

# THE BLACK BAG



BACK TO SCHOOL

BRISTOL MEDICAL SCHOOL MAGAZINE  
Freshers Edition 2024



**The University of Bristol Medical  
Students' Magazine**  
Est. 1937

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# The Black Bag

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# IN MEMORY OF DR SANTI RODRIGUEZ



This Freshers Issue of The Black Bag is dedicated to the late and beloved Dr Santi Rodriguez (1971-2024).

As the co-lead for the Year 1 undergraduate medical curriculum from 2020 to 2024, Santi was deeply committed to the students under his care. Ever generous with his spirit and time, Santi provided untold hours of personal and academic support to many first-year medical students. It is highly fitting that this special edition of The Black Bag, welcoming new first years to our community, is dedicated to Santi's legacy: his sense of humour, compassion and gentle leadership.

Santi was enormously proud of his Galician culture. He published in the Virtual Library of Galicia, honoring the poetry of his paternal homeland. I would like to honour his memory and legacy by sharing a Galician poem with all of you.

## **Black Shadow, by Rosalía de Castro (1880)**

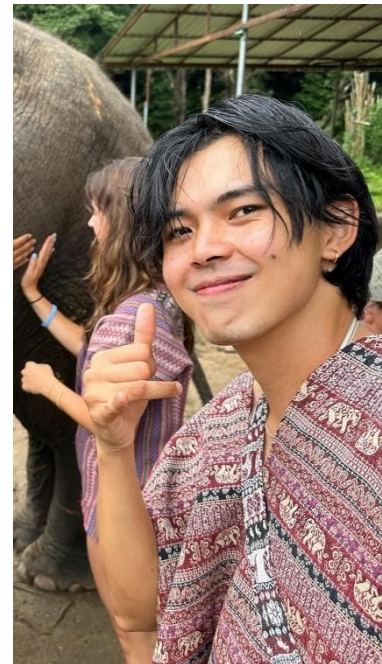
When I think that you have parted,  
Black shadow that overshades me,  
At the foot of my head pillows  
You return making fun of me.  
When I fancy that you've gone,  
From the very sun you taunt me  
And you are the star that shines  
And you are the wind that moans.  
If there's singing it's you who sings,  
If there's weeping it's you who weeps,  
And you are the river's rumour  
And the night – and the dawn.  
Everywhere you are in everything,  
For and within me you live  
Nor will you ever leave me,  
Shadow that always shades me.

*Zin Htut, Year 5*

**H**ello everyone. Welcome back.

**F**irst years, I am delighted to welcome you to Bristol Medical School and introduce you to this hallowed publication. Older years, welcome back to the medical school's premier dream blunt rotation. The Black Bag is Bristol Medical School's magazine that has been running since 1937 (!!!), essentially due to its ability to withstand any calamity it has faced over the past 87 years: this includes, at one point, threatened with being sued. Yet it lives on, evading the beady Big-Brother eyes of the GMC (the **Grand Ministry of Cum**). And so, after decades of impressive survival, I plan to use my incoming editorship to transform the Black Bag into a PSY-OP to overthrow Premier Keith Starmer and his new 10-year plan to ~~privatise~~ reform the NHS. Just joking (but not really).

**A**las, let us not speak any further of matters of the heart. Instead, I'd like to thank all my ~~chaotic-neutral-minions~~ contributors for abiding with what has been very absent leadership as I have been ~~finding myself~~ philandering whilst on my elective in Thailand (see picture with elephant bum). You guys are amazing, thank you for all your hard work in delivering a very fine piece of silliness and whimsy. It would also be amiss to not mention my utmost gratitude and admiration for my predecessor, Anna, for all her hard work in pushing the boundaries of scoring a fitness to practice while restoring the Black Bag to its purest form: a gossip and satire magazine, just as God intended.



Now I'll be sincere. To the first years, you enter medical school at a time where our world is on fire. In placement years, you will meet and perhaps care for more and more people not only suffering illness but enduring hardships that extend beyond hospital walls: poverty, austerity, uncertainty, fascism and hatred. At times, you might struggle to see the point of it all.

So what would be my advice as a grizzly old 5<sup>th</sup> year? How do you manage with such bleakness? My advice: be radical in your compassion and kindness, something that begins with learning and listening to the people

you will meet over the next 5 years. Learn and listen as much as you can so you can fight for them. Fight for them by growing to see medicine as an art of caring, not curing. Fight for them by always trying to be their advocate and ally beyond hospital walls.

And in the exact same way, fight for yourself too, remember to extend this compassion towards yourself. Nurture the friendships and connections you will make across the next 5 years. It's okay if you only save one person, and it's okay if that person is you. At the very end of this magazine, there are signposts to the wellbeing services the medical school, university and wider Bristol community provides. If you ever need someone to talk to, please contact them.

Anyway. In a Korg voice: *the revolution has begun*. As always, thank you for reading, forever and ever.

**Zin Htut**

*Black Bag Editor 2024-25, Year 5*

## PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

**I**s this thing on, Ella? *taps microphone*

Ouch, Max! Yeah. They can hear us.

Ok nice! Let's get into it. I saw a TikTok the other day that said August into September feels way more like the start of the new year than December into January, and it's blown my mind.

Yas! It's a time for new resolutions, new good habits, indeed, an entirely new personality. What will it be this year? A new dawn to your running era? Time to become a surgery neek? The sky truly is the limit.

Indeed. As everyone knows, we run an *extremely* tight ship. This is a professional operation. We are in control. The Galenicals ship is sailing smoothly. We *love* positive self-affirmations. And running. And sweet treats.

And Medicine, Max! Can't forget about medicine. Yes, there's more to life... but at the end of the day your ass belongs to the dean of Gloucester academy.



Hell, I'm not even mad about it. Are you looking forward to starting your Neuroscience degree? Just one year for all that knowledge? Girl seriously!

It will be a slay. I just love science, neuro and neuroscience. And it will give me time for Galenicals presidency!

We love to see it. Anyway, the good news is we've already done loads to make sure everyone's lives are happier and better this academic year, haven't we?

We genuinely have. No more platitudes! Actions speak louder than words! We believe in *doing stuff*. Student happiness is the number one priority.

We communicate with the medical school constantly, the faculty, the academics, student groups, the SU...

Everyone wants us, they're obsessed. But we love it! It all goes on behind the scenes and we are achieving positive change. For example, we've made sure the emails people are sent sound friendlier. We wrote a new dress code policy so people can wear badges and express themselves. We created a hit new podcast. We planned out the medical social calendar months in advance...

Ella, stop listing the things we've done, we don't want people to get overwhelmed!!

So true.

It's fine, we don't need to tell the people. We just want them to enjoy it all! To have fun at medical school! To be truly happy.

Yes Max, we absolutely do. Enough of this nonsense. People reading this: Enjoy yourself, enjoy this beautiful part of the world, enjoy the unbelievable privilege we all have to be studying this degree.

Yeah, we're doing the boring organizational stuff, so you don't have to; say yes to things, rock up to socials, let yourself be free and find happiness, because medicine isn't about the destination, it's *all* about the journey.

There's more to medical school.

Yes, there absolutely is.

*Max Gerard & Ella White*

*Galenicals Co-Presidents 2024-2025*



# WELCOME TO BRISTOL MEDICAL SCHOOL!

**C**ongratulations! You've made it to medical school, the late nights studying, caffeine-infused drips and sleep deprivation has got you this far...and will continue for another 5 years! Medical school can seem daunting at first: a new city, a new environment to learn in and a completely new group of peers. The first year is a mixed bag of emotions from the days you are mind boggled about the sheer amount of content you're expected to learn to the days you spend questioning your sanity. Whilst you may feel homesick at first, you'll quickly ingratiate yourself into this somewhat delusional community. Here are 7 quick tips that we feel we should share with our new recruits!

1. As you grasp your first term here, you'll soon realise that not only will you navigate the medical curriculum but also the University you have been introduced to. From inductions to

welcome lectures, you'll believe the façade that you can navigate around this place yourself (you can't). You'll question which is more difficult: 9am starts or the trek up St Michaels Hill.

2. The first few anatomy sessions will feel like you're back in a languages class, appreciating your anterior from posterior to your pectoralis major and minor. Don't worry, jot them down, looking curious whilst smiling at the lecturer: at least one of you will believe you know what you're doing.
3. Sleep deprivation unfortunately doesn't count as an extenuating circumstance, but it is a good conversation starter! Picture this, a caffeine addicted zombie stumbling around the wards on less than 5 hours sleep-that is now you, my friend!



4. You're trying to find a seat in Wills Library and the realisation hits you. Its exam season, coming around faster than your Nan for Christmas Dinner! Good luck trying to find somewhere to sit, rumour has it a 1st year is yet to be that lucky!

5. As soon as you enter the doors to the Biomedical building and take your seat in that very first lecture, you will begin being inundated with medical questions, from the simplest of explanations to the rarest conditions you have ever heard of from friends and family alike. Little do they know that it's your first week, they just think that we are walking medical encyclopaedias.

6. Christmas and Easter holidays are like rewards for medical students. You emerge from your study cave, paler than Dracula

himself: yet unlike him, you crave some social interaction! As you arrive home, everyone reels from the shock that you still exist.

7. Oh! You're still here?! You can take this as a sign that you'll survive the gruelling long hours glued to the lecture hall seats whilst trying not to doze off. A top tip: make sure you don't sit too close to the front in the lecture hall. After all, the last thing you need is everyone taking muggies of you drooling with your mouth open, if you end up taking a mid-day nap!

All in all, everyone's experience of 1st year is going to be different...and that's okay! One day you'll be that consultant or anatomy lecturer that everyone is nodding along to, and you'll remember your days as a medical student, sleep deprived and caffeine reliant...and nothing will have changed!

*Sara Hussnain*  
*Year 4*

# What I Wish I'd Known as a 1<sup>st</sup> Year Medical Student

1. **I**f you do something embarrassing, rumours will spread quickly, people will talk about it for 5 minutes then everyone will forget about it. You can forgive yourself if you answer a question wrong in a lecture. That DOES NOT MEAN you should seek medcest. Emphasis on "seek". If it happens it happens.
2. Be the quietest person in the room and you'll find out ALL THE GOSSIP. Too late for me as I was yapping loudly from the Day 1 about Pret subscriptions and now nobody tells me nuffin round 'ere. So now I have to rely on my introverted friends to find out what's going on.
3. You should think of a good name for your medic year group WhatsApp chat. "MBChB Class of '28" with emojis is boring. "Juliet's Medic Orchestra" is so much better.
4. Trevor Thompson's lectures are like a cult - seems fun at first, but once you get further in YOU REALISE SOMETHING IS NOT RIGHT! Before you know it, you're writing haikus, going to an abandoned house in the Lake District and getting in a massage train. It's a vicious Circle that I'm Concerned about. Which brings me onto...
5. If you have no artistic talents, be prepared to write poetry. I'm not joking.
6. Grey's Anatomy may not be completely accurate, but it does give you good ways to remember certain facts for finals.
7. Chat to students from other medical schools and you'll realise that Bristol REALLY isn't that bad... it could be MUCH worse. Also, everyone complains about their med schools; you just have to pick your battles.

8. Before setting up your Wi-Fi for your 2nd year house, wait for people to start posting Virgin Media voucher codes to the group chat.
9. You'll probably end up talking about being hungry and eating food in Anatomy labs and that's okay we're all a little weird here.
10. None of us really remember any histology later on in medical school and don't really care about it lol.
11. The concept of medic families is a bit questionable, but so are the allocation system and earnings for the UK Foundation Programme, so just roll with it.
12. You're likely to spend most of first year ill with some sort of ailment (formally known as Fresher's Flu).

**In all seriousness though:**

1. Don't let your insecurities stop you from living and enjoying your life. Go out there, go to the parties, talk to everyone, try new things, get involved in societies, ask for what you need and be yourself. The right people will stick around, you'll find the right hobbies, and you'll have good stories for the plot.
2. Befriend people in the years above. It's a cheat code - they'll give you advice and resources.
3. MINIMISE how much you compare yourself to others. You'll do it, inevitably, as it's human nature. But don't let it make you feel like crap all the time. It's unproductive and gets you nowhere. Use people as motivation and inspiration; beyond that, have TUNNEL VISION FOR YOUR OWN PROGRESS! (I'm trying hard to practise what I preach)
4. Sometimes you just have to ASK. Ask for teaching on placement. Ask if you can get involved in something. The worst thing anyone can say is no. And even if the response truly is worse, you'll get over it.

5. Take everyone's advice with a grain of salt (including mine) - you might end up having a completely different experience of a placement, so go in with zero expectations.
6. Know that anxiety at the start of something new is normal - it too shall pass once you adapt. It sometimes just takes time to get the hang of things. This applies to a new year, new environment, etc.
7. Start experimenting with and learning about study methods early on. Find what works best for YOU, what keeps you motivated and engaged. Which brings me onto...
8. Not everyone can be #1. No, just because Ali Abdaal ranked 1st in Cambridge thanks to Notion and his magical way of taking notes and doing Anki, does not mean that you will too. And just because you are not scoring at the top of the year, does not mean your study method is bad. AS LONG AS YOU PASS YOU ARE FINE.
9. Read the Galenicals newsletter – there are often some pretty good opportunities for conferences, committee roles and other things in there to help you build your CV.
- 10. Love every moment. Or as many as you can.**

*Wiktoria Kotyńska*  
*Year 4*

## QUIZ: What type of Med Fresher RU?!?!?!?!?

Welcome to the wild and treacherous ecosystem that is Bristol Medical School, where a diverse range of fresher species fight for survival in St Michael's Hill and La Rocca. From the commonplace Anki enthusiasts to the elusive non-attenders, each has their own unique adaptations for thriving – or just barely scraping by – in this unforgiving academic jungle. Take this quick scientifically validated quiz to find out which species you belong to, as we journey into this strange, competitive landscape.

### 1. It's 9am and the lecture is about to start. What are you doing?

- A) I'm still in bed because I feel like my head is on fire.
- B) I'm furiously typing in the WhatsApp group, asking if it's been recorded.
- C) I've been in St Michael's since 8:15, preparing my Anki decks.
- D) I'm probably wandering around Stokes Croft, sketchbook in hand, lost in thought.
- E) I'll sign the register from home... somehow.

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### 2. What do you bring to anatomy class?

- A) A vague sense of impending doom and a bottle of water, because it's always a *rough* day after last night.
- B) I'll just message the group chat to get the summary later. Too much hassle.
- C) My textbook, three pens, and an unhealthy enthusiasm for body dissection.

- D) Nothing. Anatomy doesn't *speak* to my soul. I'm here for the art of it, not the flesh.
  - E) I'd bring something, but I haven't figured out where anatomy is yet.
- 

### **3. How do you interact with other medics?**

- A) I don't. I'm busy making non-medic friends who "get" me.
  - B) Primarily through WhatsApp. I exist there more than in real life.
  - C) Medics are my life. We revise together, eat together, and I might even start a revision group chat if one doesn't exist.
  - D) I occasionally grace them with my presence at socials, but I'm more of a solo act – spiritually and socially.
  - E) Who are "other medics"? I'm not sure I've met any yet.
- 

### **4. What's on your laptop during a lecture?**

- A) YouTube, Spotify, anything but lecture slides.
  - B) WhatsApp open in multiple tabs, plotting group chat dominance.
  - C) Anki and a detailed revision plan. I'm practically running a small-scale data centre.
  - D) Open tabs on avant-garde cinema or pointillist art, plus a random Google search for "medical school dropout rates."
  - E) Just the register page, making sure I don't accidentally show up.
- 

### **5. How do you feel about Trevor Thompson's lectures?**

- A) A hazy memory, at best. I might have been there in body, but my mind was elsewhere.
- B) Honestly? I didn't hear a word. I was too busy asking the cohort what their UCAT scores were.
- C) I hung on every word and went home to make an Anki deck summarising the *entire* lecture about holarchies and paradigm shifts.



- D) I left halfway through his softboi spiel to go see a free-form jazz performance in Cosies. No regrets.
- E) Who's Trevor Thompson? Was I meant to attend that?

## Results:

### Mostly A's: *The Hungover Hermit (Homo Semipresentius)*



Ah, the *Hungover Hermit* – a nocturnal creature, rarely seen during daylight hours. Known for their staggering ability to avoid teaching, this species often wakes up with a throbbing headache and a sense of existential dread. Their natural habitat is WG

Grace or, later in the night, the treacherous caverns of La Rocca. Survival strategy: binge-drink, cram the night before, repeat. The medical ecosystem remains baffled at how they manage to scrape by – likely through sheer luck or divine intervention.

### Mostly B's: *The Group Chat Warrior (Parvus Textus Obsessivus)*

Observe, if you will, the *WhatsApp Warrior* in its natural state: hunched over a phone, thumbs moving at breakneck speed. Rarely seen in the wild, this elusive species thrives in the digital landscape, ruling the cohort group chat with an iron fist. Their primary goal is to monitor all UCAT scores and lecture slides with religious zeal. Social interaction? Only if it's on WhatsApp. Scientists remain



unsure if this species exists in physical form or is merely a hyper-evolved bot.

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'THE FUTURE  
CARDIOTHORACIC  
SURGEON'  
(non-disputable)

OBVIOUSLY WEARS  
WHITE COAT TO LECTURES &  
FOR PRACTICE



### Mostly C's: *The Anki Addict (Studium Maximus Ankius)*

Now we encounter the *Anki Addict*, a highly efficient, hyper-organised species that dominates the academic ecosystem. This creature is always preparing, always revising, with their natural

environment being the medical library or the front row of a lecture hall. They possess an almost inhuman focus and are known to self-teach advanced surgical techniques well beyond their years. While other species of fresher are still figuring out how to sign into Blackboard, this one has a 6-year Anki plan. Rumour has it they were born with a flashcard in hand.

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### Mostly D's: *The Artsy Outsider (Creativus Avoidance-icus)*

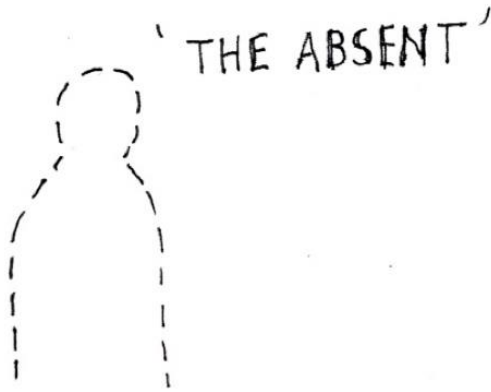
Here we find the *Artsy Outsider*, a curious creature who finds themselves adrift in the medical ecosystem. They rarely associate with their peers, instead choosing to frequent the art galleries of Stokes Croft or the underground spoken-word poetry scenes of St Paul's. Medicine, for them, is merely a distraction from their true calling – something *far more* creative. They attend anatomy in spirit, if



not in body, and at the FOM conference will provide an interpretive dance routine about the futility of life in medical school.

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### **Mostly E's: *The Phantom Fresher (Spectrus Absentia)***



Finally, we meet the *Phantom Fresher*. This species exists in name only, appearing on registers but never in person. No one has ever actually *seen* them, and yet, somehow, they continue to pass the year. The Phantom Fresher's survival strategy is a mystery to all – perhaps they possess cloaking abilities or have

mastered the art of invisibility. The only sign of their presence? A name ticked off a register, leaving the rest of the cohort wondering if they're real or simply an urban myth.

*Zin Htut, adapted from a previous article by Anna Andrieu*  
*Year 5*

*Illustrations by Anna Andrieu*

# First year med student fits – the ultimate guide

**W**hat's the difference between a first-year medical student and a snake? One sheds their skin in anticipation of a fresh start and the other is a limbless reptile. Maybe the distinction is more blurred for some...

Regardless, most of us can agree that those starting university are in a creative breeding ground of outfits, micro trends, and clique uniforms. For most medical students, however, we find that creativity starts to waver when faced with 9-5 placement in scrubs. Although I have no positive words about the compulsory grey Bristol scrubs, hospital scrubs in general are bafflingly flattering (#hospitalhot).

**Here is a summary of the classic medical student fits seen from Park Street to Gloucester Road.**

*Disclaimer: If you own more than one of the pieces mentioned in the round-ups or feel distinctly uncomfortable at how much you relate, this is all in jest!*

**International student** – I don't know why but you are either exhibiting a flair of Silicon Valley tech Entrepreneur or an unattainable preppiness. Always the best uni bags too. Probably something to do with the worldly influences in your life.

**Micro trend obsessive** – is that a mob wife aesthetic fur coat and a tomato girl gingham dress? You spent how much on ASOS? You might speak in brain rot but three years later will end up gaining 4+ 'excellence in OSCEs' feedback. I want my grandma to be treated by you.

**Fresh out of private school**- we don't care that you have money, we just are concerned you only use it on class A drugs and Ralph Lauren.

**Crunchy freshers** – you are so cute and more wholesome than a bowl of granola. Doctors love you because you seem to have the best conversational skills. You turn up to lectures decked in Lucy & Yak, nursing an oat milk flat white. Ethical and sustainable is your motto, Bristol's pride.

**Gatekeeper** – I think we are all you, but on varying levels. Behold, displayed below is the ultimate level of academic gatekeeper. You brought a Capsule wardrobe and a STEP 1 textbook to halls. I have seen your reddit posts on leaving medicine for consulting or running your biotech startup. Style icons for you range from Ali Abdaal to Elizabeth Holmes.

**Notting Hill adjacent** – So maybe you don't hail from London, but there is something about this way of dressing that has a chokehold on the home counties and beyond. They are the quietest people in CBL but the loudest on the gram. Sambas, silver necklaces, signet rings. If it's not a crochet top it could be a quilted jacket. I am very jealous if you have a Notting Hill quilted jacket.

*Diyora Ilkhomova*  
*Year 5*

Please don't comment if that's what I wear all next spring when I obtain one.

**Pinterest girl** – Do I want to be you or be with you? You are always the scribe for CBL and have a matcha in hand for effective consulting. You are a big fan of investing in high-quality pieces to wear for long and often. Unlike the above folk, you are more partial to gold bijoux.

**Part time athlete** – you are destined to be an anesthetist or ENT specialist, casually compete in a sport on a national level. I also think a study should be done on these freshers and the likelihood they perform in Clicendales. This all means that no expense is spared for your ward shoes because you are on your feet more than anyone else.



# A to E Assessment of The Acutely Unwell Medical Student (updated guidelines for 2024)



## Airway

Have they told you that they are a medical student within 10 seconds of you meeting them? This means the airway is patent.

If not, assess for possible causes of airway occlusion- Is their stethoscope or lanyard on too tightly?



## Breathing

If tachypnoeic, check their latest progress test score. If below the 25<sup>th</sup> percentile, commence high flow quesmed via nebuliser.

If a cold & stony dullness is heard on percussion of the chest, a future career in orthopaedics and private practice is most likely.

## Circulation

Inspect for clamminess. If present, they are likely on the medics rugby team.

Assess their fluid balance and hydration status by measuring the remaining volume in their unnecessarily large, reusable water-bottle.



## Disability

**Alert-** If they in 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year, they will probably be telling you about their gap-year and/or Duke of Edinburgh expedition.

**Confusion-** They may tell you that medicine is no harder than other degree.

**Voice-** They are unconscious but can correct you when you provoke them by asking if they are studying biomedicine, pharmacology, or any course at UWE.

**Pain-** They respond only to painful stimuli such as an unfavourable TAB.

**Unresponsive-** If totally unresponsive, they should consider intercalation in childhood studies.

Check their blood glucose- if hypo, they are probably 'cutting' in preparation for Clarendon. Give them a high-sugar drink & the validation that they are seeking.

**Note:** Request an urgent CT Head if the student develops a sudden interest in histology. This indicates serious intracranial pathology.

## Exposure

Palpate the calves to ensure they have not been skipping leg-day.

Do a 'culture test' by asking them to quote the opening line of 'Pride and Prejudice' or getting them to name 3 Shakespeare plays. Medical students should fail this test.

You may need to escalate by getting them an Uber home

Use **SBAR** when handing over to the Uber driver:

**Situation-** Explain what's going on to the driver & give them the medical student's address. Use the word 'Stat' to imply urgency and authority.

**Background (of the medical student)-** Did they go to a private school? You should be able to ascertain this by the presence of their dad's American Express credit card somewhere on their person. Do they own a car and can they give you a lift to your GP placement next week? All of this is useful information.

**Assessment-** Inform the driver of the key findings of your A-E assessment.

**Recommendations-** Suggest that the Uber driver takes them straight home and ignores their drunken requests to stop at TakaTaka or Jason Donervan.

*David Morillo, Year 4*



## A Short Story

**T**heir apartment was at the top of a set of clackety, steel stairs that would concern all four of them in the later months when the winter would arrive with its frost. But it was summer now, the middle of July 2020, with its heady scent of heat and smoke, and so the stairs were as safe as they would ever be. The view at the summit was of rolling hills of coloured terraces, and he was admiring it now, sat on the top step, with his flatmates below him.

In the day, they pottered around the house and at night, their other friends would gather in their tiny, half-broken apartment, and there they all drank and smoked and talked. They had just finished their first year of medical school and the summer's laziness seemed to be their reward.

Yet the simplicity of their summer revealed their privilege and concealed the uncertainty of the times they were living in. The world was on fire, caught in the pandemic's riptide, but they were lucky. Late at night, they spoke of their futures in vague yet cautiously hopeful terms, over roll-ups and beers. The uncertainty of what lay in store for them was underlined by one central question each of them considered a few times a day: would life ever return to normal again? Or would life always continue to change?

So, he sat on the top step and tried to not let that question turn over in his mind. He glanced down from the view of the hills and let his gaze fall upon his friends just below him instead. He thought of an important truth that he had learnt that summer: when good days came, like this one, he should close his eyes and try to contain them gently, in the same way that flour remains in the sifter until you turn the handle.

As the years passed, another truth made itself known, one which was not as clear to him then as it is now. The truth he learnt was that everything always changes because time rearranges everything.

And so that first summer trickles on like a brook, sticky and slow, but by August, the days feel shorter, the flour sifting through his fingers. One day that summer, he writes the first few paragraphs of this to try to fix that moment into his memory, and wonders whether he will ever show it to anyone. In the autumn, he turns 20 years old and then the winter comes and the virus spreads even faster. The day after Christmas that year, his father is taken to hospital and put on a ventilator in a dimly lit ward full of other fathers who are dying.

But time passes. It does more rearranging. His father gets better. His family are lucky. The months pass. He spends everyday with his friends. He notices his first grey hair. The place where he was born, his homeland, descends into war and violence again. It's worse this time. For weeks, he worries about whether his family there are safe. They eventually are.

The years pass. He works hard. He passes some exams. His closest friend graduates, becomes a doctor, and he wonders if he could be prouder of anyone else. He realises he can when he sees his sister grow up to become one of the strongest people he knows. He travels. He travels to the very edge of his homeland to where he can see it within reach, yet unable to set foot in it again safely. He works and learns at a clinic that looks after the people of his country, both those who have escaped and those who continue to survive within it. Feels guilt for not doing more to help. He visits the nearby refugee camps, full with even more people. In the language he shares with them, they call one another in the same way they would call family: that is to say, to him and to them, they are all brothers, sisters, aunts and uncles.

He writes the rest of this. He wonders if it's too trite or pretentious to show anyone else. He realises he doesn't care. Instead, he considers the one thing that time hasn't rearranged yet: his friends, the ones that sat upon those clackety, steel stairs and lived in that tiny, half-broken apartment with him four summers ago. When he thinks of them, he feels his throat catch and he remembers that in his language and in every language, he would call them his family too.

*Zin Htut*

*Year 5*

# Freshers Archive Page (Nov 1998)

*Note: Needless to say, 1998 was a very different time and I don't think we could get away with this now (apologies to any freshers who think they're fit)*

## FWOOR! FIT FRESHERS


Once a year, Bristol's most popular student pubs brace themselves for an invasion. It is an event notorious for drunken bad behaviour, bizarre outfits, copious vomiting and random snogs - yep, its the **Fresher's Pub Crawl!**

This year was no exception - 10 pubs were covered in all, by some in under two hours (now proud owners of Pub Crawl 98 T-shirts), putting most of us hardened 4th years to shame. On the lookout for talent (writing talent for Black Bag of course), Ramzi and I donned our greens and set off to snap the sauciest 1st years we could find (hard job but somebody had to do it).


For those of you with slightly blurred memories of the night, here are some reminders:








Urn - could the guy in the middle please step out of the picture.



I wanted you to mark off my card - not give me your phone number.

NB Black Bag accept no responsibility for hurt feelings if you think you are fit and were not included in this article.

Ah - these innocent first years have yet to learn of my reputation.



# GOOD LUCK FRESHERS OF 2024!

If you've given this a read and think "wow, that was shit – I could do way better", then get involved and email us at [blackbag1937@gmail.com](mailto:blackbag1937@gmail.com) or DM us @theblackbagbristol on Instagram. Free food at every meeting, I swear on me mum's life.

## SUPPORT CONTACTS:

### Galenicals Welfare Reps: Rosie & Diya

Ready to offer advice and support or to simply listen.

Email: [med-galenicalswelfare@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:med-galenicalswelfare@bristol.ac.uk)

### University Wellbeing

Email: [wellbeing-access@bristol.ac.uk](mailto:wellbeing-access@bristol.ac.uk)

Phone: 01174569860 (call line open 24 hours)

### MIND Support Line

Safe and confidential place to chat about your feelings.

Phone: 03001021234 (Mon-Fri, 9am-6pm)

### Strut Safe

Judgement-free phonenumber for people walking alone at night

Phone: 03333350026

(open Fri and Sat from 7pm to 3am, Sun 7pm to 1am)

### Bristol BAME Service

1-1 SUPPORT for people from BAME backgrounds

Email: [BristolBME@rethink.org](mailto:BristolBME@rethink.org)

Phone: 07436246182

As always, thanks for reading, forever and ever. Love ya – The Black Bag Team.