. The overall lack of communication and social interaction of all kinds will put these babies at a disadvantage from a very young age, as-well as making them possibly more susceptible to anxiety and depressive disorders from this strange and unusual way of living.

With many parents and carers worried about their child’s first developments in life and social skills, it’s no wonder ‘Corona babies’ are struggling with adjusting to the normal way of living. Unusual to them, hectic daily busy environments are where their social skills are expected to shine and develop most. These babies have to learn and adapt to our way of living, which is nothing as they know have experienced so far.

As Humans when do we stop?

By Millie Appleby

As soon as we are born, we want what we need, and if we were not given it we cry. However, as we begin to develop and grow, we might still cry, maybe even throw a tantrum or just straight out loose interest in a person because they do not give us what we desire. It slowly moves away from need and becomes the fixed idea of want.

Many of us know, as Maslow's Hierarchy suggests, psychological needs are all we truly require to survive - nonetheless, we all crave, yearn and pine for more.

Want vs need, Capitalism vs Communism, and of course the argument that is more prevalent than ever in today's society, carnism vs veganism. These are all issues that can easily create a divide - one side can arguably debate that millions of people's choices are immoral all because of the desire to better yourself as an individual yet others can that argue personal happiness is achieved through 'materialistic' items that you have independently worked for.

However, can conditioning ourselves to be content with what we have, lead to a healthier lifestyle?

The saying money can't buy you happiness has always been a contradictory term when there are over 200,000 homeless people in the UK - Yes some may be happy as they are, 'content', but what about warm running water, a hot meal, a roof over their heads - maybe not just for themselves but also potentially their family. Big figures of money may not make you happy, but even a small sum can ensure you are able to collate some of the essentials. In today's society people should not just be surviving with water, food and a shelter, they should be living with accessibility to a drink, a meal and a home.

I can admit to being an individual who thrives off my own personal success, in collective cultures, this frowned upon but growing up in the United Kingdom or any other Individualistic culture, can you not admit the same? Of course, this does not mean we don't like to see our friends, family, and even strangers living a successful life, we are just conditioned to work towards our own triumphs before our social groups. At first glance we can easily begin to mistake wants and needs but as they are defined their differences are made crystal clear.

In this modern society, industry is based around the consumer more than ever, we are constantly being given the opportunity to see and maybe even have the chance to get products that will give us more than what is deemed a fundamental need.

Are we not coming close to a fine line steps away from the finish? It shouldn't always be about wanting more but instead being happy with what we have. A family unit - not even necessarily people we are related to - can create more satisfaction than basing your life on being a consumerist. In your last moments will you not instead remember the ones you love most or the newest iPhone, car, or trainers?

Love the essentials, appreciate what you have, and learn how to stop - remember to take breathe and cherish the necessities.

‘The Firm’: Does the Monarchy Still Have a Place in Modern Britain?

By Thalia Cosgrove

"THE QUESTION IS SIMPLE, IF THE ROYAL FAMILY DOES NOT CHANGE, WILL THE PUBLIC'S TOLERANCE LAST?"

The British Royal family has certainly had a whirlwind of a past few months. By now, almost everyone has seen (or at least heard of) the iconic interview concerning Meghan Markle and Prince Harry on the Oprah show, (regarding “Megxit”); this aired in the UK on the 8th of March, attracting copious amounts of media attention. The tabloids have been filled over the past few months with Royal controversies, ranging from Prince Andrew’s involvement in the Jeffrey Epstein scandal, to Prince Charles contracting coronavirus - while also seeing a drop in his national popularity after the Oprah broadcast. It’s hardly surprising when the interview revealed he had stopped taking Harry’s calls too. People are beginning to question whether or not the monarchy should change, or even whether it should exist at all. Is there still a place for this family in modern Britain?

One important factor that caused the monarchy’s popularity to plummet, is that The Duke and Duchess of Sussex had been cut off financially by the Royal family at the beginning of 2020, meaning the couple now had to rely on Harry’s inheritance from Princess Diana, who also suffered at the hands of the British press. It could be argued that if they want to remove themselves from the Royal family, then they shouldn’t be expecting to rely on them financially, but the treatment still seems cruel. Another key factor diminishing the Royal family’s popularity would be the seemingly discriminative treatment of Meghan Markle, which suggests that the Royal family remains outdated in modern Britain’s multicultural identity. Can the Royal family truly represent Britain if they don’t represent the diversity of its citizens?

If the monarchy is to be abolished any time soon, it’s likely that most of the young royals will follow in the Duke and Duchess’ footsteps, but it’s worth remembering that royal experts say the likelihood of the monarchy being abolished is pretty low, even if royal author Nigel Cawthorne previously suggested to Insider that the monarchy will be “severely damaged in the long term”

by Harry and Megan’s exit. It remains that most experts believe that things will not change significantly at all, especially given the historical examples ranging from the controversies around both Princess Margaret and Princess Diana, who had similar responses with little action done. When an institute is this embedded into the identity of Britain, its questioned whether this can truly be changed.

We could also ask if there is an actual demand by the public for change. While there haven’t been any protests or riots about the abolishment of the English monarchy, many people believe that the opposition to the monarchy is larger than the media portray it. There is a wide range of motivations for the abolition of the monarchy, including anti-class anachronistic and outdated views, along with opposition to it as an undemocratic and hereditary institution, not to mention opposition to a particular monarch or dynasty. While there is little doubt that the nature of the constitutional monarch gives the Queen little power, it remains true that the Queen has privilege as a birth right and can still wield more power than many would believe - with it being recently revealed she had blocked attempts to investigate the extent of the monarchy’s wealth. While France no longer has a monarchy, their Royal palaces are still tourist attractions. Tourism still can exist for Royalty that doesn’t.

All in all, the monarchy doesn’t seem to be going anywhere anytime soon, with it still having enough popularity with the public to keep them secure and intact. But this is not permanent. If our generation is more aligned with Meghan and Harry, then change in the monarchy is more likely then unlikely. The question is simple, if the Royal family does not change, will the public’s tolerance last?



Temperamental Technology and Teams Torture

By Lucy McMillan

To the people who 'preferred online school to normal school', I just want to say congratulations, because I believe I'm in the majority when I say online learning was dreadful. From missing deadlines to people yelling "you're on mute", the trials and tribulations of working from home will be burned into the memories of many of us forever.

Ok, let's be honest. Have you, or have you not, attended at least one lesson from your bed? If the answer is no, you're either lying or have at least logged on in pyjamas. Still no? Top half formal and bottom half pyjamas counts. One thing I mastered was the art of staying in bed for as long as possible before my first lesson started (I'm talking seconds before it began), yet still technically remaining on time. Nevertheless, even with the extra hour in bed compared to normal school time, you still somehow manage to feel exhausted, though the only movement you've done is walk downstairs to the fridge and back. You think "how on earth did I ever manage to wake up at seven o'clock, get the bus, go to five lessons, socialise, and then come home to do homework?" Doing all that in one day now seems impossible, especially when making a lunch that isn't Heinz tomato soup or super noodles has become a struggle.

Lunchtime was always the highlight of my day. A whole half an hour where you can act normally without panicking that you're unmuted? Bliss.

Virtual lessons will never feel right. No matter how competent the teacher is, there will always be either a technical issue or an awkwardness in every lesson. Take for example when a teacher asks a question and you know the answer (and you know everyone knows the answer), but everyone feels too awkward to actually unmute... so we sit in silence until the teacher calls on someone. Sometimes it feels we all have a sixth sense when it comes to teachers asking questions. It's like we can recognise we're about to be called on, and it's always fear inducing.



Like many others, I have a group chat for each subject where we would often ask the same questions, "does anyone know what page we're on?", "has anyone got a picture of the PowerPoint?" and of course, the most frequently asked, "what the hell is going on???". These chats would often be active during lessons; however, we'd rarely be communicating in them normally. Instead we'd be hyping each other up to unmute. For some reason, asking a question that's completely valid and necessary is terrifying. How very Gen Z.

From awkward eye contact with window cleaners, to family clattering about the one time you're unmuted, there were so many encounters that made online learning horrendous in the moment, yet hilarious as we reminisce. Overall, learning virtually was difficult. There is no doubt about that. Frankly, a typical day for me would consist of waking up seconds before my first lesson, lazing downstairs to grab my laptop (just to immediately return to my bedroom that has become a glorified cave of unwashed clothes, uncompleted worksheets, and dirty mugs). Only then would I go to my lessons, try to interact at least once, eat, and go back to bed. My timetable became merely a loose guide, breaktimes would become breakfast and I'd have a shower at lunchtime. It gradually became like groundhog-day. Every day was the same.

It was exhausting even though we did nothing; anxiety inducing even though we were alone. It's hard to see assignments piling up after every single lesson and not being able to complete any of them. Nothing about online learning was easy. It was migraines, backache and exhaustion even if there were funny moments. And after all that, somehow, I still don't really know how to work Microsoft Teams.



'Embrace the Sh*ttness'

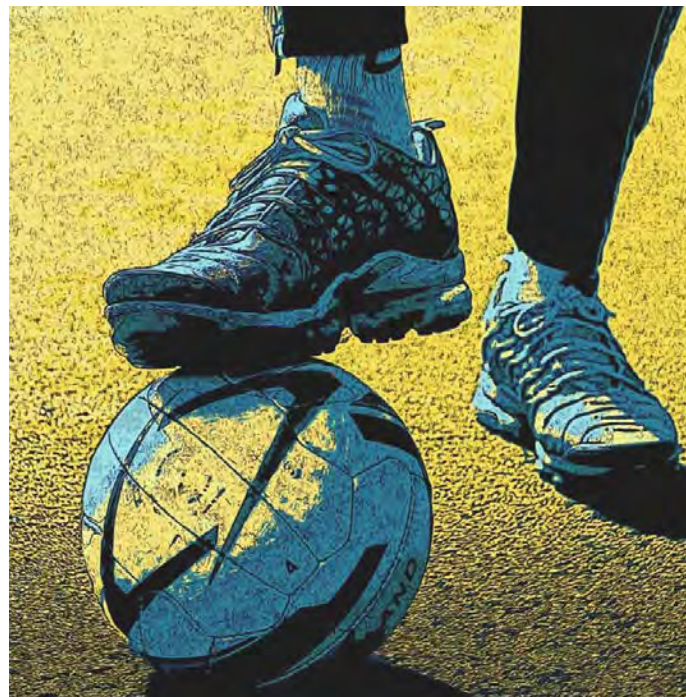
Managing Chester F.C during a pandemic

By Dan Laidlaw

The situation with coronavirus has impacted so many and Chester FC is no exception. Similarly, too many football clubs throughout the football pyramid, the pandemic threatened the survival of Chester as a club. I had the opportunity to speak with Chester's Manager, Anthony Johnson about how the pandemic has affected his team along with his thoughts on how the national league 'handled' the situation.

"Dealt with? I don't think it was dealt with, they allowed the season to run until May without giving any clarity on how clubs will be funded, they left clubs to fend for themselves. So, when you ask me how was it handled; it wasn't and it's nothing short of a disgrace". I think it's very clear where Anthony Johnson stands with regards to the national league, and it's hard to disagree. It got to 48 hours before the season was due to begin for the national league to provide any information as to how the season may continue. It was decided that the season would be played and would receive grants to cover for the lost income, as a result of the pandemic. However, over halfway through the season the league decided that the funding would be loans. Instead, clubs were now left unable to repay and stuck with players on contracts with no income. The national league decided to distribute the money evenly, this sounds great right? "you've got clubs averaging 300 at home receiving the same as Chester who average 2000? It's ridiculous." Once again, the league shows a complete and utter naivety and inability to handle the situation; Football fan or not, the pandemic as a whole has been handled terribly, which has left fans, players and managers understandably fuming.

We could have sat for hours talking about the irresponsibility of the league, but instead ended up speaking about the positives that came as a result of the pandemic. Last season, Chester were allowed to play their playoff games behind closed doors and with private COVID testing, the problem was the £50,000 that was needed. Chester fans rallied together to raise the money for testing along with every member of staff and players deciding to play for free, as a fan this was amazing news. "It's important people know this wasn't some gimmick to make us look like good people, many of us have families and kids, this is our livelihood. But some things are more important than money". Football as a whole has been taken over by money over recent years, so to see this level of camaraderie and desire to just play for Chester was brilliant.



As a fanbase, Chester were ridiculed for being knocked out of the playoffs (extremely controversially, may I add) but the response from Anthony Johnson was simple, yet wonderful. "Embrace the sh*ttness", fans proceeded to print flags, banners and shirts displaying the club's new motto. It's safe to say they love the club just like we love them. It's the small things for me, the fact Johnson refers to Chester as 'our club'. He's one of us, and as a squad we wouldn't change them for anyone.

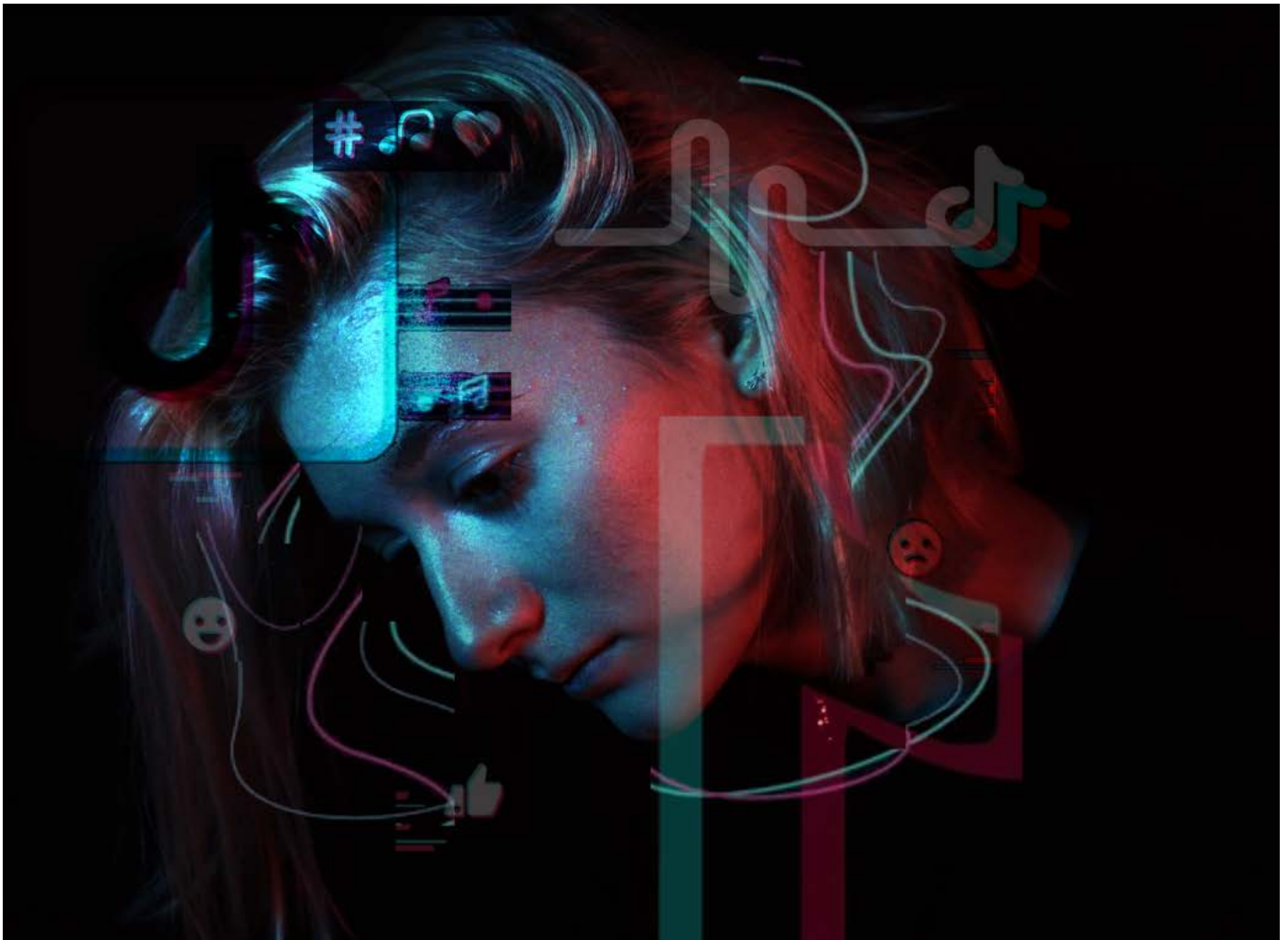
This leads on perfectly to a discussion that has surrounded Chester for years. We are a fan owned club, meaning the board is voted by fans who are all equal equity owners in the club. The downside being we don't have the funds of other clubs. "I get asked a lot, what's the ceiling for a fan owned club and I just think you know what? F*ck your ceilings. We can go as far as we like, it will just take time and will have to be organic growth, like a conveyor belt as players come in and out we slowly improve as a core squad. Chorley are a great example, they walked the league first season but they weren't ready for the league above, they then get beat every week, relegated, their best players picked and guess where they are now? Four places below us, because we've grown slowly, we've lost our best player but we replace and improve; it's just gonna take time." Chester will never compete financially with the levels of others in non-league that's been evident throughout this pandemic, but something this year has exposed is that with a core group of players, managers and fans who love what they do there is no limit to what you can achieve.

TikTok as a Double-Edged Sword

By Elizabeth McCay

One thing that has remained by our side through this traumatic year, TikTok. This wonderful but potentially harmful app has seen a boom over quarantine. It's been my lord and saviour. This genius app ranges from nonsensical videos, to political revolution, to fashion advice, to fan culture, to tackling body shaming and back to comedy in a matter of scrolls. However, TikTok is very much a double-edged sword. At face value we see what most people perceive TikTok as: the hilarious videos that any teen could quote, videos that spread positive messages of body positivity and political awareness and of course, most importantly- the dances. That's not even the beginning. TikTok has a plethora of hypnotising content to satisfy anyone who has an account, and an algorithm that hooks you immediately as you scroll intently awaiting the next 10 seconds. You scroll and scroll...and scroll- you laugh and cry and ponder- and scroll again. Your splintering attention span clutches onto each video you swipe onto; addictive is an understatement. The contents of your 'For You Page' is solely consistent of videos related to things you have liked; every single video you see will be entertaining to you. It is terrifyingly easy to spend hours at a time on this app. Before you know it the whole evening is gone, it's 2am and you have achieved nothing apart from temporary entertainment. The obvious problem of addiction is stellar. However, the problems don't stop there.

A dark side of TikTok exists and is horrifyingly prominent: a side where predatory men target young girls just doing a fun dance, where people are brave enough to show their insecurities and are only met with malice, and many disturbing videos that have gone viral for all the wrong reasons. Yet, another issue is the clear silencing of POC and other marginalised creators who attempt to speak up on important issues. TikTok is extremely good at distraction- whether it be tearing you away from your homework or distracting the general population from the inequalities that POC have been trying to bring up for years. The concept of 'shadow banning' is taboo, some people have been banned for advocating for political issues - which is of course, immoral. Yet, videos spreading hate speech remain. Many people are seeing a repetition of 2012 Tumblr within TikTok, which can be interesting. Musical.ly became TikTok in 2018 and was immediately flooded with gamers, artists, fandoms and- there's no better way to say it- nerds (myself included). Frankly, it was cringe. From 2018-2019 you had to hide the TikTok app on your home screen because of its awkward connotations. Many people see summer 2019 as TikTok's heyday- all the trends were hilarious, the community were all likeminded people, and it was still a secret.



Then, Covid-19 happened. The world stopped. People needed a new fixation to pass the time and suddenly, everyone was on TikTok. There were people making fulltime careers out of it, it became the social media of choice for promoting anything, it was astoundingly funny- it was new. Very suddenly this cringe app morphed into the giant it is now, with 6 million active users. But with the increase in popularity came all the same things that those dreaded Tumblr years were known for: mental illness romanticisation, toxic fan culture, disturbing and unhealthy trends, bullying, glamourising eating disorders, scarily prominent predatory behaviour and more. It's terrifying, but inevitable. It's not just TikTok, social media as a whole is not and has never been healthy. But social media is the future, it's a damaging creation but it will never go away now that the whole human race is addicted.

As I'm writing this article and completely slamming the idea of social media, I have checked my phone multiple times...so maybe I'm a hypocrite, and just a by-product of this social media obsessed society. I witness the damaging effects of TikTok daily and yet I cannot tear myself away from it. Of course it's damaging, but I'll be damned if it's not funny as hell. There have been too many times where I have turned to TikTok for comfort during this hellish year, it's been a life saver. To be frank I think a lot of us would have gone completely mad without it. So, as we can all see TikTok is a bit of a double-edged sword, but it's got a lot of redeeming qualities. Including allowing content that people have no other outlet for, giving people voices, making us laugh and creating so many pop culture references that we will be able to quote like Vines for years. Along with it being a bit dodgy, anyone who downloads it will see that it is a great source of entertainment, and during this pandemic TikTok has been an amazing way to bring peoples spirits up even if its just a silly little video.



Piers Morgan Motivated by Confrontation; the Media Caricature that is Piers Morgan

By Emily Donaldson

Piers Morgan is a British journalist and media figure who has recently attracted controversy for his aggressive and controversial interview tactics. He specialises in breaking stories and has achieved international fame as a confrontational television personality. Piers has hosted well-known shows such as *Good Morning Britain* and *Piers Morgan tonight*. However, after six years on the show, Piers has made the decision to leave *Good Morning Britain*. Much to the nation's surprise, his decision was motivated by the feedback he received for his opinions on Meghan Markle's interview with Oprah Winfrey. He labelled the Duchess of Sussex as a 'liar' after she had told Oprah Winfrey that she felt suicidal due to her allegedly strained relationships with the Royal Family. Piers' opinions on the story obviously gained attention, not only from the viewers, but also Piers' colleagues. His extreme comments about Meghan caused a clash live on air between him and fellow presenter, Alex Beresford, and a debate soon developed.

Piers stated that he "didn't believe a word of it" before storming out and quitting the breakfast show after six years. Piers has never been apprehensive to say what he thinks; it appears he doesn't care whether his opinions create uproar or confrontation, due to his belief in freedom of speech.

Twitter has been a platform for Piers to share his opinion not only on the Duchess, but also Boris Johnson. For example, he recently tweeted "He left our borders open, repeatedly locked us down too late, let Covid rip through care homes.... He got the vaccine right, everything else wrong." Although many people may hold the same views as Piers, was it really right for him to slate the man who is trying his best in times no one could have predicted? Piers Morgan is either loved or hated by the public, and it doesn't seem like his controversial attitudes will be changing anytime soon.

Life on Pause...

By Emily Anderton

Lockdown. You either love it or you hate it; much like many people's relationship with Primark. It has its flaws, yes; but have you reflected on the joyous time we spent locked in with the ones we hold dearest, making memories and creating laughter while a moment in history was being marked? Well, if you haven't yet, I'm going to remind you of some of the little things we did to make that dragging of time just a little bit more bearable.

I'll start where you expect, the old sibling chaos. When Boris announced national lockdown, to say the nations' hearts dropped was an understatement. I've always been close with my siblings, don't get me wrong, but there is always a chance of World War three breaking out whenever we're in the same room. Nevertheless, living under one roof, for however long it's been (in my opinion a lifetime), I thought only one of us would make it out alive, yet I have learnt that I value the connection and time with my siblings more than I ever thought I would. And how have I achieved this? Well, I give great credit to a show which is romantic, action-packed, enchanted and fit for a 21-, 17- and 12-year-old. How we sat through 65 episodes of a show that is nothing more than being about a magical man called Merlin every night is beyond me, but that shared escapism that we all embraced will never be viewed as time wasted.

Another thing that has become apparent is how we can see our parents turn their fridge into their own wine bar, as they attempt to drown us out with that cheeky glass of wine on a Tuesday night, their excuse being every day in lockdown feels like a weekend and besides its "rude not to", and I'm obliged to agree.



The frozen face. The buffering voice. The "you're on mute". The dreaded quiz night of a Thursday. A time to check in with the cousins, to discuss shows and to test whether our brains have truly turned to mush. It's all fun and games when on the film section, everyone knows the answers due to the long days of movie reviewing that we've all endured; yet the geography round rolls around, and the only thing crossing our minds is our 'staycations' on the sofa. We kissed goodbye to the sunburn and long-haul flight for a Christmas getaway a long time ago, and now we've swapped the queues at passport control for the queues in the rain outside the Co-op, waiting to gather the ingredients so that we can embrace our inner Gino at tea that night. Yet we must admit, we were never going to be on his level no matter how hard we tried!

The lockdown makeover. The glow up. This was the time to stop following Joe Wicks, and instead actually become the fitness guru that is him. Meal prep. Workouts. 10,000 steps. Never before would I have thought that I would be so eager and enthusiastic to "feel the burn" in a workout and to count the number of steps I do a day. I guess this is where you can tell that I've been confined within the four walls of my house for way too long, meaning that even a simple walk around an abandoned golf course seems like a step towards normality.

The fashion sense and need to look put together went flying out the window as soon as the dreaded 'L' word was announced. The look of sweatpants and an old hoodie replaced the crisp look of jeans and that cute top you bought in town last month; yet comfort was key and unbeatable and to be honest, I'm kind of sad I can't get away with that look anymore, jeans are rather uncomfortable.

When the old birthday rolls around, the usual laughs, bubbles and celebrations were replaced with the computer showing the faces of family and friends, to which you awkwardly chat about the absolute nothingness happening in your lives. The nicely wrapped gifts normally received were substituted with vouchers found within the stack of birthday cards along with the message of "hoping to see you soon" and the advice to shop online; it almost feels like a normal day in lockdown...except for the extra chocolate! Christmas was another celebration that came and left without its gatherings and merry chaos that comes along with the snow. However, the normal stress of whether or not there is enough wrapping paper was replaced with the worry of whether or not we will be able to collect the turkey from the butchers for the classic Christmas roast. That's corona for you.

Lockdown meant that not only school and work ground to a halt, but also activities such as clubs and pubs. It's safe to say that the garden turned into a football pitch every Saturday with Dad dressed in neon sportswear with a whistle around his neck pretending he's the new manager of Liverpool. Not only was the garden transformed, but the lounge became the new dance studio Mum never planned for, yet the tutus and dance shoes were ditched, and instead were replaced with Wii remotes and a good 2000's tune blasting from the TV mid just-dance dance off.

New hobbies were also adopted, baking being my personal favourite. I must say, I have never been more excited for a trip down to the Co-op to purchase myself a bag of self-raising flour for the crazy cake I've been eyeing to make from the random cookbook Mum had stashed in the drawer. Let's all agree, we start the process with high hopes of being the next winner of the Great British Bake Off, yet we soon realise how Nigella makes the process seem all too easy in comparison to the chaotic reality we really to encounter. So yeah, maybe I'm not gonna be the next winner, but it's the taking part and trying that counts, I guess.

But in all seriousness, I think we can all agree on the fact that we have grown into mature and understanding young adults from this global disaster. I hope that history remembers how the youth have supported the vulnerable with the home deliveries of essentials and the long chats with them by the front door, in which we finally realised that they aren't all technophobes, and perhaps even better with the old iPad than myself.

Shhhh, don't tell anyone.





Is my Body Type in Fashion this Season?

The Incurable Truth

By Rosie Marsh

Toxic beauty standards have been killing us for decades; enough is enough.

Every day we are exposed to increasing amounts of images in different formats, which all hold the intention of presenting what success and happiness is 'supposed' to look like. This representation is what perpetuates the beauty standards which continue to dominate popular media and culture. Even a subtle presence in the media suggests an approval of someone's lifestyle, influencing millions of impressionable viewers that want to achieve this perceived representation of what perfection is. Not only this, but the media suggests that once you achieve this beauty standard, you will be happy, successful and be respected by men, as well as the entirety of society.

What a detrimental message to be sending to younger generations.

There is no such thing as an 'ideal.' It is all relative. What you find attractive, someone else may value as mediocre.

What you may perceive perfection to look like, someone may view as deficient to the beauty standard in society, holding a completely juxtaposed idea of what 'ideal' even means. Holding the belief that achieving the 'ideal' look will bring you happiness can only really end one way. This is most likely going to be an internal battle with yourself, taking up years of your teenage life which you will later go on to regret. You will never be happy with yourself unless you stop feeding into the need to meet society's idea of 'perfection'. Maybe the only reason I am growing to accept my body is because it is moving closer and closer to meeting society's beauty standards.

The incurable truth is that by the time I've learnt self-acceptance, the ideal will have already changed, just for the cycle of self-hatred to begin again. We go to cosmic extents to try and change our bodies for society's approval. By the time we have failed, the ideal has already changed. One minute everyone wants to look like Kim K, the next – low rise jeans are back and skinny is coming back in to fashion. It's all just impossible.

The concept of body neutrality is often not spoken about in the media, compared to the influx of 'body positivity' that is plastered over every billboard we see.

But it's not that simple. By just reading 'body positivity' under every Instagram post we see of the 'ideal' body type, it doesn't mean we will feel this sense of positivity about our own bodies. Instead, we sit and deliberate how we can fulfil our dream to get their body, and maybe then we'll feel some form of positivity about ourselves.

Holding its roots in fat acceptance, the body positivity movement has created a community of like-minded individual's pushing against the social norms that create an ideal standard of beauty.

Body positivity initially focused on challenging the unrealistic beauty standards that are set for women in society, focusing later on the notion that "all bodies are beautiful" as of 2020.

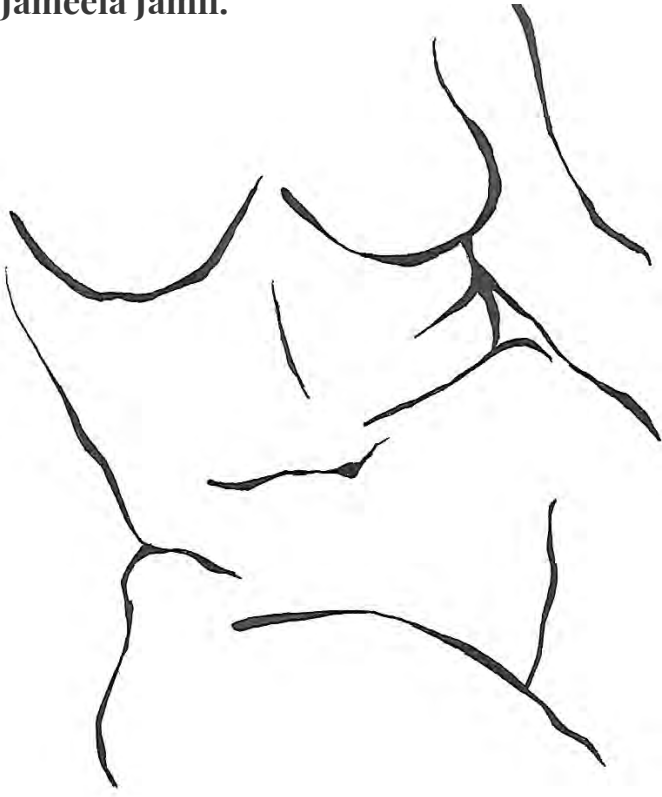
The movement highlights that the beauty industry profits from the socialised insecurities created for us to internalise.

Women spend around £483 on beauty products a year (Glamour, 2018) just in the hope of moulding into society's notion of 'perfection'. Public figures such as Lizzo and Tess Holliday (founder of 'effyourbeautystandards') embrace their diverse 'plus-size bodies' and highlight the body positive movement as a way for women to move closer to self-acceptance, but the movement isn't as innocent as you think.

Once you stop deciding that having the 'ideal' body will bring you happiness; you give yourself the chance to discover your value and know your worth.



Imagine just not thinking about your body. You are not hating it. You are not loving it. You are just a floating head. I'm a floating head wandering through the world," - Jameela Jamil.



When compared with the concept of body neutrality, readers come to terms with the idea that being positive about your body 24/7 isn't realistic and can even perpetuate toxic expectations for women to feel fulfilled and accepting of their bodies all the time. Rather the 'neutrality' aspect focuses predominantly on what your body does for you, rather than what it looks like.

On paper, learning to love your body sounds like a no-brainer, yet with body-positivity comes the constant focus of the conversation being body image, which doesn't work for everyone. You are more than your body. Your worth is not dependant on what you look like.

The body neutrality movement accepts that you may not love your body all the time and emphasises that this is completely OK. You can accept your body for what it is, even if you don't completely love it, rather than the notion of toxic positivity being perpetuated even further through the body positivity movement.

So, who even decides what the ideals will be each decade and how is this presented in the media?

With the rise of Marilyn Monroe, who eventually became a massive sex symbol and the talk of Hollywood, the 1950's became a time of celebration and indulgence as a stronger economy was starting to return to the West. She became an icon of the Golden Era who portrayed the look that was most desired at the time and the media began to embrace a 'fuller' figure compared to the 1940's. Hip and Butt pads, as well as weight gaining tablets were being sold across the entirety of the UK.

With the 60's came a drastic change. Curvy was out and skinny was in, due to the likes of Twiggy.

With a second wave in the Women's rights movement and the birth control pill being approved, women finally felt in control of their own bodies and free from the constraints and ideals of the 1950's. However, it was just one ideal to another, completely going against what women were trying to do by breaking away from the standards of society at the time, proving that there was still an incredible amount of work to do in relation to the expectations put upon women relating to beauty standards and body image in the media. Twiggy represented the new trend of a less curvy, straight up and down body, which clearly marked a new era for women, leading women to rely on diets to have control over their figures.

Thin was never thin enough.

With the 70's came the dance era; however, the same look still dominated the media for much of the decade, leaving an easy transition into the 80's. Jane Fonda's first workout video influenced women everywhere, leading to women now exercising to intentionally shape their bodies on a large scale, which was ideal timing for the modelling industry to introduce the super models. Cue the 80's. Models were seen everywhere with their tall, athletic physiques and became brands in their own rights. However, this didn't last long as shortly into the 90's, the skinny look was back in.

Due to heroin becoming more accessible and purer, this was a foothold with the middle class and wealthy, infiltrated through film culture – Pulp Fiction, suggesting a potential rebellion in society against the healthy ideals of the 80's.

Pale, skinny, emaciated, the look known as 'heroin chic' led by Kate Moss, held extreme amounts of push back as people didn't like the glamorisation of drug culture. However, cut to 1999 and heroin chic is out, creating a new ideal of flat, athletic stomachs, boobs and a tan to become the new craze of the 2000's.

Vogue dubbed supermodel Gisele Bündchen 'the return of the sexy model', influencing the new look in the media, to dominate the next decade as fitness became part of mainstream media once again, but by the time the 2010's came around, a couple of provocative moments and a convenient family network allowed the Kardashians to bring back the curves I think so many of us wanted to see. The booty craze has never been more celebrated than now, especially due to the influx of social media – shifting where people are getting their perspective of these new ideals from, opposed to forms of traditional media in the past decades. Looking forward, ideals are appearing and disappearing faster than before. How we can predict what's next?

If our bodies are objectified as trends and ideals to dominate the media, will we ever be happy with ourselves if this phenomenon is constantly changing from one generation to the next?

Let's talk about the trendiness of flat stomachs and how they rarely go out of fashion.

Flat stomachs are often seen as an aspect of your body that compliments an outfit, besides the fact that traditionally fashion caters specifically to thin people; a vast number of outfits and trends are only viewed as fashionable when seen on people with flat stomachs. Hear me out. When a thin celebrity wears an oversized jumper with high waisted denim shorts, people perceive this to be effortless and fashionably casual, but when the same outfits are seen on fat people – they are considered 'outdated' or 'unstylish', perpetuating society's internalised fatphobia and classism. The idealisation of thinness makes it virtually impossible for plus-size people to wear similar clothing and look 'stylish', especially in the media.

Why do we only view thin as attractive?

Fatphobia, colonialism, anti-blackness, and capitalism all play in to why we internalise 'thin' to be attractive. 'Chubby' stomachs were considered a symbol of wealth and beauty during the renaissance period, which slowly changed over time due to white colonists pushing the concept of black people being 'inherently fat' because they 'lacked self-control'. This further exemplified the notion of fatphobia as a means of fuelling racism and trying to justify slavery. Decades later, we have a diet industry worth nearly £200 billion and the idea that flat stomachs are superior to non-flat or fat stomachs, leaving us with the question, will having a flat stomach always be the ideal?

What we view in the media shapes our perspective of beauty, which allows us to internalise the concept that we need to look a certain way to have worth. Fashion has constricted women's bodies for over 250 years, maintaining society's obsession with looks and beauty, just for the next trend to become outdated after a few months. How we look, how we see ourselves, feeds into how much value we believe we hold, leading us to take unnecessary risks to fit this 'ideal' and becoming unhealthy mentally or physically. Often, it's both.





The Disproportionate Value Within Society

By Mabel Lee

During February, a photo of the Keeping up with the Kardashians star, Kendall Jenner went viral as she promoted her fellow sister Kim Kardashians new fashion brand, posing in a tiny, red bikini. Within the same week, a photograph of Alyssa Carson, a NASA astronaut in training, at just the age of 19 years old, was also uploaded online. However, most of you may have never even heard of Alyssa Carson or her accomplishments mainly because the media hasn't even touched upon it. But you have probably heard of Kendall Jenner, or at least the Kardashian family who, by the way, got famous because the release of a sex tape a family member 'leaked'. And yet, the media continues to talk about them, draw attention to them and promote them to millions of viewers.

The media didn't release any content on Alyssa Carson, so I'm going to inform you. Carson was only 3 years old when she told her dad she wanted to be part of the first team to travel to Mars. Since then, Carson has completed all NASA's space camps, aerospace tests and at the age of 12 was even invited to talk at a NASA convention about her love for the red planet. And now, at just 19 years old, she is the youngest ever trainee astronaut and is a member of the team who will be the first to visit Mars. Some pretty astonishing accomplishments.

On the other hand, the media continues to contribute to Kendall Jenner framing the ideology of what a female should aspire to look like through endless articles, social media posts and videos. Although we can't blame this on Kendall. The amount of coverage the media shows around any beauty influencer out there is bound to impact young women, meaning the media is the building block for the belief that all women should look and behave a certain way. Whereas, in reality, they are just unrealistic ideas on a screen forming unrealistic goals because who knows what someone actually looks like in the flesh.

This poses the question of what message is the media constantly displaying? Perhaps it's to be drop dead gorgeous or to cut down your diet and physically work yourself mad to get to an unhealthy weight. Whatever message the media has been humanising for years, Alyssa Carson is the archetype for proving these expectations are distorted, impractical and misdirected. It is about time somebody did. It is about time somebody obstructed what the media perceives as a 'normal' lifestyle. In reality, the media is just a communication mechanism which is becoming so deadly, no one can see it. Helping humanisation or captivating it?

"So, no more of the media promoting sexual bikini poses, the normalising of clean skin and a thigh gap which is painting disproportionate values within society. Let's all be Alyssa Carson's."





Brighter Shades of Night

By David Quinn

"For them, seeing shadows is the way to perceive daylight" – Michel Foucault

Whispered and hushed in the Morning song.
Bring in the beautiful with the dawn.
The light barely crept across the new horizon,
As the glass jades it like a jewel,
It rests itself, yawning,
as it slips silent through the window.
Each of these fractal beams, a richness,
Each shaft, layers of perfect shade,
Like the rainbow on crow, coal black oil,
The sky smiles, darkness dissipates.

This is the simply sublime,
The little chit of heaven in the corner of the eye.
Through perforated plastic, and steamed glasses,
The moon looks like sunshine.
There is fear of tomorrow, like a looming abyss,
But if open wide enough, darkness is revealed as this,
The shadow of our brighter times,
The only way to perceive daylight.

Could this tranquillité d'esprit last forever?
This one moment trapped,
like the restless beam of light,
waiting to burst into a flower.
Nurture it wisely,
And dream some more.
These days go by, their features writ in water.
The world goes by, while shelter lies here forever.

Boys Don't Cry

Breaking Down the Barriers of Toxic Masculinity.

By Rosie Marsh and Millie Appleby

One of the most significant examples of toxic masculinity being revoked in the media is the numerous accounts of Harry Styles starting to break down the barriers. Not only did Styles make history as the first man on the cover of Vogue by himself since 1892, but his iconic outfits also prove that it doesn't make you any less of a man if you wear items of clothing that are stereotyped as 'feminine'. Every day he strives to fight gender norms; refusing to conform to social constructs – especially in the fashion industry that is still so strongly dictated by the 'rules' of masculinity. His willingness to reprobate outdated gender constructs highlights the confidence he has within himself as a man. This holds hope for future generations, that may take a lead from him and continue to break down the walls of toxic masculinity together, one step at a time.

'Man up', 'take it like a Man', 'grow some balls' are all phrases that mean absolutely nothing, yet as a society, we respond to them and know exactly what is expected of us as soon as these sayings are put into play. The impact that socialisation can have on gender norms is huge, but this can be a positive thing which can give us as individuals the hope that there is the capabilities for change. What does 'man up' even mean? No two men are the same so why are they treated like one?

The fuel for toxic masculinity is social media and the ignition is the response. Society will never fully agree on anything, there will always be the controversial views such as the place men are supposed to hold within the social hierarchy, but times are changing. From Frank Ocean and Harry Styles to Lin-Manuel Miranda the Grammy winning creator of Hamilton, men from all works of life are standing their ground and trying to educate, not only themselves, but their fans and followers that being a stereotypical man does not define your masculinity. Pink, skirts, dresses, flowers, a sweet-smelling perfume are all things we link to a women, but why? The gender constructs are holding millions of men back. We should stop labelling a hairstyle as masculine or a pair of shoes as feminine and accept individuals for the person they are without defining them because of stereotypes surrounding gender. A man in a pair of heels should be viewed just as masculine as a man in a pair of trainers.

It is time for us to begin making a difference, we should want our future selves to be accepting of the change and welcome the idea that there is not just one way of being a man. Women and men are both victims of toxic masculinity, and growing up in a society so focused on what it means to be a man is beginning to put strain on numerous generations. To be a man you do not have to be 'straight', you do not need to have a penis, and you do not need to wear what society expects you too. Embrace who you are through fashion, your personality and your own individual flare – so what if it isn't stereotypically masculine, you know who you truly are, and that's all that matters – right?




Why do so many people believe these are the key elements that give a person the right to be a 'true' man? You can only imagine how harmful this is for society as a whole.

Toxic masculinity: a set of attitudes and ways of behaving stereotypically associated with or expected of men, regarded as having a negative impact on men and society as a whole.

For decades, gender norms and stereotypes have been perpetuated in society, with expectations placed upon both men and women to conform to certain ways that are deemed 'appropriate' for their gender. Perceptions are finally beginning to change towards masculinity, a new perspective is being shaped for future generations. However, this does not mean it will now cease to exist in coming years. Toxic masculinity assumes that there is only one way to be a man, which is often accepted through means of sexism, homophobia and internalised misogyny, all thanks to the patriarchy. This raises even more issues with the phrase 'toxic masculinity', but we'll get to that.

The message we are given in society is that girls are weak, and boys are strong. Girls are more nurturing, and boys as a whole are not caring. These perceptions of each gender is subconsciously fed to us in the media, conditioning us to internalise gendered expectations and stereotypes. This creates an increasingly damaging society that can be extremely isolating to be a part of, not matter how you identify.





A Love Letter to a Homophobic Queer

By Lauren Bartlett

To my younger self, you don't need to feel disgusted with yourself.

I have a confession: I am a homophobe, and I'm sure many others can relate. Internalised homophobia isn't conscious – it's a subconscious reaction put into place by what we see in the media, kids in the playground and our parents; ideas learned from others which maintains this cycle of hatred. This is because homophobia has become so deeply ingrained in our society that for some, hatred has become the norm. And it's about time we talk about it.

I'm extremely fortunate to be in an accepting environment, surrounded by people who love me, and I couldn't be more grateful. And yet there was a time I felt disgusted at the thought I might be queer, or whenever I saw anything related to the LGBT community on social media. I convinced myself I was straight, and that I made up the fact I found a girl somewhat prettier than my straight friends for attention, because it was a "trend". This wasn't true. I simply didn't want to be queer. I wasted so much energy on repressing parts of myself out of fear; fear of rejection, judgement and hatred. Because the reality for many is that one in five LGBT people have experienced a hate crime in the last twelve months, nearly half of LGBT students in Britain's schools are bullied for being LGBT, and 72 countries currently criminalise same-sex relationships. As a kid I never saw straight or gay people, but people around me did and, quite frequently they saw the latter as terribly wrong.

One thing that kids love to do, that I'd like to use to illustrate my point, is use "gay" as an insult. We've all seen it – "that's so gay" and "you look gay".

Some of us have done it, a lot of us have probably heard it. It sounds trivial, but many people don't realise the damage this rhetoric can have on children, simply by continually perpetuating the idea that being queer is synonymous with negativity, that it's something deserving of being insulted for. Of course, they don't mean harm – they're kids. But the truth is kids learn preconceptions from their parents, and their kids will do the same. Even in films and the media there are stereotypes that we unknowingly harbour. Queer cinema is continuously ignored by the mainstream and pushed aside for a replacement of queerbaiting, either lesbian fetishization or no female characters at all, and stereotypical, one-dimensional characters whose only personality trait is being queer. Only recently have we had good representation recognised through films like *Moonlight* and *Brokeback Mountain*. It's these and other more nuanced and touching depictions that can make any real difference in the perception of queer relationships, not Marvel's first gay character with five minutes of screen time and no name. Often if representation is included, it's treated as a tick box to please the viewers and nothing else, which is counterproductive.

What is productive, is awareness.

Only through awareness of our internalised hatred, can we overcome this, by exposing ourselves to LGBT voices and educating ourselves. We need a more accurate representation, not just any representation. We need more intimate, vulnerable, more relatable love shown on screen and more LGBT voices propelled in mainstream media. We need more characters who look like us, not caricatures of us. On the other hand, we have those who use social media to cultivate hatred. We have "straight pride" and the new transphobic concept of "super-straight" trending on TikTok, which trivialise the pain queer people have been through. The facts that two-in-five young trans people have attempted to take their own life and those 8 countries have evidence of the death penalty being used against same-sex relationships should shock people, and yet we're accused of celebrating pride because we feel a sense of superiority. We don't. We celebrate pride for the people like us, being bullied, discriminated, and oppressed because we exist. Now, I no longer feel the way I did about my queerness when I was eleven, or even fifteen. I no longer feel angry at the world for the way I had felt about it, which is why I'm writing for my younger self and anyone who may be feeling the same way. You are not disgusting. You are not weird. You are not selfish and you're not alone. Please, look inside yourself and become aware of your hate. We can all better ourselves in terms of queer appropriation and mainstream attitudes in society, we can all work together to end the negative stigma around the LGBT community and love acceptingly. I know you don't mean it, so be gentle with yourself. It's not your fault. You deserve love that is pure and kind.





Last Words

In a world where we are saturated with information, for this year's edition we wanted to allow a moment for space, celebrating the power and influence of the creative arts. More than ever, after a week whereby our government has proposed to cut funding to arts subjects at higher education by fifty percent; we feel this highly editorial publication demonstrates the force and capacity for change the arts hold for twenty-first century Britain.

We are both incredibly proud to be a part of TERM Magazine, not only has it been amazing to watch the publication rebrand but to witness our team grow and develop has been incredibly rewarding.

So, when reading this year's edition, we hope that it allowed you to take a moment to reflect and allow a moment for contemplation and the power of our words to resonate with our audience.

Millie Appleby, Editor

Meg Morrison, Deputy Editor

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