

Literary Culture and Student Wellbeing.

Why Not?



Food,
fitness &
fun.

Over the past few years in particular, mental health and wellbeing amongst students is a topic that is struggling to overcome stigma, while battling its oppression against many young people across the world. Taking care of physical and mental health often go hand in hand and it can be difficult to find ways to make steps to take care of ourselves, or even to overcome any anxieties or uncertainties about the things we know we could do - but aren't doing.

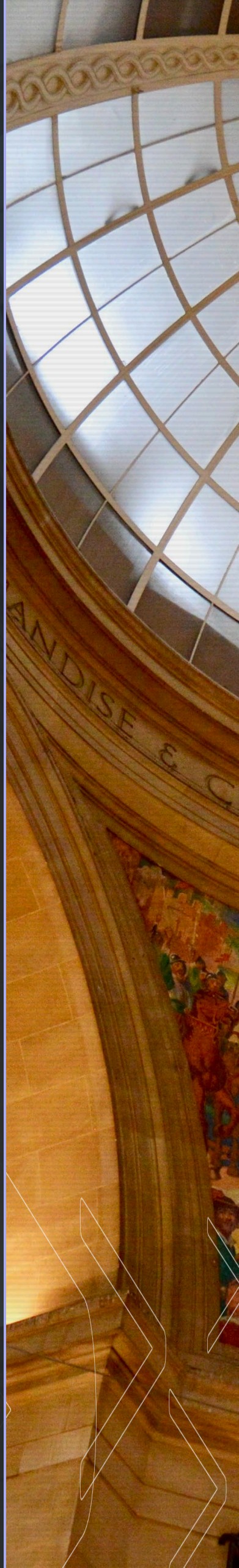
Why Nott? Magazine takes a relaxed but sensitive approach to these kinds of difficulties faced by university students, carefully written by a few of us who are currently studying at Nottingham Trent University, and aims to be accessible to other students, no matter the state of your mental health. There are articles spread across themes such as fitness, food and entertainment suggestions*, which are there to help and encourage you to try something new for the sake of your wellbeing. Why not give them a go?

If you feel you are in need of further medical advice or counselling, there are many charities and services available through your GP and the NHS that are happy to help and can be found locally, which can often be applied for online. Counselling for student mental health problems from the NHS website available via:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/student-mental-health/>

***DISCLAIMER:**

The articles within this magazine were (mostly) written before the current pandemic and lockdown situation we have now found ourselves in. Please consider this when reading these articles; especially the ones within the entertainment section. Please do continue to follow current government rules, and stay inside your homes and stay safe. We hope these articles can inspire you to make some new plans (especially in Nottingham) for once this is all over, and we can continue life as normal again. Stay safe, and remember to wash your hands!



A FOODIE GUIDE

'Nottingham is undergoing a foodie revolution,' BBC *GoodFood's* Tony Naylor reports. From the gothic *Pit and Pendulum* to the airy continental feel of *French Living*, I'd argue the foodie mutiny won out a long time ago, remnants including delicious *DoughNotts* and *Annie's Burger Shack* which citizens of Nottingham have been left to defend. By defend I mean consume. However, all this consuming doesn't come cheap for the city of students, considering *Alchemist's* fabulously boozy Long Island concoction comes in at £8.50 a glass. Yet all is not lost; writer Beth Atkinson has researched and recorded some of the best homemade cocktails, which are just as fabulous and boozy as the *Alchemist's* but a fraction of the price. Not to mention, inspired by some of your favourite classic novels. Whilst the words "drinking" and "students" are often synonymous, there isn't a more iconic duo than "students" and "deadlines". We've all spent hours in the library snacking on vending machine chocolate and hydrating ourselves with the tears of frustration we cry. However, as writer Amalia Smith explains in "The Do's and Don'ts of a Deadline Diet", the vending machine meal plan is not the best to ensue and in fact could be inhibiting our ability to finish that essay. After all, there is no better feeling than clearing your Dropbox, and mind, of looming deadlines.



A FEW FOODY BOOK FAVES

The Nottingham Cookbook Oonagh Robinson & Sat Bains

Part of the *Get Stuck in Series*, 'The Nottingham Cookbook' celebrates Nottingham's fantastic culinary scene. With a foreword by Nottingham based Sat Bains, a two-star Michelin chef, the cookbook contains 50 recipes deemed spectacular and certainly a "must-try". The 224 pages featuring not only local pubs and restaurants but the many cafes and delis on offer as well. Establishments including the premium *Cod's Scallops* and curry favourite *MemSaab*.

TIME TO EAT: DELICIOUS MEALS FOR BUSY LIVES Nadiya Hussain

Nadiya Hussain's guide to quick delicious meals is ideal for the busy student. With tips on saving food waste and a "freezer" meal plan, it's sure to save precious time and money. Top tips, like investing in freezer bags rather than Tupperware boxes to save space and do's and don'ts with meal prep labelling, it is a must have bible for those 9-5 lectures. Soon enough you will 'be time-smart in the kitchen' and saving on the washing up.

FOOD FROM NOVELS WE WISHED WERE TRUE...

Foods from novels that we wish were real (and what we turn to instead)...

***The Lord of the Rings* – Lembas Bread**

'One bite is enough to fill the stomach of a grown man'

Described as sweet and with the texture of a wafer, one piece can keep you going for days! Very useful on a student budget!

Real world alternative: Porridge

The adverts are correct! Porridge is the breakfast of adventures and a small serving can keep you going till lunch! Whilst not as magical, porridge can be sweetened much like Lembas bread and without the help of elves.

***Harry Potter* – Chocolate Frogs**

I'm not too sure if having to catch your chocolate is a good idea when you need a sugary pick me up, but it would be great fun to give it a go (the exercise would be an excuse to eat more anyway).

Real world alternative: Milk Chocolate Easter Bunny

Although not as exciting as Ron's favourite sweet treat, every year many of us enjoy chomping down on a chocolate bunny for Easter. The lack of magic makes bunnies easier to catch too.

***Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* – Fizzy Lifting Drink**

Come on, who hasn't dreamt of being able to fly! And if they're from Wonka's Chocolate factory they're going to taste good too.

Real world alternative: ...

Unfortunately, after extensive research we have concluded that no such drink exists (we're just as upset as you are). Unless one is brave enough to consume lemonade whilst on a trampoline which, lets face it, could get very messy. It has been known that some people feel weightless when completely and absolutely drunk (you didn't hear it from us) but maybe don't try that out.

***Alice in Wonderland* – 'Eat Me' Cake and 'Drink Me' Potion**

It would be pretty fun to shrink down to the size of a mouse and sneak into places and then when you're bored of being tiny, you can take a bite of 'Eat Me' cake and go back to your normal size.



THE LORD OF THE RINGS



J.R.R. TOLKIEN

FOOD FROM NOVELS WE WISHED WERE TRUE...

Real world alternative: ...

Much like the Fizzy Lifting Drink debacle, 'Eat Me' cakes and 'Drink Me' potions have no real life alternative. Alas, there will be no mouse-sized shrinking for the foreseeable future. Don't let us stop you from having a go at making your own versions, but unfortunately the magical aspect will likely remain unattainable.

The Magicians Nephew – Toffee Fruit Tree

A magical tree which bears fruit which tastes like toffee! I'd plant a whole orchard full of these!

Real world alternative: Lychee Fruit

Growing on tropical trees native to Guangdong and Fujian, Lychee is a sweet, fleshy fruit that can grow in the shape of hearts! The outside rind looks magical with its pink and red colours and spikes all around (like a dragon's egg). Lychee most definitely deserve a spot in a magical orchard.

Magician's

C. S. LEWIS



In Book

THE DO'S & DONT'S OF A DEADLINE DIET...

Deadlines are a stressful time for many, with the average student finding themselves confined to their desk or the library for long periods of time. Knee-deep in books and assignments, healthy eating habits are often catapulted out of the window as our main focus becomes conquering the workload in front of us. Grabbing a chocolate bar and a can of Red bull on a quick study break – or even skipping meals entirely – is suddenly all too easy.

However, while we may indulge in these fatty or sugary foods under the pretence it will supply us with the energy needed to complete our work, evidence suggests that poor eating habits actually decrease our performance during deadlines. While our hunger may be temporarily satisfied by a takeaway pizza after a long day of studying, it has been reported that fast food might actually decrease our ability to work effectively. David Benton's Neuroscience and Biobehavioural Review supports this, with a number of studies showing how 'a high carbohydrate meal' is 'associated with feeling less energetic'. Likewise, after consuming 'a sugary snack', the review also details how 'a short term increase in energy was followed by a longer-term fall in subjective energy'. In other words, if you're looking for a pick-me-up, sugar might not be your greatest friend.

With studies finding an association between negative affect and stress and intake of high-fat snack or convenience foods, there appears to be a strong connection between what we eat and our mental health and well-being. Despite the temptations of unhealthy food options during periods of high stress or missing meals to save time - which contribute to feelings of tiredness and agitation - a healthy and balanced diet during deadlines is paramount. While skipping breakfast to get a head start on our essay might seem like a good idea to the workaholics amongst us, if exercised regularly, this can soon become a dangerous pattern that can negatively affect both mind and body, in addition to causing nutritional deficiencies. Instead of missing meals in periods of high stress, try eating smaller meals more frequently, supplementing your diet with healthy snacks throughout the day (low-sugar protein bars and low-fat Greek yoghurt with honey is a personal favourite). To boost the success of your study session further, replace takeaways with foods that have slow releasing energy, such as fish rich in omega-3 fatty acids that contribute to healthy brain function. Additionally, incorporate high protein foods such as eggs, chicken breasts or meat substitutes (Quorn chicken pieces serve as an equally delicious alternative) oats, beans or lentils, all of which will aid in feeling fuller for longer. To accelerate energy and productivity levels, swap your sugary cravings with fruit and nuts which have shown to stabilise blood sugar levels and simultaneously decrease tiredness.

While the average student may have misconceptions about healthy eating being time-consuming or not satisfactory enough to fuel an all-nighter in the library, taking a slightly longer break to prepare more nutritious foods could be more beneficial to your studies in the long run. For further inspiration on healthy eating, check out our recipe ideas below.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0149763402000040>

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0031938406000102>



PIT AND PENDULUM...

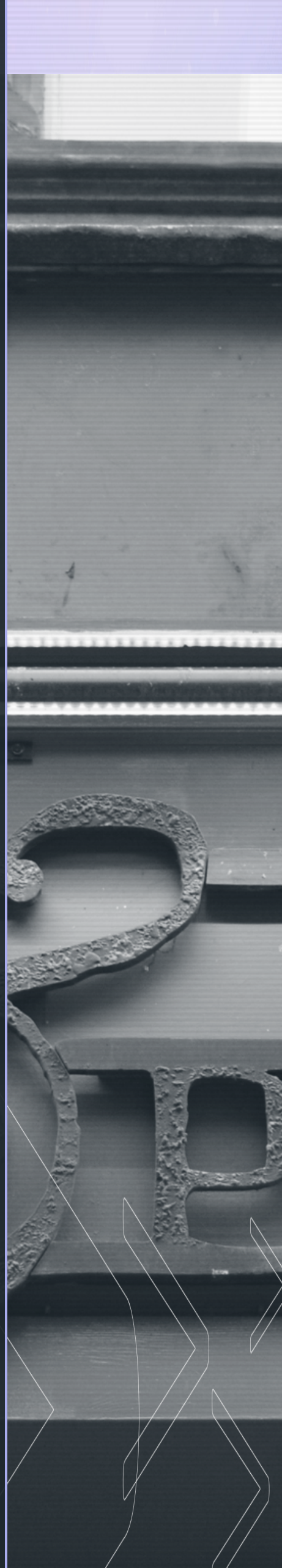
Pit and Pendulum; Nottingham's Barbarous Boozer

Pit and Pendulum, a haven of all things gothic, is a must for those brave enough to venture into the darker sides of Nottingham nightlife. Sharing the title of Edgar Allan Poe's short horror story which details the torture and torments faced by a prisoner of the Spanish Inquisition, the chilling atmosphere of this bar comes as no surprise.

Located in the belly of Nottingham, eerie lighting, dark cobwebbed walls, disturbing artwork and toilets hidden behind bookcases are just a small part of Pit and Pendulum's impressive attention to detail. However, do not let this spooky façade deter you; while the cocktails might be named after the Seven Deadly Sins and come in a variety of unearthly colours, their taste is a vibrant and refreshing contrast to the ominous aura of the bar. Further disrupting our ghostly expectations, the classic pub food served is both a surprise and a relief as the plate of intestines you might be anxiously anticipating is replaced with chicken wings, loaded fries and spicy mozzarella sticks.

For those looking for something a little more sinister, don't be disappointed – the menu also offers a deliciously dark charcoal burger, both terrifying in appearance and tantalising in taste.

Whether you have a passion for heavy metal music or are secretly a vampire or simply want a change of scenery from yet another night in Rock City, the bar also offers late night live music, perfect for the nocturnal night dwellers amongst us. Along with this, the high quality and affordable range of food and drinks make Pit and Pendulum the perfect – albeit rather sinister - hang out spot. Not convinced? Pop on your darkest outfit, heaviest eyeliner and come and see for yourself...if you dare.



CLASSY COCKTAILS FROM CLASSIC BOOKS

Classy Drinks from Classic Novels
Get inspired by literature and drink
what you read!

THE GREAT GATSBY

The Bee's Knees

A sweet and fruity gin cocktail
invented in the roaring twenties,
embody Daisy Buchanan while
you sip this tasty tipple.

50ml London Dry Gin

2 tsp Honey

25ml Freshly squeezed Lemon
Juice

25ml Orange Juice

Ice

Mix the gin and honey in a cocktail
shaker or bottle with a secure lid
until the honey is fully dissolved.

Add the lemon juice, orange juice
and a few cubes of ice and shake
well for thirty seconds.

Serve in your classiest glass.

ALICE IN WONDERLAND

Mad Hatters Tea

Make your tea party a little mad
with this tea-based cocktail.

250ml Earl Grey Tea

1tbsp Freshly Squeezed Lemon
Juice

100ml Mango Juice (more can be
added if you prefer a fruitier
cocktail)

25ml London Dry Gin

25ml Cointreau

Ice

Brew the tea for around 5 minutes.
Stir the lemon juice into the tea.

Leave to cool.

Add the Mango Juice, Gin,
Cointreau, cooled tea and ice to a
cocktail shaker or bottle and shake
well for thirty seconds.

Serve in a teacup if you want to
embody the residents of
Wonderland.



CLASSY COCKTAILS FROM CLASSIC BOOKS

LITTLE WOMEN

Homemade Lemonade

The March sisters are often described sipping a refreshing glass of lemonade and making your own is so easy! Here's a simple lemonade recipe which can make a great base for other cocktails or be enjoyed on its own

- 130g Sugar
- 250ml Water
- 250ml Lemon juice (around 6 lemons)
- 500ml Cold Water (to dilute)

Combine the sugar and water in a saucepan and mix over a medium heat until the sugar dissolves to make a simple syrup.

Take the syrup off the heat and add the lemon juice.

Add the cold water and taste. Add more cold water to dilute if necessary.

Serve with ice and slices of lemon (sisters optional).

This lemonade makes a great mixer for spirits! Try a cocktail from one of the links below.

<https://www.brit.co/lemonade-cocktails/>

<https://www.tasteofhome.com/collection/spiked-lemonade-drinks/>

<https://www.townandcountrymag.com/leisure/drinks/g9575735/lemon-cocktails/>



ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment can often be an escape from the tough world we live in. Whether it takes the form of theatre, cinema, reading or nights out, students can use different forms of leisure to relax and switch off from university work and other factors playing on their minds. Forms of entertainment can also be a great way to meet new people and kick start the social life so many seek at university. The articles in this section aim to inspire you to pursue, perhaps, new forms of amusement and to motivate those who may feel they lack interest in this subject to engage with their fellow students.



ENTERTAINMENT BOOK REVIEWS

For this month's book review, we asked our editors for their favourite books all about entertainment.

Pick of the month: *Nights at the Circus* (Angela Carter)

Angela Carter's novel *Nights at the Circus* is centred around a celebrated aerialist in the circus and explores ideas of femininity and power within entertainment. Carter is well known for portraying an innovative feminist voice in her writing and in this novel she explores how the act of performance can be synonymous with liberation, especially from Victorian patriarchal society. The protagonist, a winged woman named Sophie Fevvers, is an outgoing and playful character who asserts her authority within the entertainment she provides. The ambiguity as to her fictionality could be argued as a further form of her liberation as she defies classification and binaries. From posing as a living statue of Cupid in a brothel as a child to performing in the circus, Fevvers takes the reader on a dramatic journey of self-discovery and liberation.

If you are feeling inspired by Carter's novel, Why Nott check out 'Cirque Du Soul', the best drum and bass night out in Nottingham.

Some more entertaining reads...

The Great Gatsby (F. Scott. Fitzgerald)

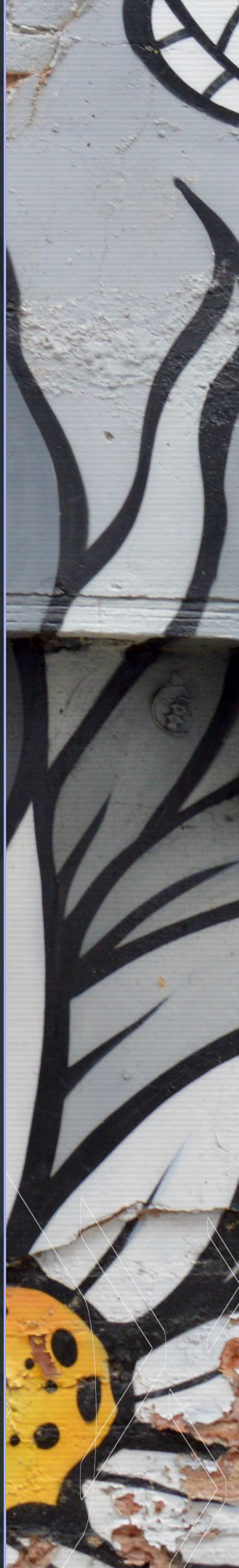
The party classic *The Great Gatsby* follows the questionable protagonist Nick Carraway and the never ending cycle of feeling inferior. Nick's new neighbour, known as Gatsby, has an infatuation with a girl that turns out to be Nick's cousin, who lives on the other side of island. For your fill of the roaring 20's, prohibition, and the class divide pick up a copy!

A Sky Painted Gold (By Laura Wood)

If you've read *Gatsby* one too many times, Laura Wood's '*A Sky Painted Gold*' is the perfect mix of glamour, morals, and romance we've missed since *Gatsby*. This coming of age novel follows seventeen year old Lou, who is swept off her feet into a world of cocktail parties and glitz with a new love interest living in a mansion nearby. It's only when things seem a little too good to be true, that we realise Lou's new love interest might not be as great as he seems.

Dropped Names: Famous Men and Women as I knew them (By Frank Langella)

Fancy something a bit different? Langella's memoir follows some of his most thrilling celebrity encounters as an actor in Hollywood. Even accounting for his affairs- one being Elizabeth Taylor, Langella misses little and divulges on the secret side of Hollywood you don't see on the big screen. If audiobooks are your thing, Frank Langella reads it himself.



WHERE TO GO IN NOTTS

Where to go and where NOTT to go? That is the question.

Here at Trent, we take wonderful pride in our student themed nights at various venues in the city. So here we have listed a weekly schedule of the best events held by our favourite clubs for you to have a gander at!

DAY	EVENT		
MONDAY	Dirty Mondays (Pom Pom)	Lemonade Mondays (Pryzm)	
TUESDAY	Tape Tuesdays (Pryzm)	Bubblin' Tuesdays (Stealth)	
WEDNESDAY	OCEAN WEDNESDAYS!	Indie Wednesdays at The Bodega	
THURSDAY	Quids In (Clifton SU)	Tuned (Rock City)	YOYO Thursdays (Pom Pom)
FRIDAY	Ink sessions	Get Lucky (Rock City)	
SATURDAY	Wavy Saturdays (Ink)	Climax (City SU)	Rebel Rebel (Rock City)

For those unfortunate students that do not manage to get a ticket we have listed some venues for you, so no Ocean outfit goes to waste! Make sure you get yourself to these bars, clubs and venues for the latest music and drink deals. Let's show Uni Of what we're all about.

Why Nott try...

OZ:BAR Route One Coco Tang
 The Alchemist Bierkeller Turtle Bay
 Bunk Penny Lane All Bar One Baa Baa
 Sobar The Lacehouse Pitcher and Piano
 Kitty Café The Gooseberry Bush
 Revolution Bar Lloyds No1 Bar

Best place to get tickets?

Fatsoma App and the NTSU website under 'events'!

Best Wetherspoons in Nottingham?

Gooseberry Bush is the best student spoons in my opinion!

Best club night of the week? (Minus Ocean)

Rock City is always buzzing on a Thursday, the best night without fail!

TO DO AND WHAT NOTT TO DO IN NOTTS

That is the question.

Nottingham takes pride in the wonderful range of literature it has to offer; being the birthplace of some of (arguably) the most influential writers we study today, so it is no shock to see events and campaigns to promote this fact...

From the likes of D.H. Lawrence to Alan Sillitoe, one could argue Nottingham isn't just about how you are going to recover from your *Saturday Night* on the *Sunday Morning*.

At UNESCO Nottingham City of Literature, they recognise the need to promote literature in and amongst the City of Nottingham using several creative initiatives. Understanding what Nottingham has to offer goes hand in hand with the exploration of the city, which is why their campaign *The Nottingham Big City Reads* and its aim sounded most fitting for students who are new to Nottingham and are keen to explore.

In a bid for 'everyone in Nottingham to get reading', they have creatively devised a large-scale book trail, with books appearing 'in the most unusual and wonderful of places'. They also selected works by authors from Nottingham to also feature in this campaign, further promoting local writers. Social media was the main initiative in a bid to get people out and about in Nottingham exploring the city. Books were left in venues such as cafes, galleries, libraries, bars and landmarks in Nottingham in order to get a real sense of surrounding, place and location within the big city.

This brilliant initiative from Nottingham City of Literature is a current, creative and collaborative way of encouraging people to get reading and deserves its creditability to be upped a notch.



TO DO AND WHAT NOTT TO DO IN NOTTS

We asked, you answered...

Q: What made you want to get involved in this event?

A: 'Being an avid reader, I was keen to be involved in this campaign; understanding and acknowledging the works that have been produced in the city. I thought it would be of great use to me as a way of pinpointing where places were as well as finding great reads along the way!'

Q: How did you find navigating your way around Nottingham City centre?

A: 'Having not been to Nottingham before, I found the concept slightly daunting but was eager to explore the city and know what it had to offer. Using a variety of different places in this trail allowed me to do this and come across places I would never have found before! It really helped with the confidence of my surroundings.'

Q: Would you consider visiting any of the venues again?

A: 'Obviously some places were out of the ordinary and not somewhere where you would visit often, but I really enjoyed the main city centre, cafes in particular, so I would definitely visit those again.'

Answers provided by L. Meer, an NTU first-year English student who participated in the event.

CINEMA BINGE

This article was written before the current pandemic situation. Please continue to follow government advice and stay at home. Once all of this is over, this article could inspire an outing to look forward to. Stay safe.

You get home from university, drop your bag to the floor and collapse onto the sofa – where you've strategically placed a blanket and remote for easy access to Netflix. You scroll endlessly through the countless shows and movies, trying to find something new and interesting... but, nevertheless, you settle on *The Office*. So, when the next episode begins to auto-play you just sit back and enjoy the ride, and it's only when your stomach rumbles that you realise you've been sat there for almost five hours.

Sound familiar? (*Or is it just me?*)

In this modern age, binge culture defines us as a society – and the ever-growing list of streaming platforms just adds to the easy access that binge-watching provides us.

Once a week, every week, for just over a year now, I take the trek into Nottingham City Centre and make my way through the Cornerhouse to my favourite place on Earth. ~*The Cinema*~. And once a week I write collection codes on my hand and type them into the ticket printer, watching as three tickets drop one after the other. Yes, three tickets for three films. Because binge culture shouldn't be confined to your sofa: it is a way of life.

What's not to love about the cinema? The glorious chairs (with the luxurious footrest you know you shouldn't use), the screen twice as big as your dorm room, and *slushies galore!* Truly, it thrives on its reputation as an experience. And what can be better than treating yourself to a day of brand-new movie magic?

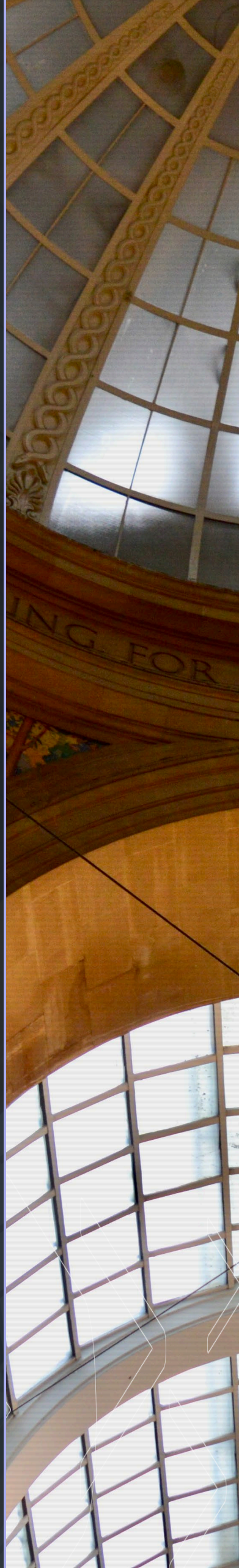
There are many benefits to the cinema's atmosphere, too. At home, you have the distraction of social media to pull you away from the movie, but, as it feels almost like a crime to even glance at your phone during the screening, your attention is fully devoted to the film so you'll never miss a second of the action! (As long as you didn't order that extra large drink!) Cinema binges, however, require quite a lot of planning. It can be costly to spend the whole day at the cinema on a student budget, but there are many student-friendly deals available if you're committed to the screen! However, in my opinion, the value of this experience is well worth the expense: there's nothing wrong with a little self-care!

Also, finding films that you want to watch *and* fit with your time schedule isn't always a walk in the park, so choosing the screenings can be difficult. But with cinema, even if a film's not to your personal taste, you'll have watched something new in a style you might have never otherwise seen.

Cinema is incredibly useful in introducing a wide audience to literature: Autumn de Wilde's *Emma* released in February is a truly wonderful adaptation of Jane Austen's novel, and Kenneth Branagh's upcoming *Artemis Fowl* is certain to inspire its audience to read its namesake series! But it also familiarises literature that may otherwise be considered 'niche'; think of how many comic book superheroes have become mainstream staples of our culture thanks to movies! *Black Widow*, *Wonder Woman 1984* and *The Eternals* being only a few scheduled for release this year. Cinemas are always showing fresh and exciting content.

That's the joy of cinema – it's always new, always changing.

Cinema bingeing also, albeit unexpectedly, has a positive effect on literary studies. By watching a variety of genres and writers, you'll discover a wide range of writing styles – which can help your own development (especially on a creative writing course!) and will inspire your own creativity to no end! So, next time you can, sit back and relax in a comfy chair and grab an overfilled bag of popcorn. Feel the weight of assignments fly from your shoulders, take a deep breath and laugh through the ridiculous ads and trailers. Free your mind from the stress of everyday for a couple of hours and take some time for yourself. In what is turning into an age of solitude, I can't wait for the days when we can share the cinematic experience again.



ALL THE WORLDS A STAGE – SHAKESPEARE REVIEW

‘All the worlds a stage’ - A week of Shakespeare at Nottingham’s Theatre Royal by Kathryn Morson

On tour from the Royal Shakespeare Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company enriched Nottingham’s Theatre Royal with back to back performances of *Measure for Measure*, *As You Like It* and *the Taming of the Shrew*. These plays were performed with an impressive recycling of the same 27 actors, with each actor being in two out of three shows.

As part of their initiative to engage young adults with theatre, the RSC offered £5 tickets for those aged 16-25 for certain performances. This is perfect for students with limited budget, and thus I was able to see all three shows within the two weeks of performances. Nottingham’s Theatre Royal also offered a variation of themed events such as pre-show talks, post-show discussions and even Shakespearean bingo. *Measure for Measure*, directed by RSC Artistic Director Gregory Doran, was the more serious of the three performances is in no way less engaging. We are transported to 1900s Vienna where issues of sexuality are as relevant then as today. This play highlights the double standards that men often fall prey to and women’s entrapment in societal expectations.

As You Like It, directed by Kimberley Sykes, offers a pastoral comedy that plays with audience interaction, improvisation, and often utter madness. It was humorous and fun, expressing the realities of love. Interestingly, as the audience we played the role of the Forest of Auden, with Orlando placing his love notes of audience members. This was inventive and thought provoking. In an interview with the RSC, Kimberley Sykes explains her research into the co-dependency of trees and how this was a metaphor for society. With comparison to *Measure for Measure*, Sandy Grierson (Angelo and Touchstone) and Lucy Phelps (Isabella and Rosalind) should be applauded for their presentation of such varying characters. I also took advantage of the free pre-show talk on gender and boy actors in Shakespeare’s England.

Finally, *the Taming of the Shrew*, directed by Justin Audibert, reversed gender roles to present a matriarchy, commentating that he wanted to see ‘what happens when you get female actors to play traditionally powerful male roles, and vice versa’. He discusses how different conventions give women power e.g. direct eye contact. However, the comedic aspects of this play can undermine this effort and present a matriarchy as a laughable idea.

3 great shows were performed by 27 great actors. In addition, the 27 actors were inclusive of all cultural background and it was a highlight of mine to have scenes that incorporated sign language.

Shakespeare is for all, so next time the RSC are in town, Why Nott give a show a go?

[Gender Swapping Shakespeare on Stage \(2020\)](https://www.rsc.org.uk/news/archive/gender-swapping-shakespeare-on-stage)

<https://www.rsc.org.uk/news/archive/gender-swapping-shakespeare-on-stage> [accessed 9 March 2020].



FITNESS

For a healthy and active lifestyle, we all know that daily exercise is one of the many factors that is needed to maintain this. Physical exercise is also 'increasingly being advocated as a means to maintain and enhance good mental health'. As students, this is important as many obstacles can get in the way of us keeping our mental health and active lifestyle to a good standard. Although, exercising can range from simple 30-minute walks around your local park to a full gym session with your personal trainer, for us students this can be slightly overwhelming. Not all of us are gym goes but this is the perfect place to start! Whether you gym every day or are member of a sports team or have never done either, this fitness section is exactly what you need. The quirky and fun-filled articles in the section are ranged for all members of the sporting world and hope to educate you on both the troubles people face with exercise and the hundreds of benefits it can also bring about...

Raglin, J.S. Exercise and Mental Health. *Sports Med* **9**, 323–329 (1990).
<https://doi.org/10.2165/00007256-199009060-00001>



A FEW FITNESS FAVES BOOK REVIEWS

For this Month's fitness section, we asked our editor's their favourite books all about fitness.

Running Saved My Life (By Bella Mackie)

Bella Mackie documents her journey of choosing to simply 'run' away from her problems. With her previous issues with divorce, anxiety and dropping out of university, she writes about how running and exercise was the only method of help that actually worked. The story is both witty but deeply sad and grasps the brutality of mental illness. Despite there not being much about running and fitness, the message of getting out and physically doing something is quite inspirational. A truly moving read!

More to read!

Just Eat It (By Laura Thomas)

Tired of restrictive eating, excessive exercise, and harsh body standards; Dr. Thomas, a registered dietician writes an empowering book to free us of the diet culture we're faced with. Thomas recommends intuitive eating. How to eat without feeling guilt, shame, and anxiety the majority of us face with our diets.

The Last American Man (By Elizabeth Gilbert)

Ready to be inspired? Try Gilbert's emotional story following a man who used Native American survival skills to live self sufficiently in American nature. The protagonist, Eustace Conway at the age of seventeen left his home to find a better, realer life. More than just a novel on the fitness levels he achieved, Conway grew his own food and made his own clothes. He travelled the Mississippi in a handmade wooden canoe; he walked the two-thousand-mile Appalachian Trail; he hiked across the German Alps in trainers; and he scaled cliffs in New Zealand.

Born to Run: A Hidden Tribe, Superathletes, and The Greatest Race The World Has Never Seen (By Christopher McDougal)

More than just a novel, McDougal's book isn't just a fitness book but an inspirational story filled with incredible characters, science, and athletic achievements. It begins with McDougal's questioning of 'why his foot hurts', and follows his search across continents to find an answer. Starting with the tribe of Tarahumara and their secrets to superhuman running skills to the science labs of Harvard. This read will make you wanting to get your running trainers out.

COMBAT THE CORONA BLUES

ABS-oloute Killer

The Coronavirus has had a significant impact on our daily routines, with gym closures forcing people to make huge physical and mental sacrifices. Yes, self-isolation is mandatory. But it doesn't have to be boring! Right now, exercise is more important than ever, fighting against fatigue and creating organisation amongst complete chaos. So, get those abs pumping with this abdominal, HIIT workout that you can do inside, anywhere, anytime!

Area of Focus: Core

Equipment: None

One minute each x 4 rounds!

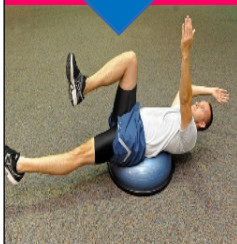


Crunches

-Lie down on the floor on your back, bending your knees and placing your arms across your chest.

-Brace your abs to engage your abdominals and protect your lower back.

-Move your shoulders off the floor and bring your elbows to your knees, inhaling as you lower yourself down and exhaling as you perform the movement.



Dead Bugs

-Lie flat on your back with your arms pointing to the ceiling and your legs bent off the ground.

-Slowly move one arm down behind your head, keeping it straight whilst moving the adjacent leg down to hover just above the floor.

-Return to start positioning and repeat on the opposite arm and leg, keeping the movement controlled.



Russian Twists

-Sit up right, lowering your upper body to a 45-degree angle, keeping your legs hovered over the floor bent.

-Move your arms side to side, twisting your core as you do so and keeping your legs, chest and hips stationary

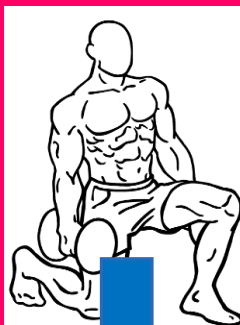
Bootylicious Booty Guide

Quarantine may have us binging Netflix and lying in our bed all day, but why not get those endorphins flowing with this wonderful workout! With the option to use equipment, whether that be dumbbells or tins of beans in your cupboard, this guide is sure to get that booty burning. Combine with your daily dog walk or HIIT interval sprints, and you'll be on your way to building a bootiful booty in no time!

Area of Focus: Glutes

Equipment: Dumbbells or tins

Jumping Lunges



Weighted Squats

One minute each x Four rounds!

Thirty seconds rest in between rounds.

-Holding your dumbbells straight, place your arms either side of your body, feet shoulder width apart.

-Move one leg forward into a lunge position, keeping your chest up and your knee at a ninety-degree angle.

-Proceed to repeat on the other leg.

-With your chest up and back straight, hold both weights, bending both your arms so that each weight sits slightly on your shoulder.

-With your feet slightly wider than shoulder width apart, proceed bend your legs into a squat position.

-As you travel back up, squeeze your glutes

GYMTIMIDATION | STAMPING OUT THE STIGMA

‘We have all been there before girls. You are feeling motivated and driven, determined to go to the gym tomorrow morning and give 110%. You’re ready to take your training to the next level, finally convincing yourself to try the free weights section. You prepare your clothes the night before, laying out your new Gym Shark set that you finally got your hands on, because failure to prepare is preparing to fail. Right? Well not quite. As soon as you set eyes on the barbell racks, your self-confidence vanishes, replaced by that overwhelming and all too familiar feeling of dread. Hello gym anxiety.

This scenario is all too common for a multitude of women, impacting female students tremendously. Although open to both sexes, the gym still maintains its status as male orientated, providing irrefutable evidence of gender divisions. It is undisputed that resistance training is one of the most effective exercise practices, proven to help you overcome your fitness plateaus, increase lean muscle mass percentage and decrease body fat composition. Even though research shows women’s participation in resistance training improves their overall physical strength and physiological health, the majority are avoiding it due to fear of judgement and intimidation. Focusing on weightlifting and women’s use of the free weight’s section, BU Today reported in 2013 just 17.5 percent of American women—and 20 percent of college-age American women—meet the strength training recommendations of the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.¹ So what’s stopping women, and female students at NTU, dropping cardio for deadlifts?

‘I often end up focusing on exercises around the treadmills and mat area’ says second year, Education student Sinead Mills. No stranger to incorporating a healthy and active lifestyle into her daily routine, Miss Mills admitted to finding the experience of the gym taxing, avoiding certain areas due to fear of intimidation. ‘I fear judgement at the gym, often second guessing my knowledge of the gym equipment and machines available. To reduce my anxiety I try to avoid the free weight’s section, so I don’t seem as if I am getting in the way of the men.’

GYMTIMIDATION | STAMPING OUT THE STIGMA

Pinpointing the layout of most gym's to be daunting, Miss Mills explains how this places unnecessary restrictions on women, offering solutions as to how gyms can play an active role in preventing women feeling overwhelmed. 'Maybe something simple like changing gym layouts could be effective, so moving the free weights section to the front of the gym rather than the back. This would definitely encourage myself, other female students I know, as it would emphasise the gym being a welcoming, inclusive environment.'

Just like the age gap, the gender gap in the gym robs women of success, leaving us feeling unwanted in an area promoted as an escape of life's realities. Although you are not going to eradicate your gym anxiety overnight, you should not allow stigma to stop you. Instead of submitting to 'gymtimidation', grab those weights, do your squats, and keep your head held high ladies- because you deserve to do what you love.

Literature that will help you overcome 'Gymtimidation':

- *Get Your Sh*t Together*, Sarah Knight.²
- *Not A Diet Book*, James Smith.³
- *The Psychological Effects of Aerobic Fitness Training*, David G McDonald and James A Hodgson.⁴
- *Jog On- How Running Saved my Life*, Bella Mackie.⁵



Sarah Knight, *Get Your Shi*t Together* (London: Quercus Publishing, 2016).
James Smith, *Not A Diet Book* (New York: HarperCollins, 2020)
David G McDonald, James A Hodgson, *The Psychological Effects of Aerobic Fitness Training* (New York: Springer, 1991)
Bella Mackie, *Jog On- How Running Saved my Life* (Glasgow: William Collins, 1993)
(Rich Barlow, 'Women and Weight Lifting: It's Good for You', *BU Today*, 6 March 2013, p.1.)

PARK RUN

“I wonder if I'm the only one in the running business with this system of forgetting that I'm running because I'm too busy thinking.” – An escape from pressure using the Nottingham Parkrun

Running can be a great activity to keep fit, whether you're a casual runner or a running enthusiast; running can help you receive not only a fitter body but also healthy mental benefits. Running can also provide an escape as Alan Sillitoe wrote in *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner*, writing about how running allowed the main character, Smith, to escape his bad situations emotionally and physically whenever he ran. For many people making a schedule and sticking to it can be a difficult task, and as with many sports, consistency is vital in running. One activity that can help you keep up your running is the 5k Parkrun, which is a free, weekly community event that takes place all over the UK and Nottingham every Saturday morning. One of the biggest ones that take place in Nottingham is at the Forest Recreation Ground with a course that is a blend of challenging flats and hills, snaking its way around a beautiful green park.

The Parkrun welcomes anyone and always makes sure everyone finishes no matter what your pace is. With an age range between 10 and 80 years old it really is inclusive to anyone in the community. If you are an average runner, you might want to aim for a time between 25 and 35 minutes which is the average finish time for a lot of parkrun runners. It's also easy to get involved in by registering online and then turning up with your own personal barcode. They time your score and send you the results, letting you track your progress week by week. It's an excellent way of keeping fit in a controlled and friendly environment so Why Nott give it a go?

Group or Solo

Running in a group can often be better than running alone because subconsciously you get caught up in the pace and give more effort than when you are running alone. By joining a big group of runners, it can also take away that fear of feeling like everyone is looking at you to perform. With a regular event of over 300 people in a wide range of skill groups, no one will focus on one person, so you'll be able to exercise without pressure.

The park itself is full of winding paths, so it's great for a midweek run outside of Saturday mornings. Running solo or as a pair, the park can cater to any runner as the paths all link up with each other - allowing you to plan a route that fits the distance you are aiming to achieve. For runners looking to push themselves further than just a weekly run, this park is the perfect place to keep going to set up your routes. Running solo has its own benefits as well allowing you time to think through problems stressing you out in a less stressful environment such as running through a park. Being close to nature is often a good place to be when reflecting on yourself and difficult situations. Smith in Sillitoe's novel turned to running when he was at his lowest and helped him pick himself back up and take on the world again.

Mental Benefits

While also making your body fitter running can lead to psychological benefits short-term and long-term. Runner's high, which can lead to a euphoric state as well as elevating your mood can be attributed to a chemical called endocannabinoids naturally produced by the body. Endocannabinoids increase in the bloodstream when you run as the body creates more and enters into the brain, which promotes short-term effects reducing anxiety and an easing of the mind.

Long-term benefits of running also include an improvement in brain performance and can prevent cognitive decline improving your working memory and focus. This is because the hippocampus which is the part of your brain associated with memory and learning increases in volume over time after running regularly. The ability to switch between tasks quickly and effectively is also increased. By running regularly in Parkruns and solo running this can help not only your body but also your brain.



▶ A STUDENT GUIDE TO THE GYM Expectation VS Reality



Expectation- You'll set yourself up for the day, making it to that Thursday, 6:30am HIIT class you've been dying to try.



Reality- You will miss your class because you are too hungover from last night's Ocean Wednesday.



Expectation- After a week at the gym you'll finally have the body you want, feel amazing inside and out and going to the gym will be a part of your everyday lifestyle.



Reality- No amount of training can out train that Doner Kebab you demolished at 4am in Trent Kebabs, but it was so worth it.



Expectation- All your flatmates will want to go the gym with you. It will become a fun and regular hobby that you can do with the whole squad.



Reality- One flatmate joins you. Nice try. You would get a first for effort and a third for execution.

A STUDENT GUIDE TO THE GYM Expectations Vs Reality



Expectation- You'll grab yourself a chocolate protein shake after the gym. All the fun without the guilt, sure to leave you full and will stop those midnight cravings. .



Reality- 'Hello and welcome to McDonalds, can I take your order please?'

Expectations aside, the reality is that going to the gym is better than not going at all. Not only does it come with its physical advantages, but the gym is as equally as beneficial mentally, relieving you of the stresses of student life. So why not try working your biceps by lifting dumbbells rather than downing tropical VK's?

FOOTBALL FRENZY

How 'Football Frenzy' is helping improve wellbeing

Football is one of the most popular sports around the world with millions of people playing it every year from the heights of top league professionals down to grassroots football. Nottingham itself has a rich history of football, with Nottingham Forest being one of the most prestigious clubs in English football. However, many people who want to play don't want the intense training and time pressures that local teams and university teams often have.

Football Frenzy is a brilliant activity to get rid of all that pressure. These weekly five aside games for students are a great place to play competitive but also fun football matches. It just involves you turning up and paying £5 whether you have a team of five players or just on your own. Easy right! It takes place on the football pitches at the Forest Recreation Ground every Sunday which have amazing facilities. With teams taking part across six divisions, there's always space for any skill groups.

Friendly Social Atmosphere

Football Frenzy is a great way to improve your football skills as well, while also gaining mental benefits. The friendly social atmosphere allows you to get along with everyone on your team with both teams having respect for each other! Making friends can be straightforward when you are all working together.

Sport also allows you to de-stress because of the chemicals your body releases such as endocannabinoids which can make you feel happier and reduce the anxiety you may be feeling. Playing sport can also help you get a better night's sleep because of how tired your mind and body is after the exercise. One of the great things about playing football is the amount of fun you get from it. It isn't a slog to get through like you might often find the gym is so it's a perfect way to keep active without forcing yourself to do it. You often get so immersed in the game that you don't think about how much exercise you are doing.

Team Skills and Leadership

Team sports can develop your skills in leadership and how well you work in a team. Useful stuff! It is vital to work as a team to have the highest chance of success. Football teaches you the value of teamwork quickly because you have to put it into practice. While it also helps you be more vocal when communicating with your teammates, football frenzy allows you to step out of your comfort zone getting you to socialise with new people especially if you're joining a new team. This can be daunting but the social atmosphere makes it easier to be comfortable talking to completely new people.

However, one of the most important things that I've found football teaches is how to deal with setbacks. No one wins every game and it can be heart-breaking to put in so much effort and come out empty handed because of the odd deflected goal. This helps build resilience which can be used in everyday life to navigate tough times and there's always the next game.

GYM TOP TRUMPS

The Bro

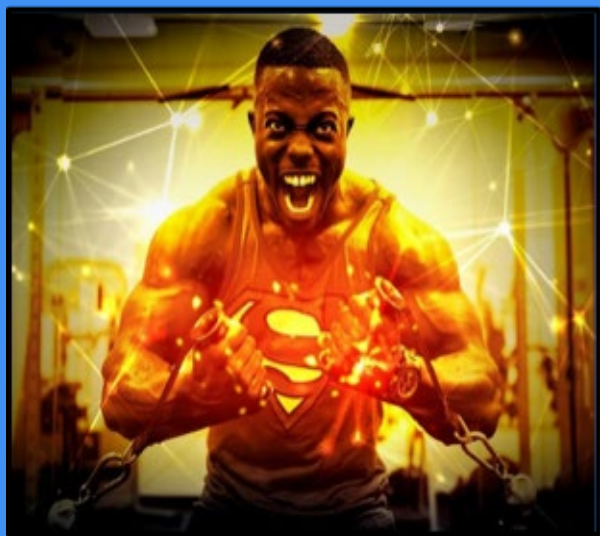


- *Strength: Infinite.*
- *Cardiovascular Fitness: None existent.*
- *Rep range: 1 rep max.*

Always starts the day with a chest pump. Focuses on strength over form, because who cares about injuries? Often found hogging the barbell section. What is leg day again?

Although a natural human response to cry out sometimes when pursuing our fitness goals, the Screamer takes it to the extreme. The most vocal of all the gym stereotypes. You will most definitely hear them before you see them. No, you're not imagining things, there really is someone screaming 'YEAHHHHH' as they hit their deadlift PB. How to avoid them? Crank up the volume on your headphones, don't be intimidated and enjoy your session.

The Screamer



Strength: Unlimited lung capacity
Favourite equipment: Vocal Chords
Special Ability: Gruntiny

GYM TOP TRUMPS

The Model

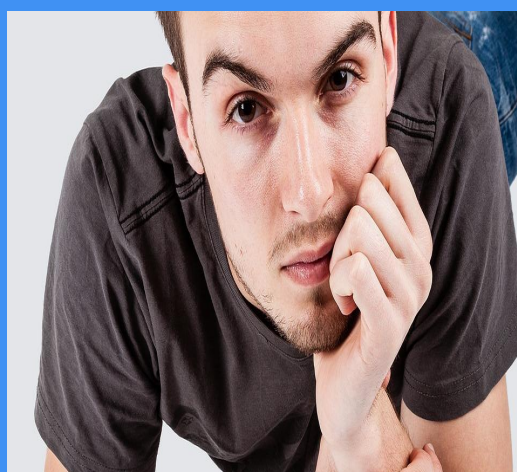


- *Strength:* Strong glutes.
- *Favourite equipment:* Gym floor mirrors.
- *Special ability:* Snapchat.

Not referring to a 90's supermodel. Talking about the individual that snaps a million mirror selfies and videos before participating in even 15 minutes of working out. Because if you didn't snap it, it didn't happen right? Usually caught posing on the squat rack. Always armed with a pair of gym shark seamless leggings.

There is always that one guy on the gym floor, no matter where you move, will always ensure he has his eyes fixed on you. With a top ability to complete a HIIT training session, yet obtain absolute focus on his prey, he's hard to ignore. For whatever reason you are looking, even if it is just genuine interest in our workout routine, please stop.

The Gazer



- *Strength:* 20/20 vision
- *Favourite Equipment:* The one closest to you.
- *Special Ability:* Multitasking.

A STEP BY STEP GUIDE TO IMPROVE YOUR MENTAL WELL BEING

Step by step guide to improve your mental wellbeing as a student
Whatever your age, race, gender, many of you reading this will have experienced struggles with maintaining a good mental health. Reports have shown that these struggles are heightened whilst studying at university, with 1 in 4 students experiencing mental health issues. Whether it is due to financial strain, a build up of academic pressure or loneliness, there are many ways in which you yourself can improve your mental health as a student.

What is mental wellbeing?

Mental wellbeing describes your mental state – how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life. Our mental wellbeing is dynamic. It can change from moment to moment, day to day, month to month or year to year.

Encountering stress, depression and anxiety during the course of university isn't unusual. Meaning a student's mental health should be of the utmost importance to the university. Nottingham Trent University offer an Online Support service – SilverCloud, for students feeling anxious, stressed or struggling with body image or eating. For urgent support, contact NHS Urgent Care Centre or call 999.

Meet Jimmy Chipolata...



Courtesy of Beyond Pink World

Nottingham Trent University's registered therapy dog is available to help cheer you up if you are feeling stressed.

"Since Jimmy has been here, I've seen people come forward who normally wouldn't come and talk, such as lesser-engaged and shyer students. Lots of our staff and students' wellbeing can improve just by stroking Jimmy..."

Tips for maintaining mental wellbeing:

- University life is fast-paced and new. Take some time out of everyday to be by yourself and relax.
- Meditate! Meditation has been proven to help with mental struggles, especially with young people. Download an app e.g. Calm or Simple Habit and try it for a few minutes a day.
- Get some fresh air. Nottingham is full of green spaces, go for a walk around the Arboretum or Wollaton Park and lose your stress in nature.
- Write down your stresses, let it all out! This is a brilliant strategy for those who do not want/feel like they can not speak to others about this.
- Speak to the people around you: friends, family, colleagues, lecturers. You are definitely not alone.

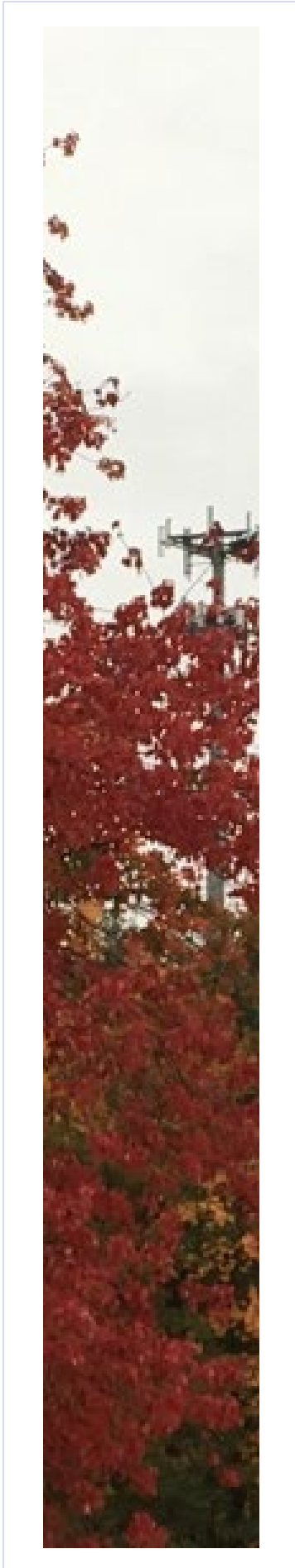
Love you for being you!

WALK IT OFF – STUDENTS AND STRESS

Walk it off.

Students and stress. They go together like Boris Johnson and fridge freezers. When it comes to alleviating stress, people tend to talk about changing your diet, sleeping more, or hitting the gym. I, like many of us, have a tendency to head to the pub when I'm stressed. According to a 2018 NUS survey, 60% of students drink to relax. So, you're trying to cut down on the booze and like me you hate the gym, already sleep too much and don't want to change your diet. How can you maintain a healthy approach to controlling stress? Luckily for you reader, I have the magic answer: walking. Specifically, I'd recommend a walk through the natural splendour of the Attenborough Nature Reserve. It's a mere fifteen-minute drive from NTU's Clifton Campus, is accessible to all and even has a café. What more could you want? You've got two circuit walks that cut through the marshlands surrounding the River Trent, with longer walks that follow the Trent either East or West. It's a big hit with locals, so if you're after a tranquil walk without having to battle through the dog walkers and pushchairs, I'd avoid peak times. But during the week you can often walk for a few miles and only see one or two people. I've found that a walk within the peaceful grounds of the nature reserve can clear my head of stress and anxiety, all whilst getting me out the house. It's been a life saver for me during packed exams seasons and busy deadline weeks.





SUMMER AFTER THE WINTER SLUMP

Summer. A time of sunshine, clear skin and day-drinking. Music's a constant in the background, the scent of BBQ permanently in the air, getting reacquainted with the garden you've seen once a week to take the bins in and out before this. The onslaught of hay fever. Boiling, sleepless nights with five fans on full blast while we lay awake roasting in what feels like the fiery pits of Mordor. Yet, you're never without the thought that 'this is the life' - and how can it not be? Your Vitamin D is at optimum levels and your mental health is so right you don't remember it being wrong. For some, however, the season of summer comes with the realisation that winter is around the corner, bringing cold weather, the urge to burrow and seasonal depression. So, in this article, there will be a few tips and tricks to help with the winter slump.

No.1 DAYLIGHT BULBS/SAD BULBS

For those with SAD (seasonal affective disorder), using something like SAD or daylight bulbs that imitate natural light can be a great help! Start by using these bulbs in rooms you frequent the most, such as your bedroom, living room and anywhere else you see fit and little by little you will begin to see a boost in productivity, you might even start to enjoy studying. Your moods will begin to improve as the lights help to produce more serotonin and a little extra of the sunshine vitamin, great for when the sun is M.I.A. Even your vision and how you see colours will improve. The light from the bulbs can also encourage your brain to produce melatonin, making you sleepy and ultimately improving sleep, which can help with insomnia and help you say hello to eight hours sleep. These bulbs help with all things SAD.

No.2 VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTS

Vitamins, vitamins, vitamins! You need these whether you suffer from SAD or not. Make sure you're up to date with them as having low iron levels, for example, can make your bout with SAD that much worse. It can lead to fainting, lethargy, and endlessly tired days and nights. So, go forth and use that student discount at Superdrug, Boots, or Wilkos and get those vitamins even if they're Flintstone gummies.

SUMMER AFTER THE WINTER SLUMP

No.3 GYM

I know, I know - the dreaded gym. As daunting as it sounds, the gym is a great way for you to get out, get some exercise and a change of scenery. You don't have to stay for 2 hours grunting and screaming till you're a sweaty mess (unless you want to, of course) - you might find you enjoy yoga, a HIIT (high-intensity interval) class, or simply just walking on the treadmill. Don't feel too pressured though, a simple ten-minute walk to the shop or getting off two bus stops earlier could be a big help.

NO.4 ANIMALS

If you qualify and you can, get yourself a service animal. Animals are great companions and can be trained, to sense when your moods are unstable and help with balancing them back out. They also give you some sense of routine and permanent responsibility, meaning you'll have to take care of yourself to take care of them. You don't have to take on a big financial commitment like a cat, dog or a miniature horse - it could be something small, like a hamster or a guinea pig. And I already know what you're thinking: "yeah right, not my uni accommodation", but, by law, landlords are required to accept qualified service animals, so make the law work for you. Just remember, adopt, don't shop.

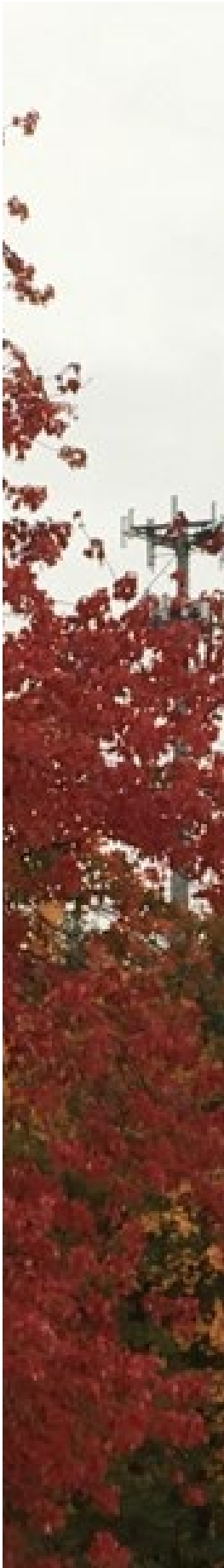
NO.5 TALK TO SOMEONE

Having a good set of friends to talk to could make a world of difference; they're familiar and know our likes and dislikes, are mostly readily available and typically want us to be at our best. While talking with friends is a great option, I would also advise booking in with your Uni counsellors at the start of term, especially as during the middle of a bout with SAD, we have no energy to expel anywhere else but, on our will, to live. Counsellors can help with professional advice, planning your days, talking through your worries, just providing a listening ear, or, if need be, giving advice on medication and seeking further help.

Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems.

Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)

Website: www.mind.org.uk



MENTAL HEALTH VS COVID-19

As the Coronavirus pandemic grows, universities across the country close for the foreseeable future and the media continues to scaremonger, it is vital that you are looking after your mental health in this period of uncertainty and isolation. Granted, it will NOT be forever, but there are things you can do in this period of encouraged 'self-isolation' to prevent your thoughts spiralling and anxiety escalating in these troubling times. At the writing of this article the UK has not yet been put into a lockdown of any kind so it is important to remember that it is a worst case scenario and I guarantee you have been in a worst case scenario before and come out the other side thriving. There is nothing, and I mean nothing, to suggest that you cannot do the same again.

Of course, the closure of universities and ending of face to face teaching across the country is a worrying event in our academic lives, an unprecedented period of not knowing that is bound to cause some feelings of anxiety and dismay. It doesn't have to be though. The most important thing to keep in mind is the fact that you are not alone in this. This seems quite paradoxical doesn't it, a real-life juxtaposition (for any of you English students out there) that you are together in your isolation, in a stronger position than if a small minority were experiencing disruptions to their education. You are in the same position as thousands upon thousands of students nationally who have had their academic year cut short, left in the dark about upcoming assessments, packed up a year of their lives to return home, said goodbye to friends new and old, unsure when they will see them again.

This means that whatever happens to you will mean the same for everyone else. We are all entering a period of transition and change, but sometimes we have to trust the process. We have to trust that our lecturers and educational institutions have our best interests at heart and are doing all they can to ensure we are getting the most out of online learning. Let that be a comfort to your growing anxiety. Let some of the burden drop. This needs to be a team effort and everyone is playing their part.

This is a period that also brings financial worry if you are a student with a part time job that you depend upon alongside your student loan to afford rent, food and other essentials. As we are told time and time again, money doesn't grow on trees, so you are bound to fear the lack of security in current times. Let's remember again, you are not alone in this.

Essentially, times are tough. We have to pull together and keep reminding ourselves that it is only temporary (if we follow government guidelines at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>, of course.) Declining mental health amongst students is a growing concern for mental health charities and campaigns throughout the UK, and a time like this is no different. The Mind charity website is one of the best I have found for tips on how to cope

(<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>.)



MENTAL HEALTH VS COVID-19

If you are a student who has struggled at any point during your university experience with your mental health then I really salute your bravery at this time. Whether you have an eating disorder, depression, generalised or health anxiety, BPD, or any other mental health disorder this pandemic is not something to be taken lightly in your healing and recovery. But if you feel like you were making progress or even entering a period of recovery before this covid-19 chaos then please don't be disheartened if you feel you are starting to struggle. When considering how I would approach this piece my thoughts turned to Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story *The Yellow Wallpaper* and her young female narrator forcefully confined to the upstairs nursery following a pre-natal depressive episode. Her well-meaning but toxic husband has ordered her incarceration as we see our government and medical professionals ordering widespread social distancing and isolation for anyone showing symptoms of the coronavirus. These are well meaning but potentially toxic forces at play for our mental health, providing us with endless facts and figures that will not change the situation only escalate our fear.

The story follows her slowly descending into madness as she begins to see the bizarre pattern on the 'sickly' yellow wallpaper (p.8) 'budding and sprouting in endless convolutions' (p.109) until she actually believes there is a woman in the wallpaper that she must free from her entrapment. Now obviously, there are so many ways we could read this in terms of patriarchal oppression and women's role in the home during the 19th century but we can also take something from it to help us with current events.

The narrator talks of her mental health as something she believed she had under control but this period of isolation feels like a step backwards in the wrong direction. She says "You think you have mastered it, but just as you get well underway in following, it turns a back somersault and there you are. It slaps you in the face, knocks you down, and tramples upon you." Mental health issues can be isolating, debilitating and traumatic at the best of times but this new period of isolation does not have to manifest these feelings. Isolation can open doors for new hobbies, new information, new ways of seeing the world.



MENTAL HEALTH VS COVID-19

Cancelling gigs, flights, shifts, theatre shows, conferences, basically any form of mass gathering is obviously frustrating in terms of losing money and time spent with loved ones, but it doesn't mean we have to lose faith that things will get better. Channel this energy, this faith, into other things.

Gilman has said herself that this story wasn't intended to drive people crazy it was intended to save them; we can use this country-wide isolation- forced or otherwise- to refocus and find clarity. We can finish a piece of work we've been procrastinating over for weeks, we can read a book that is gathering dust on a shelf, write a poem reflecting on recent affairs, set up a go fund me for people who may not be able to afford to bulk buy beans and toilet roll, maybe even get ahead on seminar work, god forbid! Remember too, that sometimes doing nothing is absolutely okay. Equally, if you want to write a novel or run a marathon then please be my guest! There are no rules in this. We have to support ourselves and those closest to us in the ways we see best.

This pandemic does not have to be earth shattering to your mental health and the progress you have already made or hoped to make. It puts a pause on normal life, but this is a new normal for the time being. Let us use this time to do good, be good and good will come. Self-isolation is a necessary means to a hopefully imminent end. Take control of your own narrative and you will reap the benefits. Tell your mental health who is going to come out the other side of this stronger, and I assure you it won't be your illness.

(Charlotte Perkins Gilman, *The Yellow Wallpaper*
(California: Xist Publishing, 2015)



SOME MINDFUL READS...

NERVOUS CONDITIONS TSITSI DANGAREMBGA

Whilst this bildungsroman is primarily focused on colonialism and family domesticity, there is a particular focus on eating disorders throughout the second half of the novel, in which one of the key protagonists, Nyasha, suffers with anorexia. Although her refusal to eat is interpreted by many as a metaphorical result of colonialism, the struggles she has to endure from this disorder are a very real representation of the ways in which many others struggle. Eating disorders of many kinds are not specific to any one gender, age, or ethnic group. That is why getting this fictional representation of this struggle perfect may not be an easy task; or an easy read for many who have suffered with this, or currently are. However, I think Dangarembga's illustration of anorexia perfectly captures the very realistic physical and mental consequences that eating disorders can cause, as well as the distress this can cause to those around the individual who's struggling. *Nervous Conditions* is an enticing read for many and may be especially eye-opening to those who may not understand eating disorders and the struggles of it.

SAPIENS

YUVAL NOAH HARARI

Although not a book overtly concerned with addressing mental health, *Sapiens* is a book I found to be of personal use to me. It allowed me, through the scope of the history of our species, from the basins in Africa through to the modern world, to better understand myself, my ancestors and why the world we live in is as it is. I felt it grounded me in history, whilst making sense of the world around me. Perhaps not an obvious choice for a book on mental health, *Sapiens* really settled the anxiety I felt towards the world we live in.

▼

NOTES ON A NERVOUS PLANET MATT HAIG

If you're looking for a book that enables you to think about your own mental wellbeing, as well as pondering how to stay in touch with your own humanity, then Matt Haig's Number One Sunday Times Bestseller *Notes on a Nervous Planet* could be the book for you. Haig addresses how we might cope with anxiety and tolerate the toxic traits of social media in a fresh way. At no point in the book do you feel that he is preaching to you from the lofty heights of his soapbox, instead Haig allows you to address your own anxious thoughts through contemplating the world around you and its impact on your mental health.

ALL THE BRIGHT PLACES JENNIFER NIVEN

Jennifer Niven's, 'All the Bright Places' perfectly discusses the troubles of mental health that many teenagers face. The beautiful story of Violet Markey and Theodore Finch, who are both battling their own demons, show the possibility of bringing brightness out of dark situations. Even with the dark themes throughout the novel, the story relates to everyone who has ever struggled with life's realities. An extremely sad, heartfelt but enjoyable read.

JOG ON: HOW RUNNING SAVED MY LIFE BELLA MACKIE

Bella Mackie documents her journey of choosing to simply 'run' away from her problems. With her previous issues with divorce, anxiety and dropping out of university, she writes about how running and exercise was the only method of help that actually worked. The story is both witty but deeply sad and grasps the brutality of mental illness. Despite there not being much about running and fitness, the message of getting out and physically doing something is quite inspirational. A truly moving read!

A FEW WORDS OF THANKS ...

First of all thankyou to the team for all the hard work you have all put into the creation of this magazine, especially in these difficult times. Each individual has left their creative mark on the pages and I hope that you can all see them. Thankyou to Rebecca Cullen, Rory Waterman, Angela Donaldson and the rest of the NTU for their continual support throughout the project. Special thanks goes out to Trent Editions for taking the time to appear in our launch event. Finally, thankyou reader. It is for you that we have produced this magazine and encouraged us to keep going with this project. We hope the work produced reflects our gratitude to you.

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