

Spring 2020

University of Kent

# theGradPost



A newsletter created by postgraduates for postgraduates

# Editorial

Greetings!

Welcome to the Spring 2020 edition of *The GradPost*!

As we are in the middle of the academic year; dissertations, exams and final deadlines are suddenly looming. Therefore, our team has generously put together a variety of articles to help the everyday Kent postgraduate beat the stress.

From sharing dissertation tips, to offering advice on how to deal with procrastination, there's something for everyone in *The GradPost*. Whether you're studying for a Master's or a PhD, on the Canterbury or Medway campus, we are here to inspire. We have even included a small crossword for you to fill out when revision becomes too much!

If you would like to share any ideas, or pitch an article that you would like to see in *The GradPost*, please send it via email to [gradpost-submissions@kent.ac.uk](mailto:gradpost-submissions@kent.ac.uk)

All the best,

**The Editor-In-Chief**

**Cameron Jull**

MA Multimedia Journalism

## KGSA update

### It's time to spring forward!

We've made it through the winter, so it's time to start getting out of our claustrophobic study spaces and take in some fresh air! Last term brought with it a full refurb of the Woolf Common Room, which is now open and buzzing with social postgrads. If you haven't checked out the new space, be sure to stop in to play some pool, crack out the board games, or park on the sofa and enjoy the flat screen TV. No matter what you use the space for, don't miss the hand-drawn mural on the back wall; it was created by a local artist Vic Lee Prints and was designed to represent Virginia Woolf's life.

This fresh space will be home to KGSA events going forward and we're so excited to make use of all that it has to offer. Our bi-weekly game nights are back; meet us every other Wednesday for free hot cocoa and board games that have been provided by the Graduate School's Postgraduate Community Experience Awards scheme. (We might even be introducing video game nights!) If you're looking for a quieter evening, the free lending library is now fully stocked; grab a book from the back shelves, enjoy it as long as you'd like and then return it for another postgrad borrow. You'll also find some smaller games and decks of cards back there, which you're free to use in the space at any time.

We've been up to quite a bit over the last few months. The most exciting event of last term was our annual Postgraduate Thanksgiving, which found a new home in the fancy Darwin Conference Suites.

Formerly a potluck that took place in the Woolf Common Room, this year we had to expand our offerings – and our fanciness factor – due to the sheer amount of postgrad engagement we've had. We hope everyone left with full bellies and hearts; we loved celebrating with you.

March will bring our first Wine and Whine night. This cathartic event will allow postgrads to hang out in the Woolf Common Room, grab a glass of wine – or grape juice – on us, and complain the night away. Let it out. We get it, we're students, too.

Lastly, keep an eye out for another pub quiz in May. We're already in touch with the Gulbenkian to plan a rematch from Welcome Week. Since we always give a prize for the best team name, it's worth your while to get a group together early and brainstorm.

As always, the Postgraduate Officers of the KGSA are here for you. Never hesitate to reach out, even if it's just for a bit of a venting sesh. We're in the trenches with you, and we could all do with a little extracurricular whining.

**Shelly Lorts**

President of Kent Postgraduate Officers (KGSA)  
PhD student, Medieval and Early Modern Studies  
Twitter: @unikentshelly



### Cover image

The newly refurbished Woolf Common Room taken by Shelly Lorts.



# Impact and the School of Arts

## Why engage in arts-based research?

With such a strong focus on employability with respect to student recruitment, it is easy to overlook the impact of arts-based research at both MA and PhD level, as art history, drama, film and media studies may seem relevant only to a limited spectrum of career choices. However, researchers point out the 'unique' and 'useful' nature of arts-based research as 'an important public service that may be otherwise unavailable.' (Barone and Eisner, 2012\*). This notion of the arts being a service, rather than an indulgence, is also one of the reasons for the cross-curricular and inter-departmental opportunities presented by arts-based research.

The following three examples illustrate how research in the School of Arts impacts on the local community, the University's research excellence, and the postgraduate community. The Department of Drama and Theatre has been engaged in 'Playing A/Part', an inter-departmental project that works creatively with autistic girls in partnership with local schools. Funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council, this unique project led by Professor Nicola Shaughnessy has enhanced the status of the University through the appreciation of its participants and by attention from the media. The department's work with schools now also includes funding through a Community Scholarship for comedy and improvisation classes led by Nathan Keates, PhD student in the Tizard Centre.

Another success is the art history department's forthcoming exhibition 'Hair, Textures of Belonging' which received significant funding from the Arts Council of England. In partnership with Elen Deprez from Studio 3 and Dr Sweta Rajan-Rankin from the School of Social Policy, Sociology and Social Research, the exhibition investigates the equivalences between hair identity and black identity for women of colour. Hair is investigated in terms of its ritualised patterns and how it articulates identity, including the context of the 'more than' human. This is currently a strong area of research for the Department of History of Art, as featured in an international conference at the University and as the subject of the recent Studio 3 exhibition 'AI and I' curated by Elen and Alice Helliwell.

The School of Arts has also encouraged applications for the Graduate School Postgraduate Experience Awards, with Alžb ta Kovandova from Film Studies winning a grant for 'Belonging(s) at the University', a forthcoming project which will address inclusion and community building among research students.

So, why study arts-based research? Arguably, research at the School of Arts has a significant bearing on the University's Research Excellence Framework as well as building inter-departmental and community relationships. In addition to



enhancing creativity and wellbeing, this rationality is something unique to arts-based research that should perhaps be made more of in terms of transferable skills in an education sector that is increasingly focusing on employability. This should not be at the expense of what the arts have to offer.

**Yvonne Cullen**  
PhD Drama

\*Barone and Eisner. 2012. *Arts Based Research*, SAGE Publications, Inc, Thousand Oaks, CA

## Tizard Centre PhD student on BBC Radio 1 #LifeHacks Podcast

### Autistic culture and community

On 17 December 2019, I was invited to New Broadcasting House to record a BBC Radio 1 #LifeHacks podcast with Katie Thistleton and Dr Radha. I had previously recorded a podcast and shared my MA research on five local radio stations as part of BBC Faith in the World week in July 2019, and a producer at Radio 1 had found this in his research for new content for the #LifeHacks podcast. While there, we recorded a short podcast on autistic culture and community. If you haven't guessed already, I am an autistic scholar-activist and early career academic; my research looks at autistic people and religious/humanist groups.

I wanted to talk about autistic culture and community, and my own journey to acceptance and self-love, as there is a dominant negative narrative surrounding autism. Autistic people generally have to fight to be heard not from a pathological and deficit approach. This podcast was to show the importance of the 'autistic voice' in challenging such ideas and moving to a social model of disability (where the individual is disabled by barriers in the environment).



There is a growing number of people who are identifying as autistic from a wide range of backgrounds, of different ages and lived experiences. Although I have an MA in Autism Studies from the Tizard Centre (2018), I have learnt the majority of what I know about autism and autistic people from other autistic people and the wider autistic community.

Being autistic makes your life experience qualitatively different. Being autistic in a majority non-autistic world can lead to communication breakdown and frequent misunderstandings, which can be exemplified by the double empathy problem. However, as the double empathy problem shows, this is not the case. This is a theory of autism, coined by Dr Damian Milton (lecturer in Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities at the Tizard Centre), whereby both autistic and non-autistic people can struggle to understand each other and their life experiences. This basically sums up a lot of my life, but especially before I started to get to grips with who I am as an autistic person. I only heard the narrative of me being wrong, me being broken, me misunderstanding – and me failing each time.

You can listen to the podcast here;  
[www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07zqdk4](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p07zqdk4)

**Krysia Waldock**  
PhD Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

# Kent Union update

## An update from your Vice President



### Laura Carlin

#### **Vice President Postgraduate Experience**

**Email:** [union-postgrad@kent.ac.uk](mailto:union-postgrad@kent.ac.uk)

**Facebook:** [@KUVPPostgraduateExperience](https://www.facebook.com/KUVPPostgraduateExperience)

It's strange to think that I am so close to finishing my time in this role, yet August feels so far away. This is the perfect time to reflect on everything we have achieved so far for postgrad representation, while identifying what else can be achieved in the time left.

I always struggle to recognise my own achievements as I feel like I have to really feel the impact of something before it can be called a success. With this in mind, the PG Buddy Scheme, and in particular the weekly PG Tea Break event, are what I am most proud of.

These events allow students to come together and talk about whatever they want in a dedicated space. This may not be for everybody, but I can tell that those who make use of the PG Buddy Scheme and the Tea Break get a great deal out of it, making a positive difference to their experience at Kent.

Admittedly, this role has been hard. Being the first person in this position, and trying to come to terms with so many new responsibilities, has made me feel as though strategic change has been less possible... until now. Reflecting on what I wanted to achieve over the remaining six months led to the 'Time to Talk' campaign. This had contributions from a wide variety of different student groups and postgrads across different departments, all willing to make it a whole campaign rather than just a one-time event.

We will be running a stigma series which will give students a safe space to come and talk about mental health at least once a month, for the remainder of my time in this role. I hope this will help further shape my role and the other full-time officer roles in the future, allowing for direct contact with the issues that students are facing on a daily basis, and determining what we should be focusing on. I believe that it is easy to get carried away and forget to prioritise those who are currently struggling through their time at university.

I hope that the next team of Kent Union officers can build on everything that my coordinator Nicola and I have achieved this year, continuing our motivation and hard work.



## An update from your other full-time officers



### Sasha Langevelt

#### Students' Union President

**Email:** union-president@kent.ac.uk

**Facebook:** @kupresident

As your Students' Union President, I am dedicated to changing the way we engage with environmental sustainability. I have campaigned for the reduction of single waste plastic on campus by lobbying the University to introduce reusable bottles for every bedroom on campus. We are now lobbying the University to embed sustainability into the curriculum with the help of passionate academics, the Estates' Environmental Sustainability Team and the Sustainability Network Chair. Kent Union is also supporting student groups' environmental initiatives such as Youth Strike for Climate. It's amazing to see how many students are behind this cause.



### Victoria Saward-Read

#### Vice President Academic Experience

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**Facebook:** @KUVPAcademicExperience

In the last month, a space has been designated for students who are part-time, mature, commuting, or have caring responsibilities on the Canterbury campus with the view to open as soon as possible. Enhancement Weeks have been and gone and I am currently seeking feedback from students to get their views on how these weeks went, and how they impacted studies. If you had an Enhancement Week please email me to let me know your thoughts! We continue to work with the University to ensure that any disruption to teaching during industrial action is mitigated, while supporting our researchers who choose to strike.



### Emily Window

#### Vice President Student Engagement

**Email:** union-engagement@kent.ac.uk

**Facebook:** @KUVPSStudentEngagement

This year, as VP Student Engagement I've been busy with the new things in my remit; sports clubs and student groups, alumni engagement, employability planning, and of course, fundraising! Here are some highlights:

- introduced contactless fundraising for student groups
- successfully lobbied for a new gym membership structure, with free memberships for first years, returning students, and postgrads on campus
- successfully secured £45k for the Give It a Go programme, launching next year.

I'd love to hear from you about how I can engage with postgrads in the work I'm doing – particularly in regard to sports memberships and the Give it a Go programme, and how we can tailor more sessions towards PGTs and PGRs!



### Omolade Adedapo

#### Vice President Welfare and Community

**Email:** union-welfare@kent.ac.uk

**Facebook:** @KUVPWelfare

I am currently working on improving support for student sex workers following reports of the increasing number of students working in the sex industry while at university. This term, as part of the project, we have been working with The Student Sex Work Project who will be holding a FREE awareness workshop on 1 April, and hosting a documentary screening with a Q&A session in the evening for anyone who would like to attend.

In addition to this, I am developing a good practice guideline for staff to understand sex work and feel confident in supporting students. Beyond this project, I am looking at how we can promote effective money management among the student population and improve student housing.

# Wise words from postgraduates at Kent

## Returning after the Christmas break

Returning to university after the Christmas break can leave you filled with dread and anxiety. It's normal to feel a bit overwhelmed, but there are a few things we can do to ease the transition. Cleaning your home before you leave for the Christmas break is a good idea, because when you get back you will have a clean and tidy space to start getting your work done. Also, planning your schedule is a really important step to adapt to any timetable changes. Getting familiar with how your schedule and deadlines will look is vital to organising your workload; ideally this should be done before or during the break. Finally, starting your assignments early is very important. It's understandable that when you go back home for the holidays, all you want to do is relax and spend some time with family. However, time flies when you are having fun and before you know it, it's January, and you will have a few assignments to submit! Doing work slowly during the break will avoid unnecessary tension and stress, especially when you are close to the deadline. By implementing small changes into our daily routines we can make sure we get the most out of the Christmas break and we will even be able to enjoy the first weeks of term in the company of friends before lectures start.

**Sofia Mondragon Ruiz**  
MSc Marketing

## Tips for writing a dissertation

As someone that has survived an MA dissertation (and has a copy in the Templeman Library to prove it!), here are a few of my top tips for organising your work. Not that I followed any of this advice myself – please learn from my mistakes!

- Make sure you type up notes from books: themes, important quotes, all with page references. I have one word document per book/article, with a complete bibliography reference at the beginning. That way, when you want to include something, you can copy and paste the text into your assignment, put the whole reference straight into the bibliography, and know exactly where it came from. I have pages and pages of handwritten notes that are all well and good, but you can't search a document for keywords, and there's no way of backing them up to the cloud (short of scanning everything in, which I have done, but that feels like such a waste of time now).
- Get to know your citation scheme before you start writing. This way, you won't waste hours later converting from Harvard to MHRA or MLA. Your department will have a style guide that they want you to follow – don't create yourself more work for later by ignoring it!
- Citation! Make sure you cite everything as you go along, as the worst thing is finding a quotation at the last minute that just says 'page 34' with no idea which author or text it comes from.

- Proofread EVERYTHING. Even your bibliography. There is nothing worse than finding a typo or grammar error after printing and binding your dissertation.

**Megan Batterbee**  
PhD English

My tip for an MA dissertation is to make sure you are organised and break everything you do into little chunks and exact tasks. 'To do' lists are my recommended way of breaking things down. Also, if your tasks are written down, you are less likely to forget to do them!

**Krysia Waldock**  
PhD Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities

The main tip that I have for writing an MSc dissertation is to contact your supervisor straight away if you have any issues. I know that supervisors may seem scary but their sole job is to help. No one is a perfect researcher at this stage so no question is a silly one. Be open and honest and you'll be absolutely fine!

**Rebecca Dole**  
PhD Psychology

## Get prepped for the year ahead

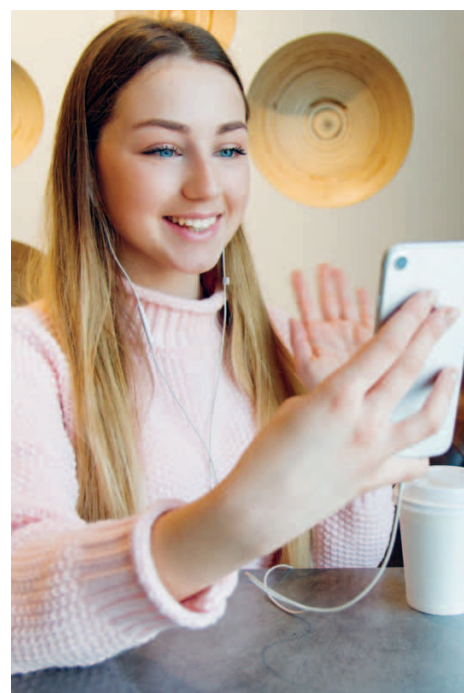
I hope you are all well and have settled into the second term. As someone who is on their third degree programme (PhD), I can confidently say that every single year, I found the second term different to the first. You may have noticed that your workload has increased slightly (or massively). You may be socialising less, or feel more homesick this term. I would like to take this opportunity to say, you are not alone! Even though they may not explicitly say it, I bet that some, if not most of your peers feel the same way. Here are some of the tips I have learned along the way to get you through to summer.

- 1 If you have noticed an increase in your workload, and are feeling overwhelmed, go and speak to your academic adviser or one of the many wellbeing services across campus. It is completely normal to feel this way, but it is better to tackle it as soon as possible to get any help put in place quickly. If this option does not appeal to you, then go back to the basics, make a list and a timetable. Setting times and goals for your assignments throughout the week will help you to stay on top of your work and enable you to fit in all your other activities.

- 2 If you are feeling isolated due to a decrease in your socialisation, try something new! There are many clubs and societies that are always looking for new members. If a society or formal club doesn't seem like your sort of thing, then maybe try out one of the classes provided at Kent Sport. They are a great (and healthy) way to socialise. Kent Sport also have great membership deals.
- 3 Lastly, it is completely fine to feel homesick. The cold winter nights at university can often leave people dreaming of home. If you feel this way then Skype your family or friends, this will help to make them feel closer to you. If this is not an option for you, then try to schedule a meet up with friends. There is nothing that a good chat with a friend over a coffee can't fix.

I hope this helps, but an important note to stress is that if you are feeling especially low, then please seek help. There is always someone who wants to listen!

**Rebecca Dole**  
PhD Psychology



## Ensuring successful written work

When writing any lengthy piece of work, it's worth remembering that you aren't expected to know everything about writing it at the start. It's a learning process, as much about the information you convey as how you convey it. To this end it's useful to know that you are not alone in writing and there are many places at Kent to access help to ensure success.

### UFLT

Tucked away by Santander, this is the Unit for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. Access to 1-2-1 support sessions and more – check their webpage! UFLT is student and lecturer focused.

### SLAS

With workshops, 1-2-1s, as well as online support, head to Student Learning Advisory Service (SLAS) for a variety of 100% student focused resources.

### Tutors

Your tutor's name will be at the front of your student handbook and you might forget it by the time you need it. Head to the contacts section for the part of your course you need help with and send an email or drop into their office.

### Online

The Kent website and Moodle have a variety of resources. If you're not sure what you're looking for, many password protected resources can be found with a Google search and then log in!

### Library

We often forget this but for PG students, the subject specific librarians are a wonderful resource – use them well!

**Jane Davidson**  
PhD Humanities

## Gandalf's Column

### Dear Gandalf,

I've never written anything as long as my Master's dissertation is required to be. I'm getting really anxious about the whole process. Do you have any tips or tricks to help ease my mind and make the process go smoothly?

### From Nervous Dissertation Novice

### Dear Nervous Dissertation Novice,

There's no doubt that this is a large task to undertake, but after years of comforting many students who felt just the same as you, I think I have devised some advice to give to postgrad students.

The main thing to focus on during your planning is time management. Time management is essential when you have multiple things to do. For myself, trying to balance feeding, cuddling, napping and running my social media can be quite the challenge without a schedule in place. You want to break down the project into smaller parts and identify how much time you need to spend on each stage. It's also really helpful to set yourself a number of smaller deadlines or goals to meet. Crossing these off can give you a good idea of just how much progress you're making (and how much time you have to come and give me your affection). Using something like a Gantt chart might help you with this. I would draw one to show you what it looks like, but my paws limit my otherwise excellent drawing abilities, so have a look online instead. Work backwards from your deadline and see what tasks you can fill in. It might change throughout the year, so be prepared to be flexible. Make sure that you don't leave everything until the last minute – this will be very stressful. I once had to try to fit in three hours of naps into a single hour, and I can assure you my naps were not optimal that day.

Make sure that you set up regular meetings with your supervisor to get guidance from them on what you need to do. Meeting with them once a month should be a minimum expectation, but feel free to ask them to meet more often than that if you are struggling. UPP have to meet with me almost every week to make sure Woolf is up to my high standards, so I know the importance of checking in regularly. Your supervisor can help you plan out the main structure of your dissertation and can set up a contract with you with some smaller deadlines in to help fill out your Gantt chart, but have a look on what you humans call 'the internet' – I've overheard there's some useful stuff on the Kent website to get you started.

Don't just plan your project, but try to plan your days too. You'll have other commitments outside of your dissertation, so make sure you are scheduling in time to focus on the project. I find that I can get an enormous amount of napping in when I schedule my day around my feeding times – my productivity has never been better. Make sure to schedule in at least 15 minutes a day of cuddles with your favourite cat on campus; giving yourself time to do the things you love is very important.

When it comes to writing your project, make sure that you are set up comfortably with limited distractions around you. I personally find I function best sitting in the sunspot coming through reception to keep me nice and warm, but I've heard students tend to prefer the library or Senate building. Make sure to give yourself plenty of treats too; there's nothing worse than trying to work on an empty stomach. Fortunately for me, my food bowl refills itself overnight, maybe you have the same luxury in your kitchen cupboards. Make sure you've got a mix of foods to keep you at your best; I once only ate Dreamies for an entire day, and ended up napping through my meeting with the college master, so I can tell you first hand just how important it is to eat the right foods.

Make sure to schedule in breaks too; it can be hard to maintain your focus for long periods of time. Some people like to give themselves a short break for every 30 minutes of work that they do, but I personally prefer to give myself a three-hour break every ten minutes to ensure I have ample snoozing time, so find what works best for you. During your breaks, do something you enjoy. Take a walk, listen to music, chat with friends, or even better, come and chat to me. I'll be sure to give you some more great advice whenever you see me, and bless you with productivity with every stroke you give me.

If you're still unsure of where to start, I've heard a number of students mention the Student Learning Advisory Service. I frequently listen into your conversations, and one student was telling their friend that they got a 1-2-1 meeting with someone who helped them with timetabling and setting out a plan for their dissertation. Maybe they can help you too.

I hope that this leaves you feeling a little more prepared to take on this challenge. I will be here any time you feel stressed to give cuddles too, don't forget.

### Gandalf the Black and White

House of Woolf, the Second of His Name, Catman, Bestower of Academic Blessings, The Night, Postgraduate King, Fabulous Feline of Blean, The Great Protector, Taker of Naps, and Pigeon-Control Commander

*Photo taken by Zoe Horsham, MSc Social and Applied Psychology*





# Procrastination

## The last enemy of postgraduate study

*"Knock, knock", "Who's there?", "Procrastination!", "Procrastination, who?" "Procras... eh, I'll finish it later."*

A few years ago, while skipping off campus on a sunny Friday afternoon, I asked a PhD friend of mine if she was interested in going for a few drinks that evening. She refused politely, adamantly exclaiming that she was going home *right away* and not leaving the house that weekend until 3,000 words of her thesis had been completed. I wished her well and carried on with my (hazy and irresponsible) weekend. The following Monday morning when she wandered in with hunched shoulders and bowed head, I asked her how her writing had gone:

*"My writing? Oh, the 3000 words? Ah... well, no, to be fair, I didn't hit 3000 words. I didn't even start it... but I finally got around to bleaching my skirting boards, and they've never looked better!"*

After a few chuckles at her expense, the group agreed that it was a struggle we could all relate to: procrastination. We all know how staring at that blinking cursor on a blank word document can quickly veer into; *"Ah, sure. I'll make a cup of tea first....Hmmm, I never did sort that laundry....OMG! Harry Potter marathon!!"* And our poor assignments never see the light of day.

But why do we procrastinate so much? And why is it only with the things we don't really want to do? I certainly don't lie awake at night wondering, *"Why didn't I start that Netflix series today?!! I'm never going to get it finished now."* Even worse, we become so negative in response to our own behaviour. You label yourself as lazy, disorganised, unproductive, and disinterested; anxiously crying with exhaustion and thinking *"I promise, I'll start much earlier next time!"* Strangely, instead of being lazy you seem to be most productive when you're procrastinating. Just not productive with the 'right stuff' it seems.

To best understand why we procrastinate, think of yourself as being two people who are at odds with each other: 'present self' and 'future self'. When you make goals for yourself, which sadly includes writing assignments, it is your 'Future self' that is taking over but only your 'Present self' can take action on these goals. And that self is much more interested in the instant gratification of YouTube 'cat plays piano' and ignores all long-term pay-offs.

So, are we all doomed to sleep deprivation and excessive coffee consumption? Staring at a looming deadline in blind panic, like a metaphorical deer in the headlights? Not necessarily. Like all habits, procrastination can be managed with time and a little commitment. And so, here are a few things that have helped me squash the procrastination monkey on my back. Hypothetically speaking.



First, get rid of temptation. Spending your evenings watching videos on how to learn the ukulele would be extremely productive if you didn't have a deadline approaching fast. Or if you owned a ukulele. Try and designate a 'workspace', where only your university work is carried out. No texting, no social media, no eating. Nothing but work! As poor postgraduate students often sleep, study, eat, socialise and bathe in the same 15 square feet, we often think "that's easier said than done!" Even if you just designate a desk in your room, it's a start. If you want to take a break and scroll through social media, then walk away from your workspace. And, eh...you can always eat on the floor.

Second, make a mental contract with yourself. *"If I'm really good and do 30 minutes now, I can take a break and have that bar of chocolate I have saved up (or that glass of wine I've been needing since 9am lecture.)"* We didn't evolve to sit hunched over a computer for hours on end, with aching back and sweat on our brow. We are so much more productive when we aim for short bursts of effort with regular breaks in between. More importantly, it's terrible for your mental and physical health. Try and remember why you were decided to continue as postgraduates, when your peers have joined the 'real world'. Among the deadlines and stress, we sometimes forget to enjoy our learning.

Third, your first draft should never be your final draft. Start writing as if you're writing to a friend that doesn't judge you for your poor grammar, terrible referencing and page long rolling sentences. Worry about these things at the end. On that note, productivity doesn't always have to happen in front of the computer. Go for a walk and talk to yourself out loud, without shame or compunction, about your research. Sit with a like-minded friend and discuss ideas. Ignore any teachers in your past that told you doodling was 'unproductive' and draw your thoughts until the pictures become words. Start off small and before you know it, you'll be firing out words with the poeticism of a modern Oscar Wilde.

Finally, and most importantly, be kind to yourself. We forget the pressure postgraduate students put themselves under with seminars, deadlines, work commitments, family life and trying to balance our own sanity. If you don't succeed in getting some work done today, give yourself a break and try again tomorrow.

Now stop procrastinating by reading this article and get writing!

**Clare Lafferty**  
MSc Biological Anthropology



# Creative piece

## The Call of the Void

*“... all she could see was her own pale, scared face staring back at her. She had not seen a man through the window, walking towards her through the snow. She had seen his reflection.”*

The writer Stanley Black took a hearty swig of port and drained the glass. Another chapter finished. He rubbed his eyes. It was warm in the study and he felt very tired. He needed coffee.

In the kitchen, Stanley turned on the radio to block out the half-formed thoughts swimming around his head. The radio was playing a documentary about barbed wire called *The Devil's Rope*.

'A good name for a book', Stanley thought. It was a shame he hadn't thought of it. He might use it anyway.

Coffee was soon bubbling, brewing and dripping down into the pot. Droplets of water welled on the window. Stanley moved to the sliding doors and stepped outside to wake himself up. It was freezing, and he shivered and looked at the long shadows on the lawn. Returning to a full pot, Stanley poured a cup and leaned against the counter to sip the brew.

He looked at his watch and realised that almost an hour had passed. He groaned and switched off the radio. In the near silence, he heard a noise like rushing water. He looked around. No taps were on in the kitchen.

He turned off the coffee machine, stifling its gentle hiss, and went upstairs. An unfamiliar green light was spreading across the walls. It drew him to the end of the landing where the bathroom door stood ajar, green light spilling forth and pooling around the entrance.

Stanley reached out and took hold of the door handle. It was warm to the touch. He became very aware of the sound of his own breathing. He inhaled and exhaled in deep, deliberate breaths. Summoning his resolve, he threw open the bathroom door. The mysterious green glow filled the room. What awaited him sent a shudder into the pit of his stomach.

Slimy, shapeless and shuddering, an alien nightmare protruded invasively from the toilet bowl, its mottled skin a sickly green-grey. A mass of tentacles wrapped themselves around the bowl and the seat rattled against its hinges. Spinning eyes searched the bathroom and fixed with sudden purpose upon Stanley.

The creature's body convulsed. Its tentacles writhed and pulsated, and Stanley realised he had seen it before; in his own mind. It was one of the creatures from his novel *Green Goo*; the sci-fi chiller that *The Times* had rightly described as 'chilling'.

The creature retched as Stanley slammed the door. He heard the splatter of otherworldly phlegm, and the sizzle as it began to eat through the soft wood. An acrid smell reached his nostrils. How had something from his mind manifested itself in the waking world? The coffee seemed a long time ago.

He raced downstairs and into the kitchen where a chill wind whipped through the house, stripping it of warmth. The sliding doors had been opened. He pulled them shut, silencing the howling wind.

Sensing a presence behind him, Stanley turned around to see another familiar face. Standing silently over seven feet tall was a man with gnarled hands and a thick beard covering most of his face. It was Eckerhardt, the relentless, insatiable killer from *The Woodsman* and its sequel *Snowbound*.

Eckerhardt did not speak. His tongue had been gnawed out by rats as he lay bleeding and left for dead in the fetid landfill during the closing chapters of *The Woodsman*. He held a huge knife in his hand, taken from the block on the counter. A huge axe leaned against the cabinets; the rusty blade still wet with the blood of its last victim.

Stanley wondered if an idea from his books could remove these things from his mind. His greatest regret now was that he had never much gone in for happy endings.

A marble counter stood between the two men. Stanley darted left and then right, out of the way of the knife. The lumbering Eckerhardt lunged and sliced thin air. He threw the knife at Stanley, missing by inches. The blade thudded into a cupboard.

As Stanley made for the kitchen door, Eckerhardt picked up his axe and swung it around his head in a huge arc. Stanley made it out of the kitchen door and into the hallway before the axe cleaved into the door frame with a dull thud.

Stanley stumbled down the dark corridor, his pupils dilating as he felt blindly for the front door. He heard Eckerhardt grunting as he worked to extract his axe from the door frame.

With his eyes improving, Stanley could make out the familiar walls and window frames, but at the end of the corridor, one surface refused to resolve itself into the door that he knew was there. The darkness stretched on to infinity.

It was only when he was inches from the rippling, enigmatic surface that he realised he was staring into absolute nothingness. It was the void from his novel *The Void Caster*, a portal into the absence between time and space, beyond the sea of stars and the shambling celestial shapes of the star-dwellers.

He shook his head to rid his mind of the silent scream of space and turned around, back to some semblance of normality, to where the shape of Eckerhardt blocked the last vestiges of light gleaming from the kitchen. He knew what fate awaited him back there. He turned back to the void. Here, there was a chance. The void was before him, right in front of his eyes, absorbing everything. In *The Void Caster*, the crew of the starship *Astral Traveller* had found the first void orbiting one of Saturn's moons. Those brave souls a billion miles from home hadn't known what they were about to encounter when they stepped into the empty space, but Stanley knew. He had always known what was beyond.

Stanley Black closed his eyes and stepped into the void.

**Caleb Pike**  
MSc Computer Science

## Creative Writing Society annual trip

The first term of my Master's at Kent was not without its challenges and it ended with a whirlwind of assignments. It was daunting to cover so much material in such a short space of time but I surprised myself by managing to achieve good grades in my coursework so far.

I was able to have a well-earned rest over the holidays, enjoying an excellent Christmas with my extended family. I also managed to catch a little winter sun in Malta before the start of term, courtesy of the Creative Writing Society (CWS), which organises an annual trip for members. I certainly would not have been able to do this without the society!

Societies are for postgrads too, and the CWS has been the counterweight to the more technical nature of my course.

The second term so far has felt like the calm before the storm, as I embark on several completely new modules while balancing my studies and social life. More assessments and exams are on the horizon, and now that some of these have been set, I'll have my work cut out for the rest of the term!

**Caleb Pike**  
MSc Computer Science

# Eatery evaluation

## The 'go or no go' of campus food and drink

With so many places to eat and drink on the Canterbury campus, it's inevitable that some are better than others. By this point in the year, it's likely that you've found your go-to places, but are you missing out? Here is our handy guide to the best that campus has to offer, including insider tips you may not have discovered. Please make sure to check with each establishment if you have any specific dietary requirements!

### Best café (coffees, teas, non-alcoholic drinks)

Few things are as important to successful postgraduate study, than a constant stream of coffee. There are several spots where you can grab a cup of the stuff, but our top recommendation is The Gulbenkian Café, which we feel has a decent and consistent espresso selection. They also have a secret special offer of £1 filter coffee for students. Just ask for a filter coffee and have your student card ready. The 'Gulb' is also famous for their fabulous hot chocolate and their fine selection of fruit and herbal teas. Try the peach! These are best paired with one of their delicious muffins (blueberry or chocolate) while soaking up some of that theatrical culture.

### Best atmosphere

With its comfy leather sofas, rustic exposed brickwork and an extensive beer garden for the summer months, K-Bar is undoubtedly the most atmospheric of the campus watering holes. Its food selection is mostly limited to light bar snacks like pizzas and toasties. At Park Wood, Woody's has been recently refurbished and its regenerated form remains the most pub-like of the campus bars and the perfect place for a casual drink with friends.

### Best drinks (alcoholic)

If you're a connoisseur of fine ales, wines and spirits, you'll probably find little to excite your palette unless your student loan has just come in. Gentrification has brought the price of a pint in Canterbury to Londonian highs and draught ales on campus are few and far between. Even generic fare such as Guinness or Doom Bar will set you back £4 or more. Woody's serves Brewdog's more adventurous 'Indie' Pale Ale for £3.80 and Punk IPA for £5. The cheapest pints at time of writing are Carling (£2.80) or Budweiser (£3.30) in K-Bar, Origins and Mungo's. A spirit and mixer is usually around the £2.50 mark (gin and tonic is always a good choice). These bars all serve pitchers of beer and cocktails; Origins has an especially decent cocktail menu. We recommend the Dirty Dollar (vodka, Malibu, blue curacao and pineapple juice).

### Best breakfast

We're going back to the Gulbenkian Café for their cooked breakfast, which is served until 10.30am on weekdays. You can build your own meal from a selection of classic elements, including perfectly poached eggs, crispy bacon and hearty sausages, or else opt for the more contemporary smashed avocado and chilli on toast. The Gulbenkian membership card can also be used in the café for a discount (this also applies to our coffee recommendations above).

### Best burgers

With many campus eateries falling on the fast food side of the culinary spectrum, the common or garden burger can be found in many forms across the University. Once again proving it's worth the walk, Woody's is widely considered to serve up some of the best and most succulent burgers on campus. Origins is set up as an American-style bar and grill, and this includes a whole Looney Tunes-themed burger menu catering to every palate with chicken and vegetarian/vegan options. These are served with Origins' famous curly fries, which have a long and storied history as a campus favourite. Mungo's has an extensive and somewhat cheaper selection of burgers, which are slightly on the greasier side.

### Best deals

The classic American bar food selection at Origins consists of nachos, mac 'n' cheese, po'boys and burgers, which can be paired with a side (think American bar finger food) and drink for £10 (£9 with your KentOne card). Mungo's offers a cheaper beer and burger deal for £5, but only on Tuesdays. It's also worth mentioning fast food joint Hut 8 here, if only for its 2-4-1 Friday pizza deal. However, being hidden away in Turing, it's such a long way from Woolf College and other postgrad haunts that over-ambitious grease seekers making the journey might find themselves giving up and nipping into the Co-Op instead.

### Best value

Beyond the deals mentioned above, where on campus offers the most in terms of straight up value? Well, some of the sides and smaller plates in Origins are certainly good value for money, such as the generous portions of mac 'n' cheese. Dolce Vita also offers a good meal for a good price from a more adventurous selection of international dishes. But the winner of this category goes to Rutherford Dining Hall. It's not haute cuisine, but if you want a good feed, purchasing one of their main meals opens up a whole canteen of self-serve sides including vegetables, potatoes in a variety of forms and the all-important salad bar.



### Best street food

There are a few options to choose from here, but special mention goes to A Taste of Thailand, serving up delicious and affordable Pad Thai and Thai Curry with a variety of ingredients and toppings. Check it out next time you see it on The Plaza

### Other tips and tricks

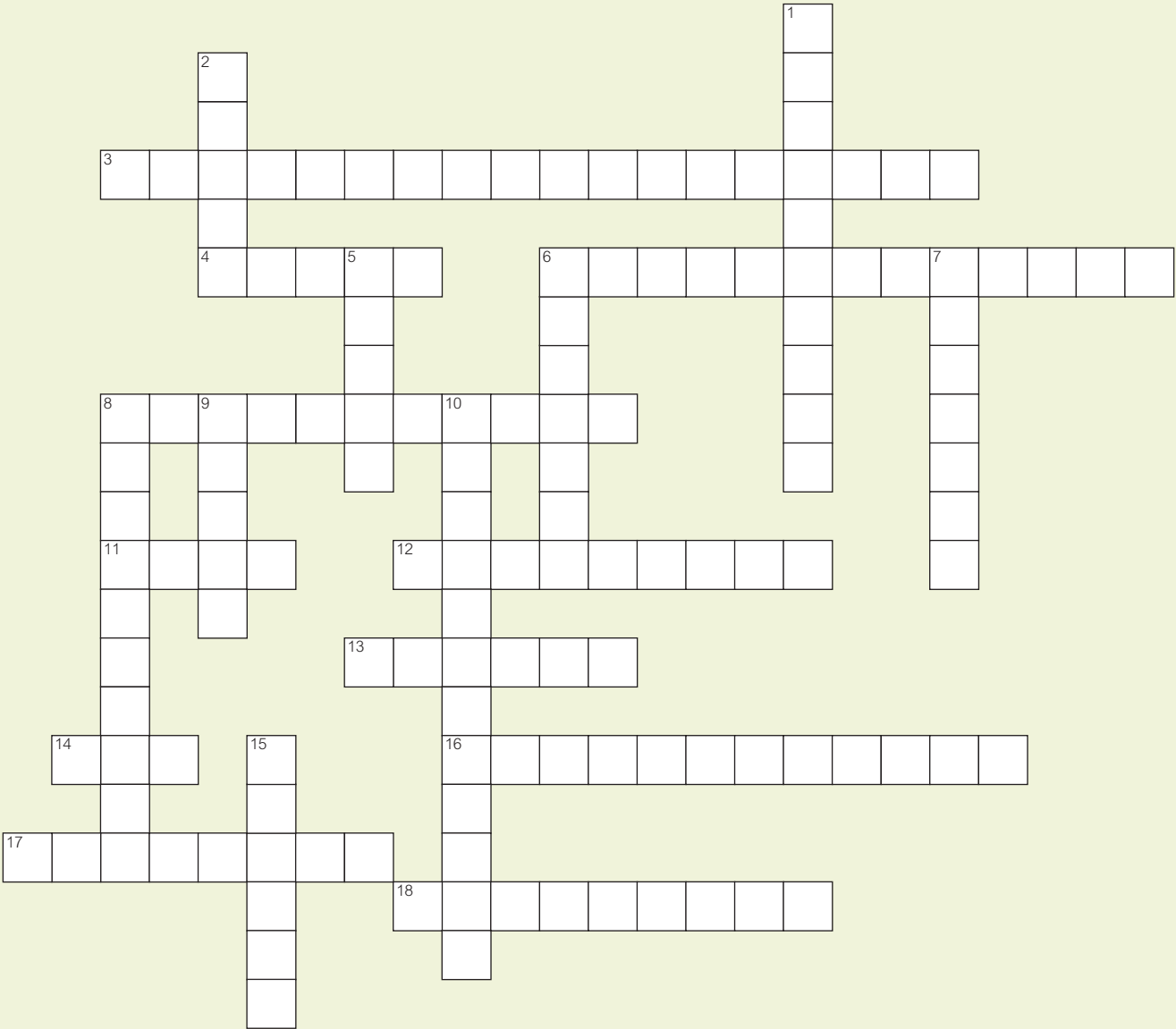
Remember, if you're not already using your KentOne student card to pay for food and drink purchased in establishments operated by Kent Hospitality, then you're missing out on a tasty 10% discount. Similarly, do take advantage of the loyalty card stamp schemes offered by coffee favourites like the Gulbenkian Café, Library Café, or Caffè Nero.

Chances are that you've popped into the Co-Op on campus more than once. If you're a regular customer, it's almost 'essential' that you splash out for the NUS Totum card which nets you another 10% off. The cheapest meal on campus is likely the perennial classic, the Co-Op meal deal. Savings can be maximised here by choosing items such as rice or pasta bowls (main), sausage rolls or pasties (snack) and smoothies which are more expensive individually. Otherwise, the simple triple sandwich is always a pragmatic decision. It's cheap, dependable and there's three!

**Caleb Pike**  
MSc Computer Science



# Kent and Canterbury Crossword



## Across

- 3 This Elizabethan playwright was born and baptised in Canterbury. (11, 7)
- 4 A room for students to work and closely examine their academic notes. (5)
- 6 The nickname for the old Canterbury and Whitstable railway line, now a popular footpath and cycle route. (4, 3, 6)
- 8 Five historic coastal towns in Kent and Sussex formed a league for trade and defence. (6, 5)
- 11 A piece written in creative verse, often recited with coffee. (4)
- 12 This director's latest film won seven BAFTAs at the 2020 awards. (3, 6)
- 13 This river splits Kent in two. (6)
- 14 The spirit of juniper runs clear. (3)
- 16 This pop star won five awards at the 2020 Grammys. (6, 6)
- 17 Shared by author Chaucer and Vice-Chancellor Templeman. (8)
- 18 Formerly Kent's other cathedral city. (9)

## Down

- 1 The only Kent-based club in the English Football League. (10)
- 2 The University of Kent has a campus here, but not in Texas. (5)
- 5 This Kent town boasts the largest medieval castle in England. (5)
- 6 This Royal Dockyard was at the forefront of shipbuilding for over four hundred years. (7)
- 7 The motto of the undefeated county of Kent. (7)
- 8 Espresso coffee with steamed, frothy milk. (10)
- 9 A strikingly new, full length work of fiction. (5)
- 10 This *Lord of the Rings* actor is originally from Canterbury. (7, 5)
- 15 The jump from winter to summer. (6)

Caleb Pike  
MSc Computer Science

# Postgraduate events

## Kent Union

### PG Tea Break

**Student Media Centre, every Wednesday, 2-3pm**

Take a well-deserved break from your Wednesday afternoons to catch up with fellow postgrads over a free cup of tea or coffee and delicious selection of biscuits! Open to all postgrad students.

## Gulbenkian

**Thursday 26 March 2020, 19.30**

### Dance EDGE 2020

EDGE Dance Company's 2020 tour presented by London Contemporary Dance School

**Saturday 28 March 2020, 13.00**

### FiBFEST 2020

Live folk music festival

**Saturday 28 March 2020, 14.00 and 19.00**

### Film Banff Mountain Film Festival

**Monday 30 March 2020, 20.00**

### Nitin Sawhney: Music and Me

Global Sounds series

## Curzon

**Sunday 29 March 2020, 15.00**

### Romeo and Juliet

Ballet

**Wednesday 1 April 2020, 19.15**

### Swan Lake

Ballet

## Marlowe

**Thursday 26 March 2020 – Saturday 28 March 2020, 20.00 (Saturday matinee, 15.00)**

### Dead Good

"Bob and Bernard have only two things in common: they're both dying... and they're not going down without a fight."

Theatre

**Tuesday 31 March 2020 – Saturday 4 April 2020, 19.30 (Thursday & Saturday matinees, 14.30)**

### A Monster Calls

"Patrick Ness' piercing novel, *A Monster Calls*, is brought vividly to life in the Olivier award-winning production by visionary director Sally Cookson."

Theatre

## Events in Kent

**Sunday 5 April 2020, from 09.30 until 16.00**

### Green Living Market Whitstable

Eco-friendly businesses market

Whitstable Umbrella Centre, Oxford Street,

Whitstable, CT5 1DD



# University of Kent

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MA Multimedia Journalism

### Editorial Team

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**Rebecca Dole**

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**Jane Davidson**

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### Production, Design, and Layout

Kent Design & Print

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