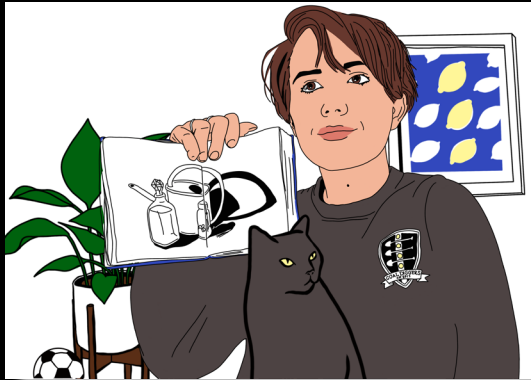


GDFC MAG



EDITOR'S NOTE



EMMA MAGNUS
@EMMAFMAGNUS

When lockdown began I was determined to preserve the normal structure of my life. It required certain adjustments: I moved my gym into the garden, I made my kitchen my office and I overcame a lifelong fear of video communication to see my friends. But there was one absence in quarantine that it was impossible to fill satisfactorily: GDFC.

I'm lucky - I have been playing football in lockdown with one local digger (safely! Please relax.) Life is good for us: we've found an 11-aside pitch to train on. But our yearning for GDFC shines through in all our choices of drills. We consider how our football tennis will win us aerial duels, how working on our close control will help us dupe opponents. We dribble through cones dreaming of the runs we'll make down the wing one day (we're both fullbacks). We crave the thrill of the match, and even with all our enthusiasm and dedication we can't imitate the feeling of being with the full team. In the end, everything comes back to GDFC.

Of course, GDFC is about more than football. Despite not having played a physical match since March, I can't help feeling that this season has been one of our most successful: the QuarantTeam menu of events alone is enough to show us that. As the old saying goes, the score line does not reflect the game. This season we've dug deep and proved our resilience. Our team spirit has endured against our fiercest opponent so far: COVID-19. And we see this in the magazine too. The contributions are disparate in voice, format and content, but the passion within the club emerges stubbornly throughout.

GDFC is about supporting each other on and off the pitch, whether that's in trying something new or in unapologetically showing who we are. This magazine aims to showcase the diverse talents and voices within the club. Everyone is welcome to contribute, whether they are a seasoned writer or putting pen to paper for the first time. To all our contributors so far: thank you. To our readers: sink your teeth into the thoughtful commentaries in these pages; revel in our writers' droll words. Feast your eyes upon the rich illustrations and marvel at the vast creativity within the GDFC community. Above all, please enjoy this inaugural issue. There will be many more to come.

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MAG TEAM



EDITOR IN CHIEF
EMMA MAGNUS @EMMAFMAGNUS

Emma established GDFC Mag and is the publication's editor. She commissioned and curated content for the magazine as well as having contributed to it herself. Emma has worked in theatre for over 5 years and is an agent for international stage rights. She writes in her spare time and is the author of the Ventrilocrisp. She joined GDFC in 2015.



CREATIVE DIRECTOR
ANASTASIA KUCHTA @ANASTASIAKUCHTA

Anastasia is responsible for the design and layout of the magazine. She also worked to commission illustrations, as well as illustrating parts of the magazine herself. Anastasia works as a Graphic Designer, and has a MA in Magazine Publishing from University of the Arts London.



CONTENT DIRECTOR
CIARA ROBINSON @CIARA_SHAY

Ciara helped commission, curate and write content for the magazine. She works as a social/psychological researcher in the criminal justice system having completed an MSc in Urbanisation, Complex Emergencies and International Development. Ciara used to chair political debates at youth conferences across the EU and previously helped run events at the School of Life. Fresh faced and eager to become the next Rapinoe, she joined GDFC in 2019.

ILLUSTRATIONS BY GABY PIMENTEL @PIMALIM92

ABOUT THE COVER



Lily Grant illustrated the cover, which features a number of Goals who have been keeping the GDFC community alive through zoom exercises, classes and parties. Thank you to everyone who has participated and keeps digging!

From left to right: Lily Grant's Sunday Life Drawing Class, Gaby Pimentel's Wednesday Quarantime Workout, Amy Lester's Sunday Football Fitness Session, Founder Fleur Cousens and K8 the D8, Helena Alty's Saturday Yoga Class, Chloe Kraemer (Brexid Bardot) virtual MOZF DJ.

HISTORY GOALS

WORDS BY FLEUR COUSENS @FLEURCOUSENS, ILLUSTRATIONS BY MADDY HARTLE @MADDYHARTLE

Move over History Boys... it's time for History Goals. Let's start at the very beginning. On September 2015 our first ever training session took place, at a sweat filled indoor pitch in Whitechapel, charging extortionate fees.

Around 20 of us were present and on the recommendation of my mother I asked her colleague to coach us. My mother assured me he was experienced. He was lovely but there was no coaching qualification in sight. For one painful and pricey hour, he fired footballs at us and demanded we control them. We – of course – had no idea how to do this.

After thanking him for his time, we popped over the road to the pub. Though the session was chaotic, spirits were high. Over a few pints one of the twinkle toed attendees informed me she was a qualified coach and would love a go at running a session next week. Yes please. Another attendee informed me her friend was also a qualified coach. Yes please.

The following week saw the birth of the greatest pairing since shovels and footballs on a crest – Coach Josh and Coach Ruby. They became the glue to the club. For those who had the pleasure of being coached by Ruby she was sensational. Amazing at football, clear but never patronising, quick witted but in control. One Coach Ruby turning drill later and the whole membership was suddenly queer.

Coach Josh was, is and has always been my absolute rock at GDFC. He immediately understood our ethos, our aims and became the footballing husband I never knew I needed but could now not live without. For the first few years of GDFC he was at every training session, every post training pint, every match, every social, every meeting. He was also our traveling store cupboard – with a car-boot full of cones, balls and sweaty shin pads.

BLIMEY was that needed – because the club began to grow at a rate I was certainly not ready for. The first two years were incredibly special, but it was also when GDFC very much became my life. I was spending an average of 50 hours a week organising the team, while also trying to find paid work in the TV world. Without the



stability, commitment and professionalism of Coach Josh and Coach Ruby, the club would not have survived.

Those years – though chaotic – were amazing. The club was all about fun. We had weekly training sessions and monthly socials at our pub sponsor, The Old Red Lion. It was a simple but infectious routine. We were, however, lacking structure. We had no kit, no committee, no regular place to train, no funding and not even a casual womxn's league to play in.

We trained wherever there was space to play. After months of bouncing between corporate enclaves and school pitches, we finally arrived at the hallowed turf of Kings Cross. This pitch was our home for 70 glorious weeks. A community 5-a-side pitch, it was no more than a concrete square but we thought it was everything a goal could ever need. As we grew in numbers half the training group would play under the streetlights in the car park. But still, morale never dropped and numbers kept growing.

In terms of leagues – the landscape of grassroots womxn's football was very different back in 2015. Ability-based 11-A-Side leagues were all we could find. After months of searching we finally



“WITHOUT THE STABILITY, COMMITMENT AND PROFESSIONALISM OF COACH JOSH AND COACH RUBY, THE CLUB WOULD NOT HAVE SURVIVED.”

entered a 5-A-Side league at St Mary Magdelene School. It took place inside a clammy gym hall and the football had been replaced with what seemed like an over-sized tennis ball.

At this point our aim was to lose with as low a score as possible, as the majority of teams in the league were ability-based. We did, however, meet two teams that shared our ethos. Boiler Room FC (now Romance FC) and Wonderkid FC. These teams showed that there was a place for non-ability based teams like us within the grassroots community.

Training and matches took place on the same night - a Tuesday - as we didn't think our members would commit more than one precious evening to football a week. Matches took place earlier than training - so match players would whizz from Highbury to Kings Cross after the match and recount tales of defeat to the eagerly attentive group whilst we stretched. On the few weeks we were victorious post training pints were a necessity.

By late 2016, we had ventured out into the world of twice-a-week football and joined a Southwark 5-A-Side league. After just one

glorious week of referees Jeff and Norm we were hooked. One memory that stands out was a sunny Sunday in August. We had happily settled into the league and even though the score line wasn't in our favour we merrily enjoyed a well-earned half time glass of fizz as the rays shone down on us.

The next three years were monumental: the membership grew, the committee grew, the coaching team grew (Ciara, Amy, Kitty we love you), the amount of leagues available to us grew, the amount of GDFC merch grew, we discovered our new Holloway training home, Murder On Zidane's Floor was born (and became the best night of the year four times a year), we had three fundraising comedy nights, two fundraising tournaments, marched in the Pride parade, spent multiple nights at Rowan's Bowl, the committee were invited out to Milan, our kit became goald, we won Islington's Sports Club of the Year 2019, Hannah Wright founded the Festival of Football, sixty of us went on tour to Lisbon and returned home as Amateur World Cup winners, Emma Magnus founded GDFC 40+, we became members only, we moved from Facebook to an app, we started additional

“ONLY A FEW PEOPLE ARE ABLE TO CELEBRATE A LOSS AS IF IT IS A WIN. THAT IS US: GOAL DIGGERS FC.”

Thursday sessions for non members...the list goes on.

We are now at a whole new stage in GDFC History. The stage where our community lives online as a Quaranteam. On Mondays we learn from inspirational Goals about everything from capitalism to cookery, on Wednesdays Gaby Pimentel runs a workout session and our Social Secretaries host a get-together. On Saturdays Helena Alty leads a yoga session, on Sunday mornings Coach Amy runs a football fitness session, on Sunday afternoons Lily Grant teaches drawing classes - and every other weekend we dance to the non stop Quarantunes played by our amazing MOZF DJs. We remain as a team – separate but together.

Looking back at the history of GDFC has been an emotional journey for me. It is hard to understand how we got to where we are. One thing however, is for certain. We have a committee who volunteer hours of their time each week. A committee who never stop working. A lot of this work is thankless, a lot of this work goes unnoticed. Without it and without them we would not be where we are today. We would not be GDFC.

For me the club feels like such a huge part of who I am that I can't quite understand what my life would be without it. It's become the space where I feel most comfortable in myself. A large part of this is to do with my sexuality. I didn't come out until I'd finished university and I was terrified of accepting my true identity. At this stage in my life I had no queer community. Now, five times a week, I feel like I come home to my chosen family. I'm no longer the outsider, no longer "the lesbian", no longer alone.

However it is not the queerness of Goal Diggers that has made me feel safe. It is the supportive atmosphere rooted in our ethos. I'm no historian, but someone who is, is Carrie Dunn. She has been following Goal Diggers since the beginning and she admitted that her biggest surprise is that our ethos has always remained.

Her surprise is rooted in the fact that this ethos is unique. Availability over ability. Inclusivity over winning. The expectation that we would become an ability-based team further down the line was something she and many others shared. People want to win. We are part of a society that values and glorifies "progression".

People don't live in the present. They are fixated on climbing a ladder, achieving their next goal – living a life in which they can post about their most recent win and receive an endorphin hit from the likes flying in. Only a few people are able to celebrate a loss as if it is a win. That is us: Goal Diggers FC.

Winning is and will always be more than the score line. If we win 10 - 0 but our team hurl abuse at each other on the pitch then that is a loss. The whole ethos of Goal Diggers is rooted in the necessity to bring your fellow teammates (goals) up through words of affirmation. We don't fixate on the mistakes we make, instead we concentrate on the achievements. "Right idea" – "it's nil-nil goals" - "keep digging" – "dig deep".

Some might call this approach to sport idealistic. Some might say it would never work. Yet we are the biggest non-profit womxn's grassroots team in London with 200 members aged between 20 and 62 years old and a hefty waitlist. Something is working.

When you remove the inter-player rivalry from a team you create a safe space. You create a community. When the player gains complete agency over how much they play and at what level - it's empowering. Teams will always exist which are ability based and so they should. But the growth of non-ability based teams which focus on encouragement, support and unity is something sport needs.

It takes a certain type of person to join and remain in Goal Diggers. Why? Because if you're an experienced Goal you're someone who focuses on bringing your team morale up, just as much or even more than you focus on your own game. This takes strength and patience. And if you're new to football then the courage it takes to join a new team and grow within that team is monumental. You have to be willing to be both vulnerable and brave enough to learn something completely new – something which society has always said is not a sport for you.

I never could have dreamt that in just under five years, those excited post match pints as we eased the bruises from having been unable to control repeated balls hurled at us, would have led to the community we have become today. But whilst so much has changed since then, as Carrie Dunn observed, one thing hasn't – our ethos. We are a club that sees the joy and confidence that you get from football as something that should be available to everyone. Availability over ability. Enjoyment over winning. As long as each goal keeps digging deep, we're happy. This Goal Can.



INTERVIEW WITH

COACH CHLOE MORGAN

INTERVIEW BY EMMA MAGNUS @EMMAFMAGNUS

The latest addition to Goal Diggers FC's coaching team is a professional footballer for Spurs, a lawyer specialising in medical negligence and an all-round safe pair of hands. Chloe Morgan takes off the gloves....

We're very excited to have you as a GDFC coach – I'm sure we'll see more players signing up to play in goal knowing you'll be teaching them. What made you want to become more involved with GDFC and what do you hope to teach us?

I am in the process of completing my FA Goalkeeping Level 1 coaching badge and I was really interested in gaining some experience working with adults. I absolutely love the premise of GDFC and what it is trying to achieve and I wanted to assist the team whilst also building on my coaching experience. In the last 6 months, I've been fortunate enough to put on a few goalkeeping sessions with GDFC and I have absolutely loved it. The people, the inclusiveness, the positivity – it's all been lovely to be a part of. Going forwards, as a priority, I'd like to work with the goalkeepers to develop confidence in their own ability.

A lot of us dread being called up to play in goal in the absence of a keeper. Why should we learn to love playing in goal, and what tips do you have for non-keepers in goal?

Firstly, it takes a lot of bravery to play in goal as an out-field player, so anyone volunteering is a hero! It's easy to feel like any goals you concede are your fault – but you've got to remember that football is a team sport and if the ball has ended up in the back of your goal, it's had to get through 10 other players to get there!

Why you should love playing in goal – because it's a completely unique position and you have an incredible view of the game. You can also get involved in some very dramatic and cinematic dives.

This 19/20 season Spurs Ladies became Tottenham Hotspur Women, joined the Women's Super League and became a fully-professional club. What was it like becoming a professional footballer overnight?

Absolute madness to be honest! The week before, I was in a shirt and trousers, finishing off a handover of my cases to a colleague and having my firm leaving drinks. The next week, I was in my training kit, on the field 5 days a week, looking forward to our first international tour. It was completely surreal, but I felt so grateful to be in a position where this was possible.

You're a solicitor as well as a professional footballer (!). How on earth do you juggle the two? What did your average day look like before you took a year's sabbatical?

I've wanted to be a lawyer since I was young and so that had always been a priority for me growing up. I also loved playing football and where I had been playing part-time, I was able to work during the days and then train in the evenings with Spurs.

An average day would see me getting into work early for 8am, working on my own cases and assisting with my senior colleague's larger cases. I would usually have a number of meetings or client calls to make throughout the day. I was also heading up the London office's LGBT+ employee networking group so I would also be busy setting up an event or speaker.

My firm were very understanding of my football commitments and so I often left on time if I had training. I would travel home, pick up my car and drive to the training ground for the session. It was tough sometimes and tiring, especially getting home late in the evening, making dinner and then having work again the next day but we were battling for promotion at the time and that really drove us to push harder.

How do you cope with the pressure of professional football, especially that of playing in goal?

The performance pressure, the comparison of yourself against your team mates, the physical toll that training and matches take on your body – it really does take a bit of getting used to. But you're in a team of women who know exactly how you're feeling and so your team mates become a really important part of your support network.

Specifically with playing in goal, it feels like there is an additional pressure of being the last line of defence and any goalkeeper mistakes can usually be critical. Experience has helped me cope better with the pressure - I've had games where I've wanted the ground to eat me up. Then you analyse things afterwards, learn from your mistakes and also learn not to dwell and beat yourself up for too long. The season goes on and you'll be needed again the next week and so you develop a natural resilience to bounce back and go again (hopefully more determined to correct things!).

What has been your highlight of the last season with Tottenham?

It has to be our promotion-winning game against Aston-Villa! It was one of the best nights of my life. We had battled all season and every player and staff member had made huge sacrifices to earn every single point. It all came down to that game and getting that last crucial point. Before the game, as a surprise, the staff put together a video of our best memories from the season and it gave us that boost we needed. I can't even begin to describe the nerves we all felt stepping on to that pitch but we all had each other's backs. It was a very tough game and I will always give credit to Aston Villa for challenging us and making us earn that last point. The final 5 minutes felt like a lifetime and when the final whistle blew, we all just exploded into celebration. We'd made club history together and it meant everything to us and all the staff and players before us.

Who is your favourite football player?

Megan Rapinoe - not only for her incredible performances and her track record of success on the pitch, but also for everything she stands for off the pitch. She is fearless in her pursuit of equality and I can't think of a footballer (male or female) who has used their platform more to raise awareness of injustice.

Being able to see everything in front of you on the pitch, what would you say is the most underrated footballing characteristic a player can have?

Being able to read the game - not just in terms of positioning on the pitch, but also being able to read the mood and general vibe of the game. Games will inevitably ebb and flow and some games will obviously be more important than others but really intelligent players will help set the pace and tone. As an example, thinking about breaking up the opposition's play to give the team time to settle or knowing when the right time to counter

will be. It's a difficult skill to master when the game is constantly moving and it's something that I'm always looking to improve.

How have you found quarantine and what does your training routine look like now?

It's been difficult not seeing my teammates and to not be able to do what I love every week, but the biggest priority is everyone keeping safe and well. There's obviously a lot of uncertainty for everyone right now and I'm hopeful that we'll be able to finish the season (if it's safe to do so!). We've been given individual training programmes which look as similar as possible to a normal training week. I keep to the plan but every now and again, I'll swap a run for a bike ride in Hyde Park or take myself on a long walk instead to introduce a bit of variety to the week.

In April, FIFPRO published a paper on the implications of COVID-19 on professional women's football which warned that the pandemic

poses an 'almost existential threat' to the women's game. How do you think coronavirus will change the game as you know it and what impact do you see it having on you as a player?

I think it would be naive to conclude that COVID-19 will not have a detrimental impact on women's football and it's frustrating that this has happened at a time when there was a real impetus for growth (from grassroots to elite level) and development. There will definitely be a period of adjustment (in line with the government guidelines) regarding training, fans being able to attend matches, extended timetables etc., but I'm much more optimistic generally. The driving force behind the growth was female engagement with football and I can't see that being dampened by COVID-19. If anything, I've seen some amazing initiatives on social media by female footballers at all levels looking to help the female footballing community through this time, from online panels to example training drills. Absence makes the heart grow fonder and I am hopeful that the momentum for the women's game will only come back twice as strong once it's safe for us all to play again.

Once it's possible for training to resume, Chloe will be coaching monthly sessions for goalkeepers. If you are a keeper and want to find out more, visit GDFC's website.



IN CONVERSATION WITH

COACH JOSH PUGH'S MANAGER JACKET

WORDS BY EMMA MAGNUS @EMMAFMAGNUS, PHOTOGRAPH BY KAREN YEOMANS



Coach Josh Pugh's manager jacket is early for our meeting. "I always make sure I'm early" it explains. "If training starts at half past I've got to be there for twenty-past. If I'm any later, I'm late." The jacket looks fresh: the embroidered Goal Diggers FC crest catches the April sun and the initials JP gleam in white. Physically, the hard-wearing jacket bears all the hallmarks of quality: two layers of zips for extra warmth, solid waterproofing, a capacious hood and Velcro cuffs to trap the heat. Frankly, it's a little overdressed for such a warm day. "I'm not getting much use at the moment. I'm hanging on the back of Coach Josh's door – he couldn't bear to put me out of sight."

The manager's jacket was a long time coming, taking over from Coach Josh's burnt teal outerwear, now retired. The position comes with great responsibility, which the jacket does not take lightly. It forms part of the coaches' official club merchandise, which arrived a few months after the players' current gold kits. The delay, combined with the cooling autumn temperatures, meant that by the time the jacket arrived it was chomping at the bit to go. At just eight months

old, it has fast become an iconic representation of its owner. It's a regular fixture at Clapham Common, Whittington Park and Holloway School, shifts which put its waterproofing to the test. The jacket laughs warmly. The job is more than that, it explains. "I'm an overt link to the players... I make it clear that we're organised and official and that we have explicit standards. After all, any professional club that's also sponsored by Nike will have the same jacket, just with different badges and initials." Being an external manifestation of the club's growth (Goal Diggers has expanded exponentially since its foundation in 2015) weighs heavily on the jacket. Looking and acting the part are inherently tied together, and professionalism is central to its attitude towards coaching. "If it's someone's first session it's my priority to make sure they enjoy it, have fun and come back. They need to see and feel that this is a pretty big operation, and we need to ensure that the coaches are on it." I wonder if this is a case of the tail wagging the dog. Does wearing the jacket put Pugh in the coaching mind-set? The jacket is unequivocal. "Absolutely. He feels differently when he wears me." This is a double-edged sword for the jacket. It explains that having professional influence comes at the cost

of bonding opportunities with its owner. “Coach Josh wouldn’t take me on holiday to Cornwall, even though I was perfect for the windy, rainy weather forecast. At the end of the day, he sees me as a football jacket for work. He doesn’t want to take work on holiday and I can’t begrudge him for that.” The jacket exhales slowly. It laments not having the chance to watch other teams play too. “When he [Pugh] goes to watch another game he doesn’t want to be seen as a coach. He just wants to be someone watching football. And who can blame him?”

Tension aside, it’s clear that pitch-side, the owner and the jacket are two peas in a pod. It’s hard to tell where Coach Josh ends and the jacket begins. I ask the jacket what it’s like working with Pugh. “It’s a dream come true. He’s punctual, organised and prepared: just like me.” The jacket pauses, sanguine. “Seriously... there are real advantages to working with a coach who plays himself. [Pugh’s] best coaches have been good communicators. This is the big link between playing and coaching football. It allows him to think about how players want to receive messages.” But does the jacket ever feel that Pugh would rather be on the other side of the touchline, playing himself? “He’s actually missing coaching more than playing at the moment. But no: coaching and playing are separate hats. You turn up wearing one or the other.” It elaborates: some mistakes in a game are unavoidable – a bad touch or a player slipping over a lace. “But when it’s something that could have been prevented? Well that’s when he wishes he could stop time, stop the game and clarify things.” Just like a Bernard’s watch, I point out. “Exactly.” The jacket chuckles. “On the other hand, I know that when Pugh turns up to play for his team [Todo Ciudad FC], he’s excited just to worry about himself and to know that his only responsibility is the one on the pitch.” A pause. The jacket tells me how much it admires its colleagues’ [Kitty Burne, Ciara Monahan and Amy Lester] ability to coach their peers. “This is really hard.” Does the jacket have any advice it wishes it could give to its owner? It gives a conspiratorial smile, as if this is something it has discussed with Pugh before. “He can get better at running in me for one! We have to chase after the ball a lot at Clapham Common.” It laughs again, throaty and infectious. “I wish he would pair me with a beanie more often.” Something in the jacket’s look softens. It sighs wistfully. “I want him to know that he can wear me to watch Spurs. He doesn’t need to be ashamed of me because I’m associated with another club. I can keep him warm on the terraces.”

To combat the maudlin shift in tone, I ask what the jacket’s highlights have been since it began its tenure. Its eyes light up. “The 4-3 win against EEA when we came back from being 3-1 down.” The jacket is referring to Goal Diggers’ heroic comeback against EEA Ladies at Clapham Common on 17 January 2020. The atmosphere at the game was electric. The team dug deep to claw back the victory: a combination of grit, teamwork, skill and spirit. There’s unadulterated joy in the jacket’s face as it describes the goals scored by Lauren Fitzgerald, Annie Gallagher (earning her the nickname ‘Annie Gallagher’), and Bella Borg’s winner. “I was really happy. I remember making a

“IT’S CLEAR THAT PITCH-SIDE, THE OWNER AND THE JACKET ARE TWO PEAS IN A POD.”

speech at the end of the game and just telling everyone how much I loved them.” It’s clear that the passion the jacket puts into the job makes this kind of win even sweeter. For the jacket, it’s this collective spirit –this teamwork—which makes it all worthwhile. It tells me about a rainy evening at Whittington Park. “We had three games: a win, a draw and a loss, all in horrendous rain. But everyone arrived on time, and we did a good warm-up.” Tuesdays, it says eagerly, are where the players have the greatest potential for improvement by having consistent game-time against strong players. At Wednesday training, it’s the sessions that the jacket is excited to run again that stand out. It enthusiastically explains the coaches’ traffic light grading system for training sessions: red needs work, amber needs tweaks and green means it can be run again without further changes. The jacket speaks with heart, making it clear that winning isn’t all about the score line. It’s about growth, above all as a team.

What’s next for the jacket, I speculate. Where does it want to see the club go? It doesn’t miss a beat. “My aspiration would be to maximise our potential...for us to be as on it as possible, play as well as we can and win every match that we play.” The jacket adds: “I’d like to see us finish higher up in the table at Clapham.” It mentions its desire to see more players enjoying the step up to competitive play, revealing again its characteristic attention to development. The jacket talks fluidly about its aims: it knows where it wants the club to go and is constantly searching for new ways to improve. “Football is interesting...the detail that goes into planning and knitting everything together is an ever-changing task. Even if I’d been a coach for fifty years there would still be things that I wouldn’t even have considered knowing, and that is very exciting.” Why football? I ask the jacket. It pauses, struggling to articulate a lifetime of passion in a few short sentences. “Football is the best team sport and team sport is the best thing for so many areas of development. I love football because I grew up watching and playing it.” It compares football to tennis, arguing that teamwork is at the heart of its love for the game. “The winning feeling is amplified by the number of people involved in the victory.”

With COVID-19 bringing the season to an abrupt halt and the warmer weather settling in, I point out that the jacket is now looking at a long time on the back of Coach Josh’s door. It doesn’t seem too fazed, hoping that now is the chance for its teammates to see it in a different light. It is suddenly animated: “I might get an outing now if there was, say, a GDFC barbeque on the beach. The kind of event where Josh would wear shorts and a jumper and would want a big jacket for the evening chill.” This was not a coat cut according to its cloth: it is full of heart and hope. “My dream” it adds, “is to be accepted socially as well as professionally.”

CALCETTO ELEGANZA LADIES

DEALING WITH LOCKDOWN IN ITALY

WORDS BY ISABELLA DE FELICE @CALCETTOELEGANZALADIES



It's been almost two months now since the day when the Italian Prime Minister announced on TV the application of a set of measures to fight the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic in Italy. Among other things, restrictions on movements and prohibition of social gatherings were introduced.

In a matter of hours, the lifestyle we had always taken for granted was completely and irremediably changed. No more office commutes, dinners with friends, birthday parties, no more hugs and kisses. No more Monday football practices. It has been a time for worries about the health of our loved ones, keeping jobs, paying rents. Doesn't sound fun, right?

BUT. But in all this worrying, uncertainty and unwanted change, one thing has not changed at all. Even if we cannot play on the football field right now, we are still a team. In fact, our bond as a team and as friends just grew stronger during this difficult time. Just like on the pitch, each one of the Calcetto Eleganza Ladies played a role.

Some turned Monday practice into Monday Skype aperitivo, Danila and Naki kept everyone fit through on-line training sessions (well, almost everyone, you know who you are!), our goalkeeper Tina entertained us with her Facebook live deejay gigs (Tina, you da best!), Camilla sent us nostalgic screenshots almost every Monday showing us her phone notification for "Monday practice", Anna was all about funny memes and Gina was still about excel charts. Everything is changing but the team is still our safe place. A place where we can be ourselves, find support and love and where we can make fun of each other just to lift our spirit (yes, Giuliana, I am talking about you).

This lockdown is hopefully going to end soon and things will gradually go back to normal but one thing will remain with us going forward. Although we might feel lonely sometimes, we now know that we will never be alone.

CACAHUÈTES SLUTS

DEALING WITH LOCKDOWN IN FRANCE

@CACAHUETESSLUTS



HELLO,
DAY 1 : it's Okay, I'm happy
DAY 2 : same sensation
DAY 20 : lower morale
Jour 45 :

Unlocking, it's not easy...We have all our little things to hold between work, painting and meeting with friends, my days stay full...

Tuesday is the Zoom video with my team Cacahuètes Sluts, it's cool ! Because it gives me the impression to playing a virtual football party... and also, it's good to see her team, it's motivating for the week to come.

....DAY 35548 : football in real life, with the team. Strongly!

- MORGANE BINOIS

I am spending my quarantine in Paris' twentieth district, in a twenty meters square flat, with my roommate Anna - yes, that is not a lot of space but happily we get along. Because of the lockdown, the Cacahuètes Sluts' trainings have been reduced to weekly parties. And with such limited space, my practice of sport has been reduced to wearing sportswear. I did try to run on the streets once. It didn't feel as great as when it used to be done on a football field, with a ball at the foot and the Cacahuètes Sluts surrounding me. The lockdown definitely made me realize how important football is in my life and how bored, lonely and frustrated I feel when I can't practice it. It also made me realize that checking on family, friends and teammates is something that I should do more often. Calling and talking to the Cacahuètes has helped me overcome the lockdown way more easily, and I can't wait to see them again on the field.

- LOLA CASSAYRE

MANAGING TRAINING AND MINIMISING OVERLOAD INJURY

WORDS BY GABY PIMENTEL @PIMALIM92

Some injuries are unavoidable. Others, such as overload injury, are very much avoidable. How to manage your load during a lockdown may seem a strange topic to write about, seeing as we're all housebound. However, have you started doing much more exercise than normal? Do you have aches and niggles that have slowly started to appear? Do areas of your body hurt (e.g. knees, ankles, calves), but you're not sure why? Lockdown has caused many of us to greatly increase our daily exercise, as a way of staying sane, and this is prime territory for an overload injury.

WHAT IS OVERLOAD INJURY?

When we exercise, our body goes through a cycle of microtrauma and repair. We cause a small amount of damage to our muscles/tissues, our body repairs them and as a result they adapt and get stronger. However, when the repetitive microtrauma exceeds the capacity of our body to repair itself, things start to break down and cause injury. Overload injury!

HOW DO I KNOW IF I HAVE IT?

Firstly, it's important to look at the context of how your aches and pains started. If there was a direct incident, such as rolling your ankle, that will not be overload. Instead, overload injury is more likely to occur with the following factors:

- Increased/excessive volume of training
- Increased/excessive frequency of training
- Increased/excessive intensity of training
- Sudden change in type of exercise
- Excessive fatigue and not enough recovery

As a result, symptoms will normally develop over a period of time. Typically, they come on gradually and at the beginning most feel like it's something you can shake off. However, the more you continue to train, the worse your symptoms will become. There are other intrinsic factors that can contribute, such as muscle weaknesses and

imbalances, but these can only be determined through physical assessment.

HOW CAN I WORK OUT MY LOADING AND PREVENT OVERLOADING?

The beauty about the following advice is that it doesn't only apply to lockdown, it can be a useful way of managing your training once normal life has resumed. The term 'load' refers to any form of physical exertion placed on the body, anything from high intensity sprints, to a leisurely stroll, to a kick around in the park. The following advice is a strategy used by the England women's football team to track their weekly loading, as a way to prevent injury and keep the squad fit.

The first step of quantifying your load is to be able to quantify how difficult something was, or how hard you found it. For this we use the 'Rate of Perceived Exertion' scale, otherwise known as RPE. See the following diagram:

0-10 Borg Rating of Perceived Exertion Scale	
0	Rest
1	Really easy
2	Easy
3	Moderate
4	Sort of hard
5	Hard
6	
7	Really hard
8	
9	Really, really hard
10	Maximal: just like my hardest race

Next step is using your RPE score to quantify loading. Simply multiply your RPE by how many minutes of exercise you did:

Minutes performed of exercise x RPE score = Loading score

For example:

Yesterday I did the Wednesday Quarant Team workout for 22 minutes and I scored it 6 on the RPE scale.

$$22 \times 6 = 132$$

I would have a loading score of 132 for yesterday's workout. The clever aspect of this method of quantifying load can be shown in the following two examples:

A high intensity workout where I worked at my absolute maximum (10) for 13 minutes, would give me a load of 130

$$13 \times 10 = 130$$

A low intensity workout that I did for 130 minutes (such as a long, leisurely walk), that was very easy, would also give me a load of 130

$$130 \times 1 = 130$$

These examples show how different intensities, duration and styles of workouts can all give the same loading score.

The next step. Every time you complete exercise, calculate your loading score and scribble it down. Do this for one whole week and this will give you your weekly loading score. Remember, loading is calculated by multiplying the minutes by your RPE. See example below:

	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	Weekly Loading Score
Mins	30	90	15	0	25	0	35	
RPE	5	2	8	0	5	0	4	
Loading	150	180	120	0	125	0	140	715

HOW DO I USE MY WEEKLY LOADING SCORE TO PREVENT INJURY?

This is a simple calculation that is backed by research (for those interested, if you google 'Tim Gabbett acute chronic workload ratio' you will find extra information on this). Research shows that increasing your weekly loading by more than 1.5 times significantly increases your risk of overload injury. Using the weekly loading example above, this score can be used to calculate your maximal threshold for the next week. Therefore, keeping below this score will reduce your risk of overload injury, but conversely will give you a threshold to work up to if you want to safely push yourself.

"RESEARCH SHOWS THAT INCREASING YOUR WEEKLY LOADING BY MORE THAN 1.5 TIMES SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASES YOUR RISK OF OVERLOAD INJURY."

See this following example for the final step on load management calculations:

Weekly loading score = 715.

$$715 \times 1.5 = 1072.5$$

Therefore, Week 2 'weekly loading score' cannot exceed 1072.5. You can use this score to work towards as you continue to track your daily loading, then as you reach your threshold, you can decrease time/intensity as a way of safely training.

SUMMARY

1. Overload injury is a preventable injury
2. You can calculate the loading of each activity you do by multiplying the minutes performed by how difficult it was (a score from 0-10, known as RPE)
3. Add up the loading score of every activity done within a week, to give your weekly loading
4. Each week, you should increase your loading by no more than 1.5 in order to reduce the risk of overload injury
5. You can use your maximal threshold either as a number to avoid exceeding, or a target for safe training
6. This process of load management is key in staying injury free and can be used long term when out of quarantine and back in full, normal training

For more information, or online Skype Physio appointments, please email gabypimentel@btinternet.com.

WOMEN'S REPRESENTATION IN ESPORTS

WORDS BY HALEIGH KLING @HALEIGHDIANA, ILLUSTRATION BY LILY GRANT @LILYROSEGRANT_ART



As people are forced to spend more time at home, many are turning to video games to relax and pass the time. As I morph into a piece of the sofa cushion, I can't help but think what the impact of the electronic indigo nimbus will have on my eyes – and my body. As the world closes its doors and people turn inward, the cold, blue glow of electronic screens reflects back on the masses' faces.

The family favourite football team used to encourage loyalty and a sense of group identity. With empty pitches and no re-opening date, will our identity as football fans disappear?

In early March familiar pastimes, such as going to the pub or stadium to watch football, ended with mass sports cancellations around the globe. The empty pubs and stadiums cast an abysmal shadow over football's future and its following. Unless you are into Nicaraguan or Belarusian

domestic football, the only place to get your footie fix is in the virtual world.

Opportunity for innovation is shaping the way socialising and sports will work. Esports is not something new in the UK and has become a major form of participation in place of attending stadium matches. Now, it may become the new norm.

As the use of virtual sports games rises, so does the diversity of players. In the on-going global pandemic, sports watchers of all backgrounds are turning to esports. Will esports game-makers choose to create realistic characters, or continue to exclude diversity? Time will tell if game-makers will follow the money or act as tools for change.

Even before the current pandemic, FIFA remains unwavering in their traditional (and often oppressive) football practices. If men and women can't play together on the pitch because

of physical differences – then why are they still being excluded from playing each other on a virtual pitch?

In the FIFA 20 Official Gameplay Trailer there are no images of a woman playing football in the game. However, EA had plenty of other highlights for FIFA 20 (version 20 of the game), including more ‘realistic’ effects in gameplay such as “New Ball Physics – Physics Driven Ball Movement” (which they began working on before 2013). What is EA’s perception of realism in FIFA?

Since 2013, EA FIFA has put strong emphasis in studying the physics of footballs, revamping their in-game footballs each year. It wasn’t until three years later, in 2016, that EA decided that women’s teams would be introduced into the game. Yet, four years later, few advancements have been made, and nothing as noteworthy as the physics of balls.

In an interview by Dean Takahashi (writer at VentureBeat) with Nick Channon (Senior Producer at EA Canada in 2015, now Senior Director of Business Development), Channon remarked on the introduction of women’s teams in 2016:

Obviously it’s something we’ve been considering for a while. When we added women to our game we wanted to make sure it was done properly. You don’t want to get into a situation where you just add a woman’s head to a man’s body. We’ve had to do quite a lot of work to get to that point. Quite a lot of technology has been put in place in terms of body types, making sure we had a female body type that looked authentic and realistic. We had to change some of our technology to do that.

It’s strange that Channon believes their consideration to be obvious. If it’s obvious, then why weren’t women’s teams introduced sooner? It’s also surprising that they had to change their technology to create a women’s teams, the same technology that allows for extremely varied male bodies.

The metrics for creating a male player and giving him a personal score on the game is individualized, yet EA rates their female players all at roughly the same score. So why did they have to completely change their technology to study the female players? EA had not yet commented on the metric system for rating female players at the time of the publication of this article.

Throughout the article Channon reiterates the growing popularity of women’s football. Yet the women’s teams in the game have not had nearly as much development as the men’s teams. The article ends with a very pertinent question posed to Channon:

GamesBeat: Do you see the addition of women as a trial? Could they someday get their own separate branded game?

Channon: We’ll wait and see what the future holds. We feel this is a great start with some of the best players in the world playing in one place. We’re excited for this year and we’ll see what the feedback tells us.

“IN 1999, MORGAN WATCHED THOSE WOMEN COMPETE IN THE WORLD CUP. SHE HAD TO WAIT 17 YEARS FOR FIFA 16 TO INTRODUCE WOMEN TO THE GAME.”

Now, as Senior Director of Business Development, is Channon considering this? Five years and five FIFA games later, we are still waiting.

Upon the release of FIFA 16, female football player Alex Morgan featured on FIFA’s website. In the interview with Morgan, when asked “Who is your biggest inspiration?” Morgan said:

“...I also grew up being inspired by US Women’s National Team “greats” like Kristine Lilly, Mia Hamm and my current teammate, Abby Wambach. Watching them inspire a generation of girls during the ‘99 World Cup was incredible. In turn, we are inspired daily by the girls that support us and strive to be in our shoes one day. I was once that little girl and I know how important it was to me to have role models for me to emulate on and off the field.”

In 1999, Morgan watched those women compete in the World Cup. She had to wait 17 years for FIFA 16 (the 16th version of the game) to introduce women to the game. That is 16 years without female representation in a game that makes up 40% of EA’s revenue (Parker, 2018).

FIFA 20 had time to develop the physics of a ball, but didn’t implement advances to the women’s teams, even with women’s teams gaining viewership worldwide. In a time when women’s teams are being furloughed faster than men’s teams – virtual sports could step up and help support female athletes; yet we are still waiting.

Another notable name in football esports games is Konami’s Pro Evolution Soccer (PES). In a controversial move, PES has no plans to develop women’s teams in their game. In an article by Talal Musa (RealSport, 2019), Lennart Bobzien (European PES Brand Manager) states: “... we currently don’t have any plans to integrate women into eFootball PES 2020.” When reached for comment, Konami customer support replied: “Regarding your concern, we regret to say that we are unable to disclose information about future plans/updates. Nonetheless, rest assured that the contents of your inquiry will be duly noted.”

FIFA may beat PES in their inclusion of female players, yet, with the money and resources available to both, we are still left wondering and waiting. In the current lean towards virtual football, inclusion is key. Esports have made a lot of progress, but they still have a long way to go.

MAXOMATIC (GOLDFISH)

WORDS BY KATY CASTLE @KCASTLEK, ILLUSTRATION BY ANASTASIA KUCHTA @ANASTASIAKUCHTA

The plastic bunting was refusing to stick. Standing on a chair, Max tried to blu-tac it to the ceiling. The bunting slipped from Max's hands and tangled itself around Max's body. It wrapped tighter and tighter. Max struggled to breathe. What kind of event used bunting like this? Max craned to read the flags. P – R – P – S – E. Porpoise? Max looked again.

Purpose.

Max felt a ripple of fear and awoke, swaddled in sweaty darkness. Their phone glowed. It was six-fifty am on Saturday morning. A message had arrived in the night.

How are you doing? I'm at Jorge Chávez airport about to fly home. Back in the office on Monday! Six months went too fast. Nicki had put a crying emoji with a line of tears dripping from both eyes. Will you be in? x

Six months and two weeks ago, Max and Nicki bonded over goat's cheese and chutney sandwiches at the staff away day. Two weeks later, Nicki went on a six-month sabbatical to Peru. She posted regular Instagram updates of herself holding monkeys or standing by large expanses of water with mountains in the background. Max replied with wow emojis and counted the months with wavering patience.

Max put down the phone and slept again, dreaming of Nicki beside a waterfall decorated with bunting that read Courage. A few hours later Max woke to the buzz of the bathroom fan, stretched to unplug their phone and opened Instagram.

The first Instagram story was Nicki's. It showed sun and clouds through a plane window. She had typed chau chau and placed a heartbreak emoji over the image.

'Patricia! She's coming back!' Max called through the wall to their housemate.

Muffled in house socks, Patricia padded out the bathroom and stood in Max's doorway. 'Finally!' she said, fists raised in triumph.

It wasn't just that Max and Nicki both approved of the upgraded cheese and pickle at the away day lunch. At Nicki's leaving drinks there had been a vibe – a hand rested on a thigh and

lips brushed against a cheek – and Max had come out to Nicki as non-binary. The following morning, Nicki messaged to say she would listen if Max ever needed someone to talk to. After six months of internet-enabled communication, Nicki was transformed into what Patricia called Max's burning, pulsating, passion, and what Max called 'a potential for romance'.

Patricia and Max were trying out a new brunch place. They sat on mismatched wooden chairs at an old school table. Autumn whipped in carrying auburn leaves whenever the door was opened.

'I wouldn't mind,' Patricia said, as Max looked up from reading Nicki's latest message, 'if what I'd said had been incredibly dull. But it wasn't, and I won't repeat it, and you'll never know what it was.'

'Sorry, sorry,' Max replied, turning the phone face-down on the table. 'Nicki just asked if I want to go for a drink after work on Monday.'



‘That is interesting,’ Patricia said, lowering her cutlery.

Wearing a freshly ironed white tee shirt the next day, Max half-heartedly scanned emails and wholeheartedly checked the time. The office was large, to accommodate ninety employees, and the only decoration was the Peruvian flag bunting which hung across the ceiling, a leftover from Nicki’s leaving party. Max sat next to the window. It had started to rain.

At ten o’clock, the office doorbell rang and Nicki was shaking out an umbrella and hugging the office manager. She had been trekking up mountains and hiking in the jungle, lying on golden beaches, eating ceviche and drinking maté. All this, while her colleagues had boomeranged from bed to tube to desk and back again. The strip lighting, which made everyone else look like death, seemed to make her glow. Her very presence was incongruous with the drizzly October day and now she was coming to greet everyone at their desks.

Max had daydreamed, more often than they would like to admit, about touching Nicki, about the warmth of her body and the scent of her neck. Regretting the white tee shirt against their already pale skin, Max instinctively tidied, moving the empty coffee mug and cafetière to the edge of the desk and straightening the keyboard. Courage.

Nicki was stood beside Max, hugging Anoop.

‘Nicki?’ Max said. The name felt familiar on Max’s tongue.

‘Oh, hi!’ Nicki said. She smiled and rested a hand on the back of Max’s chair. ‘Anoop and I have a meeting now in Purpose. Speak later.’

The meeting rooms at Max’s office were named after the company’s values: Courage, Integrity, Purpose and Resolve. This led to questions such as ‘Have you got Resolve?’ or the statement ‘Courage is unavailable’. New employees found this odd, but Max had grown to like it. The abstract made solid. It was important not to worry about what ‘speak later’ meant.

At twelve-thirty, Max avoided a group of colleagues eating meal deals to sit alone, took out a homemade falafel wrap and opened Instagram.

Whether to bring lunch had been the subject of some discussion the night before.

‘You could invite her to that food market and get her on her own?’ Patricia had suggested as she folded her laundry.

But from Nicki’s messages her first day was going to be busy and Max wondered if she would even take a lunch break.

‘You are going for a drink later. Make something wholesome and earthy.’ Patricia said. ‘Queers love chickpeas.’

‘That is not true. Vegans love chickpeas.’

‘All queers are vegan.’ Patricia said, throwing a pair of socks at Max.

‘I’m not,’ Max said, dodging the socks.

‘Behold!’ Patricia said, ‘The only non-vegan queer in London-dom.’ She draped a tea towel ceremoniously over Max’s head.

Max tucked the tea towel behind their ears and stood on a stool. ‘I am ruler of them all!’ they declared with arms outstretched.

Pretending to be overwhelmed, Patricia fanned herself with a cushion.

Max contemplated, not for the first time, whether to try falling in love with Patricia. As if she’d heard, Patricia let out a huge, unchecked fart, dropped the cushion and laughed hysterically.

Max had just taken a bite of the wrap when Nicki sat down at the bar. No longer able to eat, Max placed the wrap back on the plate. Resolve.

‘How are you?’ Nicki said. ‘Everything has gone to shit. Anoop cried in our one-to-one. I can’t wait for our drink later. Still up for it?’

Max nodded, finding it hard to breathe.

‘Great. I’ve got ten minutes before my next meeting – save me,’ she said, and ripped open the wrap she’d bought. ‘Jealous of yours,’ she said, looking at Max’s plate. ‘I’m going to start making lunch from tomorrow. I couldn’t face it last night.’ Chewing frantically, she ate in quick bites.

‘I could make you one,’ Max offered. ‘I’ll be making my own anyway.’

‘Would you?’ said Nicki. ‘You’re too nice. I’d love that.’ She wiped her mouth with a serviette and gathered up the packaging. ‘I quit smoking while I was away but, you know what, fuck it. I’m having one now. You don’t smoke do you?’

Max did not. The thought of being alone later with Nicki was both unbearable and sweet, like Haribo Tangfastics. Max looked at their phone. A message from Patricia.

Chickpea and chard curry tonight? She followed this with a tongue emoji.

I won’t be back till late. Drink with N remember!

Oh yes! Show her your moves. Ninja emoji. I’ll leave leftovers for you

At four-fifteen Nicki came over to Max’s desk. ‘Could we go to the pub now? Just for a quick one. My meetings are finished.’

The pair left through the revolving doors and crossed the damp road. The pub was quiet this early in the evening.

A bartender stopped stacking glasses to serve them. Max paid for both their drinks and led Nicki over to a booth. Resolve.

Nicki took a sip of her large white wine. 'It's just fucking hard you know. You're so much stronger than me. That office is suffocating. Everyone was so open and friendly in Peru. ¿Hablas castellano? I got practically fluent. I really came out of my shell, you know? I'm not saying I found myself, just I did new things. I did things I never thought I'd do and met such wonderful people.' She took a second, bigger, sip of her wine. 'I almost didn't come back, but obviously that would be a terrible idea. I'm getting out of this job soon though. It's a fucking shitshow.'

A notification lit up Nicki's phone. She stopped talking to read it.

Max tried not to be too curious about who the message was from. The only people Max had been communicating regularly with over the past six months were Patricia and Nicki. Max wondered whether to remind Nicki that Anoop was always crying. But then, everyone struggles with life in their own way before collapsing nightly under duvets and the weight of the world. Purpose.

Max's phone was in their bag out of reach. Still waiting for Nicki, Max watched the bartender serve an older man. The man settled on a barstool and scanned the room. His eyes lingered too long on Max before returning to his Guinness.

'It'd be sad if you left.' Max said. 'I didn't know you were thinking of it.'

Nicki raised her head from her phone. 'We'd stay in touch.' She reached and held Max's hand.

Max kept as still as possible. All their attention was on the sensation of Nicki's skin against their own.

'You know I sublet my flat while I was away?' Nicki was saying. 'The tenant smashed my cheese plant! He apologised but I'd had that plant since uni. Now I'm in this flat on my own with not even Cheesy to water. It's soulless. And it's my birthday next week! You're going to come? Please come.' She squeezed Max's fingers and let go.

Max had sipped on a half pint while Nicki gulped her wine. There was an awkward pause when she finished.

'I totally blathered on at you there,' said Nicki. 'How embarrassing. I'm going to get into bed and watch Netflix now. Text me later.' She put on her coat to leave.

Back home eating curry, Max recounted everything to Patricia.

'All I was thinking was – I'd like to get into bed with you. If only I was Netflix. And she said I should message her?'

'It's definitely happening,' Patricia said, waving a piece of naan. 'One – she touched your hand! That's basically sex. And two – you're making her lunch! That's marriage. So.

It's her birthday next week. You have to get her a present.'

'Oh fuck,' said Max. 'We shouldn't have waited for the rain to stop.'

Patricia stood on her tiptoes to peer over the crowds. Shoppers were everywhere – three deep at the flower stalls and haggling for more greenery. Well-dressed parents pushing boat-sized buggies. Single people seeking succulents. The irony of the escapade was not lost on Max.

'True love knows no bounds,' Patricia said, joining the line of people edging along the pavement that ran behind the stalls. 'Come on. And afterwards we can try out the oyster stall.'

Purpose. Belated raindrops dripped off the marquees and the puddled ground glistened in the thin autumn sun. Max paused by a chilli plant. Its fruit was round as a tomato, green smearing from orange to red. 'Or could I get her this?' Max said.

'Nope,' Patricia replied, a few steps ahead.

'She did say the wrap I made her was too spicy,' Max said. 'I wonder what she ate in Peru.'

A bobble-hatted man brushed past carrying a cactus with large spines. Patricia twisted to avoid it but Max wasn't quick enough.

'Ouch.'

Pain spread across Max's hand, accompanied by a rush of excitement. Max tried to ignore it. Integrity.

'Fuck sake. The world. Full of idiots,' said Patricia, as blood bubbled out of Max's cut.

'It's not bad,' Max said, tasting the droplets. 'Keep going, we're blocking the way.'

The pair continued, sliding themselves flat to get past prams filled with orchids.

'Here.'

The cheese plants were arrayed in tiers with leaves as if they'd been sliced into frills. Max lifted a tag. *Monstera deliciosa*.

After some deliberation; Max selecting, asking Patricia's opinion, Patricia protesting, Max choosing and Patricia overriding it, Max went for one with healthy-looking leaves. Max handed over plastic notes and waited while the trader scrabbled in her belt for change.

'Say hello to Cheesy Two,' Patricia declared. 'Stay there, I'll take a picture.'

'You're not supposed to name gifts,' Max said, posing next to the plant. They both peered at Patricia's screen. 'I don't look bad. Shame it's a surprise.'

'It'll be worth it,' Patricia said. 'Now for oysters.'

'You go. It's too busy and I'm injured,' Max said, flapping the affected hand up and down.

'Little shop, little shop of horrors,' Patricia sang in Max's ear as she left. Standing close, like a penguin guarding an egg, Max shuffled the cheese plant out the way. A Cockapoo sniffed as it trotted along. Max made a mental note to tell Patricia, or maybe Nicki, that its hair was the colour of a flat white.

Patricia returned with two oysters swirling in clear liquid. Max told her about the Cockapoo. She laughed and brandished the paper plate. 'You're going to try one, yes? We can Instagram this instead.'

Max took an oyster. Patricia held her phone up, camera ready. 'Turn around so the sun is behind you. I can see your cut if you hold the oyster like that. It's gross.'

'Not gross! Mysterious, hardy? More people will reply to the Instagram story.'

Patricia lowered her phone. 'Or a certain someone?'

In response, Max tipped the oyster in, chewing a couple of times before swallowing. It tasted like it looked. Patricia raised her phone to film Max's reaction. Max leaned against a window ledge and spat it out.

'Extremely hardy and mysterious, Max. Charming.'

Max coughed. A line of dribble caught on their fleece. 'You can edit out this part.'

Sitting in the back of the Uber, Max asked, 'When do you think I should give Cheesy Two to Nicki?' The plant was balanced on Max's lap. The glutinous taste of oyster lingered in their mouth.

Patricia looked at Max through the leaves. She was editing the video. Cartoon gifs of sea creatures flashed on her phone.

'She's going to the pub for her birthday. I don't think I can give it to her there.' Max said and brushed the topsoil of the plant as a distraction.

Patricia paused her editing. 'I guess the thing is, how much do you like Nicki?'

Before replying, Max scrolled past adverts for plants on Instagram. 'She's the first person I've liked in ages. Since I came out. I'm pretty certain she likes me. She invited me to her birthday.' Max dug two fingers into the soil. 'She did invite the whole office, to be fair. Fuck. Post that video on Instagram. This is primetime. Everyone in their post-Sunday lunch slump.'

'If you let me focus I will,' Patricia said, selecting a bouncing cartoon shell. She used her forefinger to drag it to the righthand corner of Max's head, resized it and pivoted the picture with finger and thumb.

'Don't forget to tag me,' Max said through leaves.

Patricia started typing on the video clip. 'What's your handle?'

'I changed it. Maxomatic.'

Max tapped on the notification to repost the story to their own Instagram. A warning sign popped up. Max had spent forty minutes on Instagram today. Max ignored it. Resolve.

'Do you think plants get lonely?' Max asked Patricia that evening. Patricia was making a red onion and goats cheese tart. The cheese plant sat on the kitchen table. Max tested the moisture of the soil and watered it with a spritzer.

'They can be neglected, for sure. Don't get stressed. Nicki will like Cheesy Two and think of you every time she waters it.' She slid the tart into the oven.

A notification. Nicki had seen the video. She sent a green vomiting emoji.

It was disgusting! Max wrote, feeling guilty. But I did see a Cockapoo the colour of a flat white.

*

The following Saturday night, Max got off the train at Hackney Central with the cheese plant in a paper bag and a stomach full of nerves. Nicki had repeated her invitation to everyone on Friday. Anoop was planning to go but Max didn't have her number. Patricia was meant to come as Max's support but had bailed at the last minute. Max's cold fingers were clenched around the paper handles. The scratch from the cactus had faded along with Max's confidence. Purpose, Courage, Resolve, Integrity. Max repeated the mantra.

The pub was brightly lit and rammed with locals. Max stepped past the security guard on the door. Voices were raised to be heard over Motown. Heart beating fast, Max pushed through the pub and looked for Nicki. She was sitting with a group of strangers and wearing a badge that read 'birthday babe'.

Nicki spotted Max and waved. Max wove towards the table, holding up the bag so as not to damage the plant. 'Happy birthday Nicki,' Max said and offered her the present.

'Max! This is so nice!' Nicki moved glasses out the way to put the bag onto the table. She lifted the cheese plant out. 'Look, everyone! It can go with the one Sammy bought me!' she said.

Max tried to work out which of the strangers was Sammy. Possibly the man in the yellow beanie.

Turning back to Max, Nicki explained, 'Sammy's so cute, she ordered one off that plant delivery service in the Instagram ad.'

'Oh,' Max said. 'I was looking for cactuses for my bathroom and I remembered you'd said you liked them. It was when I had those oysters actually.' Or was Sammy the one wearing red lipstick?

'Yeah, that video was funny,' Nicki said, admiring the cheese plant's leaves.

Feeling shy and hoping to find Anoop, Max went to the bar. There was no sign of her. Max Whatsapped Patricia. She replied immediately.

Nooo. No-one from work at all? Nothing wrong with having two plants, don't worry. Did you give her the card?

Shit. Max had taken Patricia's advice to be bold with the card.

Nicki had made space next to her on the bench. Her leg pressed warmly against Max's. This was Max's moment. The card was in the bag on the floor. Purpose and Resolve. Also, Courage and Integrity. The woman in red lipstick leant across, lifted a wine bottle and topped up Nicki's glass.

'Nicki, I forgot, there's a card for you,' Max said.

Nicki opened the envelope. On the front of the card was a drawing of a cheese plant. Patricia had found it online and paid for next day delivery. Max took long slow breaths. Resolve.

Dear Nicki,

Wishing you the best and happiest of birthdays! You may no longer be in sunny Peru, but hopefully this plant (Cheesy Two) will bring the jungle back into your life. I think you're lovely and we should hang out outside work again. Max xxx

While Nicki read the card, Max dropped a hand down in the gap between both of their hips. This way, if she wanted to, Nicki could squeeze Max's hand.

Nicki finished reading and, moving her leg away, turned towards the red-lipsticked woman. A hot flush of shame ran through Max.

'Immo,' Nicki said. 'Me and Max work together. Read this nice message.' She passed the card to the red-lipsticked woman and stood up. 'I'm just going to say hi to those guys.'

Max watched as Immo scanned the card. Everything was swirling very fast, or alternatively, slowly, as if the room were underwater.

'Making moves, are you?' Immo shouted across the table.

Max choked on lager.

'It's been difficult for Nicki with Sammy,' Immo said, as if Max knew who Sammy was; as if Max should agree. 'They are so in love, it's tragic,' she said.

'Who?' Max said, heart pounding.

'Nicki and Sammy! Sammy is her girlfriend. Sammy is her girlfriend!' Grabbing Max's wrist, she continued. 'She had a student visa here. She had to go back to Peru and Nicki went with her for six months. Nicki thought they would

break up but they've stayed together. Didn't you know?'

Like machinery that needed oiling, the cogs shrieked in defiance as they pulled the pieces into place. Why had Max never asked what Nicki's trip was for? Or who took the photos for her Instagram? Or why her flat seemed so empty now she was back?

Feeling sick, Max nodded, took a final gulp of lager and set the empty glass on the table. A bartender whisked it away. Integrity.

'Shots!' another of Nicki's friends shouted, bringing a tray over. 'Nicki, shots!'

The tray was set on the table and a shot glass placed into Nicki's hand. She tipped her head back with everyone after the count of three. The man with the yellow beanie perched on top of his head was trying to flip cards off the table and catch them.

Max headed to the bar again. 'Double gin and tonic.' Nicki had a girlfriend she went travelling with while Max made wraps and bought plants and behaved like a fool. A fool who internalised corporate values and assumed others did the same.

Nicki was still clutching the shot glass. She was crying.

Immo held her arms. 'Don't CRY on your BIRTHDAY,' she shouted and pushed her face close to Nicki's. Nicki's other friends gathered around her. The yellow-beanie man kissed her cheek.

It was enough. Winding through the boozed bodies, Max fell out the door into fresh cold air.

On Wednesday Max and Nicki were in the same meeting. Max, who had avoided Nicki all week, read emails as they waited for more colleagues to arrive. Nicki tapped her phone against the table.

'Max, thank you for coming on the weekend. Sorry we didn't chat much. We'd all been to bottomless brunch and I was wasted. Did you hear what happened? Someone fucking stole your plant! It's actually heartbreaking. Who would do that? I told Sammy and she said she'd send me another one, because now I'm worried about the plant she got me all alone in my flat. Isn't that cute?'

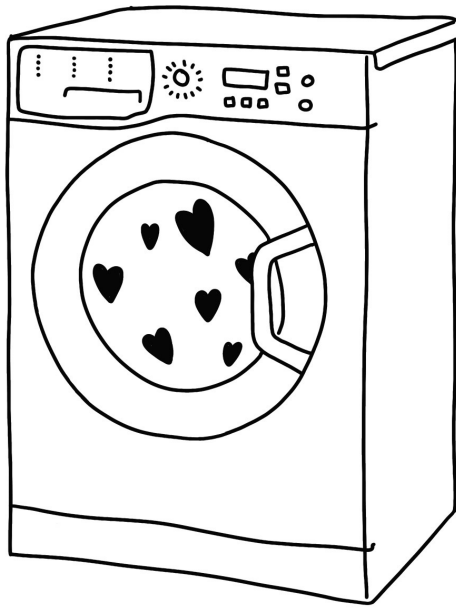
'It's cute,' Max agreed. 'Surely someone took it by mistake. I hope they look after it.'

Max and Patricia hadn't been getting on so well since the weekend. That evening, Max cooked a supermarket pizza and ate it in bed watching Netflix. Cheesy Two stood on the bedside table. Max switched off their phone. When the Netflix show was funny Max turned towards the plant and laughed. The protagonist hit a problem and Max squeezed the edge of the plant's pot, flexing the plastic. Before turning out the light Max whispered a soft goodnight. And all through the dreamless night, if ever Max awoke, they saw Cheesy Two's leaves outlined in lamplight that seeped round the edges of the blind.

LOVE LETTERS TO HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

TO THE WASHING MACHINE

WORDS BY ROSIE CASTLE, ILLUSTRATION BY LA KINGSBEER @LCKDREWTHIS



Shall I compare you to the dishwasher?
You are more lovely and more functional.
Though the other device be far posher,
Its leaves a residue to unction all.

While your gentle spins turn our threads soft,
Our champagne flutes and glasses shatter.
Your lavender perfume is noted oft,
Yet our side plates make an awful clatter.

Dear spinner, we request your wise advice,
For our dishes don't clean as they oughta.
Please tell your rival to scrub our fish slice,
And to stop filling with excess water.

All day long you cleanse our sweat, tears, and blood.
We thank you, now please promise not to flood.

ARTIFICIAL GRASS ANIMALS

WORDS BY ELLEN ROBERTSON, ILLUSTRATION BY LILY GRANT @LILYROSEGRANT_ART

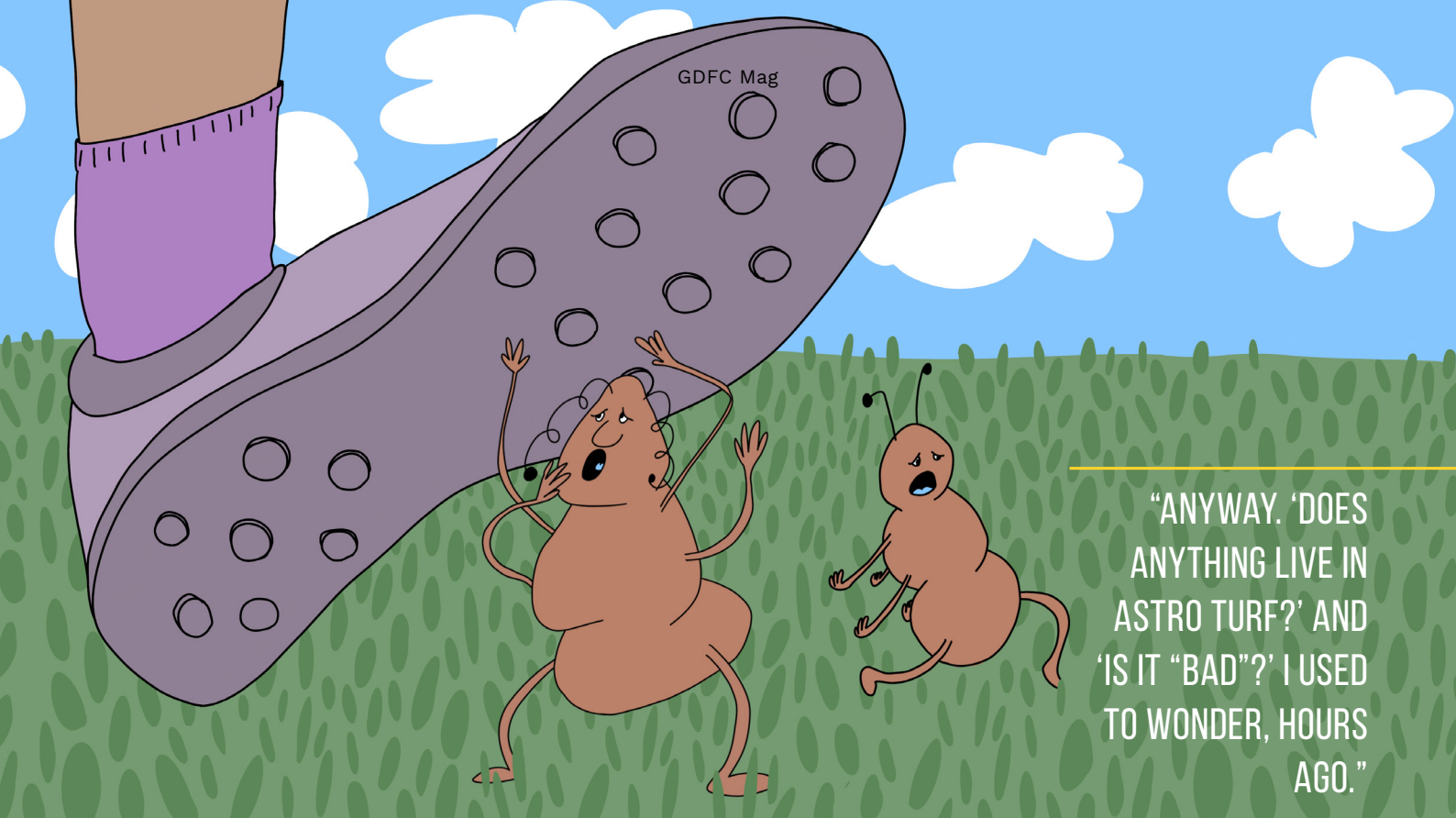
It's late, and I am haunted by the echoes of a dream I'm pretty sure no mortal has ever dared to dream before. But, the bird perched metaphorically on my chamber door isn't banging on about laundry detergent. Instead, my raven* keeps quoting: 'Does anything live in astro turf?' To be honest, I'd rather it was doing the 'Nevermore' stuff because at least that's enigmatic. I've tried to ignore it, and go back to sleep. I've already done what you usually do when awoken by a persistent raven* and muttered aloud: 'Get thee back to into the tempest and the Night's Plutonian Shore'. But will it listen? Will it fuck. The question burrows deeper. Grass is full of life. But what about its plasticky cousin? Presumably, larks don't swoop down of a dewy morning and hope to catch worms wriggling free of the standard polyester tire cord backing. Or do they? Guys: are there bugs in there?

As Dr B**, who taught me GCSE Science, can attest: I am not a biologist. She's not a biologist anymore, actually. I saw on Facebook recently that she left teaching at the beginning of the year to follow her passion and make soap. (Aren't other people's passions weird?) It won't have escaped your notice that in recent weeks the market for soaps is unusually buoyant, certainly compared to the alarming downturn faced by most startups. Dr B never seemed all that nefarious when she was telling us to revise photosynthesis (a little bit pushy maybe?), but now I can't help but feel the timing is suspicious. With hindsight, her early captions, '#WashYourHands', 'You can never be too clean! :)', 'there's a deadly virus coming buy my soap', seem more and more sinister. Those hashtags are the daubings on the wall, and her lair? Pinterest. Of course. Yes, setting up that sudsy little empire right before the outbreak of Covid-19 might be a 'coincidence', and heck, it might even seem uncharitable to publicly cast aspersions on the character of a decent woman just trying to make a difficult late-career switch when there's no 'evidence' she's necessarily started a global pandemic, but I'll level with you: I don't trust anyone with an Etsy shop. I don't know what goes on on that site, but they all seem to have access to a lot of glue? Ask yourself: who needs that much glue? Maybe you're fine with it.

I digress. For once, I'm not awake thinking about the whole Dr B thing. What I suddenly must

know is: when we footie-players habitually descend (lockdown notwithstanding) onto the astro pitches of London, are we in fact running amok among a tiny polymethylenic ecosystem? Are we sending insects scurrying from our feet like New Yorkers from Godzilla? Are stags and stinks and other myriad forms of beetle shielding their young, and squeezing their eyes shut, and praying they escape our studs unscathed? Are we antagonising the ants??? (Grammarians among you will raise your eyebrows at that but I maintain the sentence needs three question marks. Pls don't @ me.) If there is a fragile miniature world trying to survive beneath those fake ribbons of greenery, we're monsters. If, on the other hand, there's nothing living in it, if we've just ripped up real, rooted, living grass, and then proceeded to cover the bare earth in tarmac, and then - adding insult to the ground's injury - to cover that tarmac in a bright, spongy imitation of the turf that came before, a garish but ultimately sterile ghost, then... we're still monsters. But we're worse? (Are we worse?) Should I feel angryTM about this? I'm happy to but be cross but I'd like to know where on the scale of things it should fall? Is this as bad as straws? A biodiversity-squashing carpet of evil that's been obligingly spread under our feet this whole time? One that's allowed the ball to travel very smoothly?

So, as with any repetitive question that flits and flutters around your chamber at 3am on a strangely sleepless quarantine night (I'm doing the raven thing again): I've Googled it, honey! Probably I should have done something more exciting like trek to Whittington Park in my pyjamas with a magnifying glass, but my PJs are skimpy and anyway it's 2020 pal and what's the internet for if not to dampen burning late-night queries? This quarantine, I've had recourse to sweatily type "Help, I fancy everyone" and "Is it normal to feel nothing for Sigourney Weaver"*** into Google on the same night. And I wonder why it knows me so well. It's worth saying at this point that I am fine. Before you get to this next paragraph and think 'she's not fine?' just a head's up: I'm actually doing well. I have just applied for a new writing job that I'm excited about, and before you ask, no it's not writing adverts for Dr B's soaps. (I did enquire but she said she doesn't 'need extra staff yet'. 'Yet'. Wake up!)



“ANYWAY. ‘DOES ANYTHING LIVE IN ASTRO TURF?’ AND ‘IS IT “BAD”?’ I USED TO WONDER, HOURS AGO.”

But hey, reader! Listen! I’m stunned by the results of my late night astro search. Not because my question was answered. It wasn’t. At all. I’m shook because what’s come up in the search results, indeed what I am currently scrolling through, mouth agape in amazement, is image upon image of every animal you can think of, from the largest seagoing mammals to the littlest earth-dwelling arachnids, every single last one of them made out of fake grass.

You can buy them. You can rent them. If you want, if you really want, you can obtain as many artificial grass animals as you have pounds to burn. A whole new world I never knew existed. I guess I finally know how Fleming felt, peering into the petri dish where penicillin abounded, except this discovery matters.

If in a few years’ time, let’s say, your firstborn and heir happens to be bending your ear about a footie-themed birthday party. Yeah, you could hire a pitch and write out some invitations and bake a cake and blah blah blah I’m bored and your kid’s in tears. Because you didn’t try. Be honest. You didn’t really try. You could at least have added in a couple of little green piglets to nibble the edge of the tramline and benignly spectate! You could have gone the whole hog (je m’excuse?!) and rented a gorgeous flock of artificial grass flamingoes to spread themselves around the D, camouflaged defenders, ready to take down anyone who tried to score (even and especially the little prick who keeps going in for slide tackles when you’ve expressly said you wanted a clean game)! How your progeny will laugh, and how they will thank you in years to come!

But why wait until you have a family to start your collection? When we’re once more allowed within two metres of each other, why not absolutely prank the living daylights out of your friends by asking them to meet you in a park, and surrounding yourself with a veritable safari of the guys? Why not get an artificial grass dog, now? Not only would it provide a really meagre substitute for the contact of another living thing, but even better: you could take it on one of your sanctioned daily walks. ‘Rex, we’ve only been out for half an hour! You can’t have turned into grass already!’ Well, you can improvise your own lines. Why? Why not?! There’s at least one astro sculpture company online that takes commissions, and they don’t just make animals. I can’t stress this enough, they also make people. Artificial grass human beings. Make. A. Grass. Wife. To. Live. In. Your. Porch! Make a grass goblin to live under your stairs! Use your imagination! THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS! GET A GRIP!

Anyway. ‘Does anything live in astro turf?’ and ‘Is it “bad”?’ I used to wonder, hours ago. I still don’t know. And, at the same time: how could it be? In many ways, the more I think the important thing isn’t to satisfy the raven*, but to ask instead: ‘how much does it cost to buy a raven made of astro turf?’ and the answer to that is: ‘it depends what size you’re looking for you can kind of spend as much as you want’. Night.

* metaphor

** this is her real name

*** no!

GDFC TIMELINE

WORDS BY FLEUR COUSENS @FLEURCOUSENS

2015

SEPTEMBER

First training session at Whitechapel

Coach Josh + Coach Ruby joined GDFC

OCTOBER

Month of training at William Ellis School

NOVEMBER

Training began at Kings Cross Community Pitch

We were officially named Goal Diggers FC

DECEMBER

Our logo was created

The Old Red Lion Theatre & Pub became our official kit sponsors

2016

FEBRUARY

The first official GDFC kit arrived

Entered our first ever league at St. Mary Magdalene Academy School

JULY

Summer training in Highbury Fields

Entered the Sunday 5s league in Southwark

Ciara Monahan became a GDFC coach

2018

JUNE

Summer training in Finsbury Park

First GDFC Comedy Night hosted by Chloe Petts with headliners Desiree Burch and Emma Sidi

JULY

GDFC marched in the London Pride Parade

Super 5s tournament plate winners

AUGUST

Training moved to our current pitch at Holloway School

SEPTEMBER

We entered the monthly Clapham 11s league

Playing for Kicks tournament winners

NOVEMBER

First Murder on Zidane's Floor at the Yard Theatre

JANUARY

Transgress x GDFC comedy and drag fundraiser

MAY

First official match outing in our goald Nike kit

GDFC Beginners played at Stamford Bridge

JUNE

The Festival of Football began
Nike x GDFC x Kit Bag "Game Changers" video

Lily Grant graced the cover of Timeout London

GDFC Guardian feature on women's football

Winners of Islington's Sports Club of the Year 2019

Goals on tour: Portugal Amateur World Cup winners

JULY

Summer training in Victoria Park

AUGUST

Amy Lester became a GDFC coach

SEPTEMBER

GDFC Beginners won the Muslimah Sports Association Tournament

2017

SEPTEMBER

Roar of the Lionesses book launch

OCTOBER

Rowan's Bowl social

NOVEMBER

Our first wave of merch arrived: beanies, and long sleeve white football shirts

FEBRUARY

We entered the Tuesday 7s league at Whittington Park

Coach Ruby's final training session

MARCH

Closure of Kings Cross Community Pitch

Semi-finalists in the Ladies Super Liga tournament in Crossharbour

APRIL

We trained at Shoreditch Park gravel pitch

GDFC vs Fans tournament at Shoreditch Power League

2019

MARCH

GDFC was named as one of Time Out London's 'Three of the Best Women's Teams'

Kitty Burne became a GDFC coach

JULY

GDFC white summer kit arrived

Our beginners team got to the final of the Summer Super5s Tournament thanks to Sid's iconic penalty

SEPTEMBER

We entered the Beginners Super5s League at Mabley Green

We entered the bi-monthly 11-a-side Clapham Women's Saturday Football League

FEBRUARY

GDFC qualified for round two of the FA People's Cup

MARCH

First 40+ session at the Arsenal Hub

GDFC made it to the semi-finals of the penultimate round of the FA People's Cup

APRIL

Calcetto Eleganza invited the committee out to Milan for a weekend of football

2020

OCTOBER

GDFC Comedy Night hosted by Jodie Mitchell

JANUARY

GDFC became members-only with a membership cap of 200

GDFC moved from Facebook to the TeamApp

Thursday Footb-ALL sessions began

MARCH

Life as an online QuaranTeam began

APRIL

Chloe Morgan joined the Coaching Team

MAY

10 Diggers ran 1264.6KM in a week and won the Super 5s Running Challenge

Fist issue of the GDFC Mag published

OPINION

CORONAVIRUS IS FINALLY CONNECTING US IN A WAY THAT TECHNOLOGY NEVER COULD

WORDS BY GEORGIA IACOVOU @GEOIAC

Isn't it great? We're now all connected by an unstoppable virus — not a never-ending throng of consumer products.

This last decade and a half has seen a terrifying hyper-growth in digital communications. Everyone in the Western World has become reachable at a single click or tap or voice command; wow, such convenience. Now we're all overloaded with notifications and screen fatigue — which is great. The more notifications and fatigue you have, the more **connected** you are. I have 14k unread WhatsApp messages... I've never felt more connected.

This gruesome obsession we have with staying 'connected' has prompted further production of even more apps, that are designed to stop you looking at your phone so much. Some of them even cost money, like this one called Forest, where you grow a digital tree while focusing on your work. So, just to clarify: you can now **pay** to put an app on your **phone** in order to reduce how much **interaction you have with your phone**. Staying connected is free, but even a brief stint in superficial levels of disconnection comes at a cost. Interesting 🤔.

Of course this is all because 'staying connected' is just another — entirely false — 'benefit' of social media, and other services. Silicon Valley and Big Tech in general may be sitting there telling us about how much they're changing the world through innovation, but really they're just there to deploy their putrid brand of fully-automated capitalism.

The attention economy, unsurprisingly, continues to thrive under COVID-19

The other week, our very own Emily Cousens did a very engaging presentation on the economy, and what implications COVID-19 may

present. Something we didn't quite touch on was the economy of attention that consumer technology runs on; that so much of your digital life is governed by machine recommendations designed to hold your attention for hours at a time.

Our attention is finite; even if you've been furloughed there are only so many episodes of Brooklyn 99 you can fit in to your waking hours. This is exactly what enables the attention economy to thrive: the very fact that it operates on a model of **static scarcity**. There will always be 24 hours in a day — no more. As long as it makes money, the fight for our attention will never end.

Apps like Forest *may* be built with good intentions, but in actuality it forces you to allocate your attention to it just like other apps do. If you exit Forest while your tree is still growing it will just die — all they've done is gamify attention, and take £1.99 from your bank account. All in the name of making you more productive (which, as we know, is the MOST important thing).

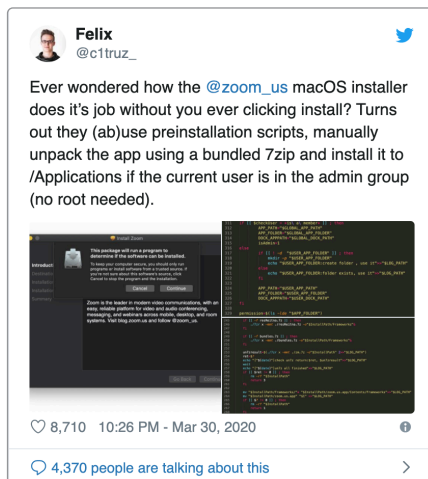
The only way technology connects us is that we are all utterly at its mercy...

Last year, in a bid to distract consumers from ever looming privacy concerns, and to make himself seem more likeable and less like a poor CGI rendering of a human, Mark Zuckerberg announced a radical redesign of Facebook which will be rolling out very soon. This new design of course does nothing to protect people's privacy (why would it? It's Facebook), and in some countries will come with a dating feature. Yes, dating.

Why am I telling you this? Because — as usual — this is yet another ploy from a tech giant to amass as much attention and data as possible.

We have no control over it, because we have become begrudgingly reliant on services like Facebook. For some people during COVID-19 and beyond, WhatsApp is the only way they have to communicate with loved ones. For others, Instagram maybe the one viable place to continue to run their small local business. Yes, we are 'connected' by these technologies, but only because there is little or no alternative.

Another shining example is of course Zoom, the only video conferencing app that can successfully host more than three or four people without horrible lag issues. This is the case for me, anyway. And yet, I hate it. Why? Because like Facebook and Google et al, it's established itself as the unquestioned standard in it's market, while being completely opaque and underhanded. This tweet describes what I mean perfectly:



👉 Translation: Zoom installs itself on your computer without you realising. You know, just like malware does. I'm not saying that Zoom is malicious, but I am saying that it is a piece of software which is hard to trust — and yet, we kind of **have to use** it if we want to talk to each other. Technology seems to 'innovate' all around us, and we seem to have no say in the matter.

What else do we have hardly any control over? Ah yes, COVID-19.

This virus has had such an impact, that all of us — globally — have had to make radical changes to our behaviour. These changes are entirely unprecedented, and technology has actually done very little to help. What we're seeing at the moment is not the product of years of innovation in digital utilities; all we're doing is using pre-existing tech in slightly different ways.

That's because big tech industries, as we've seen, are far more interested building things that are optimised for profit — not for helping society. So now that the virus is here, the great innovators are completely ill-equipped.

"Big tech doesn't build anything. It's not likely to give us vaccines or diagnostic tests. We don't even seem to

know how to make a cotton swab. Those hoping the US could turn its dominant tech industry into a dynamo of innovation against the pandemic will be disappointed." —David Rotman

Social media and the like continue to exist, and we continue to share facets of our everyday lives. Except now, **we are all doing the exact same thing**. If you're savvy enough to construct your timelines in a way that blocks out videos of celebrities and other rich people lounging around in their ridiculous mansions, trying to be relatable, then you will see: we have quite literally never been more connected than this.

We must stay indoors. We must not go out except for food, essential work, or half an hour of exercise. We must all adjust, in our own way, to these new circumstances. Our love of football still connects us, because now instead of enjoying a game of football together, we all **miss it** together. Even if I ignored every GDFC-related post on any of my timelines, I would still be passively aware of this fact.

A strange byproduct of this pandemic is that we have reached a level of human connection that would otherwise be impossible — even with the most well-intended pieces of technology. For instance, we've all started to experience much more vivid dreams since full lockdown was announced (someone has even started collecting them if you're interested). Technology has played no part in this phenomenon.

In the UK, every Thursday evening at 8pm, everyone stands at their doors and windows and claps to give thanks to the NHS during this hard time. I don't need the news or social media to tell me that this is happening — I can hear it perfectly every time.

Depending on who you are, you know that there are other people in your life who are just as bored as you are — or just as busy. You know that others will be struggling with money; or starved for time alone in cramped living conditions; or desperate for human interaction because they live alone too.

I don't even have to tell my friends that I miss them — they already know that to be true. And I know that they miss me. We're all aware that a video call is not the same as actually hanging out. You don't need a quantum computer to work that one out.

So, while this pandemic has dissolved the already flimsy lie that capitalism is the only way to live, and exposed all of the 'innovative' technology we've built as nothing more than a clumsy default solution to remote communications, it has also connected us with each other in a way never seen before.

The power that COVID-19 has had over us in just a few short months is completely unmatched by any technology available to us at the moment; sure, many of us saw a pandemic coming, but there is no prediction model out there that foresaw the levels of human connection we are achieving as we speak.

HOW I LEARNED TO STOP WORRYING AND LOVE THE LOCKDOWN

WORDS BY JP CASEY @JP__CASEY, ILLUSTRATION BY ANASTASIA KUCHTA @ANASTASIAKUCHTA

Pandemics and lockdowns and aliens oh my! It can be easy to fall into a sense of despair at the general malaise of the world around us, with each day bringing a fresh raft of ominous news bulletins and foreboding op-eds heralding the end of days. The working world has been awash with scalding hot takes, both sensible and clickbaity, that the lockdown will usher in a new age of working from home, where Deliveroo riders are the only people permitted to leave the sanctity of their homes, Zoom calls will invade our bedrooms and offices like a kind of chirpily-branded Big Brother, and we'll all have to get Microsoft Teams passwords tattooed onto our forearms to fit into the new world order.

But this is not all doom and gloom, despite the general downtrodden bent of even my own Twitter feed. As the world realigns itself to the new reality that going outside is a terrifying, dangerous concept, there have arisen opportunities to distract, entertain and even improve oneself from the relatively safe confines of our homes. Of course, this is not to downplay the significance of the current pandemic and subsequent lockdown, but rather to reframe it as an opportunity to learn new hobbies, pick up old ones, and begin to reassess and restructure one's life. Now that we have nothing to do but knit hats and consider which decorations to hang on the walls of our homes in Animal Crossing, it is perhaps apt to consider exactly how we're going to knit those hats, and how we can reshape our relationships to make the best of a surreal situation.

PERSONAL PROJECTS

As suggested above, there is no shortage of new hobbies flooding into the homes of bored people across the land, with regular pub trips and excursions to local parks replaced by a manic desire to, say, fill out a stamp collection, or sew a complete wardrobe from scratch using nothing more than a few lengths of thread, some fabric purchased from Gumtree, and an unrelenting resolve.

Artistic projects are among the most popular, with crafty undertakings such as sewing, or more abstract interests such as painting and drawing both relatively easy to take up, and offering the comforting payoff of yielding a tangible thing you can hold in your hands and say "look, I made that!" With much of the physical ripped from our lives, with phone calls and emails replacing human contact, these artistic endeavours offer a return to the tangible and the familiar.

Personally, I have taken this opportunity to get back into a creative project I have left untouched for some time: the painting of my vast collection of Warhammer miniatures. I shan't bore you with the details of this undertaking – save for enthusing, which I hope you will indulge me, that Orks are far more satisfying to paint than those fiddly Dark Eldar – but seeing my army grow from a collection of shadowy, unpainted blobs to vibrant, colourful warriors, has been nothing short of delightful. I've even built a truck with a face on it, in scenes that do not at all closely resemble the "could a depressed person make this" exchange from Parks and Rec.

But ultimately, the point is that these projects are personal, and ought to be engaged with and judged as such. One of the limiting factors behind many well-natured but ultimately stressful collaborative projects of the pre-lockdown days, particular artistic ones such as book clubs and drawing classes, include an implicit element of public assessment, and dare I say judgement. It's not enough to attend a still life drawing class, but you must draw under the beady eye of an instructor, or the snatched glance of an unnervingly talented neighbour.

Obviously these communal functions have their own benefits, but the lockdown is forcing us to engage with personal projects in an entirely personal manner, and could help spark the kind of serene isolation you see in those Medieval paintings of clerks writing books, where they have acres of gorgeous countryside on their horizons, and nothing but cats and flowers for company.

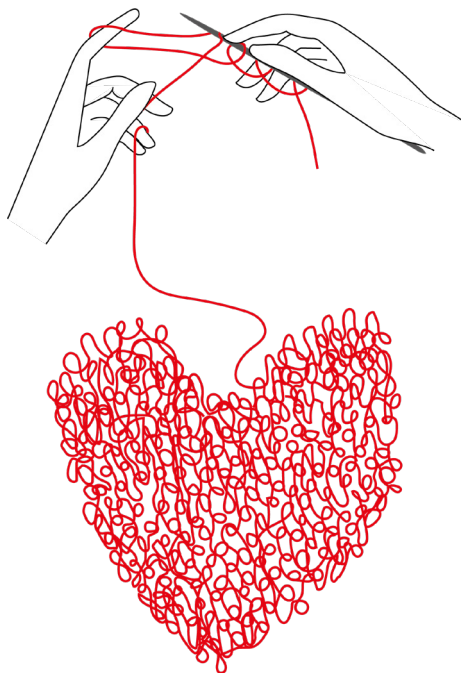
GETTING MOVING AND MAKING PROGRESS

The other impact of this sudden elimination of colleagues and contemporaries is the subsequent removal of arbitrary deadlines, at least if you avoid some of the more enthusiastic realms of Twitter. Take athletic targets, for instance; during a sporting season, there are all many of opportunities to test oneself and the impacts of one's training, from regular team practices to full-on matches, and I have found the relentless slog of a season to be a relatively unhelpful measure of one's progress. Say your role on your team is that of a substitute, or someone played out of position to accommodate a more established squad member, experiences which have categorised my footballing career, if it can be called that, thus far; it can be difficult to see tangible progress from all the training one is doing in such circumstances.

But now, these somewhat arbitrary measures have been removed, and while the lack of matches, training and team-based booze-ups are sorely missed, the ability to simply train, or practice, or refine one's technique, is a welcome relief. I have started running, for instance, and instead of worrying that I'm not able to get up and down the wing as quickly as I ought to be in the 79th minute of a cup tie, I'm simply running for the sake of running, comforted in the knowledge that all progress is good progress, and that the fruits of my efforts aren't tied to relatively meaningless things like how many goals a random team scores in a random game.

And this is doubly true for exercises without an objective measurement, such as the time one completes a run or the pace one moves at. Stretches, home workouts, yoga, and whatever Joe Wicks is up to this week are all ways to keep fit and get those endorphins going without any kind of arbitrary targets or goals hanging over one's head like a Damoclesian sword.

This approach also applies to other projects. When I would be bouncing between my office job, training sessions, social obligations and personal downtime, like a particularly energetic piece of Flubber boinging to and fro until I would crash into an exhausted splat upon my bed in the evening and yearn for a day off, I would often be concerned that I wasn't giving a person or a group of people the time and attention they deserved. It was easy to see how many hours I was devoting to a particular hobby, and comparing these totals to my perception of the importance of that hobby, and draw inaccurate and unhelpful conclusions like "I spend most of my time walking to and from work, therefore walking is my favourite hobby".



Now, there is a freedom to taking things as they come, and engaging with people and interests without many of these arbitrary metrics bouncing around.

LOVE IN THE TIME OF QUARANTINE

And on the subject of engaging with people, the lockdown has presented a helpful opportunity to shift relationships from passive interactions to active interactions. Take, for example, The Great De-friending, a joke that pops up on social media every few years that deals with a person removing many people from their Facebook friends list, on the grounds that many of the denizens of that roster are not, in fact, friends; random people met at parties, people from secondary school that haven't been contacted in years; someone with the same name as you that you added on a whim when you were 14 and now haven't had the gumption to remove.

I like to imagine the quarantine and my social circles within it in a similar fashion. No longer are my social interactions passive by nature – people that I see everyday through work or communal activities who I may not actually be that close to – but they are active, in that I must actively find time to speak to the friends and family that I truly love. In some ways, this can be construed as a negative, as the contraction of a social circle as low-key small-talk and water-cooler chat is all but abolished from society; but I'm choosing to see it as a positive, that I'm making an effort to do things – anything! – with the people closest to me.

The breakdown of typical social structures may even have helped this, with the collapse of office hours meaning I am no longer beholden to daily interactions with those losers from the floor above me in the building who all massively overdress for work and enthuse about their standing desks on the stairwells between our departments. Just the other day, one of my best friends visited briefly, while maintaining a distance of six feet, of course, to deliver a cake for a flatmate's birthday, and I got far more out of our miniature, planned session of hanging out than a thousand hours of small-talk with the standing deskers in the office.

Of course, this positivity comes from a relatively privileged position. I have a phone with which to call my friends, and a laptop with which to participate in needlessly elaborate Zoom-based pub quizzes, so the enactment of this realignment of social priorities is by no means possible for all. Yet the opportunity to realign them remains, and hopefully, when this lockdown does end – and I do say "when" because I need some light at the end of the tunnel – I'll have a greater appreciation for those who I may have neglected over the course of the nine-to-five grind.

LESSONS LEARNED: A CORONAVIRUS LEGACY?

WORDS BY MAT CHES

In a recent GDFC lecture, the legacy of COVID-19 was questioned. Of course, this is not set in stone. Whatever predictive legacy we imagine now could be momentarily overturned by the unexpected. However, legacy is a product of our present decision-making. There are choices to be made in how we frame the coronavirus narrative. What will we remember? What will we forget? What lessons will be learnt from a pandemic that put the world on pause? And will these lessons change how society functions?

Scattered across newspapers and political rhetoric, a wartime legacy has been invoked through images intended to parallel the fight against COVID-19. Like the “great” wars, coronavirus has been a leveller. It affects everyone, everywhere. And yet, though the virus may not discriminate, its impacts are hardly uniform across society. It feels uneasy to hear phrases that consistently glorify death in service and paint patriotic images of a nation on the front line. We should absolutely acknowledge the selflessness of key workers across the globe. However, this sort of blanket imagery entices people to see the virus as an external enemy, from foreign lands, that we are “united” in fighting. This is problematic in countless ways. Primarily, borrowing from a wartime legacy subtly shifts accountability away from government and negates the very evident reality: those in power did not take this pandemic seriously. The extent of lives lost are, in part, due to a continued neglect of key services and the choice to ignore global calls for lockdown. What does this tell us? COVID-19 was not an “invisible mugger”. It was seen coming a long way in the distance. And instead of lockdown, the government has resorted to measures that include issuing £60,000 to the family of a deceased healthcare worker whilst they count plastic gloves individually to bolster the reported numbers of PPE. Clearly those in charge have a price for everything and continue to privilege profit and the economy over the immediate welfare of the people.

THE IMPORTANCE OF MEMORY AND NARRATIVE IN THE CREATION OF LEGACY

Though borrowing from wartime legacies is not helpful, one wartime sentiment has been stuck on replay in my head: lest we forget. Often people think of memory as a snapshot in time. In reality, individual and collective memory is negotiated and renegotiated over time. Built around narratives and belief systems, memory provides us with a messy collection of moralistic lessons that feature in our everyday decisions. If this is the case, why not be conscious in our own creation? Ultimately, as the image starts to soften and time acts as a distancer from the original emotion, the lessons need to be clear enough to sustain the motivation for change. So, lest we forget the context of this pandemic, the costs and the lessons born from it. Remember the significance of choosing to frame history in a certain light and the active role we take in perpetuating or negating certain narratives. This will be fundamental to the debates that decide our future.

Where should these debates start? Overnight, we bore witness to the rapid expansion of government power and a structural change to the way society interacts. From ‘empty’ government pockets, billions of pounds materialised to manage the virus, provide incomes and save business. I hope we can use this moment to note that, though rare, change can happen instantaneously. It is not always necessary to constrain our economic and political imagination. So, what legacies can we imagine that we may not have done before?

KEY WORK

Every Thursday at 8pm, neighbours step outside to share a moment of appreciation for key workers. It is a nod to all the underpaid, overworked NHS staff as well as those who provide other fundamental services every day. Filled with an overwhelming sense of emotion,

we exchange waves with people who were once, for the most part, strangers. We probably don't know the reality of the virus for those most at risk or in contact but perhaps a shared minute is enough space for us to imagine. Without them, the country would not eat, they would not have basic amenities and for many, they would not survive. This tokenistic action should be the cherry on top of a fully equipped, fully supported key workforce. It is not. Until now, key workers have been rarely acknowledged, let alone valued. Why?

I could detail the horrendous salaries of investors to contrast the wages of nurses who can barely make rent and feed their children but let's keep this simple. Wages are not valued according to some measure of usefulness or even time spent working. A salary package is primarily determined by how much "exchange value" a worker creates in the market (even if that exchange serves no purpose in society). This means that many key jobs do not necessarily pay enough to live and are less appealing. And yet, as we have seen: when all else has come to a grinding halt, these jobs are fundamental.

Where could this feature in the COVID-19 legacy? We know what labour is key to the welfare of society. Collectively recognised across the world, this could be the foundation necessary to correct the dissonance between essential work and the monetary value we place on it. That is not to say we reverse the scale but rather, rally around movements to increase the pay of key workers and properly regulate private industries where the primary function is to increase shareholder profit. There are many ways which this could be done, some of which I am familiar with and some of which I am not. How we action change is another question. My point is: the social and economic capital given to key work needs to align more with the value these jobs offer society.

A CRISIS OF CAPITALISM?

This brings me to another potential consideration for a COVID legacy. Nothing has rattled the cage of capitalism quite so much. Picture the emptiness. Noiseless, vacant streets that you would usually side step down to reach your destination. Barely lit restaurants and clothing stores with the identically styled mannequin from last week and every other week since lockdown started. These are the images of a world on pause.

The problem with our economy is that it is structured to drive the growth of what is called "exchange value". In other words, the primary aim is to acquire surplus money through the commodification of space, products and goods that can be bought and sold. When the world is still and

all but essential exchange remains, relentless profit is no longer facilitated and markets begin to shrink. Sadly, these images will be the symbol for one of the biggest recessions ever seen. Economic collapse will spiral to cause less profits for business, less capacity to keep people employed, less income to purchase goods and so the cycle continues. But if our economy was not geared towards maximising money, would this be true? Is there an alternative?

The answer lies in understanding how and where life continues to flourish. People rush to the parks to enjoy their one allocated hour. Runners and cyclists burst along the canals to compete for virtual productivity medals. Community organisers play bingo whilst repeatedly shouting numbers at the partially deaf grandma on their street. For those who have a home, it has become the centre of existence. A small, London flat with no outdoor space, shared amongst three friends. These are the places, spaces and things we require to live.

What if the economy was about extracting the most use for life not the most monetary value? We could produce less without the effects of economic crisis detailed above. Producing less on this scale would be hugely beneficial to combatting climate change. It would address some of the most debilitating stressors in our daily lives. Housing would no longer be a prospect for ever-increasing real estate profiteering and accumulation. Instead, we could see the advent of a fundamental right to shelter that doesn't squeeze people into tiny rooms for a large percentage of their income – or worse, onto the streets

whilst they wait indefinitely for a secure place to live.

During COVID-19, governments have stepped in to facilitate aspects of an economy geared towards this kind of welfare. Certain basic provisions for life are protected, there are cases of nationalising private hospitals, "universal" income has been partially provided and government regulation has meant that provisions key to healthcare are not subject to the whims of the market. Though by no means perfect and with more to be done, it does show that this kind of thinking is possible.

Unfortunately for the UK, the actions being taken are those of a Conservative government whose motivation is to address acute risks in an unprecedented time. Though by-products of COVID-19, these actions were not envisioned to fundamentally challenge the system we live in. Therefore, with the current government in power, will these extraordinary measures continue beyond a moment of crisis to see a more substantial change? And what happens when they begin to scale them back?

EXCERPT FROM LESSONS

BY KATE TEMPEST

I thought I'd learnt my lesson once
I learned it 'til it thumped my
head to numbness
Yearning it would let me rest

And then I learned it more
I learned it again
And then, just when I thought I had
it done

I found myself
Mid-mistake
Realising I'd not yet begun

I've seen the lions turn to cubs
And I have seen the hunters turn to
prey
The lessons will come again
tomorrow
'Cause they weren't learnt today

“PEOPLE NO LONGER TRAVEL TO WORK WITHOUT EVER NOTICING WHO GETS ON AND OFF AT THESE SAME STOPS.”

UNPRECEDENTED OR A RETURN TO NORMAL?

In the space of four years at a central London university, I looked out of a window and over my desk onto a foodbank. I saw the line grow and grow until it began to wrap around most of the park. People of different ages, ethnicities, genders and nationalities would gather no matter the weather. This was the reality of austerity measures introduced to cut public spending in the aftermath of the 2008 economic crisis. To ‘balance the books’, austerity was designed to reduce a budget deficit exacerbated by money injected to revive a profit economy from recession. Spending reductions were made to welfare programmes, housing subsidies and social services.

The government bailout package issued as a response to COVID-19 is bigger than many of its predecessors. Where does all that money come from? It is a loan taken from different financial institutions or wealthy individuals and it comes with an interest rate. The government will have to pay this extraordinary amount (in addition to surplus) back to the lenders. To translate, those with that kind of money to lend will eventually profit and the interest will be paid by tax payers. Meanwhile, taxpayers are also the mostly likely to feel the effects of a comparably severe austerity package. Think inequality is bad now? The very rich may become richer, the poor may become poorer and the law-abiding taxpayer will pay out of pocket. To be frank, COVID-19 is brutal, but the next 10 to 20 years could be just as bleak.

This is why we need to consider the legacy of coronavirus now. Responses to COVID-19 may begin to follow the trajectory of previous economic crises. The government could enact packages that foster a return to normal, a return to growth, a return to a profit driven economy. Whilst most of what we know about the economy and society has been brought into question, why not drive the legacy to be one of a more fundamental change? There are ways to do this that are not so outside an ever-expansive realm of possibility. And if the Tory government won't do this, perhaps another might?

A LEGACY THAT IS MORE THAN YOUR OWN

Finally, it is important to remember that the impacts of the pandemic are felt just as differently across the bodies of society as everyday life is experienced. The topics written about in this article are through the lens of someone privileged, belonging to one space, which is potentially blind to others. If we are to introduce an economy for use value, it must be use for all. It is no wonder that the way we function is representative of the singular interests of very small elite groups that built institutions and business in their likeness.

In many ways, mutual aid has been a beautiful challenge to this. Neighbourly faces, street Whatsapp groups and weekly bingo. Searching for bizarre shopping ingredients whilst others remain in isolation or delivering prescriptions to the elderly gentleman who doesn't quite get your name right. These are the images of communities bound together. People no longer travel to work without ever noticing who gets on and off at these same stops. Ultimately, some bonds have been strengthened and some have been built. Reciprocal exchanges to support those around you, no matter how different, have attempted to fill gaps the government failed to. As beautiful this is, mutual aid is not untainted by its own internal politics. Who is not seen in your community? Is everyone taken care of equally? What about the substance user, the homeless person or refugees? What if your community only looks like you? Will your values still apply to other communities? My point here is not to issue some vague statement about relativity. It is simply to encourage flexibility and imagination into any legacy you create individually or collectively. Leave room for the untold stories or the stories you are not part of. Actively seek out to understand just how differentially COVID-19 has affected us. Weave others' stories into the tapestry of your own narrative. These voices will add texture to the lessons we learn and are equally, if not more so, important.

CHANGING THE RULES OF THE GAME

When writing this piece and thinking about its audience, I so desperately wanted to end on an uplifting note. But then I wondered if sometimes, leaving on such a note, negates the very lived and painful reality of those worst affected. I could list all the genuinely empowering actions taken to change the micro and macro setting in which we interact with each other and the world around us. And yet, by talking about what is already being done, this could induce others to think change is happening with or without their engagement. So, let me say this: the picture is bleak but the lessons are fresh. Be part of the collective consciousness that dares to imagine a place where our institutions and distribution of resources are not structured according to profit but for life. Dare to welcome the pain that comes with deconstructing a way of life that, for many, is barely living. And, rigorously analyse what actions you can take, if you aren't already, that move you beyond the realm of nodding in agreement to being part of a struggle that will never be easy but is necessary. Let the bleak picture be the motivator and remember. Remember who key workers are, what services are necessary for life and the faces of the community around you. Remember what the government is capable of and that the world can look different in a day. You may as well make change whilst the rules are being re-written.

PODCAST

DESERT ISLAND KICKS

PODCAST BY MAY ROBSON @DESERTISLANDKICKS, ILLUSTRATION BY LILY GRANT @LILYROSEGRANT_ART



FOUR TRACKS, A BOOK AND A LUXURY: WHAT WOULD YOU TAKE TO A DESERT ISLAND?

This is a fresh take on the classic Desert Island Discs. In each episode I will be asking a different GDFC guest to reflect on their football journey through song.

It comes as no surprise that the famous footballers cast away on BBC Radio 4 are all men. But football belongs to everyone, and the stories we tell must reflect this.

In COVID-19 lockdown, the idea of being marooned far from your friends and family might not be a welcome escape but rather an all-too familiar reality.

Nevertheless, I hope that this lockdown listening can help us all feel more connected and give a shout out to all the great female and non-binary footballers out there.

My first castaway is Izzy Agaylea: GDFC Striker, hair-icon and our very own treasure. Listen at <https://soundcloud.com/desertislandkicks>.

BOOK RECOMMENDATIONS

WORDS BY LILY LINDON @BOOKYMCBOOKFACE

WANT TO LOSE YOURSELF IN A GOOD NOVEL? COOL. BUT WHAT DO YOU WANT TO READ ABOUT FIRST?

- 1 SOMEONE THAT EXISTS IN ONE BEDROOM (LIKE ME): **MY YEAR OF REST AND RELAXATION, BY OTTESSA MOSHFEGH**
- 2 SOMEONE HAVING AN INTENSE, FRENCH, LESBIAN ROMANCE (LIKE ME): **ALL ABOUT SARAH, BY PAULINE DELABROY-ALLARD**
- 3 I WANT SOMETHING CLASSIC AND QUEER (LIKE ME): **ORLANDO, VIRGINIA WOOLF**
- 4 FOR GOD'S SAKE, JUST GIVE ME SOMETHING WITH FOOTBALL: **UNSEEN ACADEMICALS, TERRY PRATCHETT**

1 MY YEAR OF REST AND RELAXATION
BY OTTESSA MOSHFEGH

'I knew in my heart - this was, perhaps the only thing my heart knew back then - that when I'd slept enough, I'd be okay. I'd be renewed, reborn. My past life would be but a dream, and I could start over without regrets, bolstered by the bliss and serenity that I would have accumulated in my year of rest and relaxation.'

Our deeply unreliable narrator likes nothing except the escape of sleep. So, fired from her job in the modern art gallery (she was caught taking naps in the cupboard), and with the help of a definitely illegal psychiatrist, she forms a plan: take drugs to sleep at nearly all times. One day she will wake up like a butterfly from the cocoon, but for now she will surface only to get coffee, more pills, and VHS tapes of Whoopi Goldberg. But how relaxing is a year addicted to sleeping pills?

A daring concept brilliantly written (at a time when locking yourself in your room for a year seemed like it could only exist in fiction) and with a fascinating protagonist - think supermodel Eleanor Oliphant on drugs. Apathetic, cruel, and self-destructive, yet with an air of irony which makes the reader constantly second guess what her real feelings are. Like is the ending positive or ironic? I just don't know.

2 ALL ABOUT SARAH
BY PAULINE DELABROY-ALLARD, TRANS. ADRIANA HUNTER

'My partner's amused by this sudden, instant, almost abrupt friendship. I don't tell him that when I have the choice between spending time with him or with her, I choose her.'

It's all about impetuous, loud, obsessive Sarah, with her 'unique brand of beauty' and 'green, not really green eyes' and the spring when she comes into the narrator's life 'as if stepping onto a stage, with gusto, triumphant.' In Paris, their tornado romance becomes all-consuming: talking, smoking, making love between going to the cinema and listening to string quartets. But the candle can't burn like that forever.

A bestselling, award-winning debut in France, published in its sexy English translation earlier this year. A bit like Sally Rooney, but more French, more passionate, and obviously more lesbian. I don't think I breathed properly while reading the entire first half??? Also, it's short, and has short paragraph-like chapters, so it's good if your lockdown brain can't focus for long (believe me though, you'll race through this.)

3 ORLANDO
BY VIRGINIA WOOLF

'She had, it seems, no difficulty in sustaining the different parts, for her sex changed far more frequently than those who have only worn one set of clothing can conceive.'

Who is Orlando? He begins the story as a handsome, clumsy courtier in the Elizabethan age. She ends the story as a mother, wife, and award-winning poet in twentieth-century London.

Orlando's mutable journey through gender, time, and space is also the author's love letter to Vita Sackville-West, her friend and lover (who is photographed in historical men's and women's fashions within the book -- it's worth a read just for those tbh). This parody biography might be Woolf's most playful novel, but no less virtuosic than you'd expect from her.

To my shame, this was my first time reading Orlando. In case anyone else out there is going “Oooh I’ve always meant to read it, but I don’t want to force myself to read something because I ‘should’”, let me just say, this book is FUN. When I was at uni studying/skim-reading Woolf I never realised how FUN she is. I love how Woolf adopts this playfully self-aware ‘biographer’ narrative voice, frequently cutting herself short when in the middle of a delightful tangent about life by saying that the philosophical style ‘tedious, and best left to the novelists’. Although I think you could read this book and enjoy it without any prior knowledge, it’s also cool to know that this is basically Woolf committing to flirty banter with her sapphic friend. And, even though it was first published in 1928, it’s still one of the novels with the most radically relaxed approach to gender fluidity I’ve come across.

4 UNSEEN ACADEMICALS BY TERRY PRATCHETT

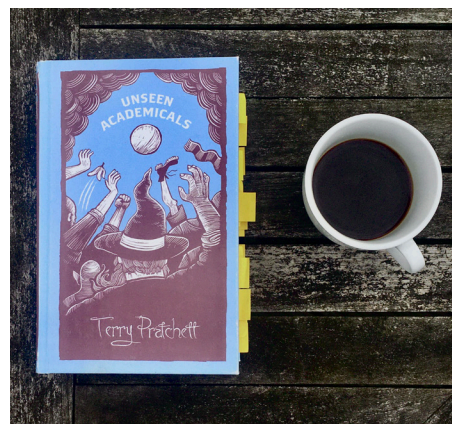
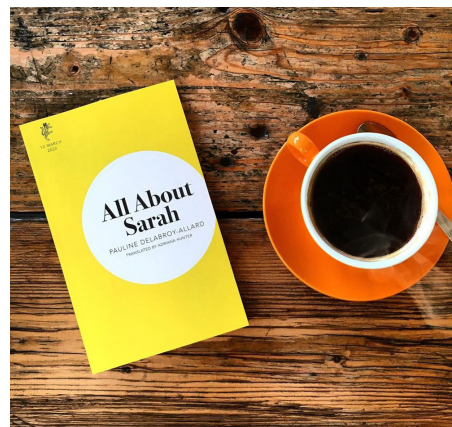
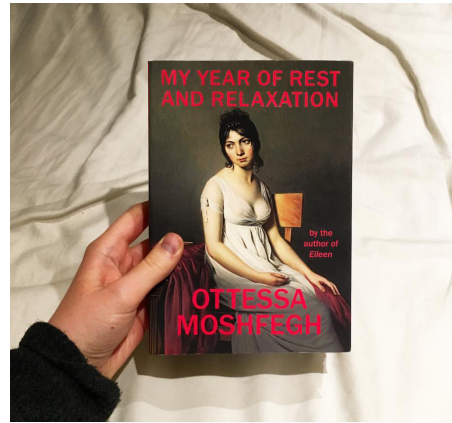
‘Unseen University has always had a fine sporting tradition.’

“‘Had” is the right word,’ sighed Ridcully. ‘If I was to suggest so much as an egg and spoon race these days they’d use the spoon to eat the egg.’

For the preservation of their pride and their beloved cheese boards, the wizards of Unseen University must partake in a game of the commoners’ sport, ‘foot-the-ball’, and they must not use magic. But they’ll use just about every other trick they can, including having a suspiciously well-read goblin as their trainer, a legendary pie-chef as their nutritionist, and by putting their Librarian (who happens to be a large orangutan) in goal. But the thing about football is, it’s not just about football...

I grew up reading Pratchett’s deliciously funny and philosophical Discworld series, and now, famously, I read one every year on my birthday. Fortunately, as a little #Ariesbabe, I could finally tuck into this big boy. I’ll be honest with you, when I was younger I avoided reading Unseen Academicals for three reasons: it was long, it was one of Pratchett’s last written novels (sadly coming after his Alzheimer’s diagnosis), and, worst of all, it was about football.

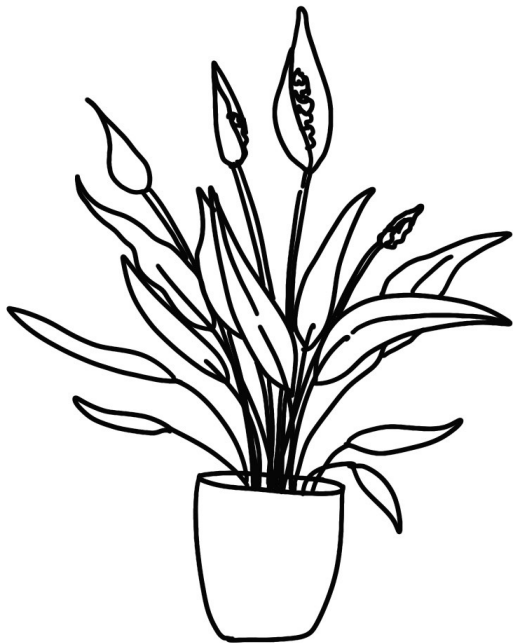
All of those things remain true, of course, but now I’ve grown just slightly more open-minded to football. Still, I’m not gonna lie, there are a few too many scenes where Mr Nutt talks about football wisdom for a bit too long, and, perhaps fittingly for a book largely set in a kitchen, there is a lot of waffle. But because it’s Pratchett, it’s still pretty good waffle. His handling of foot-the-ball does encompass still-relevant issues of systemic inequality and diversity, including class, race, religion, and sexuality (albeit through the lense of different superhuman creatures), should you choose to see it. At the end of the day though, it’s a funny, feel-good romp, with an ongoing homage to Romeo and Juliet (but with rival football teams). If you’re missing football chat, or want to read something that’s like a parody Harry Potter for grown-ups, you’ve scored.



PLANTS

LET'S GROW, GOALS

WORDS BY JESS KEATING @JESSLKEATING, ILLUSTRATIONS BY LA KINGSBEER @LCKDREWTHIS



Here I am, attempting to channel Luce from Imagine Me & You and guide you through my top 5 houseplants. I'm rooting for you to find the plant of your dreams.

NOW, TELL ME ABOUT THE (PEACE) LILY

The clue is in the name with the peace lily, or *Spathiphyllum*: it's a symbol of peace and hope. It is also often sent in sympathy when someone dies.

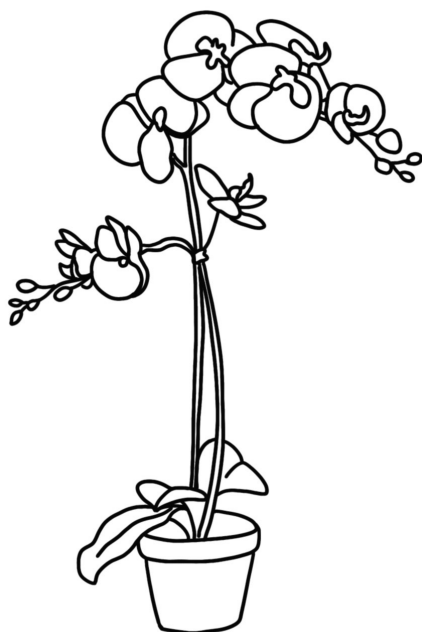
A low-maintenance and resilient houseplant, peace lilies are also one of the top houseplants for cleaning air (certified by NASA). It thrives in light shade, so is a wonderful option for bringing some life to a darker part of a room. Paying attention to its body language will help you care for it. The leaves droop when it needs watering, and within an hour of watering, it will have perked up and look lively again.

THERE'S A SNAKE (PLANT) IN MY BOOT

Though it was trickier to identify what a Snake Plant means when veto-ing the mother-in-law's tongue meaning, it represents purity, tenacity and health. There is a plethora of *Sansevieria* (aka snake plant / mother-in-law's tongue) out there, so just see what takes your fancy. They are all typically green with distinct patterns on spear-like leaves.

The snake plant is extremely durable and can survive being neglected (but obviously I'd recommend caring for your plants). They thrive in most light conditions and only require watering every 2-3 weeks when the soil is dry. It's another great choice if you're looking for an air purifier as they absorb toxins and release oxygen (even at night). It's sometimes known as the bedroom plant because people believe it brings good dreams.





Y'ORCHID-DING ME?!

A true timeless classic. Orchids have been highly regarded for centuries, symbolizing luxury, love, and strength. What a winner! Beyond that, different colours have slightly different meanings: pink expresses seduction and sensuality, yellow represents eroticism and warm love, black represents complete submission, blue represents eternal hope for an inaccessible love (#PitchPlease, am I right?). However, my biggest piece of advice is to just pick the one that you like.

Some people are scared of orchids and assume they take a lot of care, but here are a few tips to keep your orchid looking luxurious:

- Water your orchid just as it's dried out. Distilled or recently boiled and cooled water is ideal. Either submerge the pot for 10-15 minutes and then allow it to drain, or pour water in. Be careful that the orchid isn't left in standing water because that will cause root rot
- Avoid direct sunlight, it will get sunburnt (honestly!). Your orchid will thrive in indirect sunlight
- They like humidity, so mist their leaves and aerial roots up to two times a day
- Feed your orchid every fortnight during spring and summer, and once a month during autumn and winter

I'M FRIENDS WITH THE MONSTERA

I think the Monstera is absolutely stunning and is a real showstopper in any home. It's also known as the Swiss cheese plant, due to the holes that develop in the large, glossy, dark green leaves. It symbolizes honour, respect, and long life.

A real bonus with the Monstera is that it's low maintenance. Pop it somewhere with indirect bright light, water once a week or so from the base (you can let it soak for 30 minutes in the sink or bath), and polish the leaves every few weeks with a damp cloth. They grow upwards rather than outwards, so you may want a stake to allow it to climb.

WIZ CALATHEA

The Calathea symbolises a new beginning and happiness. It's associated with the expression 'turning over a new leaf' because the leaves close at night and reopen in the morning. It's probably better at waking up in the morning than I am.

You can get Calatheas in so many different colours and decorative patterns. Calatheas are to houseplant lovers what shirts are to queer womxn. There's sure to be at least one that catches your eye. Now, the Calathea requires a little bit more attention than some of the other plants I've mentioned, but don't let that scare you away. Calatheas need consistently moist soil, but don't leave them sitting in water. They also love humidity, so they're a great bathroom plant. They benefit from regular misting, and if you wipe down the leaves, they will stay glossy. Place your plant somewhere that receives indirect light; direct sun causes the leaves to burn and fade. Keep it away from any draughts. Calatheas need consistently moist soil, but don't leave them sitting in water. They also love humidity, so they're a great bathroom plant. They benefit from regular misting, and if you wipe its leaves, it will keep them glossy.

If this contribution leaves you wanting more or you need some more encouragement to embark on your plant-owning journey, feel free to get in touch for a chat!



IN THE KITCHEN

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY VERITY PHILLIPS @VERITY_PHILLIPS

SHAKSHUKA



BAKED EGGS IN A SPICY TOMATO SAUCE (££) VEGETARIAN, KIND ON THE WALLET AND QUICK TO MAKE

It's the weekend – or is it? Who actually knows what day it is. Breakfast? Brunch? Dinner? LINNER?! Hey, no one is judging – Shakshuka works anytime.

INGREDIENTS

(Serves 2)

- 2 x Eggs
- ½ Onion, finely chopped
- 1 x Garlic Clove, crushed
- Chilli Flakes
- Feta (to crumble on top)
- 1 x Avocado, sliced
- 400g Passata/Chopped Tomatoes
- Coriander

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat oil in a deep frying pan and fry off the olive and garlic until soft.
2. Add the Passata/Chopped Tomatoes & Chilli Flakes (+ season, OBV).
3. Create two small holes in the mixture and crack the eggs in.
4. Cover with a lid and simmer for 5-6 minutes, until the whites of the eggs are cooked but the yolks are RUNNAY.
5. Remove from heat, crumble Feta and Coriander on top and serve with sliced Avocado.

SLOW ROAST LAMB



WITH PERSIAN RICE & CUCUMBER MINT YOGHURT (£££)

YES I KNOW EASTER IS OVER BUT THIS IS TOO NICE TO NOT WRITE ABOUT. Requires more time – best for a weekend when football is not happening (when is that ever? Well, right now it is).

INGREDIENTS

(Serves 2, with leftovers)

- 1kg Lamb Shoulder (Or Leg of lamb will work)
- 3 x Tbsp Ras-El-Hanout (Wtf is this, I hear you cry? You'll find it in most green grocers, definitely in Waitrose. Failing that, it's simply a mix of Cumin, Coriander, Cinnamon, Ginger & Turmeric)
- 1 x Lemon, juiced
- 2 x Garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 x Pilau Rice (Microwave pack, because cba, it's easier)
- 100ml Natural Yoghurt
- Handful of Mint
- ¼ Cucumber
- ½ Pomegranate
- Rocket Leaves

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Create a marinade of oil, Ras-El-Hanout, Lemon and Garlic. Put the lamb joint into a roasting tray. Rub that good stuff into the lamb. Leave it in the fridge for 2 hours or ideally overnight. Yessss!
2. Preheat the oven to 150 fan. Once at temperature, put the lamb in the oven and cover with foil, for 4-5 hours. Relax. Read a book. Do a Jigsaw. Stroke your pet. Netflix and chill – wash your hands after you detty pig.
3. Revisit the Lamb every now and again and baste it. What is basting? Take a spoon and just spoon over those damn juicy juices over the lamb. Recover and put back in the oven. Good boy. Moist.
4. (When close to serving) – Make the yoghurt. Finely slice the Cucumber and Mint. Mix in with the yoghurt with salt n pep.
5. Microwave the Pilau Rice.
6. Serve everything up however you like – the lamb should flake apart easily. Top with the Pomegranate and Rocket.

THE VENTRILOCRISP

REVIEW: WALKERS SALT & VINEGAR

WORDS BY EMMA MAGNUS @THEVENTRILOCRISP, ILLUSTRATION BY LILY GRANT @LILYROSEGRANT_ART



C lapham Common on a Saturday afternoon: the only day of the footballing calendar that the Ventrilocrisp will enjoy a post-match pint (usually the pub is too late for its puritanical way of life). Its hind parts are splattered with mud after 90 minutes on the pitch and its hands are caked with the stuff (it takes all the throws along the right wing). Its face is flushed and clammy. Most of all, football has awakened a desperate hankering for salt. Barkeep! One Walkers Salt & Vinegar.

Pubs don't always sell Walkers, but with Lineker as their spokesman the crisp has become synonymous with football. The Ventrilocrisp is famously mean of spirit. Yet the coercive magic of the setting means that from time to time it will (begrudgingly) pay an inflated price for a run-of-the-mill Walker. But the buck stops here. Whilst its teammates share their crisps convivially, ripping the packet lengthways for ease of access, the Ventrilocrisp hoards its stash covetously to itself. There is one advantage to the high price per crisp: it encourages the Ventrilocrisp to savour the packet. And savour them it does. The heady salt curbs the monstrous appetite like a suckling baby on the teat. Meanwhile, the sharp, undiluted vinegar stings the tongue punishingly.

The vinegar flavour is worlds apart from a Kettle Chip, say. Tinny and aggressive, this is an ingredient with an evil streak. As well we know, this is a lean crisp: light, thin and not excessively oily. This allows for efficient consumption: a handful of crisps can be folded hungrily into the mouth while eyes are turned. The crisps strike a delicate balance: satisfying the Ventrilocrisp's cravings yet keeping its appetite for dinner intact.

Being the archetypal crisp is a double-edged sword for Walkers. A little long of tooth to be considered cool, there's no denying that Walkers are good at what they do. As always, the crisp depends on its context. Here in the dimly-lit pub, warm bodies bundled together and soft sounds of laughter, an unexceptional crisp (no offence) becomes a star. The maid-of-all-work is transformed into Cinderella, resplendent at the ball. For there, crisp in hand and shoulder to shoulder with its teammates, the Ventrilocrisp is alive with the joy of football.

AGONY AUNT

ADVICE BY ISY WILSON @ISYWILSON AND JANE CAHILL @JANACAHILL

Dear Agony Aunt, I had a dream recently that I gave birth to Lord Voldemort but he had George Osborne's feet. What does this mean about the current political climate, my own political inclinations and my role in society going forward?"

I'm not saying you're right wing scum but I'm not not saying it either. At first glance, this dream seems to suggest a subconscious desire to birth a new political movement, seizing the centre ground by its claws, ripping us away from critical regional institutions of co-operation, flinging us into a proto fascist state, and dismantling the welfare system to the point where a deadly disease could run ragged with little left to halt it. Oh wait...

Never fear, this could simply be that you are GDFC's own Bran Stark with prophetic insights into the tactics of our Night King rulers. Ask yourself these three simple questions:

Did you stop performatively communicating your love of the NHS by the third clap, choosing instead to rewatch a compilation of Raab's daily briefings?

Did you secretly enjoy watching your friends donate via Virgin Money, full in knowledge it would be partly siphoned off into Richard Branson's Necker Island mortgage (tragically not covered by government relief programs)?

In the early days of the pandemic, did you make a sneaky last-minute trip to north Italy, surreptitiously avoid handwashing, and cough on 12-year olds, in the hopes of unleashing the vaccine of herd immunity amongst the British public?

If the answers to these questions is no then fear not, your role is clear: harness the power of your dreams to hover over secret subcommittees of SAGE (chaired by Andrew Sabinsky), track the movements of Dominic Cummings and the new Symonds-Johnson love child (heir to the throne), and discern the next movements of the Night King's army. Return your findings to Sir Keir Starmer of Holborn and St. Pancras who will oh so forensically forge our defensive strategies.

Perhaps we can yet disrupt the coalition of Plantir, Faculty and Cambridge Analytica in their march on our post-lockdown freedoms.

If yes, well, turns out your becoming terrifyingly right-wing. That's ok! (well, it's not, but you're auntie is always here to help.) Live your best life: explore second homes in Cornwall where you can flee for the second outbreak. Here you can spread the disease to a region economically dependent on EU funding and now-depleted tourism whilst enjoying long rambling walks on the picturesque coastline. If you would like to do a take-over of the GDFC insta in the process and flaunt your splendid isolation for us all to see, do let committee know.

Dear Agony Aunt, my housemate has block booked the dining room table for all her zoom calls, is this fair? I have reported her to HR but they have done nothing and in fact I felt they didn't care about my problem, especially when they turned away and stared licking their own balls (they're a cat). What should I do?

Who among us hasn't had to deal with some difficult office politics? If it's not block booking the dining rooms for zoom calls, it's deciding to make an iced smoothie while you're trying to minute a meeting, or slamming your laptop shut without warning. However, it sounds to me like your flatmate actually has a grade-A crush on you, so let her know that she's got your attention with some flirty retaliation. Hide her mouse; snap her pens in half, or sprinkle some olive oil on her keyboard. This way she knows you're interested, but in charge.

As for the HR department, the key is building strong foundations to get them in your corner. Your HR manager might be sleeping for 16 hours a day and eating his own fur but he's not made of stone. Approach him gingerly with a small bit of chicken and scratch him behind his ears while you explain your problem and ask him to stop licking his balls in front of you. If he still refuses, then it's time to whistleblow.

LONG DISTANCE DATING

WORDS BY ROSIE CASTLE AND KATY CASTLE @KCASTLEK

Whether quarantine has thrown you into a long distance relationship or you have recently begun dating a cyborg, the Laddees (Long And Distant Dating Expertest Experts) are here to help with some virtual date suggestions!

GO DANCING

Get your date on one device, a Britney dance tutorial on the other, and get moving! On the one hand you will most probably have a delay in internet speed and so will be doing the moves out of sync to each other, on the other hand this is a good excuse for any dodgy footwork on your part. For a more relaxed version with a club atmosphere, simply turn off all the lights, blast some tunes and get your freak on. Top tip: add double sided tape to your trainers to recreate that sticky dancefloor! Make sure you invite your date to the next MOZF Zoom night!

NETFLIX AND CHILL

Netflix and... what? You asp. But this was supposed to be a socially distant date guide! Are you telling me to break the rules? Not at all sweet dears – the ‘chill’ part here refers to chatting via the Netflix Party google add-on. We recommend watching a film that you don’t need full concentration for, perhaps one you’ve seen many times- Clueless, Matilda etc! Give yourself a username on the app (t1gerqueen is taken) – will the anonymous chatroom vibe allow you to lower your guard ...?

WINE TASTING

Collect a s many bottles of wine as you can find in your house (red wine vinegar? why not?), set up some cheese and grapes, and discuss your wines in detail with your date. It doesn’t matter if you’re drinking different wines, none of your comments about the smells or tastes will make any sense anyway. This is a fun, structured way to get smashed on a date, and you don’t have to worry about cycling home afterwards! For a more organised version, agree beforehand which food or drinks you will both purchase.

VIRTUAL MUSEUM

Show off your cultural sensibilities and take your date on a virtual tour. Use the Google arts and culture app or Google Maps to visit Amsterdam’s Van Gogh museum and the Guggenheim in New York. If you prefer to stay local, try Kettle’s Yard in Cambridge – take a break from being in your own home to virtually snoop in someone else’s!

SKYPE & COFFEE

Boil the kettle, put on that top with the cut-out shoulders – show them you’re changing out of your pyjamas for this... if only on top. Make sure to stay seated throughout so there’s no cheeky giveaways, and please- no sudden movements! Any hot water spilled on your laptop could signal the immediate cancellation of your lockdown lovelife. On a physical date, we advocate sitting next to someone rather than opposite, allowing you to avoid any awkward eye contact yet offering the possibility of a tantalisingly brushed knee... Unfortunately, this feature is not yet possible over the internet. You could sit sideways on, though your date may find this behaviour unusual and concerning. Take this opportunity to finally work on your eye contact, and if you get uncomfortable you can simply stare at your screensaver as you talk.

MEET YOUR FRIENDS

Join your friends’ weekly Zoom pub quiz and impress your date with your ability to guess the Hackney pubs as represented in emoji. Afterwards, start a separate chat with your date to discuss the group dynamics and antics of the night, repeatedly and anxiously asking them if they liked your friends, just like you normally would!

GDFC CRUSH

ILLUSTRATION BY LILY GRANT @LILYROSEGRANT_ART



You can run very far Emily Cousens. I want to get sweaty and go the distance with you.

Matilda Chez. You've got a Goal crushing hard. I even nearly told you once. Bopping dance moves and the friendliest of smiles. I'll remain closeted for now (had years of practise) but a goal can dream...

To the sexi little MM, I watch you from my shrine and countdown to the day when we will meet again. Let's share a glass of slut juice and you can show me around your workshop. Please kidnap me soon, I've got a tingle. T.S

To the striker who always arrives late in baggy clothes, I'll make you come first for once.

Ciara (my phone kept autocorrecting that to Ciabatta) is gorgeous and very fast. I play in goal for another team and when she plays upfront I'm both scared and in awe of her.

Ladybird, Spotted in your stripy trousers. Flirtations over poached eggs. Dancing to Little Mix. This isoSLAYtion needs to end sharpish so we can see what's in store. Your gooey crush, "Emma."

QUARANTINE QUOTATIONS QUIZ

WORDS BY QUOZIE QUAZZLE

HOW TO PLAY

1. ALL YOU NEED TO DO IS GUESS WHAT BOOK/ PLAY/ POEM/ SONG THE QUOTATION IS FROM AND WHO WROTE IT/ SANG IT.
2. YOU ARE NOT ALLOWED TO GOOGLE THE QUOTATIONS THEMSELVES.
3. BUT HOW?? YOU CAN: GOOGLE INDIVIDUAL POEMS/ SONGS E.G. IF THE QUOTATION IS 'TIGER, TIGER, BURNING BRIGHT', YOU CAN SEARCH 'WILLIAM BLAKE' AND CHECK THROUGH HIS POEMS; LOOK THROUGH BOOKS; LOOK AT SPOTIFY/ YOUR ANTIQUATED CD COLLECTION, ETC.; PHONE A FRIEND; ASK A STRANGER IN THE SUPERMARKET QUEUE; MAKE USE OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD HIVE MIND BY WRITING THE QUOTATION IN CHALK ON THE STREET
4. CHECK YOUR ANSWERS AND TWEET US YOUR SCORE @FC_GOALDIGGERS!

NB: ONE OF THE POEMS HAS NOT BEEN PUBLISHED BUT TWEETED...BY A POET. BONUS POINT IF YOU GET THIS ONE!

I HAVE LISTED QUOTATIONS FROM LITERATURE, POETRY AND MUSIC, LOOSELY CONNECTED TO THE THEME OF ISOLATION AND LOCKDOWN-ORIGINAL, I KNOW! ALL THE QUOTATIONS ARE CHRONOLOGICAL WITHIN THEIR CATEGORIES (OLDEST TO NEWEST).

LITERATURE

1. 'Our separation so abides and flies, that thou, residing here, go'st yet with me; and I, hence fleeting, here remain with thee.'
2. 'Syrup is sold in the post-office. A car drives to market, full of fowls and a farmer. Milk-churns stand at Coronation Corner like short silver policemen. And, sitting at the open window of Schooner House, blind Captain Cat hears all the morning of the town.'
3. 'I walk up and down this house- up and down this house, I think of prison. Long ago, before I had ever met Giovanni, I met a man at Jacques' house who was celebrated because he had spent half his life in prison.'
4. 'Rosemary Villanucci, our next-door friend who lives above her father's café, sits in a 1939 Buick eating bread and butter. She rolls down the window to tell my sister Frieda and me that we can't come in.'
5. '...once alone in his room in New York, he too would be sad again, and I hated thinking of him sad, just as I knew he'd hate to see me sad in our bedroom, which had all too soon become my bedroom.'
6. "It looks," he said slowly, "like King's Cross station, "Except a lot cleaner and empty, and there are no trains as far as I can see."
7. 'I began, by my own choice, to help my mother clean the house, to cook, to keep up with the mess that my brothers made, to look after Elisa, my little sister. In my spare time I didn't go out, I sat and read novels I got from the library..'
8. 'A few times I left the flat for the corner-shop, to buy cigarettes and packets of pasta, but otherwise I saw no one and heard from no one. At night I picked up random books from my mother's piles, tried to read a little, lost interest and started another.'
9. 'After I've washed up, I read a book, or sometimes I watch television if there's a programme the Telegraph has recommended that day. I usually (well, always) talk to Mummy on a Wednesday evening for fifteen minutes or so.'
10. 'For the first time ever I did not do my reading-while-walking. I did not do my walking. Again I did not tell myself why. Another thing was I missed my next run session.'

POETRY

1. 'Four grey walls, and four grey towers,/ Overlook a space of flowers,/ And the silent isle imbowers/ The Lady of Shalott.'
2. 'Nine bean-rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee/ And live alone in the bee-loud glade.'
3. 'Wild nights- Wild nights!/ Were I with thee/ Wild nights should be/ Our luxury!'
4. 'Woman much missed, how you call to me, call to me'
5. 'Sometimes when I'm lonely,/ Don't know why,/ Keep thinkin' I won't be lonely/ By and by.'
6. '...If only I had/ grey, green, black, brown, yellow eyes; I would stay at home and/ do something. It's not that I'm curious. On the contrary, I am/ bored but it's my duty to be attentive'
7. 'The caged bird sings/ with a fearful trill/ of things unknown/ but longed for still/ and his tune is heard/ on the distant hill/ for the caged bird/ sings of freedom.'
8. 'The rest of the day was quite easy./ I did all the jobs on my list/ And enjoyed them and had some time over./ I love you. I'm glad I exist.'
9. 'If I'm entirely honest,/ and you say I must be/ I want to stay with you all afternoon/ evening, night and tomorrow'
10. 'i do not meditate/ i masturbate/ i simply don't have time for both'

LYRICS

1. 'In my solitude, you haunt me, with dreadful ease, of days gone by'
2. 'Hiding in my room, safe within my womb, I touch no one and no one touches me'
3. 'I think we're alone now, there doesn't seem to be anyone around'
4. 'Yeah that's how we're livin' and you know u can't touch this'
5. 'You see it's too much to ask for and I am not the doctor'
6. 'Lonely, I'm Mr Lonely, I have nobody for my own'
7. 'I miss ya, I miss ya, I really wanna kiss you but I can't'
8. 'Touch the road and it's shutdown, Boy better know and it's shutdown'
9. 'It's just that me, myself, and I, Been missing out for way too long'
10. 'I would've stayed at home, 'cause I was doin' better alone, But when you said "hello", I knew that was the end of it all'

HOROSCOPES WITH SERAPHIC STASI

WORDS AND ILLUSTRATIONS BY ANASTASIA KUCHTA @ANASTASIAKUCHTA



ARIES

With Saturn heading out of Capricorn this year, things are getting easier for you – professionally speaking. Possibly it's because you sit on your laptop in your sweats with the tele on. Or you are being paid, but not having to lift a finger. A strong focus on your career or life path goals will pay off however – the old way of doing things is pretty much dead and buried as the year progresses. It's time for reinventing yourself.



TAURUS

Rule-breaking Uranus continues to transit your sign, encouraging a different approach to your life. It's a powerful time for new courses or training, as well as for your voice! And this summer you will have plenty of time to pursue these, along with desires you never knew you had and finding ways to pursue them.



GEMINI

Venus retrograde in your sign this year suggests you're learning and reinforcing self-love, and it's quite a magical process. Throughout the summer you will spend lots of time alone, allowing you to develop your independence and the innovative side of your personality.



CANCER

Jupiter is blessing the sector of your chart that rules committed relationships most of 2020. The year is powerful for sorting out your one-to-one relationships, as you will have plenty of time alone with your significant other, best friend or family. Use this time to work through love and dysfunction.



LEO

The beginning of the year was a reality check for work and health habits (I see you pandemic), but now you are able to see the need to make radical changes to your routines. As Jupiter and Pluto join forces in your solar sixth house from March to November, motivation will build to new levels. This motivation should be put to use working on self care and health this year.



VIRGO

Venus prompts a review of your satisfaction regarding your career and professional satisfaction. Take the time you have at home away from the office to explore your true joys. Saturn is slowly making its way into your work and health sector this year, moving you toward a healthier, simplified, and more efficient daily routine.



LIBRA

With all the time you will spend indoors this summer, it's a powerful time for making changes that improve your living conditions, self-esteem, and comfort levels. Your ruler, Venus, spends extra time in this area of your solar chart (from April to August), and you'll be questioning whether your current lifestyle is fulfilling you. Indulge these queries and create the domestic space of your dreams.



SCORPIO

Uranus opposing your sign can most certainly mean that your relationship needs are met sporadically (thanks social distancing). There can be times when you feel restless, but it can be hard to know whether you want freedom and independence or if the outside world is pushing it on you. Despite being trapped at home, you stand to widen your social circle, update your skills, communicate more effectively, read, publish, and write more.



SAGITTARIUS

Thanks to Jupiter moving through your money sector, you might discover new untapped financial resources. Maybe it's simply the lack of TFL charges to your bank account, or the fact that you are pouring your own coffee each morning. With Venus in retrograde this May and June, avoid any large purchases. Throughout the year you will find unique ways to make and enjoy wealth.



CAPRICORN

With Jupiter and Pluto coming into alignment for most of 2020 there will have been a "fall" (probably corona) earlier this year. This will allow you time to rebuild and rise from the ashes. While Jupiter and Saturn both transit your sign this year, they don't officially meet until December. This means there can be quite a lengthy buildup, but ultimately, this will be a powerful year for making positive lifestyle changes.



AQUARIUS

You will find increasingly more clarity in your life as Saturn transits your sign. Your subconscious, dream world and intuition, will come into focus. A matter you have swept under the rug will come to light, and allow you closure and the ability to finally move forward in 2021. You may feel as if you are on a precipice or in a state of limbo (aren't we all), but with Jupiter now in your solar twelfth house you will see a way forward. Pay close attention and listen to your sixth sense in the months to come.



PISCES

With Saturn in your privacy sector until July 1st, watch not to appear distant and disinterested to others. Make room for connections, relationships, and projects that empower you. This can be the year in which your connections and networks can lead to meaningful new goals. Give time to your passion projects and indulge in your more eclectic interests, while making space and time for your inner muse and genius.

WOTD

WORD OF THE DAY

WORDS BY KATY CASTLE @KCASTLEK

Hallo Goals, wie geht's?

I don't know about you, but I have found it difficult to access the creative juices in these times of uncertainty and change. And so, turning away from my Creative Writing MA, I have developed a not-so-small addiction to learning German on Duolingo. As a result, I enthusiastically suggested this column to the editor. But when I came to write it, I was stumped – Goals, who am I to say which languages or words we should know? What is important? And to go back to my original creativity conundrum, how can we best articulate ourselves when we aren't sure what to say? I hope I'm not the only one avoiding Zoom catchups for lack of anything to contribute. In an anxious search for new words that might describe our current states of being, I discovered an interesting blog written by Bernadette Paton, Executive Editor of the Oxford English Dictionary on the ways linguistic change develops alongside social change, and the words that have entered our lexicon historically as a result. It is reassuring that the OED staff are working hard to document our fast-changing linguistic landscape, but I wonder if the answer is not to adapt the English language to fit, but to consider languages which already have words to describe some of the current mood. That these words sit within entire languages and social contexts might help us to remember that situations that are totally 'new' for one person may well be somewhat known and understood by another. As much as I am avoiding Zoom, I must emphasise that it is always good to speak to people if you are ever struggling. And what better way to try and reach across that social distance than with a few well-placed knowledge nuggets to impress your new HingeZoom lover?

Now then, these words are mostly taken from the Internet and are missing all context. If any Goals would like to provide some much-needed context I would be very grateful.

AGE-OTORI / 上げ劣り (AAH-GEY-OH-TOH-REE)

Japanese, to look worse after a haircut

DESVELADO

Spanish, to be unable to sleep or to be sleep deprived

GÖKOTTA

Swedish, to wake up early in the morning with the purpose of going outside to hear the first birds sing

CAVOLI RISCALDATI

Italian, literally meaning reheated cabbage, it describes an attempt to revive an old romantic relationship

UITWAAIEN

Dutch, to go out for a walk or to the countryside in order to clear one's mind

UTEPILS

Norwegian, to sit outside on a sunny day enjoying a beer

HANYAUKU (HA-AHN-YOH-KUU)

RuKwangali, a Namibian national language, the act of walking on tiptoes across warm sand

THE MAKATON CHARITY HOST A VIDEO OF THEIR SIGN OF THE WEEK, AT THE TIME OF WRITING IT WAS TO RIDE A BIKE

Makaton is a 'unique language programme that uses symbols, signs and speech to enable people to communicate'

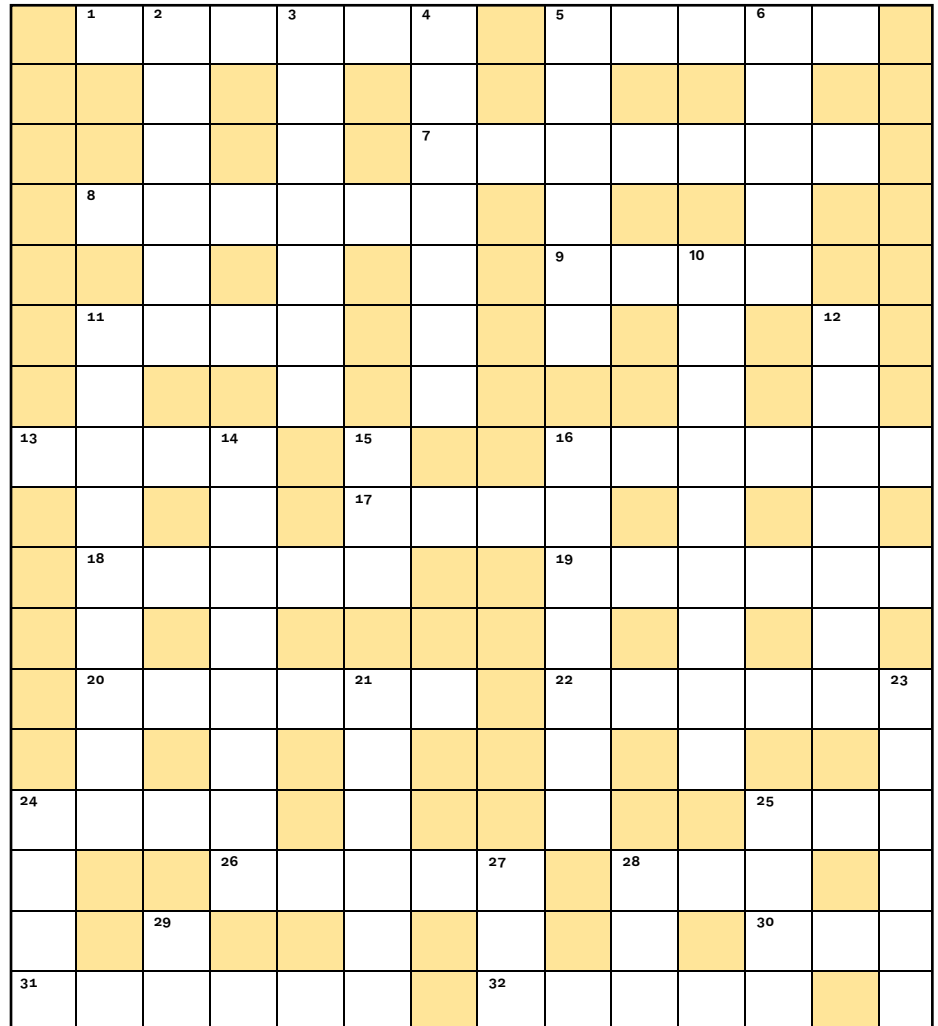
I hope these words have helped you to think about and articulate some of the desires, emotions and experiences you're having at the moment. If you'd like to contribute – please send me words! Bis bald! Tschüss! Follow me on Duolingo Goals, @kcastlek x

GDFCROSSWORD

WORDS BY KATY COVELL @KATYCOV

ACROSS

1. Attacking midfielder in wide position (6)
5. Tactic used to trick opponent; a baby might have one (5)
7. Surname of current Lionesses' Head Coach and dapper waistcoat wearer (7)
8. Skill involving threading the ball through, between an opponent's legs; spice (6)
9. Player temporarily at another club to their own (4)
11. Giggly's first name (4)
13. A _____ (4) - Gerrard's infamous and cruelly ironic on-pitch mistake against Chelsea; undergarment (4)
16. A _____ (6) - method of restarting the game when ball goes out of play over goal line without scoring
17. _____ (4) Toone - Man. Utd WSL & England U-21 Player; sounds like a Rhianna Song.
18. _____ (5) Goal - perhaps it should be called a 'Ghoul'!
19. Type of common bird supposedly killed by a wayward Mo Salah shot (6)
20. Winners' cup or plate (6)
22. National _____ (6)
24. How to indelibly inscribe the winners' names onto cup or plate (4)
25. Cross _____ (3) - horizontal goal post.
26. Fabian _____ (5) Everton Midfielder/ Left Back (Cryptic clue: sounds like an Oracle missing an eye)
28. Sports _____ (3) - a firm support(er)!
30. A draw (3)
31. A method of directing the ball with your noggin (6)
32. A competitive game of football (5)



DOWN

2. _____ (6) time - also known as stoppage or extra.
3. Team knocked out of the 2019 FIFA Women's World Cup by Sweden (7)
4. Scottish football team based in Glasgow (7)
5. Red _____ (6) - Man. Utd's nickname
6. Italian football club A.C _____ (5)
10. Combined score of two matches/ legs; particulate material used in construction (9)
11. Sent down (9)
12. Method of kicking the ball with the end of the foot (3, 4)
14. Moved to a higher division - opposite to 10 down (8)
15. _____ (3) piece e.g. Free kick
16. On-pitch team leader (7)
21. Embarrassingly bad on-pitch mistake or piece of play (6)
23. Defensively covered/ tracked an opponent (6)
24. To have the _____ (4) - advantage over; limit
25. Ice _____ (4). Post-game treatment to aid muscle recovery
27. East/ West _____ (3)
28. Wager (3)

29. The ____ (1,1) - Governing body of association football in England

Across: 1. winger, 5. dummy, 7. Neville, 8. nutmeg, 9. loan, 11. Ryan, 13. slip, 16. corner, 17. Ella, 18. ghost, 19. pigeon, 20. trophy, 22. anthem, 24. etch, 25. bar, 26. Delft, 28. set, 16. captain, 21. howler, 23. marked, 24. edge, 25. bath, 27. Ham, 28. bet, 29. F.A.

CROSSWORD ANSWERS



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FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO SUBMIT A PIECE FOR THE NEXT ISSUE,
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