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THE CURIOSITY ISSUE



**WISDOM
BEGINS
IN WONDER**

SOCRATES

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A NOTE FROM THE EDITOR

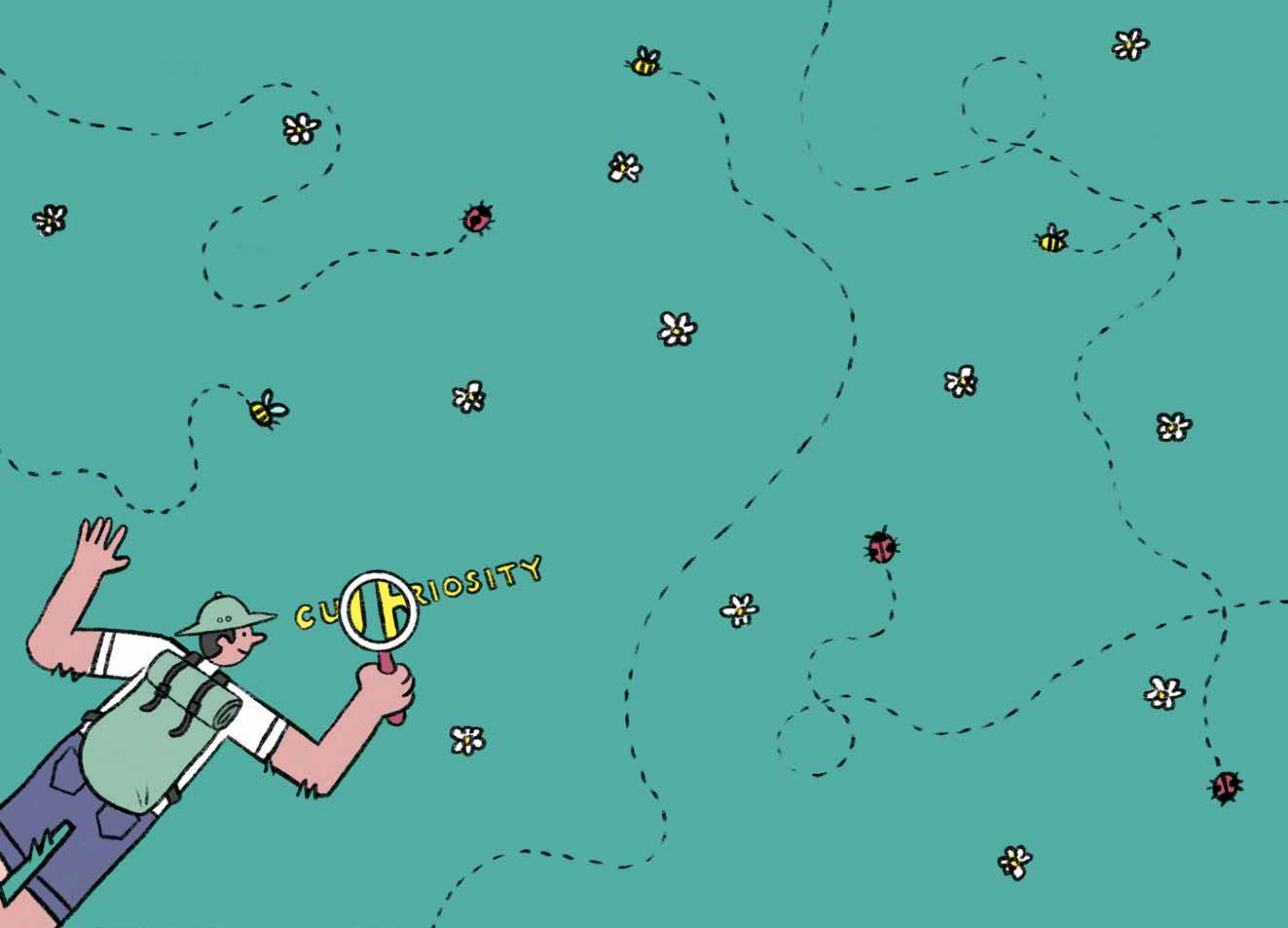
Welcome to the Curiosity issue of *milk* magazine

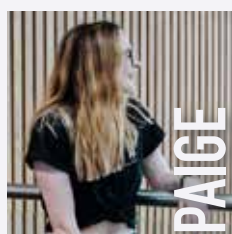
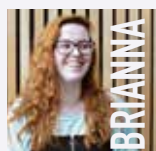
Curiosity inspires us; it enriches us; it fulfils us. As this year's editor, I wanted to ensure the theme for this issue was one that would bring a little something for everyone. We all get curious, whether it's exploring a new part of town or searching through an actors films on the web. Curiosity can mean a lot of things: a desire to learn, experimentation, or wanting to try something new.

In this issue of *milk* we have cast an inquisitive eye over many varied topics. We hope that the issue itself will feel like an exciting adventure, as we explore everything from local shops to remote parts of the world and even the farthest reaches of the solar system. We will also discover how curiosity plays a part in our creativity and the actions of the people around us. We have been sure to include plenty of personal experience to illuminate this.

Needless to say, I hope you will be curious to explore everything in this issue and I dearly hope we satisfy that curiosity and inspire you to practise curiosity in everything you do, as I welcome you to *milk's* Curiosity issue.

Edd Glasscote
EDITOR





MEET THE TEAM

Here at *milk* we are curious in everything we do. A philosophy of celebrating the unusual has been present since our inception. With a new batch of creative minds taking the reins of *milk* every year, you can always find something new.

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OUR NEED TO KNOW

TEXT LUCIE BLOOMFIELD

Curiosity, in its simplest definition, is the desire to know more. We see this all the time; hoards of people filing out of South Kensington station and into the museums, or children following up every answer you give them with a 'but why?'. These may seem quite trivial examples, but of course curiosity has manifested in grander ways too. In fact, JJ Thomson – the first person to discover subatomic particles – was researching purely for the satisfaction of his curiosity. As Dr Suzie Sheehy explains: 'at the time, this seemed to be a completely impractical discovery; Thomson didn't think there were any applications of electrons,' but 122 years on and we live in a world surrounded by technology we cannot imagine living without, none of which would be possible without our understanding of the electron. All because JJ Thomson got curious. This anecdote highlights a key element missing from our initial conceptualisation of the term 'curiosity'; it must be desire for knowledge with no particular practical use in mind, no foreseen end. Indeed, twentieth-century philosopher Hans Blumenberg exposes

the assumption most of us make of the connection 'between knowledge and usefulness in life'. Not all of the students in a mathematics class are curious to discover how Pythagoras' theorem works, and yet they desire to acquire that knowledge in order to pass their GCSE exams. If we take away this end, so that the students had no exams (what a dream!) and there was no legal obligation nor social pressure to be in school, we would then uncover who the curious students are, for they would be the only ones left. The reason these students stay to learn about Pythagoras is because of the pleasure one gains from engaging the intellect, focusing on and interacting with a subject. The joy and achievement is the pursuit, rather than the acquisition, of knowledge. Therefore, we can amend our definition of curiosity to 'the desire to know more for the sake of the pleasure in learning'.

Curiosity is often considered to be a uniquely human trait, but why have we evolved (or been given, if one is to take a theological approach) the ability to be curious? In short, what's the point? One

popular answer is that curiosity initiates progress. As with the example given earlier, we wouldn't be living as we are if it weren't for curiosity. Not just in scientific areas of study but in religion, art, philosophy; the list goes on. Imagine if Rembrandt hadn't been curious to see the effect of layering paint on thickly; the technique of impasto might never have been invented and gone on to influence other artists, such as Van Gogh. In the words of Walt Disney, 'we keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we're curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.' Curiosity doesn't just cause progression in the function of society (for example, medical advances), but it also causes progression of culture. Both of which are essential components to human life.

It seems intuitively true that every human being has the faculty to be curious, but this does not mean that everyone has equal 'appetite for knowledge' (as seventeenth-century philosopher Thomas Hobbes puts it). While a child at play might regularly



LIKE HUNGER OR COURAGE, CURIOSITY HAS EXTREMES YET ISN'T INNATELY BAD IF USED IN PROPORTION.

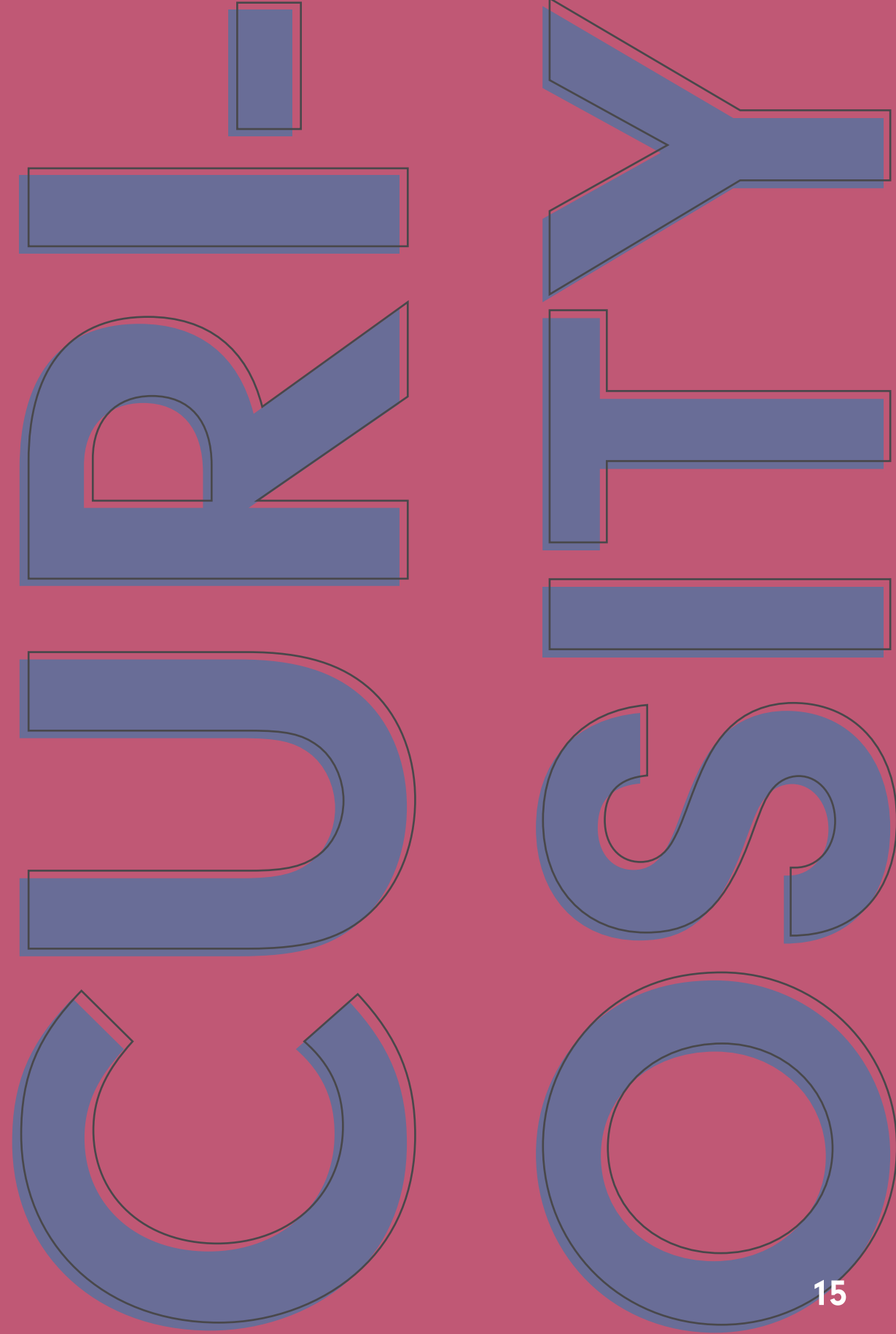
ask 'what's that?', a single parent lacking time and energy is not given as much opportunity to be simply curious. Influential Enlightenment philosopher David Hume advocates that curiosity 'requires youth, leisure, education, genius, and example to make it govern any person'. To be curious one must be given the opportunity to be so, by their circumstance, their peers, and themselves, but also by society, for example the 'rise of reason' might contribute to a decrease in curiosity. Jon Agar's article questioning 'why scientists say they ask "why?"' admits that while curiosity-driven research is still around, there are 'many forces' that shape scientific research, such as public desire and investment (for example, one is more likely to get funding for cancer treatment research than an endeavour that has no clear goal). Of course, most curiosity-driven research also has end goals, for as Hume states: 'Where the mind pursues any end with passion; tho' that passion be not deriv'd originally from the end, but merely from the action and pursuit; yet by the natural course of the affections, we acquire a concern for the end itself'.

However, interest without reason is not so much discouraged, but neglected, as it often seems to affect the short term insignificantly. Should society encourage curiosity? That question is still unanswered. Many traditions have warned against the

dangers of curiosity, such as the Greek myth of Pandora's Box, and Neil Kenny (Professor of French at the University of Oxford, specialising in early modern French literature) points out that 'from antiquity through the sixteenth century curiosity had most often – but not always – been a vice.' Curiosity tends to hold an amoral status today, perhaps due to the secularisation of society, placing less significance on arguments such as that of Enlightenment philosopher Voltaire who argues that we should not 'penetrate into the essence of the things He (God) created'. Yet, society is careful not to encourage curiosity, evident in the current saying 'curiosity killed the cat', which philosophers have suggested is due to the dangerous insatiability that can come with curiosity. One example of this is the smallpox relapse case of 1978; Professor Bedson, the then head of Birmingham Medical School's smallpox lab, was told to gradually shut down his laboratory due to the decline of the disease, but instead cut corners and increased research in order to satisfy his curiosity in the limited time he had, resulting in a final outbreak of smallpox, killing housewife Janet Parker.

However, like hunger (a natural phenomenon) or courage (widely considered a virtue), curiosity has extremes (uninterestedness and insatiability) yet is not necessarily innately bad, if used in proportion.

We've named our uniquely human 'love of truth' as curiosity (in Hume's terms), and through the satisfaction of this part of our human nature we not only fulfil ourselves intellectually and emotionally with the pleasurable experiences of pursuit and satisfaction, but push humanity and society forward. So go out and get curious. Find the time to sit down, relax and learn about something for the sake of learning about it. After all, it is the quality of curiosity that enables us to ask the question: 'What is the meaning of life?' and I would argue that being curious enough to ask this big question, in part answers it. ●



THE CHAOS OF BEING A HUMAN BEING

Third-year BSc Psychology student Sam Brown debates human behaviour. He wonders about the chaos of the mind and discusses the need to question beliefs.

What sparked your curiosity to study psychology?

Human beings. At A-Level, I took physics and mathematics, but finding there was always a definitive answer was unsatisfying. I was gifted a book about psychology and decided to switch over. Why do we do the things we do? In my opinion, human beings embody chaos. It's that variation that really drew me to psychology. Human behaviour cannot be reduced to a single element. People are like snowflakes: no two are the same.

Why do you need to explain the chaos?

It's not about finding a definitive explanation, but rather an understanding of the variables within the chaos to predict certain behaviours. I think the ability to understand and share the feelings of another is conceptually impossible. One person can never truly understand the thoughts and feelings of another because the way we perceive the world is different. You may be able to understand to a high degree, but you can never have true empathy. Curiosity is to human beings what swimming is to fish. It's what we do. We strive for knowledge. I believe that we understand little about ourselves as a species.

What obstacles have you encountered in psychology so far?

Some people have staunch views on particular subjects, like the belief that everything is biologically determined and that is it; they are reducing human beings down to just biology.

What is one thing that you wish more people knew or a belief that you hold with which many people disagree?

I wish people were more critical of their beliefs and values. People are blinded by their beliefs and are very set in their ways. Just because someone holds a different opinion to you doesn't mean you should necessarily discount their humanity. How can you be certain that you truly support the views you hold unless you interact with those that would challenge them?

What in studying psychology has changed your perspective of yourself?

The concept of emotional attachment. Holding on to negative things causes the distress in your life. There's a concept called rumination: a deep or considered thought about something. It's that moment before you drift off to sleep and your brain decides it's the perfect time to start contemplating life. However, if what you're thinking about is negative, you're not going to feel good. Coming forward, apologising and moving on is far more productive. The upset and hate you have for a person does more damage to you than it ever could to them. Forgive and forget those that you can. ●

The role of curiosity differs depending on what age you are – at least it did with me. When I was younger, I was the most curious I have ever been; I had nothing holding me back and was free from judgment. That nature was under threat when I was a teenager. Years of trying to fit in with the aesthetics and interests of the crowd severely limited my creativity and curiosity.

I did, however, manage to find my own outlet – films.

Films can be a method of escapism for anyone. They provide an insight into other perspectives, themes and ideas that may have otherwise been inaccessible. In a cinema, round at a friend's or on your sofa, you can completely submerge yourself in a world which doesn't truly exist; a curious awakening.

These awakenings came at various points in my life. Like most children I watched Disney film after Disney film. One I always went back to was *Mulan*. Aside from knowing all the lyrics to every single song, *Mulan*

taught me to be curious about what it meant to be a girl. As a six-year-old, I was shown a young woman who grew up in a strict community which did not allow for any variation from tradition. *Mulan*, on the other hand, a 16-year-old girl, makes the conscious decision to ignore the 'natural' order of her community and take the place of her father in war. Peering up at my TV screen with the tape playing, I was being presented with a different version of femininity; a different version of myself and the possibilities I had. It made me realise that I could be the decisive and confident warrior that *Mulan* had been, in my own way.

Teenage years are filled with discovering who you are and what you want to be. For me, much of my time

Eden Edwards explains how film can help show us different worlds and points of view.

& CURI-OSITY

as a teen was filled with the discovery and exploration of identifying as a lesbian. I think this process has been one of the most curious things I've gone through thus far. Naturally, films played a huge part in my journey.

The first time I watched *Carol* I was about 16. I was curled up in my bed hiding from my parents, who thought I'd gone to sleep hours ago. By this time in my life, I had already expressed my 'curiosity' about attraction to girls; but still being at school and having not yet had a girlfriend my parents' answer was typically: 'It's just a phase.' *Carol* and *Therese's* relationship flourished in front of my eyes and hit me like no heterosexual love story

ever had. By the end of the film I was a blubbing mess (and still am every time). I had seen the relationship that I'd been yearning and searching for. It allowed me to imagine my future. I could finally see myself in a love story, one with no extreme stereotypes – just two women falling in love. It allowed me to explore the life of an openly lesbian adult woman and filled the scared young 16-year-old with hope for the future.

I grew up in an environment which was accepting of my sexuality and I was always aware of my privilege in not experiencing homophobia first hand. Despite this privilege, I knew it was so important to be aware of the experiences of others in my community. The treatment of *Cameron* (Chloë Grace Moretz) in *The Miseducation of Cameron Post* shocked me but opened my eyes to a school of thought which I believe is naïve and uneducated. This film represented a true story – a real life narrative. Real-life thoughts and people who actually believed that homosexuality was a sin that could be cured. I came to the

sad realisation that *Cameron* wasn't the only young LGBTQ+ person, who's been through this. How does it happen? How can people think this? These questions have been floating around my head ever since, and I still don't really have the answers. An idea was unlocked in my head, a curiosity, that I didn't even know was there.

Now I am writing this as a 19-year-old who watches films to explore my inner curiosities, answering questions which allow me to further my development into being an independent individual. I am once again just as curious as I was when I was a six-year-old. I'm on the cusp of adulthood and I have all the possibilities in the world to explore my inquisitiveness; this new mature curiosity. ●

CELEBRATING SRI LANKA

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY MIA HOWELL

There's a lot of joy in exploring a part of the world that's off the beaten path. Mia Howell describes her experience visiting the small town of Hikkaduwa in Sri Lanka.

On Easter Sunday 2019, churches and hotels were targeted in a series of fatal organised terrorist bombings in Sri Lanka. This article was originally written before these attacks took place. After much consideration, we have decided to include the piece in this edition of milk. We hope to not let this act of violence minimise the beauty of Sri Lanka and its people highlighted in this article. Our deepest sympathies are with the victims, and the families of those affected.

In the summer of 2018, I made the decision to pack my bags and travel to Sri Lanka for three weeks, to volunteer with the charity organisation Travelteer. I was staying in a village called Kumarakanda, which is situated in Hikkaduwa, a small town located on the south coast. Hikkaduwa has a population of around 100,000 people. Like most of Sri Lanka, it is a largely Buddhist town, and the locals mainly speak Sinhalese. After the tragic Boxing Day tsunami in 2004, which devastated the area, the people of Hikkaduwa have worked tirelessly to rebuild the town. It

has found new economic growth through this dedication and developing new ways to attract tourists. On my visit it was truly humbling to get the opportunity to appreciate the authentic culture of Hikkaduwa, and admire the area for what it truly is: a strong, honourable community.

Travelteer is committed to empowering local communities in Sri Lanka, to offer long-term sustainability and positive assistance. It runs three programmes, two of which are dedicated to teaching sport and English in local schools. The third is the marine and wildlife conservation programme, which I spent my time on. This entailed replanting trees in the rainforest areas, volunteering at the local turtle sanctuary and working on beach and river cleans. Travelteer put in enormous efforts to support the community, and it was a rewarding and eye-opening experience to work alongside them.

As this would be my first trip to Asia, I was expecting a culture shock, one that would take some time to adjust to. Less than a

day after arriving, I felt entirely comfortable in Hikkaduwa. All it took was a few hours exploring the town to gain an understanding of the strong sense of community. Every local that I had the pleasure of meeting greeted me with warmth, and engaged me in conversation.

On my first full day, I made my way down the main town strip in Hikkaduwa, which is brimming with local handmade goods. It is full of colourful clothing, curious trinkets and delicate jewellery – I could have easily spent hours browsing. Many of the stalls displayed an assortment of handcrafted traditional wooden masks, beautifully bold in colour, and deeply intricate. These masks range from pocket sized to human height, with some several metres tall. Each has a story behind it, and locals believe they hold different merit depending on the design and which demon it represents: fire, peacock and cobra designs are a few common masks to ward off spirits.

Naga Viharaya is a small Buddhist temple, just a two-minute walk along the train line from where I was staying in Hikkaduwa. The temple is quiet, mostly visited by locals and monks taking the time to worship. It is home to a reclining Buddha, a historical representation of Buddha during his final illness. The temple is decorated with breathtaking ornate tiled ceilings, kept in near immaculate condition over the years. The windows are elegantly stained in pinks, blues and yellows, complemented by the colourful, detailed interiors. Walking around the temple, I had an overwhelming feeling of peace, and deep respect for the building.

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Even something as simple as travelling around Hikkaduwa was a surprisingly exciting experience. We zipped around town in some of the many tuk tuks, each carefully customised and themed by the driver, and dedicated to Disney, Bob Marley and countless other tributes.

Occasionally, we would need to catch a bus to travel a little further afield – often over to the city of Galle, slightly south-east of Hikkaduwa, to collect textile resources for the programme. The buses are customised in a similar way, with

beautifully designed ceilings portraying various Buddhist and Hindu gods, and the driver's seat area filled with statues and other religious ornaments. Arguably the best part about these journeys, however, are the food vendors who hop on to sell delicious street foods, right from the comfort of your bus seat. Among these snacks are dahl balls, which are fried spiced lentil balls served with chillies; a delicious treat, if you can handle the spice. Often vendors would sell fresh fruit, such as watermelon and pineapple: the perfect refreshment on a hot and busy bus.

It's safe to say that Hikkaduwa is a beautiful but overlooked location, with countless sights to satisfy curiosity. The town's small size does not limit how full of heart and soul it is. Indeed, those who live in this unique and beautiful location are one of the greatest treasures of Hikkaduwa, in their welcoming nature and their pride in their town. ●

If you are interested in volunteering with Travelteer in Sri Lanka, you can find out more information about the programmes they have to offer at travelteer.co.uk.



Mediocre Artwork

Sam Price is a second-year Fine Art student. Sam uses her work to explore her creativity and turn the mediocre things in life into art.

How would you describe your art?

I'd say my style is quite juvenile and stupid. I bring in aspects of absurdity and surrealism to give my work a fun and accessible feeling, but often there are dry and serious topics being addressed through the humour I use.

What inspires you?

Most of my enthusiasm comes from mediocre things. Something about a lazily applied green screen effect or a taxidermy fox gone wrong just inspires me to keep creating. I like the idea of not having to be polished or having a big budget. I watch *The Chin Review* series on Youtube to recharge my inspiration and am inspired by children's TV (*Horrible Histories* is a favourite). Literature like *Slaughterhouse Five*, and *Monty Python* of course.

Similarly, who inspires you?

The people who inspire me most are artists without inhibitions – people with the desire to create anything and everything. Wayne White is a huge influence on my work; I especially admire his ability to wear many hats in the art world (set designer, puppeteer, animator, sculptor, painter... the list goes on). Also, Kate Bush. How could anyone not be inspired by Kate Bush?

Where did the passion start?

I have always been very focused on the creative arts. My nan taught me how to draw and paint, and my mum encouraged my creativity, particularly my silly film-making ventures, running around as a nine-year-old with my laptop camera.

What's your latest project?

My current project involves an 'art machine' which I have made in my garage in Plymouth. I am planning on making a fake game show based on the machine and the idea of valuing and reproducing art.

What challenges have you faced?

A huge challenge about art, in general, is the long intermittent periods of feeling completely lost, uninspired, or self-conscious about your work. The problem with creative subjects like Fine Art is the artist often feels that their worth is determined by their work. I think it is important to bear in mind that everyone has these times, and that it's very much a part of the creative process to feel lost.

What's next?

A series of performance-based works over the summer, but at the very least I will be experimenting in my garage, making more ridiculous art.

Favourite artist?

Currently, I am following the work of Tom Woolner. Our work and attitudes are uncannily similar, and being a bit of a narcissist I just find that very exciting. ●

TEXT BRIANNA HENDERSON
PHOTOGRAPHY EVE PRICE

DR WILLIAM OLIVER

For every prominent historical figure there are many who fade into obscurity. Ceri Bailey explores the actions of a curious Bath resident and his important culinary and medical innovation.

ILLUSTRATION EMMA FLOOD

When pedestrians walk along the corner of Green Street and Broad Street, opposite St Michael's Without, they probably fail to notice the large oval plaque dedicated to Doctor William Oliver. Unfortunately the doctor has been forgotten by the majority of the population, perhaps because his largest contribution to the Georgian era is easily overlooked: a biscuit.

Doctor Oliver moved to Bath after gaining his MD from Cambridge in 1725, around the time that Bath's cultural prominence was rapidly growing. Here he rubbed shoulders with some of the most famous Bathonians of the Georgian period. Along with influential figures such as John Wood the Elder and Ralph Allen, Dr Oliver contributed to the opening of the Royal Mineral Water Hospital, located in the centre of Bath. He acted as Deputy President of the hospital fund and eventually as a physician there.

Dr Oliver's most famous achievement in the city of Bath, however, was a cracker-like biscuit: the 'Bath Oliver'. Introduced in the 1750s, it was promoted as a bread substitute for the health-conscious Bathonian, and an aid to digestion. It is suspected that Dr Oliver invented the biscuit to counter the

consumption of sugary Bath Buns, which Oliver believed were unhealthy.

Bath has always been a centre for health and medicine, as the spring waters were considered to have healing qualities. During the eighteenth century, a visit to Bath to take the waters became a part of the annual calendar for the Upper Sorts. The water from the springs has a peculiar, not especially pleasant, metallic taste due to the mineral content. It is understandable, then, that Georgian visitors might indulge themselves with a tasty treat such as the Bath Bun, unknowingly contributing to ill health. This made the Bath Oliver a healthier alternative.

The Oliver biscuit became increasingly popular after the doctor's death. He shared the secret recipe with his coachman, Atkins, who set up a shop in Green Street and continued to make the biscuit. The shop sent biscuits across the country, making a huge fortune. According to Nibbles Cheese, 'Bath's Oldest Cheesemongers', Atkins' shop passed through multiple owners, eventually making around 80,000 biscuits a day in 1952. Although no longer produced in Bath, the biscuits are still available today and, apparently, pair incredibly well with the local Cheddar. ●



In the Kitchen of... Cascara

Sus is a Bath local who took over Cascara in October 2018. She explains how curiosity plays a role in this vegan café.

What motivated you to take over Cascara?

I'd always thought about running a café, but I'd never been confident enough. I didn't want the responsibility when I was younger. I just wanted to leave my job, go home and forget about it. Something happened which inspired me – a friend died and it made me realise that life's too short. I saw Cascara for sale so I got a loan and bought it – it was definitely the right thing to do.

Was it a big career change?

I was an account manager for a hospitality company for the last three years. Before that, I'd worked in kitchens and catered at festivals. It wasn't a massive change but I hadn't run a business before!

Why did you want to make Cascara vegan?

I'm vegan so I didn't want to be serving dairy, because it's not what I believe in. But also, there's a demand for it. I wanted to educate people about how tasty vegan products can be.

What are your curiosities?

The health benefits of a vegan diet. I'm really interested in anything that links to that. I watch documentaries on Netflix and study Naturopathic Nutrition – they promote a vegan diet. Also how being vegan impacts the planet, I find both of those things interesting. ●

Sus

MAKING POLITICS ACCESSIBLE

Laura-Jasmin Nuttall is a third-year English Literature and Creative Writing student who is developing an app called iVote. Allowing users to vote in an easier way, it aims to encourage non-voters to engage with politics. She intends to make the voting system more accessible.

Where did the idea come from?

I come from a working-class background, where the majority of non-voters sit, and the problem was many people said: 'I would vote but I don't know what I'm voting for, I don't understand it.' I went to Sweden for a semester and they have a digital voting system. I thought if Sweden can have it, then surely the UK can have it as well.

What sparked the curiosity?

I seemed to be the only one who voted in my area and everybody else didn't. My mum's side didn't vote. My dad did because he's more middle class, whereas my mum is working class, so it's a bit half and half.

What's the link between English Literature and politics?

We're analysts. We're continuously analysing, whether it's a film or a newspaper article, also with what's going on with Brexit. Someone needs to do something.

What's the goal?

I want more people to vote. In the European Referendum, over 13 million

people didn't vote and that's quite a lot of people. Non-voters come up with excuses: 'I don't know what I'm voting for,' or 'I don't understand what's going on.' The main aim is to get everyone to vote and ensure their voices are heard.

Why is the app important?

The user can access the manifestos of parties in a simple, easy-to-understand format. The voting process is intimidating. There's a lot of technical jargon, and for someone who isn't educated, that's going to put them off. Politics is really confusing.

How does the app work?

You download the app and create an account in order to vote. Once you've signed up for an account, a verification code is sent for double security reasons – because it is voting, it's sensitive content. Then by using a QR code you unlock the information about each party – there's videos, manifestos. The points are bullet-pointed and simplified into sections, so, for example, if only education applies to you, you can just look at that. It's all separated clearly.

What's next?

I have been in contact with the Electoral Reform Commission, the House of Commons and the Bath local MP. They like the idea and they want to give me a pilot to run it as a trial. Unfortunately, there's no funding, so I have to find a contractor or a donation. Hopefully within the next 10 years, this app could actually be available to download. The aim is to get it out for 2 July 2028 – 100 years after working-class women got the vote in 1928. ●



ART & CURIOSITY

Curiosity not only inspires us to find out about something new, but it can also inspire us in the things we do. Sylwia Holmes explains how an inquisitive nature is important in her art, and how that art helps her to view the world in a new light.

TEXT AND ILLUSTRATION
SYLWIA HOLMES

From a young age, I was curious to learn about the natural world. I would try to understand why it a refuge and a way to investigate the world around the nine-year-old me. For many years the people who influenced me, and maybe I myself, had a scientific attitude. Later, I discovered that science alone, as interesting as it was to me, wasn't what was fuelling this inner search. Instead, art and the capacity to share my perspective were my motivations all along. Once I understood the motivations behind my creative outlook, I started to shift the focus of my curiosity. Books held less interest for me and I stopped asking my dad about how the dinosaurs ceased to exist. I became aware of what drawing and painting meant to me.

Art is a constant quest. The idea of creating the unexpected is so powerful and seductive that curiosity is a crucial

feature in the personality of an artist. Curiosity makes us wonder and makes us humble: it makes us ready to learn, to begin again, and to never give up. It's this constant motivation which make us hungry to discover and to express, in as many different ways as possible, what is inside us. In other words, it makes us creative.

The wonderful thing about curiosity is that it can mean loads of different things to each and every one of us. But for me, curiosity manifests as this unstoppable desire to travel. To experience through my own senses what it's like to be in a place for the first time. The indescribable feeling of being somewhere physically that you imagined, seeing through your own eyes, feeling through your own hands and hearing through your own ears. It's almost paralysing and at the same time incredibly inspiring. It fills me with endless streams of imagination and leaves me ready to create. I know I have a story to tell because of my travels.

That's when I know I'm on the right path with a painting: when it gives me that thrill, it's almost unbearable being inside my body. I tell a story because it's meaningful to me and if I find it relevant then other people will possibly find it so too. In the end, the number one reasoning behind art is its ability to connect us with others. Through art, drawing, writing and photography we feel empathy and the perspectives of others; curiosity will let you learn the different perspectives of others, to listen to their stories, and anecdotes they share with you through their kind conversation. I sometimes think us artists have a privileged position: a magnificent view of the world where there's this almost magical spark that makes us want to understand the world better.

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much deeper and transforming what you don't know into something transcendent.

Personally, the thing I love the most about creating art outside my comfort zone and being curious is the opportunity to find new relevant topics. It's astonishing how you might not think that some person or place has affected you, until you start recognising it in your drawings. It's like a puzzle you're working on every day. Every day making little changes and progressing until some day you hopefully finish it. Each piece counts and the idea of seeing the whole thing finished, perfectly put, is so interesting to us that it motivates us to continuously work towards our goals. It's questioning how all of this will look tomorrow that fuels my curiosity and motivates me to keep going. ●

THE LAST NIGHTS IN CARE

She grew up on angel cards, laid out every night to stir

her curiosity and tempt visions of the morning in her sleep.

Every hand dealt was identical after she cut most

of the deck, carving a fool-proof future that would carry each prayer to pay off.

Reassurance came first, glowing with the gilded outline of her mother.

Then Divine Wisdom, chosen for the picture she imagined was her sister,

drinking from her chalice well. Last was Awakening, which she had customised herself, a face

cut from a Polaroid stuck carefully over the angel's head. In this card each night,

she saw herself holding a sceptre in one hand, a flowing goblet in the other, Awoken –

as the card had promised – as something more than she had ever believed herself to be.

DELIGHT A THIEF Charity Shop Finds

Honey, our Art Director, and Edd, our Editor, met up with members of the band Delight a Thief to explore a selection of charity shops and find out about how curiosity and ingenuity play a part in their lives and careers.

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY HONEY DEBNEY-SUCCOIA



Music is inherently curious. To make new music, with new melodies and new lyrics, the creator has to explore different ideas and push the boundaries of what currently exists. So musicians are naturally generally curious people. With this in mind, we met with Ali, Jake and Danny from Delight a Thief to talk about all things music and curiosity.

Based in Bristol, Delight a Thief are a melting pot of psych rock, dub-reggae and electronica. Alongside Ali (Alejandro) Invernizzi (lead guitar/vocals), Jake Gazzard (bass/rhythm guitar) and Danny Waldron (drums/vocals), the five-piece is completed by Harmony Knight (lead vocals) and Sindbad Gillam (synth/vocals). Their sound has been described as having an

Danny
↓



‘undeniable flair’, and impresses audiences time after time.

After a quick coffee to wake everyone up, we headed out to hit the charity shops up and down Moorland Road in Bath. We browsed shelves and rails, looking for items that screamed out to be picked up, and chatted with Ali, Jake and Danny about their experiences with music. I was struck by the amalgamation of different styles and characters in Delight a Thief. Each member had a distinct, strong personality, yet they fit together, bouncing off each other. You could really see this when they spread out across the charity shop: each naturally found themselves drawn to different items.

Jake discovered a shelf full of rings, vowing to fill every finger, whereas Ali immediately buried his head in the books, telling us about a vineyard in South Africa that uses ducks as natural pest control. Danny was mostly drawn to the clothes and spoke about how he usually ends up buying women’s clothes from charity shops, which didn’t faze him in the slightest. The combination of them all together was refreshing – they had an outlook on life that in itself inspired curiosity.

Ali dug a box of Yu-Gi-Oh! cards out of a basket hidden in a corner and it made me reminisce on my childhood, reminding me of the many days spent playing with them. Lifting the cards up, he exclaimed how they brought such fond memories. We styled bizarre outfits, with Danny trying an oversized neon retro jacket – which Ali decided was ‘the wrong kind of 70s’. Jake decked himself in bejewelled rings, pink velvet boots and bucket hats, later experimenting with an oversized lampshade as a bucket hat – which we admired, though I’m not sure how it would work logistically on stage. Ali



“Always BE CURIOUS”

(unless you're
a cat then
it'll kill you)

sported an assortment of weird and wacky sunglasses. We discussed the world of fashion and self-expression, and how they explore their image as a band through the way they dress (apparently, 90s rave attire didn't go down too well with Ali). With their music being so varied, they explained that it made sense for them to try out different fashion styles alongside it. And it keeps things fun.

Edd wanted to know how the band felt curiosity played a role in their music. Danny told us that they're 'curious all the time'. 'We fuse genres together, there's an element of curiosity with that,' he said. Fusing genres and creating something new requires curiosity – it can't really happen without it. Delight a Thief have learned that great things happen when you mix things up, try new directions together and find a balance in an eclectic mix of influences. Danny summed up our discussions with some final words: 'I think it's healthy – always be curious. Unless you're a cat, then it'll kill you.' ●



Jake
←

MORE THAN THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

Second-year BA Business student Dan Gottlieb shares with us the necessity of maintaining an open mind. He explains how the pursuit of happiness is more important than keeping to the initial end goal.

What planted the roots of your curiosity to study business?

I worked abroad as a recruiter for Aerospace and Defence before university, which set the scene for understanding business dynamics. Business is logical and analytical. It's like maths: there's a definitive answer. That's the big difference between business and creative courses.

What is it like doing a degree as a part-time student?

It's hard because you don't feel as connected to the university as others. The lecturers are definitely less engaged. There's a lack of drive, but it also gives you a lot more freedom with what you do with your time. It just depends what you have going on in the background. But it gives me enough time to work at my jobs as a gymnastics instructor and bartender. It's a constant fight for balance.

What do you wish more people knew, or what belief do you hold that other people disagree with?

A general belief I hold is to never stop learning – in any industry. People should realise the importance of getting into good habits now. If you're good at doing something now, you're going to be

better at doing it later in life. Learning is something that you will always be doing, especially with how business paradigms will shift within the next decade because of automation, or even just lack of finance to be able to pay for people's jobs. People will have to adapt so that they will be learning more. So if they can switch into this mode of being able to accept learning now it will benefit them later on. When you're a kid you take in more information because it's the first time you've heard that information, so you have to go into a trance-like state where you're open to more things, or at least more opinions. A beginner's mind is one that is always learning, right? The experience of life is about learning.

Has doing business changed your perspective on yourself or the world?

I've learned more from practising business in the real world. Going to uni made me realise that I shouldn't jump on one bandwagon. In the future, I want to do something that's more closely related to my gymnastics instructing; something that is physical, interactive and builds trust with strangers. I just hope I'm happy in whatever job I have. I want to be a wind-tunnel instructor after uni, and have the degree in the background as a back-up to help with venture projects or start-up innovation projects from LEDCs [Less Economically Developed Country] primarily. No matter what job role you'll be in, you'll be affected by business. Companies continue to have more power than governments do. ●

SPACE

One of the human endeavours that has most commonly embodied the spirit of curiosity throughout human history is that of astronomy. Edd Glasscote follows this spirit from the ancient era to the modern day and explores the life of one of the most curious and influential astronomers.

TEXT EDD GLASSCOTE ILLUSTRATION EMMA FLOOD

Exploration is one of the purest expressions of curiosity. Previously in history, curious souls could explore the Earth, finding places that they and their cultures had no idea existed. However, in the age of information, knowledge about the remotest parts of the world is available at a moment's notice. The spirit of curiosity has always been present in humankind's investigations of the cosmos. One of the astronomers who best

represented this was William Herschel, whose tireless curiosity was an important example to the astronomers who would come after him. In the following centuries this spirit would be crucial to science. With the help of the ever-increasing power of technology, humans are discovering more and more about the mysterious, puzzling, fascinating and utterly awe-inspiring cosmos beyond our little planet.

Space has always been a fascinating concept for humans, perhaps more so than finding out about the planet we live on. Ancient civilisations would often study the stars and attempt to understand the vast expanse they saw, but would rarely pay much attention to the world beyond their nation, or those they wanted to conquer. Often considered the father of science, Aristotle created his theory of the stars in 'the celestial region' in the third century BCE. Many of these early assumptions about the planets were proven to be inaccurate. Aristotle's models were based on the geocentric model of the solar

system, which placed the Earth, as opposed to the Sun, at the centre of the solar system. Despite this, through analysing the movements of the stars, early astronomers were able to identify many of the closer planets in the solar system. In comparison, humans wouldn't produce a reasonably accurate map of the known world until Ptolemy's *Geography* over 400 years later.

The realm we see when looking up to the stars is so fundamentally different from the one we know, there's little wonder it sparks such curiosity. William Herschel, the astronomer most famous for discovering the planet Uranus, embodied this curiosity. One of the most impressive elements of his discoveries is that he was entirely self-taught. Early in adulthood, Herschel was forced to England when his native Hanover was occupied by the French. Hailing from a family of musicians, he became a successful and popular composer and organist, being offered positions up and down the country. Eventually Herschel became organist at the new Octagon Chapel in Bath and it is here that he humoured his curiosity for astronomy. Having no formal education in the subject, he would frequently read about the stars, a hobby which soon became an obsession.

According to his sister Caroline, who came to live with him in Bath and became

a respected astronomer in her own right, William would go to bed reading his favourite authors in the fields of astronomy and optics. He would then wake up full of ideas for methods he could use to set eyes on the celestial bodies he had been reading about. When not at work as an organist, Herschel would experiment with lenses. He constructed his own telescope and then began to make improvements on the formula. He wanted to see how effective he could make a telescope, so he could find out even more about space to satisfy his curiosity. This energy and fervour would cause him to turn almost every room in his house on New King Street into a



makeshift workshop, and his basement into a foundry with metalworking equipment and kiln. This allowed him to experiment with making mirrors and, after plenty of trial and error, a telescopic mirror of three feet in diameter, the largest in the world at the time. His hard work made him the best telescope-maker in England.

The previously unknown seventh planet – Uranus – was discovered by Herschel from the back garden of his house in Bath. One of his main efforts during this time had been to familiarise himself with the brightest stars in the sky. This led him to examine the stars of the Gemini constellation in 1781. One of these stars struck him as ‘curious’ and after returning to examine it a few days later, he found it had moved, suggesting that it was a closer body to Earth than the other stars. At first, Herschel believed it was a comet, until it was further analysed and discovered to be a planet, one never identified before. This discovery was revelatory, since the known area of the solar system doubled in size as a result of Uranus’ distant orbit. It was a huge development for the models of the solar system. It also vastly changed Herschel’s life, as he was offered a pension from King George III to make him a full-time astronomer, allowing him to give up music. In return he would move to Windsor and allow the royal family to use his equipment to stargaze.

In the following centuries, astronomers carried on the legacy of curiosity laid out for them by their predecessors (such as Herschel) by discovering more about our solar system, such as the eighth planet Neptune, and about the solar systems and galaxies beyond our own. Once it was technologically possible, humans sent probes and telescopes into space in order to better uncover the nature of the cosmos. The aptly named ‘Curiosity’ rover has been

“The world ^{we see} up to the ^{is so} fundam^{en}tally different ^{we know} ^{wonder, it} curiousity.”

When looking ^{there's little sparks such} ^{sity.”}

exploring and studying the surface of Mars since 2011, simply to soothe the burning desire to find out more about this other world, so close yet so foreign when compared to our own. Similarly, the Herschel space telescope, named after William Herschel of Bath, was sent to examine the stars and further humanity’s understanding of space. It’s evident that curiosity is a vital component in finding out about the cosmos; something that realistically has little bearing on day-to-day life on Earth.

Unfortunately, since the time of the Cold War, curiosity is no longer the key motivator for the most well-funded and successful space explorations. The space race was crucially a political endeavour, perhaps spoiling such a landmark moment as Neil Armstrong’s first step on the moon. In the 21st century, as technology advances and private companies are finding space travel more and more viable, the motivating factor is being drawn further away from the curiosity that made discovering the universe such an enriching pursuit. Companies such as SpaceX and Virgin Galactic are some of the frontrunners in current space exploration and while it could be argued that their endeavours are helping to advance humanity, there is less of a role for astronomy’s inquisitive spirit. Now that much of the solar system is known, it is free for companies to commercialise as the processes become more achievable. It seems a shame, however, that the legacy of curiosity has been leading towards flights through orbit for ‘space tourists’ – feeding off the curiosity of those who are willing or able to pay. One can only hope that, even after this, humans will continue to look outwards from our little rock, with the sole purpose of curiosity; hearts full of wonder at the vast unthinkable beauty that humans have been in love with for millennia. After all, there is so much more to uncover in our curious cosmos. ●

MODERN WITCHCRAFT: SOCIAL MEDIA'S NEWEST SUBCULTURE

Laura Medicott explores the newest trend in popular culture: witchcraft. Where did it come from?

TEXT AND ILLUSTRATION LAURA MEDICOTT

A few months ago, I stumbled on the #witchcraft tag on Instagram. I, like many others, fell down a rabbit hole of sage, beautifully illustrated tarot cards and aesthetically pleasing arrangements of crystals. Whether the post is about manifesting your dreams into reality or a guide to making moonwater, they all expose a trend that is only gaining more traction: witchcraft. Why are young women turning to a practice that historically would have seen them hanged? What is so appealing about witchcraft that it has begun to affect media and the millennial cultural climate overall?

The proof of the growing presence of witchcraft as a new lifestyle is in the numbers: The term 'witch aesthetic' reached peak popularity in late 2018, yielding 35,800,000 results when Googled. At the time of writing, #witchcraft on Instagram yields 2,922,256 posts and #witchblr brings up hundreds of Wiccan and witchcraft oriented blogs on Tumblr. So clearly, the content is there, and the

fast-paced growth and focus on aesthetics point to a movement. However, it's relatively difficult to pinpoint the start of a trend when it was not a trend to begin with.

Witchcraft and Wicca are spiritual and intensely personal in nature, and have been around for generations. Witchcraft as a practice has existed for as long as our recorded history. It has endured the rise and fall of multiple civilisations and spanned cultures worldwide. In the West, the witch has been vilified, especially in Protestant Europe. A woman who represented a threat to the norm was hunted, tortured and burned. Religious anxieties and the patriarchy's chokehold on control of the female needed a way to keep everyone in line, and fear-mongering around 'devil worshipping' seemed to do the trick. The powerful woman was demonised, whether she actually was a witch or not. With such a dark history associated with the term, how could it become an easily consumed life style and a brand?

With the advent of social media, practitioners of witchcraft and Wicca had the opportunity to create easy networks and grow communities. It lived, and still lives, on Tumblr, YouTube, and Instagram. The practice existed there almost as a subculture until, in the past year or so, it has become marketable. 'Trendy' witchcraft, which is disconnected from the spiritual and religious aspects of Wicca, can be traced to the advent of self-care culture. The practice of self-care, and accompanying visual language of herbal teas and meditation nooks, could arguably be attributed to a response to face-paced capitalism focused on productivity at any cost. Self-care sought to remind people to put themselves and their mental and emotional wellbeing first, usually through techniques of mindfulness and meditation.

Once it could be branded, and companies started to profit from self-care, people switched to spirituality. This saw the younger generations dabbling in crystals and believing in the law of attraction. But this movement has now also been commodified, with online shops such as Audrey Kitching's Crystal Cactus, which promises the products will '[embody] the energy to transform, inspire, and heal'. Spirituality then took a different path: a lot of the witchcraft practice follows the same thread. The law of attraction turned into manifesting and the power of intention, and the crystals have stuck around. But why witchcraft?

Its dark history in western culture has imbued a lot of meaning into the term 'witch'. Calling yourself a witch can be seen as a return to self-made power: a counterculture that rejects the highly digitised, mass consumption capitalist culture of the Western world. It may be a way for women specifically to reclaim what they were once killed for: self-realised power. As feminist scholar Silvia

Federici put it, witches are 'the embodiment of a world of female subjects that capitalism had to destroy: the heretic, the disobedient wife, the woman who dared to live alone, the obeah woman who poisoned the master's food'. The practice is an empowering way to connect to your mother line, to nature, to folklore. In this new age of feminism, that kind of connection can't be coincidence.

Those invested in the trend are usually Gen Z and millennial women. A woman's curiosity about her own power is key to the appeal. We live in a world where we think we know everything. We can answer any question with a few keystrokes. But the occult is called the occult for a reason. Curiosity about the known and unknown is a huge pull to young women, especially if it could be a way to take power into your own hands, in a society where women are finally being encouraged to do so. However, all counterculture movements become absorbed by mainstream culture. Punk went from a rejection of society to a lifestyle you could buy into by purchasing a skirt with a few





THE WAY WE THINK OF THE WITCH HAS FOREVER CHANGED

safety pins. Mainstreaming witchcraft could negate or limit the point of the movement in the first place. This entails a process we have seen before. First, the trend will develop an easily identified, appealing visual language. The social media presence has passed this point. The tag #witchaesthetic translates to an easily imitated look, colour scheme and composition of images. There are YouTubers who may have started with a focus on spirituality and even the religious aspects of Wicca, but the companies that use their visual language will take the feel of their 'witch lookbook' videos and turn them into fashion lines, overlooking the religious connotations. The masses supplied their own demand and the brands are catching on. We're likely to see high-street brands market 'witchcraft collections' at some point in the future.

Pop culture will in turn make it fashionable: *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* would never have caught on the way it has five years ago. It is a very well-timed piece of media, exemplifying the commodification of surface-value aesthetics and using the thread of female empowerment as something to market. On social media, it has moved from small creators to big brands such as *Buzzfeed* and *Teen Vogue*. Celebrities are also cashing in. Lana del Rey's announcement that she and other witches would put a curse on Donald Trump, as funny as it was, put celebrity endorsement on the map for witches.

All in all, the way we think of the witch has forever changed. Social media both gave witchcraft life again and will eventually devoid it of meaning. Despite this, it will have given young women everywhere a creative outlet and fun way to feel empowered and connected to nature. So even though you can buy crystals and tarot decks at Urban Outfitters, witchcraft has hopefully reminded people that we don't know everything, that self-empowerment and connecting to nature is important, and to adopt self-made happiness instead of buying it. ●



USING BUSINESS TO DO GOOD



TEXT MARIAH ROBERTS
PHOTOGRAPHY NELLIE OWENS

Nellie Owens is in her third year. She started as a BACA student studying Creative Writing and 2D, and since second year has taken Creative Writing as a single subject. She talks about starting her own embroidery business.

Tell us a little about Earth to Nellie.

I wanted to find a way of uniting my love of embroidery with my fascination for plants and the human form. I work hard on body positivity every day and, in a society that focuses on trying to look a certain way, I wanted my work to deviate from that. I think it's wonderful that art surrounding the topic of body positivity is blooming at the moment. It's rewarding for both the creator and consumer.

What made you want to start your own business?

My mental health dipped last year, and one of the thoughts that brought me out of that rut was the realisation that I needed to be earning money in a more fulfilling way. My job needed to feed my soul rather than take from it. Last summer was when I finally admitted embroidery was what I wanted to do. I loved the idea of opening a little shop. I'd thought about doing it before but never had the confidence. Getting over that first hurdle and saying to myself, 'Actually, you can do this,' was one of the hardest things I've done.

What was your inspiration?

I grew up in the countryside and spent a lot of time in our garden. I'd be picking daisies

or making potions using grass, leaves and mud. Now, I have a growing plant collection at home that brings me joy. Living in a city like Bath, I feel I have been very lucky. There's a lot of greenery here. I am heavily inspired by art, too. Artists such as Carolyn Gavin [who is a painter and illustrator], Neva Hosking [who does portraits and traditional printing] and Roeqiya Fris [an illustrator who uses her designs to create clothing]. Their hard work is a huge motivation.

What are your hopes and goals with Earth to Nellie?

The main goal for me is happiness. This might sound corny, maybe even naive, but this business was born out of feeling unhappy with myself. If I focus on channelling positivity, maybe it will help someone else to feel okay or happy with themselves, which is all I could ask for.

What's next for you and what are the issues that concern you most?

With the urgency of climate change, I think I've developed environmental anxiety and starting a business has definitely amplified that anxiety. I've always had this fear of adding to the masses of plastic, chemical and water waste we produce. The fast fashion industry is harmful to our environment; I want to reduce the impact my business has on the planet by transitioning into upcycling. The aim is to source used items (cushion covers and tote bags) and embroider onto those. I eventually want all of my packaging to be 100 per cent biodegradable. ●

**THE IMPORTANT
THING IS NOT TO
STOP QUESTIONING.
CURIOSITY HAS
ITS OWN REASON
FOR EXISTING.**

ALBERT EINSTEIN

**curiosity is the
engine of
achievement**

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