

THE STUDENT VOICE

ISSUE 1

Could All That Glitters Be Gouilding?

THIS MONTH'S JOURNALISTS:

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Ellie Goulding at the United Nations in New York. *Click on images or underlined text to view source.*

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COULD ALL THAT GLITTERS BE GOULDING?

Lara Huddleston

Soaring from Herefordshire country girl to international popstar, Ellie Goulding has a fantastic story – but it isn't quite what it seems.

During a surprise visit to her old college (HSFC) in December last year, Goulding shared some of her story with students also aspiring to a musical career. With over 19 billion streams worldwide, 2 Brit Awards, and a Grammy nomination, Goulding is a glittering example of what can happen if you “stick with it”, a lesson she reiterated to rising artists in *Dead on Arrival* and *Crush*, two of HSFC's top bands.

But the college wasn't the only place she visited. Alongside her passion for music, Goulding is an environmental activist, spending the rest of the day at Bodenham Lake with the Herefordshire Wildlife Trust, learning about the restoration of local habitats. Speaking later on BBC Radio 4's Today Program as ‘Guest Editor’, she said, “I'm passionate about nature; I grew up in nature”. For her, the Herefordshire landscape was a “safe place” that comforted her during mental illness and helped her “think of songs”.

Now an environmental ambassador for the UN and WWF UK, Goulding proves that a rise to fame is also a rise to responsibility. She has spoken at COP26, COP27, and COP28, and won the UN Foundation ‘New Voices Award’ to demonstrate this; however, perhaps her special connection to the Herefordshire country brings us particularly close to her message.



Ellie Goulding visiting HSFC.

Nevertheless, Goulding did not touch on environmental issues during her visit to the college, instead focusing on her experience of the music industry. She explained on the Today Program, “I was never too keen on mixing my activism with my music”, admitting that she was initially “reluctant” to commit herself to an eco-identity, and perhaps an affiliation with extreme

groups, like ‘Extinction Rebellion’ and ‘Just Stop Oil’. Her activism is also noticeably diluted on her Instagram, which mainly features photos of herself performing or posing. Her website, apart from advertising some eco-centric merchandise, is also quiet.

Can environmental activism be as plastic as the pollution it protests against? As young people facing an uncertain future, it is reasonable to be sceptical of celebrity activists. Clearly, environmental activism should not be taken for fast fashion or a trendy accessory; however, perhaps Goulding's situation is not so simple.



Ellie Goulding performing ‘Burn’ at Glastonbury in 2014.

Goulding told the So Hot Right Now podcast: “I genuinely thought the activism would jeopardise my job, and I believe it has”. Could this be tragic proof that fans are more superficial than celebrities? “Every time I post anything about climate change, I lose at least a thousand followers,” she also disclosed. With a fanbase of mainly 18–26-year-olds, whose futures are inextricably linked with the future of the planet, Goulding's situation is disconcerting.

“People are following me for a very specific reason and it's not the environment,” she added. Perhaps we expect popstars like Goulding to distract us, rather than remind us, of the climate crisis. Perhaps, unconsciously, we are still denying its seriousness by blocking it from certain aspects of our lives. Is it impossible for pop-singers to blend entertainment with protest?

Celebrities like Goulding are therefore left with a hopeless dilemma: stay silent and protect the vibe, or speak up and lose popularity. At the end of the day, we go to concerts to have a good time and forget our worries – but surely, as we come together to enjoy music, we could also come together to care about the planet.

GLOBAL FESTIVITIES: JANUARY

To learn more, click on the link in each title.

New Year's Day

An international celebration of the new year, involving fireworks and parties in the UK.

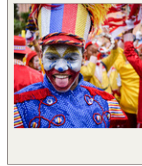
1st



Kaapse Klopse

A South African celebration of the new year that originated in the colonial era, featuring the Tweede Nuwe Jaar Minstrel Parade.

2nd



World Braille Day

Celebrates the importance of Braille and promotes the rights of blind and partially-sighted people.

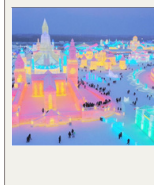
4th



Harbin Ice Festival

A Chinese celebration of Winter crafts, featuring an ice-world of sculptures, ice lanterns, winter swimming, skiing, dog-sledding, and Arctic animals.

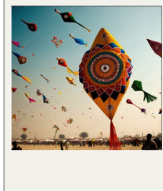
5th



International Kite Festival

Hosted in Gujarat (India), this celebrates *Uttarayan*, a Hindu festival marking the turn of winter to summer. Professional kite-makers gather from all over the world to fly their creations - see the gallery via the link above! Continues until 14th.

8th



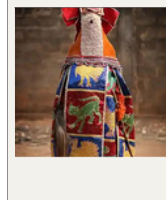
10th

Martin Luther King Jnr Day

Honours the life and legacy of MLK Jnr, who nonviolently campaigned to end segregation in America during the 1950s and 60s. He quickly became the most influential African American civil rights advocate of his time.



MLK Jnr.



Ouidah Voodoo Festival

Celebrated in Ghana, Togo, and Benin, this is a festival of the Voodoo religion. Fetish priests, Voodoo adepts, traditional chefs, processions, and scary dances are all part of the experience.

15th



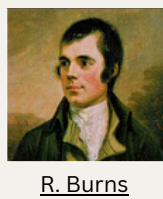
Winnie the Pooh Day

Celebrated on the birthday of A. A. Milne, Winnie's maker, this festival is marked with teddy bears' picnics and honey!



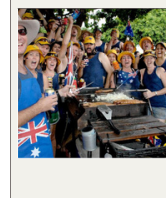
Squirrel Appreciation Day

In the UK, this festival is specifically dedicated to red squirrels, which are endangered at the hands of grey squirrels (introduced from the US).



R. Burns

18th



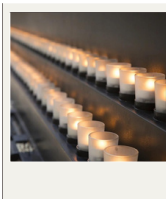
Australia Day

Although this festival marks the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788, it aims to celebrate the many dimensions of modern Australian culture, whilst remembering the original custodians of the land. Some Australians believe the date should be changed to commemorate a less painful memory in Australia's history.

Burns Night

Celebrates the life and legacy of Scottish poet Robert Burns with a traditional Scottish dinner (haggis, neeps, tatties, etc). This started in 1801.

21st



Holocaust Remembrance Day

Marks the liberation of Aushwitz-Birkenau and commemorates the millions of Holocaust victims. It also advocates the prevention of future genocide.

National Storytelling Week

Continues until the 4th Feb, honouring the oral tradition of storytelling.

25th

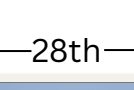


26th

International LEGO Day

Marks the day that Godtfred Kirk Christiansen, a Danish inventor, patented the original 2x4 lego brick.

27th



27th



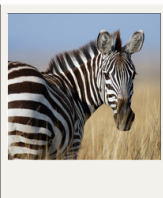
Up Helly Aa

A Scottish festival all about fire! It originated in the 1880s, featuring Viking pageantry, torch-lit processions, and the burning of a galley.

International Zebra Day

Advocating the conservation of Zebras, which have become endangered due to poaching, habitat loss, and competition.

28th



30th



31st

COUNTRY PROFILE:

VENEZUELA

Lara Huddleston



Capital: Caracas

Population: 33, 740, 000

Language: Spanish (new Venezuelan Constitution also recognises indigenous languages)

Religious Majority: Catholic

Currency: 1 GBP = 45.73 Venezuelan Bolívares

Climate: Tropical – hot, humid, moderate in highlands.

Politics: During the first half of the 20th Century, Venezuela was ruled by military strongmen who promoted oil industry. Since 1959, there have mainly been democratically elected governments, until President Hugo Chavez (1999-2013) started exercising authoritarian control over the government. President Nicolás Maduro, who has held power since 2013, continued this trend, placing strong restrictions on freedoms of expression and press. Currently, the government is a federal multiparty republic.

Economy: Mismanagement of the petrochemical industry left Venezuela unable to withstand the 2014 global drop in oil prices, sparking severe economic decline. This, in turn, resulted in reduced social spending, shortages of basic goods, and hyperinflation. Natural disasters (e.g. the 1999 floods in Caracas) and uncontrolled immigration compounded these economic problems. To mitigate this, Maduro introduced a new currency, shown in the conversion above. Before this, 1GBP = 4,572,632.91 Bolívares!

Safety: Poor living conditions due to the economy has forced over 7 million Venezuelans

out of the country. There are major concerns about human rights abuses, violent crime, corruption, and political manipulation of the judicial system.

Current Affairs: Since the early 19th Century, Venezuela has claimed Guyanese territory west of the Essequibo River. On December 3rd 2023, Maduro called a referendum in which 95% of voters (allegedly) supported him declaring ownership of the Essequibo region – which is rich in oil and natural gas. Maduro then attempted to claim the region using legal manoeuvres. On the 14th December 2023, he met with Guyanese President Irfaan Ali, agreeing to avoid violence at all costs.

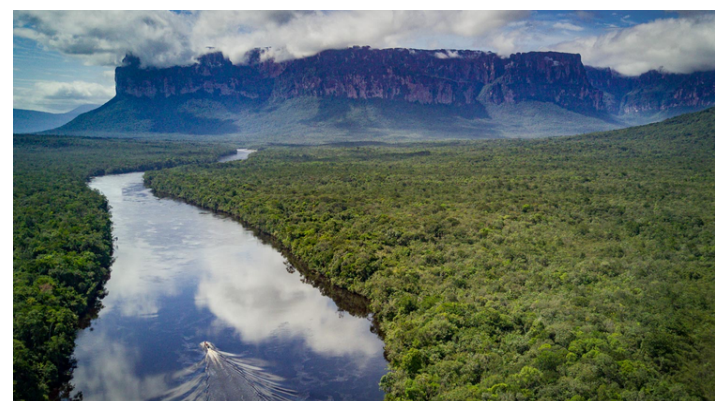
National Anthem: [Listen here!](#)



Salto Angel (Amazon rainforest in south-eastern Venezuela)



Cloud Forest (near [Casa Maria](#) in Carabobo)



Auyán Tepui (Canaima National Park)

BEHIND THE CONFLICT: A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE ISRAEL-PALESTINE WAR

Lara Huddleston

Any explanation of a conflict as complicated and controversial as this one is likely to be an oversimplification. This article aims to provide basic, impartial information about some of the events leading up to the current situation.



1
Beginning of the 20th Century: The territory was populated by Arabs under the Ottoman Empire. Zionism began in Europe, which claims that Judaism requires independent statehood.



4
1948: Israel declared statehood.
1948-49: After Israel's declaration, a conflict known as the 'Israel War of Independence' to Israelis and 'Nakba' (*catastrophe*) to Arabs took place. More than 6000 Israelis and 10,000 Arabs were killed.



6
1964: The 'Palestinian Liberation Organisation' was founded to fight for the independence of Palestinians. It was led by Yasser Arafat from 1969, who used guerrilla warfare and terrorism throughout the 1960s-90s.



8
1973: The Yom Kippur War began on the 6th Oct, the Jewish Holy Day of Yom Kippur, and continued throughout the Islamic holy month of Ramadan until the 26th Oct. In an act of indirect confrontation, the US supported Israel, while the Soviet Union supported Egypt and Syria. Like the 7th Oct attacks in 2023, these were unexpected by Israel.



2
1922: Palestine was mandated to Britain after the Ottoman Empire fell. Tensions rose between Jewish immigrants (wanting to make the land a Jewish state) and native Arabs. The Holocaust exacerbated this.



5
1956: The Suez Crisis resulted in Gaza (controlled by Egypt) to be temporarily occupied by Israel until 1957.

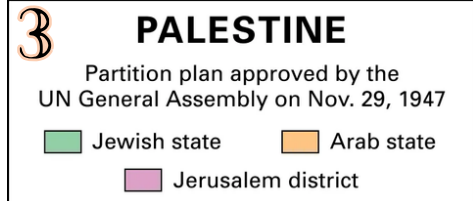


7
1967: The Six Day War was fought between Israel and the Arab countries of Syria, Jordan, and Egypt. Around 700 Israelis and 18,000 Arabs were killed.



9
1987-1993: The First Intifada (*uprising*) occurred violently. A group of Palestinians who considered the PLO too compromising formed Hamas, a militant organisation dedicated to the destruction of Israel.

Statehood: Recognition as a country/political unit.
Mandated: When land is given to a country by the UN as part of a peace agreement.



3
PALESTINE
Partition plan approved by the UN General Assembly on Nov. 29, 1947
 Legend:
 Green: Jewish state
 Orange: Arab state
 Pink: Jerusalem district
1947: The UN voted to partition the territory into two states, Palestine and Israel, and make Jerusalem an international city. Clashes between Jews and Arabs began immediately, with both groups committing violent acts towards each other.



10
1993: The Oslo Accords were signed, establishing the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and the West Bank, which gave Palestinians a small amount of political freedom.



11
2000-2005: A second Intifada killed around 1000 Israelis and 3200 Palestinians. Walls and checkpoints were constructed around Palestinian territory by Israel.



12
2005: Israel withdrew from Gaza.
2007: Hamas took control of Gaza, triggering an Israeli blockade of the territory. Periodic fighting continued between Hamas and Israel.



13
7th October, 2023: Hamas invaded Israel, killing 1,139 Israelis. Since then, over 22,185 Gazans have been killed and over 57,000 injured.

Blockade: When territory is surrounded via military means to stop people and goods moving in and out.



A map released by the UK Government highlighting their updated travel advice about the region.

To learn more, watch [this video](#) or [this video](#), and read [this article](#).



Celebration in Tel Aviv, a city in Israel, after the UN vote to partition Palestine in 1947



More than half of the Arab population fled their homes during the war of 1948. Only a small fraction were allowed to return after the hostilities ended; around 7 million Palestinians today descend from these refugees.



A speech given by a member of the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades (the armed wing of Hamas) on the 8th of December, 2012, to mark the 25th Anniversary of the founding of Hamas.

COLLEGE CORRESPONDENTS

MEANING WITHOUT THE MAKER

CAN LIFE BE MEANINGFUL WITHOUT GOD?

Lily Down, Philosophy and Ethics Correspondent



'Atheism failed to answer a simple question: what is the meaning and purpose of life?'

In her article, 'Why I am Now a Christian', released in early November 2023, Ayaan Hirsi Ali describes how she found life 'unendurable' without any form of 'spiritual solace'. Despite joining renowned atheists like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens, this about-turn for Hirsi Ali surely signals her conviction that a life without belief in a God can never produce the security of meaningful existence; however, is such a claim reasonable - could atheism be a fulfilling alternative to belief in a God for providing meaning and purpose?

When Genesis states that God made humankind 'in His image', this establishes a unique relationship between humans and God through intentional creation. However, an atheistic, scientific perspective would claim no such relationship ever existed, as evidence suggests that we are simply random products of evolution. Adopting a more humanistic approach, I would argue that meaning may be found through another form of relationship: those we share with each other.

Christopher Hitchens comments, 'it could be that all existence is a pointless joke, but it is not in fact possible to live one's everyday life as if this were so'. Due to humanity's natural inclination to find meaning, and the fact that our actions have real effects on others, I would argue that human contact is the only requirement for meaning, even if this is created by ourselves, not God.

Therefore, if meaning is the product of our own

invention, with both religious and atheistic outlooks becoming equally valid, it seems that this is simply an illusion that comforts us from the harshness of reality, but one that is nonetheless necessary.

HOMOSEXUALITY AND GOTHIC LITERATURE

Alice Drury, English Literature Correspondent



The gothic – a genre of horror, terror, and spooky supernatural that has pervaded fireside stories for centuries. For a form intended to cause fear, why would it link to homosexuality?

Some suggest that during the Victorian period, when homosexuality was as scary as Frankenstein's monster, gothic literature may have been the safest way to express homoeroticism. Oscar Wilde, author of 'The Picture of Dorian Gray', was accused of this during a trial held against him for homosexuality, whereby 'Dorian Gray' was brought against him as evidence. The gothic novel may have contributed for his arrest in 1895.

Indeed, if we follow this idea of writers liberating their repressed homosexuality through literature, why gothic? Gothic literature was first established by Horace Walpole's novel 'The Castle of Otranto' in 1764, itself sparking speculation over implied homoeroticism of both the novel and the author. Proceeding its publication, gothic tales seem to obscurely reference similar themes of transgressional sexuality.

However, the intention of integrating forbidden desire into the gothic may have been from a conservative perspective. Since gothic tropes focus on monsters, vampires, spirits, and the subversion of order, the concept of the "other" may have been intended to further demonise

homosexuals by having gothic terror metaphorically reflect the social anxieties of the Victorian era.

Regardless of critical intentions of the past, queer Gothicism has allowed people to dissect reality and offer some form of representation as new ways of living are explored – as social acceptance develops, so can literature and love.

HISTORY'S FORGOTTEN WOMEN

THE SHE-WOLF: ELEANOR OF AQUITAINE

Poppy White, History Correspondent



Eleanor of Aquitaine, Frederick Sandys (1858)

Behind each module in History A-Level from the Crusades to 20th century Britain, women are often left on the outskirts of major events, yet without these women some of history's greatest victories could not have occurred. Throughout the next few issues, we will be exploring History's forgotten women.

Sovereign. Crusader. Rebel. Regent. Throughout history, women could only dream of achieving one of these titles – or of becoming the wealthiest and most powerful monarch in Medieval Europe. Yet, this formidable reputation was bestowed upon no other than the 'She-Wolf' of England and France: Eleanor of Aquitaine. Best known for a tumultuous love story between Louis VII of France and Henry II of England, how then did royal power lie within Europe's most eligible bachelorette?

After the creation of the Angevin Empire through her marriage to Henry Plantagenet in 1152, connecting her lands in Southern France with England, Normandy, Anjou and Maine, Eleanor's fierce protection of her Empire meant defending it against anyone, even her own husband.

In 1173, dissatisfied with his lack of power, Eleanor's eldest son Henry plotted to overthrow Henry II, joined by his brothers Richard and Geoffrey, as well as Eleanor. Perhaps motivated by her constrained power in Aquitaine or her

husband's mistreatment of her sons, Eleanor's revolt and imprisonment shows that the Mother of the Angevin Empire was difficult to silence.

Following Henry II's death in 1189, Eleanor was free once more to tighten her grip on power as the regent of England, whilst her son, Richard the Lionheart, went crusading, protecting his land from her son, John. Eleanor personally rescued Richard I from the Duke of Austria and crossed the Pyrenees in 1200 to marry her granddaughter, Blanche, to the son of the French King. She also defended peace against the Capetian Kings of France and helped create one of England's greatest dynasties: the Plantagenets.

Placed on the backrow of history as the reason for the failed Second Crusade or forgotten as the mother of Richard the Lionheart, Eleanor's story shows how some of England's greatest victories could not have happened without the She-Wolf of England.

SPORTS THOUGHTS



GUEST Sports Correspondent, Gary Brackenbury

In amongst the very important but seemingly endless stream of premier league football games over the festive period, one of the worlds lesser regarded sports pushed its fancy dressed way to the front of the headlines. Darts! The most fun you can have over a distance of 237cm (that is 7 feet, 9.25 inches in old money) with 3 mini arrows thrown at a small circular board 451mm in diameter (work that one out yourselves) whilst cheered on by a crowd of (mostly) middle aged men in various outrageous fancy dress costumes (something to do with evolution probably). The reason for this? The teenage sensation Luke Littler. The Warrington lad, fresh from his GCSE triumphs earlier in the year, beat two former World Champions before losing in the final.

Meanwhile, in other sports, the once mighty Manchester United became a little untied with their Dutch manager being on the ropes one game (defeat against Bournemouth) and a hero the next (draw against table toppers Liverpool) and ropes again (lost at West Ham) and hero once more (won against the Villa), before totally crashing out at Forest (Nottingham). Liverpool remain 3 points clear at the top.

Meanwhile in more obscure football news, perennial struggler and relegation botherer, Hereford, is currently somewhat bizarrely in the

National League North, with an impressive winning streak halted by a potentially resurgent Gloucester City (1:1 draw). Gloucester remain in 22nd position while Hereford have reached 4th place, still 10 points adrift of the mighty Scunthorpe United who look like certain league winners at the half way stage.

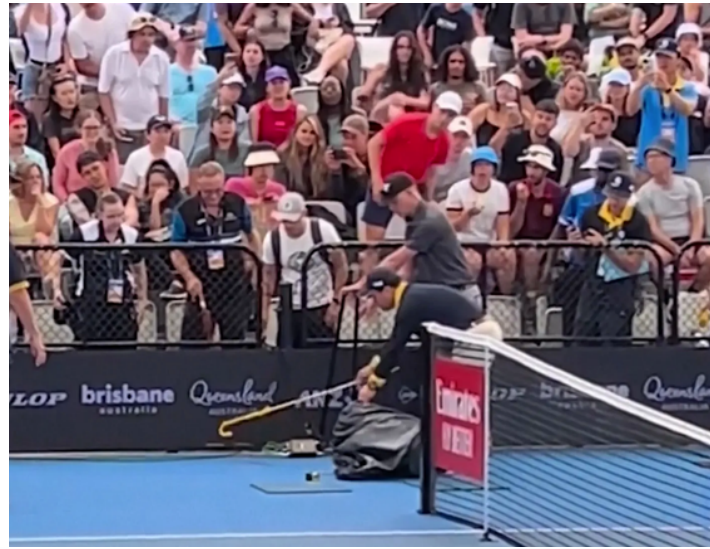
In other sports news; tennis was played in New Zealand and in Brisbane they used snakes to focus the attention of ball boys and girls. Some people somewhere played cricket and golf (is golf still a thing these days?)



Luke Littler, the Youth World Champion



Hereford FC playing Gloucester City.



An Eastern Brown Snake, one of Australia's most deadly reptiles, accidentally slithered onto the court at the Brisbane International tournament.

POLITICAL ANGLE: BACKWARD BRITAIN

Maddie Lloyd, Politics Correspondent

The UK is widely recognised for being one of the rainiest countries in Europe, so how is it that our infrastructure cannot support this type of weather?

In the past week, Storm Henk swept through the country, proving further still that Britain can't cope with its changing climate. After more than 600 flood warnings, thousands of homes without power and one man dead, surely we must realise the importance of building a more secure Britain that can handle our weather. For some homeowners in the West Midlands, this was the fourth time this year that their properties had been flooded. Train services have ceased and some of England's major roads have been closed. The Environment Agency advised that all public infrastructures need to be made flood-resilient by 2050, as this isn't the first time Brits have been disadvantaged due to a lack of climate-resilient infrastructure.



Jack (age 7) being rescued in Severn Stoke on the 3rd of January, 2024.

But it's not only the winter that is challenging the UK, as 2023 was the hottest year on record and 2024 is set to be even hotter still. This dry heat contributes damage to roads and railways, which can reach temperatures up to 20 degrees higher than the air around them causing trains to be derailed at the extreme.

It is clear that this country is not well-enough equipped to combat the changes in weather and seasons that is to be expected in the years to come. Are we considering the consequences of climate change for the UK seriously enough, or merely accepting these disruptions as the norm?

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

We'd love to hear your feedback!

Email your thoughts to lhh.2204584@hereford.ac.uk

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WHAT'S UNDER THE BED...?

SHORT STORY COMPETITION

Write something using the prompt above!

Max. **500 words**. Deadline: **10th February 2024**

Winner will receive a **£20 cash prize** and be **published in a future issue** of The Student Voice.



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