

### FORMER KU STUDENT SPRINTS TO SUCCESS

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### THE WORST TATTOOS AT KU REVEALED

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# STUDENT LABOUR SUPPORT PLUNGES

- River poll shows 20% drop in Labour support since 2017
- But more students than ever want to remain in European Union

**EXCLUSIVE**  
By **ARIANE GOMES**  
and **NAJIB HASSAN**

Student support for the Labour party has plummeted because of confusion over Jeremy Corbyn's Brexit policy, according to an exclusive poll by The River.

With a general election expected within weeks, our survey of more than 500 students across the

University showed 48.5 per cent would vote for the Labour party.

However, that is down from more than 70 per cent in 2017 before the last general election when Mr Corbyn's message was hugely popular with younger voters. With the Lib Dems and Greens taking nearly 30 per cent it means the anti-Tory vote faces being split.

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## HUNKY FORMER KU STUDENT IS 'WORLD'S MOST DESIRABLE MAN'

FULL STORY ON PAGE 3

# Sexual health centre closed for academic year

By **ALICE CARTER**

Kingston University's sexual health centre is closed this academic year due to reduced NHS funding.

Students who were previously able to visit the sexual health centre discreetly must now book appointments through the University GP for advice or sexual health screenings.

A KU spokeswoman: "To increase the number of appointments available, the practice has extended the hours

of nurse appointments by 1.5 hours a day."

The LGBTQ+ society at KU holds regular safe sex talks and often encourages students to get tested at the centre.

The society's president Jack Bridger said: "We're losing out [on] easy access to getting tested which was one of the defining facts of the AIDS crisis. We couldn't get the help, and people couldn't get informed so this closure is very damaging to our communi-

ty and the student body as a whole," Bridger added.

The spokeswoman said that students wishing to access a walk-in sexual health clinic can visit The Wolverton Centre at Kingston Hospital.

Bridger is concerned that there will be an increase in waiting times and a higher number of appointments.

"They're both in high demand and require appointments well in advance with very little walk in's available, and

ultimately this will put people off when you make it less convenient.

"I don't think they realise the impact this will have.

"Students will be less likely to get tested. Just having a place to go for a way to get informed is vital, knowledge saves lives and keeps us healthy," he added.

Free chlamydia and gonorrhoea testing kits are available at the surgery reception counter.



Jack Bridger, President of KU's LGBTQ+ society Photo: Marie Mannes

# Students fed up as Knights Park refurbishment delay continues

By **AIMEE MILLER** and **MARY MANN**

Students are fed up over delayed Knights Park refurbishments as workspaces continue to be disrupted.

According to the Kingston University website the developments had initially been estimated to finish in 2019, but are now rumoured to be completed by October 2020.

Fourth-year fine art and art history student Faith McKie said: "The 3D workshop is an integral element of Knights Park campus and for every course not just fine art. We use it daily, and without it open, it feels like my work has been forced to a standstill while we wait.

"For fine art, your practice could literally be anything, you can make anything you want, and some of us rely heavily on the machines, materials, and tools from the workshop in order to construct our work."

The University said the developments will enrich student learning experiences and maintain the University's award-winning status.

Additional routes to classrooms, the library and the student bar created with the intention to ease student mobility on campus have instead made it harder for students.

The 22-year-old art student added:



Students continue to be disrupted

Photo: Marie Mannes

"We can't access the campus easily. The direct route from our studios in the Avionics building (behind Middle Mill halls) has been completely blocked off. We have to take a side passage round to the front of the building rather than be-

ing able to enter where the workshops are at the back. Which if you're carrying heavy materials or artwork, it's a struggle."

Third-year graphic design student Linda Harmaala said: "It's a bit of a

labyrinth if you don't know where you're going. I don't know if that will change when the renovations finish."

Construction began in 2017, and KSA students have been studying alongside the construction work ever since.

McKie said: "It's ridiculous that it's not finished yet. I remember construction starting in the latter half of my second year, and since then I have studied abroad for a whole year, returned for my final year, and it's still not finished."

Students are particularly worried over whether the work will be finished in time for the degree show, as spacing and visibility plays an important role in their artwork.

However, third-year illustration and animation student Emily Noyce remains positive: "I'm not annoyed that I don't have access to it, because if the University is trying to improve itself, that's a good thing."

The £30m refurbishment itself serves to be a multifunctional edition to the campus.

A KU spokesperson said: "This work is part of a larger transformation programme intended to enhance students' teaching and learning at the University."

## KU student demands gender neutral toilets

By **AIMEE MILLER**

Student campaigner demands KU accommodate non-binary students better, despite the opening of new gender-neutral toilets.

Abigail Grant, Kingston student and board member in Amnesty International UK, feels that nothing has changed with the addition of the new toilets.

Grant said: "KU needs to do a lot more to increase the amount of GN toilets, and also the visibility and cleanliness of them."

Knights Park has 16 cubicles, and five more will be in the new Town House building.

Grant finds the additions long overdue after two years since the initial trial started.

Grant said: "The GN toilets in Penrhyn are a disgrace. They are hidden away in the library without any appropriate signage."

Last January Grant submitted a petition to the Student Union demanding GN toilets in every university building.

She says the additional toilets would improve inclusivity, and "more importantly, accessibility, making sure our fellow students feel comfortable and should not be in fear of being verbally or physically abused for having to choose a bathroom."

A spokesperson for the University said: "Following positive feedback from students and staff, plans were put in place to develop other similar facilities around the University."

# KU deny Town House delay despite 2019 promise

By **NATALIE CROOKHAM**

Kingston University has denied delays to the Town House build despite previously advertising completion for September 2019.

The multi-million-pound landmark building on Penrhyn Road is now set to open in January 2020, four months behind schedule.

A Kingston University spokeswoman said: "It is anticipated that the building will open for staff and students use after the Christmas and New Year holiday period on January 6."

Some students are disappointed by the delay as they had hoped to be using the space already.

Media skills student Josh Bennett was expecting the project to be completed for his arrival at KU and said:

"I was definitely looking forward to using the new spaces in the Town House. As a creative student, the environment of which you work has a huge impact on the creative process."

The Town House building will provide a modern learning environment which includes a new library, 300 seat multimedia auditorium and rehearsal space for dance courses.

Social areas available to students, staff, alumni and the public include a covered courtyard, multiple cafes, landscaped grounds and space for events.

Second-year dance student Nikhita Nistala said: "I was looking forward to classes in the Town House. I was hoping to have at least one year in there before graduating."

The LRC has been inconvenienced

too as they were unable to move into the more spacious facilities on the upper floors of the new build over the summer.

In preparation for the move, the library has removed many books from the LRC shelves, and students are having difficulty accessing resources.

Library assistant Aniqqa Khan: "It is making things a bit more hectic. Obviously, if we could have managed to do the move over the summer, we would not have to be working extra hard to make sure it does not disrupt the students."

Planning permission was granted for development in 2015, and demolition of the existing Town House started in 2017.

From November work will begin to install a range of technology, furniture, signage and fixtures.



The town house's current progress

Photo: Marie Mannes

# From former aerospace engineering student to Mr World

By **STEPH SPYRO**

He has a higher IQ than Einstein and a body to die for.

Now KU graduate Jack Heslewood has been voted “the world’s most desirable man” when he won the Mr World pageant in the Philippines.

Heslewood, who graduated with a degree in aerospace engineering, won the title after competing in five challenges over three weeks.

The 28-year-old who is the first Briton to win the male pageant, said: “It’s a real achievement that I think I was really ready for when I won it. I felt like I was a deserved winner because I’d really worked so hard for it, so I’m really excited.”

Unlike other pageants, this competition does not focus on looks but instead on how well-rounded the men are, with an ability to demonstrate strength, athleticism, a sense of fashion, creativity and multimedia abilities.

“It’s not a



beauty contest or a beauty pageant,” Heslewood said. “They’ve taken out the rounds that judge you more on beauty.”

He said: “I think the competition attracts people who look good because usually if you’re well-rounded, one of those things includes being able to keep fit and healthy.”

The all-rounded former student from Hertfordshire graduated in 2012 and went to work as an engineer in the aerospace and automotive fields, as well as in advertising.

He recently started his own business that specialises in stock trading using artificial intelligence.

Heslewood has an IQ score of 181 (Einstein’s was believed to be 160)

which is technically classed as a “genius” test score, according to Mensa, the largest high IQ society in the world.

The ex-rocket scientist hopes to use his platform to promote science and engineering. He said: “I want to promote learning science and engineering, not just to become scientists or engineers, but to realise that you can apply that to any kind of job.

“I also want to be able,

through my Mr World efforts, to explain the effects of climate change and the technologies that are being developed by certain companies that can be used to help the environment.”

He decided to take a break from his business and follow in his sister’s footsteps into the world of pageants.

Jack’s sister, Kirsty, came sixth overall in the Miss World pageant six years ago making the duo the first siblings to compete in the Miss World and Mr World competitions.

“I already knew about the competition through my sister. I was helping her with fundraising and I was doing my own fundraising.

“I was already doing that, and because I was already a very well-rounded person, which is what Mr World looked for, I thought, ‘Wow, I’m already doing what they want for a Mr World so I’ll apply to start at the very beginning,’” said the new winner.

Hunky Heslewood, who is a triathlete, enjoys swimming, running marathons and eating healthily.

He competed against 71 other nations for the coveted title, which was announced in Manila on August 23.

He made it to the top five of both the top model challenge, where he chose to model swimwear, and the talent and creativity contest, where he showed off his self-taught drumming skills.

The competition takes place every two years and has men from a number of nations compete for the title.

South Africa’s Fezile Mkhize and Mexico’s Brian Arturo Faugier González placed second and third in this year’s competition respectively.



Jack modelling proudly ahead of Mr World 2019  
Photo: Stu Williamson

## Kingston University’s halls filled with furry friends: who are they?



Tyrone resting in Clayhill common room.  
Photo: Isabella Ruffatti Pacas

By **SOPHIE HUMPHREY**

Clayhill’s cat Tyrone has been there for over a decade since he was abandoned and then adopted by caretaker Paul Grundy.

However, the feline has not had the easiest time.

“He has been severely injured by a student kicking him and he broke his sternum,” Grundy said.

“Unfortunately, we didn’t catch the student. I only took him to the vets because he had a hernia and when they x-rayed him, they found it was broken.”

Sadly, Tyrone’s fellow Clayhill cat, Simba, has not been seen at Clayhill since last summer.

Emma the fox has claimed Seething Wells as her home, being frequently spotted there for over a year.

Emma’s popularity skyrocketed after she was pictured and videoed by students and staff. “The first fox I ever saw outside of a zoo was at Seething Wells and I was freaking out when it happened. I thought it was so cool,” said third-year civil engineering student Lindsey Shoffeitt.

She also has her own poster hung proudly in the common room of Seething Wells for all to see.

If you have any pictures of other animals or wild life, please send them to: [editors.river@gmail.com](mailto:editors.river@gmail.com).



Spotted: Emma out and about at Seething Wells  
Photo: Katy Gusterson

# KU students join Extinction Rebellion protest

By **ISABELLA RUFFATTI**

Members of newly formed KU Extinction Rebellion society participated in an interna-

tional protest on Monday, the first of many set to take place over the next two weeks.

The KU students joined at least half a doz-

en Extinction Rebellion members in blocking Westminster Bridge to protest against climate change.

Danielle O'Shaughnessy, who acts as a link between the Kingston Extinction Rebellion group and the university society, said: "I'm really hopeful that the ball will start rolling."

Third year sociology and human rights student Cait Matthews started the society by

approaching O'Shaughnessy with the idea.

The protest aims to call for urgent action on climate change. Matthews hopes it will push the government to action.

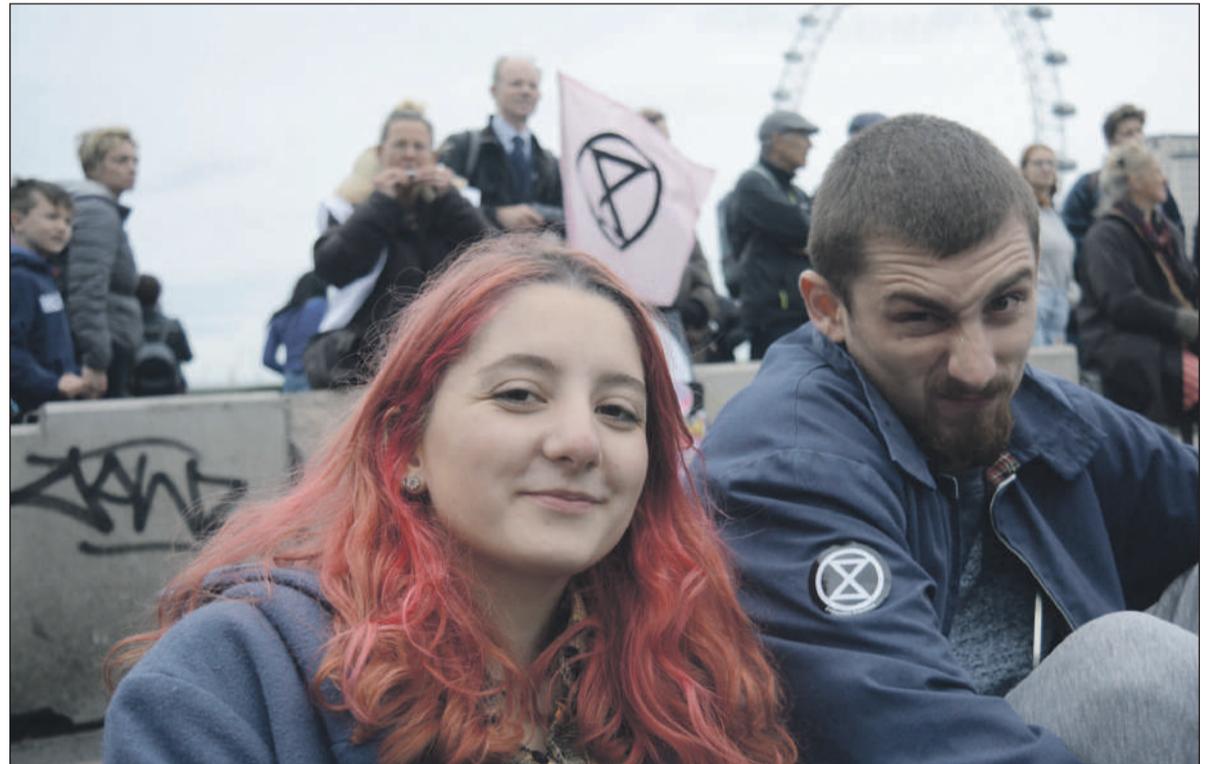
Protesters occupied the streets of London while others marched around chanting. One society member jumped onto a van and stayed there for several hours.

Another protester read from Margaret Atwood's *The Testaments*, a book set in a

world devastated by war and climate change.

Indian master's student and protester Rutuja Patil said she experienced heavy flooding for several years in her home county.

"Fighting climate change is a matter of survival and some people did not realise the danger of the situation," she added. "For these people [other protesters], the driving force is being angry. For me, it is being really scared."



Fine art student Julia Machado and film production student Milo Tucker at Westminster Bridge  
Photo: Isabella Ruffatti

## Brexit Guide for EU students

By **JAMIE ECCLESTON**

In order to remain in education as an EU student you must complete the EU Settlement Scheme application. This is a short application covering your reasons for being in the UK, criminal background, proof of residence and proof of identity.

Once this application is completed you will receive an email from the Home Office detailing your application's result.

Obtaining a settled or pre-settled status will allow you to work and study here, access public funds (like benefits or pensions), access the NHS and travel in and out of the UK freely throughout the duration of your course. However, these are only extended to those who have started living in the UK before December 31 2020.

Access to Student Loans includes both maintenance and tuition loans respectively. Research funding for UK students will depend on the outcome of Brexit.

However, the government is considering a replacement in UK Research and Innovation for EU Research Grants. The state of the Erasmus Scheme is also still up for negotiation, although no details are available for either.

For any students worried about post-graduation, if you receive a pre-settled status you are eligible to remain in the UK for five years, and then apply for settled status.

This grants you permanent residence and will allow you to then apply for citizenship.

# KU graduates will suffer from new immigration laws

By **ARIANE GOMES**

KU students are torn on the new immigration law allowing international students a two-year waiting period to find a job.

In September, the Government introduced a new two-year post-study work visa to allow students to find a job after graduation.

"It feels good when you think about it," said first year digital media student Nikita Protchenko. "Here I have more

job opportunities in digital media than in my home country, Latvia."

The changes are welcomed by Feisal Haji, the ex-president of the Kingston International Student Society who said that it is taking the law back to normality.

The Home Office decided to reverse the controversial 2012 decision made by then Home Secretary Theresa May which forced overseas students to leave the UK four months

after they graduated.

Haji said: "She (Theresa May) changed it for a short-term political reason that has hurt a lot of people, and this country.

"International students are not only an important asset to our education but also our friends and colleagues."

Students will have the opportunity to apply to whichever work place they wish to work, no matter their degree.

The new law has not come into effect, but it has already proved itself problematic as current students complain that they would not be eligible.

"I am disappointed by it," said Rincy John, 23 MS in pharmaceutical science with management studies. "It is just applicable for students who graduate in 2021 and it's unfair for current international students pursuing their degree."

John hopes to stay in the UK after she graduates as she believes that she will be an important asset to the country.

A spokesperson for migration watch said: "We are opposed to [this law] as we will have a large number of overseas graduates taking up low-paid, low-skilled jobs.

"This will further encourage univer-

sities to sell their courses on the basis of immigration and not education."

At Kingston, students and staff come from a total of more than 140 countries bringing with them "a diverse range of experiences, expertise and talent," according to a KU spokesperson.

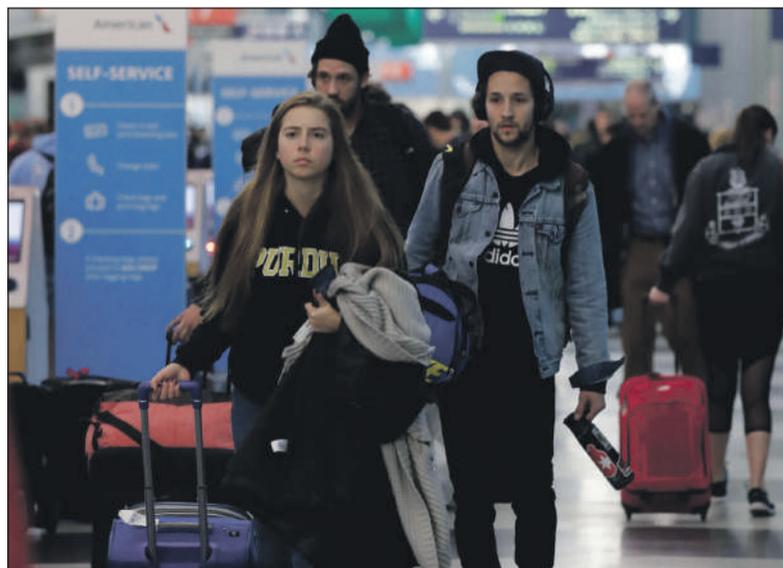
To make sure that all overseas students can have the same opportunities Ashish Tibrewal, has created a petition asking the Government to bring forward the date so current students can be eligible.

"It would be unfair for current international students to not be given the same opportunities as the 2021 graduates," said Tibrewal.

Typically, it takes two to six months to find a job after graduating and one of the main reasons students struggle to find a job is due to poor management skills.

They do not start the application process early and just start applying after finishing their degree.

Currently, international students must find companies that have a tier two sponsorship licence and are able to spend the necessary money and time needed.



Travellers walking in airport terminal

Photo: REX

# Students reconsider: Remain stronger than ever before

Even in 2015, when David Cameron won a majority in the election, a River survey showed that 52 per cent of KU students would back the left-wing party.

The survey also revealed that an overwhelming number of Kingston students would vote for Remain if a second EU referendum was held. The poll found that 85.2 per cent of students would vote in favour of remaining in the EU, compared to 15 per cent advocating for Leave.

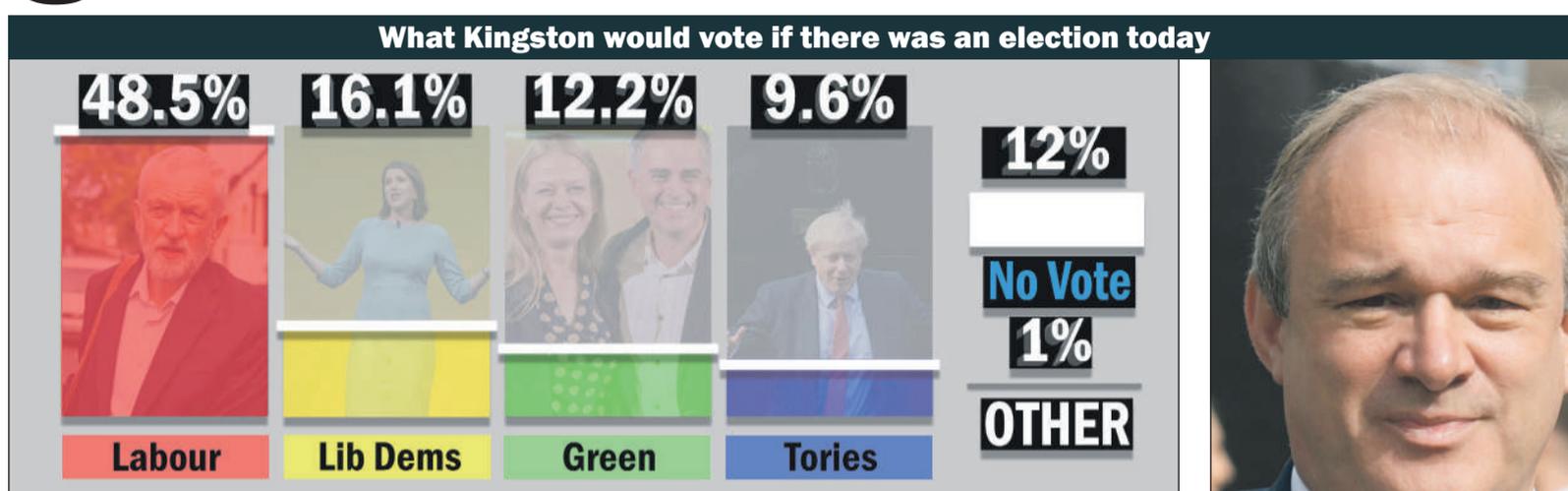
Robin Pettit, a political science lecturer at Kingston University and UK politics expert, said the drop in Labour voting intentions was due to Mr Corbyn's Brexit stance.

"I think it is because Jeremy Corbyn is very straightforwardly left-wing," he said. "I think that is attractive for a lot of students.

"However, his stance on Brexit is not Remain. Corbyn has a long history of advocating Leave, or at least Euroscepticism and being unhappy about the EU. So for him to be out and out for Remain is tricky for him because it's not where he is personally."

The last time Labour polled less than 50 per cent among the Kingston student population, the local seat was won by the Tories in the 2015 election. National polls are showing the Conservatives leading by around eight per cent and heading towards a majority because of potential splits in the Remain vote among other parties.

In our survey, the Liberal Democrats trailed with just 16.1 per cent of the student vote – with their support bolstered by their intention to scrap the Brexit process altogether and revoke the Article 50 declaration to leave the



How Big is it Jeremy  
Photo: Rex Features



Swinson a new Lib Dem Power  
Photo: RexFeatures



Prime Minister Boris Johnson  
Photo: RexFeatures



Our own, Ed Davey  
Photo: RexFeatures

European Union.

The Green Party picked up 12.2 per cent of the vote with the Conservatives, who have advocated for a tougher line on Brexit including a possible no-deal, coming a distant fourth place at 9.6 per cent.

Pettit said he believed that the Lib Dems should have polled higher. "I was expecting the Lib Dems to do better than the 16.1 per cent, considering the student profile and what the Lib Dems stand for at the moment," he said.

"The Lib Dems are very popular

among students, but they threw it away when they supported increasing fees after the 2010 elections. And it seems like according to this they have not regained that support and that Labour is seen more as the natural home for students."

Support for Remain among Kingston students has risen sharply compared to a previous poll held last November, where 75 per cent of students supported Remain.

Conor Bollins, the chair of Kingston and Surbiton Labour, said he believed

Brexit could have major implications for the future of KU.

"Kingston University could be greatly affected by Brexit," he said. "A number of London universities are concerned about how much funding could be lost if the UK left the EU without a deal. This would be detrimental on the student experience, the quality of teaching and academic research culture."

The poll showed that 78.7 per cent of KU students believe that the Government is not taking the necessary

steps to support EU citizens living in the country and British citizens living abroad.

Meanwhile, 21.2 per cent think that the Government is trying their best. The poll also revealed that people in favour of leaving would like the UK to leave the EU with a deal.

This poll was conducted with around 509 responses across all four campuses from September 25 to October 1. The Conservative and Liberal Democrats were unavailable for comment.

## Banquet Records: Fears for Brexit impact on stores

By STEPH SPYRO

The owner of local favourite Banquet Records has spoken out about how Brexit is the biggest challenge for the popular Kingston record store.

Store co-owner Jon Tolley said that the uncertainty around the Brexit deal is his biggest concern as most of the store's stock is produced in mainland Europe and then sent to warehouses in the UK, and then to the shop on Eden Street.

"The problem is how do we get 80 per cent of our stock into the UK in a timely manner? Until someone tells me that, then I'm going to keep worrying," the record store owner and Kingston councillor said.

Tolley, who was a customer of the store in his school days, said that it is unlikely that Brexit will force the much-loved record store to close.

"While it probably wouldn't make us go bust it would stop some things from happening it might be some gigs, it might be some products that we don't have.

"It might be that people are losing their jobs so they have less money to spend, on hobbies like records collecting.

You've got to buy food, you've got to pay your rent. You only buy a record as a luxury choice."

Touring American or European bands will have to reconsider how their crews and equipment get to the UK, a concern to the local store which hosts club nights attracting artists like Norwegian singer Sigrid and American singer-songwriter Billie Eilish.

Tolley also believes that a lot of bands are not booking UK and European tours in this period because

they think it's all a bit weird.

He predicted, that if Brexit was "a mess", a solution for well-known artists could be to bypass physical stores and send the vinyl records direct to customers through the online retail giant Amazon.

He said that if that was to happen, it is unlikely that customers would continue to visit physical stores - a threat to the already-struggling high street.

"If they bypass all the other physical stores, then that bridge might be burnt forever. Maybe people will just get out of the habit of supplying physical stores - and if we're not supplied then we can't sell that stock."

But Tolley is optimistic that, six months after Brexit, things will sort themselves out for the local record store: "I don't want to be alarmist because I think that after

six months or so, it will probably sort itself out. But it's whether or not smaller businesses can survive those six months.

"We operate on such small margins that if we lost 25 per cent of our trade for a month, we still have the same amount of rent to pay. We still have the same amount of wages to pay. That would really hurt us. But I don't think it would make us go bust - but it would make others go bust," he said.

Warner Music, which supplies Banquet Records with albums from artists like Coldplay and Ed Sheeran, has released a new report on its Brexit contingency plans for the last three months of 2019.



Co-owner of Banquet Records  
Jon Tolley  
Photo: Marie Mannes

# Rapper Akala kicks off Kingston's celebration of Black History Month

By **BEKKA BARNARD**

Rapper, journalist and political activist Akala visited Kingston University last Thursday to give students a semi autobiographical talk titled 'The Power of Education'.

The event was held in celebration of Black History Month, which runs through October.

The author of the Sunday Times bestseller 'Natives' aimed to bring awareness of the struggles that the Black community have and continue to face, and to teach listeners about the importance of both state and unconventional education through his inspiring story, all whilst maintaining his usual humble nature.

Last year Akala (real name Kingslee James McLee Daley) was awarded two doctorates from two separate universities - a Doctor of Arts by Oxford Brookes University in June 2018, and in the same month gained a second doctorate from the University of Brighton.

The BAFTA and MOBO award winning rapper began by recalling the racial profiling he received from a teacher whilst in school:

"When I was seven years old, I was put into a special needs class for kids that don't speak English. I didn't have special needs, and I was born here. I was reading Lord of the Rings at home and 'the cat sat on the mat' at school whilst drinking hot chocolate and eating biscuits. As I got older I realised that I was being rewarded to fail."

He continued to reflect on how he was underestimated at school:

"It made me feel as though I'd done something wrong. My experience was in no way unique, but it was very valuable to me because it showed me that some teachers would be offended that I was a bright Black boy and that they couldn't wrap their minds around it."

"I saw very early on what a difference the adult whose care you are put into makes."

Alongside these, he shared a newsletter from his Pan-African Saturday



**Akala: Cultural education is important too**

Photo: **RexFeatures**

school with the audience, which featured a picture of five-year-old Kingslee and the quote 'we do better work here'.

"Even at five-years-old I understood there was something that I was getting from my Saturday school that I wasn't from my other school" he said.

"Now I'm older and I look at my peers that didn't have this kind of cultural support, I realise how important it was."

"These schools were a massive part of my life and part of the reason I think I've been able to navigate life."

Akala also touched on the importance of the arts in education. His stepfather was the stage manager of the Hackney Empire Theatre, which he explained was "London's equivalent to The Apollo" in New York.

"I was seeing four pieces of theatre a week, I was young so I took it for granted, but I don't think it's any coincidence I've gone on to do the stuff I have with The Hip-Hop Shakespeare Company."

After sharing sobering anecdotes of life as a young Black male in North London, he revealed that a main con-

tributor to his own success is his ability to learn independently. "In life, you're going to get one particular kind of education, especially if you go to a state school," he explained.

"They might have business studies, but they are teaching you to work at a business, not to run one."

"I left school with A's in virtually everything, but I didn't know what a loan or a mortgage was."

"You need to take two sets of notes - one to pass the test and one to better yourself."

# The digital womans' rights march

By **NICOLE PIHAN**

The first-ever digital women's march is being held on October 11 across all social media platforms, where girls, women and supporters worldwide are posting their solidarity marching videos.

CEO of 'Girls Who Code' Reshma Saujani said: "There's a problem we wanted to solve, which is that young people too often feel unable to participate and to be heard."

'Girls Who Code', who's mission

statement is 'diversity and empathy', will be joined by over 100 other women, activists and community leaders that understand the need to be heard does not only occur to more mature women and girls.

They realised that even children younger than 13-year-old watch news from around the world, and want to participate in the fight for their rights, but often they are not able to do it in person.

The power of technology can make a difference not only in the streets or

conferences but also in online spaces.

"Today, girls—and all who identify as girls—are more connected to one another than ever before."

"Our ideas and dreams spread quickly from one smartphone to another, allowing us to share our lives with another girl, family, and community a world away," says part of the organisation's statement.

Anyone can show their support and get involved by pledging their participation on the official march website [www.marchforsisterhood.com](http://www.marchforsisterhood.com) at any

time during that day.

On October 11, post the video or photo of yourself "marching" with the hashtag #marchforsisterhood and unite with people from around the globe.

The organisers want to establish a strong, worldwide community that can begin to make a difference by firstly starting to exist.

Beyond that, the march was created because at the core of what the organisation does is:

"Empowering girls to use technology to change the world," said Saujani.

## Waterstones re-opens

By **AIMEE MILLER**

Kingston Waterstones is back after nine months of reconstruction with a brand new look and more on offer for KU students.

Regional bookshop manager Jennifer Shenton said: "Students have already settled onto the high benches in the cafe with their books and laptops, and we're hoping to encourage that vibe as much as possible."

Plans to create two-for-one cinema tickets, and other exclusive competitions attached to their loyalty schemes are in development, but Shenton says discussions are still taking place and are six months away from being available.

Publishing professor and director of KU Big Read Alison Baverstock said: "Think about the rules of the third space; your first space is your home, your second space is your place of work, and then your third is the public place you gravitate to in order to relax. This Waterstones could become Kingston student's third space."

## Korean language scheme now open

By **CHLOE WRIGHT**

KU students and staff now have the opportunity to study Korean alongside their degree after it's addition to the Kingston Language Scheme (KLS).

The scheme allows KU students to study a language for free, gaining skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing as well as introducing students to the culture of the country.

For many students, there is already a pre-existing interest in Korean culture and the KLS proves vital for their studies or for students of selective courses, a year abroad.

Second year graphic design student Dee Jobanputra, 19, said: "I have an interest in learning Korean as I'm interested in the culture, music and country in general."

"I am planning to study a year abroad there next year and hopefully learning Korean will come in handy when I travel."

A surge in Korean dramas, bands such as BTS and Black Pink, and literature in mainstream western media is one of many reasons why places on the scheme filled quickly.

Kingston's proximity to New Malden is also an important factor, as it has one of the largest Korean communities in the UK.

Kim said: "Language is becoming more and more essential to get into any field of career, not to mention academic research."

"Kingston offers it for free so everyone should make the most of it."

Classes run in both semester one and two but do not run during reading week. Times are to be confirmed.

# KU students awarded degree posthumously

By **STEPH SPYRO**

The mother of a KU student who received her degree posthumously has paid tribute to her daughter who hoped to help find a cure for cancer.

Pharmaceutical science student Charlotte Staplehurst, 21, wanted to be a cancer researcher after graduating to help find a cure for her mother and others.

"I have suffered from cancer for many years. Charlotte made it her goal to join the world of research to help find a cure for myself and other sufferers," said Tracy Staplehurst in an emotional tribute to her daughter.

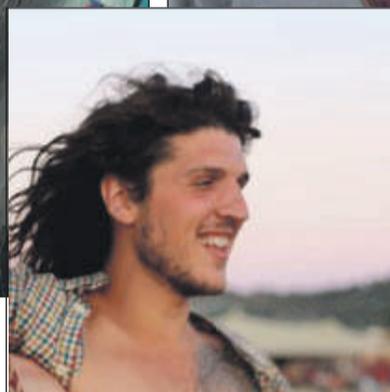
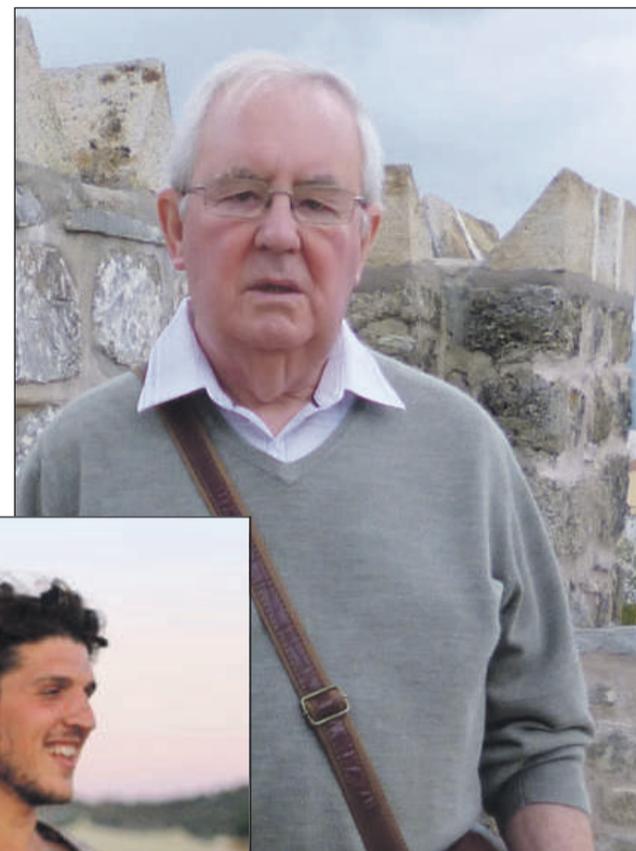
The student, from Eastbourne, died when she was struck by a car after leaving a pub in New Malden in August 2018.

Staplehurst's parents Robert and Tracy attended the graduation ceremony held at the Rose Theatre in July, with their daughter Maxine who received the certificate on her sister's behalf.

"It was very touching and moving that Kingston University wanted to award Charlotte's degree posthumously and we are grateful to Richard Singer, Mariko Kishi, Kat Farrell, Sarah Wilden and everybody else who had a hand in making Charlotte's graduation ceremony so special to us," said Mrs Staplehurst.

"The kindness and sensitivity shown on the day are memories which we will cherish."

At an inquest into Staplehurst's death in June, coroner Dr Sean Cummings at West London Coroners Court said that the KU student died from head



**Tragic trio, from left: Charlotte Staplehurst, Keith Atkins, Luke Taylor**  
Photo: Met Police, Maggie Atkins, Rachel Taylor

and chest injuries after a road traffic collision while crossing Coombe Road.

Staplehurst, who taught English to children in Bali, wanted to return to Asia with her family after graduating.

Her mother said: "Charlotte was smart and intelligent and had so much to give and to live for. She had the power to make everyone around her happy with her contagious laugh and a beautiful smile. They always say that heaven only takes the best, we are sad that it had to be her.

"We all miss her so dreadfully.

Someone told me once [that] losing a child is living a life sentence, how right they were."

Staplehurst was one of three students who were awarded their degrees posthumously at the graduation ceremonies held over the summer.

Keith Atkins received his PhD for his thesis titled 'The Cottage Hospital Movement in England and Wales, 1850-1914: Origins, Growth and Contribution to the Healthcare of the Poor'.

"Kingston University always tries to honour students close to completion of

their degrees at the request of, and in consultation with the family...", a university spokesman said.

The parents of Luke Taylor, 25, who took his own life in January, received their son's product and furniture design degree in his honour.

Rachel and Paul crossed the stage together while Taylor's coursemates, other graduating students and parents wiped away tears from their eyes.

Product and furniture design course director Phil Davies spoke about Tay-

lor, from New Malden, at the ceremony. He said: "Luke was an amazing, vibrant person. He had a beautiful, open personality and was a really talented designer and maker. Everybody loved Luke."

Taylor's parents have fundraised over £3,900 for the mental health charity Mind and the environmental organisation Greenpeace.

If you are affected by topics discussed in this article, the Samaritans can be contacted for free on 116123 or KU's health and wellbeing team on 020 8417 2172.

## Kingston's unconditional offers are 'unacceptable practice'

By **NATALIE CROOKHAM**

Kingston University is yet to confirm if it will stop the controversial practice of giving students conditional unconditional offers.

A conditional unconditional offer is a pre-exam offer where students who make the institution their firm choice have their offer made unconditional.

Chairman for Real Education Chris McGovern said:

"The financial interests of the university are being placed ahead of its potential students. There is a scramble to fill places rather than to fulfil moral obligations to young people.

"Kingston University and others will suffer long term pain, even closure, for their pursuit of short term gain."

Universities Minister Chris Skid-

more is concerned by the excessive use of conditional unconditional offers. The Department for Education wrote to 23 universities asking them to stop the "unacceptable practice".

A KU spokeswoman declined to comment on this directly but said: "We constantly monitor our recruitment practices and will be reviewing our offer making for 2020 entry."

"Kingston University is committed to offering places to students with the academic ability to succeed and thrive during their degree studies.

"The University makes unconditional offers by taking into consideration past academic achievement and predicted A-level or BTEC qualifications."

In the last academic year two out of five offers from Kingston made to UK 18-year-old applicants were classified

as conditional unconditional.

Office for Students chief executive Nicola Dandridge said: "Whatever admissions practices universities choose to use, they should be clearly aimed at encouraging students to make the decision that is right for them, and not the decision that best suits the university."

Continued use of conditional unconditional offers put universities at risk of breaching consumer law.

A UCAS survey showed that two thirds of students receiving a conditional unconditional offer felt positive about them.

UCAS chief executive Clare Marchant said: "Students' best interests must be the number one consideration for universities and colleges when making offers.

"The use of unconditional offers remains a complex issue and continues to evolve."

Nationally, the number of UK 18 year-old students receiving conditional unconditional offers has increased to a record high of 25 per cent which is 30 times more than five years ago.

Kingston University gave 46.4 per cent of applicants conditional unconditional offers.

Animation and illustration student Ollie Smallwood was delighted to receive his unconditional offer and said: "To study at Kingston seemed like a distant, unattainable dream."

Accounting and finance with business experience student Charlie Ann considered dropping out of sixth form in her second year but an unconditional offer from KU reassured her.

"I stuck with it and completed my A-level exams and even though I did not do particularly well I am still at a university doing a course I actually like," she said.

Fine art student Charlie Lucas said unconditional offers could put students off working hard but she thought that it is not a big enough problem to stop them altogether.

"I was pretty relieved when I got an unconditional because it meant less stress in getting a good grade on my foundation course," she said.

"Exams are a lot of pressure and for some of that stress to be taken away makes it a lot less anxiety-inducing for students," she said.

# Kingston spends double that of other universities on mental health services

By **CHARLOTTE DORANS**

KU is spending over £1 million a year on mental health services, more than double that of some other universities in the U.K.

According to information gathered by Sir Norman Lamb, former Minister of Health and mental health campaigner, other universities did not even know how much they spent on mental health services.

Responses from 110 universities said that they did not monitor how their wellbeing services were being used or whether they were up to standard.

A recent survey from Student Beans, says that, students are having to wait almost two months to speak to an on-campus mental health specialist and one third of those were waiting for an appointment cancelled due to the waiting period.

The survey also showed that 40 per cent of students have not spoken to anyone about their mental health issues and 41 per cent, have struggled with their mental health, have considered dropping out of their university.

A KU spokesperson said: "The Student Wellbeing Service offers appointments for students to discuss their individual situation confidentially with a counsellor or mental health adviser."

Jasmine Barrett, who is studying English language and linguistics with creative writing, said she found it



One-to-one sessions often help people with mental illnesses

Photo: RexFeatures

"pretty straightforward" booking an appointment, but the service could only do so much.

"They couldn't offer me more in-depth cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) as I didn't want to change my doctor's surgery from the one in my hometown, but they offered me six weeks of counselling regardless which was great, and my counsellor definitely

used some CBT approaches."

KU Student ambassador, Emma Campbell feels that the wellbeing services are not well advertised: Not many people know about them or how to access them. She also added that the number of sessions were limited: "There is a maximum of five sessions which isn't nearly long enough when you consider a lot of these sessions

are going to be dedicated to becoming comfortable enough to properly open up about your struggles and then the five hourly sessions usually work out at a lot less than an hour per session". Other alternatives include private counselling through the NHS which can vary from £10 to £70, or calling mental health charities such as the Samaritans.

## Male mental illness: "I never felt judged by the university"

By **EMILY HOOPER**

"I'm in my final year of Computer Science. I didn't struggle with my mental health until I came to uni. I didn't fit in as well as I thought I would, and the lifestyle didn't fit me, I began to struggle emotionally.

"It's very easy for men to feel like they have to 'man up' or keep their feelings to themselves as it's not seen as masculine, but it reached a point where it was clear that I wasn't feeling like myself.

"The issues with stigma around men and mental health are definitely there, but I don't think it's nearly as bad as you'd expect. I received no judgement - no one wants you to suffer.

"Initially I went to the University GP service and they recommended the University drop-in sessions. You didn't have to book in, only show up and you would be able to speak to someone. I then realised I needed more help and arranged six weeks of free counselling.

"It definitely felt like the University services helped, I never felt judged. There were a few times where I would miss a session because I had exams,



12.5 per cent of men suffer from mental health disorders

Photo: Rex-Features

and they were really helpful with rearranging them. They made it as easy as it possibly could've been.

"There is mental health support at all campuses and they are flexible. I decided to receive my counselling at Kingston Hill rather than Penhryn Road, as I was then able to separate my studies and feelings in a way. I could use

that hour a week as a time to get things off my chest without judgement and not be distracted by the environment.

"The most important thing is the way that you feel. If you're a guy and you feel anxious, unhappy or isolated, that's completely valid even if you don't understand why.

"You don't always have to be seen as

masculine or 'laddy' - it's not always going to be that way. You don't have to conform, you're allowed to accept how you feel.

"The most important thing is that you put your mental health first, it affects everything else. The help and support is available and was a generally smooth process for me at Kingston."

## COMMENT TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF FIRST

BY **TRACY WINU LANDU**

Everyone has a responsibility to take care of their mental health and well-being. It should be as important as our routine eye tests or dental check-ups. In fact, as students with a lot on our plates, it's imperative that we check in with ourselves on a daily basis.

The BBC has revealed that mental health facilities in UK universities have been pretty poor. However, with rising demand in services and a lack of funding and proper administrative practices, it is of universities to increase awareness of how to spot and deal with mental health and encourage students to take care of their wellbeing.

Whether you're into meditation or find it a bit woo-woo, we can all admit sometimes we just need to switch off. Being constantly plugged in (in the literal sense too) can take a toll on our health.

With increasing pressures to do well in every aspect our lives from platforms like social media - it is not a surprise that many of us are feeling down and depressed.

I am a firm believer that our mental state affects everything we do. At a time when I was going through issues during my second academic year, I took the initiative to see a counsellor at the Student Well-being services.

My experience overall was a positive one. I am grateful that I had a positive experience but I'm aware that isn't always the case for some people. Like in the case of Ceara Thacker, a student from Liverpool University who took her own life after her mental health deteriorated, it's so important that during the process of admission right down to the after-care that the wellbeing services take each case individually and seriously.

In conclusion, the reasons why students develop mental illnesses are deep and complex. But it is an issue that needs to be taken seriously across all UK universities. Make sure you're regulating your own mental health, talking to and checking up on friends and booking an appointment with the well-being services if you feel you need one.

If something is really affecting you don't put it off and leave it until late. If you need help, please contact the Samaritans on 116 123. They are open 24 hours a day, every day.

# THE RIVER SAYS

People just need to be made aware of their existence.

In the modern world, mental health is taken a lot more seriously and it is more widely-recognised than ever before.

With Love Island providing after care support to their contestants, is enough being done to support those with mental illnesses?

Simply put, no.

People are spending far too long on waiting lists for appointments and support with the average being 12 weeks according to The Guardian.

This is something which ex-health minister Sir Norman Lamb deemed "scandalous."

People are being promised of help 'soon', with 'soon' never coming.

People with eating disorders are being allowed to let their unhealthy eating relationships get worse because they do not fit the stereotypes of someone with anorexia.

The River believes more needs to be done.

More help needs to be made available in schools and universities.

More information needs to be advertised in doctor's surgeries, dentists and on public transport.

We may be living in the 21st century and attitudes may be far more liberal, but nowhere near enough is being done to let people know about what help is available.

Will Kingston University provide better mental health support for students?

# THE RIVER IS

The River is written, edited and produced by journalism students at Kingston University.

The River aims to serve the university and the local area. Our mission statement commits us to raising and addressing the issues relevant to students and local people, as well as to entertain and inform them.

It is our aim to celebrate the achievements of students and local people alike. If you have information or a story which would interest our readers, please contact us.

We aim to conform to the standard codes of conduct for the profession of journalism.

It is The River's policy to print timely corrections and clarifications when we have got something wrong.

If you feel we have misrepresented or that we have made a mistake, please get in touch with us:

editors.river@gmail.com

# 22 Stairs Too Many

We have all been there. Fifth floor lecture? Use the lifts, only someone else has a class on the first floor and joins the ride. Argh! **Lucie Skorvagova** shares her frustrations



Photo: Marie Mannes

## It is always a struggle to get to the fifth floor

I always assumed lifts were supposed to make your life easier. They raise you higher and drop you lower.

Stairs make you feel as if you will not be able to use your legs or breathe ever again.

Whereas lifts float you effortlessly to where you need to be.

On the other hand, stairs are a great exercise that works pretty much every muscle in your lower body, as well as strengthening your core.

I am not trying to say that we should run up and down the 110 stairs in Penrhyn Road's John Galsworthy building in seeking a buff body, but it would be an added bonus.

However, it makes perfect sense to take a lift when you have a lecture on the fifth floor, and you do not want to

spend two hours sitting between your classmates looking and smelling like you have just run a marathon.

Or maybe you are late, and even though you would typically make an effort and conquer those stairs, you choose to take the easy route. Funnily enough, it can actually be faster and less annoying to walk to the fifth floor than take a lift.

How is that possible?

In my experience, as soon as the lift arrives, it is full within seconds. Fair enough, people might have realised they only have five minutes before their next lecture or seminar starts.

Panic-stricken, they need to get to where they are supposed to be as soon as possible. The lift is obviously their first choice.

Both fast and effortless. Or at least that is what you would think.

If you are lucky enough to get inside before the 10 other hopefuls, brace yourself to experience claustrophobia and awkwardness.

Trying not to touch anybody and make sure nobody is touching you at the same time.

Maybe you are trying to avoid staring at yourself in the mirror, and thinking what is worse, an awkward silence or listening to a very private conversation?

Be ready to not exist for a moment of your life and survive that struggle as you tell yourself it will be worth it.

The lift starts to move upwards. You look forward to reaching the fifth floor. But all of a sudden... it stops.

You panic, thinking that maybe you

are stuck. You will never see the sun again, and then it dawns on you. There is something worse than that.

You open your eyes very slowly and take a deep breath. You are right, your worst nightmare has come true.

Somebody is getting off... on the first floor.

22 stairs. It is only 22 stairs from the ground floor to the first.

It takes maybe 20 seconds and yet, here is somebody who cannot handle this minor athletic challenge; somebody who is guilt-free in disrupting the rest of our lives.

Just when you think it cannot get worse, the lift stops on the second floor.

For all of our sakes, please walk to the first floor.

Much appreciated.

# Extinction Rebellion more harm than good?

By **STEPHEN HALL**

Climate change is currently one of the biggest threats facing our planet and it is no surprise to see people across the globe starting to take to the streets, demanding immediate action.

However, I believe that one set of climate change activists, are actually doing a disservice when it comes to convincing the general public to get on board.

Extinction Rebellion.

Do you really think the sceptical and uninitiated are going to be convinced

by a bunch of middle-class white people jumping on police vans and doing yoga on Waterloo Bridge?

I fear these activists are actually using a trendy issue as an excuse to self-congratulate themselves about how heroic they are being, acting as 'the saviours of the world'.

The methods of protest such as shutting down London in April and blocking off airports, in my opinion, puts more people off the cause rather than convincing people to get on board.

The morning commute into London is horrendous enough already, without a bunch of annoying activists shutting down the trains and blocking main roads in London.

Instead, we need to have a calm and measured approach that focuses on offering smart and realistic policy solutions which will convince new people to join the cause.

We need to start incentivising big energy companies to start investing more into green energy production, such as wind and solar

power. The fact that green energy production is free should be a good enough selling point.

The government needs to invest more into nuclear energy, as, if done safely, it is one of the most efficient ways of producing energy with zero carbon emissions.

Instead of Extinction Rebellion going around London acting like toddlers who cannot get their own way, they should instead try and raise practical solutions that are reasonable and beneficial to everyone.

# Kingston student becomes the master of her own degree

What do you do when you want to get a master's degree, but can't afford tuition and the cost of living in London?

By **CATHERINE POOLE AND STEPH SPYRO**

For Stacie Woolsey, a KU graduate, this wasn't a trick question. Actually, it was a very simple one - she would just design her own.

"I very quickly realised that, one, I couldn't really find the right kind of master's that I wanted to do and two, it was going to cost me an absolute fortune," she says.

She was not wrong. She was shocked to find out that attending the Royal College of Art (RCA) - factoring in the cost of materials and living in London for two years - would put her £40,000 out of pocket.

Adamant not to give up, she decided to take matters into her own hands.

On a whim, she emailed four designers that she looked up to, including artist Dr. Alexandra Daisy Ginsberg, technology designer Thomas Thwaites, the innovation arm of UK department store John Lewis 'Room Y', and material researcher Seetal Solanki, and pitched them her idea of making her own master's degree. She asked each designer to set her a brief and asked for their guidance, as and when they could give it to her, for the next 18 months of her project.

The designer, 25, from Doncaster, expected everyone to refuse, but to her surprise, they all agreed. From then on, there was no turning back for the former KU graphic design student, who graduated in 2016.

Normally, MA students are surrounded by peers in lecture rooms for emotional support before those dreaded deadlines and have friends to help fuel late-night study sessions in the library.

Woolsey had none of that, although she says instead of having an institution to lean on, she had the design industry in her arsenal.

**“I couldn't really find the right kind of master's that I wanted to do”**

"Alongside the four people I picked to set briefs, I built up a network of mentors, so industry professionals I could go for some more specific help as and when I needed it," the 25-year-old continues.

There was a mixed reception to Woolsey's 'master's' - some were impressed, some questioned why she would put herself through so much work and some didn't understand at all.



The woman who created a viable alternative to a master's degree.

Photo: Stacie Woolsey

Initially, her biggest concern was validating her 'degree'. "How can you grade art and design when it's opinion-based and not a reflection of academic study?" She questions. Eventually, she realised that the success of her work was down to the audience and industry. She decided to ask each of the designers that had set her a brief to give her a brutally honest reference, and that was her way of validating her 18-month long project.

Melissa Worth, 22, a graphic de-

sign student at Kingston University, did a four-month work placement for Woolsey where she gained lots of professional contacts.

She said that Woolsey "is a very mature designer with masses of experience,"

"She's very decisive and knows what questions to ask. It was inspiring to see her confidence and communication skills with other designers. I felt like my ideas were underdeveloped but I'm now much more confident and can't

wait to get into the industry."

Alongside making her own master's degree, Woolsey made ends meet by working three bar jobs and took two months out to work full time to fund her project. She estimates that she spent £4,000 on her masters due to the cost of her materials and rent (her two largest expenses) making it a more viable alternative to a traditional masters degree.

Woolsey is currently working on a second phase of 'Make Your Own

Master's' by providing a community, guidance and structure to 10 hopefuls who want to pursue in an alternative to traditional higher education. "I can't provide them with an education, just a rulebook and structure," she tells us.

"I care an awful lot about education because I think it has a massive knock-on effect to how fair an industry and the media is. I need to find a balance between Make Your Own Master's and graphic design, but I'm not sure where my future is heading yet. I'll make a plan in a year's time."

The young designer said that she "declared herself unemployed" for the year but continued to work harder than she ever had, and adds that it was worth it.

Some of the briefs set for Woolsey by the designers:



A brief entitled 'Dirty Soap' set by Room Y which aimed at the future of children's nurseries.



Thomas Thwaite's brief entitled 'New Coal'. Woolsey looked at a new future for working class mining towns.



A brief entitled 'Faith in the Fish' which focuses on the microplastic contamination of fish.

Photos: Stacie Woolsey

# Terrible Tats from KU students

After Ed Sheeran's tattoo artist admits singer's ink is s\*\*t, **Stefania Dall'Armi** meets with five KU students to find out why they regret their hasty choices

By **STEFANIA DALL'ARMI**

Have you ever thought of getting a colourful penguin Pingu or a Heinz Ketchup label inked on your body?

This may not be a natural decision for you, but it is for the English pop star Ed Sheeran, who has over 60 tattoos and counting.

However, his tattooist Kevin Paul, 40, does not think it the same way. Last week, he told The Sun that working with the musician has been one of the "best and worst" things to happen to his career.

Tattoos are more than 6,000 years old and are used around the globe with particular cultural characteristics. In Japan, they are a symbols of protection, in South Africa their complexity reflects the social status of a person and in New Zealand Maori art expresses strong spiritual meanings.

However, it is the western world that beats the records of the inked population, says a recent survey conducted by Dalia. Tattoos are now mainstream and the UK is in the top 10 most tattooed nations. forty per cent of the popula-

tion has body art. Tattoos may seem like a good idea at the time but as a study made by Advanced Dermatology reveals, almost half of those who have tattoos later regret them.

The same survey also shows that the main causes of regret are: impulsiveness, too original style or poor quality.

I wanted to discover if KU students' concerns relate to these three categories and after some funny and awkward conversations I could not agree more.

Every tattoo tells a story, but do we really want to hear it?



**NINJA TURTLE**

"Last year, I was watching Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. When I finished I did a BuzzFeed quiz that told me which ninja turtle I was. It said Donatello so I was thought 'Alright I feel like getting another tattoo'. I called to book and I got the tattoo the same day. I don't regret the decision, I just regret I made him with colour because it doesn't fit with my black/red theme."

**Filipa Hristova**, Cyber-Security and Computer Forensics student.



**TOUCHY SUBJECT**

"My lion tattoo is a watercolour and there is a red splurge that is on my thigh away from the tattoo so whenever I wear a skirt, the lion is hidden but this red splodge isn't which always leads to awkward questions."

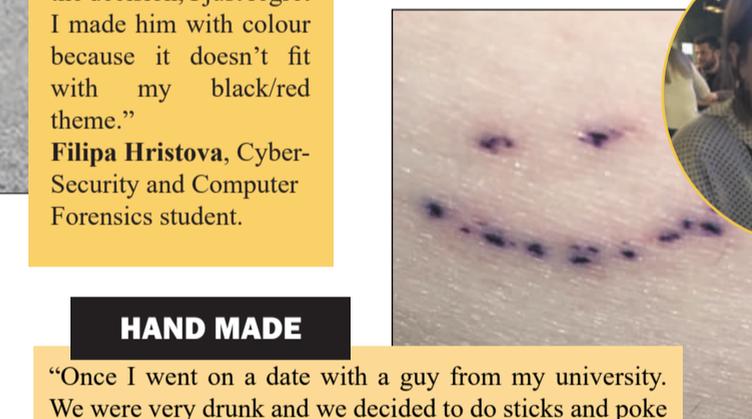
**Catherine Poole**, Journalism student.



**TERRIBLE TATTOOIST**

"I went on a trip with my boyfriend to Thailand. Everyone that goes to Thailand gets a tattoo, so we decided to get a traditional bamboo inked together, but the tattooist that did his was a different guy. At the end my boyfriend's tattoo was good, and mine was bad because the lines were messed up and I had to go back there the next day. The guy did it again but the ink exploded in my skin, ruining the whole thing!"

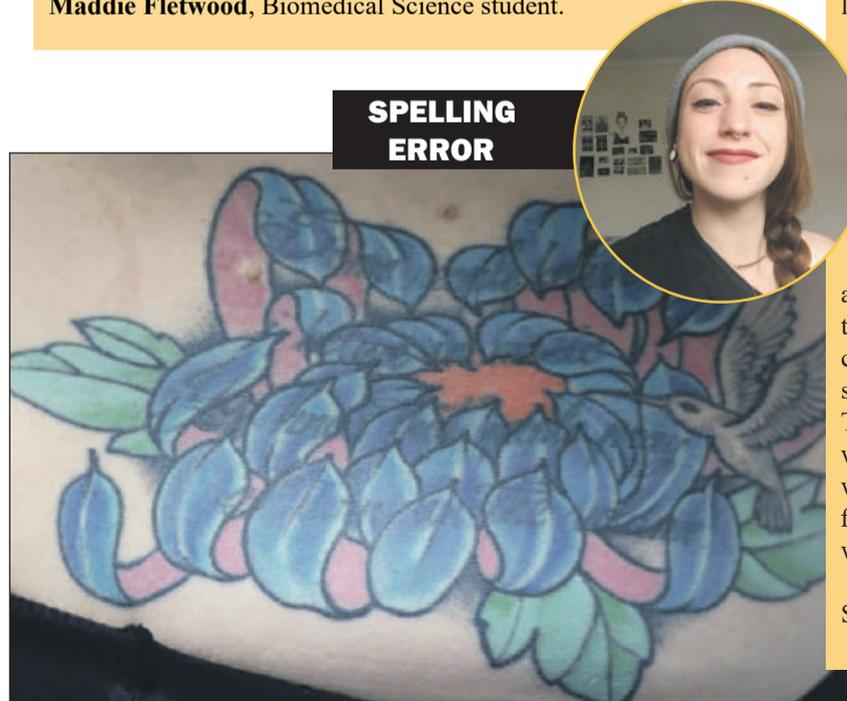
**Steph Spagola**, Sports Nutrition student.



**HAND MADE**

"Once I went on a date with a guy from my university. We were very drunk and we decided to do sticks and poke smiley faces on our legs. Although, we used biro and sewing needles so now I have an oddly shaped half-smile scar on my thigh."

**Maddie Fletwood**, Biomedical Science student.



**SPELLING ERROR**

"I was 16, young and stupid when I had my first tattoo. It was a quote from a song of an English group. 'Some people believe in God. I believe in music. Some people pray. I turn up the radio'. The problem was not really how the tattoo looked, but the fact that they misspelled 'believe' twice. So when I moved to London, I was very ashamed and I decided to cover it up. The worst thing is I asked my mum for help and she advised me to go to a 'very good artist'. Never trust your parents when it comes to tattoos. I didn't see it until it was done. The job was botched! It was very painful and I just wanted to set myself on fire. You can still see the writing underneath!"

**Greta Baldini**, Nutrition Student

# Attwood's The Testaments worth the long 35-year wait

BY ISABELLA RUFFATTI

Did he live or die? What a cliff-hanger, right?

Sherlock fans had to wait two years for the burning question of whether their beloved series protagonist, played by Benedict Cumberbatch, had survived a seemingly lethal fall.

For Margaret Atwood fans, the wait was even longer.

Was Offred's escape from Gilead, the suffocating patriarchal dystopia, successful?

Thirty-five. Thirty-five years it took to learn the fate of The Handmaid's Tale's narrator and get an answer as to how Gilead had fallen.

And it was very satisfying.

The Testaments is arguably a slow burner, it takes its time feeding the reader a meagre spoonful of information.

But it works. I could not read fast enough. The suspense was torture.

As a creative writing student I have been taught that it is a writer's uppermost duty to make the characters suffer, and with them, the reader.

I both hated and marvelled at Atwood's skill.

The narrative is a hell of a twisty ride, taking us even deeper than ever into the heart of Gilead- if only to watch it implode.

The book follows three witness accounts, one of whom is Aunt Lydia.

She belongs to the aunts, a group of women that can be described as angry and conniving militant nuns.

Their job is to preside and to some extent enforce Gilead values on the rest of the women in Gilead society.



Collective punishment scene from the TV series Handmaid's Tale

Photo: RexFeatures

People who have read the book or seen the series may recognise her as the same Aunt Lydia from a Handmaid training centre the first book's protagonist was in.

Never fear, you do not need to read the first book before reading The Testaments - unless you absolutely love spotting Easter eggs, of course.

**“The narrative is a hell of a twisty ride”**

If you have not read the book or seen the TV series, you can think of Aunt Lydia as a crueler Severus Snape, but just as deeply submerged in the politics of

the world around her.

Hers is a story of survival and power dynamics, a story she narrates to an imagined hoped-for, future reader.

Perhaps you.

Should you be among those rare people who have never read a Harry Potter book and somehow avoided the films, you can take Aunt Lydia's own words for it: “Think of me as a guide”.

“Think of yourself as a wanderer in a wood. It's about to get darker”.

While Offred was limited as a narrator as she was by her white handmaid's hat and confined space she occupied, Aunt Lydia's shrewd

account, coupled with the testaments of two young women (one of who grew up in Gilead), is eye opening and underlines the hope that Gilead will end.

The fun is in watching it unravel.

**So to wrap this review up, would I recommend this book? Totally. Why should you read it?**

**It is entertaining and insightful. But if you do, hurry.**

The Gilead of The Handmaid's Tale may have appeared a distant future in 1985, but the Gilead of The Testaments may not appear to be so distant in 2019.



## Harold Fry walks wonders at KU

By CHLOE WRIGHT

The *Unlikely Pilgrimage of Harold Fry* was selected as the KU Big Read for this academic year. Was it enjoyable?

To give you the quick answer: yes.

The story focuses on the ‘unlikely’ walk Harold Fry undertakes in order to save his friend Queenie from cancer and along the way, he meets a number of characters, reflects on his past and his relationship with his wife and son.

This book was Rachel Joyce's debut novel and follows Harold Fry on his 466.5 mile journey.

While he is generally motivated and positive, Joyce paints Harold as very human, and so he does experience moments of doubt about his journey.

This made the book start off quite slow.

Despite Joyce making Harold a likeable character, the reader, in a way, feels obligated to take to Harold, initially out of pity, because he is a lonely character.

His loneliness is mirrored in many of the other characters, though most noticeably in a character called Martina.

The book was a bit slow at times, and it felt a bit repetitive with how Harold sought out reassurance to continue his journey from the people he met on his way.

Nevertheless, the book was one I would definitely read again and had some of the best plot developments and twists I have read in a long time.



## London Film Festival on the road to embracing gender equality

By NICOLE PIHAN

Let's hear it for the girls! The BFI London Film Festival is ripe with pure female directorial talent.

From *A Beautiful Day in the Neighbourhood* directed by Marielle Heller, to *The Other Lamb* by Malgorzata Szumowska, over 40 per cent of the movies at the Festival has a woman director mark on them.

To put this in perspective, only two movies directed by a female were shown during the Venice Film Festival this year.

The organisers of the BFI London Film Festival say: “There are great films being made by female film-makers and we want to see that reflected in the programme.”

The *Other Lamb* is Malgorzata

Szumowska's English-language debut and tells the story of Selah, a young girl born into an all-female cult lead by one man, Sheperd. Selah, growing more disillusioned as she ages, starts to question the rules and values she was raised to believe.

The 46-year-old Polish director says: “It is first and foremost a movie about the fall of the patriarch, with a strong and sharp feminist angle on the surface.”

Like many other female directors, Szumowska, expresses hope and trust in already visible trends of the way women are seen and appreciated. Not only as movie directors, but in any occupa-

tion across all the industries.

Szumowska says she never paid much attention to whether she was treated in an equal way to her male colleagues or not. “I was always working hard towards my goals. I was looking at the whole situation through the perspective of my successes.

“I wasn't aware of the amount of work I had to put in to succeed, compared to the men I was competing against,” she says.

The BFI London Film Festival will take place from October 2- 13, across various venues in London.



## Reddy brings India's struggle to the screen

By SARANGI SHARMILA ANAND

Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy is an Indian biopic about the Andhra Pradesh Emperor Uyyalawala Narasimha Reddy who started a war against the British East India Company in 1847.

The opening shot of a film should reflect its theme and here, Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy has justified in its first sequence showing Buckingham Palace, where the British officials discuss invading and looting Indian territories and imposing taxes on Indian farmers.

Narasimha Reddy (Chiranjeevi) is the territorial administrative and military ruler of Uyyalawada. Infuriated and troubled by the barbarism that his own people are subjugated under the British East India

Company, he starts a rebellion with other rulers.

The film portrays the struggles for the India's independence alongside love, affection and betrayal.

The audience are enthralled by vibrant colours with power dances, action and music.

Unlike other historical-war films, Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy is more realistic on its depiction of the battlefield.

But the screenplay has its flaws. The fast pace was a bit obscure but the film must be praised for the historical archives comprehensible for the big screen.





# THE CLOWN PRINCE OF CRIME IS BACK

**Joker in cinemas now**

Photo: Warner Bros

By **CHARLOTTE DORANS**

Before he became Joker, he was Arthur Fleck, played brilliantly by Joaquin Phoenix, a loner and social outcast working as a clown for hire.

Meanwhile he has big dreams to become a comedian, despite the unfortunate tick that makes him burst into uncontrollable laughter at inappropriate moments.

He still lives at home, looking after his ill mother where they watch late-night TV shows religiously and has a one-sided crush on a neighbour after they mimicked blowing their heads off in an elevator. Very romantic.

Throughout the first half of the film, Arthur is mistreated by Gotham's society, which favours the rich and powerful while the poor are left to fend for themselves. He takes a lot of punches in this movie. Literally.

Our first introduction to Arthur is him at work being beaten in the streets by a group of kids who stole his advertising sign.

Though the film itself is a separation from the DC Cinematic Universe, its comic book influences are definitely there.

The plot being very reminiscent of Alan Moore's classic 1988 graphic novel, "The Killing Joke", which portrayed a dark and sombre tone that has impacted the rest of DC's catalogue.

This dark and gritty tone is definitely carried over to Joker, from the set design of Gotham City being covered in rubbish and graffiti to the ominous musical score increases the dark atmosphere.

Joaquin Phoenix definitely had some big shoes to fill with the late

Heath Ledger, whose performance as the Joker in *The Dark Knight* (2008) is considered by many the most iconic Joker on the big screen.

**“Villains aren't born, they are created”**

Joaquin really made the character his own, down to the smallest detail, including his uncontrollable laughter feeling like it physically hurts for him to laugh but there's no way to stop it.

The big question that Joker wants to raise is that villains aren't born.

They are created and society is a pivotal part of ordinary people's downfall.

However, from the start it is obvious that Arthur Fleck is not an

ordinary man. During a talk with his social worker it is mentioned that he spent time in Arkham State Hospital, already showing the audience he is a man with a lot of demons.

The elephant in the room is the violence depicted in this movie is not something that we have not seen before in cinema.

Actually, we have probably seen a lot worse.

The message portrayed in *Joker* is meant to make us look at how we treat disadvantaged people. But at times the message feels a bit ham-fisted.

The wealthy people of Gotham don't care. His social worker tells him [and you], "They don't give a shit about you Arthur."

They don't give a shit about me. They don't give a shit about us."

Many of the cameos, like Robert De Niro as Arthur's idol Franklin Murray and Zazie Beetz as Arthur's love interest, were good with the limited amount of screen time they were given.

There are plenty of connections to the Batman universe, just to remind you that you are still in a Batman movie.

If you are looking for an action-packed comic book blockbuster then this film isn't for you.

If psychological crime thrillers interest you then I would definitely recommend it.





In-game capture of Eden Hazard from FIFA 20

Photo: Electronic Arts/EA Sports

# Good gameplay, bad glitches

By **STEPHEN HALL**

With a new FIFA game coming out every year with seemingly minimal changes, spending £60 on what can be a glamorised update is not exactly value for money.

However, for FIFA 20, I believe the developers EA have genuinely put in considerable effort to make the game new and fresh this year.

First of all, they have introduced a whole new game mode with Volta, essentially a watered-down version of the FIFA Street games, replacing the journey game mode which I did not even bother to play last year (and I am sure I am not alone on that one).

The gameplay for Volta is okay, but can feel a bit repetitive and shallow, certainly not as good as playing FIFA

Street. However, I admire EA for trying to introduce something new and fresh. It is certainly nice to play something different to the standard FIFA style.

Even though EA still have not overhauled things as massively as I would have liked, they have definitely introduced more this year than they have for a very long time.

**You can now create and customise a manager**

The addition of press conferences and player morale adds depth and realism to the game.

However, it does not take long before you start to see the same questions

popping up, and it can seem like a grind you do just to keep your players happy.

The player morale system is also quite shallow compared to the system in Football Manager, and you would have to be a complete moron not to pick the obvious positive options.

The best change has undoubtedly got to be the manager customisation. Instead of having to pick between 10 dull, generic models, you can now create and customise a manager, male and female, which is a nice personal touch.

Player potentials now change depending on their form rather than a fixed, predetermined rating, and older players declining less quickly also opens up more options for transfers, as opposed to using the same high-potential

youngsters.

However, an important thing to mention is the enormous amount of game-ruining glitches in career mode that have been present since the launch.

EA announced they are working overtime to fix these in an upcoming patch, but really, it is unacceptable to have so many things wrong this early on.

Therefore my high rating of the game is under the assumption that these issues will be fixed soon.

If they are not, then I would cut my score down to two.

Ultimate team has also seen some minor but good additions.

As someone who does not really touch ultimate team too much, I have really enjoyed playing it this year.

The addition of seasonal objectives means that you are rewarded more within the early stages of the game for doing simple tasks such as listing players or creating green links.

The mystery ball game mode also adds something new and is a fun break from the rage-inducing division rivals.

The gameplay in general across all modes is also pretty solid and balanced, with no particular style of play seeming too overpowered like the arcadey-pace in FIFA 13.

Overall, a solid addition to the franchise but again, like every year, it still feels like EA could have done a bit more.



## Destiny 2: A spooky, nostalgia-filled adventure across the Moon

By **WILL SAWYER**

In Destiny 2's latest update, ancient creatures and ghostly shadows disturb the shattered surface of Earth's moon.

They are protecting the secrets that lie within a mysterious fortress. Yep. Moon's haunted.

Destiny 2: Shadowkeep marks a huge step in evolving the franchise into what it was always meant to be.

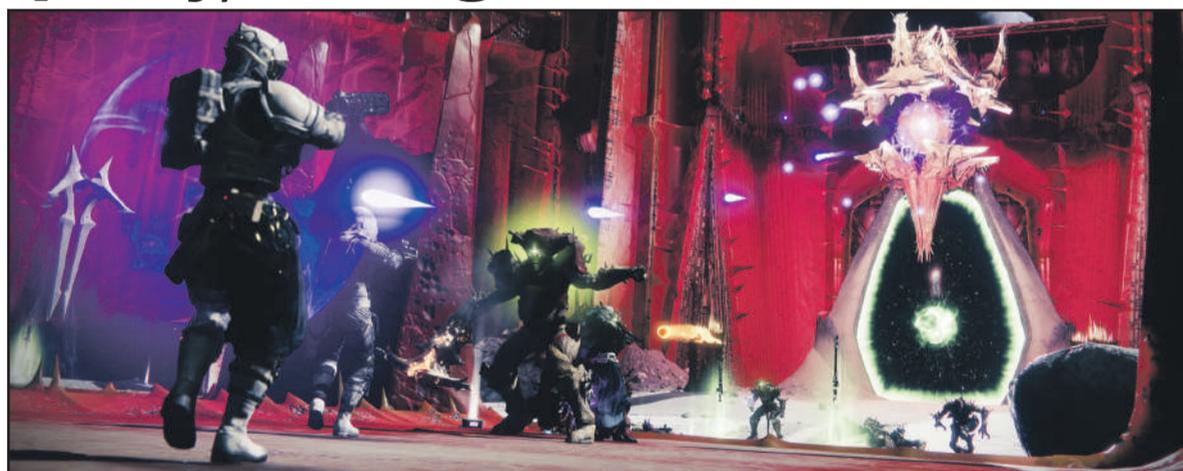
In Shadowkeep, the monstrous Scarlet Keep has emerged and unleashed the ghosts of defeated foes called Nightmares.

It is your job as a Guardian to head to the Moon, investigate the danger and save the world.

The story might seem like a spooky yet typical action-packed romp across the Moon.

But by the end, it sets the stage for a much graver threat and neatly ties into the narrative started by Destiny in 2014.

The franchise's developers, Bungie,



Guardians fight their way to Scarlet Keep

Photo: Bungie

have clearly been listening to fans lamenting how things were better in Destiny.

So Destiny 2's new Moon location is a bigger and better version of the original.

It is a haunted wasteland for new players and a real nostalgia trip for Destiny veterans.

Returning to the devastated lunar surface was like visiting home after a long time away and seeing your family.

Except that new conservatory that you've never seen is actually infested with malevolent aliens!

And Shadowkeep's content doesn't just end with the new story.

A few days after launch, the Vex, an unrelenting army of alien robots, started their invasion of the Moon.

This unlocked Vex Offensive, a six-player seasonal activity that tasks teams with slaying the Vex legions to slow the invasion.

While it is not as demanding as one of Destiny 2's raid activities, it is

still a fun mode that offers plenty of opportunities to score some sweet loot along the way.

Bungie has also overhauled the armour system, in what it calls "Armour 2.0", to better cater for fashion as well as function.

While this new system is mostly an improvement, players who have been away from the game for some time might find Armour 2.0 off-putting.

Overall, Shadowkeep seems like a huge step in the right direction for Destiny 2.

The first week of this Moonage Nightmare has been an excellent introduction to Bungie's new vision for Destiny as an ever-changing multiplayer role-playing franchise.

Despite how overwhelming the game might seem to new or returning time to jump into the world of Destiny.





Jamal Rhoden-Stevens at the International Athletics World Relay  
Photo: Jamal Rhoden-Stevens

# Running for the record: KU graduate sprints to success in Japan

By **EDDIE LUCHFORD**

Kingston biochemistry graduate Jamal Rhoden-Stevens spent his summer breaking a Great Britain national record at the International Athletics World Relays in Yokohama, Japan.

Alongside three teammates which included Olympic bronze medal winner Anyika Onuora, Jamal Rhoden-Stevens broke Great Britain's mixed 4 x 400 metres record with a scintillating time of 3 minutes and 20.49 seconds.

He described competing in Yokohama with Team GB as "a great feeling" and said that he "felt we could have gone faster but that's life".

Jamal stressed the importance of mental strength for young aspiring athletes.

"My advice would be to set out goals for yourself but never limit yourself, athletics is a mental sport as much as it is physical. Managing expectations on yourself and what others put on you takes time, it's best to take the pressure off yourself and enjoy the sport. For me the number one priority is to be happy".

He describes his daily routine as rigorous: "I get up at 7 am every day even on weekends, eat, and then head to the track to get warm. After that I head straight to the gym for a good

stretch and recovery session then go again. When I was at uni I would fit my training around my studies and make sure to drink a lot of water to stay hydrated."

A relatively new event, the mixed 4 x 400 metres, which will debut at the Olympics next year in Tokyo, was first introduced to IAAF competition in 2017. The hope was that having two men and two women combined would lead to exciting races, as big leads could be overhauled with lots of take-overs as the teams decide what order to run in.

However, even with the event still in its infancy, a recurring theme is beginning to show with every team in the World Finals this year opting for male athletes on the lead and anchor legs.

**“My advice would be to set out goals for yourself but never limit yourself.”**

Despite setting the new national record, Jamal and his team were less than two seconds off the pace and fell just short of qualifying for the final, which was won by a star studded team from the United States.

A USA team, which included some of the same runners, broke the world re-

cord in Doha only a couple of weeks ago.

Jamal, who graduated from Kingston last year having won the University sportsperson of the year award, did not begin proper athletics training until he was eighteen. He used to enjoy long jump, never training and just turning up to open meets for fun. It was only when he started breaking school records that he realised how talented he was. His father, who had run for Herne Hill Harriers, got him into track initially as a 100m and 200m runner.

Having spent a lot of time on the treatment table at the start of his sprinting career, Jamal decided to make the change from the notoriously unforgiving sprints to the one lap 400m which focused more on control than explosive speed.

Having previously juggled his training commitments with his degree at Kingston, Jamal hit the ground running following graduation last year, securing brand deals with Rio Ferdinand's brand 5 supply and Ellesse. Brand deals are crucial for young athletes as National Lottery funding is renowned for its inconsistency, with a tendency to be there one year then gone the next.

His sights are now set on the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo and the European World Athletics Championship

## KU women's hockey team play their best despite player's collapse

By **CHARLOTTE DORANS**

**Kingston 2  
Brighton 7**

The KU Women's Hockey team had their first defeat of the season ,7-2, against Brighton University. KU had faced Brighton in the first game of their last season and lost 8-0.

Even with minus two players due to 'Fresher's Flu' they were determined to win this match for their first game this season. From the moment the match started, KU fought hard, with player Niamh Micall managing to block a tough push from Brighton, but they still landed a goal in the first couple of minutes.

KU managed to score a goal but Brighton wasn't going down easy, despite strong opposition from KU.

Both teams managed to successfully defend each other's goals, with KU giving stronger tackles

compared to Brighton, but with less people in the team it was becoming a bit difficult.

During the second half of the match, a sudden casualty shocked everyone when Grace Treacher collapsed on the pitch, briefly halting the match, she was taken off the pitch to rest while another team member replaced her.

Shortly after, she was back and ready to go, bringing it to a full team of eleven.

With two minutes left to go, Brighton managed to come out on top and secure their victory but despite their lose, both teams gave congratulations to each other. Captain Ellie Mapletoft said that despite the circumstances, everyone played their best. The Cougars will be playing Surrey Women's Seconds on October 16 in Surrey Sports Park.



Sophie Wombwell breaking a sweat during the game  
Photo: Eddie Luchford

## Women's lacrosse suffer first-game defeat

By **STEPH SPYRO**

**Kingston 5  
Brighton 21**

With a set of fresh faces, KU women's lacrosse team suffered a devastating 21-5 loss against Brighton University's first team on Wednesday evening.

The KU girls fought well at Tolworth Sports Ground but were not able to overcome Brighton's offence.

President of the lacrosse team, Ellie McDonagh said: "All the girls played really well and we have some really good defensive players, so hopefully we're successful for the rest of the season."

The team, which was made up of several members who had never played a match before, got called by the ref for stick checks, covering the ball and dangerous shooting, which is when it is unsafe to pass the goal.

# Last season's top team lose their first game

By **STEPHEN HALL**

## Kingston 1 St Mary's 3

The reigning champions got off to the worst possible start in their new league as they fell to a 3-1 defeat against local rivals St Mary's second team at Tolworth on Wednesday.

The opening few minutes of the game were pretty even until a bad defensive clearance was gobbled up by St Mary's, who capitalised with a well-taken goal.

Damian Lopez then scored a beautiful curling shot from outside the box but the referee disallowed it after hearing a chant of 'leave it', which is a method commonly used to put off defenders.

In the opening minutes of the second half, Kelvin Adjei's effort crashed into post as Henry Awouere's follow-up shot could only find the side netting.

Cougars keeper Will Jacques then made a couple of great saves in the space of a few minutes to deny St Mary's a second goal.

His earlier goalkeeping heroics could not help him though as St Mary's easily slotted it in the net from close range to make it 2-0.

Some nice Kingston build-up play from the back then lead to a cross into the St Mary's box with Adjei going for the spectacular with an overhead kick but could only put it wide.

Shortly after, a great effort from Awouere was cleared off the line to compile Kingston's misery.

It got even worse for Kingston as St Mary's scored an absolute screamer into the corner of the net from 35 yards out to add their third of the day.

It wasn't all doom and gloom for Kingston however as Adjei managed to score a peach of a curling shot in the dying embers of the game.

Kingston firsts coach Besim Ali gives his reason why he thinks the Cougars lost:

"The quality from playing out from the back wasn't as good as it usually is.

"We still ended up creating chances by getting the ball in the final third but [there was] just a

lack in quality there with putting the ball in the back of the net," he said.

This opening defeat comes after a stellar season last time out where Kingston won the BUCS Division 4C title, only losing twice.

Despite the defeat, Ali was still hopeful of Kingston's chances this season:

"We had more shots and attempts today than the opposition even though we've gone and lost the game.

"That still gives me some hope that we will do well, so I see us up there and we can win the league," he said.

The game plan for this season is to implement a philosophy of building up from the back, retaining possession and patiently waiting for the opposition to leave defensive gaps, which can be exploited.

Unfortunately for the Cougars, this simply did not work this time out, as they could not deal with St Mary's high pressing which stopped Kingston from playing their natural game.

This was also a sentiment shared by Ali: "The opposition were at a good level.

"They gave us problems when it came to playing out as all their players locked on and pressed," he said.

At times it also seemed as if Kingston were lacking in confidence in their ability to patiently build up the play as the first goal was gifted to the opposition after a rushed clearance.

However the Kingston defence but their bodies on the line to make many last-gasp goal line clearances throughout the game.

Despite the game plan not working this time, Ali still plans on sticking with it for the time being:

"We're going to still go with the same system and the same philosophy of playing out and how we play through the thirds.

"We just need more work on it in training and maybe a couple of personnel tweaks," he said.

Kingston will be facing Brighton's second team at home next week on Wednesday at Tolworth Court Sports Ground.



Cerrell Wilkinson in action against St Mary's

Photo: Isabella Ruffatti

## Kingston second's team start the season strong with a 10-0 win

By **EMILY HOOPER**

### Kingston – 10 Goldsmiths – 0

There was a victory for KU men's second football team today as they beat Goldsmiths University (GU)'s second team by ten goals to none at Tolworth Court Sports Ground.

Man of the Match, Umeh Ebube Casmir, was responsible for half of the goals, showing a promising start to the season after being moved up from KU's third team.

Casmir said that he expected to do well due to their "new coach and tactics", but not as well as they played.

"We played really well as a team today, our one-on-one battles were really good. The other team wasn't as prepared which helped," he added.

The new coach is Oscar Kotting McMillan, who is the former captain of KU's first men's football team, who Casmir described as having a "good coach mentality".

KU started off steady and then began to dominate possession for the majority of the game, scoring their first goal in the 20th minute and already winning 6-0 at half time.

A notable moment of great performance and teamwork was KU's second goal in the 26th minute, Jagkaram Sidhu assisting

Casmir in his attack with a precise cross.

Other noteworthy performances include excellent attack from Victor Nwosu, including two goals, and Joseph Tolbert, who managed to get past the entire defence from the halfway line.

Despite the score, GU kept up good effort and sportsmanship throughout the game.

The game stayed fun and light-hearted, especially after GU's goalie booted the ball straight in to one of his player's heads, following an accidental foul from a KU player.

Both team's managed to have a laugh about it and the whole match remained friendly – an amazing start to the season.



Kingston were dominant on the ball

Photo: Isabella Ruffatti