



THE LEGACY ISSUE



Featured Artist **Gracie Hall**

Gracie Hall is a photographer from Stockport, Greater Manchester, currently studying Future Media Production at Manchester Met. After picking up a camera in April 2023 and getting her first photo pass three months later, Gracie has photographed over 50 artists across all genres including Zara Larsson, Ashnikko and Don Broco. She's currently writing reviews and taking photos for aAh! Magazine and working freelance with artists playing in the city and beyond. **Follow @gracroc**



Featured Artist **Nicola Macey**

Nicola Macey is a Fine Art student in her third year at Manchester Met. She primarily works with oil paint, exploring themes related to feminism and experiences of womanhood. This is an oil painting on canvas showing her housemate reading pensively in their student house. It is a small quiet moment in between the chaos of uni life. **Follow @nicolaart**



THE LEGACY ISSUE

EDITORS' LETTER

It's an exciting time to be a student in our brilliant city. This year we're celebrating our university's 200th anniversary and the 10th print issue of aAh! Magazine – Manchester Met's online and print student arts and culture magazine. Reflecting on these milestones, we're looking back at our journey over the years as a magazine, at our university, in our fantastic city and through our own personal experiences. At the same time, this anniversary presents us with a period of new beginnings, of change, potential, empowerment and possible transformation. It is a future we can take into our own hands. We can decide what happens next.

The art of reminiscing and anticipating devised a timely and fitting theme for our new issue: LEGACY. We wanted this issue's theme to allow us to explore our present and future as well as the historical events and figures who have left a lasting impact on our creative community.

Our legacy does not just shape our history but also forges our future, influencing both us and generations to come. Legacy is what we have created and what we are yet to achieve. 'Legacy' has many interpretations: it is tradition, accomplishments and individuals. Legacy is the change that you want to see in the world. What we do from here will be OUR legacy. Let's be ambitious, inspiring, innovative – and take everyone with us.

This issue kicks off with a look at Manchester's evolving landscape and the university's successes. We reflect on the legacy of student magazines with a stroll down Memory Lane (and Wilmslow Road) as we uncover a treasure trove of photos taken by former Manchester students 30 years ago.

Music is so important to Manchester and there is a huge creative legacy to build on. This city is vibrant and urgent culturally – there's always something happening, and Mancunian music legacies continue to thrive. We look at just two significant names from the city's music scene: Hit & Run's Rich Reason and Warehouse Project and Parklife founder Sacha Lord.

Two hundred years ago women writers had to use male names to get published but now the voices of women from all our city's communities are part of the mainstream. Two of the Manchester Writing School's female figureheads take the spotlight as we uncover how they are transforming Manchester's literary legacy.

And there's more... a Manchester Fashion Institute graduate guides us through Manchester's place in the world of fashion while our environmentally-conscious students lead the activism against climate change with a plea to preserve our Peak District. And finally... a culinary legacy for us all... Nana Meg's tater ash... a family recipe passed down the ages.

aAh! Magazine has been building a strong community since 2014. The magazine provides a platform for students to showcase their talent. aAh! is written by students, for Manchester. *The LEGACY Issue* celebrates our ongoing success and the lasting impact of the magazine. We invite you to immerse yourself in the theme of LEGACY.

How will our legacy continue? You decide! But make it good.

Georgia Pearson, Makenna Ali, Tara Morony
aAh! Magazine Editors



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PROJECT COORDINATOR
Natalie Carragher

EDITORIAL ASSISTANTS
Georgia Pearson
Makenna Ali
Tara Morony

EDITORIAL TEAM
Aimie-Ligaya Gater
Amy Corringham
Caitlin Baber
Ian Burke
Jennifer Grace
Leslie Kerwin
Jess Berry

CONTRIBUTORS
Anna Klekot
Amelia Masters
Amber Bermingham
Carla Acevedo-Ferron
Ciara Reynolds
Elizabeth Clark
Ella Bartman
Felicity Hitch
Hajar Douglas
Iver Lawson
Jane Ashworth
Kian Godbold
Megan Mcardle
Nicola Macey
Zac McMenemy

GRAPHIC DESIGN ASSISTANT
Bradley Sansom

GRAPHIC DESIGN
Faye Byrne
Jack Dean
Laura Sheridan
Maddie Clayton

ILLUSTRATION
Dylan Meek
Georgia Harmey
Katelan Evans
Liam Bonney
Lulu Panati-Reeve
Snehal Dhanwate

PHOTOGRAPHY
Ben Redshaw
Ellie Wright
Emily Dicks
Gracie Hall
Laura Rooney-Harbottle

SOCIAL MEDIA ASSISTANT
Jess Berry

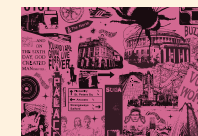
SPECIAL THANKS
Elle Simms
Georgina Hurdsfield
Helen McCormick
James Draper
Joe Stretch
John Lean
Kaye Tew
Louise Clennell
Nathalie Griffith
Sadie Blake
Special Collections Museum
Vince Hunt

Get involved
We're always on the lookout for student journalists, editors, social media marketers, graphic designers, illustrators, photographers and filmmakers on an ongoing basis to help make aAh! an informed, inspiring, witty and opinionated collection of student voices and talent that makes our city brilliant. Get involved and be a part of your student magazine.

Email aAh.editor@gmail.com
Telephone **0161 247 1951**
Address **aAh! Magazine, Manchester Metropolitan University, Grosvenor East Building, M15 6BG**

aAh! is distributing copies on Manchester Metropolitan University campus and across Manchester. A wide range of advertising packages and affordable ways to promote your business are available. Get in touch to find out more.

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Cover Artist **Laura Sheridan**
Follow @ls_graphics.studio



OUR TEAM

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CELEBRATING 200 YEARS

By Ian Burke
Design Faye Byrne
Illustration Georgia Harmey



1824

FORMATION

The Mechanics' Institute, a precursor of Manchester Metropolitan University and the University of Manchester (UoM), is formed on April 7. One of its founders, Joseph Brotherton, later becomes Salford's inaugural MP and the UK's first vegetarian parliamentarian.

Elsewhere in the city, the country's first horse-drawn bus route starts running between Market Street and Pendleton on New Year's Day. Students would have to wait another 180 years before the first Magic Bus made an appearance on Wilmslow Road, and then three came all at once!



1909

LS LOWRY

LS Lowry begins studying at the School of Art under the teacher who would become his biggest influence, the Impressionist painter Adolphe Valette. Other notable art school alumni include women's rights campaigner Sylvia Pankhurst and designer Peter Saville.

Manchester United win the first of their dozen FA Cups this year and — stamp collectors rejoice — the first Philatelic Congress of Great Britain takes place at Hulme Town Hall.



1878

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Not the tautology its name suggests, but a teacher training college. It has seen many guises and location changes throughout its history, but it is now one of the UK's leading destinations for future educators.

Over the road from the All Saints campus, the Deaf Institute also opened its doors in 1878.



1838

ART SCHOOL

The UK's second oldest art school opens, the Manchester School of Design. After several name changes, it became part of Manchester Met (then known as Manchester Polytechnic) in 1970.

Also in 1838, Manchester was made a borough, absorbing Ardwick, Hulme and Chorlton-on-Medlock, among others.

1948

BABY

The University of Manchester unveils the Small Scale Experimental Machine, aka Baby, the world's first computer.

Primitive by today's standards, its memory of just 32 words is nevertheless the direct ancestor of everything from smartphones to wearables to gaming PCs. Baby shaped the future of the world.



1970

MANCHESTER POLYTECHNIC

UMIST — another successor of the Mechanics' Institute — transfers its non-degree courses to the School of Art in 1966, with a name change to Manchester Polytechnic in 1970.

Overworked NHS staff is an issue in 1970, too. Not allowed to be paid cash for overtime work during a flu outbreak, bosses at Ancoats Hospital instead remunerate nurses with extra meat pies and jam pudding.

1992

MMU

After the Higher and Further Education Act of 1992, MMU is born! It, along with three dozen other former polytechnics, becomes the first wave of 'post-1992' universities.

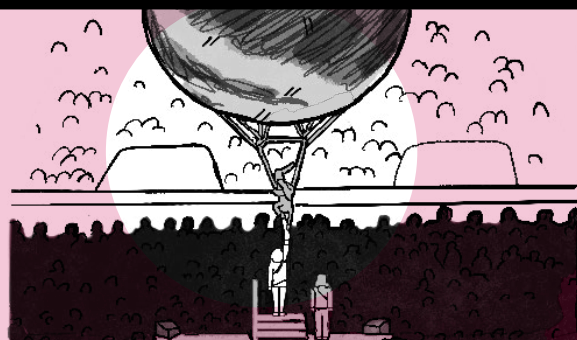
With the 'Madchester' craze fizzling out, Factory Records files for bankruptcy this year, with the expense of recording the Happy Mondays' messy *Yes Please!* album being a contributing factor.

2002

COMMONWEALTH GAMES

The 17th Commonwealth Games take place in Manchester, with a classic Manchester welcome. It is a wet and wonderful opening to 11 days of competition.

In addition, UoM, UMIST, Salford and Manchester Met award honorary degrees to sportspeople, including track athletes Diane Modahl and Roger Bannister and cricketing legend Clive Lloyd.



1996

THE BOMB

This is a seismic year for Manchester. In June, a huge IRA bomb destroys a portion of the shopping area around Marks & Spencer and the Arndale Centre. Incredibly, the next day, Old Trafford hosts a Euro '96 football match between Germany and Russia.

Meanwhile, at Manchester Met, Queen Elizabeth II cuts the ribbon on the Geoffrey Manton Building.



2014

HUMANITY HALLOWS

The *Humanity Hallows* student magazine website launches. A print version follows in 2015; the predecessor to aAh! has Bipolar Sunshine on the front cover, along with features on How to Survive University, Street Style on a Budget and an Essential Guide to Manchester.

Other cover stars throughout its eight issues include Smiths' guitarist Johnny Marr, comedienne Sarah Millican and Manchester Met's very own Joe Stretch. It rebrands as aAh! in 2018, with an overarching theme running through each biannual issue. Starting with 'UGLY' and exploring 'FOOD', 'DISRUPTION' and 'YES', the 10th print issue — this one — focuses on 'LEGACY'

2023

CHANEL

An iconic event takes place in Manchester: the Chanel Métiers d'art 2023/24 fashion show. Manchester Fashion Institute students are invited to work alongside the Chanel team as backstage dressers, stand-in models and collection organisers.

This boosts Manchester's thriving arts and culture community, evident through an infectious buzz around the city. Of course, Manchester provides plenty of rain to keep the canopy of the 'Chanel Tunnel' on Thomas Street busy.

DOUBLE CENTENARY

With Manchester Met and UoM able to trace their roots back to the Mechanics' Institute, both universities mark their 200th birthday with celebrations and events throughout 2024.

Here's to the next 200 years!

2024

THE LEGACY OF student

As aAh! celebrates its tenth print issue, we look back at the history of our student magazine

By Makenna Ali
Design Faye Byrne

"It was a brilliant time to be in the city," says Janet Conroy. Janet was the editor of PULP magazine from 1991 to 1992 at the height of the 'Madchester' music scene. PULP was the student union magazine for Manchester Polytechnic (re-named Manchester Metropolitan University at this time), focusing on the arts, culture and politics.

Janet says: "There was so much new music and clubbing. There was lots of poetry and the theatre scene was great. It was a booming time for the arts."

In the year Janet was editor, PULP released 15 print issues, the most ever published in a single year. Janet got involved in the magazine while studying for a BA in English at Manchester Polytechnic. "I loved writing and I knew that I would quite like to create a career in journalism, publishing or writing," she says.

Janet's role was a one-year paid position and in her role as editor, she invested in computers and brought the production in-house for the first time. "I was very proud of it, and it was quite fun actually," says Janet. "I absolutely loved it." As editor, she felt it important for the students to gain as much experience as possible.

For Janet, getting involved in PULP was an opportunity to work on actual magazines and to make friends with like-minded creative people. One of those was Richard Davis, a social documentary and portrait photographer, based in Hulme. Richard photographed an emerging band from Seattle who had a gig at Manchester Met in 1989 for the magazine. Their name? Nirvana.

For PULP Janet interviewed musician and TV presenter Jools Holland and Richard O'Brien, writer of *The Rocky Horror Show*.

The magazine ran features on high-profile individuals such as Johnny Dangerously in 1990, Sean Hughes in 1991, Derrick May in 1992, Boy George in 1993, Trevor Nelson in 2005 and The Walkmen in 2006.

PULP took bold political stances, raising awareness of political conflicts, wars and issues affecting the LGBTQ+ community. They debunked sex myths and spread awareness around sexual issues with features about AIDS, female masturbation and more.

The magazine lasted for 30 years but was shut down in the 2009-2010 academic year. After six years without an outlet for students wanting to work on their own publication, *Humanity Hallows* was created in 2014, which became aAh! Magazine in 2018.

Brontë Schiltz was one of the first generation of editors at aAh! Magazine, which set out to cover stories about the arts, culture and humanities both on campus and in the city, celebrating Manchester and the creative individuals who make it a brilliant place.

Like Janet, Brontë was studying for an MA in English at MMU and got involved in the magazine because she wanted a career in writing. She is now the Northern Correspondent and Digital Editor for the *Big Issue North*.

"It was sort of a new era in Manchester Met's history," she says. "I really loved how varied it was. The themes of our issues would be open enough that people could bring so many different ideas to it."

One issue Brontë worked on was *The YES Issue* of May 2019. With a theme like that – everyone in the world understands yes – and because of the diversity of the university, aAh! was able to take its message to the myriad of cultures and perspectives in Manchester.

Then the pandemic struck, and the campus had to close. Students were stuck at home with only their laptops and phones connecting them to the world. So *The DISRUPTION Issue* made a virtue out of the pandemic, and was produced remotely by a team all working from home. Released in April 2021 as the fourth issue of aAh! Magazine, this instalment demonstrated what can be achieved despite life's disruptions. It's also an edition that captures what we all went through as a legacy of that time: self-isolation, sanitising, separation...

Post-pandemic themes reflect the spirit of a student community emerging somewhat dazed and bewildered from Coronavirus... there was *The FREEDOM Issue*, *The ENERGY Issue* and *The CHANGE Issue*.

Lisa Silva, a graphic designer and illustrator, worked on all three. She got involved because she was keen to try as many things as possible relating to magazine production and design.

"Being involved with the magazine did wonders for my skill set," she says. "It made me much more confident and secure in my abilities to take on publication-based jobs in the future." Lisa now works in-house as a graphic designer for a tech company as part of their marketing team. Result, Lisa!

The sixth print issue, *The CHANGE Issue*, came out in May 2022. It focused on changes in the world and how they affected young people – a perspective often overlooked in mainstream media. For the team it was an opportunity to reflect on our experiences in the long shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic, and with the crisis in Ukraine, the theme became even more timely.

"IT WAS A BRILLIANT TIME TO BE IN THE CITY"

The CHANGE Issue graphic designers came up with some brilliant pixel-inspired designs to document how we all adapted to changes like online teaching and hybrid working. Digital themes crossed over into our real world as covered in a long-form feature on Zoom Dysmorphia. Then came *The CHANGE Issue* that changed.

aAh! proofreaders were checking the almost print-ready magazine when Russia invaded Ukraine. Everyone came together on a Teams call to discuss how we could incorporate world events too significant to miss. The team quite literally *changed* the entire direction of the issue's content and design to reflect the world's biggest story.

Via the social media app Telegram, Journalism student Alice Stevens spoke to a student who had fled Ukraine, and this ran alongside an interview with her best friend – a Russian-Ukrainian exchange student studying in Manchester. The front cover design of a chameleon – think 'change' – incorporated the blue and yellow of the Ukrainian flag and served as a springboard for aAh!'s #StudentsSupportUkraine campaign.

At the heart of the aAh! Magazine philosophy is that ideas are valued and that everyone gets credit for their input: the graphic designer, photographer, illustrator and artist are namechecked on every single spread throughout our magazine alongside our student journalists and contributors.

The idea is that each edition of aAh! Magazine can be a passport into the magazine, media or journalism industry, but the real world isn't always as friendly as at aAh! – especially for women.

Janet's first job after leaving PULP was a bit of a shock. "It was quite challenging because it was two men who owned it," she said. "I had a production editor who worked for me. He was older than me and struggled with having a young female boss."

But she credits her work on the student magazine as paving the way for her entry into what has become a successful career as a journalist. "Take every opportunity you can at university," she says. "I would say to anyone who's harbouring a secret wish to do it but thinking 'I don't think I'm good enough' or 'I'm too scared to ask' to absolutely go for it. Get as much experience as you can. Make contacts through the work you do and keep in touch with all the contacts that you make."

Brontë agrees: "Getting the range of experience that aAh! Magazine offers is valuable – and also quite rare. It forces you to get out of your comfort zone, because journalism can be quite an uncomfortable job at times."

Having solid experience on a student magazine in a city the size of Manchester – and the print copies with your name in so you can prove it to editors – can be a huge step forward in the creative industry, Lisa says. Another important element is persistence.

"The industry I think can be difficult at first. It reinforces feelings of insecurity which feeds into your impostor syndrome, if you have one. I'd say just accept that it can be hard, but don't give up trying."

So the legacy of our student magazines PULP, *Humanity Hallows* and aAh! is that together we have launched several generations of brilliant creative minds into orbit who are now working in the arts, culture and humanities sector. They assembled the building blocks of their future on the same campus you are at while keeping students informed about what's happening here and in Manchester.

As we look back at 200 years of the university and forty years of our student magazine, we celebrate the greats from our history and we look forward to the future. Join the team, come with us – and be part of our legacy.

magazines

UNI LIFE 30 YEARS ON

By Ella Bartman
Design Faye Byrne
Photography Alex B

Former Manchester student Alex B discovered the advantages of clearing up a cluttered room when he stumbled across pictures from his old university days in the city. Although he often reminisces about this time, the smile on his face as he looked through these photographs showed they brought back more memories than he could recall.

Now a gang of 52-year-olds, the same friends Alex remembered so fondly have kept their friendships tight and their families tighter. Three decades on Alex reminisces about the best years of his life in our rainy city. We take a look back at student life in Manchester through his eyes.



ALEX'S ROOM

In the heart of student culture, the group of friends spent the majority of their time hanging out in Alex's room at 36 Cawdor Road, Fallowfield. With walls adorned with posters of George Michael and photos of friends, Alex hosted everyone here after lectures – if they'd actually managed to make it to university that day.

Talking, relaxing and almost never doing their uni work, life as a student wasn't too bad. Regardless, making memories, planning nights out and excited chats about the future took place within those walls. Living on a student budget posed no threat to living life to the fullest. Times were simpler, and saving money was easy

with the Kwik-Save just round the corner on Wilmslow Road. It was their first taste of adulthood and, without the responsibility of mortgages and kids, their lives revolved around eating and drinking at the cool (and not-so cool) spots, finding the cheapest places for groceries and navigating the hook-ups and the heartbreaks.



READY TO GO OUT OUT

Wherever the group went, almost always together, they'd have a cigarette in one hand and a pint of Snakebite in the other. Socialising was a top priority, with every night being a party for Alex and his friends. It was £2 pints at 'The Queen of Hearts' pub, now '256', or the student bar 'Squirrels'. There was even the occasional night at The Hacienda club — emphasis on 'occasional' — as the £10 entry fee could get them three Full English Breakfasts at their Fallowfield local 'Three Trees'. Wherever they were, they'd have Happy Mondays and all things 80s disco pop blaring through the speakers, ensuring a good time.

BAND ON THE WALL

If you were in Manchester in the 90s, you'd almost certainly go out to the places where there was the best music, and Band on the Wall was one of those places. The gang were drawn to the club on one night specifically for Alex's gig there as a bass player in a band. Before going out, the gang would get suited up, usually with a tucked in graphic t-shirt and a pair of boxy jeans, ready to dance the night away. Whatever the genre playing, there were no preferences; a dance floor was all they needed.



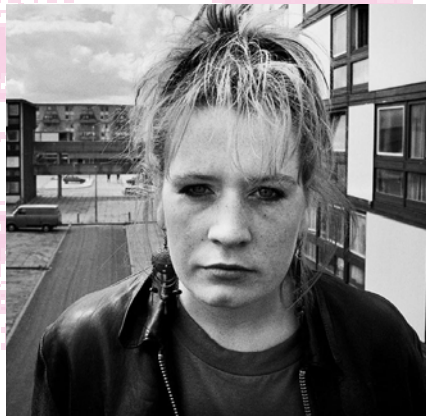
RICHARD DAVIS

“HULME IS A BLOODY GOOD PLACE TO TAKE PICTURES”

“It was a photo that changed my life,” says Richard Davis at HOME café in the city centre. This picture is of Joy Division, taken by British photographer Kevin Cummins on Epping Walk Bridge in Hulme. The stark, steely images would go on to define the band and this part of the city’s legacy. It was also Richard’s introduction to Hulme and played a huge role in delineating his own creative career.

Born in 1965, the Manchester Met alumni’s story is a nod to how the city can shape us. Having walked the corridors of Manchester Polytechnic as a mature student, moving from Birmingham to the now Cavendish Halls, the photographer went on to capture the likes of Steve Coogan, Lemn Sissay and Caroline Aherne. His work encapsulates the vibrancy and rawness of Manchester in the 1980s.

In the 1970s, the community of Hulme was promised modern streets in the sky and a neighbourly utopia. Instead, corners were cut and the deck access ‘crescents’ were not fit for use. Tenants struggled with poor ventilation, lack of maintenance, social isolation and thriving pests — cockroach infestations were regular. The futuristic vision was an abject failure and just two years after opening, Manchester City Council deemed the development unfit for families following the tragic death of a five-year-old who fell from a balcony.



Those who stayed were segregated by shoddy design and blighted by rising crime rates. While others turned their backs on the Crescents, Richard stepped forward, viewing it as “otherworldly”. Describing Hulme as “a bloody good place to take pictures”, he arrived in the area as a 22-year-old student and would go on to build a studio and darkroom in his flat.

At the time, Richard was of the mindset he couldn’t be told what to do or how to think — an instinct he still carries with him today. Richard says you “saw life” in Hulme — then a creative hub full of artists, musicians and poets. In 1987 Richard was given the keys to a flat in the Crescents from a guy in a band that he met in a pub. The address, 257 Charles Barry Crescent, was on the back of all their records, and Richard was told he could live there rent-free as long as he forwarded the heaps of mail they received. This meant more of his money could go on photography, allowing him to immerse himself in the darkroom and completely devote himself to his craft.

Richard’s creative instincts blossomed in these surroundings, taking particular inspiration from Hulme’s graffiti scene. He describes how the art portrayed a unique blend of expression: “You not only had Northern graffiti, but also political graffiti and humorous graffiti. It was like no other place seemed to have that variation.”

During his time at university, Richard took advantage of every opportunity that crossed his path, including joining the university’s student magazine, PULP. He characterised this experience as “crucial”, adding: “It gave me so much access to people and meant early on I had an excuse to photograph people and things which led to many friendships. It was one of the best moves I made early on in Manchester.”

This connection opened doors for his craft, enabling him not only to develop his creative ambitions but also create meaningful relationships which have lasted a lifetime. Richard reminisces about his time as a student with “a lot of pride and enjoyment”. He says: “I loved every minute of it and have no regrets. I lived student life to the full and didn’t want to waste a single second.”



“I loved every minute of it and have no regrets. I lived student life to the full and didn’t want to waste a single second.”

Reflecting on Manchester’s rapid transformation from his time as a student to how we experience it today, Richard raises questions about progress and property. He expresses a lot of empathy for today’s students embroiled in the housing crisis, asking: “Who’s all this new property for?” He worries developers are pricing young people out of the city, recognising that students have less room to try and fail, as money concerns can stifle creative freedom.

From Richard’s perspective, the essence of a captivating photo lies in one of three categories: portraits, buildings and graffiti. As an artist whose work has evolved over the years, Richard still has a preference for film over digital, emphasising film’s warmth, tones and connection to photographic history. “I’d say it’s like records. CDs are practical but they’re clean sounds. There’s a warmth to film: a life of its own. It’s not too sharp to focus, it’s not realistic sometimes. The great images aren’t always pinpoint sharp.”

Richard’s photographs of Nirvana act as a culmination of his approach. Before the band found fame, Richard photographed them at Manchester Polytechnic Student Union in 1989. The black-and-white image shows Kurt Cobain in a candid moment during the concert, capturing the vibrancy



of the band. To Richard it was “just another gig at the time, nothing stood out”. He explains: “It was only with the release of [their second album] *Nevermind* two years later that things took off for them... If only we knew what was to come!”

These photographs became known as some of Richard’s best work, resurfacing in 2021 in the BBC Two documentary film *When Nirvana Came to Britain*. Richard struggles to pick out a favourite picture from his collection and has no plans to slow down: “I’m never happy with my photography; my next photo is always the best one.” This mindset comes from his time spent in Berlin in December 1989. The years from 1988 to 1990 taught him the importance of being busy; of always having a project, moving forwards and developing his style.

He shares a current project he is working on comparing the Barbican Estate in London with Park Hill in Sheffield, and the Hulme Crescents in Manchester: “Three estates, we’ve lost one. Two are now Grade II listed — could Hulme have been Grade II listed?” History influences a lot of Richard’s work; he discusses the way in which photographs document life, referencing moments in his life that have been documented, such as the miners’ strike in 1984-85 and civil rights movements. This pushed him to think about architecture and how we live our lives.

Richard considers what the future might hold, discussing how he is moving towards talking about photography, having recently given a talk at the Salutation Pub. He reflects on his life in Hulme, his football photography and the distinct identity of the “Manchester moment” he lived through. He explains: “It’s helpful for me to put all the pieces together in my life,” and this is something he wants to continue as he grows older.

As Manchester evolves, Richard’s lens continues to capture the city’s essence. He says: “The beautiful thing about Manchester is it’s a huge city culturally but actually physically quite small. You can get around it easily, get to know people easily and make friends easily. There’s a network here.”

These words serve as inspiration for students of today to take advantage of what the city has to offer. Like Richard did.

By Megan Mcardle and
Carla Acevedo-Ferron
Design Maddie Clayton
Photography Richard Davis



All Saints Park

By Ian Burke

Design Bradley Sansom

Photography MMU Visual Collections

The headwinds of yet another storm are coursing through Manchester. Big coats on. Hoods up. Only the most masochistic of ducks would consider this to be 'nice weather'. Still, it'll take more than a tempest to halt progress on the renovation of All Saints Park.

Heavy machinery grafts hard as a handful of pigeons keep watch between haphazard pecks at the concrete. A dinky green digger is using its bucket to smooth down piles of aggregate along Lower Ormond Street. This transitional scene must make St Augustine's Church, that slab of brick-built brutalism to the rear of the park, feel less conspicuous for once.

A JCB hauls a ton or two of topsoil at a time from out of the guts of the park. A small pile of dirt soon grows into a twin-peaked mountain outside the Ormond Building. Another yellow digger clanks its way to the summit, acting as makeshift security in case any passing climbers think of planting a flag.

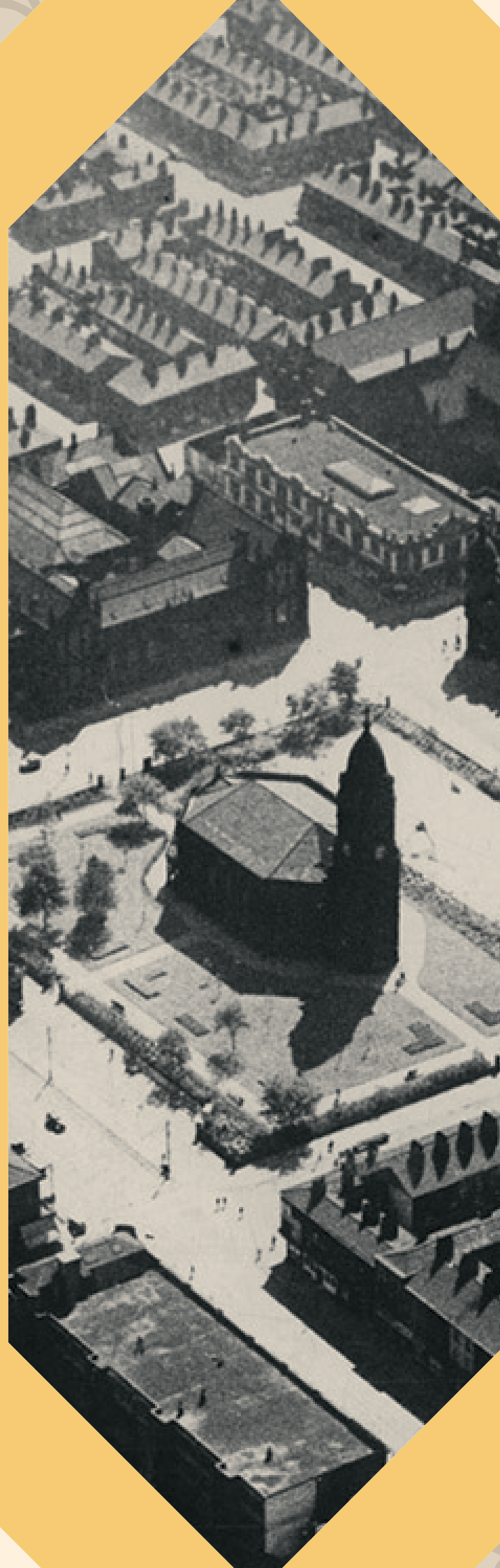
The workers need to be careful though. Lying a few feet below that topsoil are the remains of Mancunians past. 16,000 Mancunians, to be precise, squeezed into a graveyard the size of a couple of football pitches. Actually – make that 16,001

“We did uncover some bones in an area we weren't expecting to,” says Paul McCullough, senior project manager of the Capital Development team at Manchester Met. “It started as someone finding a broken bone. The archaeologists came down and initially thought it was going to be a discarded piece of bone, but then they unearthed a whole skeleton. But it wasn't in a proper grave, so it could potentially have been a pauper's grave.”

Archaeology professors from the University of Salford have a watching brief on the project. When you're working around the dead, you need to be extra cautious.

“All the gravestones are under there,” McCullough continues. “When the former churchyard was turned into a park, it was created by putting fill on top. So if you look at the park from the street, you'll see that it rises quite significantly. The only place there weren't any graves was the original outline of All Saints Church. Everywhere else was full, and it was pretty much up to Oxford Road level.”

This means the diggers are hitting flattened gravestones at a depth of just 50-70 cm. There have also been unexpected finds within the church's footprint, such as the discovery of a burial chamber used by local dignitaries.



All Saints Church was consecrated in 1820. It pre-dates the University and its most venerable buildings. It wasn't all fields back then. Much of Manchester was a slum. Notorious areas like Little Ireland and Angel Meadow, whose squalid conditions inadvertently planted the seed of Marxism, sprang up between the city's burgeoning cotton mills. Someone was getting rich, and it wasn't those who lived in the tight warren of terraces. They were the mere human fuel of the Industrial Revolution.

With All Saints Park being consecrated ground, there are restrictions on what Manchester Met can do with the land. It can't host meetings or musical performances, for instance, and the selling or consumption of alcohol is also forbidden. So what's going on with All Saints Park today? Why has it been closed for the past few months?

“Basically, it's getting much-needed investment,” McCullough says. “The park was last refurbished in the '90s. The council still owns it, but we've got a long lease. It's unusual in that the University has responsibility for the park but it's still fundamentally a public space.”

The developer, Casey, closed the park to the public on October 16, 2023. However, once completed later this year, we can expect a host of new trees and wildflowers, more seating for those rare rainless days, and — except for Oxford Road — pedestrianisation and improved cycle infrastructure on the streets bordering the park.

“That's fundamental to our plans and is a requirement of the planning permission,” says McCullough. Cycle stands will be available on both streets and cycle routes will be maintained on Cavendish Street. “The idea is that we'll have a cycle-friendly campus. It'll all be shared space, so there'll be no kerbs except for decorative reasons. [There'll be] improved accessibility too, and that'll gradually work its way across campus.”

The sprucing-up of All Saints is the first phase of a wider scheme of on-campus improvements. The Public Realm Masterplan, to give it its official title, anticipates linking up the main part of the university with the Brooks Building, although the potential development along Bonsall Street is years down the line. Before that, the second phase will renew the pedestrian area

around the Geoffrey Manton and Grosvenor buildings, with the last phase linking the two.

Back outside, another sharp gust from the storm forces someone's umbrella inside out. A grey squirrel, bemused, dashes between contractors, perhaps looking for somewhere else to store its stash. Another umbrella gives up.

“We did actually uncover some bones in an area we weren't expecting to”

OUR DIGITAL FUTURES

By Tara Morony
Design Laura Sheridan
Photography Montclair Film

SODA

From hosting the 2023-24 Métiers d'art Chanel show, to being chosen as the new headquarters of the English National Opera, to the launch of Aviva Studios as the home of Factory International, Manchester is undoubtedly experiencing a cultural moment.

Manchester's position as a cultural hub is not new. Historically, the city's cultural institutions have played a pivotal role in shaping its civic identity and public spaces but what's new here is this shift towards developing an international outlook with a focus on digital innovation. This is no coincidence, as Manchester City Council's digital strategy aims to make it a world-leading digital city by 2025.

At the centre of this transformation is Aviva Studios, a landmark cultural space in the heart of Manchester, hosting theatre, concerts and exhibitions. With plans to 'reshape the city's cultural output', the 7,000 capacity venue aims to attract 850,000 visitors a year and bring £1.1 billion into the local economy over the next decade.

Award-winning director and producer Danny Boyle (think *Slumdog Millionaire* and *Trainspotting*), directed the official opening production *Free Your Mind*. This Matrix-themed, large-scale immersive performance offers a dramatic re-telling of the classic sci-fi film through dance, music and visual effects, to explore the potential of the digital revolution.

The production was created in collaboration with students from Manchester Met's School of Digital Arts (SODA). SODA is a £35 million investment into the workspaces, networks, teaching and research needed to drive the next generation of creative content.

Jill Griffiths, Head of SODA, explains how this project came about. "Danny is part of our industry advisory group and he approached me about the possibility of students contributing," she says. "I was absolutely delighted about the idea and keen to make it happen." Following a competitive process, nine students were selected by the panel to participate.

The video work created by these students from the Filmmaking, Future Media Production and Music and Sound Design programmes features significantly in the production.

Boyle says: "It seemed the perfect opportunity to use the skills and resources of the students here at the School of Digital Arts to connect with The Matrix which is about our digital futures."

Student filmmaker Lui Bauer highlights Boyle's awareness of the importance of involving the younger generations: "Danny was of the opinion that you cannot tell a story about the digital age without consulting people who are digital natives."

'Digital natives' refers to those who have grown up surrounded by technology. Lui says "by including the points of view of a digital native who is less scared and more open to these new technologies, but with some criticality as well", Boyle created a more nuanced conversation about the role of AI in relation to the future of technology.

This was an interdisciplinary project, says Lui, with "dialogue that was happening between all these disciplines". Lui adds: "That's what I really enjoyed, finding the way for all these practices to come together and inform each other, not work against each other. SODA teaches an awareness of other disciplines, which is a core skill for the industry, and makes you a better creative."

Film student and aAh! filmmaker Charlie Andrew reflects on the creative freedom the project allowed. "Making content every week really helped develop our roles," he says. "We were able to have this powerful sense of freedom in terms of what we were able to put on the screen."

Working on a large-scale commercial project for the big screen is a once in a blue moon opportunity for most film students, but also comes with its challenges. Charlie's contribution was a short film which explores the history of Manchester. He says: "Trying to fill this huge screen with interesting content that the whole audience will be able to consume and understand was bizarre."

Jayden Roy Crooks, a second year filmmaking student, describes the euphoric moment of seeing these various disciplines come together: "I remember from the beginning moment to it all coming together – seeing Danny's vision being executed."

"It seemed the perfect opportunity"

Danny Boyle

A core group of academic and technical staff from SODA supported the students throughout the project. Students worked in SODA's professional editing suites and studios to create high quality content with access to cameras over the summer which meant production could continue outside university term time.

Jill says: "My colleagues were brilliant. Not only did the students have access to all of the facilities, but they had people to support them as well."

There are several initiatives emerging which suggest that community and inclusivity are being increasingly prioritised in the digital arts scene in Manchester. 'Factory Academy' offers free training programmes to diversify the workforce in creative and cultural industries, offering a way for up and coming creatives to get involved in the arts industry.

Film student Charlie says that Factory International are "well aware of the next generation of creatives" and suggests "this should give the North a boost, to put Manchester firmly on the map in terms of the creative arts." Lui praises Factory's

ability to "attract artists and find ways to bring out the talent in the local community". Platforming creative, local young people offers a refreshing shift from what has been a historically impenetrable industry for anyone who does not come from a highly privileged background.

SODA has a number of ongoing collaborations and partnerships with industry and cultural organisations, such as with Factory International at Aviva Studios and HOME. On the possibility of similar projects in the future, Jill says: "Where we have an opportunity to do something at large scale, we will absolutely move to make that happen. We are keen to make sure that our students have as many opportunities as possible."

This positive approach is not lost on the students. Digital innovation and expanding student practice are at the heart of SODA's philosophy, bringing students from various courses together to create. Charlie says: "SODA is aware of the past, especially within filmmaking practice. When we are shown inspiration for projects, a range of older and newer pieces are showcased. It's about being aware of the past and present."

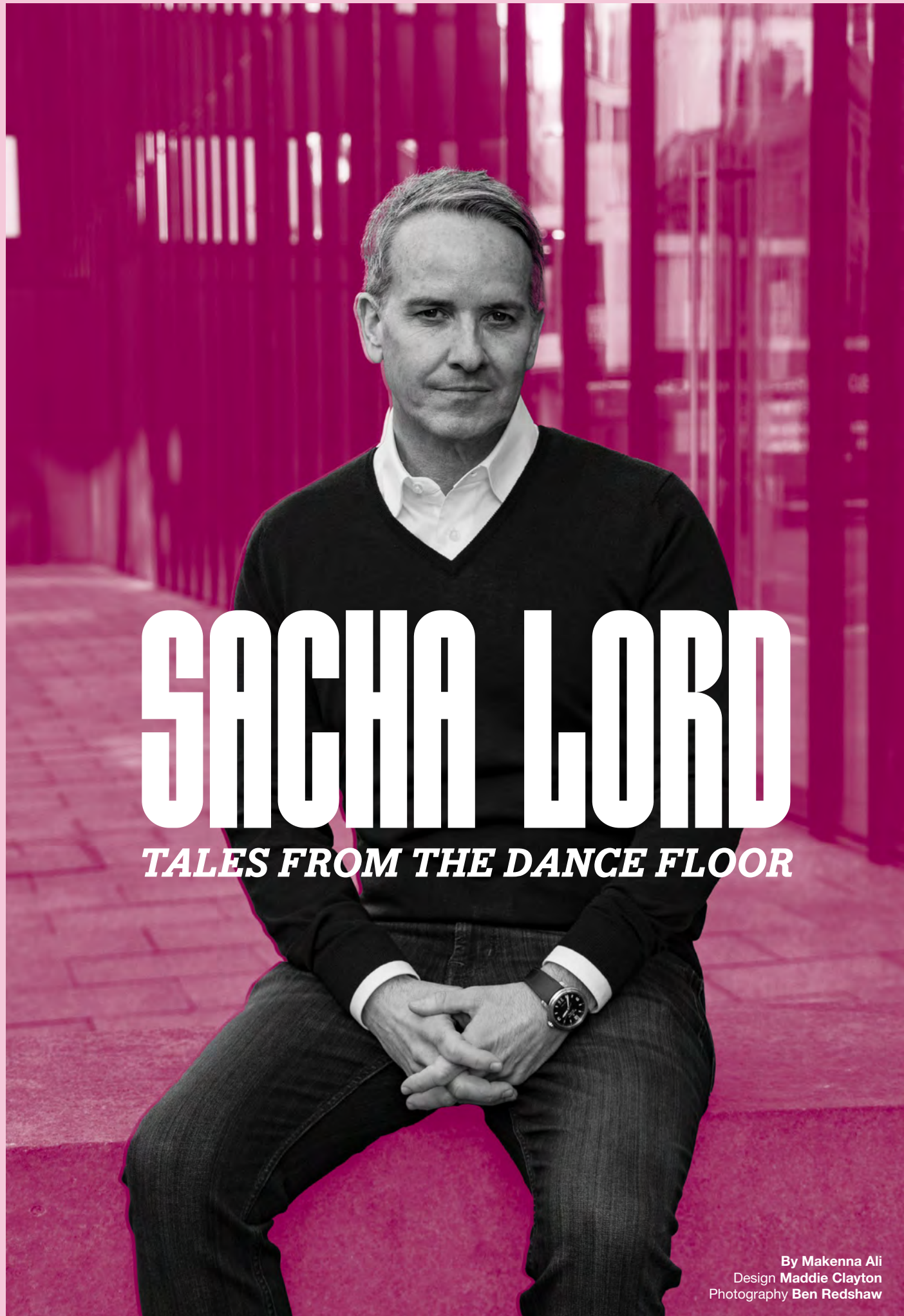
Jayden thrives on being pushed, he admits. "SODA is a place that pushes the boundaries, pushes people into connecting with each other, and pushes what you can do digitally," he says. Lui agrees. "It excels at creating a space where you can experiment. SODA is a place where it's not frowned upon to make something that's a little bit odd."

Jill is delighted at what this project represents, and what it has achieved. "This project for me absolutely encapsulated what SODA was created to do, which is to provide students with the knowledge, experience and skills to be able to work on collaborative artistic projects and performances with globally recognised artists and cultural organisations," she says.

"SODA's aim is to be a leader in innovative creative digital arts that bring together different artistic fields and practices and which reaches not only a Manchester and regional audience, but a global audience too."

The collaboration with Danny Boyle was a particularly rewarding experience for the students, for Jill and her colleagues. "We were absolutely thrilled to see the students' work during the performance," she says. "We are really proud of them."

Historically, creative opportunities have tended to be centred on London, yet this is changing as more studios leave and head North. Manchester is embracing digital innovation, with young people at the centre of this transformation. As a young digital artist in Manchester, Charlie Andrew is in a great position as a filmmaking creative. "I think it's very exciting," he says. "Manchester is definitely on the rise for the creative industries."



SACHA LORD

TALES FROM THE DANCE FLOOR

By Makenna Ali
Design Maddie Clayton
Photography Ben Redshaw

"I didn't do very well at school and the reason for that was Madchester," says Sacha Lord, sitting down to talk at Manchester Met. Across the road is The Footage pub where he played some of his first gigs as a DJ. He's here to talk about his new book *Tales from the Dance Floor*, which documents his 30-year career at the forefront of Manchester's party scene.

As an 18-year-old, Sacha dreamed of becoming an artist and studying at Manchester Met, but the city had other plans for him. When he was in sixth form, Manchester's music scene was at its peak with New Order, The Stone Roses, The Smiths and Happy Mondays all on the circuit. He says the enthralling Madchester scene led him astray and resulted in him getting two Us and an E in his A-Levels. It worked out for him in the end though.

'Madchester' was a musical and cultural phenomenon that developed here in the late 1980s as indie music merged with acid house, psychedelia and 1960s pop vibes. It was an exciting time to be a teenager and a perfect wave to catch for a driven individual like Sacha, looking to make his mark and put on a good party.

The Hacienda club on the corner of Whitworth Street West was at the centre of this movement, and this was where things began for Sacha: "It was the first type of club I had been to where it didn't matter who you were. Everyone was in The Hacienda for music, and I got obsessed with that."

Sacha then began to put his own nights on. His first was at The Hacienda on 4 July 1994. He organised student nights at the 'Flea and Firkin', now The Footage on Manchester Oxford Road. "It all fell into place from then," he says.

A career in the creative industries would always be part of his path. This "regular bloke" who grew up in Altrincham is now the co-founder of the Warehouse Project and Parklife Festival. He is also the first Night Time Economy Adviser for Greater Manchester, appointed by the Mayor of Greater Manchester Andy Burnham.

Sacha bought his first nightclub in 2002 called Sankey's Soap. He admits it was good fun but he eventually grew tired and restless with the business. "I got bored because it was the same four walls week in and week out. I then came up with the idea of The Warehouse Project, which is nomadic – it can move around."

The first Warehouse Project was held at the Boddingtons Brewery near Strangeways

prison in 2006. He soon found there was an issue – the brewery wasn't soundproof and the music could be heard in the prison. The nightclub had to switch to an underground car park at Store Street near Piccadilly station.

Sacha says: "My phone was ringing, ringing, ringing. After about the fifth time I answered it, and it was the governor of Strangeways prison." The Warehouse Project had caused a drug spike in the prison. "We were getting letters from prisoners on Strangeways letterheads saying 'I heard Annie Mac, can you send it on tape?' It was ridiculous so that's why we moved and out of that came Parklife [Festival]."

"We were getting letters from prisoners on Strangeways letterheads saying 'I heard Annie Mac, can you send it on tape?'"

Sacha's book *Tales from the Dance Floor* tells it as it was. Co-written with award-winning music journalist Luke Bainbridge, it highlights three decades of his success. Sacha says: "Sitting down to write 85,000 words was a tough task. I've known Luke most of my career, back when I was putting on nights at The Hacienda. I wanted to co-author with someone who understood without me having to recall all these things."

Sacha enjoyed the dynamic of co-writing with Luke and reminiscing with someone who just "gets it". He says: "It's been a really good, therapeutic process." He adds it was interesting to look back on Manchester in the 90s and reflect on how much times have changed, describing how the city's nightlife back then was run by "nasty people". He says: "There are a few eyebrow-raisers when people read the book," he remarks. "I've been shot at twice and petrol bombed in Sankey's."

His own club nights have also been marred by incident, he says. "Somebody did sadly pass away in 2013 after attending the Warehouse Project. They had taken something and by the time they got to hospital, they didn't make it. It would be ludicrous not to include things like that [in the book]. I've tried to encompass it all."

Sacha says he committed to being completely honest when writing the book and was keen to lay out the truth. He does not shy away from the harsh realities of the

night-time economy in Manchester and the wider issues the city has faced, past and present.

There have also been plenty of wholesome moments during his career running events in the city: people contact him saying they've found love at his events or formed life-long friendships. "Someone told me their son was conceived during the Warehouse Project."

Today, in his role as Night Time Economy Adviser, Sacha champions reforming Manchester's nightlife and supporting hospitality. He consistently backs small and independent businesses across Greater Manchester by leveraging his profile. From picking up the tab for everyone's meals at independent restaurants for the day to calling for the Government to protect and promote the hospitality industry, he gives back to his home and the city that made him the man he is.

Sacha's events showcase the power of community too. According to him, the formula for successful events is focusing on the guests who create the atmosphere: "Everyone thinks when you buy a ticket to Warehouse Project or Parklife it's all about the DJ, that the DJ is the most important thing on the platform – or the artist, or the band. But the customer is the most important thing. Unless they gel or unless they mould, it's not going to work."

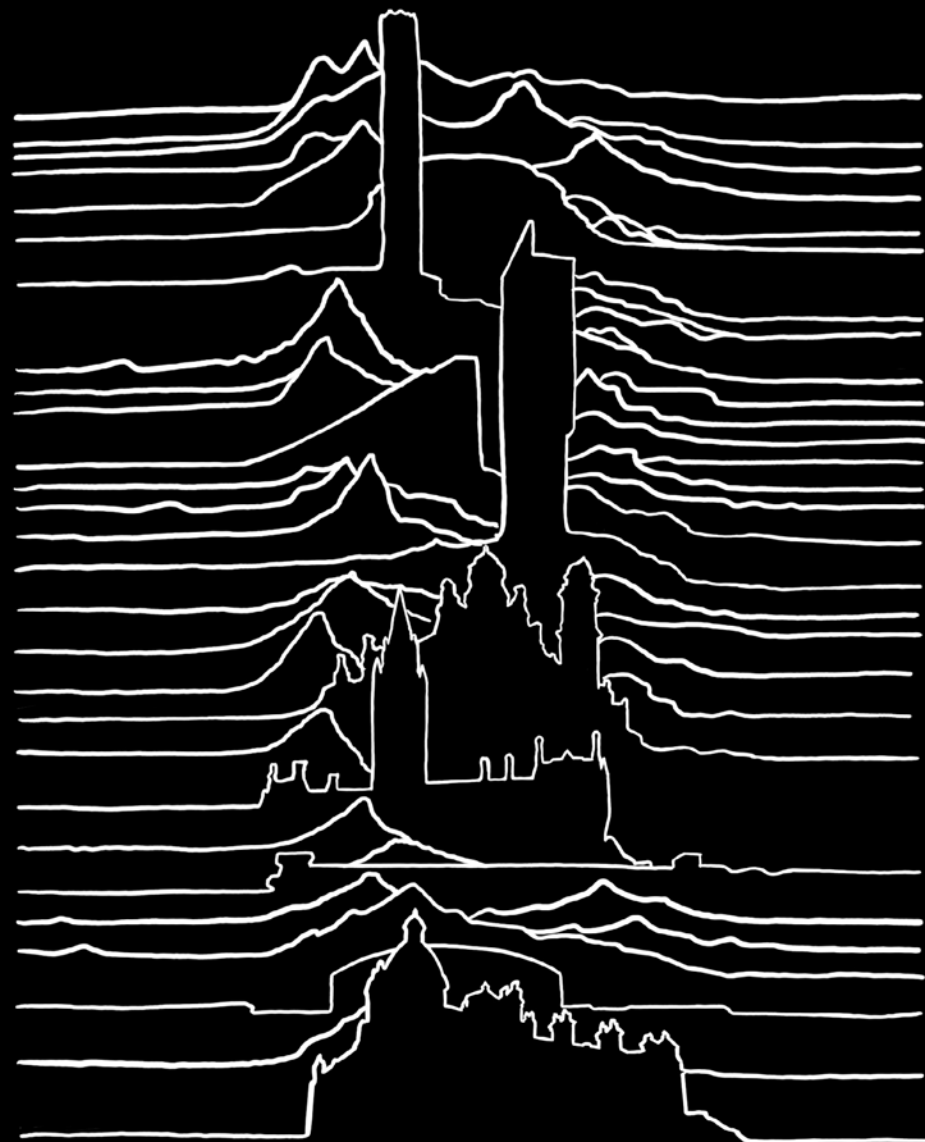
Sacha's influence on the city and Mancunians is widely recognised by fellow Manc legends — like when Ian Brown, lead singer of the Stone Roses gave a quote for his book. Sacha says: "[Ian] said something like: 'Over three decades Sacha has kept the nightlife light alright.'" He jokes: "I think it probably helped that I was paying him [to headline my festival]."

Sitting in the MMU radio studio at Grosvenor East, Sacha is surrounded by young people who look up to the level of success he's achieved. But he has two important messages for them: "Success is not about money. If you're successful, that will come eventually. I think success is learning every time you fail.

"If you want to start a business now nothing is stopping you. If you fail, just brush yourself off and start again."

Sacha wants to be remembered for creating happy memories, and he leaves us with this thought. "Can I just say that I already know what my tombstone is going to say," he says.

"Sacha Lord: 1972 to whatever year. Guestlist closed."



By Ciara Reynolds
Design Laura Sheridan
Illustration Liam Bonney

1 THE DEAF INSTITUTE

As well as being a staple for student club nights, The Deaf Institute is an intimate live music venue that's been part of the humble roots of many big bands today. Opened as the Adult Deaf and Dumb Institute almost 150 years ago, and reimagined in 2008 as a three storey café, bar and live music venue, its Ballroom is — alongside the Albert Hall — Manchester's most evocative gig destination. Household names such as The 1975, Charli XCX, Wolf Alice and Pale Waves have all played beneath its glitterball, helping to seal the Deaf Institute's new legacy.

135 Grosvenor Street, M1 7HE

FIVE ALTERNATIVE MUSIC VENUES that have left their mark

You know the larger venues, but Manchester's live music scene is built around these city institutions which have so much more to offer. So before you go looking for your next mega-gig, broaden your horizons and consider some of these fantastic places.

2 THE PEER HAT

Hidden away down a Northern Quarter back alley, The Peer Hat is Manchester's ultimate grassroots venue. At street level, the venue is a classic dive bar but its basement hosts gigs, spoken word poetry nights such as the Silly Exhibition, improvised plays and the always bizarre electronic open mic nights. Finding out what's on is always a challenge, but it's the type of place that's perfect for just turning up and letting the universe decide.

14-16 Faraday Street, M1 1BE

3 BAND ON THE WALL

The Band On The Wall is one of Manchester's most important venues, catering for music fans and clubbers with tastes ranging from folk to R'n'B; from reggae to rock. Dating back to 1803, it earned its name through a wall-mounted stage which literally put the band on the wall. Since then, plenty of huge names have passed through its doors, such as afrobeat legend Tony Allen, Buzzcocks and The Fall, and it is supposedly where Joy Division signed their contract with Factory Records in blood. (Please note, blood isn't more legally binding than ink).

25 Swan Street, M4 5JZ

4 YES

Since opening in 2018, YES has quickly become part of Manchester's furniture. With four bars and two live music venues, the Basement and the Pink Room, the ex-auction house on Charles Street has become a hub for an eclectic swathe of sounds. As well as touring acts, it champions local and hotly-tipped bands with its Hot Take and Mood Swings nights; Hold Tight is the city's monthly alt-dance magnet, while the Deptford Northern Soul Club does exactly what it says on the tin.

38 Charles Street, M1 7DB

5 SOUP

Last but not least is SOUP. Formerly known as Soup Kitchen, this venue has been covering all bases as a café, club and live music venue since 2010. With tickets from just £5, SOUP is a Northern Quarter staple, playing host to artists such as Push Baby and Mareux — even Dua Lipa has performed in front of its bare brick walls.

31-33 Spear Street, M1 1DF



HIT & RUN's RICH REASON

The nightlife industry is currently seeing more than 40% of young people worrying about finances when contemplating a night out. Over 60% of students who work a part-time job say the money they earn is spent on paying their bills and buying food, according to a National Union of Students survey.

So the obvious question that arises is: What is drawing these people to continue going out, even when they know they shouldn't?

Hit & Run are leading the pack to keep people coming through the doors despite their financial difficulties. 17th birthday this year, Hit & Run's leader Rich Reason also manages 'Ghosts of Garage', 'Discopuss' and the music collective 'LEVELZ'.

Rich Reason is a DJ, promoter, manager and father of two, who has been making a statement as a promoter on the Manchester music scene since 2004. His focus is on giving clubbers a space to forget their day-to-day challenges.

The introduction of no phone policies, so event-goers can detach from the reality of life, multi-genre nights and portions of free tickets all work together to keep people coming back to his events.

Rich says he uses his nights, in particular Hit & Run, to bring artists to Manchester for the first time and to support local music. "This gives us an identity that distinguishes us from others," he says. "It's about creating your own lane, rather than being like the rest."

"Rather than affecting lots of lives a tiny bit, I just work with people I think have got real potential, and try to change things for them."

To platform talented, emerging individuals, Rich says "the trick is to do things so people come through the door, and then expose them to stuff they might not recognise". That includes emerging artists and new names that the audience might not

recognise. The aim, he says, is to "try to expand their minds."

Despite his love for the scene, it's also clear that there are difficulties that follow closely. Rich says: "Promoting is interesting in that it's exactly where business and art meet... If you end up being too business-focused, there's no soul or identity."

The impact of the current economic climate on the 'going out' aspect of people's lives has affected jobs within the music community. "We used to run Hit and Run every Monday night for almost seven years, whereas now, understandably, students take their degrees a lot more seriously," says Rich. "I think it's starting to get into a tough period again, but it's just the macro environment of the cost of living."

This seems to be a shared sentiment among the Manchester music community. Rich says, "It's definitely not just me. Artists are willing to take part as soon as there's a cause they believe in. You can ask and they'll 100% do it – there's a lot of big heart." Reflecting on the role of music events in society, and how he's using his events for good, Rich adds: "Music is by nature political."

A key element of Rich's role is supporting artists from the city. "Hit & Run has a very strong Manc identity," he says. "Manchester is incredible in that every single sound is represented and there are people doing it really well. I think that's an incredible thing. There's so much community."

Rich says he is trying to create "memories for a lifetime". He says, "The irony is, when

“It’s about creating your own lane, rather than being like the rest.”

Despite the challenges faced by the music industry, Rich's sense of purpose remains untouched. A strong focus for Hit & Run — and for Rich in his personal life — is charity work. Rich has created 'Food 4 Thought' whereby rather than buying tickets, event-goers pay to get in by bringing food and necessities. Rich reflects on this: "Hit & Run have made some of the largest food donations in Manchester as part of Food 4 Thought."

people leave my nights sometimes they don't remember anything, but I do think they carry the feeling. Especially in these divisive times, I want to create a space where no-one gives a shit. It's about trying to engender an atmosphere of tolerance and respect. Life's hard, and that goes back to the no phones policy – I'm just trying to give people a release for a few hours. It's about bringing people together, giving them a safe space – and some time to forget."

By Ella Bartman
Design Maddie Clayton
Photography Emily Dicks

By Jessica Berry
Design Laura Sheridan
Photography Gracie Hall

GAME CHANGERS

THE PHOTOGRAPHERS CAPTURING MANCHESTER'S MUSIC LEGACY

No barriers, no fuss: just up close and personal with the city's hottest up-and-coming artists. Picture The Pink Room at YES, at capacity with barely enough room to swing a cat when the next big thing takes to the stage. Pints fly, photographers duck for cover and sweaty mosh pits swallow singers with perfect cheekbones whole.

Manchester's music scene has a long history of shaping careers and aAh! Magazine's music photography team are building their own legacy in the capital of the North. Georgina Hurdsfield studied psychology and joined the aAh! team as a music photographer back in 2017. She still volunteers for the magazine as a graduate, coordinating aAh! Live – the magazine's live music section alongside aAh! project coordinator and senior lecturer Natalie Carragher.

Georgina says: "I have been with the team since 2017 when the magazine was called *Humanity Hallows*. I became aware of the magazine during my second year when I saw they were running a photography competition. I went on to cover my first gig for aAh! Magazine, Lukas Graham at Manchester Academy in March that year."

Natalie says: "Georgina's work has shaped the success of our music section, and her commitment to the project long after graduation means she has paved the way for students to follow in her footsteps and build stunning portfolios."

"She is a hugely talented photographer and inspiring individual to work alongside, and she has helped build a vast network of industry contacts. As well as that, she has mentored our undergraduate students to provide a springboard into the industry for countless members of our team."

Since aAh! got its first press pass, the team has covered it all, from historic Band On The Wall gigs to Victoria Warehouse at full capacity. With photographers and writers regularly attending Leeds Festival, AO Arena, Gorilla and YES, aAh!'s music journalists and photographers have built up impressive portfolios. Georgina alone has covered names such as The 1975, Maisie Peters, Blink 182 and Little Simz.

Along the current roster of live snappers is final year photography student Ben Redshaw, who joined the magazine a year ago and volunteers alongside studying for his degree. He has photographed more than 35 gigs since joining the team.



"Some of my favourites have been Tom Grennan, Busted, and Lucy Spraggan," he says. "But if I had to pick one special moment from them all it would be the first gig I did, at Manchester's AO Arena with Westlife." Ben had some prior experience working with Hard Rock Café on small gig nights, but this was his first big shoot.

In October 2023, Gracie Hall was introduced to the team by Ben, at a We Three gig. Gracie, a Future Media Production student from Manchester, had been working for *Melophile Media* when they met. Her first gig shoot for them was Joker Out at Club Academy. Having a soft spot for indie venues, Gracie predominantly works at smaller shows for aAh! Magazine.

"My visual favourite is definitely Deadletter. I really enjoy working at YES Pink Room because of the amazing lighting. Non-barrier gigs are my favourite to work, because the first gigs I ever went to were emo-rock shows," says Gracie. "Plus my camera is super light so I can get away with being in mosh pits."

Gracie's incredible Deadletter shoot at YES captures the ethereal glow around the band and the raw passion of the night with the band crowd surfing, roaring and riling up the mosh pits.



**“ I WOULDN’T BE
WHERE I AM
NOW WITHOUT
aAh! MAGAZINE**

Georgina Hurdsfield”

Gracie was already an admirer of Georgina’s work before she joined the team. “Georgina has actually been a massive inspiration to me — I’ve been following her since 2020,” says Gracie. “So working with her has been great, and the community around the team is amazing. It’s allowed me access to a lot of gigs I wouldn’t have been to otherwise, like Ashniko and Don Broco.”

Even though Georgina, Ben and Gracie are all from Manchester, working as photographers for aAh! Live has opened up new perspectives for them. The industry creative network built up offers fantastic opportunities to students and an opportunity to be part of Manchester’s music legacy.

Ben says: “Photographing for aAh! has helped my career as a photographer substantially! I have been given countless opportunities to photograph my favourite bands and new artists, and make connections with other photographers and creative people along the way.

Gracie says: “Building a new legacy is really important to me. I love the heritage of Manchester’s music scene and you can see that in artists now. Seeing the past impacting the present is amazing and I love being able to capture it. People underestimate how important chronicling things is.”



These photographers are already establishing a name for themselves; Georgina has become part of the official image teams for some of the festivals she shot with aAh!

“A standout moment in my aAh! journey was covering Leeds Festival in 2019,” says Georgina. “It was a surreal opportunity to photograph some of my favourite artists, including The Story So Far, Basement, Joji, CHVRCHES and Sea Girls. I used to attend a lot when I was younger, so it was a full circle moment being there with a press pass.”

Georgina continues: “Following my coverage of Live at Leeds Festival and Leeds Festival in 2019, I submitted my work to the festivals, which ultimately led to my inclusion in their official photography teams. Since 2021 I’ve been a part of both festivals’ teams. These opportunities are particularly significant to me as both festivals have a special place in my heart.

“I’m so grateful when I go back to these festivals. I remember the joyful memories I had made there working for aAh! Live and I create new ones – for me and other people – while doing my favourite thing.”

Georgina speaks about the role of aAh! in her development as a photographer within the industry: “I always tell everyone I wouldn’t be where I am now without aAh! Magazine. Working with the magazine has been an invaluable learning experience. I have photographed more than 50+ gigs/festivals for aAh! It has honed my skills in communication with PR and industry professionals, navigating photo pit etiquette, capturing shows of varying scales, and crafting compelling reviews. I attribute my current position and skillset to the knowledge and expertise gained through photographing for the magazine.”

Among the huge moments captured at the 2023 Leeds Festival by Georgina were sets by Billie Eilish, Loyle Carner and Ethel Cain – an example of the incredible journey she has been on since she picked up her first aAh! Live pass.

Speaking on the privilege of documenting musicians artistic journeys, Georgina hopes her photos will hold nostalgia for our generation in years to come: “I want aspiring photographers to have the same opportunity, support and knowledge starting out. I would love for them to envision a future where they too can shoot for their favourite festivals or tour with an artist.”



ELLIE LOUISE BROWN

By Amy Corringham
Design Jack Dean
Photography Recondition

Q&A

Manchester Fashion Institute alumna Ellie Louise Brown created Recondition, a new disability-friendly, sustainable clothing brand.

Recondition is an adaptive fashion brand designed for people with disabilities. Created by former Manchester Met student Ellie Louise Brown, the collection is made up of user-centred designs created with style, comfort and accessibility in mind.

The sustainable fashion brand incorporates inclusive designs and innovative fastenings to fill a gap for people with disabilities, and bring trendy clothes for all. Design and technology graduate Ellie explains the story behind her brand and what motivates her to be part of the movement building a more inclusive industry.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself and why you decided to create Recondition?

I had always wanted to start my own business, and fashion is what I love. I know that I am coming into a space that is over-saturated and there is not a lot going on that is necessarily good right now in the fashion world. Particularly up here in Manchester, there is a lot of fast fashion and unethical fashion.

I initially saw starting a business as a future thing, but going into my final year of university, I took every opportunity I could. I participated in the business boot camp with Innospace, which made me realise that I have the skills and the knowledge to start the business now. In fact, now might even be a better time to do it. No-one is relying on me, the reward would be higher and the risk incredibly low.



“I want Recondition to allow people to wear stylish, trendy clothes which physically work for them”

What inspired you to create an accessible and adaptive brand?

Two and a half years ago, I fell over the tiniest step ever, broke my ankle badly and ended up in surgery. It opened up a world to me that I never thought I'd have to think about. It blew my mind because I am privileged enough to be non-disabled normally and this small insight made me think about the people who deal with this all the time. I thought 'I don't want to leave this insight behind' so I asked: 'How can I help?' I looked into how a disability affects people and their fashion. I want Recondition to allow people to wear stylish, trendy clothes which physically work for them.

What has been the biggest challenge you've faced?

I think this is a universal challenge: money. It costs so much to do anything. One of the good things is that the fashion industry is becoming more inclusive, as there is more funding available for women. That said, it is still really hard to get anyone to give you money. I don't have any finance behind me, I'm not a nepo baby.

What is your fondest memory of fashion?

In my childhood, I just loved sewing and thought it was so cool that you could make something out of nothing. There was no defining point where I first felt love for fashion. I am the only girl in my family, and my aunty used to feel sorry for me, so she gave me her heel collection and told me to go into the living room and practise with them. She used to say that I would thank her someday.

What message do you want your brand to share?

I want Recondition to be a brand that designs for and incites change in the fashion industry by paving the way for a more inclusive way of operating. I'm creating a brand that responds to the wants and needs of its customers by creating meaningful and desired products. I want it to be a brand that gives back to the community by creating safe spaces for everyone to feel included in fashion and have the opportunity to engage in conversations around it.

What are your future plans for Recondition?

I want to bring the community further into the brand and develop more products by the end of the year. I would like to diversify into a lot of different garments for options that everyone else has. I don't want to just focus on one kind of product – I want to have something for everyone. I just want a nice loyal community and for them to love the clothes and for the clothes to love them back.

Follow @recondition.mcr



finding comfort in the past

By **Amelia Masters**
Design **Bradley Sansom**
Illustration **Snehal Dhanwate**

From fashion model and tiny toy collector Iris Law to singer-songwriter Beabadoobee leading the 90s cuteness revival, capitalism and cuteness go hand in hand. We dive into the trends paving the way for us to dip into our childhoods.

From a cracked hard teddy you've cuddled since childhood – when it was soft – to an annoying Tamagotchi that just won't die, or even a schoolgirl prairie dress reminiscent of simpler days, nostalgia can come in many forms. In a world so serious, nostalgia can make us feel safe and act as a comfort blanket when the world gets too harsh. When the Sunday Scaries hit and your seminars are making you question if you've chosen the right course, you might just find a miniature plastic toy to be your saviour.

Sonny Angels are just one example of nostalgic comforts created for young women to help deal with the stresses of adulthood. This collectible toy was created by Toru Soeya, the CEO of Japanese company Dreams, and is inspired by the American cartoon 'Kewpie'. Described on their website as a 'little angel boy', the small naked baby in a variety of headgear claims to be ready to provide 'healing moments' in the everyday lives of fans.

"It improves my day when I buy a Sonny Angel because of the dopamine rush of opening the surprise box," says Amelia Godel, head of MMU Fashion Society. "I love them because of the collecting aspect and how they are physical objects in an age where everything is digital. Being able to look at them in my room, in my studio or wearing them as part of my outfits feels better than looking at things on a screen."

One of the features collectors enjoy about Sonny Angel mini figures is the 'blind box' packaging; meaning buyers do not know

which figure they will receive until they buy one and open the box. This edged excitement is capitalised on by character-led companies, with fans buying box after box until they get the figure they really want, often documenting the process on social media.

"The surprise element [of blind boxes] is reminiscent of toys that were available when we were much younger," says Amelia. "It keeps you coming back to purchase another to chase the thrill of getting the one you really want, or just a different one to the ones you already have."

Japanese brand Sanrio dominates the market with its blind box sales, offering consumers an addictive dopamine rush. Best known for its Hello Kitty brand, the adorable character celebrates its 50th anniversary this year with a new exhibition at Somerset House in London. Featuring artists including Japanese painter AYA TAKANO and interdisciplinary artist Sain Fan in collaboration with Sanrio, the event will explore the irresistible force of cuteness in contemporary culture.

The enduring appeal of Hello Kitty is complemented by a rising trend in the popularity of other nostalgic collectibles, including Sonny Angels and Sylvanian Families. Amelia says: "I think people really enjoy revisiting [these toys], particularly ones you can collect and display rather than 'play' with or trade, as they start to move into their own spaces, whether that be in uni halls, student houses or first homes."

Despite providing comfort and enjoyment, these collectibles also have the power to put a dent in your bank account. The Sonny Angels cherub toys, first made popular in Japan and collected around the

world, do not come cheap. Each figure sells for about £10 each, and is part of a series of themed headgear – sailors, animals, fruit, vegetables. In total there are 650 dolls to collect, with the rare 'Robby Angel' appearing on resale sites for an average of £70.

On the market since 2004, the cute Sonny Angels are now regularly sold out. Their resurgence in popularity on social media has contributed to this demand, with the hashtag 'Sonny Angel' now reaching more

than 800 million posts. This trend is closely followed by another nostalgic toy – the Tamagotchi – which has more than 742.6 million mentions on TikTok.

Iris Law is a fashion model and self-certified 'cool-weird girl' who regularly shares her own collection of 'tiny things' and nostalgic treasures on her platforms. From Sylvanian Families to her own personal collection of Sonny Angels, Law offers a safe space for those who might have been teased in high school yet went on to embrace their quirks and unconventional interests.

The micro trend of 'cool-weird girls' has made its way online, with artists like Beabadoobee and influencer/designer Limnick embracing the aesthetic. Capitalising on a sense of individualism and all things niche, this trend makes individuality fashionable, favouring maximalism and eclectic, colourful outfit choices.

Amelia admits this "gimmicky" trend has influenced not only her own personal style but the way she thinks about spending too. "I'm not necessarily buying more, as I'm already quite careful about my consumption as sustainability is important to me," she says. "It's more about finding ways to add things I already own to my outfits or bags, whether that's upcycling or reusing existing things or being more considerate about what I buy."

The environmental impact of collecting, overconsumption and following online trends has been called out repeatedly, but it's clear it can offer an undeniable pleasure to people looking to find comfort in something fun and familiar. This presents a dilemma for fans though, who are also increasingly concerned about the effects of fast fashion and sustainability. "Sometimes the dopamine hit is diminished because I'm also very aware of how the plastic in these toys is not a very sustainable choice," says Amelia.

Growing up in a world of climate change, pollution and plastic waste, Gen Z is acutely aware of the challenges facing the environment. This is evidenced by recent research data from Mintel, which says around 70% of 16 to 19-year-olds agree that sustainability is an influential factor when purchasing fashion items. This figure is significantly higher than for older generations.

With a generation apparently so in tune with sustainability, why are these plastic toys so popular? As well as favouring tangible physical objects over screens as a way of rejecting constant scrolling for mental stimulation, the answer may lie in the psychological impact of the pandemic. The mental health charity Mind found that 88% of young people admitted the pandemic had a negative effect on their mental health. This period saw many young adults return to childhood bedrooms filled with nostalgia, dusty trinkets and the smell of unwashed teddies – and this could be where the interest was rekindled for some.

Lucy Jane, the owner of the Afflecks clothing swap shop Beg, Steal and Borrow, says there is no surprise we return to familiar comforts and trends years later when times get tough.

She says: "I think this has been fuelled by people who have really latched onto a nostalgia-based trend [from] a generation that grew up on the Internet – particularly young adults who lost several of their most important coming-of-age years due to the pandemic.

Benjamin Wild, Division Head of Fashion Communications at Manchester Fashion Institute and a senior lecturer in Fashion

Narratives, expands on the connection between nostalgia in fashion trends. "I think people's attraction to nostalgia reflects a desire for security and stability during a period of pronounced social and political turmoil," he says.

"To return to events, individuals and places that are fondly remembered or fantasised provides comfort, perhaps even clarity. This is especially the case with items of dress. Old garments or reinterpretations of them become conduits of people's memories."

The wearable aspect of Sonny Angels offers an element of simple, childlike escapism. Fans like Amelia enjoy adding accessories to outfits to complement their personal style, attaching them to keychains, bags and belts. Some people have even started making little crochet clothes for their Sonny Angels.

Lucy Jane believes this shift in fashion is towards wearing things that bring people joy, rather than what's trending. "I have seen a rise in people wearing clothes that are fun, which could be because it's reminiscent of childhood," she says.

It's this power of nostalgia that allows us to escape the present and revisit fond times from the past that is so attractive at the moment. Amelia explains that part of the appeal for some is to take enjoyment from cute aesthetics and toys they were once keen to outgrow – before they were faced with the realities of adulthood.

Dr Neil Dagnall, a Psychology lecturer at Manchester Met, has researched why we find comfort in the past. "We tend to have a negative affect fading bias, whereby the negative affect associated with unpleasant personal event memories fades more than the positive affect that comes with positive personal event memories," he says.

"So the past is typically pleasant to recall. Nostalgia allows people to escape the present and revisit fond times from the past. So that is about displacement and comfort."

Amelia agrees. "Seeing these trinkets I have collected placed alongside sentimental items and things I have made definitely has a positive impact on my mood."

When incorporating the trend into personal style, Amelia says it doesn't always require buying new things or chasing rare items. Instead, it's the personalised element of the process, such as the ability to customise outfits with trinkets, which has enduring appeal.

Amelia says adapting cute items into wearable nostalgia can be easy. The *Je t'aime* singer Jane Birkin was famous for her bags, which she customised with scarves, key chains, beads and even watches. More recently, designs from Miu Miu SS22 and Balenciaga SS24 collections feature heavily detailed and accessorised handbags.

"It may well be something you already own, which has personal value," Amelia says. "It's an accessible trend in that way because anyone can be involved."

She also says the trend to collect and wear cute trinkets and collectibles does not have to cost the earth – quite literally...

"It encourages people to use things they already have or find new uses for old objects, such as keyrings or toys, by adding them to their outfits or bags. So it feels like a more wholesome trend."



A HOME FROM HOME

By Iver Lawson
Design & Illustration Jack Dean

I stop before the entry sign and peek through the gate into the secret garden. The scene is lively and warm; a stark contrast to the empty street I am standing in. There is bubbling conversation, lilting above the thrum of cheerful music to which groups of people sway gently, hot drinks in hand. A gathering at Hulme Community Garden Centre.

This wholesome, green little sanctuary dwells quietly on the outskirts of Manchester Met's Brooks Building, easy to reach but known only by a lucky few. 100% volunteer-led, the centre is a beacon within the community, a rare and valued space where individuals can meet and share in the experience of tending to something special.

For music student Katie Russel, involvement with the garden has become a treasured part of her student experience. Whether it's through volunteering, chatting with visitors or simply relaxing in the café with a book, she feels her time here has helped to cultivate a home from home amidst the flora.

"Being an international student, the garden centre has been essential to my sense of community," she says. "It provides a space where you are welcome to socialise, but feel no pressure to."

Adjusting to university life can be a lonely or isolating experience for many students, whether international or local. A recent study by YouGov revealed 92% of university students in the UK experience concerns with loneliness and more than half feel uncomfortable seeking a solution to it. Building a sense of community and belonging in a new city can often seem daunting, yet there are ways to combat this difficulty.

Alyss McBirney has been a long-term volunteer at Hulme Garden Centre and is now a member of staff. She has seen first hand the benefits of outdoor activities in easing these struggles. She explains that if students spend time outdoors rather than in their rooms they will feel more connected to the world: "It takes you out of your head," she says. "You start to notice the sights and sounds. That sparks your interest and can get you out of a negative loop."

She explains the smaller sensory elements of nature can have more impact on our mental health than we realise. According to a poll by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), 91% of UK adults said seeing birds and hearing birdsong has a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing. Hulme Garden Centre provides an inner city sanctuary to enjoy the simple pleasures of nature, which can lead directly to improved peace of mind.

This positivity runs through the garden's key mission to foster community and create opportunities for people to interact with nature and benefit from its transformative effects; bringing them together and building positive creative spaces.

This is valuable for musician Katie, who feels that green areas "provide wonderful space to nurture new ideas". She has found getting involved with nature — from gentle walks to hands-on gardening workshops — can be a grounding and healing activity, especially in terms of preventing creative burnout.

Amy Deighton, a third year Creative Writing student at Manchester Met shares this outlook. She believes that being outside and moving her body boosts her mood and makes her feel that she's doing something "positive and tangible".

"My time outdoors positively impacts my creativity because it allows me to rest," she says. "It lets me connect to the environment, and that gives me inspiration to write."

Amy enjoys participating in seasonal events at the garden centre with friends and family — and she sees the organisation as an accessible place that local people can feel is for them. "It's celebratory and gives people a sense of coming together," she says. "It gives them a sense of pride, community and belonging."

The wider legacy of the Hulme Garden Centre is clear, as a wide variety of visitors and volunteers continue to keep this plant-and-human haven running. After decades of the garden centre serving the community, they are keen to keep it open.

The regular workshops, craft events, live music, pay-what-you-can meals and more are offered with

sustainability and accessibility at the forefront, providing a safe space for both people and wildlife to thrive.

Discussing the space's lasting impact on her own time at university, Katie says: "I will look back at my time here fondly. There are certain places that you know you will remember forever once you move around enough, and I can feel that the Hulme Garden Centre is going to be one of those."

The community garden encourages individuals to participate in the ways that best suit them, and Katie's contributions to the centre include baking cakes. That for her provides an opportunity to be creative in a way that is separate from her musical work. This is just one example of the positive input she has made here, and part of the impact she will leave behind in Hulme after graduation.

Alyss says there are a wide range of ways people can plant themselves in the garden's story: "We welcome new people as they come and go. Everyone is friendly and kind."

Manchester Met Enrichment Project Coordinator Elle Simms says experiences like this can impact life beyond university. "Ultimately, volunteering is just opening

yourself up to more opportunities," she says. "It helps you build a narrative around who you are and what you can bring to a job in the future."

Elle believes that taking part in environmental projects and immersing yourself in the local community is not only beneficial for future employment, but also for a wider sense of purpose.

"It's proven that volunteering improves your wellbeing and makes you happier — there's scientific evidence behind that. Your sense of value in yourself really starts to develop," says Elle. "You can relinquish the risk of failure and enter a space without having to be an expert. That is such a powerful thing to engage in, especially as a student."

As a former volunteer, Alyss wants to encourage more students to get involved in events at the garden. "You can get absorbed in an activity and learn something new," she says. "It really brightens things up."

Creative writer Amy says her experience with the centre shows that legacy is something that can be grown and cultivated through action and attention — similar to tending plants in a garden. Contributions do not have to be big to be valued, she says.

"Just do it! You'll feel empowered when you make things happen. Try it — you might find something you love."

What a legacy that would be.



EMMA GREENWOOD

By Amber Bermingham
Design Bradley Sansom
Illustration Dylan Meek
Photography Emma Greenwood

“We need to save our future, save our now”

Every day we are told to recycle, turn off lights when they're not in use and reduce our plastic waste. Most people do their bit subconsciously, mindful of the small ways they can make a difference. The younger generation have taken this further in recent years, breaking down the status quo and taking the media by storm with national campaigns calling for the problem to be tackled at its root, through meaningful climate action.

The global Youth Strike 4 Climate began in 2019, bringing a spotlight on young climate champions. Manchester-based co-founder Emma Greenwood shares her experiences being part of this movement of young activists calling for collective effort and innovative solutions.

How did you first become involved in climate activism?

In 2015 the Boxing Day floods hit Bury and its surrounding areas, and a huge pub in Summerseat was completely washed away within a few hours. Being 11 years old at the time, I started to feel a deeply-ingrained fear that I didn't know what to do with. I was 16 when I went to the first Youth Strike 4 Climate in Manchester. My mum had suggested that I go along; she thought this was the perfect thing for me because I'd always had a certain level of anxiety about the climate crisis and that I needed to channel it with others who understood. With everything Greta [Thunberg] had been doing in Sweden, it was great to follow this in the UK.

I met another girl called Charlotte, and we ended up being the co-founders of Youth Strike Manchester, which then became an incredible group of people as the strikes grew. We naturally took on leadership and

coordination roles. What began as a small strike in February 2019 had grown to be massive by September, when the general strike for climate happened. The movement took on a life of its own in Manchester and globally, which I don't think any of us could have foreseen.

Was your family supportive of you joining the climate strikes?

A youth worker once told me: “Just as a young person, you're an expert on being a young person, and that in itself is a mandate enough to speak on issues.” I still tell that to everyone. Your experience as a person existing in the world gives you a mandate to talk. That in itself is enough. I think my mum and dad raised me with that perspective as well. They were so supportive. I think they've sown the seeds of me having a consciousness around these issues, having raised me with this belief that my gender and my age shouldn't be a determining factor on what I can and can't do.

How did you get elected as a Youth MP and what was it like speaking in Parliament?

In the same month as the first youth climate strike, I was elected to be the Young Member of Parliament for Bury. The thought of being able to get involved with politics, both locally and nationally, and have a voice before I was legally allowed to, was such an incredible opportunity. It was surreal to be in this deadly silent House of Commons and hear myself talking, which still feels like a fever dream. I was falling over the benches trying to get John Bercow's attention, on national TV. The other youth MPs knew how passionate I was about the environment, and they pointed to me and tried to get me to speak; that opportunity came from the support of all the other young people in the North West.

How do you feel looking back on everything you accomplished at such a young age?

It is crazy looking back. My relationship with doing this type of work has changed over the years. During the pandemic, there was this big wave of focus on younger people as change-makers for the future. I think equally there was a lot of pressure put on young people to be saviours. That's a lot to put on people who are still in such formative periods of their lives.

Arguably, I do less now than I did at 16, which is probably a good thing for my sake. I still get involved by helping organisations

create opportunities for young people that are sustainable and done in a way that supports young people, rather than just shoving them into a space that fits adults. I often think about how the work was approached in the past, and the ways in which young people were consulted and tokenised — in hindsight this was so toxic. I'm more aware of those issues now, as are young people across the board within activist spaces.

How are you helping organisations create sustainable spaces for young people?

I'm working for a social media company called Curv, which I actually helped to launch. It's centred around using social media for young changemakers and creating communities for campaigning. I got involved in Fridays for Future Digital, which was originally a platform for people who wanted to campaign but were in countries where it wasn't safe to protest. The idea was that they could still get involved online. The co-founder of Curv saw this and approached me with the idea of a social media network that works to support young people rather than work against them, which is what it felt like a lot of conventional social media was doing.

I'm also working with Zellar to create a Youth Advisory Board. Zellar specifically helps companies implement sustainability strategies. They're eager to have young people at the helm of their work and working directly with businesses. I'm

helping them set up their youth advisory board to be sustainable and inclusive for young people. It's strange moving from being a 'young person' to an adult with a political voice.

What advice would you give to a young person who wants to get more involved in climate activism?

Don't let the legal voting age or the perception that you need qualifications to speak on certain things stop you. Having your lived experience, taking that and entering activism spaces is so powerful. Equally, enter them in ways that are accessible and sustainable for you. If public speaking is not your thing, don't push yourself to do it because it'll do more harm than good. There's no one way to be a force for change. There's no right way or a better way to do it. Allow yourself to enter these spaces in an authentic, messy way; in a way that feels true to you and helps you to take action on the things that you're passionate about.

What legacy do you want to leave?

I want to make people realise that their voice is powerful and deserves to be heard. Wherever and whatever that voice is, and whatever space you choose to put it in, own it and embody it. What I've tried to do, especially in Greater Manchester, is create safe spaces for young people. You deserve to have your voice heard. We hold so much power to create change in the world.

BEYOND BORDERS: WHY WE SHOULD CAMPAIGN FOR THE RIGHT TO ROAM

By Kian Godbold

The Right to Roam is a campaign to make England's countryside accessible to all and abolish laws of trespass. Easy access to open space has proven physical and mental health benefits and is vital for a thriving community.

It doesn't just affect us humans either. Animals would benefit from the right to roam being passed too. Sheep who roam openly live twice as long as those under domestic care by farmers.

Furthermore, thousands of animals die every year from injuries sustained by barbed wire, an inhumane method of land protection that is actively destroying the beauty of England's nature.

92%

of constituencies across England have no right to roam at all

97%

of rivers are owned by wealthy landowners.

It's time to abolish these dated laws surrounding land ownership, and make these areas accessible to all. Protect the future legacy of our connection to the environment and end the fight for the right to roam today!

This box represents the percentage of land in the UK that is publicly accessible.

0.0%

Source RightToRoam.org.uk

A LITERARY TOUR OF MANCHESTER

Manchester has given us many influential figures in literature and their legacies live on in our city.

By Anna Klekot
Design Bradley Sansom
Illustration Katelan Evans



ELIZABETH GASKELL'S HOUSE

This neoclassical villa on Plymouth Grove might hold some of the richest classical literature significance in Manchester having been visited by many notable figures in the 19th Century. Located in Ardwick, the house was home to the Gaskell family who lived there from 1850 until 1865. Elizabeth wrote most of her notable works there, including *North and South* and *Cranford*. A lot of important writers have also passed through the doors of 84 Plymouth Grove including Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens, Harriet Beecher Stowe and John Ruskin. Brontë called the home 'a large, cheerful, airy house, quite out of Manchester smoke.' Now a museum, it's a must-visit for any classic literature lover – but check opening times.

84 Plymouth Grove, M13 9LW

THE SALUTATION

One of Manchester's best traditional Victorian pubs, The Salutation has a blue plaque on its wall that may go unnoticed in passing. It's a permanent reminder of the pub's significant history in literary history. Back in 1846, writer Charlotte Brontë came to Manchester with her father who was having an operation in the city. They booked in at The Salutation, which is where Brontë began writing *Jane Eyre*, her most famous novel. Today the pub celebrates Brontë's writing by proudly displaying her portrait in the bar.

12 Higher Chatham Street, M15 6ED

FRIEDRICH ENGELS STATUE

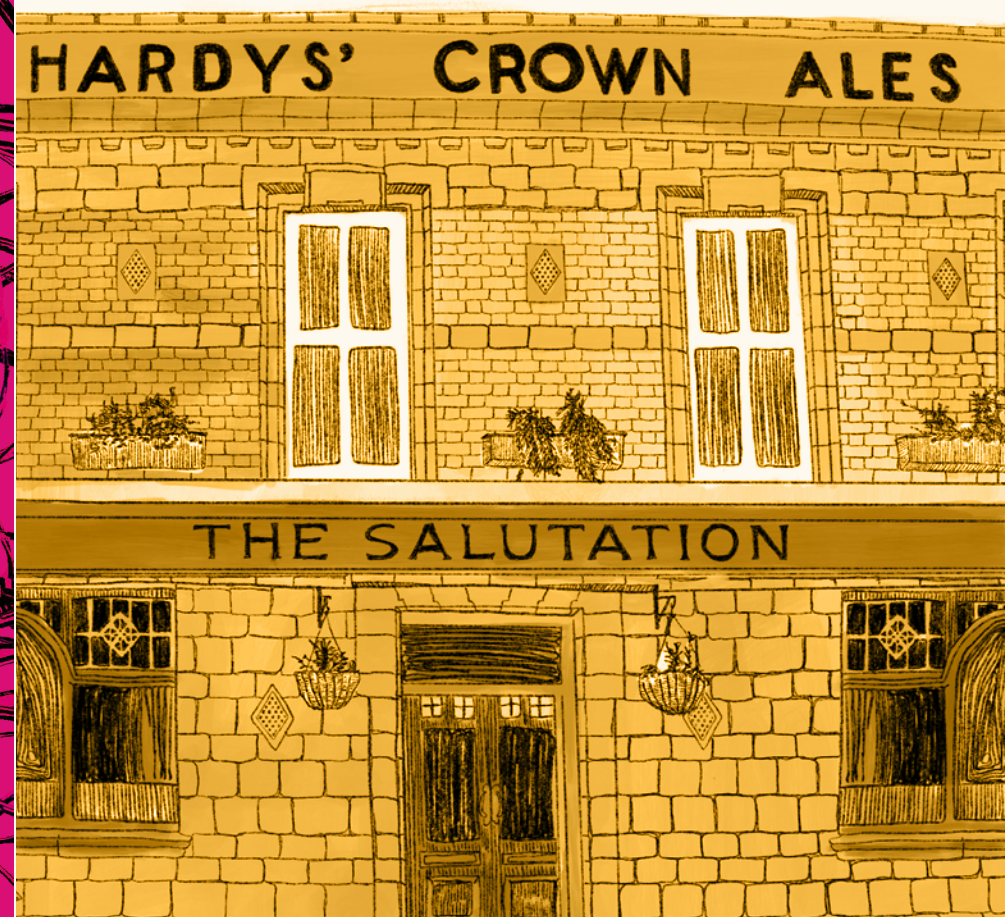
Although Engels was born in Germany, the philosopher lived in Manchester for two decades in the mid-18th Century. Born into a family of cotton mill owners, he was sent to Manchester to learn the family business, and wrote his influential first book *The Condition of the Working Class in England* in 1844 after seeing child labour and poverty in the city. Although he knew Karl Marx from revolutionary activity in Europe, they met again at Chetham's library in 1845 and published *The Communist Manifesto* in February 1848, a political vision that ended with the stirring call to revolution: "The proletariat have nothing to lose but their chains." The statue was originally in Ukraine but was brought to Manchester by artist Phil Collins, where it can now be seen in front of HOME on First Street.

First St, Manchester M15 4GU

INTERNATIONAL ANTHONY BURGESS FOUNDATION

Just a stone's throw away from Manchester Met's All Saints campus is the International Anthony Burgess Foundation. Born in Harpurhey, Manchester, Anthony Burgess was a critic, reviewer and translator, and is best known as the writer of the dystopian novel *A Clockwork Orange*, now considered one of English literature's modern classics. It was made into a film in 1971 by Stanley Kubrick. The writer's work is celebrated at his educational charity, which regularly hosts book launches, talks and other literary events. This year, we can expect a new posthumous novel appearing by the author titled *The Devil Prefers Mozart*.

3 Cambridge St, Manchester M1 5BY



THE MANCHESTER POETS LAYING DOWN A MORE INCLUSIVE LEGACY

By Georgia Pearson
Design Maddie Clayton
Photography Laura Rooney-Harbottle

Manchester has always been a city where literature has evolved. The famous names such as Lemn Sissay, Isabella Banks and Anthony Burgess are like landmarks along the Manchester Poetry Library's shelves. Their works are some of the best examples of the city's poetic output, classic and contemporary.

Malika Booker and Kim Moore are two of this city's modern day poetry stars, success stories in Manchester's flourishing literary scene. Moore says she had a fairly traditional route into publishing, building up publications in magazines and then pulling together a manuscript. She attended a writing group called Fourth Monday Poets where she was encouraged to start writing poetry, especially by poet Jennifer Copley.

"I eventually compiled a pamphlet manuscript and entered it into the Poetry Business pamphlet competition," she says. "I got nowhere twice and won it the third time! Amy Wack, the Poetry Editor at Seren, went on to publish my first full-length collection *The Art of Falling*. Getting published is a really important way of being in conversation with other poets and writers."

Malika Booker shares Moore's enthusiasm about what getting her work published means to her.

"It's really validating for someone to call you and ask for work after seeing you reading," she says. Her own debut as a published poet came this way. "Karen McCarthy Woolf was doing an anthology of Black women poets for the Women's Press called *Bittersweet* and she also asked me for a poem. After this, Lemn Sissay called me and asked me to contribute a poem to his collection *The Fire People*."

Writing is no easy feat and women have historically been underrepresented and erased from literature. In 2019 Bernadine Evaristo, author and recipient of over 76 literary awards and nominations, initiated a report into the publishing industry. She



discovered less than 1% of poets of colour were being published.

"There are many poets, including myself, who knew mainstream publishers would not publish us," says Booker. To counter this statistic, Booker set up a writing group for Black and marginalised writers called Malika's Poetry Kitchen, which acts as a space to challenge the existing poetry landscape.

Booker says: "Women were ostracised and it was mostly white middle-class men who were seen as the poets. We're now seeing a more diverse and inclusive landscape. It's tenuous and we must be vigilant. I'm talking as both a person of colour and a woman."

Booker was the first woman to win the Forward Prize twice, in 2020 and 2022, making literary history for women and Caribbean writers. Booker's modesty is

evident as she describes the exhilaration of being shortlisted for such a monumental poetry prize. "Even when I'm shortlisted, I feel like I've won," she says.

The 2020 Forward Prize is one of her favourite poetic victories, Booker says. "'Little Miracles' is a poem that was written about my mum having a stroke. It felt like me and my mum won that prize."

Booker has also won the Cholmondeley Award for outstanding contributions to

poetry, the Poetry Business Pamphlet Competition and the Geoffrey Faber Memorial Prize. She was elected a Royal Society of Literature Fellow in 2022. That, she says, "is an award for all the work I've done mentoring people and working with people in the literary sector."

She adds, "Every award feels special and they often give you things you don't expect. Winning the Pamphlet Competition for *If We Could Speak Like Wolves* really did change my life. Winning the Forward Prize

in 2022 for *All the Men I Never Married* still feels like a dream.

"I had resigned myself to not winning as so many of my poetry heroes were on the shortlist with me. It felt extra special to win because the award ceremony was in Manchester for the first time and my daughter, who was two at the time, was there with me."

Both Moore and Booker offer praise and respect to their fellow poets who make up the Manchester Writing School.

"I admire them hugely," says Moore. "It feels like the poetry dream team!"

Booker pays tribute to poets who inspired her. "Ntozake Shange wrote *For Coloured Girls Who Have Considered Suicide / When the Rainbow Is Enuf*. It was revolutionary and profound at a time where you weren't hearing Black women's stories. And I'm a disciple of Sharon Olds."

Both urge aspiring poets to seek out community. Booker says: "Find your community kin, who will be honest with you about your work and help you develop it." Moore stresses the performative aspect of poetry. "Go to live readings," she says. "I think it's important to see people perform poetry, as well as just reading it."

Another aspect of developing as a writer is the positive impact the community at the university has had on students and staff alike. Malika Booker worked with Carol Ann Duffy, Poet Laureate from 2009 to 2019. "I'm now a judge of the Manchester Poetry Prize," she says. "I took that role over from Carol Ann – and she started that prize."

The Manchester Writing School is a place where she feels she belongs, she says. "I don't think there's a writing school like this one. We have a big office full of writers. We read one another's work and attend each others' book launches. Hopefully this support goes down to the students too."

Moore's enthusiasm at being part of the university's 200-year legacy is tangible. "MMU has been a huge part of my life since 2010. I did a part-time MA in Creative Writing and researched for a PhD here," she says.

"University education is transformational and can be life-changing. That's what MMU has been for me. So I'm really happy to be working here fourteen years later, and to be part of this big anniversary!"

"WOMEN WERE OSTRACISED AND IT WAS MOSTLY WHITE MIDDLE-CLASS MEN WHO WERE SEEN AS THE POETS. WE'RE NOW SEEING A MORE DIVERSE AND INCLUSIVE LANDSCAPE"

the *faces* behind Manchester's HISTORICAL LIBRARIES

By Jennifer Grace and Makenna Ali
Design Bradley Sansom

Manchester, a UNESCO City of Literature, is home to 22 public libraries, with the oldest of these having existed since 1653. It's also home to independents, such as The Portico and university libraries, including the Manchester Poetry Library, the North West's first poetry library.

Who are the people working behind the scenes, within the silent walls, of these historic institutions? They don't always receive recognition, yet their own stories deserve to be shared as much as the ones on the library shelves.

Fergus Wilde works at Chetham's Library, the oldest public reference library in the English-speaking world. After almost three decades at Chetham's, Fergus is due to retire. During this time, he has supported the online cataloguing of thousands of resources, facilitated visitors' tours and supported readers on their quests into the archives.

Working as a librarian at Chetham's has shaped Fergus' view on the power of literature: "We're facing new and different problems from those of four hundred years ago, but we're still the same humans with needs and desires that have changed little. Reading, understanding and working with generations long gone means more than preserving the past — it can enrich our own lives."

Although Fergus will not be there (he's busy enjoying his well-deserved retirement) it's worth a trip to Manchester's Medieval Quarter to experience Chetham's and the people preserving its 600-year-old legacy.

The Portico can be found on Mosley Street with a team of staff tending to its 450-year-old archive and collection of over 25,000 books. The first person you'll meet is Ellie Holly, who volunteered at the library for three years before joining as its Welcome Desk Assistant. She particularly enjoys being involved in the Portico's exhibitions. Her favourite was a recent project spotlighting the library's collection through the suggestions of its volunteers.

"I really loved that one because you got to see what other people thought were interesting in the library, and their own connection to it," she says.



Another joy of working at the Portico for her is creating personal connections with other people, as visitors "want to talk about the history of the library and their own lives as well".

A library since 1806, there is plenty of history within these four walls: writer Elizabeth Gaskell and the founder of atomic theory John Dalton were regular visitors. With support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Portico hopes to re-connect all the floors it once occupied to develop it as a centre for learning, literature and history.

But you don't even need to leave Manchester Met's campus to find inspiring individuals fuelling the creative hearts of our libraries. The Manchester Poetry Library can be found on the ground floor of the Grosvenor East building, a serene space looking out onto Oxford Road's busy corridor.

Roma Havers, the library's Learning Manager, is a poet, mentor, facilitator and theatre maker. She coordinates cultural events and projects, and also wrote and performed in *LOB*, a "poetry tennis bonanza" presented at Contact Theatre in 2022.

Over the past two years, Roma has co-produced work alongside young people, NHS workers and neurodivergent poets. Shortly after joining the library, she created a space for poets in Manchester to produce residency works in a collaborative environment.

"To me, it feels really key to the stuff we do which is co-producing with the people we're working with," she says. "We have exhibitions of work from the people of Manchester and from poets that are coming up and we value those."

Roma is an advocate for inclusivity in the city's poetry community. Her next project is a "critic's collective", which will develop and exhibit creative responses to poetry in the library. She believes that this is an important next step in further integrating poetry into the cultural footprint of the city.

She says, "It adds to the sense that Manchester embraces poetry as part of its community, that it takes poetry seriously and wants to connect it to other parts of the city's culture."



Prof. Rob Drummond on the relationship between accents and identity

By Tara Morony
Design Bradley Sansom
Photography Ade Hunter

Rob Drummond, Professor of sociolinguistics at Manchester Met, is fascinated by the way people talk. He has led a range of accent-based projects in the community, ranging from Manchester Voices exploring the accents and dialects of people in Greater Manchester to the Accentism Project examining stories of accent or language-based prejudice or discrimination. His new book *You're All Talk: Why We Are What We Speak* investigates the relationship between spoken language and identity.

How did you first become interested in accents?

It was when I was an English language teacher in Turkey, then in Manchester. I had always been interested in pronunciation, and I noticed that some of my students were picking up a Manchester accent whilst others weren't. That became my PhD project; investigating why some Polish people living in Manchester acquired a Manchester accent and some of them didn't. The most interesting outcome was to do with identity, and feelings of connection to the community.

The Accentism Project shares stories about language-based discrimination, can you explain what 'linguistic discrimination' is?

Linguistic discrimination is any time people face prejudice, discrimination or negative stereotyping due to the way they speak. Language prejudice is always about more than language; it's covering up something else. The way we speak is linked to our social class, gender, sexuality, race and ethnicity, so when people get criticised due to the way they speak, it's often really disguising those issues. Class is present; generally speaking, working class environments tend to be where more noticeable, distinct, regional accents are. When people have really strong preferences against certain accents, it begs the question: "Is it really about the accent?"

What role does the media play in perpetuating accent stereotypes?

The motivation for using a particular accent should always be considered. In a film or TV drama, for example, using an accent because a character is from that particular region is perfectly fine.

However, choosing an accent simply because it feeds into certain stereotypes should be at least questioned — those reflections should take place.

What do you think about the negative associations of Northern accents within the media and society?

The North/South issue is a result of the capital being in the South of England, so that variety of English holds the prestige. It's not because there is anything better about Southern or Standard English. The North of England is further away from the capital and historically has been economically poorer, receiving less investment. If the capital of England had happened to be in York, everything would be the opposite. That would be an interesting subversion, wouldn't it?

Do you consider it important for people to keep the accent they're born with? If so, why?

What's important is that people should be free. It's a problem when people feel obliged to change their accent. Likewise, if people want to change the way they speak, they should be free to. We should challenge those areas of society which put that pressure on people. Don't challenge the individuals, challenge the society that makes people feel that their speech is inadequate.

Do you consider your accent to be part of your personal legacy?

Yes, I'm quite happy with my accent. I don't think it's the most exciting accent, but it is part of me and I wouldn't change

it. That said, there are certain accents that have some additional personality and status, for example, a Manchester accent. No-one's ever going to get excited about a Hertfordshire accent. There's a lovely little story — I was giving a talk at a school near Newcastle, and I asked: 'How would you describe my accent?' Then this kid just put his hand up and said: 'Vanilla'.

Tell us about your book, *You're All Talk*.

It's about why we speak in so many different ways, why there are so many accents in the UK, the history of this, accent prejudice, how the way we speak is linked to who we are, why people adjust the way they speak depending on the situation, why we have preferences for certain accents and why some accents are perceived in more positive ways than other accents. It's written for a non-specialist audience, so the research is there but it's presented in an accessible way. It's aimed at people who are interested in accents and language but have no background in it.



Opinion Why we should expand our language curriculum in schools

By Hajar Douglas
Design Bradley Sansom
Illustration Georgia Harmey

"Guten tag", "buenos días" and "bonjour". Many of us understand these phrases. Now, what if they were in Swahili, Russian, Mandarin or Bengali? Language learning is a vital element of our education that enhances our cognitive skills and enriches us culturally and yet, out of the 7,000 that exist, we are barely taught a handful. Broadening the linguistic spectrum of our national curriculum would not only unlock a myriad of opportunities but also aid in tackling the discrimination and hierarchy that often hides behind languages.

to the removal of current ones. German, Spanish and French, aka 'the big three' each play crucial roles in our relationship with Europe and the world. Moreover, the history and culture — music, science, food, cinema — of these countries is deeply intertwined with the UK. Each of these wonderful languages benefits us on a collective and individual level and must remain in the curriculum.

Nevertheless, our linguistic trends are evolving, just like our society is. The Big Three remain the most popular languages in the English school curriculum, being taught in nearly all state and independent schools. However, the number of GCSE entries for these has been fluctuating over the last few decades: 2015 was the latest peak for French and German, while Spanish has been more noticeably rising. What has surged however is the "other language" category with the number of entries in 2022 exceeding those from prior years and having the highest increase out of all categories from the preceding year.

This isn't the only change that we've seen: BSL (British Sign Language) is to be added to the national curriculum for 2025 after it was legally recognised as an official language of England, Wales and Scotland two years ago.

The school curriculum should reflect the shape and character of modern society. So, how can we achieve this with languages? There are multiple ways to approach this, some more creative than others: a 'language week or day' could be a fun way to expose children to a wealth of countries, sounds and images that they have never before heard or considered worthy of study. We could establish a more diverse range of partner schools from across the globe, bringing with them pen pals, language videos and trips. Multilingual students, parents and staff can share their language and culture in presentations. On an official note, GCSEs and A-levels in many other languages do exist, children just often aren't given the option to learn them; they should be implemented into the curriculum and qualifications for more languages should be created.

Through linguistic education, we can open up our perspective on the whole world and build a better relationship with it. Let's start with the word "hello".

What do you think? Have your say and write for aAh! Email aAh.Editor@gmail.com and follow [@aAh_mag](https://twitter.com/aAh_mag)

Throughout history, language has been used as an apparatus for social governance. Although words are used to share some of the most beautiful parts of human nature, we see linguistic oppression in the fabric of wars, genocide, colonisation and more. In the 1500s, using Arabic in Spain in any form was outlawed by King Philip II. The Goa Inquisition in India made the use of Sanskrit and Konkani a criminal offence. The teaching of sign language in many countries was prohibited as oralism was thought to be superior.

Our past has undoubtedly influenced our perception of languages in the present day, and what we associate with certain accents, ethnicities and languages are, in truth, scars from a wounded past. One of the best ways to heal from this is education.

Firstly, the introduction of new languages into the education system does not equate



FUTURE CLASSICS

Move along, Shakespeare! What better way to reflect on *The LEGACY Issue* than with a compilation of must-read books and must-see films? Here we've carved the names of some of the classics of this generation to lay down our own legacy. Are we right? Take a look at the films and books we think have made a profound impact on the 21st Century so far.

GONE GIRL Gillian Flynn 2012

Making *The New York Times* Best Sellers list, *Gone Girl* near-invented the 'Good for her' genre. The crime thriller novel follows the disappearance of Amy Dunne and her husband Nick's involvement in the mystery. It inspired the 2014 film adaptation starring Rosamund Pike, whose performance saw her and the film nominated for BAFTAs, Oscars and Golden Globes.

THE SONG OF ACHILLES Madeline Miller 2011

Popularising the age-old theory of a romantic connection between two Greek soldiers, Achilles and Patroclus, *The Song of Achilles* began a genre of classical retellings. A fanfiction for classic lovers, the untold tale of the Trojan War is an important piece of LGBTQ+ fiction.

GIRL, WOMAN, OTHER Bernadine Evaristo 2019

Bernadine Evaristo became the first black woman to win the Booker Prize for this incredible story of womanhood. *Girl, Woman, Other* follows the diverse lives of 12 different characters, predominantly female and people of colour. *The Guardian* described this book as 'a novel of the decade' and we agree.

THE HUNGER GAMES Suzanne Collins 2008

Alongside the epic success of the movies, this action-heavy film re-ignited the flame of dystopian novels for modern readers and powerful female heroines in fantasy books. These books taught young readers like ourselves to stand up for our values and against injustice. A story of power and survival that is still as popular as ever, with the box office hit *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* coming out only last year.

QUEENIE Candice Carty-Williams 2019

This book's success can be attributed to the wit of the main character Queenie, a 25-year-old Jamaican woman living in London. This book delves deep into topics such as grief, heartbreak, therapy, racial prejudices and stereotypes. Readers find themselves crying uncontrollably, laughing loudly and rooting for this character to the very end.

MIDSOMMAR 2019

Ari Aster's disturbing psychological horror follows Florence Pugh as Dani in her traumatic relationship. Despite being one of the most sinister films of this decade, *Midsommar* inspired some lasting hilarious content, cementing itself firmly in the 'Good for her' genre of film. Popularised online, this genre celebrates not just women's rights, but women's wrongs.

SHREK 2001

Nothing unites a generation like *Shrek*. Arguably the first anti-fairytale, the franchise appeals to all age ranges. The graphics, score and soundtrack are timeless, inspiring a generation of 'Shrek raves' and quotable content. Its popularity prompted the use of pop culture references in animated films.

EVERYTHING EVERYWHERE ALL AT ONCE 2022

An estranged Chinese-American family is thrown into an insane adventure as they attempt to juggle family and business. The erratic storyline demonstrates the highs and lows of this powerful story of love, acceptance and generational gaps. This movie teaches us to have more understanding for our parents as humans. Love is what bridges the gap between this mother and daughter, regardless of conflict and differences.

BLACK PANTHER 2018

Following the events of *Captain America: Civil War*, the Marvel universe made an explosive return to the big screen introducing Wakanda, the elusive, hidden African nation where T'Challa takes on the mantle of heir. Breaking from the archetypal white hero, T'Challa's story teaches all age groups to be proud of who you are and that you don't have to be super to be a hero. The box office success of this movie shows how influential and timely this movie really was as we're all stepping up to support our community.

LADY BIRD 2017

This heart-warming, tender and turbulent film captures the complex relationship between teenager Lady Bird and her mother in the early 2000s. The high school student hopes to step out of her parent's shadow and small-town life to pursue her dreams. You will find yourself relating to the dichotomy of Lady Bird's pursuit to escape yet also find her place and be popular.

BOOKS & FILMS WHICH HAVE SHAPED OUR GENERATION

By Jessica Berry,
Elizabeth Clark and Aimie Gater
Design & Illustration Jack Dean

“Tanzania will always have a special place in my heart”

By **Zac Mcmenemy**
Design **Faye Byrne**

As I sat on my second long-haul flight of the day, bound for Kilimanjaro International Airport, a very friendly if somewhat over exuberant American man asked me if Manchester United would win this year's “soccer cup trophy”. I responded absent-mindedly, mostly preoccupied with what lay ahead. I enrolled in Manchester Metropolitan University's African Wildlife Ecology and Conservation Course, run in collaboration with the College of African Wildlife Management. Over the next two years I would spend six months in Tanzania meeting incredible people, visiting some of the world's most famous sights and learning about a subject I was deeply passionate about. But I didn't know that yet. As I got off the plane, I was hit by the heat, despite it being late October. I was struck by the colossal Mount Kilimanjaro growing ever larger as we drew closer to my new college.

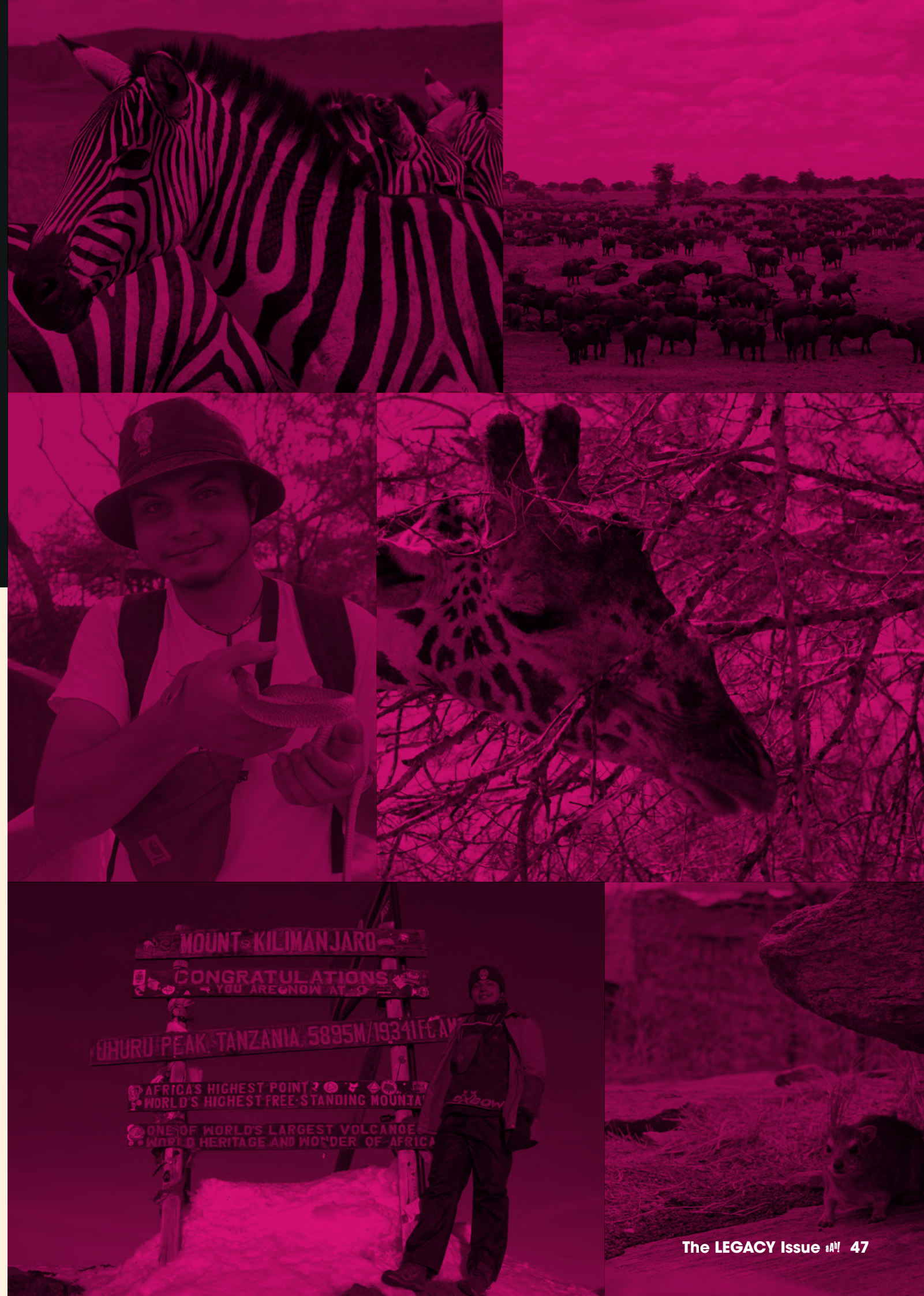
The course was not without its teething issues but I was determined to get the most out of this opportunity. Over the next two months in class, I learned about wildlife management techniques, how to conduct research projects and the threats the natural world is facing. But this was no ordinary course. Every three weeks we were uprooted from the college and some of the world's most

famous national parks would become our classroom — the Serengeti, Ngorongoro and Tarangire. It was like living in a live-action Lion King, which shouldn't have come as a surprise considering the film is set in the Serengeti and in Swahili Simba means ‘Lion’. As we camped in these beautiful savanna plains, we had the privilege of watching herds of elephants walking by, hippos bathing in muddy rivers and lions hunting, all while studying how to monitor and conserve these incredible creatures.

On my second stint in Tanzania, I conducted my Masters research project. For six weeks I lived in the wild in a small camp located two miles from the nearest village, Vilima Vitatu, which we would visit twice daily for breakfast and dinner. With my research assistant Nyerere and a ranger, we would head out each day to gather data on the critically-endangered pancake tortoises, setting up camera traps and taking measurements of each tortoise. Village locals were initially apprehensive of my presence but through my extremely limited Swahili vocabulary and with the help of Nyerere, I was eventually accepted. Returning to the village a few months later, ‘Mama Queenie’, whose restaurant we had frequented, welcomed me back with open arms.

Of course, my time in Tanzania did not consist only of studying. Having joined the college's football team, I quickly discovered that I was not as fit as I previously believed and had to work hard to adjust. However, I was in my element in the local bars and clubs, with the afrobeat tunes that I came to love blasting. There would be some great dancing from the locals, and some questionable moves from myself, inspired by a few bottles of Serengeti Premium Lager. On my penultimate day in Tanzania, I finally submitted Africa's tallest mountain, the same one I had been awestruck by upon my arrival: Mount Kilimanjaro.

My time in Tanzania was not only an academic education but a cultural tutelage also. I made friends from across Africa, indulging in new food, music, and traditions. To say that my horizons have been broadened would be an understatement. Having now returned to the UK, I feel that I have become a more complete individual. Manchester United did not in fact win the “soccer cup trophy”, but Tanzania has won a special place in my heart.





WOMEN IN SPORT

By Felicity Hitch
Design Laura Sheridan
Photography Ellie Wright

A sentiment shared among students working on the show is how the experience and knowledge they have gained has helped them grow in confidence, especially the female crew members. In a report by Women in Sport, 60% of girls said they wanted to see equal media coverage of women's and men's sports. And when newspapers are filled with ex-footballers sounding off about female commentators reporting on the men's game, it becomes even more important for women to gain experience in their chosen career fields, as they may not have had the opportunity before.

Recently, ex-footballer Joey Barton claimed that women only got jobs as football presenters because TV companies had "quotas to fill and boxes to tick", but the talented team at Matchday Live shows he is way off the mark. Matchday Live is helping women wanting broadcasting experience of any type, and helping them further their careers by giving them a taste of what's needed in TV sport.

Asked for her view on Joey Barton's comments, Verity shrugs. "Part of me doesn't care and part of me is really angry," she says. "Personally, I've never doubted myself or my ability to make it in such a male-dominated industry, especially now I actually have the skills from Matchday Live. But when big names in sport can sit and say the kind of stuff they do about women, it's annoying

knowing that there's people like that I'll always be trying to prove wrong along the way."

At Matchday Live this season, the majority of roles are staffed by women. Dortha Berger, a second year Journalism student, is one of the faces of the programme. Along with colleagues such as Verity, Amelia Tatford and Reza Rezamand, Dortha is a regular presenter, introducing the action and interviewing players and coaches.

"I think Matchday Live is definitely going to help me break through into the industry by giving me valuable experience and practice. I've actually never thought about sports journalism as a male-dominated industry, because I have always been interested in sports since I was little and that's also when I started to see more female presenters on the screen and more female names connected to sports journalism.

"In the first year of Matchday Live there was a lack of girls, but I am very happy to have more this year. I will say there is more equal representation of both genders. I think all of the contributors have found what they prefer to do and help each other to achieve their best both on and off the screen."

Along with presenting the live streams, Dortha and Verity were part of the three-woman team of Journalism students – with fellow presenter

Amelia Tatford – that launched Matchday Live's first podcast, Matchday Live Extra. Dortha says, "I joined the podcast team because I wanted to contribute to broadening the coverage of the university sports and get even more skills that I can use in the industry. We are taught how to make podcasts in the classroom and we all thought: 'Well, this is the ideal opportunity.'"

Matchday Live closed its doors for the 2023-24 season shortlisted for an Educate North award for innovation, well-deserved recognition for the efforts of Technical Specialist Sam Heitzman, who built the studio at Platt Lane and Matchday Live editor Vince Hunt who runs the editorial side. With female students recognising the valuable experience the show offers them in actual sports coverage, the challenge is to get more women behind the cameras and microphones of Matchday Live to build a legacy on the mainstream sports programmes and TV screens of the future – a generation of women in sport who learned the ropes on the touchline at Platt Lane in Manchester.

If you want to be involved in Matchday Live next season, email Sam Heitzman on s.heizman@mmu.ac.uk and state whether you want editorial or technical experience.

Every Wednesday, rain or shine, a dedicated team of students travel down to their studio in Fallowfield to begin a day of sports broadcasting. There's an undeniable energy in the air as players and coaches bustle in and out of the studio in between games.

Two presenters discuss their script before sending it to the autocue while reporters pace the touchlines of the pitches at Platt Lane wrapped up in their official Matchday Live coats, ready to grab a player for a post-match interview at a moment's notice. But here's a thing: most of the team working on the sports livestream Matchday Live are women.

In October 2022, the Matchday Live project was launched as an opportunity for students to get experience in live sports broadcasting. Based at the Manchester Met sports hub in Platt Lane in Rusholme, the project offers students a double entry point into sports broadcasting – either down the technical route, operating cameras, balancing sound and vision mixing, or as sports journalists: interviewing players, making preview features, reporting on games or possibly commentating on live games. Either way, Matchday Live mirrors exactly the fast-paced thrill of live broadcasting.

Second-year Journalism student Verity Marchant is one of the Matchday Live team. She's worked on a variety of sports this season as a presenter, camera operator and

also as a football commentator. Although she feels there is a lot of pressure in sports TV for women to be perfect, Verity thinks Matchday Live is equipping her with the essential skills for working in the industry.

"You see it all the time, especially in men's football, where if a woman makes a mistake, social media can get flooded with people using it as an example of why women shouldn't be involved in men's sport," she says. "If a man makes the same mistake, most people just see the funny side of it. If they do start slating them, it's only ever based on their ability, which is a fair opinion to have, rather than their gender. I see it a lot so I'm really aware of it, but I don't feel like there is this pressure at Matchday Live.

"We're all learning as we go. It helps to know that when I finish uni, I know what I'm doing and I will have that confidence going into the industry. I have just as much skill and experience as anyone else there."

In the last decade, audiences have grown considerably for women's sports, especially with the success of England's Lionesses and the huge strides forward taken by women's football. The average viewing time per person for women's sports on TV in the UK rose by 131% in 2022, according to the Women's Sport Trust.

Matchday Live is helping to promote this further by covering university sport: men's

and women's rugby, football and basketball, with YouTube views reaching upwards of 2,000 on each livestream. A new all-female social media team has begun sharing Instagram reels from the basketball, hitting 7,000 views for one post.

Livestreams have become especially important for promoting women's sports and creating opportunities for women to break into the industry. Ellie Gregory is a music and sound design student who has worked the sound desk at Matchday Live since the start of the academic year. She says the role has given her the experience needed to catch the eyes of potential employers.

This season Ellie engineered a Matchday Live first, when a 'ref-mic' was added just before an MMU Women's rugby match, allowing viewers to hear the decisions made by the referee. Ellie was the woman behind this. Although she described it as challenging, she is proud of the work she has learned to do.

"It was great having that opportunity because before when we streamed rugby, we never got to hear the referee explaining his decisions to the players, so coming up with a way to do it has been exciting. And it's great working in a team that embraces any chance to make their coverage better. The ref had heard about what we're doing at Matchday Live and brought his own mic!"

MATCHDAY LIVE'S NEW GENERATION



NANA MEG'S TATER ASH

By Ian Burke
Design Bradley Sansom
Photography Ian Burke
Illustration Georgia Harmey and Snehal Dhanwate

50 **THE LEGACY** Issue

Tater ash is Manchester in a bowl. The ultimate Mancunian comfort food.

Similar to Irish stew and scouse, but mostly confined to the second city. Tater ash is the type of meal pub landlords serve during the break at darts and pool league games, but never put on menus. It's almost as if charging for it would be an affront to its history as a cheap, working-class staple, born from mills, muck and mire.

Before going any further though, we need to clarify some important matters. This is not a potato hash. This is not the swanky corned beef hash you'll find at Albert's Chop House, with its poached egg crown and slithers of bacon draped across like Bobby Charlton's combover. This recipe does not have a thin lid of spuds spooned across the top like an edible thatch — that's a hot pot.

No, this is the same tater ash handed down through generations of my family. My great gran Nana Meg passed it on to Nana Narky (real name Doreen), who was so busy looking after everybody that she forgot to teach my mum how to make it. Fortunately for me, and by extension you, Nana Meg showed me the ropes.

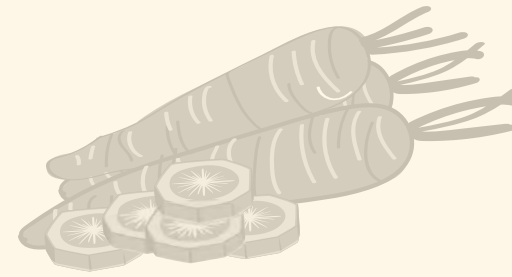
The ingredients are the same as her meat and potato pie. If you want the perfect filling for one, just follow the instructions below but keep the lid off the pan, boil the contents right down and entomb what's left inside some pastry.

SERVES 4
PREPARATION 10 MINUTES
COOKING 1 HOUR MINIMUM



INGREDIENTS

1 onion, diced
2 medium potatoes, cut to 1" cubes
3 medium carrots, sliced thick
4 garlic cloves, minced
500g diced beef
1 beef stock cube
1 tbsp flour
1 tbsp oil of your choice
2 tbsp Worcestershire Sauce or Henderson's Relish
3 tbsp brown sauce
Salt and pepper
Bread, pickled beetroot and/or red cabbage to serve



- 1 In the deepest pan you've got, brown the meat in oil for a few minutes. Once done, put it on a plate to one side.
- 2 Add the onion and soften it for a few minutes before adding garlic for another minute.
- 3 Put the beef back in. Cover with a layer of flour. Add carrots and potatoes, and give it all a stir.
- 4 Dissolve stock cube in 1.5 litres of boiling water and pour over mixture.
- 5 If needed, top up the pan with more water so that it covers everything.
- 6 Chuck in a load of ground black pepper and a pinch of salt.
- 7 Add the brown sauce, Worcester sauce/Hendo's. It's difficult to put too much in, but the amounts above should do the job.
- 8 Cover for an hour on a low heat, stirring occasionally to stop the meat sticking to the bottom of the pan.
- 9 Dish up with some pickled beetroot and/or pickled red cabbage on the top, with bread for dipping and mopping up duties.



Question: Can you freeze tater ash?

Absolutely, but leave it to 'mature' overnight before doing so, as tater ash is always even tastier the next day.

Dear Joni,

I was seventeen, sprawled on the low, jumbo cord sofa, at the party of a cool friend. A really cool friend who played bass in a band, who rolled his fags with one hand.

I was self-conscious, feeling out of my depth with the slightly older arty crowd when I heard someone singing about my exact situation. Enthralled, I went over to the record player to look for the album cover, to find out who was delivering such embarrassingly personal lines.

The sand-coloured square with 'The Mountain Loves The Sea' watercolour, painted of course, by you, informed me that it was Joni Mitchell. This is me, I thought as I read the lyrics, how does she know? You spoke to me and echoed my feelings and experiences. You were telling my story and I was hooked. So began a lifelong (albeit one-sided) love affair.

I think you were the first artist to pour yourself into songs. (A Case Of You springs to mind). I listened to a radio documentary where you described being married to a man who deemed you stupid. You felt you made up for a lack of formal education with life experience. Indeed, by the age of twenty-one, you'd moved to America, travelled and performed and had the 'social crisis' (the illegitimate baby) that helped to develop your inner life. You said it made an artist out of you. It forged your identity. How many other young women in the sixties had the self-awareness to proclaim that? And for it to be true!

'I always thought of myself as an artist'.

Good for you. I'm adopting your confidence. You knew who you were, you worked hard to create and perform until the stroke in 2015. Even after that, you learned how to walk and talk again and re-learned the guitar by watching YouTube. Your surprise performance at the Newport Folk Festival in 2022 still makes me cry.

Your confessional, all-revealing songs had a huge effect on me. You guided me through intense love affairs, heartbreak, sadness and disappointment. I love singing along with your vocal gymnastics, despite my being rubbish. You pull me along, swooping through Greece and California. I fly with you.



Your lyrics are poetry; the distillation of ephemeral emotions that I like to imagine you pinning down as they drift through the ether.

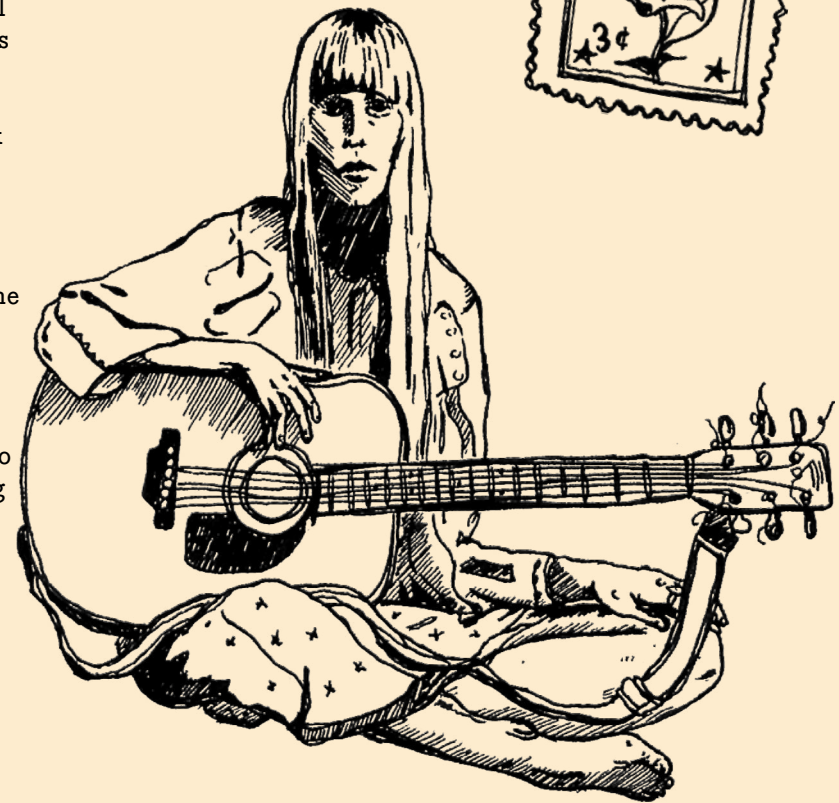
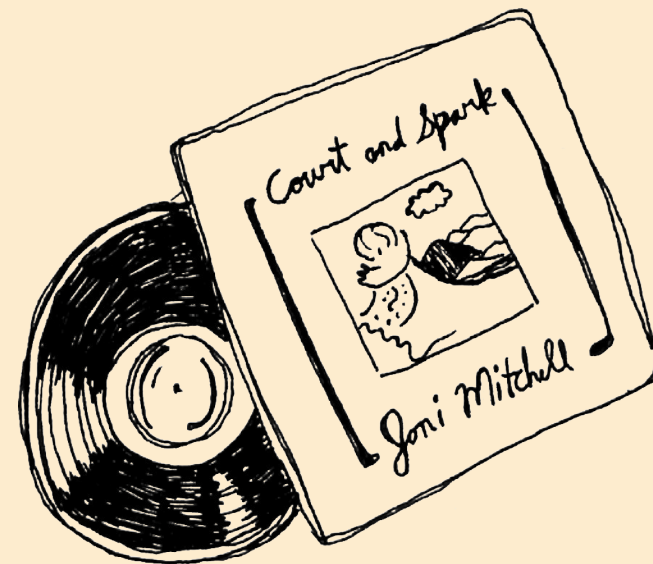
'Waiting for his car on the hill' takes me right back to a grotty student flat in Leeds where I sat with my little red record player. Just as my boyfriend was two-timing me, you wrote about sitting up and waiting for your sugar to show. I believe he then married and had a baby with his other woman. Same as my ex.

It's the story of feeling powerless. God, the times I didn't leave home, praying for the phone to ring! Or was waiting somewhere for a man, no mobiles to chase or confirm arrangements, desperately hoping they'd turn up. It was torture questioning yourself:

Am I in the right place?

On the right day?

What's wrong with me? Why isn't he here?



All my life your poignant lyrics have validated my emotions. The yearnings, the heartbreak, the moment 'you bump into a stranger and you both apologise'. Measuring a life in lovers and styles of clothes. Your ability to connect with me was, and still is, uncanny. Everyone who's written eightieth birthday tributes to you says the same.

Listening to you is a rite of passage, making emotional angst a valid and interesting experience rather than common or garden misery. You wrote my early twenties, paving the way for contemporary artists such as Cat Burns, Taylor Swift and Olivia Rodrigo to share their experiences. You made me feel understood. I took moping to a new level with Joni to commiserate with me: in fact I still feel twenty-three when I listen to your music.

I have no idea what my legacy will be. Most ordinary mortals don't leave any impact beyond their family and friends. Therefore I will be happy to have merely passed on my love of you, Joni Mitchell, to my children.

I could listen to you my whole life - and still be on my feet.

Thank you.

All love,

Jane x

By Jane Ashworth
Design Bradley Sansom
Illustration Lulu Panatti-Reeve

WHAT'S ON

MARCH

**Manchester Open Exhibition
HOME
Until 28/04/24**

HOME's biennial exhibition is the biggest celebration of the city's creative talent. From students to established professionals, the venue will host a showcase of mixed media artwork until the end of April.

**Quays Charity Duck Race
Salford Watersports Centre
29/03/24**

What's more wholesome than racing hundreds of rubber duckies down Salford Quays? Doing it to raise money for children's charity MedEquip4Kids. The 9th annual duck race will include family-friendly entertainment, tombolas, and food stalls, alongside the main event.

**Manchester Film Festival
ODEON Great Northern
Until 24/03/24**

Manchester's BFI-accredited film festival returns to the Great Northern this Spring. This year's selection is an exciting mix of narratives and animations. Film buffs, you won't want to miss this.

APRIL

**Wuthering Heights -
A Kate Bush and Friends Disco
The Deaf Institute
06/04/24**

You'll certainly find a 'Moment Of Pleasure' at the Kate Bush disco. Dressing up is encouraged, and Kate-capes are provided. If you fancy a 'Bush-off' with your friends, head down to The Deaf Institute.

**Northern Vegan Festival
Sugden Sports Centre
20/04/24**

If you love Veganuary, or fancy trying some plant-based cuisine, the Northern Vegan Festival might be for you. For £5 you can sample and buy local vegan produce to your heart's content.

**Girls All In: Puppy Yoga
The Union
23/04/24**

Puppies AND yoga?? It doesn't get much more relaxing than mindfulness surrounded by furry friends.

MAY

**Take That - This Life On Tour
Co-op Live
07/05/24- 12/05/24**

Your mum loves them, and now 2000s nostalgia is back in, we can all agree the Take That opening shows for Co-op Live are going to be huge. For seven nights, the trio and Olly Murs take on their hometown in the city's most exciting new venue.

**John Lyons
the Whitworth
10/05/24 – 25/08/24**

Boasting over six decades of work, this exhibit showcases the very best of Trinidadian-born British artist John Lyons. Delving into his Trinidadian heritage through folklore and mythology, this is not to be missed.

**Manchester Flower Festival
Across the city centre
24/05/24 – 27/05/24**

Taking over the city with colour, the flower festival trail will take you winding through the shopping streets to find garden installations. We can't wait to see this on Instagram.

By **Jess Berry**
Design **Bradley Sansom**
Photography **Richard Davis**

**Stuck on what to do this year? aAh!'s
2024 rundown assembles the events in
Manchester you won't want to miss.**

JUNE

**Parklife Festival
Heaton Park
08/06/24 – 09/06/24**

When Parklife throws a party, the city stops. Packed with pop, grime, and good times, this might be the only time techno and DNB fans can dance in the same field. This year's highlights include Doja Cat, Kaytranada and Sugababes.

**Deptford Northern Soul Club
YES
08/06/24**

If you're just not into Parklife, you're not alone. The DNSC team return to YES for their monthly takeover. Expect stompers, floaters, and floor-shakers.

**Outbreak Festival
B.E.C. Arena
28/06/24 – 30/06/24**

Hardcore punk fans rejoice, Outbreak Fest returns this June for three days of heavy metal. As Europe's biggest indoor metal festival, expect face-melting live acts and some seriously sweaty mosh-pits.

JULY

**Sounds of the City
Castlefield Bowl
04/07/24 – 13/07/24**

This year's Sounds Of The City festival kicks off with The National, and six huge acts have been announced so far. Headline shows include Hacienda Classical, Tom Grennan, and Jungle.

**Stardew Valley,
Festival of the Seasons
Stoller Hall
14/07/24**

For a wholesome afternoon out, let the London Metropolitan Orchestra remind you of the simple things in life. In an intimate concert, the most loved songs from the Stardew Valley soundtrack will be performed live. A reminder to slow down this summer.

**Hairspray The Musical
Palace Theatre
16/07/24 – 27/07/24**

Good morning, Baltimore! Groove to a brand new sound with Tracey Turnblad and her journey to acceptance. For eleven days, *Hairspray* is taking the Mancs back to the '60s.

AUGUST

**Manchester Pride Festival
Across the city centre
23/08/24 – 26/08/24**

The annual 'Party as Protest' returns for another long weekend of culture, expression, and connection. A packed four days of parades, parties, and celebration is promised. If you haven't experienced pride in the city yet, don't walk; run.

**Manchester Psych Fest
Albert Hall / Projekts Skatepark
/ The Union / Canvas / Gorilla /
YES / The Deaf Institute
31/08/24**

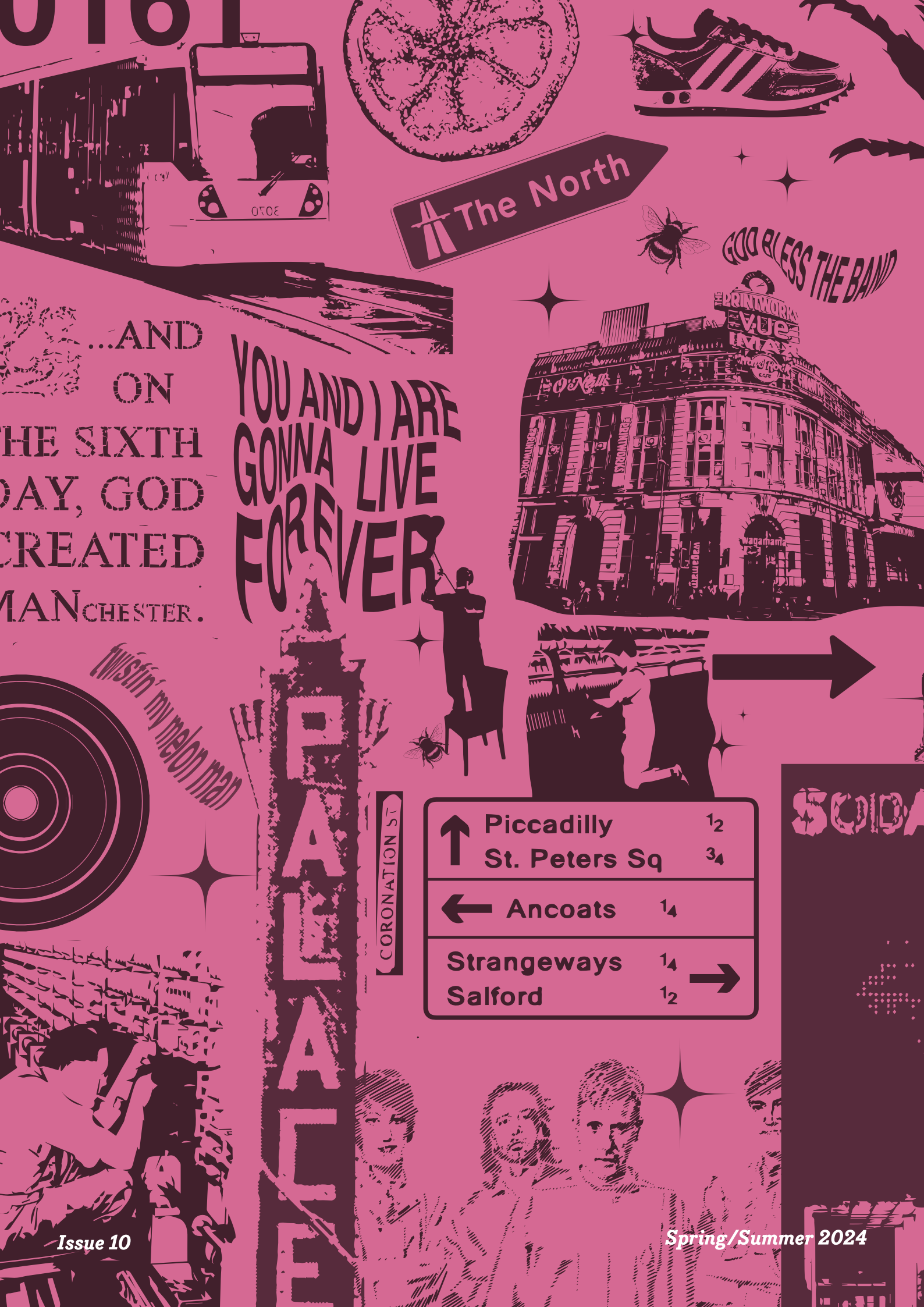
This multi-venue festival celebrates all things trippy. For lovers of psychedelic music and visuals, this is the perfect end-of-summer trip (pun intended).

**Live From Wythenshawe Park
Presents: Blossoms / Shed
Seven / Inhaler / The Ks
Wythenshawe Park
25/08/24**

For their biggest headline show to date, local legends Blossoms take over Wythenshawe Park. Bringing back the Spike Island vibes, the stacked lineup promises to be an unforgettable show.

SCAN FOR MORE





...AND
ON
THE SIXTH
DAY, GOD
CREATED
MANCHESTER.

YOU AND I ARE
GONNA LIVE
FOREVER

The North

GOD BLESS THE BAND



PALACE

CORONATION ST

↑	Piccadilly	12
	St. Peters Sq	34
←	Ancoats	14
	Strangeways	14
	Salford	12

