

THE HUIISH HERALD



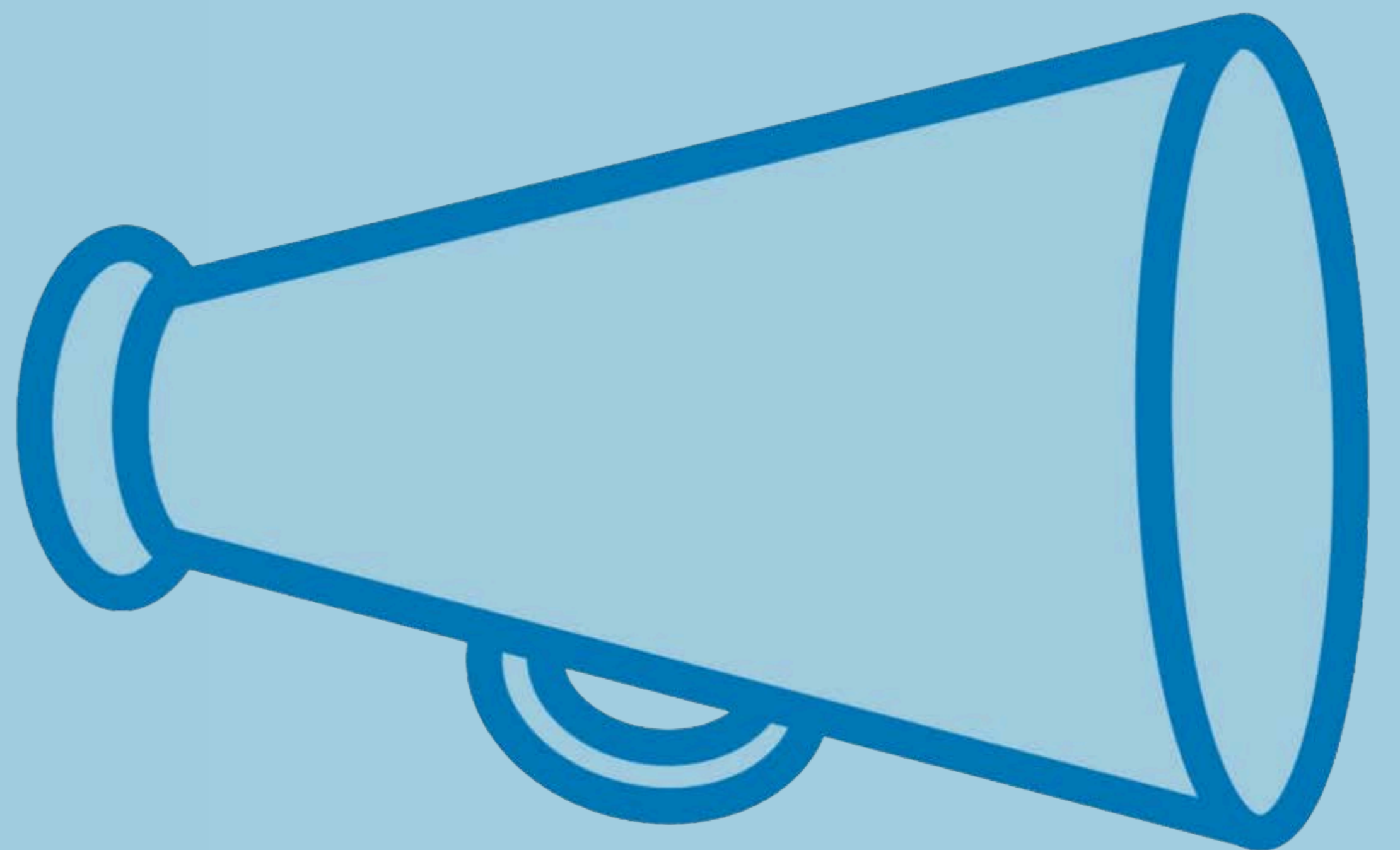
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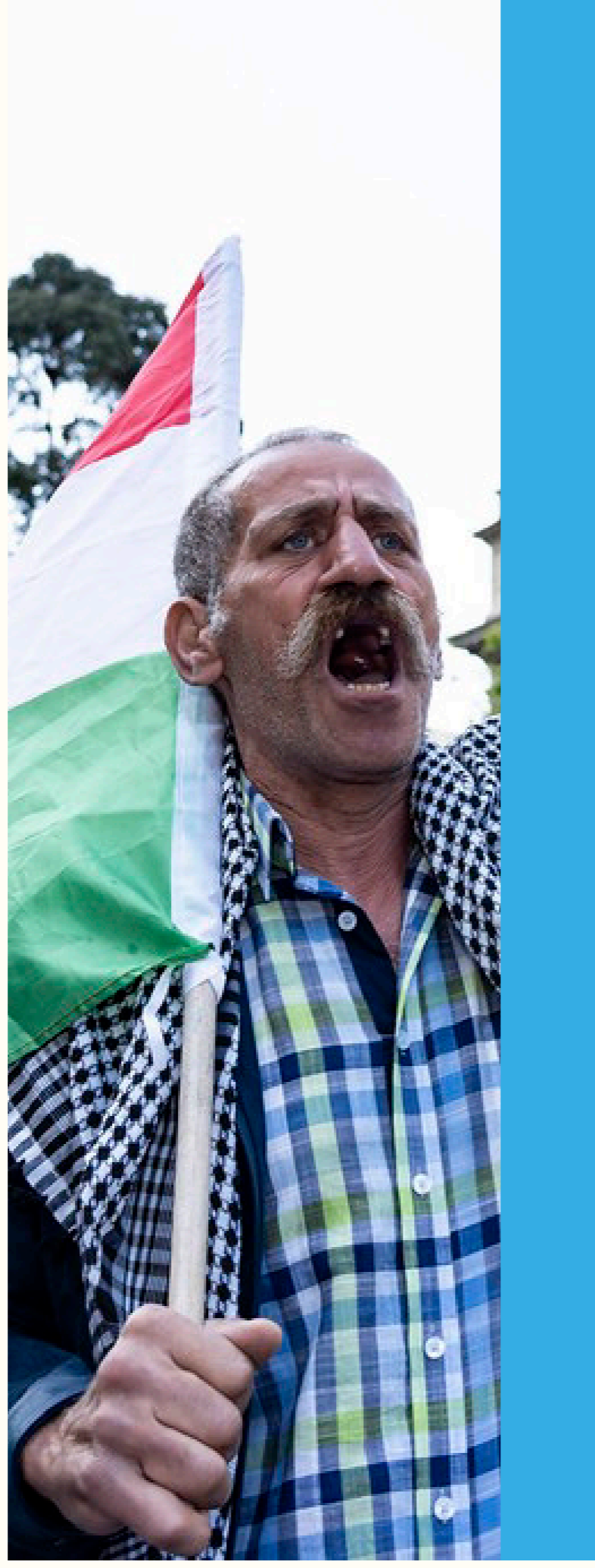


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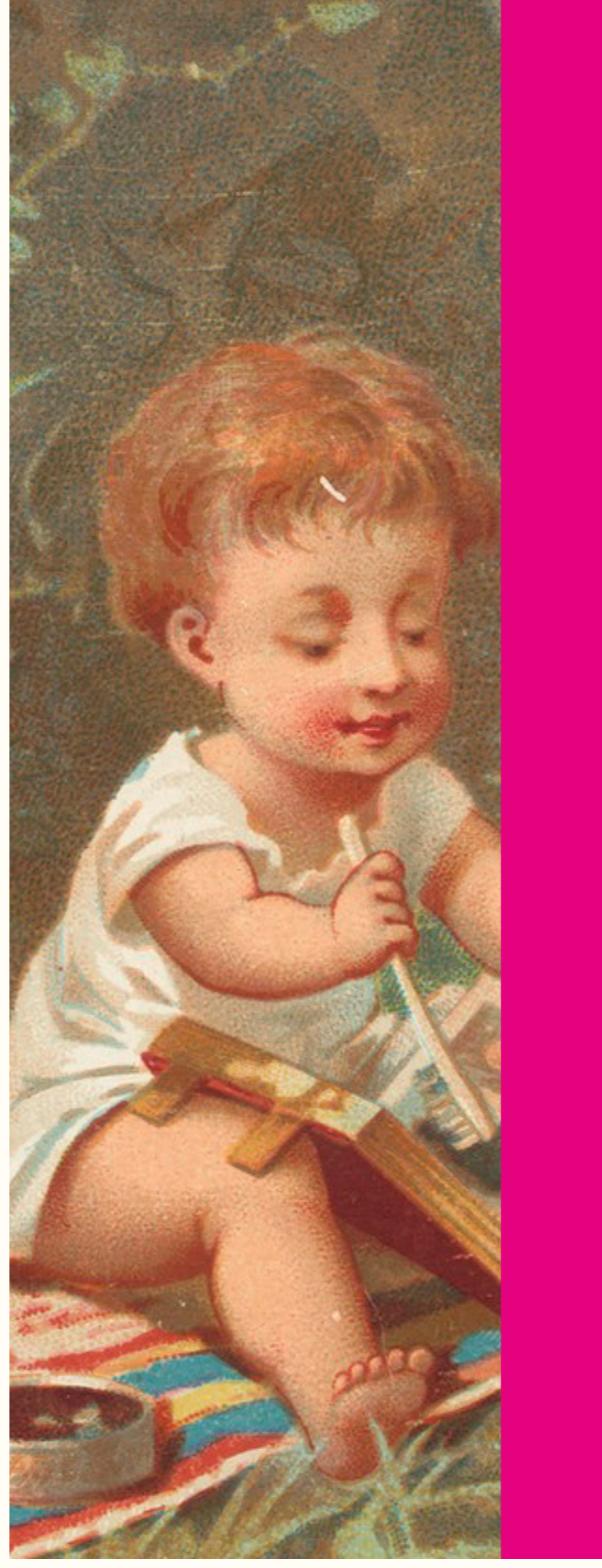
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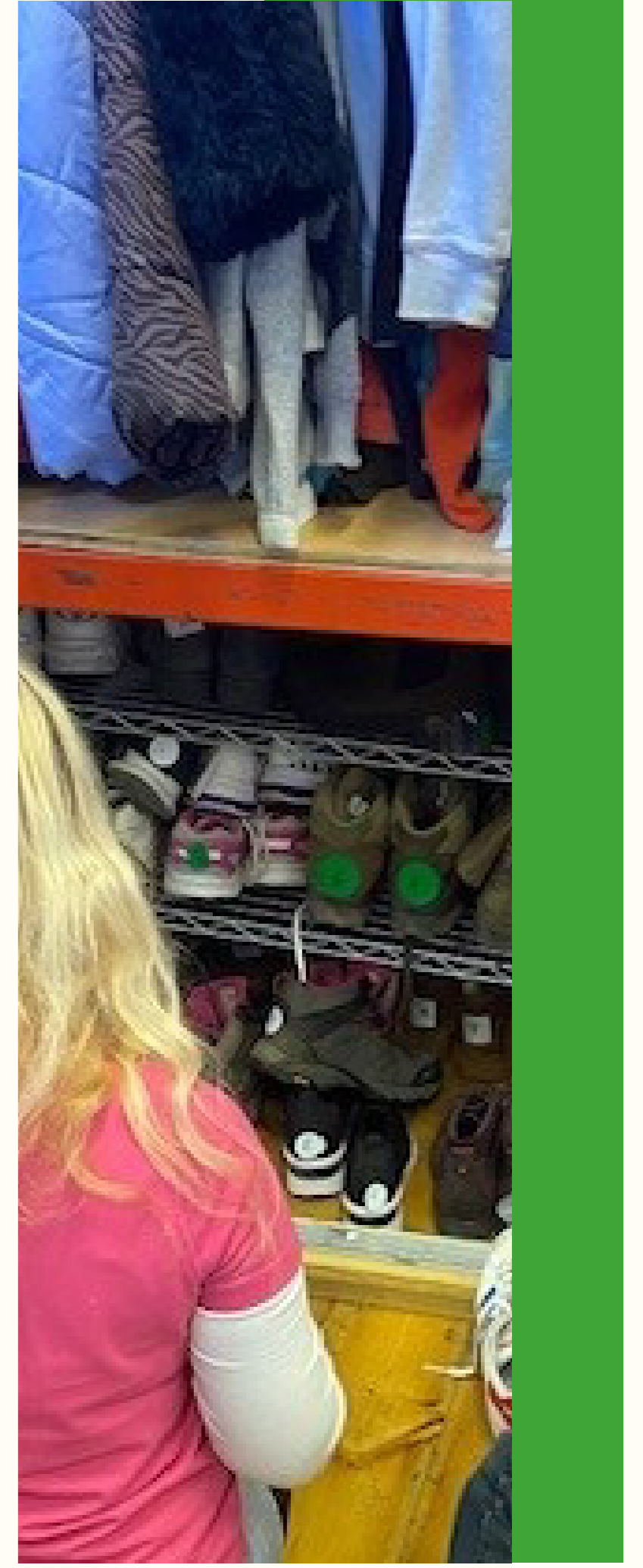
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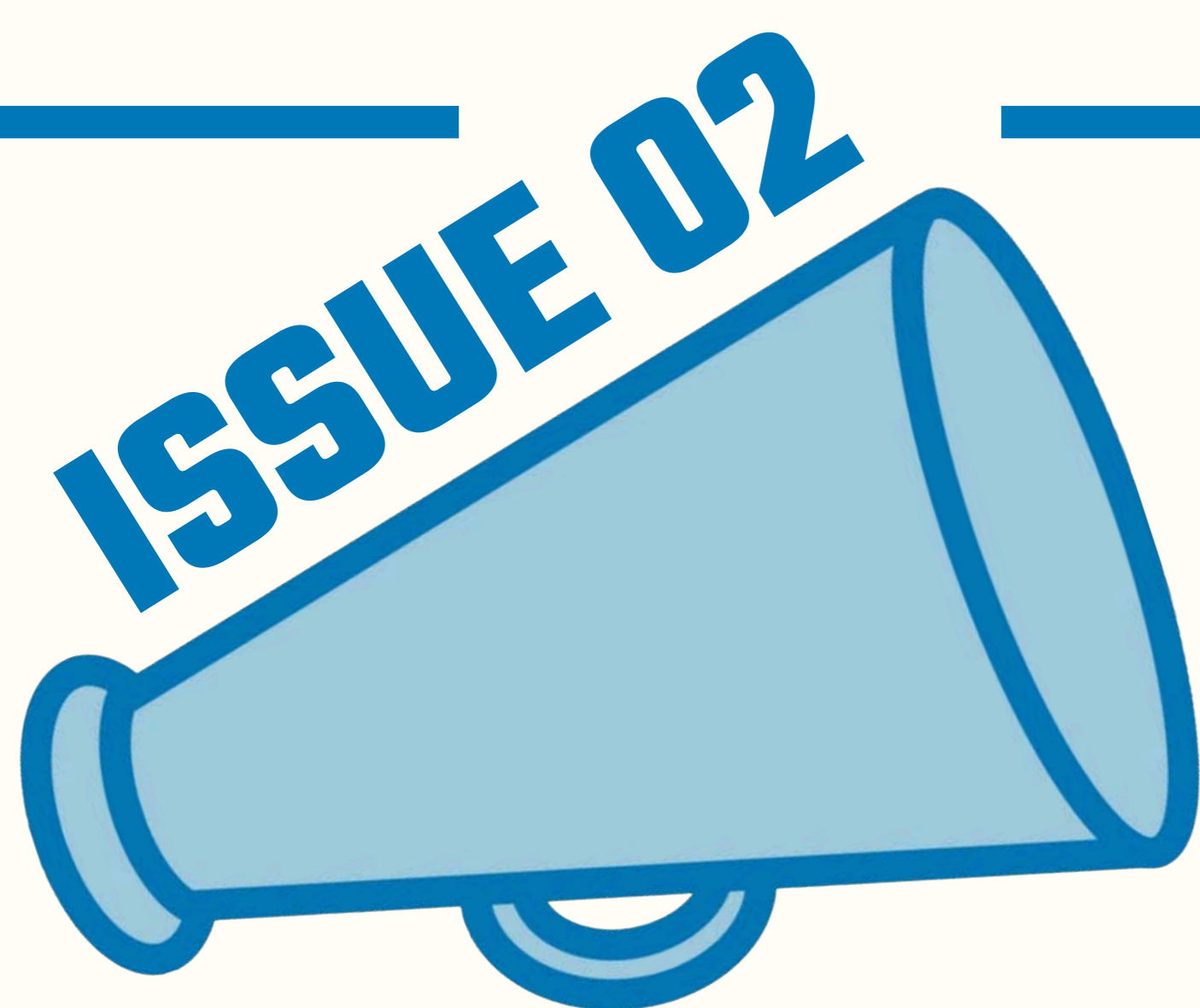
LIFE AT HUISSH & SPORT

EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome back to another issue of The Huish Herald!

This paper once again covers a wide range of articles from current affairs to the revival of 2016: this issue is specifically unique as we welcome our new Environment segment forged by our very own Lailah Williams. Exams are arriving like a plague on our vibrant teenage lives and mounting stress requires prescribed breaks so why not read this newspaper to take a breath. As always email us at 0059014@richuish.ac.uk if you have any ideas for our next issue we're always keen to hear from you!

- GEORGE BELL EDITOR-IN-CHIEF



THANK YOU FOR READING!

FEB 2026

EDITOR IN CHIEF:

GEORGE BELL

SUB-EDITORS:

MOLLY ASHLEY

JACK NICHOLAS

SOFIA SARTIAN-WALKER

LAILAH WILLIAMS

GRAPHICS:

MARIA GILROY-TOSCANO

EMILY CREW

WRITERS:

EMILY CREW, MOLLY

ASHLEY, JOSIE COHEN,

DARCY BISHOP, MIA

WEBB, JACK NICHOLAS,

HARVEY OATEN, SOPHIE

LUKINS, RIAN REGAN,

SOFIA SARTIAN-WALKER,

LAILAH WILLIAMS, FIN

TROWER, CHARLIE YOUNG

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for updates,
sneak peeks,
behind the
scenes and
more!**

LIFESTYLE

Love Actually (isn't on TV anymore)

By Emily Crew

The queen of chick flicks herself Reese Witherspoon recently spoke on Dax Shepard's 'Armchair Expert' podcast about her "theory" that the decline of romantic comedy (rom-com) films and television shows has had a huge impact on how people - especially young people - approach relationships.



With Valentine's day just past the yearly spikes of rom-com viewership have hit, streaming services like Netflix have reported a 45% increase in views between 10-14th February in comparison to the monthly average, but other than this seasonal spike, the overall viewership of traditional theatrical release rom-coms has declined significantly since their peak in the 'golden age' of the 1990s and 2000s.

One of the main factors in the decline of rom-coms is the change in theatrical experience, particularly in the changing budget focuses. Most studios have stopped investing in mid-budget \$5-50 million films (like most rom-coms) and the theatrical experience is now geared towards big action blockbusters and franchise spectacles, not more intimate romance or comedy films. Modern viewers also find the few modern, and mostly streaming service released rom-coms lack authenticity and appear generic.

The decline in both quantity and quality of modern rom-coms has meant they have faded from the modern zeitgeist - enter the Reese Witherspoon theory. Star of a fair few of these 'golden age' rom-coms, such as Sweet Home Alabama, Just Like Heaven and, of course, Legally Blonde, Reese Witherspoon discussed how she believes that rom-coms are where many young people learn "social dynamics" and that by labelling them as 'cringey' or feeding into perceptions that they're 'girly' and therefore have less merit than a more traditionally masculine film, has been damaging to young people's understanding of romance. Without having the examples of romantic relationships and interactions present in pop culture, Witherspoon believes young people don't have the blueprints to follow for relationships, and not just romantic ones! Rom-coms also contain, and often rely on, strong platonic and familial relationships everyone can learn from.

One of the easiest ways to see how important rom-coms are and what a loss their decline has been is actually to look at how significant one of the few modern rom-coms can be when they are done well. The recent phenomenon that was Crave Canada's LGBTQ+ hockey romance series 'Heated Rivalry' sparked conversations worldwide about the importance of representation in sport, challenges in accepting yourself and love - transcendent of gender, sexuality and even native languages. This relates to Witherspoon's theory - the popularity of the series (with over 10.6 million viewers in the U.S alone) has exposed this huge audience to the relationship dynamics and communication of queer relationships in vulnerable spaces, allowing a greater understanding of these dynamics to be realised in a way they may have otherwise never had exposure to.

"The impact of romance stories goes far beyond their popularity online, beyond the TikTok 'edits', beyond the viral sound bites and even beyond the huge fanbases"

Heated Rivalry serves as a case study of how important romance stories can be. The series has also made a real world impression - actors in the series have revealed they received messages from athletes who were able to relate to the experiences of the character as members of the LGBTQ+ community and professional athletes who felt they had to hide their identity due to their career in sport.

The impact of romance stories goes far beyond their popularity online, beyond the TikTok 'edits', beyond the viral sound bites and even beyond the huge fan bases. Heated Rivalry serves as proof that when effort and passion is put into telling these stories of love people are able to gain so much out of them.

#LUSHLIFE

FEATURE - is this nostalgia wave a chance to renew or a numbing distraction?

By Molly Ashley



According to online content creators such as Gabi Bailey, Natalie Reynolds and Brooke Monk, alongside hundreds of others, 2026 is officially the new 2016. The question is, what exactly does this mean for the new year?



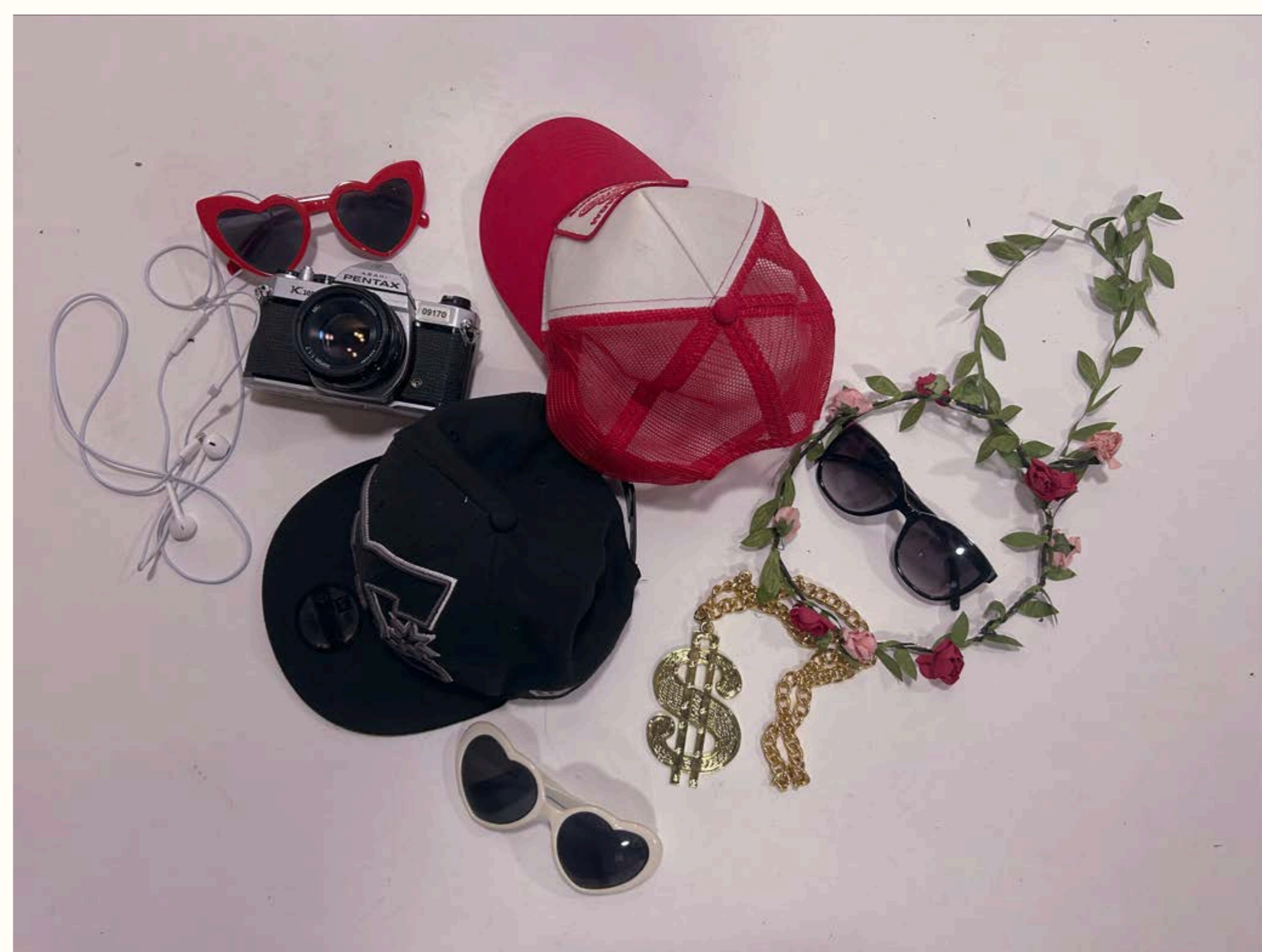
For quite a while now, TikTok creators have been making attempts to revive the 'vibe' of 2016 in their videos; using certain filters, songs, and makeup reminiscent of a bygone era. Even last year, like a green-haired phoenix from the ashes, the King Kylie Lip Kit (of the Queen of the 2010s herself, Kylie Jenner) was re-released by Kylie Cosmetics.

Now, as we reach the ten-year anniversary of the so-called "golden age" of the internet, FYPs have flooded with the sounds of Major Lazer and Zara Larson, and lip-syncing girls donning the infamous "2016 filter". One video containing music by Fetty Wap (whose self-titled album was ranked the 15th most popular by Billboard in 2016) even prompted comments that the rap artist's recent release from prison means "the world is healing".

But, to look back on the infamous year itself, could "healing" be an accurate reflection of what returning to that era could entail? Or are we just regressing?



After all, 2016 brought the birth of a new era, for America with Trump elected President for the first time, for Britain with the Brexit referendum, and for the world with the Paris Climate Agreement. With Trump once again in office and Reform growing in the UK, we've certainly recreated a fitting political backdrop for 2026 to be the new 2016. Now all that's left to do is smother our troubles in Instagram's Rio de Janeiro filter!



"we've certainly recreated a fitting political backdrop for 2026 to be the new 2016. Now all that's left to do is smother our troubles in Instagram's Rio de Janeiro filter!"

It's not uncommon to seek solace in the past in times of turmoil, but are rose-tinted glasses really what we need in 2026? Whilst the glitz and glamour of 2026's internet culture seemed at first to provide a fun form of anaesthetic, for us it fails to numb the pain of political upsets echoing throughout the digital world. Hence, we cast ourselves back to 2016 to find peace in the old internet, at the midpoint between the release of Musical.ly and its successor, TikTok, when people still used Tumblr, when you weren't bombarded with sponsored content, when Vine still existed and YouTubers were YouTubers (not influencers or TikTokers first).

Now the position we find ourselves in is not unlike that of Tumblr at the time, as described by its yearly report from 2016: "Tumblr found itself at the crossroads of nostalgia and innovation"

Will we choose nostalgia and get stuck in the past, or are we ready to innovate towards a brighter future? Which way can really save us from repeating history?

"Will we choose nostalgia and get stuck in the past, or are we ready to innovate towards a brighter future? Which way can really save us from repeating history?"



Sourdough Starters and Submissive Femininity

By Josie Cohen

Why does our nostalgia for simpler times always look like a woman in the kitchen?

The first time I saw someone make pasta from scratch in a prairie dress, I thought why not? The second time, I started to notice a pattern.

It now has a name, 'cottage core.' That dreamy aesthetic of hand-churned butter and daisy chain crowns graced our feeds like a salve for the irritability of our modern world. Who wouldn't want to escape to a fantasy of linen aprons, homemade bread and a life lived in rhythm with the seasons?

On the surface, it's just about aesthetics - a preference for a rural simplicity over the sterile nature of society. But scratch beneath that hand-embroidered exterior and you'll find something more complicated: a romanticisation of domesticity that carries with it the confinement of women to endless household labour.

The aesthetic itself here isn't the problem. There's nothing inherently wrong with wearing a long, flowy skirt or keeping a sourdough starter alive like it's a small, fermented pet (extra emphasis on the guilt when it dies). The troubles begin when these activities stop acting as hobbies and slowly morph into the foundations of our own identity. Specifically, an identity that just so happens to align itself with deeply conservative views surrounding women's roles and values.

Just take a look at the influencers who have built their lives upon this aesthetic. Nara Smith, who makes bubblegum from scratch in a full face of makeup and her nicest button-up dress, packaging traditional 'house-wifery' as merely aspirational content. Or Ballerina Farm, with her eight children and previous dreams of being the greatest now reduced to endless labour presented as an idyllic choice: "I wanted to be a ballerina. I was a good ballerina."

These accounts are not simply sharing their favourite recipes, they're selling a vision of femininity rooted in service and total submission - carefully crafting a world with the traditional family home as a woman's natural domain, as if we are animals forced to smile for the humans' entertainment. The language might be softer now, less recognisable, but the ideologies remain consistent throughout.



"What makes this particularly harmful is how it masquerades complicity as empowerment. "These women choose this life!", the argument always goes, and isn't choice feminism?"

The cottage core aesthetic glorifies not just the past, but a very specific and selective version of it. It's Anne of Green Gables without the tuberculosis, or Little House on the Prairie without the crippling poverty and colonisation. It is a past scrubbed clean of all those it did not work for: the women who died in childbirth, the ones trapped in abusive marriages, the little girls sent off to men twice their age. When we romanticise 'simpler times', we're almost always romanticising somebody else's oppression - and that's the true problem.

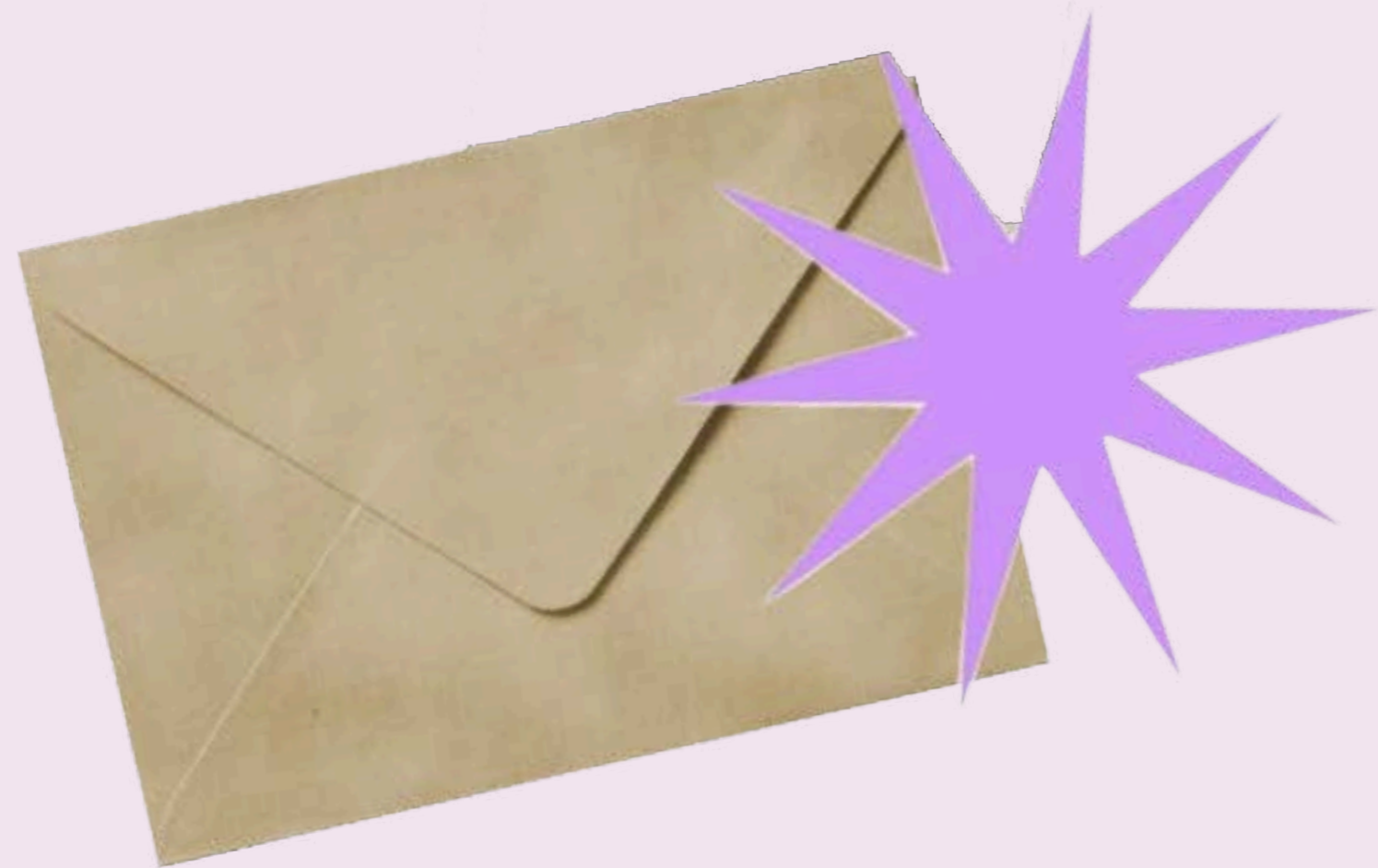
None of this means we should abandon homemade strawberry jam or vintage fashion completely. But we should become alert to the doctrinal burden these aesthetics carry and the way they allow blind nostalgia to be easily weaponised. In short, the aesthetic becomes dangerous when it stops being about what you do and begins to focus on who you are, and more importantly, who you 'should' be.

To be clear, bake all the bread you want. Not every loaf comes with a side of ideology, but it's worth checking the recipe before you commit to the rise.



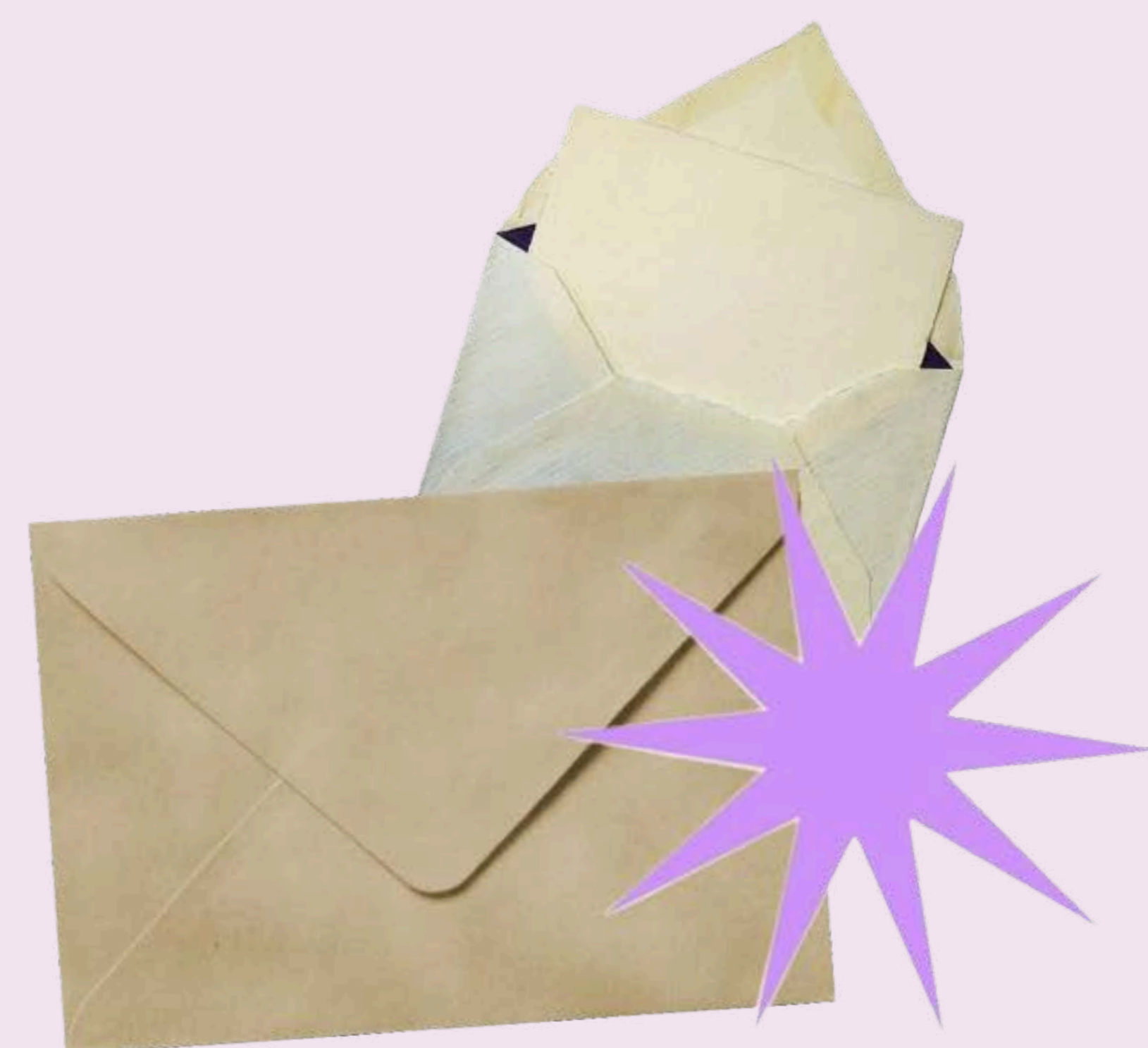
DEAR HAVEN...

*Huish's resident
agony aunt
responds to
your questions
and queries!*



Q. Do you have any advice for waking up early for college?

A. Although a cliché, getting into a routine really works- especially for the early starts. Perhaps set your alarm to play one of your favourite songs/ artists to make the mornings enjoyable!



Q. Does anyone actually do 4 hours per each subject for their Huish 30?

A. It honestly is different for everybody! Sometimes it may be less than the four hours and it could even take longer!

Q. What are your best tips for balancing college work, socialising and other commitments like having a job?

A. It's all about balance! Try and make the most of your frees and planning certain days to do each Huish 30 can be super helpful. However, you shouldn't push yourself, limiting what you do to avoid burn-out. When making plans with friends, it's always good to make them in advance to prevent stress!



If you have any questions about life as a college student, want advice or just someone to talk to, send Haven a message using the QR code!

Micro-trends or Micro-plastics

By Darcy Bishop

How have micro-trends affected the fashion industry and what can we do to avoid being sucked into another craze?

Infatuation with our phones has introduced new obsessions, one of the biggest being appearance and aesthetics. How should we look, what should we wear? What's out? what's in? these are questions normalised in everyday life.

But with the convoluted nature of the internet, obsessions rotate before we can blink. Instead of year long trends we now have micro-trends, trends that last typically from 2-12 months. As fun as these micro-trends are we need to think about their origins.

The website 'Business Waste' states some interesting statistics about the modern-day fashion industry showing the significant waste caused by fast fashion:

- 100 billion new garments are produced annually around the world (Earth.org).
- The worldwide fashion industry is responsible for 10% of all greenhouse gas emissions.
- Globally, consumers lose around \$460 million per year simply by throwing away clothes (Geneva Environment Network)
- The UN Environment Programme estimates that today people buy 60% more clothes and wear them for half as long
- Of all the clothing thrown away across the world 57% is sent to landfill (Common Objective)
- 73% of the material used in clothing ends up in an incinerator or landfill (NIH)
- Clothes made using synthetic fibres such as polyester and acrylic are responsible for more than 60% of global apparel purchases (UNEP)
- Synthetic fibres take 80 to 800 times longer to decompose than natural fibres like cotton (Clothing Manufacturers)

Majority of this waste is due to micro-trends as a byproduct of fast fashion. However, the issue isn't necessarily the micro-trends themselves but the brands funding these trends. For example, Shein is one of the biggest culprits, uploading 6,000-10,000 new items to its website a day. Other brands such as Zara, Boohoo and Primark are runners up, all contributing to the issue.

Micro-trends need to be pumped out quickly so items can be sold while their popularity is at its peak. Meaning brands are substituting quality for quantity. Fast fashion clothing is often synthetic and poorly made, meaning finding pure affordable cotton items is on par with finding a needle in a haystack. Instead, we are settling with synthetic fabric and poorly constructed garments, all to keep up to date.

The micro-trend graveyard includes Blokkette core, Gorpcore, old money, mob wife, and fairy core. Popular pieces include sweater vests, a zoo of animal print trousers, cargos, cowboy boots, white fox hoodies and far more. All of these have trended in the past 5 years however, when we look around today I hardly ever see these worn. This just visualises how clothes that have been everywhere can disappear at the end of the trend cycle.

"I have fallen victim to many micro-trends. I have a sweater vest I've been trying to sell on Vinted for over a year and sambas that collect dust. These were impulse purchases where I convinced myself I would not be cool until I owned it."



However now I realise I was a victim to consumerism and had fallen right into the trap laid for me by major brands. On top of this, many items I have worn feel as if they are decaying, with trousers getting holes and details falling off tops. It's clear shopping fast fashion does not always result in good quality and originality. Maybe we should be looking toward second-hand fashion for well made pieces.

I am a self proclaimed Vinted warrior, the screen time I spend on there rivals my TikTok screen time. And although I acknowledge it has its faults what with the carbon emissions from deliveries, this offers a much more sustainable way to shop trends.

For example, a return of the ripped jean is a trend which has caught my eye and thanks to Vinted I now own two pairs of vintage ripped jeans. I think this illustrates how shopping trends sustainably is possible.

I must clarify I'm not condemning shopping fast fashion, I love a cheeky urban browse just as much as the next teenage girl. However, I think we need to shop our trends more consciously. Before impulse buying evaluate whether what you buy is going to become a staple or something that will be worn once and then banished to the back of the wardrobe.



I've noticed the effect these micro-trends are having on Vinted, as my feed seems populated with old styles and fast fashion brands. Shein for example, is a common offender with sellers even mislabelling the item as 'vintage dressing' to promote sales. It is clear that shopping second hand has made people aware of the difference in quality between fast fashion and vintage pieces.

The recurring old trends show the quick lifetime of the trend cycle and how normalised it has become to discard clothing. Of course, we grow out of our clothes, both metaphorically and literally, and so we can't keep items forever. However, lots of these pieces are new or in very good condition. Its clear people have succumbed to the illusion presented to us on social media or ad campaigns and are now regretting the decision.

Maybe we need to start regarding clothing as an investment not just a hobby. Ask whether the 100% polyester sequin top for £5 is going to become a wardrobe staple? Or is it something you will wear out once and then forget about?



POLITICS

Protests Meets Policy

By Mia Webb

Over the past couple months, Iran has seen one of the largest waves of protests in recent history and the country's struggling economy is one of the core issues. What began in late December 2025, with many shopkeepers closing their businesses in Tehran's Grand Bazaar, quickly spread nationwide as soaring prices and the collapse of the Iranian rial (currency) pushed many Iranians to demand change via protests.

Economic hardship has been very extreme and by late 2025, inflation reached around 42%, with food prices exponentially rising and the rial hitting an all-time low, dropping to roughly about \$1.45 million (equivalent to £25). Many citizens are struggling to afford basic goods as they push to survive.

"For many Iranians, the protests are more than just political, they are a response to a failed economy."



As a result of the protests, the government imposed a nationwide internet blackout in early January, a move aimed at slowing mobilisation. However, this also harmed digital commerce and financial activity with analysts estimating that the blackout has cost Iran roughly £30 million per day, with both online sales and trading activity collapsing.

But it doesn't stop there, Iran's dependence on oil revenues which were weakened by sanctions and reduced exports are now limiting the Government's ability to ease the shock. Many experts warn that this prolonged issue could slow further growth and prevent foreign investment which compounds even more long-term challenges.

For many Iranians, the protests are more than just political, they are a response to an economy that has failed to provide stability or opportunity to the country, especially for the younger people and many small businesses. Whether or not this situation will let up remains uncertain, but the economic burden of this crisis is clear.

Top Trump

By Jack Nicholas

A recent figure making headlines in the world of politics is Donald Trump, the current President of the USA, and his interests in the invasion of countries such as Venezuela and Greenland.

Donald J. Trump: a man whose motives seem to be driven by the desire to secure access to natural resources, most notably Greenland's vast territory and Venezuela's oil reserves. But what has he done to achieve his goals and will he be successful in his mission to 'top trump' these other nations?

In a move that left many confused, Trump has argued that Greenland's residents were "sick and not being taken care of". Hence, he announced plans to send a hospital ship to to 'help' the citizens. However, Greenland's Prime Minister Jens-Frederik Nielsen had no hesitation in rejecting Trump's offer and made it evidently clear that the country's healthcare system was supported and maintained.

"Trump's reasons for intervention lie deeper than meets the eye."

It is clear Trump's intentions go further than aiding the supposed ill. Greenland has economic and strategic interest to Trump. For example, the island's untouched mineral reserves provide crucial resources to improve and produce greater technology and renewable energy. To gain access Trump intends to either purchase Greenland or secure it with military methods. Denmark, who don't officially own Greenland but still have great influence over defence and foreign affairs, as well as the members of Greenland themselves have strongly rejected the idea and have refused to sell.

To the south of the US lies Venezuela, where territorial issues regarding Trump have also arisen. Trump's decision to authorise the removal and arrest of Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro on January 3rd, 2026, is one of controversy. Concerns have been raised surrounding US interventionism in relation to the hostile nature of Trump's actions, not only regarding Maduro's arrest, but also the use of military threats including airstrikes.

As with Greenland, Trump's reasons for intervention lie deeper than meets the eye. Venezuela's oil reserves are worth billions of dollars and considering oil is a non-renewable resource, the ability to obtain a greater supply and make a profit from the oil reserves. Although Trump's intentions are set out to supposedly benefit both countries, Maduro contradicts this view and he believes that the US intervention of oil reserves would potentially transfer Venezuela's oil wealth to American companies. Furthermore, critics have further argued that the Venezuelan invasion is based upon Trump's boarder strategies, to strengthen US dominance and mimic the Monroe Doctrine, hence the existence of the term, the Donroe Doctrine.

As the situation unfolds, one thing can be made certain- Trump's presidency is refining US economic and political stance and the argument as to whether his 'top trump' will be successful or not still remains a question with an ambiguous answer.



CULTURE

Camp Code and Culture: How Hidden Slang Defined an Era

By Harvey Oaten

If you wanted to find the party in 1950s London, you didn't need a map; you just needed to know the right way to 'parlare' your slang.

Step into the world of Camp Code and Culture, and you'll find that 'vade-ing the bona polari' was once the only way to survive a night out in London. To the average passer-by in the mid-20th century, a conversation between two 'omies' or 'palones' might have sounded chaotic, rhythmic gibberish. In reality, it was a sophisticated, secret language – a linguistic 'drag' used primarily by gay men, circus performers, and sailors of the UK.

In the 1950s and early 60s, homosexual acts between men, often resulted in imprisonment. Polari served as a camouflage for gay men to communicate safely without being outed or arrested. To an outsider, it sounded like gibberish; to them, it was a lifeline.

A LEXICAL COCKTAIL

The 'fantabulosa' of Polari lay in its scavenger nature, a magpie's nest of influences and borrowings. It borrowed heavily from Latin, Cockney Rhythmic Slang, Yiddish, and even Lingua Franca – the ancient trade tongue of the Mediterranean (used by many sailors from the UK). Latin also became very popular between circus performers and folk – used heavily by many Punch and Judy performers.

In this world of Camp Code and Culture, omies didn't have a face; they had a lallie. They didn't look at someone; they vada'd them. If a man was handsome, he was a bona omi. This coded vocabulary served as a safety net for the community of gay men to discuss their lives, gossip about the 'lily law', and navigate a society hostile to their existence.

THE FRONT STAGE 'DRAG'

While Polari began in the docks and theatres, it reached an unexpected peak in the 1960s through radio. The BBC comedy show 'Round the Horne' introduced characters Julian and Sandy who spoke almost entirely Polari. While most of the public thought they were hearing harmless, eccentric nonsense, the 'in-crowd' of the community was laughing along with a secret they finally vada'd reflected within mainstream media. It was a subversive moment: Polari speakers, once marginalised, were now the stars of the nation's favourite comedy hour.



"It's more than just slang; it was a testament to omi resilience and creativity."

THE LEGACY OF THE 'BONA' WORD

Today, Polari has mostly evaporated from daily use, yet its DNA remains in our modern linguistics. Words like 'naff' (something inferior), 'Bevvy' (a drink), and 'drag' have successfully 'trolled' into standard English vocabulary.

As a language, it was more than just slang; it was a testament to omi resilience and creativity. It reminds us that even in the darkest of eras, the drag spirit will always find a way to express and parlare, to laugh and most importantly, to be understood by those who know how to listen.



No Awards For Neutrality

By Sophie Lukins

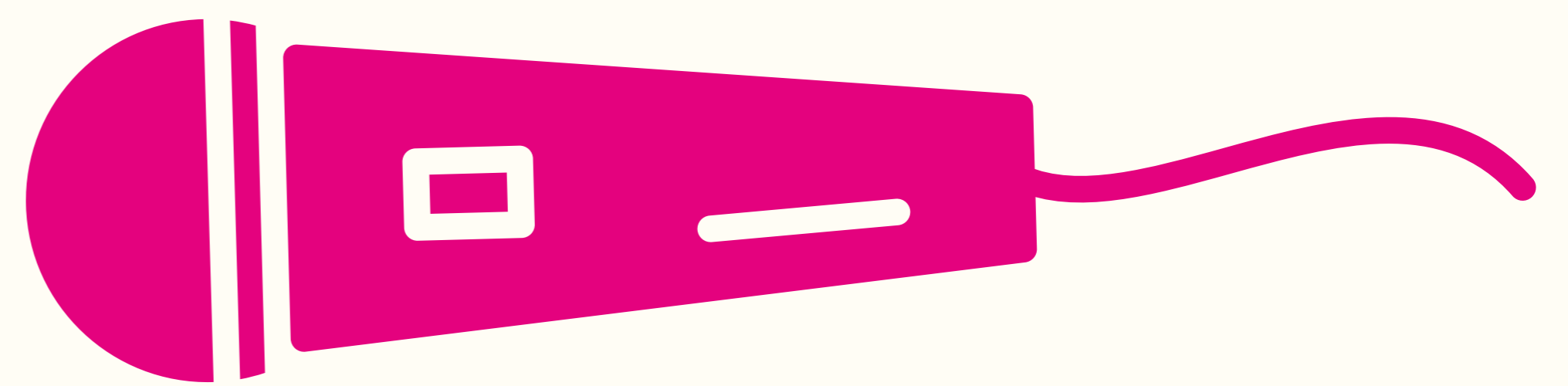
As the red carpet rolls out once again for the 2026 creative award season, artists reject neutrality in favour of using the spotlight to shine attention on social injustice, proving that art is intrinsically political.

Emotional speeches, extravagant fashion, and glamorous celebrities. People around the globe will tune into Award shows such as The Oscars or The Grammys to observe a world so seemingly far from their own.

Once dismissed as being unimportant and frivolous, art suddenly gained the respect and recognition it deserves due to the influence of these ritualistic events. However, these ceremonies don't take place in a world isolated from the real struggles that affect society.

The 1975 Oscars marked a pivotal moment in creative culture. As Marlon Brando's name was called for Actor of the Year, actress and activist Sacheen Littlefeather took to the stage and accepted on his behalf.

A speech that would typically be filled with gushing gratitude was used for the first time in Oscar's history as an opportunity to criticise the treatment of a minority, calling Hollywood and American society to take accountability for the prejudice against Native Americans.



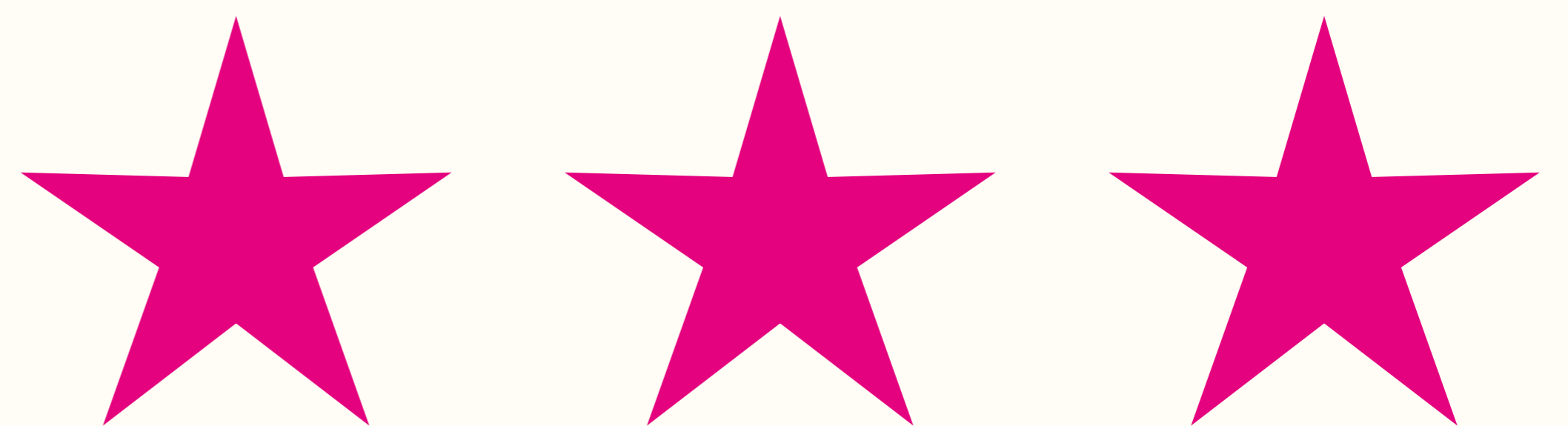
The 2026 Grammys ceremony was no exception. Billie Eilish used her time on the stage to express her views on the current injustices happening in the USA. Her words "No one is illegal on stolen land" echoed to both encouraging cheers and disapproving sighs from fellow artists. Eilish's words reflect her morals to the millions of Americans watching from home, in effort to promote her liberal standpoint on the actions of ICE.

"Over the years, politically driven acceptance speeches have become a staple of award shows."

As more artists speak upon injustice, the integrity of these messages is questioned. Ricky Gervais expresses his opinions on the matter, naming it distasteful and unnecessary as artists "know nothing about the real world". He shames celebrities, figures 'sheltered from harsh realities', for lecturing the public on what to believe.

What Gervais fails to recognise is the value that exposure has. Gervais also fails to recognise that art is created by real people for real people. The world we live in is deeply imprinted on the art we consume.

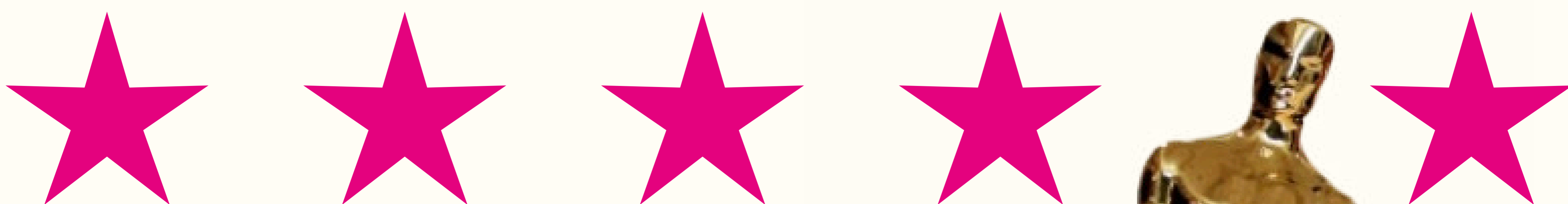
An industry rooted in real people and real life simply can't turn its back on minorities. The creative industry has never been isolated from politics; the nature of film and music is to express perspective to the masses in a digestible format. Brando, Eilish and many artists alike observe the injustice in our society and choose to speak up for those who can't.



Milestone moments are still taking place in this industry. Bad Bunny accepted the Album of the Year award for his project “DeBÍ TriRAR Más FOToS” at the 2026 Oscars. This is the first Spanish speaking album to take the title.

As he delivered his speech, his words “We’re not savages, we’re not animals we’re not aliens. We are humans” reflect his unapologetic pride in his heritage, refusing to be diminished by discrimination. In a time of intense dehumanisation of immigrants by the president of USA, watching a Puerto Rican man be celebrated for his art is truly inspiring.

As we progress through award season, it is important we don’t forget that behind the glamour and prestige of the shows, is an industry built on the backs of real people who struggled to be recognised for their passions, and we should welcome artists who challenge the institutions responsible for injustice.



**Marlon Brando (read by
Sacheen Littlefeather)**

**"He has asked me to
tell you ... that he very
regretfully cannot
accept this very
generous award"**

Academy awards - 1973





How to Write a Star Song for a Musical!

RIAN REGAN shares their advice for creating musical numbers that capture the minds of a population, thanks to the tips of the greats that have gone before.

Musical shows have never been more popular, with runs continuing for years on the West End's biggest stages; the songs and their lyrics have become part of our common vocabulary. And of course, for every musical out there, there is that one, powerful, stand-out song that everyone knows something of – caught from social media clips, TikTok trends, or the mainstream charts. This is a magnificent way to raise awareness for your musical, so how can you do the same?

Music has traditionally become popular through word-of-mouth (singing as well as speaking), and so making your song relatively easy to sing will be a blessing to your pockets as much as your principal performers. Similarly, interlacing both your melodies and harmonies with motifs representing characters and emotions go a long way in making a powerful and memorable hit; *Les Misérables*' "One Day More" is quite genuinely astounding in this regard, taking half-a-dozen simplistic, melodic lines that have cropped up in the act before and interweaving them to create a powerful chorus of tragic hope and power.



Speaking of, you'll likely want your audience to be feeling empowered. Using upbeat tempos and strong cadences is fundamental, especially if you're not using major keys (for example, K-Pop *Demon Hunters*' "Golden", probably the defining song of last year, was composed in E minor).

However, there are always exceptions to this general upbeat-ness that you'd do well to keep in mind – from the melancholia of *Cats*' "Memory" to the constant increasing tension of the eponymous number of *The Phantom of the Opera*.

If your musical focuses on a more unusual topic than the bog-standard love-story or personal power-saga, then shying away from cheesy, rather ambiguously-focused topics can be ideal – although, of course, anything too specific will be sure to divert attention away to more digestible topics. Unfortunately, true individualism doesn't do big business.

So, let's bring in *Dear Evan Hansen*, a musical that recently graced the Hush stage. Its flagship song "You Will Be Found" already demonstrates many key features mentioned – focus on the four pop-song chords, with varying subtle adjustments like suspended chords that don't take away from the digestibility of the music, and a melody that's rather limited in range and does not stray away from those key scales. The more harrowing themes and key details of the musical are reflected through the spoken-word intermissions, but the sung lyrics themselves are fairly simple but uplifting, aiming to be as transmissible as possible. The song itself comes at the end of the act; naturally, act-finale numbers are designed to be bombastic, as to stick in the head longer.

The modern-day explosion of pop music has arguably led to the pop-ification of the great musicals' signature songs – which "You Will Be Found" displays perfectly. But whether you decide to go that way, or in the style of the legendary theatrical performances, the world's your oyster.

Literature and Creativity - Relevant or Redundant?

By Sofia Sartian-Walker

"Creativity is intelligence having fun" - Albert Einstein

Let me ask you something – what is the very first thing you reach for, the moment you wake up in the morning? What about when you finally get home after an endlessly long day? How about whenever you have a spare few moments in between lessons?

That's right - your phone.

Don't worry – everyone does it. Maybe not always through choice, but even so, reaching for it has become a reflex action for millions and millions of people who have become conditioned to rely solely on technology to pass the time. And if this isn't concerning enough, it also means that there is increasingly less room for focused, immersive activities such as reading, writing, art, and so many more creative hobbies. These were once the most enjoyed pastimes, but have been increasingly discarded in favour of watching TV or scrolling on social media.

This isn't an issue that we can simply fix. Our brains have adapted and changed to desire constant, immediate hits of dopamine, provided by technology and social media, meaning that things which require long-term, continual focus are frequented far less often. It has been suggested by researchers that the reading age of young people has steadily and significantly declined. According to a 2025 study by the National Literacy Trust, the percentage of youths who enjoy reading in their spare time was at its lowest in 20 years.

There are some reasons for this which we can't always help: we spend hours learning, working, and doing necessary tasks, as well as putting our effort into remaining present and focused all day. By the time we get home, we are totally exhausted, and instead of doing things which require effort, we reach for an alternative which allows us to zone out and relax. So, surely, this means we just don't have time for reading, or writing, or creativity... Right?



Wrong! It is not that we don't have time, but that we don't always use it effectively. Let's be honest - we don't need to use our phones all the time, or check social media every 2 seconds. In fact, I can assure you that if you think about it, you'll realise just how much time is wasted when you become captivated by technology.

More so, social media doesn't actually allow you to relax at all- it may provide superficial moments of amusement, but does not give long term, restorative rest. In fact, it has been shown by the National Institute of Health that if you take just a 1 week break from it, anxiety levels and depression significantly decrease, whilst mental health and wellbeing improve drastically.

Here's how we can start to enjoy reading and being creative again: by managing our time, technology usage, and habits, we will be able to return to engaging and creative activities, and will subsequently see a shocking amount of improvements.

So to answer the question - yes, creativity and literature are still relevant, perhaps more now than ever before.

ENVIRONMENT

Cyborg Cockroaches

By Lailah Williams



Researchers are patenting live insects equipped with tiny electronic backpacks for search and rescue missions. But where do we draw the line between innovation and exploitation?

In 2012, researchers from Nanyang Technological University (NTU) in Singapore began leading efforts to develop “remote control cockroaches” for navigating disaster zones, demonstrating a method of steering the insects by stimulating the antennae.

Support soon enabled the full deployment of these cyborg creatures to aid rescue efforts in Myanmar after the 2025 7.7 magnitude earthquake, killing over 3,000 people. A total of 10 cockroaches were deployed on March 30th, joining forces with the Singapore Civil Defence Force’s (SCDF) elite overseas rescue unit “Operation Lionheart”, becoming the first instance in the world where insects were used in a humanitarian operation.



Despite this, neuroscientist and developer of DIY neuroscience kit ‘RoboRoach’, Greg Gage, claims “the roaches feel little pain from the stimulation.” As well as the scientific justification behind the perceived cruelty, some argue that given the widespread eradication of insects, this use is relatively minor.

Controversy surrounding the use of this technology has sparked debate over animal welfare and the ethical implications of invasive surgery on living creatures. It has been proven that the cockroaches used in these investigations, specifically Madagascan Hissing Cockroaches, do possess nociceptors, giving them the ability to detect tissue damage, heat and chemicals injury, leading to complex behavioural responses akin to that of suffering. As well as this, many critics worry that these projects, and similar, frame living organisms as disposable objects and risks fostering a lack of respect for nature.

Though their negative reputation precedes them, the adaptability of cockroaches has been long admired and perhaps this harnessing of their resilient nature could become yet another step forward for mankind. But at what point are we, as humans, able to dictate which animals are unworthy of their own autonomy?

"At what point are we, as humans, able to dictate which animals are unworthy of their own autonomy?"

**Welcome to
our new sub-
section!**

**If you're interested
in the environment or
want to get involved in writing
for this section feel free to email
our sub-editor Lailah:
@0060768@richuish.ac.uk**

LIFE AT HUISH

Sheltered Hope

By Fin Trower

Charity work and how it can open doors to a brighter future.

We, as students, all face the same challenges of the everyday hustle and bustle. Exam stress, university applications, and the ever-intensifying political climate. Yet beyond Huish 30 and A-levels, a more pressing issue continues to rise nationwide: homelessness.

A report published by Shelter in December 2025 stated that 1 in 152 people in England are experiencing homelessness. Over the past year, homelessness rose by 8%, following a 14% rise the previous year. This is a statistic driven by rising housing costs, unchanging wages, and reduced welfare support. And while all these factors undoubtedly play a role in homelessness, it's crucial that we- as young people- understand how stigma may complicate the solution and deepen the challenges these people face.

"Every person can make a difference, and every person should try." – John F. Kennedy

So, how can we help and what's already being done? Change does not come around through heroism, but through proximity. Being born and raised in Taunton, an area holding over 40% of rural, rough sleeping in Somerset, I was no stranger to the reality of homelessness. What my time at Open doors (a homeless support centre), taught me was the best thing you can give is not money- but time. Walking into the shelter, I didn't know what to expect, but it was truly an eye-opening experience.

It's not glamorous work, washing up and packing shelves, but seeing the impact of the kindness of others and talking to the people at the shelter, made the heavy work light. Open Doors operates through local churches, an accessible avenue for anyone hoping to give back to the local community, but there are many different places you can help, such as Arc (homeless shelter and outreach services) or charity shops in Taunton. All provide vital support for the homeless.

Volunteering, charity work, and civil service is not merely about lending a hand. It's about recognising the ways we can help one another, no matter how fortunate we are. We are born into an era where the motivation to change for the better is louder than ever and we are the generation best fit to bring about that change. These ideals require not only motivation, but understanding.

The impact of giving your time may not be instant, or obvious, but it is never invaluable. By utilising the abundance of opportunity in our local area and giving our time and energy, we will actively make a difference and will see a brighter future.





'Hello! I want to share something meaningful with you. On March 1st 2026, I'll be running the Taunton half marathon in memory of Lauren Jackson, a wonderful young person who touched many lives. We're raising funds for Mind, a mental health charity that offers vital support to those in need. Your contribution, no matter how small, can make a real difference. Please consider donating or sharing the link to help honor Lauren's memory and support others. Thank you!'
- Poppy Chedzoy Wilkins

We understand that it has been a difficult time for the Huish community, and if you are struggling, the College has specialists from Young Somerset as well as the Huish Wellbeing Team that can be contacted through the following email addresses:

wellbeing@huish.ac.uk
safeguarding@huish.ac.uk

If you need support outside of college hours, external services are available and can be found here:

Samaritans - samaritans.org, **2Wish** - 2wish.org.uk and
Hope Again - hopeagain.org.uk

If you are able, please join The Huish Herald team in supporting Poppy's gofundme fundraiser by scanning the QR code and donating. All proceeds are going to Mind UK - as a mental health charity Mind aims to provide advice and support services that empower anyone experiencing a mental health issue to live a full life and play a full part in society. They also work to improve local services, raise awareness and promote mental health and wellbeing.



SPORT

Race to Ace

By Charlie Young

For many of us, the 2025-2026 season proved to be monumental. With the season drawing to a close, and with summer approaching in quick succession, join me to reflect and cherish the Huish rugby team's most historical season.

This season marked a milestone as we entered uncharted territory, with the college having its first ever season in 'ACE league.' For those unfamiliar, ACE league is the highest possible level of school/college rugby, often being the peak of rugby careers, or just the kickstart for many professional careers. The teams in ACE league are spread all over the country, with the closest opponents being Exeter college just down the road, and Wath Academy being the furthest away, just below Leeds. This saw us travel more than ever this season with some away days being a ten-hour round trip!

One of the most exciting elements of the Huish Rugby programme, is its partnership with one of England's top premieriership clubs - The Bristol Bears. As part of ACE league criteria, each team is endorsed by 1 out of the possible 10 premieriership clubs spread across the country. This allowed us to be trained and coached by specialist Bristol Bears coaches, who have proven to do a stellar job. The team trains multiple times each week, with each session being specific to a certain area of the game, alongside game-by-game analysis, to help maximise our performance.



The beginning of ACE league began at full throttle. Our first three games flew by, with some good success. We suffered a loss to Exeter College and City of Oxford (two of the strongest sides in the league), however we played some very promising and exciting rugby. Scoring our first 10 points of the season against Exeter with an incredible solo try by Charlie Drabble. Bath's Peter Symonds College proved to be the most memorable game for us. Hosting them at home on the 24th of September, in the boiling weather, we were feeling strong. The game was eventful, and the score remained close throughout, with lots of end-to-end rugby being played. In the dying embers of the game and with Huish 1 point behind, we were awarded a penalty. Olly Stanbury stepped up. One kick. Three points. Secured! Huish had its first ACE victory, which proved to be a hugely memorable win, and a big step forward for us as a team!

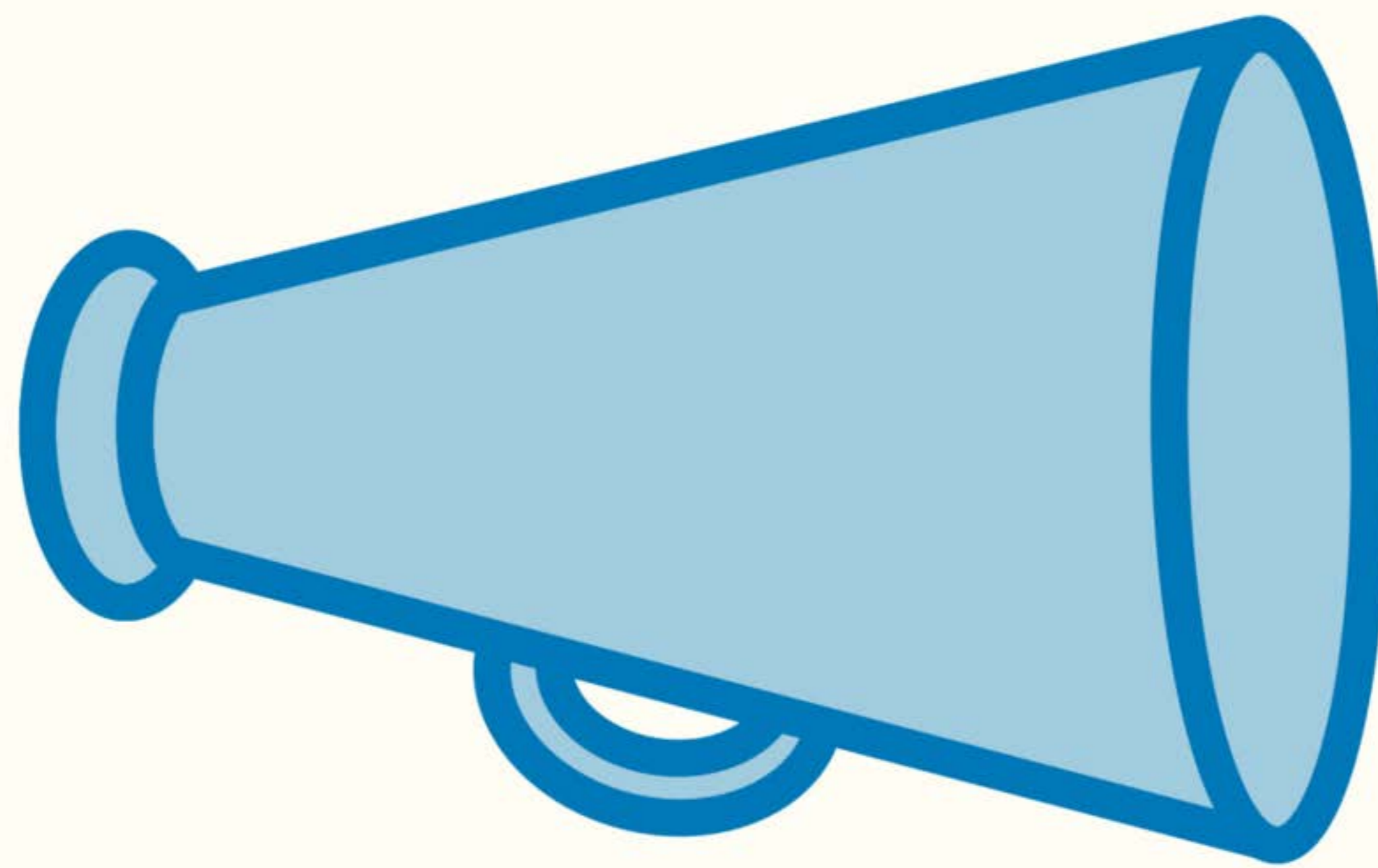
"One kick. Three points. Secured. Huish had its first ACE victory"

The latter end of the season only got better. As we entered the second half of the season, each one of the 22 teams were sorted into pools, reflecting their results and performances from the 1st half of the season. We were placed in pool D. Thanks to our week-on-week improvements, we began to gain some great traction in this pool and were playing some of our best rugby yet. We were unbeaten in last couple games of the season, with thumping wins over Peter Symonds (52-0), and a week later over Wath Academy (7-57).

ACE league rugby this season has been phenomenal, and a key highlight of the year for me and many others. However, this season is just the start of Huish's ACE journey. For anyone wanting or interested in joining the rugby team, please contact the sports department and give it a go, before you miss out! See you on the pitch next season, best of luck!



**THE HUISH HERALD 2026
ISSUE 02**



THANK YOU FOR READING