

milk.

THE COMMUNITY ISSUE





COMMUNITY

A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to the Community issue of *milk* magazine

As the editor of this year's print edition, I have been lucky enough to work on a magazine which has always aimed to be visual, relevant, experimental and forward-thinking – this year is no different. With a reimagined design, a fresh new colour scheme and an array of talented local artists and writers, we have taken *milk* to the next level.

In this issue, we highlight the importance of community and belonging. Whether you consider your community to be your closest relatives, a particular group of friends or your local sports society, it means being able to cultivate your own “tribe”. In a world that throws us many challenges, it's becoming ever more important to find your personal support system. These communities offer us just that.

This year's *milk* features some of the amazing people who have created, or are contributing towards their local community. Take Bristol-based business, The Forge (p.13), for example, which offers an open workspace that connects local businesses. This issue also explores some of the challenges of living without the support of a community; looking at the impact of mental health through the lens of a young photographer (p.20), and what it's like to be an international student, moving to a completely different country (p.16).

Our Bath Spa student community is what helped us collate such a diverse range of articles and artists to participate in this year's print edition. We hope this shows through. From all the team at *milk*, we hope you enjoy reading this issue as much as we've enjoyed creating it.

Mariëlle Scholten
EDITOR

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EDITORIAL

EDITOR

MARIELLE SCHOLTEN

ONLINE EDITOR

AMY BARRETT

NEWS EDITORS

OLENA MIRIANOVA

PETER CLARK

NATHAN MARADEI

LIFESTYLE EDITORS

LEAH FLEMING

VERITY ANNEAR

CULTURE EDITOR

DARIUS MORGAN

SHOWCASE EDITORS

SAMIYA COULTHARD

SANDRA BACZEK

MARKETING MANAGERS

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CAITLIN WHISKER

NEWSLETTER EDITOR

ANIKA SCHULZE

EVENT ORGANISERS

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HANNAH LOTEN

PR MANAGERS

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RACHEL MUSKETT

SOCIAL MEDIA

INDIA PEARCE

SAMIYA COULTHARD

VICTORIA KEWLEY

DESIGN & PRODUCTION

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PICTURE EDITOR

ISABEL LAWTON

PRODUCTION EDITOR

CHARLOTTE WILLCOCKS

DIGITAL PUBLISHER

KAT VALENTINE

WEBSITE DEVELOPER

FAYE JOYCE

SUB EDITOR

JOSHUA MCSMITH

CONTRIBUTORS

ANNABEL MILLER

AMY BARRETT

AMY STIRLING

BERYL EGLOFF

DARIUS MORGAN

EMMA HEAD

ISABEL LAWTON

JAMES BUDD

JONATHON STEPHENSON

LAURA FOSTER

LIAM JONES

SAMIYA COULTHARD

YARA GAWRIEH

COVER IMAGE

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by Harry Lloyd-Evans

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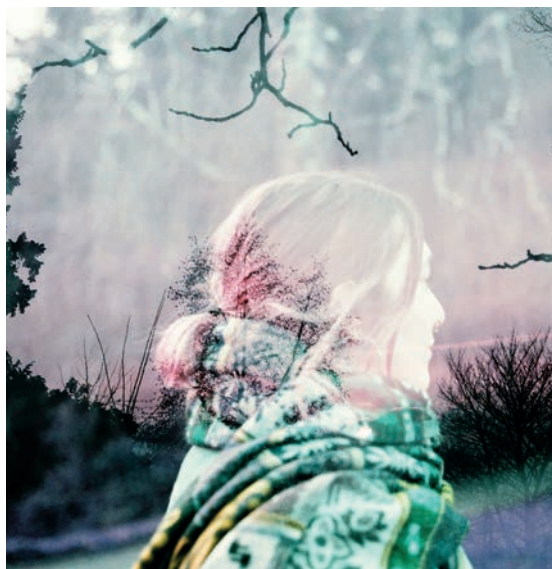
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The Faces of Fresh Milk



'Community is a group of people united by a mutual cause or place; be this through friendship, place, interest, or belief. It's a sense of unity through conversation and shared experience'

Leah Fleming, Lifestyle Editor



'It's the support of like-minded people, solace in numbers and protection as a group'

Amy Barrett, Online Editor





**'Community is a place free from judgement, fear or ridicule.
When you are with your community, you can't help but be
completely and utterly yourself'**

Isabel Lawton, Picture Editor



WHAT DOES COMMUNITY MEAN TO MILK?


IMAGES SAMIYA COULTHARD

IT'S A GIRLS' WORLD

With a growing international community at Bath Spa University, Yara Gawrieh reminisces on her year as an exchange student from Sweden and the sisterhood of living in an all-female household

ILLUSTRATION ISABEL LAWTON





The hardest part about studying abroad is leaving home and settling into a completely new one. This is why one of the most important parts of an exchange programme is accommodation. Moving from Sweden to Bath, I was faced with the question of whether to live on campus or find my own place to stay in the city. The choice was easy: for me, being an exchange student is a lot about making new friends, and university accommodation would give me the opportunity to live with these new friends.

Unexpectedly, I was placed with only girls. Living with other young women proved to be an experience of endless inspiration and motivation. With the nine of us all coming from different countries – Sweden, Denmark, Norway, Finland, Austria and England – it was quite a different experience from how it would have been back home. In Nordic countries, there tends to be a lack of social interaction, even for young people at university. It's unusual to come across a situation where there is an instant deep connection between girls sharing dormitories. From my experience, English people are much more open and are willing to engage in conversation with a lot more enthusiasm.

The home we shared together became our 'girls' territory', and it created a sense of belonging for all of us. The movie nights, the funny pranks, the romance and break-ups, the cooking and the trips we took together all gave us a feeling of heart-warming comfort. This sense of sisterhood proved very important for my whole study abroad experience, as it empowered my emotional wellbeing. Knowing that these girls, my friends, cared about me and would support me in the difficult times

made it so much easier to be away from home. Unquestionably, this sense of belonging has made me a happier person.

Studying abroad, you quickly learn to be independent and responsible, but it is funny, the way that living in a girls' dorm can also bring out the little girl in you. Small things like cute coloured mugs, stuffed animals and even unicorn lights have given our group immense joy. Shopping often became a contest of who could find the cutest minimalist stuff – which, despite how it sounds, has been a thoroughly enjoyable experience.

Your twenties are the time you start forming your own ideologies and opinions; when you begin fighting for them in the most passionate and rebellious way. It's the time when you drop everything and start focusing on being a young person, willing to experience as much as possible, and learn things about the world and about yourself.

At university, I have been able to share this stage of my life with these girls, and in between the moments of self-growth there have been endless moments of chocolate – a lot of chocolate.

One of the most freeing aspects of living with all girls is that nobody will judge you. Everybody will totally understand when you feel the need to order two pizzas and a Ben and Jerry's chocolate fudge brownie at midnight. In fact, they will insist on sharing, and will wait outside with you for the delivery. You'll never have to feel self-conscious about your appearance, as you would around boys. You can walk about in your see-through pyjamas and messy hair-bun 24/7. And when you make mistakes, everybody will be there to comfort you. They truly will be your BFFs.

Studying here, I have never been bored. There is always someone around who is interested in the same things as you. Together, you will dive into the city's soul and discover its core – as magical as that sounds. Living abroad in my girls' dorm has been full of amazing experiences, pleasant surprises and endless fun – and this is just the beginning. ●

We all realise that social media has been colonised by major companies and advertising, but do we know how to live without it? When we see reports such as that in *The Australian* newspaper, in May 2017, saying how 'Facebook is using sophisticated algorithms to identify and exploit young Australians, by allowing advertisers to target them at their most vulnerable, including when they feel "worthless" and "insecure",' how do we actually respond to that information?

Facebook founder, chairman and CEO Mark Zuckerberg's vision for the company has always been to 'connect more people more often'. After five days of silence following the Cambridge Analytica revelations, Zuckerberg responded by saying that the policies which allowed the misuse of personal information

In March 2018, news that the personal data of more than 50 million Facebook users had been 'harvested' by Cambridge Analytica caused uproar. Social media became inundated with #deletefacebook. But do we know how to live without social media, and do we want to?

were 'a breach of trust between Facebook and the people who share their data with us and expect us to protect it'. However, it remains unclear how much impact #deletefacebook will have on the business, or its willingness and ability to self-regulate.

More recent figures, accepted by Facebook, suggest that the data breach has affected at least 87 million people, and it could well be more. So, are we still willing to put our lives on display in this way? This is the question on many young people's minds, after the shocking realisation that their data isn't as private as they thought. Our oblivious use of Facebook has become an integral part of life. We are used to being able to find someone with the click of a button and depend on this ability to connect virtually. For those of us who have never lived without the influence of social media, it can be confusing and impossible to even consider deleting Facebook, much more so than for the older generation.

Born in the hinterland between the post-war Baby Boomers and Generation X 'slackers', Caroline Harris, senior lecturer at Bath Spa University, is a part of the generation that straddles pre- and post-internet, as well as pre- and post-mobile. A generation that as young adults spent hours serial-calling friends and monopolising the only telephone line. They are in a unique position, according to journalist and author Michael Harris. In his 2014 book *The End of Absence*, he writes: 'If we're the last people in history to know life

GOING OFFLINE. CAN WE DO IT?

TEXT THE MILK TEAM

'ADVERTISERS TARGET YOUNG PEOPLE AT THEIR MOST VULNERABLE, INCLUDING WHEN THEY FEEL WORTHLESS AND INSECURE'

Source: *The Australian*

before the internet [as an adult], we are also the only ones who will ever speak, as it were, both languages.'

Caroline explains: 'What this provides is a different perspective on the "water" of social media that we all swim in today. It is not the medium my generation was born into, and while many of us enjoy using social communications, for me it can at times feel more like the cold, grey Atlantic, rather than a life essential.' For Caroline, it is a 'should' – something extra to worry about, or that takes time away from other areas of life. She deleted her Facebook account in March 2018, with the revelations from whistleblower Christopher Wylie, who worked for Cambridge Analytica, providing as the final push.

In contrast, millennials have grown up with a virtually connected world, where social media is the norm. Student Darius Morgan was born in 1997, and belongs to the final generation who can just about remember what life was like before mobile technology infiltrated every facet of it – back when a mobile phone was a luxury item, rather than an essential. 'I received my first flip-phone in 2007,' says Darius. 'Its main



'SOCIAL MEDIA CAN MAKE US MORE ANTISOCIAL WHEN WE MEET IN PERSON BECAUSE WE DON'T NEED TO BE PRESENT TO COMMUNICATE'

use was to call my mum to let her know I'd safely made it to school – and maybe to play some Snake.' Since then, the phone has become more of a safety blanket: 'Your life in your pocket,' says Darius. 'Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat have all been inducted into our everyday language and lives. What they've done is incredible and has quite literally changed the face of our society. People are connected in ways which were previously inconceivable,' he continues.

With more than two billion users – a figure similar to the populations of China and Europe combined – Facebook has offered an unprecedented opportunity for a global community which many rely upon. For some people, the thought of deleting it seems almost impossible to consider. Jenny Hutchings, from East Sussex, has Myalgic Encephalomyelitis, also known as ME, a medical condition that limits a person's ability to carry out ordinary daily activities, quite often leaving them housebound. 'Facebook is my lifeline,' she says. 'I've been stuck in bed for six years and being able to offer support to friends when

they are having a bad day gives my life purpose.' She continues: 'Without Facebook I would see four people a month. My condition makes phone calls, radio, TV and visits not only painful, but dangerous. Facebook lets me reach out when I am able and feel reachable when I need a hand.'

The irony is, however, that social media can make us more antisocial when we meet in person, because we don't need to be present to communicate. The Facebook Messenger app has overtaken the main platform, becoming the social channel for events and messaging, according to a group of students at Bath Spa University. 'Almost all of my communication with friends or university groups or co-workers is done over Facebook Messenger,' says Darius. 'But even though we don't exactly use the app for what it was originally designed, we still expect everyone to have an account, and have a slight mistrust when someone doesn't.'

The question remains, do we delete Facebook? Or should we seek to change it?

For the older generation, this largely depends on your attitude to privacy and the monetising of personal data by tech companies. But for the millennial generation, it's more complex. They've grown up with technology around them and depend on social media platforms like Facebook as a form of everyday personal communication. This is where social interaction happens. Maybe we should migrate to less intrusive platforms or a closed social network. Or should we rely on the government to hold global social media companies to account?

We asked our readers if they would delete Facebook, and out of over 40 responses, nearly 40% said they will delete in the future, 24% will keep it and 32% remain unsure. Only a small proportion, of 5%, have already deleted their accounts.

Sadly, most of us feel we need it now, to stay a part of things, to feel relevant. Will Darius delete his Facebook or any of his other accounts? Just like the rest of us, he doesn't know. But one thing is for sure, there's more to life than the screen in our pockets and we can start by questioning those controlling it. ●



WELCOME TO THE FORGE

Located in the heart of Bristol is a beautiful and unique community space known as **The Forge**. *milk* reporter Liam Jones gets acquainted with this hub of creativity

IMAGES JONATHON STEPHENSON



Entering through the doors of The Forge, the architecture instantly impresses: a minimalist and spacious mixture of the new alongside the exposed brick of the original forge building. Co-founder Silkie Lloyd, a professional designer and art innovator, adores how the unpolished, rustic setting has given The Forge its artistic character. This space has been hosting workshops, from arts, crafts and design, all the way to music gigs, since it was set up in 2014 by a small group of dedicated individuals with a shared vision.

Silkie is in charge of the day-to-day running of The Forge, which is currently living up to its reputation as a successful community studio. As she clears the table of feathers from one of the weekend's workshops, Silkie explains how her love for the arts inspired The Forge's vision of providing a space for people to connect in their shared passions. Modern-day technology allows anybody to teach themselves into expertise – but nothing beats practising and learning as part of a community.

When it came to finding a location for The Forge, Bristol was their first choice. 'There's

just that special something about the area,' according to Silkie. 'We think it has to do with the incredible cultural variety and creative scene that can house an enterprise so readily down a busy backstreet in Colston Yard,' she explains. Bristol appears to get the London overflow of creatives, seeking to work and live elsewhere, although admittedly this leads to its own set of problems – namely the difference in financial expectations. Either way, it is clear that the demand is there: 'People are always searching for the perfect place either to host their events or to learn new skills in a social setting,' says Silkie.

It would be relatively easy for the business to expand and employ a much larger team, filling its rooms with people every night. The potential and talent are most definitely there, but The Forge prefers to focus on its primary goal of giving experiences to people, as opposed to monetary or popularity gain. 'Quantity doesn't always mean quality, and by keeping the workshops light and fun, there's the opportunity to build that human connection with everybody who regularly attends,' says Silkie. Around 12 to 20 people

is the average group size for a workshop. This allows for a lively atmosphere without overcrowding the venue.

Word-of-mouth has been key to the growth of The Forge. 'There's not been a lot of promotion, commercial advertisements or chasing of followers,' Silkie explains. As a visual creator, she has a preference for Instagram; it allows The Forge to showcase the work being produced here, and let it speak for itself. Although now, Silkie notes, the world seems increasingly obsessed with likes and social status over the actual quality.

The Forge is the perfect example of how to go about starting up a local business: by building contacts, finding a niche and setting itself apart from the crowd. It's also refreshing to come across a business that can honestly and openly talk about areas for improvement. The team behind The Forge have always welcomed new ideas and are more than willing to adapt to what their visitors want, by taking a genuine close interest in the people they meet.

It's this mindset that we can learn from in our own endeavours. By taking careful control of our time and working towards our goals, we can get involved in our communities. ●



Contact Silkie Lloyd at
The Forge by emailing
hello@theforgebristol.com
or follow them on Instagram
[@theforgebristol](https://www.instagram.com/theforgebristol)

FINDING YOUR PLACE



Isabel Lawton **speaks to a Bath Spa international student to discuss her experience, thoughts on community and how life in Bath differs from her home country**

IMAGE ISABEL LAWTON

Beryl. Twenty-three. Switzerland.
BA Creative Writing and Art.

How were your first experiences meeting people at Bath Spa University?

The first person I talked to was English. I don't know how my accent was back then so it's hard to know if people thought I was foreign. The weird thing is, when I meet someone who speaks my language, I kind of recoil. I remember meeting a girl from Austria and she was so excited, like, 'Ah you're from Switzerland!' and started speaking German, but I was thinking, 'I really don't want to do this.' Because I'd just got here. I don't understand why you would go somewhere to find people from the same place as you. That's not the point. To me it is more interesting to meet people from the UK. I find English people and the culture so interesting.

Did you feel a part of any particular community when you arrived?

Honestly, it's not that different coming here from your home in Gloucestershire to coming here from abroad. Everyone is new at university and away from home for the first time. You have that in common with anyone, not just people from other countries. What is fun, though, is comparing with other international students their experiences with particularly English things. Like food, or characteristics of the people and how they differ. For example, in winter it's just astounding how people dress. It's really different from where I'm from – we dress rather sensibly. I saw a girl last year in February: she was wearing flip-flops, shorts and ear muffs at the same time. English people never seem to dress for the weather, but it doesn't harm them.

Has language ever proved a barrier?

I've spent so long learning the language and now I get to use it every day, which for me is so much fun. A lot of international students,

although they choose to come here, may still have inhibitions about speaking English while also maintaining their personality. When you speak a different language, sometimes it changes your personality. If you're not as fluent, you may feel stunted because you don't know the exact words you want to say, and so you feel like you're only half yourself.

Do you still feel connected to your Swiss identity?

What's most interesting is that I didn't realise I was Swiss until I moved away. I've never been that patriotic. I do love my home, but it's not about the country. Being away, you become more proud or affectionate towards the things you have at home. I always liked when people knew I was from Switzerland – it felt nice to have something unique to talk about. Being from another country gives me a broader horizon, especially in the subjects I study. As an artist, for example, I'm able to read things in French or German that others maybe don't have access to.

Have there been any huge differences about England that have stood out to you?

For me it's so fascinating to compare things all the time. Sometimes it's hard not to be judgemental. You may frown on certain things in this country, like the school system or politics, and you feel entitled to judge it because you're from somewhere else. You may think, 'We do it better' – which a lot of the time isn't true at all, it's just different. Even in my third year I still enjoy watching people and feeling almost like I'm on holiday. When I'm here it's special; when I'm home it's special. I suppose that is quite enviable. ●

TIME TO TACKLE TOXIC MASCULINITY

We are supposed to be living in a time of diversity and acceptance, yet traditional gender stereotypes surrounding male behaviour are putting strain on thousands of young people.

Liam Jones questions the pressure to conform, and talks to hip-hop artist Jordan Stephens about challenging role models

If you search for the term ‘masculinity’ in the Oxford English Dictionary online, you’ll find the official definition is: ‘The assemblage of qualities regarded as characteristic of men.’ Look further, and it provides synonyms including muscularity, vigour, strength, ruggedness and toughness. ‘Toxic masculinity’, however, refers to the repressive stereotyping of the traditional male gender. These definitions are symptomatic of how we continue to be pushed towards this idea of traditional masculinity: that when you are born into a particular gender category, you are supposed to follow conventions – and any man who doesn’t act ‘masculine’ will often be criticised for not conforming.

It begins early, and continues through childhood. Say you’re playing football, and you take a kick to the knee. You may be shouted at to ‘Man up’. Or somebody breaks your heart, and you are told that ‘boys don’t cry’, because crying is ‘weak’. Given such formative experiences, it should be no surprise that, even now, so many

men bottle up their true feelings and carry these lessons with them later in life.

The term ‘Hegemonic Masculinity’, part of Raewyn Connell’s Gender Order Theory, refers to the patriarchal way of continuously displaying a certain level of toughness and aggression, in order to maintain dominance over not just females, but ‘non-masculine’ men. The problem only worsens for non-conforming men as they progress into adulthood, as public judgement only increases for work competition, relationships and social status.

In December 2017, Bath Spa University students met with musician Jordan Stephens, one half of the British hip-hop duo Rizzle Kicks, at the BBC Global Children’s Media Summit. Although music is his primary creative outlet, we discussed how the world stereotypes and labels people from an early age. Jordan uses his platform to empower young men who cannot relate to traditional masculine traits, which he considers to be ‘toxic’. It was instantly apparent

76% OF UK SUICIDES ARE MALE

MEN ARE MORE LIKELY THAN WOMEN TO FALL INTO ALCOHOL OR DRUG ABUSE AND ARE LESS LIKELY TO SEEK OUT THERAPY

Source: *Men's Health Forum*

how much working for change meant to him, yet also clear how difficult the challenge will be to transform mindsets.

On several occasions, Jordan stated his discomfort with the glorification of fictional characters, such as James Bond, as role models while he was growing up. These characters are often renowned for being womanisers and murderers, yet they are held up as national icons. Popular media also promotes the majority of male protagonists in a similar, physically tough manner, as can be seen with superhero characters such as Captain America and Thor. These depictions offer an almost impossible false-reality that most men try to imitate, but ultimately struggle with.

Perhaps if more male protagonists displayed diverse personalities, we would be presented with a wider variety of role models – broadening our definition of masculinity. Why shouldn't values such as kindness and the ability to express emotions be reinforced for boys growing up? It certainly does not help that the media refuses to diversify, and neglects to promote other aspects of men's behaviour outside what we've come to see as the norm. As Jordan stated: 'There's a lot of work to be done, but there's a need for us all to live positively and free.'

In today's society, individuals often feel let

down by the system and young men tend to express their emotions in the form of anger, leading to aggressive behaviour. In the words of comedian Michael Ian Black, 'Men are scared and problems can't be fixed until we first fix men.' We should be encouraging men that it's okay to express their emotions in a healthy way. Yet we don't. We all want society to accept us and far too many shift who they are for society rather than making society shift for them. ●



POWER OF THE MIND

LAURA FOSTER



A PHOTOGRAPHIC SERIES



Community offers a sense of belonging. In this edition of *milk* we have been celebrating this aspect – delving into different communities. Laura Foster offers a flipside.

In her photographic series 'Dear Diary', second-year Photography student Laura explores the thoughts and feelings associated with mental illness. The stigma around this issue can often make those suffering feel completely alone.

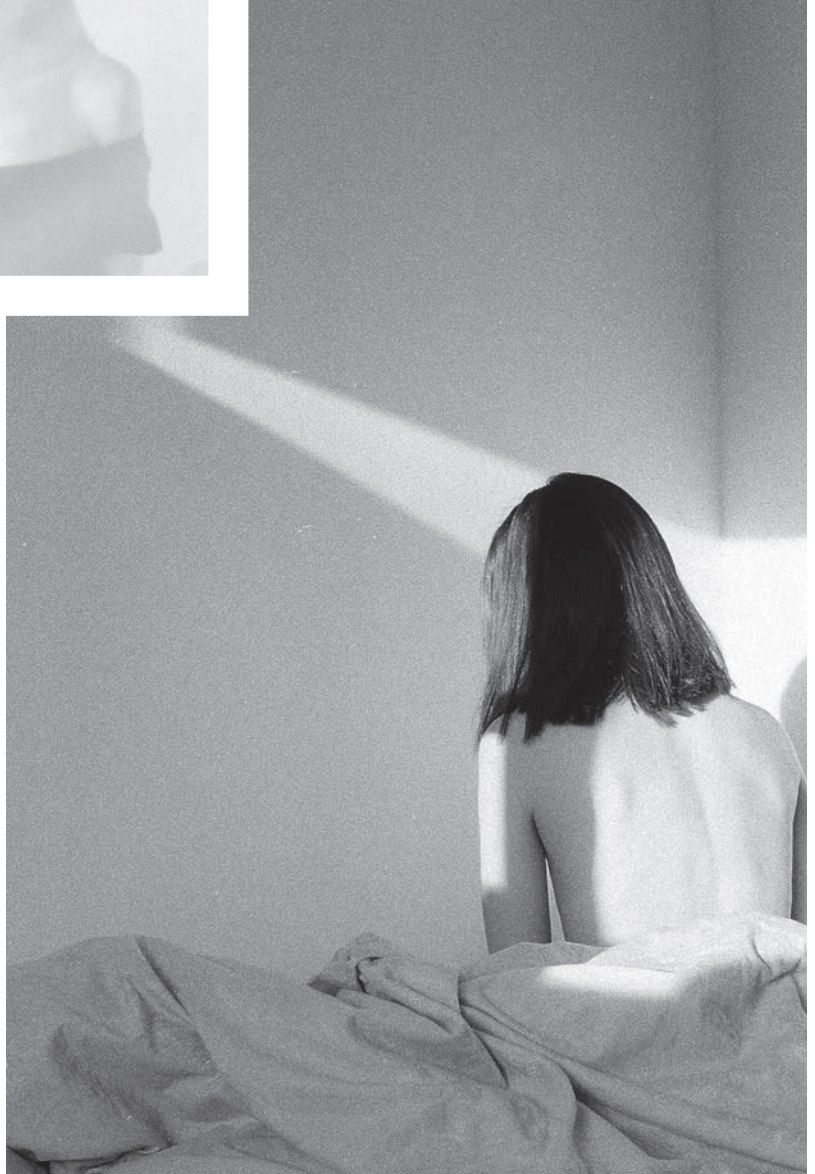
Captured solely on black and white 35mm film, her series depicts a childhood friend in an honest and vulnerable way, representing the loneliness one can feel.

Each photograph illustrates a different aspect linked to mental illness, but the ambiguity allows the viewer to make their own assumptions. That is Laura's intention with her series: to let her audience stop ... and think. ●



IMAGES LAURA FOSTER
TEXT ANNABEL MILLER





THROWAWAY CULTURE

With society's dependence on plastic reaching an all-time peak, Amy Barrett searches for sustainable and biodegradable alternatives. She talks with two local research teams who are working on developing just that

Single-use plastics are everywhere in today's society. We buy vegetables wrapped in polyethylene instead of loose from the greengrocer, put a straw in our drink instead of sipping from the glass, and grab plastic carrier bags despite the 5p charge. Plastic has become integral to our consumer culture and the environment is paying the price.

BBC's *Blue Planet II* demonstrated the devastating effect plastic waste is having on the Earth. Assistant Producer of the documentary Sarah Conner told *Newsbeat*: 'There would rarely be a dive where I wouldn't find some form of plastic from a thread of plastic fishing line, sweet wrappers or plastic bottles.'

Meanwhile, China is manufacturing billions of single-use chopsticks, with the equivalent of 3.8 million trees being cut down every year to produce them, according to the country's National Forest Bureau.

Plastic use is a problem on a global scale, which appears too complicated and too expensive to tackle. In our day-to-day lives, plastic can be unavoidable in cosmetics and toiletries, though there are simple changes we can make, such as drinking from reusable water bottles and refusing plastic straws. What we need are alternatives to plastic that are environmentally friendly, easy to produce and flexible in application. Researchers, Dr Antoine Buchard and Professor Janet Scott, are two scientists looking to create just the thing.

MORE SUSTAINABLE POLYMERS

Based at the University of Bath, Antoine and a team of PhD and post-doctoral researchers are working on the development of sustainable polymers for the Centre for Sustainable Chemical Technologies.

Currently, plastics contain polymers derived from fossil fuels, but Antoine is hoping to design something more sustainable: 'To do this we take molecules that already exist in nature – this could be sugars, or any natural food stock – and using chemistry and our scientific knowledge we transform those natural resources into things we can use. It's like we're taking nature's blocks and building them in a different way.'

Though the researchers have been able to design a polymer made from natural resources, their work is far from over. 'What we have right now is a material which is quite brittle... we need to create something that is a bit more flexible so we can make single-use plastics, things like packaging and bottles, out of it.' But this will take time, Antoine says: 'We forget sometimes that all the plastic we have right now wasn't developed in just a couple of years. Once our research is well established, it will become a bit clearer what direction we need to go in.'

BIODEGRADABLE MICROBEADS

Dr James Coombes O'Brien's research also involves taking elements from nature and using these to build alternatives to plastics. However, where Antoine is using molecules from plant or animal biomass as a basis for his monomer designs, James and the team are using a polymer already common in the natural world known as cellulose.

The key component in plant cell walls, cellulose is the ideal material for James' work. 'It's got great structural qualities: cellulose holds up all the trees out there in the world,' explains Janet, James' PhD supervisor. 'But it will also eventually biodegrade – as we know that when a tree dies and falls over, it eventually rots and just becomes compost.'

THERE ARE 3.8 MILLION TREES BEING CUT DOWN EVERY YEAR TO PRODUCE CHOPSTICKS

Janet's own research involves using cellulose for a range of different purposes, but she is particularly excited about its potential for replacing the plastic microbeads in cosmetics. 'You can't recycle plastic microbeads. It's not like a bottle: the beads will wash down the drain. We need to think about replacing those kinds of plastics with ones that can biodegrade in the environment eventually.'

Earlier this year, the Government banned the manufacture of any products containing plastic microbeads, which will be followed in the coming months by a ban on the sale of such products. Facial exfoliants often contain microbeads, but there can also be tiny plastic particles in toothpaste and foundation. 'When you think of microbeads you probably imagine quite large beads that you can see from inside the cosmetic tube,' comments Janet. 'But those are often put there for decorative purposes. There are lots of smaller ones in products such as make-up, where they act almost as a "filler" in the wrinkles of your skin, making it appear all nice and smooth. You can't feel them when you apply your foundation, but they are there.'

Janet recognises that people will want to continue using the products we have now. 'We just need to make sure the materials that go into those products don't cause problems in the environment,' she comments. Although the technology for these new biodegradable materials isn't yet fully developed, companies are already contacting the scientists about their groundbreaking work. ●



B U D D I N G P H O T O G R A P H E R

James Budd uses his 35mm film camera to capture the playfulness, the partying, the hangovers and the friendships of 'the music lot'

IMAGES JAMES BUDD TEXT ANNABEL MILLER

During his studies at Bath Spa University, London-bred photographer James Budd began messing around with disposable cameras, taking pictures of his friends – who just so happened to be musicians.

'I love music and the culture around it,' he says. 'The friends I made once I got to Bath opened up that opportunity and passion, because most of them are on the Commercial Music course. I realised I could take photos of them and I feel very grateful that they've let me. I hope maybe they've benefited from it as well.'

Bath's music scene, while quieter than Bristol's, is still very present. With the Commercial Music course well established on campus, these musicians have been dubbed 'the music lot'.

As a second-year Film, TV and Digital Production student, James' music photography happens alongside his degree.

While going to gigs and exploring the nightlife of Bath and Bristol might be recreational for most students, it's technically work for James. His downtime consists of carefully building his portfolio. 'Shooting gigs gives me opportunities to see new bands and musicians all the time – which I can never get enough of. I even got to go to Liverpool with the band Kalpa, which was an experience I won't forget.' Kalpa being one of the bands on the Commercial Music course who are currently gaining traction on the indie music scene. They've supported Voyages on their UK tour, King No-One and High Tyde at various other shows, and it was King No-One's show that took both Kalpa and James to Liverpool.

Shooting primarily on film, his style shows his subjects and their authenticity perfectly. 'It captures a moment and a feeling to a much better extent. I've only just thrown myself into using solely film, but I'm really glad I did.'

**'SHOOTING
GIGS GIVES ME
OPPORTUNITIES
TO SEE NEW
BANDS AND
MUSICIANS ALL
THE TIME'**







Film photography can be unpredictable, but it makes for more considered shots. 'I mostly try and keep the photos as true-to-life when it comes to colour as it can be, depending on what I'm feeling,' James tells us. 'I also really like using flash when I work with film – it makes the subject look really stark and stand out in the frame.'

His style is raw and playful. It's the people behind the instruments. It's not glamorous or overly glorifying, but celebrates the quirks and friendships in a community that never seems to sleep. ●





GET UP, STAND UP

After returning home with the second-place trophy, UniSlam team member and writer Amy Stirling tells us more about the thriving spoken word poetry community in Bath

From art to music, fashion to photography, there's always a new project going on and something to attend. Spoken word poetry is an art form which is often undeservedly overlooked, but it's not going down without a fight. Its presence is continuously growing in Bath, with an increasing level of interest and events being run almost every week.

The poetry community is packed with talented individuals with a passion to keep the art alive and include as many fresh faces as possible. In January 2018, a team of poets from Bath Spa University travelled to Leicester to compete in UniSlam, a national competition made up of 26 different universities.

Perhaps the most encouraging aspect of spoken word poetry is the close-knit relationships between everyone involved. The supportive nature of the more advanced poets on the scene is truly admirable, helping newcomers find their voice and pushing them to perform, compete and grow both as poets, and as people. For most, this aspect is a pleasant surprise. The thought of sharing personal thoughts and feelings in front of a crowd of strangers is of course terrifying – something many people wouldn't dream of doing. But as soon as you attend your

first poetry event – particularly the ones held in Bath – the fear is replaced instantly with a sense of security and acceptance.

The three existing poetry events in Bath are Rhyme and Reason, To Be Frank, and Raise the Bar Spotlight, with many more currently in creation, such as Decadance, with improvised dance alongside poetry, and ink., a poetry event with a musical headliner. Each of these events stands out and they are wonderful in their own ways, but the one factor they all have in common is the warmth of the atmosphere. Whether you are a spoken word expert or just dipping your toes into the poetry waters, you'll be welcomed into an encouraging space where you can comfortably share your work and listen to others, meet new people and form friendships.

In a workshop at UniSlam, we were asked why we write. One person said, 'Writing poetry, for me, is a cheaper form of therapy,' and this resonated with me. Having the opportunity to have your voice heard, and express emotions you may not feel you can in day-to-day situations, is a truly exhilarating feeling. Particularly when met with valuable feedback, praise and support from other poets. At Bath poetry nights creativity flows and the level of talent is breathtaking. ●

A LETTER TO MY STUDENT SELF: YOU WILL NEVER HAVE IT ALL FIGURED OUT. AND THAT'S OK.

Emma Head **was thrown abruptly from student life into the 'real world', landing her first job as a copywriter even before officially graduating. A year on, she reflects on her time at university and adjusting to the nine-to-five**

There are a few things university has prepared you for. You've (sort of) learnt to cook and you've figured out how to change a light bulb. And, more importantly, you've discovered a world of career options you never knew existed. But are you ready to live the nine-to-five life?

Just five days after handing in your final assignment you'll start your first full-time job and your university bubble will officially burst. For months afterwards, you'll yo-yo between feeling blessed for managing to secure a decent job with an arts degree, and desperately looking for one-way flights to Ukraine at 4am. While you'll be intensely grateful, you'll wonder what life would be like if you'd taken more time to consider your options.

At university you always feel an inappropriate amount of pride when you wake up before 9am, only to spend two hours getting ready for a three-hour day of lectures. In class you'll workshop a piece of writing you've been working on all week. Sat in a circle with your fellow students, you'll be showered with compliments and constructive criticism. In your head, this is what professional writers do all day. This is going to be your life. But in reality, you'll work Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 5pm, and the prospect of having free time will make you feel euphoric.

You'll plan weekends away and evenings out, knowing there'll be no deadlines looming over you. There will be absolutely nothing to complain about.

Except for the fact you'll be exhausted. All the time.

In the first few months in the job you'll have to work harder than you ever have before. Naturally, you'll be slower than everyone else – at university you're given weeks (sometimes months) to write an 800-word piece. At this new job, you'll have two hours. You'll work in the evenings, cancelling plans and losing sleep. At the weekends, you'll descend into a lethargic state, festering in bed. This is what Saturdays will look like. Sundays, your boyfriend will shame you into showering and leaving the house for a walk.

You'll need to be prepared to find an entirely new set of friends. After graduation, you'll say your goodbyes to your existing friend groups, promising to meet up again. But it's a hard promise to keep. Going from such a consistent, supportive environment into a totally new one, alone, will be tough to adjust to.

A few final things I have left to say to you, my student self: Stop for a minute. Take guilt-free time off to figure out what you want instead of rushing into something because it's 'the right thing to do'. Go back to your parents and enjoy that full-fridge feeling. Tell them you're planning your future wisely, and that takes time. Because it really does.

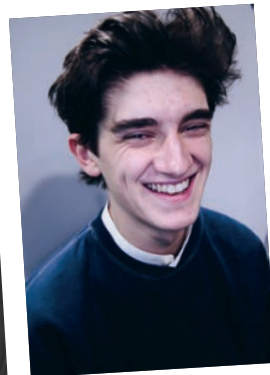
Yes, you'll gain a lot from a job, but just know that this isn't the only way you can use your degree. If you find yourself unemployed and worried it's all gone to waste – just wait. Spend the time creating an amazing CV on InDesign. Ask for career advice and realise you have a network of lecturers and tutors you can turn to. For now, though, relish the time you have left at university. And just remember: once the uni bubble bursts, there doesn't need to be a hard landing. ●



**FIND
YOUR
PLACE**



**GET
UP,
STAND
UP**



**MEET THE
TEAM**





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