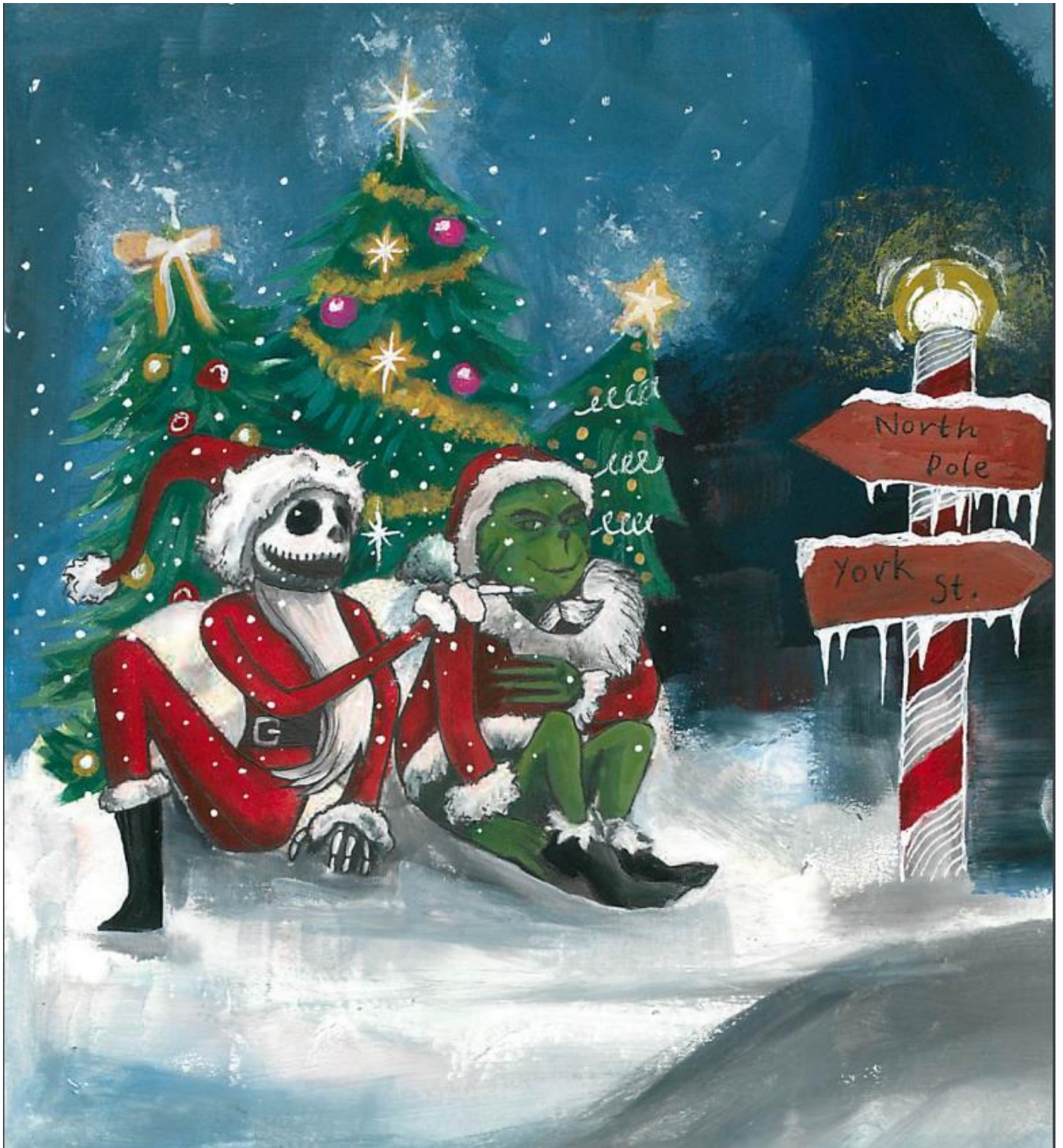


The York Street Times

ISSUE ONE – DECEMBER 2022



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Christmas at CRGS

Monday 12th December: Celebration of Christmas- Both students and parents and carers are invited to St. Mary Magdalene's Church, Clitheroe from 7pm for an evening of musical performances, readings and poems by students. Come along as it is sure to get you into the festive spirit.

Tuesday 13th December: Christmas themed Non-Uniform Day- Students will be asked to donate £1 to wear their own clothes to be donated to Shelter, a charity that supports those experiencing homelessness, something which will be especially difficult for many in the lead up to this Christmas.

Tuesday 13th December and Thursday 15th December: Christmas lunch- On these days there will be a limited number of Christmas dinners and festive treats available on a first come first served basis. Make sure you get there early for a delicious lunch!

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first issue (and Christmas special) of The York Street Times!

Together with our editor-in-chief, Mrs. Salt, and an incredibly talented group of writers from across our Sixth Form community, we have created the first of what we hope to be many editions of the school magazine.

In founding the magazine, we wanted to create an entirely student-led platform from which the voices and views of anyone from our student community could be heard and appreciated.

We hope that you feel we have succeeded in this, and that the features in the magazine make you smile, make you reflect, or teach you something new, or maybe even all three at once.

We want everyone in our student community to feel like their voice can be heard, so if you would like to be involved in any future editions, please join us at Press Gang in Room 41 on Tuesday lunchtimes.

Thank you to the incredible group of writers who feature in this issue. We really appreciate the time and effort that went into the articles, and you can clearly see how dedicated each and every member of Press Gang was in making this magazine the very best it could be.

A huge thank you also to Mrs. Salt for giving us so much support in the creation of the magazine and making it possible.

We hope you enjoy!

Libby Ainsworth, Josh Swarbrick, Olly Booth-Tian and Sophie Game

Editors

THE EMOJI ENIGMA.

By Josh Swarbrick

I love a good emoji. Realistically, who doesn't? Those wonderful little symbols are a staple of most, if not all, of our messages. Everyone has their favourite. If you're like me, it changes weekly (though at the moment I'm utterly enamoured by '👶' – there's something so mysteriously majestic about that little guy).

We can use them to spice up messages in ways my boring words could never hope to. Take the – let's be honest – tiresome 'haha'. Sure, I could add an extra 'ha', or capitalise, or even just keyboard slam (something along the lines of DHSJDHFJSHKAKLSJ often works), but the humble emoji is far more expressive, and far more exciting. There's so much variety on offer: I can be basic and go with the classic '😊'; if I'm talking to someone over 60, I'll tilt it 45° to make '😄'; there's '💀'; bizarrely – and brilliantly – there's '🪑'; but my favourite is the ever-iconic '😏'. So many different emojis for so many different contexts. It's great.

Emojis were born out of an attempt to reinsert nonverbal cues into written language. Facial expressions and body language are as vital to the way we express ourselves as the words we use, and so without them, in the distinctly lexical world of texting, it is all too easy to seem rather impersonal. In the same way a '?' is used in writing to indicate a question, emojis can be used to indicate emotion – almost like a pictorial tone indicator.

But, linguistically speaking, what actually *is* an emoji? Yes, by definition they're little images to represent something – the word literally translates from Japanese to 'picture character', e (絵, 'picture') + moji (文字, 'character') – but how do we define them *functionally*?

Many make the immediate aesthetic comparison between emojis and ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. Both language forms are graphic symbols, both are able to convey meaning, and frankly both look pretty damn cool. For ages, I'd

considered emojis to be the 'modern hieroglyph' for this very reason – but it turns out this comparison is rather flawed.

For those unaware, hieroglyphics was the formal writing system used in Ancient Egypt. This form of writing is wonderfully complex – I couldn't possibly wish to explain it all in the level of detail it deserves. Linguists categorise hieroglyphs as logographs – written characters that represent a word or sound. Think of them almost as the Egyptian alphabet. Each hieroglyph's meaning was unambiguous; they mostly represented a unique sound, not necessarily the objects they were pictured as, so there was no room to debate what the individual symbol meant.



Many linguists would argue emojis, conversely, are pictographs – they carry meaning *through* their resemblance to a physical thing. The '📖' is, well, a book. It shows us a book because it is representing a book. Simple. Well, *deceptively* simple; there are complications – best illustrated by the classic '😏'. Taken literally, the smiling face emoji is exactly that – a smiling face. But instead, we see the emoji as a symbol to show happiness, comfort, or friendliness. We don't read these 'face' emojis as the thing they are picturing, we read them as the concept (in this case an abstract emotion) we associate them with. So, in that sense, not all emojis – namely the ones we tend to use most – are pictographs.

And so we turn to the most widely accepted conclusion: that they fall under the category of 'ideograph', a graphic symbol used to represent a

concept or idea. Ideographs, unlike logographs, aren't bound by specific words or sounds from certain languages; instead, they have a universally recognised meaning. Many mathematical symbols fall under this category – for example +’s function doesn't change regardless of whether you refer to it as ‘add’, ‘plus’, or ‘the sum of’; it represents the abstract process of taking two numbers and combining them to form something new. Similarly, the ‘😡’ represents the feeling of anger, not the literal word. It transcends global linguistic barriers, as it isn't just confined to specific English words like ‘anger’, ‘frustration’ or ‘@#\$\$%&!’.

So, are emojis ideographs then? Well, yes and no. I don't wish to complicate things further than necessary (though I somewhat fear that's already happened), but to me it seems some certainly are, the ‘face’ emojis mainly, but equally all the rest are probably not.

I think I'm going to let you decide on this one.

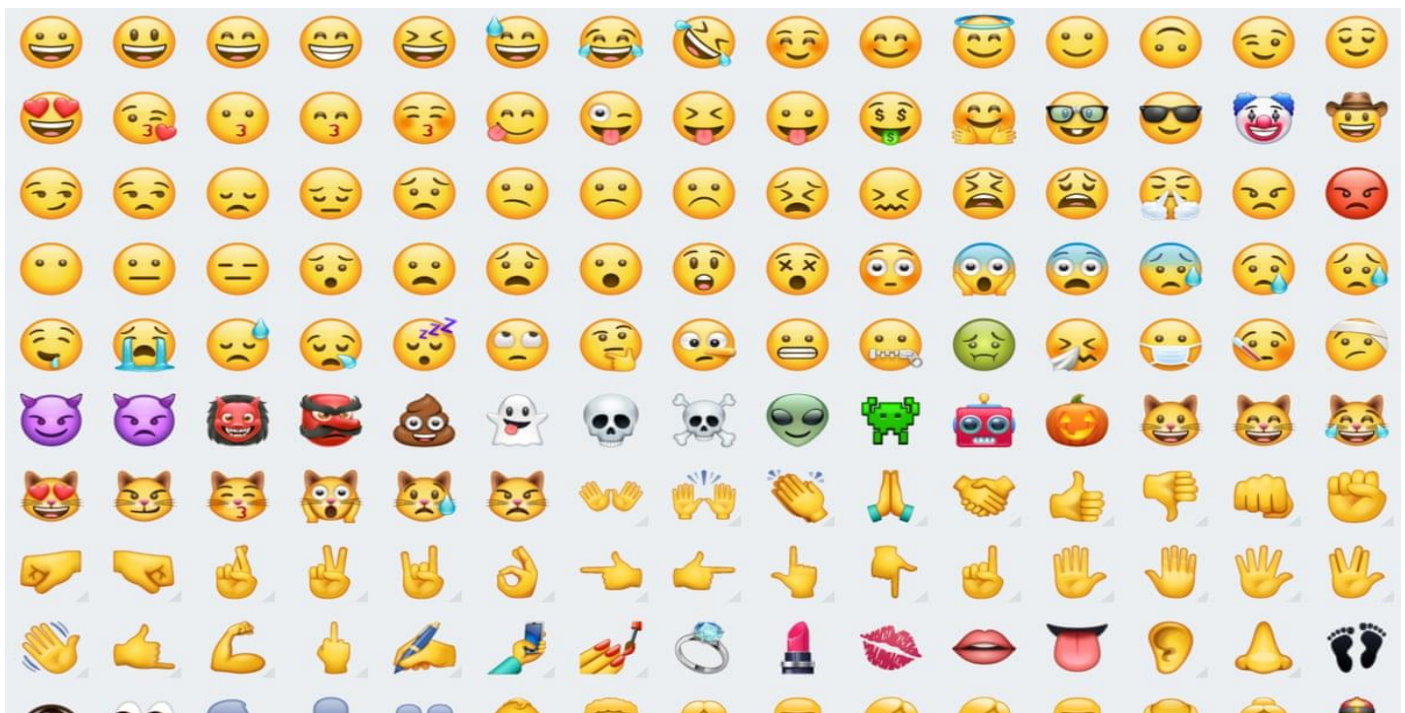
See that's the biggest (and greatest) thing about them: the way they're open to interpretation. Much like the words we use, emojis can be (and have been) semantically changed – just look at the now infamous ‘👉’. We don't tie emojis like

the eggplant to one meaning (or else there'd be some very confused greengrocers) so why bind emojis as a whole to one, pre-established definition?

I once again direct you towards my favourite emoji ‘👉’. I don't know who he is, what he is, or honestly why he is; he probably has a purpose, but if he does, I certainly don't know it. However, what I do know is that this little guy provides me with an outlet to be creative and expressive. I use him simply because it's fun, because emojis *are* fun – and surely that's what matters most.

Not to undermine this whole article, but does it even matter if we come to an agreement as to whether they are pictographs, logographs, ideographs, or even – as has scarily been claimed – punctuation? Emojis like ‘😄’, ‘🤔’, and ‘😏’ are just as ideographic as ‘🚗’, ‘🏠’, and ‘📶’ are pictographic.

The simplest answer I can give is that emojis are, well, emojis. Uniquely. They exist in their own wonderful little bubble. The brilliant complexity of the English Language often makes efforts to bound something to one strict definition futile anyway; so why try.



PROBLEMATIC MUSICIANS – SHOULD WE SEPARATE THE ART FROM THE ARTIST?

By Tabi Garley

How should fans respond when their favourite artist does something problematic? It is a question that has existed since the modern concept of ‘fame’ came into existence. However, in recent years, coinciding with the rise of social media and the increased polarization of society, debates surrounding what is and isn’t acceptable have become progressively more heated.

Cancel culture, which refers to the ostracization of someone who does something problematic from their social or professional circles, has become shorthand for ‘this person has done something we don’t like!’ Whilst it used to be a rather functional way to ignore those who have done something morally repugnant or just downright illegal, and still can be, given the pile-on nature of social media, it can sometimes be used as an excuse for bullying and harassment over the slightest of infringements. However, if the mass ostracization of someone is no longer truly effective, the issue of how to deal with problematic celebrities remains.

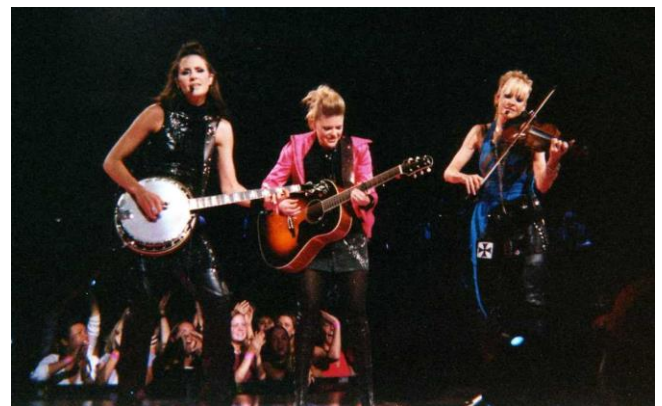
Some would suggest that those who have an issue with a famous person should simply ‘separate the art from the artist’, by continuing to enjoy their work whilst also condemning their actions, whatever they may have been. However, this only makes sense if what the artist has been



cancelled for is either not a large enough issue to abandon them altogether, or they have died and therefore will not receive any profits from fans enjoying their work. For instance, social media’s ongoing battle to cancel John Lennon is mainly motivated by

the abuse he inflicted on his wife Cynthia and son Julian, which is what many believe was Paul McCartney’s inspiration for the hit Beatle’s song ‘Hey Jude’. However, despite this signifying to anyone with a moral code that Lennon is not a man who deserves public support, as he is dead it may not seem as distasteful to groove to the Beatles or his solo music. Usually, when an artist has died profits go to many different places. For example, they may be taken from tax or go to the music label. As the profit cannot go directly to Lennon, it suggests you aren’t condoning his actions.

On the other hand, sometimes the most extreme forms of cancellation can be put upon the wrong artists, and the art is still very firmly associated with the artist, such as in the case of ‘The Chicks’. In 2003, the band publicly criticised president George W. Bush for his imminent invasion of Iraq. This caused national uproar from fans and meant they were blacklisted from country radio stations and shunned by the industry. Cancelling a musician for their political views, however, unless they are hateful far-right or far-left views, is uncalled for, as in a democratic society everyone has the right to express their beliefs. It



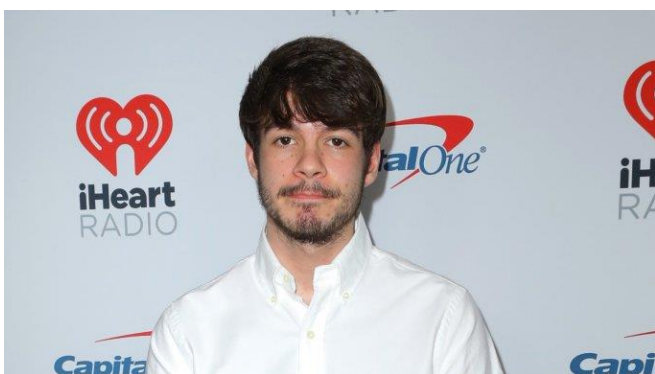
is unreasonable for fans to expect their favourite musicians to fit their ideal political views and the chicks’ condemning what was eventually declared an illegal war which caused so much suffering and violence was in no way a cancellable offense. Cancelling can have an extremely negative impact on musicians lives as it can impact both their careers and their health. In the case of the chicks, they received a

multitude of death threats and lost many of their brand deals for corporation's fear of boycott.

Contrastingly, when the artists are living, 'separate the art from the artist' can be harder to swallow. Prime examples of this are Kanye (Ye) West, Rex Orange County and Iggy Azalea. Kanye West is an anti-Semite, and listening to his music gives him the resources and platform to spread this hate, which has already been inherently damaging to the Jewish community.



In June, Rex Orange County cancelled his tour due to 'personal unforeseen circumstances'. However, the real reason, announced in October, was because he is to stand trial next January for counts of assault. Reasonably, this has caused many fans to stop streaming his music as this will provide him with money that he can use to access prestige lawyers to aid him to receive minimal punishment.



Iggy Azalea has been culturally appropriating for most of her career, often being accused of putting on a 'black voice' and appropriating black culture. Hence listening to her music will damage the black community, which has led to many

boycotting her work. These examples demonstrate how cancelling musicians can be appropriate and have a positive impact on society as it shuns the spread of hate, violence and disrespect.



Whether you carry on listening to problematic musicians is a personal choice. However, when it comes to drawing the line, it is important to understand that although you are 'separating the art from the artist' your streams may still support musician's actions as it gives them a platform and the resources to spread their opinions. This may cause a knock-on effect to different societal groups that are targeted by certain musicians.

CHRISTMAS

THE TRUTH BEHIND YOUR FAVOURITE FESTIVE SONGS!

By Louisa Salt

Christmas songs are a salient reason why we feel such festive cheer, no one can deny that hearing the familiar strains of ‘Rocking Around the Christmas Tree’ and Mariah Carey’s ‘All I want for Christmas (is yooooo oooo baby!)’ in your local supermarket doesn’t brighten up the otherwise dull errand of last-minute present shopping, but do you know the real meaning behind the words you chant every Christmas Time? Behind many a cheerful tune lies a deeper and often darker political message.

1. Mistletoe and Wine

Cliff Richard is a staple of Christmas, as synonymous with Christmas as pigs in blankets and his hit ‘Mistletoe and Wine’ may seem like a goodwill tune in which the only fear evoked is through Cliff’s prolonged eye contact and awkward swaying. Yet, the real message is much more profound. The song was created to depict the death of a poor girl and the bourgeois’ lack of compassion. It originally appeared in a musical named ‘Scraps’. The song we hear today is essentially a ‘Christianised’ and sanitised version which Cliff crafted to remove any indication of socialism. Not very festive of you Cliff!



© TV Times via Getty Images

2. Do They Know It’s Christmas?

The political aspect regarding Band Aids’ ‘Do They Know It’s Christmas’ is thought to be much more discernible, and the tragic famine in Ethiopia is clearly shown through the infamous lines, ‘When the only water flowing, ‘is the bitter sting of tears’. However, while the original idea may be commendable, the money that was raised from this popular tune has an anticlimactic ending as instead of ‘feeding the world’ Bob Geldolf (the writer) fed into the power of a harmful dictator (Mengistu Haile Mariam). The famine was not actually a lack of resources but a corrupt government and as such this money was not used to feed people but to buy weapons- and it was later revealed that Mengistu was actually purposely starving rebels. Yet, Bob Geldolf got his knighthood and the public felt pleased with themselves for being so charitable!

3. Walking in the Air

‘Walking in the Air’ is a classic and timeless Christmas song sung by the cherubic Aled Jones (before his voice broke) the inspiration for the song comes from Raymond Briggs’ book ‘The Snowman’. The theme of loss is evident in this movie/book, yet it becomes much more fervent when put into context. The transient nature of life is often reflected in Briggs work and he himself stated, ‘The snowman dies, my parents die, animals die, flowers die. Everything does’ Cheers Ray!

So, as you can see Christmas songs aren’t always what you might hope for – a bit like a present from an elderly aunt, once you unwrap them you realise they are actually quite tragic.

Anyway, Merry Christmas – and don’t get me started on ‘The fairy-tale of New York’

CHRISTMAS

SATURNALIA: ABOUTS, INS, AND OUTS

By Malaika Saeed

Saturnalia is an ancient Roman festival and holiday held in honour of the god Saturn, who the Romans equated with the Greek agricultural deity Cronus. The festival itself is held on the 17th of December, causing many to believe that Saturnalia celebrations are the source of the traditions one would typically associate with Christmas since both festivals are held around a similar time. Some also say that Saturnalia as a whole was what started Christmas and that over time, certain traditions were modified to suit changing views/opinions. An example of this could be how originally, one of the most important celebrations in Saturnalia was the sacrifice of an animal at the Temple of Saturn in the Roman Forum/Roman city centre, meanwhile Christmas could traditionally be celebrated by attending church and honouring the birth of Jesus.

Not only do the two holidays have that in common, but they also share many other traditions like the giving of gifts and feasting. With the Romans this ranged from eating roasted pig, sausages, vegetables, fruits and nuts to drinking mulsum (which was a favourite holiday drink made from wine and honey) or hot mulled wine with spices. Eating meat was something the Romans did not often do because of how it was considered a luxury that only the rich Romans could afford. This made the festival all the more special for the average Roman since the food made would be shared throughout the entire community.

In addition to this, during Saturnalia, Roman social norms were overturned which meant that slaves and their masters would swap places for the holiday, with the masters providing table

service for their slaves, allowing them to enjoy things that normally wouldn't be offered to them. Slaves were also permitted to disrespect their masters without the fear of punishment. As a result, this led to many viewing Saturnalia as a time of liberty for both slaves and freedmen. As for the gifts normally given during Saturnalia, the Romans usually exchanged gag gifts or small figurines made of wax or pottery known as Sigillaria. Sigillaria were also sometimes made of marble, Corinthian bronze, silver or even gold as well, but it was more common for them to be made of wax or pottery as they would be much cheaper. It is also said that they were frequently made in the likeness of some divinity, like the hero/demigod Hercules, gods or goddesses like Apollo and Minerva, or even a celebrated mythological character too. Furthermore, the toga, which was the characteristic garment of a male Roman citizen, was set aside and instead wore colourful "dinner clothes" which would normally be seen as unfashionable ordinarily.



Another common custom was the election of a "King of Saturnalia," who would give orders to people which they had to obey. This tradition is said to be the root of the historical western European Christmas custom of electing a "Lord of Misrule," who was usually a peasant appointed to be in charge of Christmas revelries, which often included drunkenness and wild partying. This practice could also be based off the overturning of social norms during Saturnalia.

CHRISTMAS

JOHN LEWIS CHRISTMAS ADVERTS - DEFINITELY RANKED

By Elissa Mills and Isabelle Brown

The one advert that has almost religiously become part of the lead up to Christmas festivities. The one advert we wait for as it marks the start of it being socially acceptable to play Christmas songs on repeat. The one advert which means it is officially time to get the decorations down from the loft. It is, of course, the John Lewis advert. The John Lewis advert has become etched into the British culture, alongside Mr. Brightside and a chippy tea, and in honour of the festive season being upon us, we have come up with a definitive rating of the adverts.

2015 - We are starting off strong with arguably the quintessential John Lewis Christmas advert, 'Man on the Moon'. With a touching story about a lonely old man and a young girl who just wants to help, this collaboration with Age UK is the perfect accumulation of everything that tugs at heartstrings— and most importantly, it defies the laws of physics. However, when it comes to something this heart-warming, scientific principles can be ignored. I cried. You probably cried, if you have a heart. Everyone cried. Tears everywhere. 10/10, it truly is out of this world (ba dum tss)



2016 – There are some very serious qualms to be had with this advert- namely the promotion of the very serious and profound issue of jumping

on the bed, regardless of how fun it may or may not have looked, trips to A&E on Christmas Day are no laughing matter. The second issue I have goes as follows: just think about all the poor children whose belief in the magic of Christmas was destroyed because of that one clip of the dad putting up the trampoline. Heinous, I tell you. In all seriousness, the animals are cute. What really makes this whole advert is the fact that Buster got to live out all his lifelong dreams. Truly brings a tear to my eye, even more so now that it was revealed that the dog who plays Buster, Biff, recently passed away. 7/10, rest in peace Biff.



2017- This advert saw Moz the monster, (perhaps one of the friendliest monsters in existence) to the song 'Golden slumbers' sung by the rock band, Elbow. John Lewis uses a relatable scenario of a young child at night-time, trying to sleep until then he discovers a loveable monster, Moz, snoring astronomically loud, under his bed. They become friends and play games every night until the child obviously becomes tired. On Christmas Day, the child receives a night light and sadly, after this gift, Moz disappears. The characters of the child and Moz evoke emotion as most of us remember (maybe not admittedly) imagining monsters under the bed. This teaches us maybe we shouldn't be scared of the unknown, an incredibly important lesson to learn. This advert maybe allows the audience to reflect on past Christmases, with this in mind, I'd give it an emotional rating of 8/10.



Overall, Edgar is a likeable, fantastical character and the audience once again can empathise with the advert. Bearing this in mind, I think it evokes more emotion compared to the 2017 advert, the song lyrics also link to the demonstrated theme. This is the best John Lewis advert in my opinion – it simply doesn't last long enough; I just think Edgar is the perfect emblem for a John Lewis Christmas and is emotional and tugs on the heart strings at the same time.

2018 – Now... I'm sure all of the Elton John stans out there loved this advert, but for me, this just lacked the charisma and charm of all the other John Lewis adverts. This is probably solely because Elton John is a real person, and if, like me, you don't really care about his whole life story, it is a teeny bit unnecessary. It felt like less of a Christmas advert and more of a promotion for whatever upcoming thing that Elton John was doing at the time. Sorry, Elton, 5/10.



2020 – The premise of this advert is great. It promoted the idea of kindness and love during 2020, a time when we all needed it the most, and used unique animations from a range of artists. Unfortunately, this advert is probably one of John Lewis' most forgettable ones. Let's be honest here, did you automatically remember the advert just from reading the name of it? Maybe if you're a hardcore John Lewis fan, but I certainly didn't. And extra negative points for that poor kid's hair. 6/10.

2019- John Lewis invented the most adorable little dragon of all time to win over the British public. This advert follows Edgar, a small dragon and a young girl, to the song 'I cant fight this feeling' sung by Bastille frontman, Dan Smith. John Lewis explores Edgar's challenging quality that all dragons have – fire breathing. Edgar's fire breathing becomes a nuisance in the small town (I doubt it'd go down well with the residents of Clitheroe either) After the annual Christmas tree is display goes up in a flamesdisaster, Edgar disappears into his cave. The young girl brings Edgar the useful present of a metal bowl to help diffuse his fire breathing. This magically persuades the townsfolk to admire Edgar so he finally feels comfortable in the town.



2021- In this advert, a boy watches on as a spaceship land in the woods close to his house. To twist the fantasy even further, an abnormal alien like character then emerges from the spaceship. The two characters again form a friendship,

which is extremely similar to both the 2015, 2017 and 2019 adverts. The boy even shares his Christmas dinner with his new companion, something I wouldn't do willingly. The alien then adjusts the spaceship and takes off into the abyss. Overall, I did not particularly enjoy this advert, although John Lewis have used a combination of both a sci-fi and fantasy twist, I think it is too similar to previous adverts. It perhaps could have been more engaging if it had changed entirely from the idea of children befriending fantastical creatures to a more original concept. Therefore, the rating of this is lower than the others purely for the reason of repetitiveness. 3/10. The music choice is fitting and still linked into the idea of a Christmas advert, just not as good as the rest.



2022 – This advert, whilst having a nice message, was just alright. There was nothing unbelievably moving or heart-breaking— which, hey, maybe you don't want to be heartbroken by a Christmas advert that you see on TV, but this advert really lacked the John Lewis Christmas Spirit. I won't spoil this one for you, considering that it's only

just come out (at the time of writing, anyway), but let us know what you think when you watch it!



JOHN LEWIS ADVERT LEADERBOARD

(Rated from worst to best)

8th place – 2021

7th place – 2018

6th place – 2020

5th place – 2022

4th place – 2016

3rd place – 2017

1st place *joint* - 2015 & 2019

SOCIAL ISSUES

HE SAYS. SHE SAYS. THEY SAY.

Language is a tool designed for communication. It evolves as speakers of that language have changing needs; the words they use must reflect that. As gender inclusive societies begin to form, language must adapt to this. However, some people are unable to even begin to comprehend the idea of a gender-neutral pronoun.

But the English Language already has one – ‘they’ - and it has been used to refer to someone in a gender-neutral manner for almost 650 years.

Yet some grammar guardians will not stand for it.

They claim that it has no place as a singular pronoun as it would be grammatically incorrect.

People tend to fear what they don’t know or understand, but if they were to just take a moment to think about their own language use, they would notice that in common conversation, “he/she” is not used. Rather, ‘they’ is the default pronoun instead, especially if the gender of the third person is unknown or unclear.

The argument of grammatical inaccuracies is a flimsy one, but for some it’s a fair point.

Linguistic ambiguity undoes the main purpose of language: successful communication. Some feel using “they” as a pronoun for both an individual and a group of people could cause confusion.

There have been proposals for the idea of introducing a new specific gender-neutral singular pronoun. It would make speech more concise, coherent and comprehensive. Sweden has been one of the countries to introduce a new generic pronoun form, “hen,” sitting comfortably alongside “han” and “hon”. It is a widely accepted pronoun, taught across schools from preschool age.

Further, Lancashire historically had a common pronoun that was gender neutral and used commonly in working-class communities in the

20th century: “oo”. While not popular across the country, it shows that people can make accommodations in their language use and be more inclusive.

In Sixth Form, we have taken our own steps to be more inclusive. Last year, as part of the LGBT Alliance, we took steps to encourage the senior leadership team to use gender-inclusive language in newsletters and emails to parents. Steps are continuing to be made to improve the inclusive nature of our Sixth Form. It may not be important to you as an individual, but for some, that simple change in language can be very significant and validating.



QUEERBAITING IS A REAL PERSONAL ISSUE

By Esme Dinsdale

According to Dictionary.com, ‘queerbaiting’ refers to the act of implying a ‘non-heterosexual attraction’ to a heterosexual person or character to ‘engage or attract an LGBTQ audience’ ‘without ever actually depicting such relationships or sexual interactions.’

The term ‘queerbaiting’ was coined and journeyed into online discourse in the early 2010s. Popularised by fans of Netflix’s *Voltron: Legendary Defenders* and BBC’s *Sherlock*, featuring the national treasure Benedict Cumberbatch, both shows became notorious for their use of ‘queerbaiting’ to engage a larger audience. This was a new phenomenon, but definitely not desirable.

However, with this rise in usage of ‘queerbaiting’ in regards to the media they consume, another question arose with it: can *real people* ‘queerbait’?

In the past years, victims of this expanded train of thought have been Billie Eilish and Harry Styles; both artists appear to hint to not being strictly heterosexual, which songs such as ‘Wish You Were Gay’ by Eilish, and unreleased material from Harry Styles, such as his song ‘Medicine’, along with the typically-unmasculine attire he often dons.

This conflict exploded into online debate again when actor Kit Connor was forced to prematurely put a label on his sexuality to the public, after experiencing online harassment LGBTQ+ communities after he played the role of bisexual rugby player, *Charlie*, in the hit Netflix hit series *Heartstopper*.

The reason Kit Connor came out in this way? The hate he was receiving from being accused of ‘queerbaiting’ by playing a bisexual character, Nick Nelson, in *Heartstopper*. This circles back to the question – can *real people* ‘queerbait’?

The answer to this is much more complicated than a simple yes or no.

The debate among the LGBTQ+ community has become much more nuanced; the problem with labelling real people as ‘queerbaiters’, rather than talking about fictional characters, is that you are actively speculating about someone’s private life. Sexuality is something that should be explored privately, and not shared until you are ready.

By speculating about someone’s sexuality, you are infringing on the already limited amount of privacy that they are afforded away from the spotlight; to explore an intensely vulnerable part of themselves, no less. In extreme cases, such as Connor’s, an invasion of privacy of this magnitude often results in an innocent person publicly categorising themselves as something they may not be. This is because they are



Kit Connor ✓
@kit_connor



back for a minute. i'm bi. congrats for forcing an 18 year old to out himself. i think some of you missed the point of the show. bye

4:02 PM · Oct 31, 2022 · Twitter for iPhone
© Kit Connor / Twitter

criticised for not yet being open about their sexual orientation, and subject to ‘cancel culture’, they come out before they have had a chance to understand more about themselves, and truly become comfortable with the label, in fear of being cancelled and blacklisted.

However, it could be said, and it is my opinion, that a real person can ‘queerbait’. If a public figure explicitly – and repeatedly, publicly labels themselves as heterosexual, yet continually markets themselves to ‘seem queer’ and exploits the profits of the media attention provided by the LGBTQ+ community, it could very clearly be classed as ‘queerbaiting’.

All this being said, it is only applicable to those that are open about their sexuality.

If someone has purposely kept themselves unlabelled, it cannot be categorised as ‘queerbaiting’.

It becomes as such if they were to explicitly state that they are indeed heterosexual (and had known all along that they were not queer), yet still behaved in such a way to gain media attention of queer people in order to create a bigger profit margin.

A celebrity could suddenly start being perceived as ‘more queer’ because they have started exploring their own sexuality, and they should have the freedom to do so without so-called ‘fans’ unjustly pinning them as a ‘queerbaiter’.

It is a difficult subject, and one that doesn’t have a definitive answer, but it is my belief that if it is spoken about, and if we embrace the difficulties of the topic rather than shy away from them, we could finally draw a conclusion.

LGBTQIA+ Society

LGBTQIA+ Society is a safe and inclusive space for people of all genders, sexualities and LGBT+ identities to meet new people, learn about and share their own individual experiences. Allies are always welcome!



➤ ***Tuesday lunchtimes from 1pm
In Y30***

THE EFFECTS OF COLONIALISM ON NON-BINARY AND GENDER FLUID IDENTITIES

Colonialism enforced a gender binary which contradicted many indigenous people's gender expressions, which have had long standing effects which have perpetuated the current stigma surrounding genderqueer identities.

By Sophie Game

Gender has long since been viewed as a binary: you are a man, or a woman. This can be attributed to factors such as biological representation of sex and the corresponding reproductive organs, it could also be due to the role religion played — the representation of gender only extended to men and women, for example Adam and Eve in the Original Sin in Christianity. These factors are important to consider as they can shape a person's view of gender. This view of a gender binary has been elevated for centuries across Western Europe, as the prominent religion has popularly been Christianity. This means that this idea has long since remained prevalent and taken the popular view of gender in Western Europe and beyond.

The reason for the spread of this idea beyond Europe is because of colonialism. Western European countries strived to build their own colonies on new lands. Some would say this was to explore the world, however, more cynically, some view this as a way of Europeans conquering new land, to exploit the riches of the land and the indigenous people that lived there. This happened in many places across the globe; the Americas, Asia, Africa and Oceania. With their colonisation of this new land, they also brought along their ideas, ideologies, values and expectations from Europe to the indigenous people, and erasing their own traditions to enforce the new, viewed as superior, ideas from Europe.

This remains problematic for the indigenous people, because not only did their culture get

forcibly diluted, European colonisers also enforced their ideas of gender identities (how one internalises their gender and identifies with it), representation (their outward expression of their gender) and societal roles (such as women's primary job to care for their families, and men becoming the breadwinners) onto these 'new found' nations. This was damaging to the indigenous people because, outside of Europe, there were places where gender existed beyond a binary.

For example, in Hawai'i, before it was colonised, there was a presence of a third gender identity called *mahu*. Anthropologists have explained that mahus were a balance of masculine and feminine energy. They were revered in sacred social roles, such as trusted educators and acted as vocal mediums for proliferating ancient rituals and traditions. Their existence contradicted the European enforced gender-binary, thus there was an attempt to eradicate them from society by colonisers. Their attempt to push them into a category of reproductive organs was successful, and severely diminished the number of mahus in Hawai'i. At first, it was thought that the indigenous people fought for their recognition, but the Europeans prevailed, and the effects of this can be seen today: there are still few people in Hawai'i who will openly identify with being mahu, for fear of discrimination from the people who have succumb to the European gender-binary, and have been forced to abandon their culture.

As similar thing can be said for the *Two Spirit* people of Native American tribes. These, similar to mahu people indigenous to Hawai'i, were binary-gender non-conforming individuals. They have been described as a fluid between both 'male' and 'female' people; they understood the two sides of the traditional binary, and they were considered extremely gifted and knowledgeable because of this. They were held in high regard, with a ceremonial role in Native American communities, after confirmation for tribe Elders. Two Spirits were people that fell outside of the theoretical binary of gender, and were respected and trusted because of it.

Not only this, but in Native American communities, there is also evidence of AFAB (assigned female at birth) and AMAB (assigned male at birth) people assuming differing gender identities than what was tied to their physiological makeup, some dressing in such a way that reflects the difference of their gender identity, and many people who transitioned their expression of gender later on into life. There have been anthropological studies into more than 100 different tribes that all reflect similar attitudes to gender, prior to colonisation, such as *wíŋkte* among the Lakota, the *mixuga* among the Ponca, the *badé* among the Crow. Other tribes, such as the Diné society in the southwest of the United States, have an even more diverse view of gender expression and identification. Traditionally there have been five genders recognised; *asdzaan* (female-in-woman), *hastiin* (male-in-man), *nadleeh* (androgyny or gender fluidity), *nadleehi* (woman-in-man, feminine gender) and *dilbah* (man-in-woman, masculine gender). *Nadleeh* could be revered because they might express both male and female spirits perfectly.

This third-gender identity has existed all over the world, in other civilisations too, such as Andean culture, pre-1532, the Incas, an indigenous community, worshiped a dual-gendered god, the *chuyi chinchay*. This created the space for third-gender ritual attendants and shamans to exist, who performed sacred rituals to honour this god. They wore androgynous clothing, this was to signify “a visible sign of a third space that negotiated between the masculine and the feminine, the present and the past, the living and the dead.” There is also the indigenous Zapotec cultures of Oaxaca, whose third-gendered individuals lived under the label of *muxes* (derived from *mujer*), and currently, in Bangladesh and Pakistan, *hijras* are recognised as a third gender, as well as *warias* in Indonesia.

Again in Indonesia, there is further proof of a gender spectrum, such as the Bugis (with a population of approximately three million people). Their language recognises five terms of varying combinations of gender expression, sexual orientation and physiological makeup: *makkunrai* (female women), *oroani* (male men),

calalai (female men), *calabai* (male women) and *bissu* (transgender priests).

These communities represented their genders in ways that some do today but instead of *mahu*, *two spirit*, *wíŋkte*, *mixuga*, *badé*, *muxes*, *hijras*, *warias* or *nadleeh*, some people (outside of the former colonies) opt

for the term ‘non-binary’, referring to living outside or in-between the gender binary, depending on how one identifies with the term. For me, as a non-binary identifying person, I identify somewhere outside of it altogether, and I commonly say ‘I’m just me’, when people ask where I lie on the spectrum. Others are comfortable living in an androgynous area somewhere between ‘man’ and ‘woman’, and each person differs with their identification and outward expression of the term. Another community of genderqueer people can actively fluctuate where they reside within or outside the binary on a consistent basis; these people we call gender fluid, meaning their identification of gender on the binary spectrum is not fixed.

Gender fluidity has also been located in many corners of the globe, in differing societies, such as a fluid role of gender found in the native American Crow tribe, who upheld a figure called Osh-Tisch, who transitioned from gender expressions of men, to women, to an androgynous figure, and was revered by their community, so much so that when the colonisers tried to enforce their gender ideals onto them, the tribe backed Osh-Tisch and rallied in defence of their *badé* community.

Other representations of gender fluidity can be dated all the way back to Norse mythology, as seen with Loki, the Trickster God. Many times Loki has presented as other genders, hence why modern society would label him as gender fluid, such as ‘Lady Loki’ in the Marvel Comics — she is Loki too. The presence of fluidity of gender this early in history demonstrates how important this has been to a community who upheld these stories for generations. This points to a mass acceptance of gender fluidity at a time, and that this is no new ‘phenomenon’.

This proof of existence of a diverse range of gender identities, in many places on our Earth and in history, is the validation that many need in the face of adversity. There is a stigma currently surrounding genderqueer people, often perpetuated by conservative and traditional media outlets, including some newspaper, tabloids and social medias. This lack of acceptance of 'wokery' in gender identification is depicted as something new by younger generations, something to make our generation different, and this history of gender has almost entirely been forgotten by these outlets: we are not new, and we are not going anywhere. We have existed for centuries, under different names and in different ways, in areas of the Earth that couldn't have shared their ideas between one another, so that tells us this is an innate feature of some people's gender identification.

So to those people who try to counter our existence beyond the 'snowflake generation', take a look at the facts.

As a non-binary person myself, I feel that this is something I have to explain to people to validate my existence, but why should this be?

Colonialism is a major contributing factor in this long-standing confusion about gender: is gender a spectrum or a binary, what does it mean to be fluid in your gender, the difference between gender and sex, between a 'female' and woman and of course, the infamous, 'does that mean I can identify as an attack helicopter?'

This patronising discourse surrounding genderqueer identities, which contradict the colonialism-imposed gender binary, is nothing new either, and its something that people who are cis gendered (identify with the gender they were assigned at birth) will never deal with. So, I urge you, when you next encounter someone who is not cisgendered, be open minded and accept that we are no different to you, we just don't identify with a gender similar to yours. Maybe we're a blend, maybe we're neither, maybe we differ between the binary, but we are really not that different.

We are people, and we have existed for centuries independent from the binary.

Say Something Campaign



- ***We want a school where all students feel safe and valued***
- ***We believe that everyone should try and call out all forms of abuse, bullying, discrimination, harassment and unkindness: we should be allies to all parts of our school community.***

If you feel you are unable to report your concerns to a trusted adult and would like to report something anonymously, either follow the link or go to the Student Support Page on the school website.

<http://www.crgs.org.uk/say-something-sixth-form/>

How the cost-of-living crisis is going to affect thousands across the UK in the run up to Christmas

As the cost of living crisis continues its grip on the purse strings of the nation, Christmas for thousands could look very different this year.

By Eve Peel

It's that time of year again, all is merry, all is bright, and all is very expensive. December has come once again to pinch our pockets with a mince pie here and a cracker there. However, this year the bite will be especially vicious. Inflation has reached a record high of 13.2%, a huge leap compared to last year's 2.49% . Everyday essentials are becoming more and more expensive, as the cost of living crisis continues to force families into choosing between eating and heating, for many, a visit from Father Christmas simply isn't possible this year.

There is no denying that Christmas comes with expenses, from markets and meals out, to pantomimes and presents, many of the activities we associate with the fun of the festivities have become unaffordable, yet, in the view of many, unavoidable. A survey found that more than 4 in 10 Brits admit that not being able to afford a 'proper' Christmas will ruin their festive period. In times of economic crisis, however, a 'proper' Christmas is not always possible.

This is sure to elicit shouts to remember the 'true spirit of Christmas', that of giving and togetherness, rather than material goods. This is something that even the most 'Bah Humbug!' of commercialised Christmas naysayers can get behind. It is true, at its heart Christmas is about the gift of time spent together, rather than any material items. However, for many, giving a gift, time spent doing activities together or sharing a meal is how they show love, how they create the memories and traditions that define Christmases to come. The cost of living crisis has

robbed thousands of these opportunities. Even long car journeys have become unaffordable, leaving family members alone at a time defined by togetherness.

Everyone deserves to have the Christmas they want, and the fact that thousands will have to choose between food and presents in the 21st Century is shameful. 55% of parents of under tens said in a recent survey that they will be spending less on Christmas presents this year, as the current crisis appears to be becoming more and more successful in banishing the magic of Christmas that, rightly or wrongly, is so reliant on money.

However, there are charities currently doing incredible work to help those in need. In our local area, Burnley Together have launched a Christmas toy drive, and Age UK Lancashire have launched a 'Gift of kindness appeal', which encourages people to either make a monetary or a gift donation to support those facing loneliness this Christmas. These schemes are incredibly important in helping to ease some of the pressures faced by families this Christmas. This Christmas is set to be a difficult one for many. In a period that is supposed to be defined by peace and goodwill, thousands have been forced into choosing between whether they want to heat or eat, and more needs to be done to support them at such a difficult time.

Unwanted Christmas Gifts

After Christmas, the Student Leadership Team will be collecting any of your unwanted Christmas gifts. If you get any chocolate you don't like, socks you will never wear, or toiletries you are allergic to, please don't throw it away, and instead bring it to Ms. Clark's office. They will be sorted and taken to local charities.



**OUT ON THE TOWN (COUNCIL)
WITH
STEWART FLETCHER**

**By Billy Burton, Adam Veevers, Tom Speight &
William Walker**

We arrive at Clitheroe Town Council on a Wednesday lunchtime, slightly delayed by the purchase of a beef & onion sandwich from Stansfields, the favourite lunchtime snack of Councillor Stewart Fletcher. Stewart greets us at the door, accepts our gift and, after defending the decision to kick off our first foray into journalism by bribing a politician with meaty delicacies, we are welcomed into the building. Our meeting takes place in a room adorned with a portrait of Queen Elizabeth II (Stewart acknowledges the need for an update) and photographs of Clitheroe Mayors going back decades. Councillor Fletcher has been a Liberal Democrat Town Councillor since 2015 and is Leader of the Opposition on Ribble Valley Borough Council. As well as this, he had a two-year stint as Town Mayor, the youngest in Clitheroe's history.

Billy Burton begins the interview by asking if the notorious Handforth Parish Council meeting ("You have no authority here, Jackie Weaver!"), many people's most memorable experience of local politics, is an accurate representation of the professional world he inhabits. "It's not completely an unfair reflection," he admits, but is keen to make clear that there's slightly less tension on Clitheroe Town Council, which is under the control of nine Liberal Democrats and one Independent. "We all get on fairly well to be honest." Is it any different on the Borough Council, which is three-quarters Conservative? "One thing I would say, amid all my partisan Tory-bashing, is that the enormous majority of the councillors on the Borough Council are really good, well-meaning people who care about their community. They might have a different idea about how to get things done, but I wouldn't criticise their motivations or their ethics in any way. It's not a well-funded thing, so you've got to have a certain amount of love for it to even do

it. We try and come to a conclusion when we can for the better of the borough."

After Burton's rather rude and ignorant opening question immediately tainted the council by comparing their exceptionally important work to the chaos that unfolded in that particular viral incident, William Walker gives Councillor Fletcher a chance to defend himself and his colleagues by explaining what his role entails and how the councils differ in their functions. He responds by describing a four-tier system, made up of Westminster, the County Council, the Borough Council, and the Town (or Parish) Council. Each council supposedly has their own areas of focus (roads, park maintenance, Christmas decorations, etc), but there's lots of crossover: "It's like a Venn diagram of weirdness". This mix-up in responsibilities is partly caused by financial problems. "We're seeing an unfortunate trickle-down effect in terms of spending cuts." This, Stewart explains, has led to the Town Council taking on some jobs that should be carried out by the County Council. "Theoretically, we would pick up any gaps in the system, but there are more and more gaps, and less and less system these days."

There's a sudden and noticeable change in the atmosphere when Adam Veevers mentions Nigel Evans, presumably in an attempt to draw Councillor Fletcher down a party-political route and ruin the non-partisan nature of this newspaper. Mr Veevers' question focuses on whether Evans' role as Ribble Valley MP means he has a close relationship with the Borough Council. "The Tory side, I believe, have some dealings with him, but he basically doesn't speak to us. He comes to a do every so often and eats our sandwiches." Thomas Speight further pressures Councillor Fletcher into a condemnation of his opponents by inquiring about his role as Leader of the Opposition. In this position, Stewart takes part in a periodical Leader's Questions, where he has the opportunity to bring up topics for the council to debate. Recently, he's turned his attention to water pollution, hoping to make the River Ribble only the second designated swimming river in the country. "To be fair to Stephen Atkinson, who's the leader of the Tories on the Borough, he's taken that on through the Ribble Rivers Trust, and just by entering the process of trying to get

that done, the Environment Agency has to do more testing on the rivers to see what the water quality's like. That's an example of actually moving something forward." Stewart certainly sees Leader's Questions as a way of challenging his opponents, of "rattling their cage" and "holding them to account". "It's meant highlighting the things that I don't think they're doing right and trying to come to a consensus of how we can do something about it as a council." The topics of debate in the Borough Council may be of a rather different nature to the disagreements going on in the House of Commons, but the influence of national politics is still felt. "There are some things like the mini-budget, which is a once-in-a-lifetime set of farcical decisions, and I thought it would be remiss not to bring that up. So, I would ask a question about the general picture and then ask how that would affect the finances of people in the Ribble Valley." Even so, politics on a local level is understandably much less tribal. "To be honest, sometimes even the Tories are aghast at what's gone on in Westminster. Just because you stand for that party, it doesn't mean you agree with everything Boris Johnson does and says, just as I wouldn't agree with anything, or everything, Ed Davey says. It's not a cult of personality, so you've got to allow for those differences." He describes Leader's Questions as a "pound shop version of Westminster" and is keen for us to attend a future meeting. "It'd be interesting if you did manage to come to a meeting and just see how things go on and see how you think I'm getting on. Most people seem to think I'm doing half-alright."

He also makes clear his belief in the importance of young people being engaged with politics. "There are people my age who will chat about things in the pub that they don't know the first thing about. Generally, the older you get, the less likely you are to change your mind. And I think you should come into this with a set of principles, but you should also be open to the fact that someone might have a better idea than you have and I think young people are more inclined to do that. If you're more engaged earlier on, you've just got a massive advantage. This is necessary stuff to actually live your life in the modern world. If you're going into a voting booth and you think 'I'm gonna vote for him because he's

got funny hair', you should just-" Stewart wisely cuts himself off here. "You need to have a certain amount of political awareness just to operate nowadays."



When confronted with the inevitable question of why he decided to enter local politics in the first place, Councillor Fletcher has an unexpected point of reference. "I was thinking about this question the other night and I was watching *Star Trek: Picard*." Despite describing the show as "generally quite disappointing", it includes a line with a sentiment he can sympathise with and paraphrases here: "It's really futile and soul-destroying and heart-breaking, and the only thing worse would be not to do anything at all." A native of the Birmingham area, and with the accent to match ("As you can tell, I'm not from around here"), Stewart lives in Clitheroe with his wife Kerry, also a Councillor. "I did A-level Politics, so I've always had an interest, but I wasn't involved in politics before I came here." His first taste of local government came when, as a member of the public, he attended a meeting run by members of the local Conservative party. "I went up and spoke to them at the end because they asked if anyone was interested in local politics. I had a 30-second conversation with the Tory representative and quickly realised we were on different pages." Instead, he was pointed towards Liberal Democrats Mary Robinson and Allan Knox. "Allan was the leader for something like 20 years and left fairly suddenly last year, and so it was decided that I would be the leader

from there. So that's been quite a steep learning curve."

One thing that's clear is Stewart's incredible commitment to his job. "If you're gonna do something, especially when you're representing other people, you've got to do it properly. I've put an extraordinary amount of time into this. It's the last thing I think about when I go to bed and the first thing I think about in the morning. Come next year, it could just all disappear. The only saving grace is that it's particularly poorly paid so I could literally get a job on the bins and be a bit more buff and a bit less stressed and a bit more well-off. So that's the way I make sense of it, otherwise I'd just have a panic attack every fifteen minutes." Councillor Fletcher faces an election in May 2023. "If there was a significant change in the balance of the borough, that could make me Leader of the Borough Council. That's unlikely in the present political climate of the Ribble Valley but, you know, stranger things have happened."

Stewart also makes reference to the proposed boundary changes regarding constituencies in Lancashire. The current proposal would see Clitheroe and Whalley removed from the Ribble Valley seat. "At this stage, it does only refer to who the MP would be. Some people think that eventually the structure of the councils will creep in that direction, but there's no concrete evidence for that. In terms of people's everyday lives, and what the park looks like, and whether their bins will get collected, things should stay broadly as they are at the moment." Still, these politically uncertain times could throw up any number of unexpected scenarios, and we end the interview with a question about the councillor's potential political future.

So, is Stewart Fletcher off to the House of Commons? He takes a moment to consider this, reluctant to have to crush the dreams of four Sixth Formers who think they've secured an interview with a future Member of Parliament. "As part of that general process, the Liberal Democrats have called me recently and asked me if I'd be interested in standing as an MP, and it's something I'm mulling over." Walker exchanges a glance with Speight; he doesn't sound convinced. "I'm like you guys, I'm sure. When I turn on the TV and see the Commons, I want to go around slapping people. So that would just

involve me moving to London. I've got two enormous dogs and two cats, so I don't know how that would work out." Of course, in order to become an MP, Stewart would first have to win over the electorate in one of the region's safest seats. "There's a balance between being ambitious on a personal level and for your community, and having enough humility to realise that I need to do work to be better at what I'm doing at the moment. Having one decent game at Sunday League doesn't mean you should be playing at Wembley the week after. You've got to build these things up. I'd rather do what I'm doing properly than get delusions of grandeur and go off to London. Having said that, I do literally get people stop me on the street and go 'you should do that, you'd be much better than those muppets on the telly'." Both Burton and Veevers have a glint in their eye as they notice Councillor Fletcher's confidence growing. "Yeah, you'll be the first to know when I make a decision."

If anyone has any questions for Stewart Fletcher, feel free to contact us, as he is happy to turn this into a regular feature.

Politics Society

Politics Society is an inclusive platform to discuss recent news topics, both national and international, and engage in debate and political discussion, with questions ranging from 'Should the monarchy be abolished?' to 'Is holding the World Cup in Qatar right?'. All perspectives are welcome!



➤ ***Thursday lunchtime***

UNIVERSITY

TO SLEEP, OR NOT TO SLEEP: THE HOUSING CRISES OF BRITISH UNIVERSITIES ENSUES

By Ellie Whitwell

A -level results day is one of excitement and adventure for many students who achieved their offers to University. Over 426,000 minds excited for their new life ahead of them, totally unaware of the devastation they would be greeted with caused by an impending accommodation crisis.

The combination of record numbers of applicants, grade inflation and the long-lasting effects of the pandemic have all contributed towards the growing demand for student housing. Finding university accommodation is often a struggle; however this year, the experience has been particularly difficult. Last year, we saw universities such as Leeds going as far as offering applicants £10,000 in cash and free accommodation guarantees to persuade them to defer their places. This was an attempt at a temporary solution to combat the historic over-subscription of applicants to accommodation, and the consequences of the world-halting pandemic, which has ultimately contributed to a successive

backlog of applicants far greater than in recent history.

As a result, students of 2022 have been left outcasted and denied of adequate accommodation. In particular, Durham University has become the epicentre of this chaos; students have resorted to sleeping on the streets, in a formidable competition against other students to secure contracts with the estate agents. In fact, one professor at Durham University claimed this accommodation crisis to be the 'worst he had seen in 20 years'.

With many unable to view their accommodation due to such a surge of competition for housing next autumn, students found themselves signing contracts in desperation on windows of nearby shops and later knocking on the doors of houses for their first viewing.

Many students have been told not to enrol in courses or travel to universities (particularly in Scotland) if they have been unsuccessful in securing accommodation. This is hardly a reward for their successful A level results and conscientious work.

It will be interesting to see how Universities plan to solve this crisis before next years applicants arrive. It certainly is a worrying crisis and something needs to be done with immediate effect.



WE'VE GOT ENOUGH ENGINEERS; THE WORLD NEEDS MORE POETS.

By Libby Ainsworth

But *why*? Tell any well-meaning family member, curious acquaintance or world-weary careers advisor that you plan on studying a humanities degree at university, and this is usually one of the first questions they will ask. Given the current reputation of the humanities in the UK, it's understandable, albeit incredibly annoying. The war against non-vocational degrees has been raging for over a decade; funding has been cut, departments shut down and we have all been led to believe that any degree that doesn't lead directly to a career is pointless. Naturally, people begin to wonder if the study of what are perceived to be 'dying' subjects is worth the money, time and effort all degrees require. Study, however, of any subject, is never, ever pointless.

Perhaps the biggest motivator to study is passion, that innate hunger to know more, to understand more, cannot be forced into someone. To rank passion in terms of perceived future earning potential, therefore, seems to be at odds with human nature. The desire to know more, and to be dedicated enough to explore beyond what is required, should be treated equally. The persuading of students with little passion or talent for STEM subjects to pursue them in higher education by everyone from teachers to careers advisers to parents due to the perception that they will offer a better paying job at the end, particularly if that child is from a Working Class and/or are a first-generation University student. This has the potential to further perpetuate the already large class gap within universities, as the humanities could essentially become a 'rich kids only club', and marginalised voices would be further ignored in academic settings.

The idea itself that STEM-related degrees are the only ones that teach valuable skills and worthwhile topics just isn't true, despite what we are led to believe. In a world defined by

contradictions and fake news and fearmongering, the ability to think and analyse critically is essential, and whilst this is a skill that by all means could be possessed by STEM students, their degrees largely don't facilitate the honing of it. Perhaps made even more crucial by the events of the past couple of years is the need for healthy means of communication and the ability to express opinions and emotions in an effective way, again, this is facilitated by the humanities. These skills are not taught in isolation; however, they are developed alongside the study of some of the world's greatest literature, and historical figures and thinkers. The study of, for example, George Eliot or Chaucer or Oliver Cromwell or Socrates, is a difficult thing to argue against. These are the figures who have, in one way or another, helped to define our culture, our way of thinking, and humanity itself, and they are all part of the humanities.



It is certainly no secret that the past few years have been incredibly turbulent, and it's also no secret that science helped to solve a lot of the issues, however, whilst science may have supplied the escape from a life defined by lockdowns and social distancing, the humanities provided the escapism from within it. In the depths of the Pandemic, where would we have been without the writers, the actors, the thinkers? The ones that made us laugh and think and reflect are the ones we remember most. We need to keep creating artists, we need the people who make us laugh and cry and leave us thinking. Without them, we would live in an incredibly grey world.

Perhaps the answer to 'why' study the humanities is 'why not'. Humanities is the study of ideas and theories and events, it teaches not

what to think but how to think, but perhaps most importantly it teaches us about *us*, where we've been, and perhaps where we'll go.

Lady Whistleup's Words of Wisdom



Aries March 21-April 19.

Keep clear of mince pies this season, you know the reason why.

Taurus April 20-May 20.

Put a hat on your Christmas list as you will have a bad haircut in early January, it's inevitable I'm afraid.

Gemini May 21-June 20.

Your cat will try to suffocate you.

Cancer June 21-July 22.

You will wear an ill-advised scarf in Feb, images will be shared widely on social media.

Leo July 23-August 22.

Someone will leave a meat pie in your left shoe. It's all gravy.

Virgo August 23-September 22.

Your neighbour will steal your ASOS parcel. You will see them wearing your hat.

Libra September 23-October 22.

You will feel like a plastic bag drifting through the wind.

Scorpio October 23-November 21.

As you queue for potato balls your chair will be stolen.

Sagittarius Nov 22-December 21

Someone will write 'Oh and Happy Birthday' in your Christmas card. You will never speak to them again.

Capricorn December 22 – January 19

On January 13th you will fall into an unexpectedly deep puddle, your Ugg boots will never recover.

Aquarius Jan 20 – Feb 18

You will discover an allergy to tar; your lifelong dreams of becoming a road-worker will be shattered.

Pisces Feb 19 – March 20

Your Apple Pay will publicly betray you.

INTERVIEW: ELSPETH TOLAN'S JOURNEY AT OXFORD

Elspeth is in her first year studying history at University College Oxford (Univ) and is a student ambassador. In this interview, she discusses full-circle moments, the myth of an “Oxford type”, and getting out of your comfort zone.

Why did you choose to apply to Univ and for History?

I am very fortunate that choosing to study History, and applying to Univ, were both relatively easy decisions. History was the subject that I had enjoyed the most throughout my time at school. Once I started my A Levels, as much as I enjoyed my other subjects (English Literature, Politics, and an EPQ), I consistently found myself drawn to the historical aspects of each topic that we studied. I also really enjoyed making connections between my subjects. I think that it was within this context that I first started to really delve into my subject, and to realise that it was this sort of in-depth and complex understanding that I wanted to get out of my university experience – something which I felt that the tutorial system at Oxford provided.

How do you think you have changed in your time at University?

I think I have become more confident, especially from an academic perspective. It is sometimes scary to present your ideas about a topic to a tutor who has often, quite literally, written the book on any given topic. The slight nerves will always remain I suspect, but it is remarkable how the tutorial system can foster an environment in which you can become comfortable with developing and sharing new ideas. I think I have realised that I can make valuable contributions to a discussion, and that it is good to share what

you are thinking and feeling. I think you make the most progress in those moments of uncertainty, when you are pushing the boundaries of your comfort zone. I feel like I have learnt to embrace this completely; I try to take every opportunity offered to me – opportunities I know that I am so fortunate to have.

Has anything surprised you about Oxford and your course?

I think I have been most surprised by the freedom that exists here. Obviously, there is the freedom of living away from home which is one of the most important and enjoyable things about university, but I have also found freedom in many other ways.

Academically, especially in History, I have been shocked by the range of topics that we are able to study. We also have a lot of freedom when it comes to approaching the essay questions we are set. Being able to play to both your strengths, and your interests, means that every week is a chance to explore what you found most thought-provoking in the reading, or to bring your own interests and perspective into your interpretation of a topic. I think bringing up the absolute anthem that is “Common People” by Pulp in a tutorial about middle-class philanthropy in the nineteenth and twentieth century is the best example I can give of this!

There is also a lot of freedom to do what you enjoy, both in college and across the university. The number and variety of societies available, as well as all the city has to offer, means that there really is something for everyone to enjoy.

It has also been somewhat surprising to feel so settled here. Coming from a “non-traditional” Oxford background as a Northern, first-generation university student, there is often a very powerful stereotype about what life would be like here. Whilst there is no denying that there is more to be done in tackling the harmful parts of the university culture and structure which uphold these stereotypes, it has been truly

refreshing to feel like I can, and do, belong here. The many fantastic people I have met, and the wonderful opportunities on offer, have been the defining features of my time here so far, and I look forward to becoming even more comfortable over the next few years.

What do you do outside your studies?

When I'm not working, I love playing saxophone in Hertford College's Jazz Band. It's great to meet likeminded people and make friends from across the university, as well as doing something I enjoy so much. I'm also really engaged with theatre across the city, both professional and student. I try to see as many shows as I can, especially as we are so lucky to have lots of major productions visiting Oxford on tour.

Do you miss anything about CRGS?

I think the main thing that I miss about CRGS is the sense of community. I deliberately chose a collegiate university as I wanted to mirror the close connections that I made whilst at school and sixth form, but nothing can quite compare to the routine of your time there. Seeing, and feeling supported by, the same group of people, day in and day out, is something that I don't think I will ever have in the same way again. Whether that be the same group of friends, at the very same table in the quad or canteen, or the teachers you'll see for hours every week, it really is a unique situation. I think everyone has, at times, been frustrated with the routine of sixth form, and it makes you look forward to the relative freedom of university. However, after leaving, I do look back even more fondly on my time at CRGS. This is probably the last time that you will get to be surrounded by so many people every day, and so many of those people really care about you, and want the best for you.

Do you have any advice for prospective students?

My main advice to prospective students is that they should be unapologetically themselves throughout their application process to any university, but especially to Oxford. I think there can often be beliefs, especially for those with few, if any, connections to the university, that there is some sort of "Oxford type". This is completely untrue. The University is made up of interesting, and interested individuals, from so many backgrounds. No one should be put off from applying based upon any aspect of their life that they feel wouldn't be welcomed, as there will be an open and supportive community waiting to make you feel at home, whether that be in a friendship group, college, or society (or ideally all three!).



BRITISH BOXING: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE –

By Ese Obasi

The boxing world has been a buzz recently, but not all for the right reasons. The collapse of the fight between Chris Eubank Jr and Conor Benn was certainly a memorable moment, one that won't be forgotten for years to come.

Let's begin 32 years ago, on the 18th November 1990, where the fathers of our two fighters, Chris and Nigel, began one of the most famous British boxing rivalries of all time. The extravagant personalities of Eubank Sr and Nigel Benn combined to capture the interest of the world, with a sold-out Birmingham NEC and over 100 million people worldwide watching Eubank Sr win the first bout, and then a packed-out Old Trafford with over half a billion people worldwide seeing the pair draw the second time in 1993.



Fast forward to the 5th October 2022 - we are 3 days out from the hugely anticipated fight between sons. However, this fight would not go ahead due to a failed drugs test from Conor Benn.

Whilst Benn pleads his innocence, this failed drug test was known by the fighter, the organisers, and the British Boxing Board of Control for over a month. In spite of it, the fight was not cancelled. It's what can only be described as a selfish and money hungry decision from the promoters. The drug found in Benn's system was

Clomiphene, a female fertility drug, that can boost testosterone in men. It's all the more dangerous when considering how the fight was agreed for 157lbs, 3 pounds lower than the middleweight minimum that Eubank Jr usually fights at. Eubank Jr, 33, was forced to boil down to a weight which he had not been to since age 18. Had this drugs test not been leaked by a newspaper, we could have been in for a disaster - a juiced up Conor Benn going up against a drained Eubank Jr. It also poses the question about how many fighters have been on drugs but not been found out due to the power of promoters in the Boxing world.



On a more positive note, a fight for the history books occurred on the 15th October, with Claressa Shields and Savannah Marshall headlining the UK's first ever all female card at a sold out O2 arena. Shields won the bout and now has won 14 world title belts across three weight divisions. She is truly a trailblazer for young girls aspiring to be professional boxers.

Having being lucky enough to attend the fight, I experienced an incredibly electric atmosphere – one of the best I have been to. Shields, who has also won Olympic Gold twice, came into the 'lions den' but showed no signs of nerves despite being booed by the crowd upon entrance. It's clear she certainly gained their respect after a dominant performance, displaying the sweet science of boxing for what it really is. And this is all without mentioning the fabulous undercard, featuring the likes of Alycia Baumgardner and Mikaela Mayer. The event was truly amazing and a template for how the Women's game should progress and with

the likes of Katie Taylor, Amanda Serrano, Natasha Jonas, Delfine Persoon, to name a few.

Women's boxing is alive and popping – and it only looks to be getting better. Whilst the world

of male boxing might still be under the shadow of the Eubank/Benn fight back in October, women's boxing looks to have a bright future ahead of it. And I for one cannot wait.

Current Competitions

You've got to be in it to win it!

4 Jan	<u>Immerse Essay Competition</u>	Students aged 13-18 are invited to submit essay responses to a pre-set question relating to their chosen subject. Prizes are scholarships for the Cambridge, Oxford, London summer schools.
9 Jan	<u>Young Poets Network The Friday Afternoons Song Lyric Writing Challenge</u>	Students are invited to write a poem based around the theme of identity, which, if chosen, will be turned into songs by composers, and released on the Friday Afternoons website. The original poem will be published on Young Poets website. Additionally, winners will receive tickets to the World Premiere Performance of their songs on Thursday 17 August 2023.
16 Jan	<u>Northeastern University London- The Year 12 Essay Competition</u>	Students are invited to respond to a series of essay titles related to myriad subjects. The English title is 'Should the subject English Literature be replaced by Global Literatures?' Substantial cash prizes to be won.
24 Feb	<u>Tower Poetry Competition</u>	This prestigious competition is on the theme 'The Planets' this year. First prize is £5000.
10 Mar	<u>Never Such Innocence</u>	Students are asked to respond to this year's theme in either a poem, speech, artwork or song : 'What does war mean to you?'
24 Mar	<u>Portico Sadie Massey Awards</u>	Creative writing (must be set in the North of England) and a book review competition.
7 June	<u>The Orwell Youth Prize 2023</u>	Students in years 8 – 13 are invited to submit writing in response to the theme <i>Who's in Control?</i> The Orwell Foundation offers a five step pathway through the Prize which is intended to help teachers support students through the process of creating an entry, with lesson plans and resources for each stage.

BLACKPOOL 4-2 PRESTON: NORTH END DROWN IN A SEA OF SEASIDER STRIKES

By Etienne Jones



Earlier on in the season, fellow Championship rivals Blackpool and Preston North End fought their own battle to be crowned on top of West Lancashire. Blackpool were looking for revenge after being beaten 1-0 in the previous fixture, but with Preston lacking matchwinner Archer, and goals altogether, Blackpool had a great chance for redemption. Preston were higher up in the table thanks to an outstanding defensive record, so both teams would be forced to dig deep if they were to come out on top.

And it would be Blackpool who came out on top in the lunchtime game, as Jerry Yates's double would help seal a fantastic victory for the Seasiders. Yates would begin the scoring with a close-range header from a corner, however a foul in the opposite penalty box gave Preston a great chance from the penalty

spot, which Ben Whiteman would convert easily to leave the game 1-1 at half-time.

Both teams would continue to be evenly matched, until Arsenal loanee Charlie Patino would give Blackpool the lead, a 25-yard strike finding its way past Freddie Woodman and into the Preston net. Jerry Yates then continued his fantastic game by leaping onto another cross, placing the ball into the middle of the net to make the score 3-1.

Preston would continuously apply pressure despite being 3 goals down, and after Whiteman hit the target, Blackpool defender Callum Connolly would put the ball into his own net after Evan's attempt deflected off the helpless left back. This would give Preston an increased sense of hope, however, a flurry of efforts from the Lilywhites failed to hit the target and would be punished in the 95th minute by CJ Hamilton, the winger scoring from 40 yards after Woodman found himself floundering on the other side of the pitch, making the full-time score 4-2.

At this point in the season, this helped propel Blackpool away from the relegation zone into 18th, denying Preston a chance to leap into the playoffs. Despite the defeat, Preston will have a chance to get revenge on their own turf at the beginning of April, with the battle commencing again at Deepdale. For now, however, the Seasiders are crowned the kings of West Lancashire.



THE BARN(ES) DOOR SMASHED OPEN!

ZAROURY AND BARNES GOALS SEAL DERBY DAY VICTORY FOR BURNLEY OVER BITTER RIVALS BLACKBURN ROVERS

By Etienne Jones



The East Lancashire derby is one of the oldest and most prestigious derbies in England and was widely anticipated to be a thriller, as the teams met for the first time in 5 years. With games being played as early as 1888, the game was widely anticipated to be a fight for not only the bragging rights of the region but a massive three points ahead of the impending Championship promotion race. Burnley's 5-2 defeat to Sheffield United, alongside Blackburn's wins against Huddersfield and West Ham United, gave Rivers the momentum heading into the clash. However, as history shows, anything could happen at this tie.

The first half was an extremely quiet affair; however, Blackburn goalkeeper Thomas Kaminski was required to make 2 diving saves, with shots from Taylor Harwood-Bellis and Ashley Barnes requiring the Dane to tip both shots away from danger. In between the other sticks, Arijanet Muric wasn't troubled by any Blackburn attack in

the first half. And this would continue to be the story, with Rover's only shot of the game being fired straight at the goalkeeper from Ben Brereton Diaz, the Chilean not wearing his shooting boots in this game. Burnley would come even closer, with Josh Cullen being denied by a fantastic block by Rover's fullback Callum Brittain, as Blackburn would continue to be under serious pressure. And Burnley would take the coveted lead, with Ashley Barnes firing home from 6-yards after an Anass Zaroury cross found the Austrians' head. This goal was extremely deserved, however, Burnley felt they hadn't punished their rivals enough for their lacklustre performance, as superb pressure and a Nathan Tella flick saw Barnes through on goal yet again. Despite his shot being kept from the goal, the ball rebounded into the path of Anass Zaroury, with the world cup-bound Moroccan tapping into an empty net to make it 2-0.

And the Burnley attacks wouldn't stop there, as a mazy Brownhill run sent the ball back to Barnes in the 18-yard box. More brilliant footwork saw him escape from Ryan Hedges's marking, and a powerful shot deflected off Ayala, and into the net for Burnley's third of the day. Blackburn wouldn't regather and score a consolation goal, sending their disappointed fans home after a horrific 3-0 defeat.

Burnley fans, however, are over the moon. Vincent Kompany has proved to be a fantastic appointment from Anderlecht, only losing 2 games all season and leaving them 3 points clear at the top heading into the world cup break, leaving fans positive that a return to the Premier League is a strong possibility. On the other hand, Blackburn will have to wait until the 18th of March for revenge at Ewood Park, where they'll hope that they continue to be within 5 points of the top, and still comfortably within the play off places.

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