

# THE BLACK BAG



BRISTOL MEDICAL STUDENTS'  
MAGAZINE  
Winter Edition 2025



The University of Bristol Medical Students' Magazine  
Est. 1937

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This is a satirical magazine containing cynicism and sarcasm, it is not to be taken as fact or as  
genuine statements.

# The Black Bag



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Black Bag is once again back in your hands - though I'm sure we never left your heart! Happy Holidays to all, I hope this is a great present to you and here are a few messages from me:



Firstly, I would like to immensely thank everyone who has been involved in the Black Bag so far this year and remind everyone else that there is still time to get involved if you're yet to do so! Join the WhatsApp if you're interested. <https://chat.whatsapp.com/G5pAkOOOr7Nm5bn28MvFIRd>



You may have noticed that we have a bit of a bumper issue here (26 articles over about 30 pages)! You may also have noticed that there has been no physical copy. This is a longwinded way of saying that we are reconsidering the way Black Bag is made and distributed, and to ensure it is as high quality as possible please fill in this form:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfnRjMepaiqIXMyBK1vcn5ufi7OC9zPOCYbR\\_XNz4w7cXQxjg/viewform?usp=publish-editor](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfnRjMepaiqIXMyBK1vcn5ufi7OC9zPOCYbR_XNz4w7cXQxjg/viewform?usp=publish-editor)

Secondly, the Black Bag Awards are coming up! We will be giving out awards and having fun, so please make sure you come along so you don't miss out! If you hate awards and fun, feel free to give it a miss. Details will be shared on our Instagram @Blackbagbristol in January.

Thirdly, there have been complaints that the Black Bag's writers are "moaning minnies" who do nothing but whinge, so in this issue we will be trying our hardest to focus only on the positives, so expect great articles such as '*Why you should look forward to being unemployed after F2!*' and '*The joy of budgeting: why we should be thankful for the 'cost-of-living crisis'*'.

Furthermore, as has been made repeatedly clear, medicine should not be political. Medics should certainly not be out on dangerous protests where people might have signs with words written on them. Therefore this issue of the Black Bag will absolutely refrain from any mention of the government or other political groups – such as the evil and offensive BMA; we will not be arguing that someone's gender has no bearing on how they should be treated – as this is clearly a highly political stance; and we certainly will not be criticising genocide or war crimes – as this would be vastly inappropriate, and perhaps even illegal, for medics to be doing.

I hope that everyone reading this will take these messages to heart and remember that rather than trying to make the world a better place you should be quiet and get on with it. If you're struggling with this, gently repeat to yourself and others that everything is fine and never consider for one second that it might not be or that your ethical duties to prevent harm may occasionally extend outside of the clinic.

Happy holidays!  
Love Will

## **The Hinge Misadventure**

*Note from the editor: Other dating apps are available. None are likely to grant you success. Just you specifically, though. They work great for other people.*

Healthcare regulators were placed on high alert this week after a Bristol student reported “significant anatomical misrepresentation” by a Pubeface student on Hinge.

Early reports suggested the advertised dimensions were “statistically imaginative,” with one investigator describing the discrepancy as “The difference between an OSCE pass and a resit.”

The GMC’s Fitness to Practise team has launched a preliminary inquiry under the category: *Dishonesty, Professional Misconduct, and Other Classic Medical Student Hobbies.*

A leaked fitness to practise memo reveals the following:

*“Candidate B’s Hinge profile claims cannot be independently verified without the use of a microscope or a strong imagination. Possible breach of good medical practice and basic geometry.”*

Pubeface has since issued a rebuttal insisting this was “an isolated incident,” adding helpfully, “most of our students lie much more convincingly.”

*Written by Hugh G Rection*



## **Introducing: Flexible Annual Leave Days!**

The students said they wanted approved leave, and the central medical school certainly listened. It’s easier than ever to take time away from studies guilt-free, if you follow our simple policies outlined below. For further information, [click this link that will take you to a 753-page document which we will refer you back to when we eventually reject your requests.](#)

### ***Key Features:***

- Each student may take no more than the total number of days which they deem perfectly reasonable halved thrice. This should equal 2.
- To give us time to write your name on our spreadsheet, requests must be submitted **exactly** four weeks before the intended leave date, unless that date falls within any week where the Monday was sunny, in which case the notice period extends to the number of Mondays in the previous month plus one extra week for good measure.
- Leave may not occur on any scheduled or potential teaching days to maximise learning opportunities. This includes days where your calendar is empty.

### ***Additional rules to note:***

- Cannot be taken during waxing gibbous moons, or when Mercury falls into an awkward angle with Pluto. It is at our discretion as to what ‘awkward’ means.
- Cannot coincide with odd-numbered Thursdays in months starting with a vowel, unless it is the third week following a day when ‘Summer Holiday’ by Cliff Richard was played on Heart Radio,
- Cannot be taken with any other student simultaneously. You are not allowed to spend time outside of medicine with your friends.
- Cannot be booked if the hospital canteen is serving vegetarian lasagna that week.
- Cannot be booked on a Fibonacci-numbered day.
- Subject to approval by the committee, who meet on leap years divisible by 3 but not by 6 (unless divisible by 8), and only at lunchtime on the day of the summer solstice, should this fall on a Tuesday.

- We aim to get back to you with our decision within 58 working days (please note we are currently working with reduced staffing and thus are working reduced hours on one day a week).

Enjoy your new-found freedom!

*Note from the editor: Other radio stations are available. Other Cliff Richard songs are also available. Specific mentions should not be taken as Black Bag endorsements. Except for the Cliff Richard song.*



## **Government Proscribes BMA**

*By Will Palmer*

In a shocking move, the government has taken legislative action against the British Medical Association by adding them to the list of proscribed groups. This means that it is now illegal to belong to, express support for, or arrange meetings related to the BMA.

The BMA, which the Black Bag now disavows itself of, is the trade union responsible for ensuring safe working standards for doctors as well as high quality healthcare for patients. It has more recently become a controversial group due to the repeated decisions to strike - which have happened 14 times since 2023, including most recently a series of strikes in November and December 2025.

“This measure has been taken due to the repeated actions of this group which have risked patient safety - people’s lives - as well as attempts to damage the NHS - a key part of national infrastructure.” said Wes Streeting, the Health Secretary.

Other strike action includes picket lines around hospitals, where doctors on strike display signs in support of their cause. Activities like this, which take place in public areas, can make people feel unsafe as well as the noise causing a nuisance, and the key involvement of police in ensuring public order at these events has been labelled as sapping away resources from important incidents. In future, these police resources will be put to better use arresting and prosecuting those guilty of supporting the BMA.

The BMA has joined the proscribed groups list alongside other recognised terrorist organisations such as ISIS and Al Qa’ida.

“The government is making it clear that when voices speak out in disagreement of our policies, they will be silenced by any means necessary.” said Keir Starmer, Prime Minister, “We simply cannot have thugs like the BMA walking the streets, demanding better pay and working conditions and radicalising others into doing the same. It is just not British.”

The Labour government has been criticised for failing to negotiate effectively with trade unions, leading to questions over the longstanding links between Labour and trade unions such as Unite, the UK’s largest trade union.

Whilst other parties may have views on the issue, unfortunately they are unable to comment due to the risk of being arrested on terrorism charges. In light of this we instead asked them what they thought about healthcare.

Your Party had leadership disagreements so were unable to reach a consensus but various views have been expressed and retracted.

The Green Party said they generally think it is a good thing but they don't support nuclear medicine.

The Liberal Democrats remain on the fence.

The Conservatives have said they're okay with healthcare as long as poor people can't have it.

Reform responded to our question about healthcare by shouting about small boats.



### **(Failed) Medical School Sub-Society Initiations**

We've all been that perky, clueless medical student who signs up for 50 different societies at once, blissfully unaware of what any of them actually do. At Bristol, joining a society isn't just about meeting like-minded people—it's an odyssey. Only the truly brave dare to embark on this heroic quest, fuelled by far too much caffeine and a complete lack of common sense.

Signing up? Easy. Surviving the initiations? That's where legends are forged, reputations ruined, and questionable decisions made.

#### ***Clinical Skills Society***

*'Thou who can cannulate, is a king amongst men'*

Initiation is simple really, it involves counting to ten, being blindfolded (doesn't really matter which way round you do that), then being asked to insert a cannula into a dummy (I'd like to say it's a practice arm but know you're picturing that one specific person). Extra points if you cannulate another society member, if it's SCRUBS, they'll offer you free membership, if it's Plastics and Reconstruction, they'll berate you for how bad your anatomy is and probably expect you to reconstruct whatever it was you cannulated—they say that's how friendships are formed.

Members attend every event in full scrubs, wielding their trusty sharps bin—often named (Tim is a fan favourite, but they also accept Gary). Attendance is mandatory, grooviness is optional.

#### ***Neurology Society***

*'To brain or not to brain...that is the question'*

To join you have to explain the descending and ascending tracts using interpretive dance—if you do a good shimmy, we'll make you president! Prize for the best interpretation of the medulla oblongata (cause she's my favourite). If you can explain the role of the amygdala with 11 different emotional tones you get a free tendon hammer- for optional bashing of your friends!

Candidates who manage to pull off the best interpretation of the 'sodium-potassium pump hop' without falling over are crowned committee royalty, honoured with a ceremonial badge, and bask in the everlasting admiration of our readers.



### *Geriatrics Society*

*'I'm falling again, I'm falling again...I'm falling'*

GeriatricsSoc isn't for the faint-hearted—or anyone who hasn't had an existential crisis in a waiting room. Initiation begins with little old Doris, foggy glasses, cruising with her Zimmer frame on three hours of sleep, having already fallen thrice and downed two cups of tea.

Survive 30 minutes of her recounting every ailment since the moon landing without interrupting or losing the will to live. Bonus points if you're awake ten minutes in.

Then comes the mobility assessment: successfully navigate her Zimmer frame around five strategically placed dentures, and you might just get a miniCEX signed off by the Registrar.

### *Plastics & Reconstruction Society*

*'If I'm without your kisses, I'll be needing stitches'*

No one joins PlasticsSoc. PlasticsSoc chooses you, usually whilst you're admiring your own reflection in the mirror. Legend has it PlasticsSoc began when someone stumbled upon a suture kit protesting - 'You are the object of my desires and the bane of my existence'.

Initiation involves your best friend, their arm, a suture kit and a late-night trip to ED (order optional), they might be impressed with your knowledge of anatomy, surgical imprecision, or sheer confidence in creating a masterpiece.

They travel in packs - the sacred needle-holder, the eternal suture supplier, and the aesthetic distraction. Beware - first years are often lured in, thinking they've found influencers. They haven't.

### *Paediatrics Society*

*'All children, except one, grow up' but at least 'All the world is made of faith, trust, and pixie dust'*

Being part of the paediatrics society is basically an excuse to keep wearing stripy socks, crazy headbands, set off bubble machines, and break into song halfway through clinic (if you ever even get that far).

Initiation involves dancing to every single CBeebies song playing in the background, while dodging the snot and tears of toddlers—and occasionally your own—trying desperately to remember every detail of the newborn examination, watching your own sanity slipping away.

Stethoscopes are frequently chewed, stolen, or glittered—so exams are performed with gel pens, stickers, and the occasional motivational speech to teddy bears.

Need a paediatrician? Follow the sound of music. Usually, it's toddlers versus medics in a battle to 'Let it Go'.

\*\*\*

To leave you with some delicately chaotic parting wisdom—may your scrubs stay clean, your glitter cling on for dear life, and your dignity... well, that's the first organ to fail in medical school.

Don't panic. It's not life-threatening, and most people don't notice it's missing anyway.

Sara Hussnain  
Year 5



## **UBHWRFC Report**

Picture the scene - the sky is appropriately grey and drizzly, with Baltic temperatures faced only by the bravest of Bristolians. In the midst of this depressing scene, you have a group of mud-plastered women rolling around in a way that looks similar to rugby, if you squint, to the delight/horror/amusement of the Down's Cafe patrons. Congratulations, you have found yourself at UBHWRFC training.

The season commenced with many a wonderful fresher turning up bright and starry-eyed to what was clearly the most informative GIAG session of their lives. Most women who join our club have never played before, so we started with some basics like: 1) passing the ball backwards, and 2) rugbynetball. It's always rewarding to see women come into a sport that isn't usually aimed at us and improve so



quickly, especially as the sport welcomes more and more players each year! The freshers took to rugby like a fish to water and we started getting into contact and ball handling (ha ha) - teaching from the ground up. One particularly rainy Sunday was spent entirely focusing on tackling and the important skill of 'Cheek To Cheek'.

We progressed onto drills in preparation for our upcoming games, which resulted in some very mature and indecipherable code words like 'fist' and 'tip' being yelled across the Downs. As we realised how few Saturdays were between us and a serious NAMS match, which induced zero panic or fear, we decided to run a few extra night training sessions. The Friday 8-9pm was daunting/gruelling/we were sleepy and cold, but we persevered through to start running some very skilful drills at an England-rugby-women-playing-the-world-cup-final level of amazing. Look no further, national rugby recruiters!

Socially, business is booming - Daisy's can testify to the amount of VKs we have consumed. One special Saturday saw UBH & UBHW take on the Wye Valley, where Mike thought it was a good idea to let us hike to a Welsh campsite and force us to do team building. While some mild trespassing occurred, miraculously no one was injured or lost among the many, many fields (no sheep were harmed) and we had a very #OneClub day. The evening saw both divisions of UBH running about Bristol trying to find three very beautiful/handsome 'Poulets', inspired by our French foes across the pond, before taking on a Daisy's boogie. We also had a really wholesome post-training brunch one weekend (Viva la Boston Tea Party), because who doesn't love brunch and a gossip? Our second major social saw an unholy amount of green facepaint with many victims, a lot of pints/vodka crans, and a Romanian phone-napping ring. (I was one of the victims. It's funny now. You can laugh. No, the phone has not been recovered. Yes, it is actually in Romania. Yes, I am being serious. No, I'm not bitter). Great night overall though. Thankfully, by the grace of higher rugby powers, UBHW has not yet had to brave Sportsmans... wish us luck!

Our club has gone from strength to strength, and this is gearing up to be our best year yet, with lots of exciting things to come! I have every confidence we are going to have a great season. Leicester/Swansea/Manchester/Birmingham/Nottingham won't know what hit 'em!

Up the Cloob,

Emily 'no MBE lol' Matthews Club Captain 2025/2026

### **UBHRFC Report**

Halfway through the season for the UBH and it is a medical miracle we can still field two teams considering that our pre-match warm ups look like a crime against physio guidelines.

The season has set to be a historic one with a record fresher intake, some of whom have helpfully played rugby before.

The 1XV started the year strong with a convincing 34-12 dismantling of the university T\*bes and a quite embarrassing 61-0 win against a Warwick University side.

With a bump in the road in the form of an aggravated Southampton side and a referee who clearly hated rugby, the 1XV bounced back last week to thwack Swansea- some much needed momentum ahead of Varsity this weekend.

As for the 2XV, never has such high rugby quality been replicated with such a staggering amount of alcohol still in the team's system: with a comprehensive win against Southampton and a less comprehensive loss against a stacked Bath university side last week.

Onwards and upwards for the rest of the season, come to Coombe Dingle to get a glimpse of the magic as both teams continue their cup run.



### **GFC Report**

It was a disappointing end to last season for GFC as we finished in the bottom half of the table in both our leagues. We even had the misfortune of scheduling our NAMS Vase semi-final the day after Clic; needless to say, we did not make it to the final.

However, strong recruitment and new leadership gave us hope for the 25/26 season. This could be our year. It did not start that way. The Gs suffered back to back, to back, and to back again losses, leaving fans and players alike exasperated. Surely it couldn't go on like this could it?

A trip to sunny sunny Swansea ended the losing streak, albeit not bringing us that elusive first win. Understandably, only 12 players were brave enough to cross into W\*les. To make matters worse, the referee allegedly cancelled the night before, so one of their players would have to officiate the game. This led to a perfectly onside goal being disallowed and two stonewall penalties being waved off. Excuse my French, mais c'était honteux. The game ended 2-2 and we would have to share the points.

Still, this would kick off a string of good results. We now sit on a 5 game winning streak with the latest match ending as a 5-2 victory against a team that beat us 7-1 last year. Now that's progress.

With all the momentum in the world on our side, it's time to face our W\*lish adversaries at Varsity and aim for our first win in rather a lot of years. This will be our year.

Up the Gs.





## **GWFC Report**

Let me tell you the story of the GWFC's legendary start to the season, where we achieved the biggest fresher turnout in club history...

'Twas a sunny October afternoon in Brighton when the Gs began the season with lioness prowess. Our captain, Kirat, led us to triumph for our first NAMS league game. The ladies were confident, composed, and ready. Prez Kate secured a pretty early lead netting two back-to-back, whilst some tekky play down both wings meant a couple more goal opportunities almost scored. Our keeps, Mila, ran her backline like the navy and our defence was as strong as ever. After a riveting team talk, the second half saw us playing a tougher game with the sun shining bright in our eyes. But the Gs held it together. After a well-fought for goal from Brighton, we were finally back with a beautiful through ball to Sophie Kvam slotted effortlessly into the bottom left corner. 3-1 to the Gs. 15 players putting everything into this match. Every day is a good day when you play for GWFC.



Of course, we had to celebrate the big win with several socials that really defined the season. Our esteemed social secs Mila and Kyla kicked things off with a cowboy night which ended at the Gs' favourite place off the pitch, OMG. A true highlight was Halloween's rhyme without reason, where Cher and Tony Blair stole the show. This social roundup would not be complete without mentioning the infamous sailors social hosted by Cap + Prez which got a bit too literal and concluded at sea (the house flooded). Social secs we potentially flew too close to the sun there. Anyways, the social calendar for November and December is looking stacked so if you're friends with a member of GWFC, they're probably busy tbh.

A huge thank you to our beautiful fourth years who have well and truly brought the energy, committed to every training, and made this club so friendly and fun. We couldn't have made it this far without you. The club is bigger and better than ever (biggest ever year for club membership!!!). We are so looking forward to what this year has to offer - from matches to socials and everything in between.

Catch us making our VARSITY DEBUT where Cardiff finally has the guts to send a women's team. Here's to a big win for women's football x

UTFG,  
Mira



## Varsity Report

I must confess that I am not the biggest follower of sports. I am reliably informed, though, that what took place at Varsity this year was essentially several hours of some of the greatest shows of athleticism and sporting-ability which have ever been seen in the history of humanity.

Bristol took home several major victories, including in Women's rugby and football against some formidable adversaries and some even more formidable pitch conditions (such as a 30-degree incline), as well as men's football (ending a 15-year losing streak against Cardiff). It is my understanding from what the crowd seemed to be saying, that every Bristol victory was hard-won through stellar effort and teamwork, whilst every Cardiff victory could only occur because of cheating and biased referees.

Massive congratulations to all involved, and good luck for the term ahead!

*Will Palmer*



## A LESSER KNOWN MEDICAL SPECIALTY



*Rhi*



## Christmas wish list

- 15 fewer contact hours a week
- A year's supply of Velo and a large bottle of vodka
- A car that actually functions, so you aren't stranded in Weston every weekend
- That one anatomy colouring book everyone owns
- Your costume for this year's CLIC performance
- Caffeine tablets
- The ability to actually relax
- No more CogConnect
- An Overheard at UOB for medics
- Hospital accommodation that isn't infested with rats (Bath)
- A CBL group that actually contributes
- Scrubs that fit

*-with (some) love, Polly and Yashvi xoxo*





## New Year's resolutions

- Stay for a full day of placement  
*No skiving or leaving early.... EVEN if you're at Southmead*
- Attend an 8am ward round twice per week  
*Exposure therapy for your fear of consultants*
- Attend 9ams (even lectures)  
*A hangover is not an excuse, have a Berrocca*
- Take anatomy seriously  
*Give Craig a break. .*
- Turn up to your sports society  
*Wednesday night socials don't count*
- Stop frequenting La Rocca  
*And don't get tempted by that VK deal*
- Don't get peer pressured by your Sports Society to go to 66  
*It's a shit club and you know it*
- Just one can of red bull a day  
*Is the tachycardia really worth it?*
- Attend at least one 3D lecture  
*Gotta maintain the performative male lifestyle by pretending you care*
- Master the art of looking busy on the wards  
*Stop just wandering aimlessly*



-with (some) love, Yashvi and Polly xoxo



## Finals

Exam season is a warm hazy blur of early mornings walking to the library, condensation from your iced coffee dripping down your hand. You and your nearest and dearest from CBL groups past clocking in for a shift at the PassMed Factory.

Evenings are spent in the medical library as the sun sets, running through endless possibilities for the OSCEs in a small group of your most trusted mates, turning over and scrutinising made-up scenarios in the dying light of those early summer days.

Then time accelerates to break-neck speed and suddenly; it's today. You're walking into the lab with the bright lights and smooth cold desks, and after a long, meditative silence, Professor Blythe tells you "You may begin".

It's an endless mash-up clinic of a hundred patients with a myriad of problems, and you do what you think is right in your heart and hope, wish and pray you've done enough. Then, mercilessly, you do it all over again for the second time, 24 hours later.

The OSCEs come and go - a baking hot evening spent picking up a Nando's in Taunton, eating it in the giant empty field next to the accommodation blocks, the grass beginning to lose its verdancy as the air wobbles in the near distance.

A sleepless night spent staring at the ceiling with the window wide open. *It's too hot for this.* The second day passes in a hot blur of the same actors playing different roles and then it's 5pm and you're done... it's finally over...

You rush back to Bristol on the M5, the golden light dancing over the countryside as Miley Cyrus' *The Climb* blasts out of the open windows, the engine wailing as you all descend back to Channings for debriefs, lingering hugs and then a party. Berkeley. Daisy's. Kebab. Sleep. Finals. Finished.

## July

Days later, I'm hugging a quiet, tearful goodbye with my mum at Heathrow Terminal 5 on a Friday evening. I'm getting on a plane to Asia, and I won't be back for three months. I look pale and tired. There are dark circles under my eyes. I'm shattered. I feel conflicted, wanting nothing more than to stay home curled in a ball with my cocker spaniel watching *Below Deck* but knowing I need to get back out into the world, live my life a bit. I drop my bag, and I go.



13 hours later, I land. Singapore. The heat sticks to me like molasses as I haul me and my backpack to my hastily-booked hostel in the Arab quarter, next to a beautiful gold-encrusted mosque. It's getting dark, so I get some dinner and go to sleep.

I wake up almost forgetting where I am, shower, then I venture out into the heat. The sights, sounds and scents from the streets overwhelm my senses; incense; one enormous rat; grilled chicken; hot sewage; a bus screaming past; a gaggle of tourists. I can't feel my limbs. How have I landed here? I'm hungry. What time is it? I feel sick. For the first time in my life, I had been properly hit with the outer-body experience that is, culture shock.

My legs take me to an ice-cold mall with gorgeous AC, but I start to sweat, and with a rumble in my gut I know, a toilet, I must find. That airplane food is coming back with a vengeance. I hurry into a cubicle and slam the door, quietly gasping in horror as I turn to see a traditional squat-toilet, but it's seconds until detonation. I squat, I take a breath, and I release.

Half an hour later, I shakily drink a plastic glass of iced water in a Chinese place in the basement food court. I've never felt so fragile. *God, I'm hungry.* I realise I haven't eaten a proper meal in days. I eat. I feel a little better, and then the culture shock becomes a little quieter in my head. Wouldn't it have been easier to binge-watch Captain Sandy and her crew dealing with another hellish charter guest?

*Note from the editor: Other reality TV shows are available.*



I reflect on what I've embarked on. A three-month journey with only the last bit planned. I just need to get to Ho Chi Minh City by the first of September. The rest is up to me. Nothing booked, no plans, all by myself.

A few days later, I begin a journey overland up peninsular Malaysia. Kuala Lumpur's monorails. The Cameroon Highlands' tea plantations. Quiet nights in a fisherman's house next to a roaring river. In Georgetown, I feast on endless bowls of chaotically colourful, flavourful dishes and gaze out from the top of mountains over rainforest canopy.

I spend a month hopping around Thailand. I go out to a Ladyboy show with Australian surfer friends I meet at a cooking class. I meet an old friend from many summers ago in Chiang Mai.

I spend a couple of weeks on a Southern Thai beach in my own beach hut, eating chicken rice and coconut soup and sipping cold beer watching the sunsets over the balmy, crystal clear ocean. I start to feel like myself again, finally.

## August

I carve out a few days in the north of Laos at the confluence of two great rivers where at dawn, the monks, dressed in their heavy orange robes, walk barefoot down the street. The

people of the city kneel outside their doorways, carefully spooning sticky rice and fruit into huge bronze pots carried by the monks as they file past, chanting thousand-year-old hymns through the misty mountain air. The weeks slip by.

Then I'm at Hanoi airport, Vietnam, awaiting my boyfriend's arrival amidst the din of taxi drivers harassing bleary-eyed passengers for a ride and squealing families embracing their long-gone loved ones. I miss home, I miss England, I really miss Bristol.

Suddenly we're speeding along a freeway in the back of a cab towards Hanoi's old quarter.

What follows is a blissful couple of weeks as we work our way South. That restaurant where Obama ate Bún Chả with Bourdain. Swimming in Lan Ha Bay. Paddling through the jaw-dropping Trang An. Strolling around the Huế citadel in the midday heat. Night trains with buzzing electric lights, crammed in with young Vietnamese families. Getting suits made in Hoi An as a typhoon hit. Floating in a rooftop infinity pool gazing out over Da Nang in a £14-per-night five-star hotel under the endless twinkling stars. Bliss.

September. Just as quickly as he'd arrived, he hopped back on a plane to London, and I remained solo in Ho Chi Minh City. It was time to begin the elective.

### The Elective

I hadn't seen pictures of my hospital accommodation online, just a promise from the project co-ordinator I'd emailed months before that it would include food and was close to the placement. How bad could it be?

Picture a room with a thin blue sheet drawn over a large window which looks out onto a filthy white wall. A small, buzzing AC unit from the 1980s. A single lightbulb dangling from a wire. Three bunk beds, and on each bed, a weary, stinky, traveller.

If it were a perfume, the layers would be; *Piss. Fried food. Mould. Raw sewage. Top notes of; Stale Sweat; Dirty Laundry.* There were rats, there were cockroaches, and there were two French medical students who would spend their nights shagging their way down walking street, only to regale the next day's lunch table with tales of their conquests from the night before.



I'll be honest, those first few days all I wanted to do was get on a plane and go home. I was living a tortuous 5-minute drive from the international airport, and that first week, I'd often walk through a nearby park and sit on a little concrete bench and gaze up at the planes jetting off into the grey clouds, wishing I was on one of them.

Times like these build resilience. This was what I had chosen, and I was going to make the best of it. I signed up with a beautiful, clean, empty private gym (which costs £30 for the

month in Vietnam), and I put myself up in lovely Airbnb's around the city on the weekends (costing next to nothing).

I found a couple of mates in the house to enjoy the long afternoons and lazy evenings with, sitting on the roof of our building smoking cheap cigarettes and sipping Japanese beer. Paddy, a no-nonsense medic from Dundee, and Anaïs, a French NGO worker who will no doubt go on to work at the UN. Anaïs will save the world one day.

The hospital placement was an education in how to run an efficient healthcare system. The trick is, forget about confidentiality and autonomy (take all the photos and videos you need), learn the unique brand of Vietnamese Medical Professional Empathy (play it cool), and you're good to go. All patients seen the same day, basically no primary care, on you go.

I'd spend my break sitting under the front entrance of the hospital on a little concrete bench by a koi pond, eating a bao bun and sipping a bottle of water. I spent afternoons sipping coffees around the city and reading books. I got into a meditative flow state, falling deeply in love with the country, the food, the attitude of the people, all of it.



The people of Vietnam have suffered. The War Remnants

Museum is harrowing. But it's still a fairly young country (average age of 33), and the mantra of 'forgive but don't forget' rings true. People are happy to see you, everyone's guard is down, the food is delicious, and the explosion of economic growth has hauled millions out of poverty across the nation.

Ho Chi Minh flows like a river just after a storm. Thousands of motorbikes clog up the roads and pavements, crawling forward past an endless array of road-side food carts, shophouses, quiet residential alleyways, all under a scrawl of black powerlines. The noise is an incredible, catastrophic cacophony of engine

oil, two cylinder engines, shouted conversations over the phone and a sea of whispers between people as they trade crumpled 10,000 đồng notes for coffee, Bánh Mí and steaming bowls of Phở, consuming it all on tiny plastic stools scattered across the pavements.

It's a truly beautiful feeling to walk out each day and hop on the back of a motorbike, and to be a drop in the ocean of humanity. To feel so alive, you must let Vietnam take you in with both arms in a tidal wave of smiles. I would fly back in a heartbeat.

*Max Gerard  
Final Year*

## **The Black Bag Guide to impressing your consultant – Will Palmer**

Many days are spent on the wards vying for the attention of the consultant, and with stiff competition like FIs, regs, nurses, and of course those pesky patients, you're going to need to stand out so that you can get the recognition you deserve and more importantly the praise that you crave.

To those ends the Black Bag has put together a handy guide to impressing your consultant:

### **1. Love their specialty**

You don't have to really love it, just pretend. You might have never heard of a neuropsychiatrist before, but for the afternoon you're following that consultant it's the only thing you've ever thought about doing. If you can find out whatever niche area of research they are interested in, ask them lots of questions about it and make sure to nod and tell them how fascinating it is.

### **2. Mi stethoscope su stethoscope**

Anyone who has spent any time on the wards knows that consultants rarely have a pen or stethoscope to hand. Be the person whose stethoscope and pen they borrow, and you will eternally be in their good books. The only downside is that you might not get it back, which is fine for a pen but rapidly becomes costly if it's a stethoscope.

### **3. Expert knowledge**

Consultants feel that they are above all others, and rightfully so, no mere resident doctor could ever suggest that the patient has Heyde's syndrome, amyloidosis, or Erdheim-Chester disease. Unless, of course, someone could...

It doesn't matter if the patient actually has the rare condition, chances are it is simply an asthma attack, but the consultant has thought about that before you've said it, say something new and interesting like Xeroderma Pigmentosum-associated Interstitial Lung Disease and they'll be sure to remember you as being wise beyond your years.

If you can't think of any rare disease to bring up, remember that it could always be lupus...

### **4. Do the dirty work**

Hospitals are a food pyramid and I'm afraid that medical students are at the bottom. Those who try to climb their way up ahead of their time are only going to end up stepping on toes and causing upset. However, people above you will thank you for doing the jobs they don't want to. So next time a patient needs a PR, you'd better have a glove on before the consultant has even finished introducing themselves. Don't worry if you're not qualified, there's not much difference between *see one, do one, teach one* and *just do it*.

*Note from the editor: Don't do anything you're not qualified to do.*

### **5. Get that coffee**

It seems odd but taking a gift in the form of a cup of coffee from the consultant will grant you favour and they won't begrudge you the £18.50 that the hospital café charges for a flat white. Plus that 20 minutes of chitchat is the perfect opportunity to ply them with *ooos* and *aaas* as they regale surgical tales, make sure to laugh at all the jokes no one else will; and when they use you as a vehicle to reminisce about their days at medical school, you can ride that nostalgia wave all the way to a CBD.



## **Out-placement observations**

### *Trains.*

Much time is spent on them these days. Do I regret selling my Ford KA in second year? Never more so than when I am desperately refreshing my trainline app and realising, with growing horror, that the last connecting train to Yeovil *will* be missed. SouthWestern, you make me shudder.

*Note from the editor: Other trainlines are unavailable but rail replacement buses may be running.*

On such occasions, I ponder my fellow passengers.

Across the table, I spy that familiar trope; the tall, middle-aged man, with well-trimmed beard, a checked shirt, cargo trousers, and a worn leather satchel.

But hang-on. What's this?

On further examination, I notice the incongruous bright yellow swatch, then the children's *Cars* lunchbox. Beneath the table, I spy a pink children's mini backpack with a neon-blue water bottle. All framed by a look of perpetual exasperation.

And I remember, yes, it could be worse.

As the train once more comes to a grinding halt, from slumber, I attune to a conversation between two passionate female passengers behind me.

'Tapas??? It wouldn't have fed a mouse on Ozempic!'

'And guess what? When it came to pay, he said let's split... that's feminism gone too far.'

'So I got up, walked to the bar, and asked for Angela.'

My eyelids droop and then shut, and I wonder if I am awake or dreaming as the train staggers on.

### *Small things.*

That's what I think I'll miss about this life. The times when I'm sat in the kitchen, with these friends who were strangers just 8 weeks ago, and the silence is punctuated with questions like, 'If we were in France, would La Rocca be called 'The Rocker?''

A valid point.

I think I'll miss the group trips more befitting of those with free bus cards and limited mobility than those in the prime of their youth. Like when we all hailed to the Yeovil Christmas lights turn-on.

And, shivering together, we watched as a man in high vis hurriedly draped the last of the lights around the crooked Christmas tree.

Through the crowd's chorus of 'ten, nine, eight...'. I recognised a mid-forties woman in a neat, caramel-coloured jacket. I racked my brain for her name, but my question was soon

answered as the town-crier introduced the local celebrity who would launch this year's festivities.

It was Sophie Ellis-Bextor!!

Could it be the infamous singer of the #1 UK hit recently facing a resurgence of virality, *Murder on the dance floor*? Alas, had I been wearing my contacts, I would have realised sooner - no. This was 'Somerset's most popular' Sophie Ellis-Bextor impersonator.

Surely there is only one?

Oh, Yeovil, I fear I will miss you.

- *A very hungry mouse*

*Note from the editor: Other Somerset-based Sophie Ellis-Bextor impersonators are available... apparently.*

(P.S. This is a semi-fictionalised account exaggerated, as much of my life is, for entertainment purposes.

The fact that the above is the *exaggerated* version has made me consider how truly drab my life currently is. Lol.)



### **Post-Elective Depression**

1. Are you having the occasional intrusive thought that maybe medicine (or any kind of job) isn't for you?

Yes – continue

No – genuinely props to you, there aren't many of us left. Go forth soldiers and achieve greatness, and prop up the NHS with your undying passion for medicine.

2. Have you discovered you have an unfathomable aptitude for vitamin D supplementation (working on your tan), addressing fluid balance (coffee and alcohol), and general wellbeing (the 'being' being 'being on holiday')?

Yes – continue

No – sounds like you may have contributed to society and gained some new medical skills. Try not to get too frustrated with your colleagues next year who might not be quite on par.

3. Does the price of a humble Guinness threaten to significantly affect your net worth?

Yes – continue

No – you're probably rich enough to access the first line prevention for this disorder: multiple holidays per year. Congrats and enjoy Christmas in your second home!

4. Do you feel like more than 45 minutes in a hospital or similar establishment is a hard day's work worthy of extra self-care?

Yes – continue

No – see above

5. Do the phrases ‘competition ratios’ and ‘quality improvement project’ increase your heart rate to the point that your NEWS score is affected?

Yes - continue

No – sounds like you’ve been hard at work on your portfolio already. Well done for getting ahead in the game!

If you answered yes to all of these questions, you may be suffering from **Post-eLecTive dePresSion**. More awareness needs to be raised regarding this debilitating condition. There is a lot of stigma around it because it is associated with middle class socioeconomic status, sometimes even being referred to as a first world problem. But those experiencing it understand it is an all-encompassing state of mind that makes you question all your life choices. Returning during the height of UK winter also doesn’t help. Treatment is largely supportive though for more severe cases see below for a summary of the OKAY guidelines.

First line:

1. Denial: try to put that joyous time out of your mind, as if it were a whimsical dream sequence like in twilight Breaking Dawn Part 2.
2. Forward planning: spend every spare moment planning your post F2 escape to Australia – see you there!
3. Wellbeing: there’s nothing like a hippie Trevor module to bring you back down to reality, so throw yourself into ‘Outside the box’ whether it be crocheting, running, or actually doing your GP prep for the first time.
4. Practice gratitude: it is important to remember how lucky we are, even if coming back to reality is harsh, it will never be as harsh as the realities faced by some of those less fortunate than us.

Second line: if looking for more self-destructive forms of management please see below

1. 42 Jagerbombs PME (per medic event)

Drown your sorrows in alcohol, particularly at medic events (if you have any memory of the bar crawl you have not been compliant with this treatment). This is a form of distraction as you can redirect your feelings towards self-loathing and hangxiety.

2. 5 mince pies QDS + Bailey’s hot chocolate BD:

It is widely known that the true meaning of Christmas is all about getting depressed citizens through the Winter. Engagement with this holiday has also shown to be effective against post elective depression as Michael Buble’s soothing voice can convince you that everything is going to be ok.

3. Various antidepressants have also been shown to be effective against post elective depression, however this cannot be deemed a first line treatment as the majority of the patient cohort are already on strong doses of these.

*Kate Rainsford*

*If you are struggling with mental health, there is lots of support available for you via the University, Galenicals, and the NHS.*

- [University support](#)
- [Medical School Support](#)
- [Galenicals Peer Support form](#)
- Email Helen: med-galenicalswelfare@bristol.ac.uk



## **Frontiers of Health: Some cool research and how Inspire is getting students involved**

From AI-powered diagnostics to molecular “mini-machines,” the worlds of human and animal health are moving fast. Across medicine, dentistry, and veterinary science, researchers are uncovering new mechanisms of disease, developing fairer technologies, and rethinking how humans and animals interact in a shared ecosystem (shoutout One Health). The University of Bristol has been at the forefront of many of these breakthroughs. Here is a look at some of the most exciting cutting-edge research happening right now!



*Anjali Rameshwaran and  
Freya Hanson  
2<sup>nd</sup> year Medical Students*

## **Medicine: Brains, Bytes & Breakthroughs**

### **AI Supercomputing for Better and Fairer Diagnosis**

The rise of AI-driven healthcare in modern medicine has been all over the news, but Bristol researchers have shown that not all AI is created equal. Using the powerful new Isambard-AI supercomputer (the 6<sup>th</sup> fastest supercomputer in Europe, and the 4<sup>th</sup> greenest in the world), scientists analysed skin-cancer-detecting algorithms and uncovered a significant issue: models were more accurate for lighter skin than darker skin.

With the recent awareness of and drive towards fair, unbiased medical tools, this discovery is already shaping how future diagnostic AIs are trained and tested. The same supercomputing power is also being used for disease modelling, drug discovery, and even animal-health monitoring. [1][2]

### **The Immune System’s Surprising Role in Mental Health**

Bristol-led work is helping transform that perspective that mental health research should focus on the brain alone. Recent studies have revealed strong connections between immune activity and conditions such as depression, schizophrenia, dementia, and bipolar disorder.

This suggests that these disorders may be partly driven by body-wide biological processes, not just neural chemistry. The finding opens the door to new treatment strategies, rather than relying solely on traditional psychiatric medications. [3]

### **Glucose-Binding “Mini Machines” for Diabetes Technology**

Displaying the riveting intersection between chemistry and health, Bristol’s Professor Anthony Davis and his team have created highly selective synthetic glucose-binding molecules. These tiny molecular structures, including one called GluHUT, can latch onto glucose with remarkable accuracy.

This innovation is already influencing the next generation of continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) used by millions of people with diabetes. These molecules could make sensors more stable, more accurate, and easier to manufacture. [4]

## **Dentistry: Teeth Are Getting Techy**

Even though dentistry doesn’t always get the spotlight, there’s some amazing stuff happening:

- Scientists are working on regrowing parts of teeth, so future fillings might repair the tooth instead of replacing it. [5]

- AI tools are helping dentists spot gum disease and oral cancer earlier. [6]
- Researchers are learning how the bacteria in your mouth affect your whole body — including your heart and brain. [7]

Pretty cool for something we usually complain about during checkups.

### **Vet Science: Health with a Heart (and a Wag)**

And tying in veterinary medicine, there is obviously the long-standing *Bristol Cats Study*, which continues to reveal fascinating insights. One of its recent findings: road traffic accidents remain the leading cause of death in cats under 8 years old.

This information is being used to improve guidance for cat owners and inform welfare campaigns across the UK. [8]

### **What is Inspire?**

UOB Inspire is part of a national programme to engage medical, veterinary, and dental students in academic research, partnering with GW4 universities Cardiff, Plymouth, and Exeter.

Our goal is to bridge the research gap by organising research events, promoting exciting ongoing projects, and presenting the students' voice in meetings.

In recent months, our goal has been to create a group where research enthusiasts can gather to discuss academic articles. Thus, the birth of our journal club! We pick a digestible journal article, break it down (methods, results, analysis, etc), and ask big questions like “Was this even proofread?!”. Our hopes are that together we can leave knowing a little bit more about the daunting concept of critical appraisal, different methodologies, and what a research paper can add to the world. We realised that motivating oneself to sit down and read an academic paper alone in a uni room for fun, was a feat harder than climbing Everest. Because reading alone is fine, but reading *together*? That is where the magic (and laughter) happens.

Not only do we host smaller sessions, but we also organise big events such as the annual Inspiring Research conference in collaboration with Cardiff, Exeter, and Plymouth University. This year it was Bristol's turn to host, and it was a day to remember! From talks ranging from organ donation to rabid dogs accompanied with a side of fresh pastries and crisp ciabatta (not to mention the incredible brownies). The poster presentation segment was an opportunity to network and to meet other likeminded students.

Inspire offers taster days in November and December which gives students single day visits to research groups to see what they do first-hand. They can help you consider what type of research you might be interested in and whether you would want to apply for a summer studentship.

So what are summer studentships? These are paid placements in the summer for medical, dental, and veterinary students to delve into an area of research that interests them (the student budget can always do with some cushioning). Students come up with a research proposal and find a supervisor who can help facilitate this- these projects may have hatched following a taster day visit or independently arranged.

Follow @InspireBristol on Instagram to stay up to date with all the latest.

Reference list:

- [1] [2025: Isambard-AI: Skin cancer bias | Research | University of Bristol](#)
- [2] [2025: Isambard-AI launches July 2025 | Research | University of Bristol](#)
- [3] [April: Immunological drivers and mental health conditions | News and features | University of Bristol](#)
- [4] [August: Anthony Davis Royal Medal | News and features | University of Bristol](#)

- [5] [Lab-grown teeth might become an alternative to fillings following research breakthrough | King's College London](#)
- [6] [The Impact of AI on Dental Healthcare: Improving Oral Disease Detection, Treatment Planning, and Workflow Efficiency in Modern Dentistry | Simbo AI - Blogs](#)
- [7] [Mouth bacteria may hold insight into future brain function - University of Exeter News](#)
- [8] [April: Bristol Cats study | News and features | University of Bristol](#)



## **MbChBRAT**

‘In a world where you can be anything, be BRAT’.

This is not a quote from anyone and is in fact, something I have manufactured just now, but the sentiment should ring true. Brat and brat summer was a fever dream of heatwaves, hedonism and holistically unholistic fun - but are these lessons we should have left behind as the waves of freshers flu, Gilmore girls, and seasonal depression swept through our lives?

Being a medical student is undoubtedly hard. Constraints on time, resources, and emotional capacity mean that you often end up robbing Peter to pay Paul in your own life: idk lowkey highkey this a lie because - “I no come this life to suffer” (Tiwa Savage, 2020). However, it sounded nice writing it and made me feel like Carrie Bradshaw, but anywho, I digress.

This will serve as a pop bible for how you can incorporate 7 (no real reason why 7, but like less work for me) teachings of brat into your life as a medical student.

1. ‘When you’re in the mirror, do you like what you see?’ Never attend anything looking chopped. In the words of another perpetually teen songstress, Alessia Cara, ‘beauty is everything’. Your spirit may not be moved to attend that teaching session but you can’t allow that to stop you serving looks. Equally, also like find inner peace and love yourself but that's less important here.
2. ‘Sweat marks all on your clothes’. This is more of a cautionary tale - those scrubs will show every single bead of liquid that emanates from your pores. Be warned. But also have fun - you’re only young, lit and sexy once (not me - #eternalyouth) so shake a leg at any given opportunity.
3. ‘I feel all these feelings I can’t control’. Please eat and wee before you go to a clinic. This is definitely not from personal experience but patients don't take too kindly to your stomach rumbling during their cystoscopy.
4. Talk talk - ‘I wish you’d just talk to me’. It’s not begging when you sing it so maybe sing this to friend-crushes, consultants and patients alike!
5. Von Dutch - ‘you’re obsessing, just confess it cos it’s obvious’. Plug your ears to the strike action, job insecurity, and Wes Streeting of it all - everyone [?] wants to be you!
6. Everything is romantic - ‘Fall in love again and again.’ Don’t fall in love with medicine because that’s neeky - entertain every delulu situationship on the planet earth! (Don’t cry if it flops lol this is absolutely not real)

7. 'Man I don't know I'm just a girl'. No one (looking at you University of Bristol) should ask you to do anything...listen to charli.

Go forth and be brat!

*Mohamed Aidid*



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**End of term advice column**

*Conor O'Brien*

The writers of The Black Bag were too busy to respond to your pleas for advice, so we brought in a former Bristol Medical Student who is now a consultant. We unfortunately did not check what kind of consultant...

Johnny McBro, Healthcare Strategy Consultant at McKinsey

*How can medical students get involved in the BMA industrial action? I want to do my part to help!*

This is a fantastic question; every student should be getting involved to undermine the crooked BMA. I took part in counter protests to advocate for decreasing training doctors' pay in order to pay more strategy consultants who are saving the NHS – even with these left-wing agitators.

*How can first and second years try to get more experience before their clinical placement years?*

In my first two years I made a big effort to expand my medical school experience with internships and work experience. At my Deloitte and McKinsey internships I was involved in the cutting edge of privatizing unprofitable Trusts with a particular focus in underserved areas. We were able to increase wait times and lower the standard of care whilst simultaneously cutting the clinical work staff by 30 percent!! I worked upwards of 120 hours a week, but there's nothing like the feeling of increasing shareholder value.

*I'm new to Bristol and I'm having trouble finding friends – any advice for a shy medic??*

Believe it or not I found it difficult to make friends in my first year. It's just so hard to find others who are as passionate about KPIs and MBAs! The day that changed everything was when I upgraded from LinkedIn Premium to LinkedIn Alpha. It's only £20K a year and is worth every penny. You can create a network of likeminded med students who understand the only point of doing this course is to get published (ideally in the Harvard Business Review). You also get your own AI girlfriend who has to listen to you talk about how much you love Wes Streeting – so much better than all the IRL dweebs you'll find in medicine.

*I'm feeling so lost between the workload and a new city and socialising, how can I keep on top of the work while still having a good time?*

Forget everything your professors told you – you don't need textbooks, online resources, your peers – the only thing you need is to join my Discord server MedMaxxing. Here you'll find tips for using ChatGPT to do all your work for you, going to the gym at least 3 times a day, and how to start drop shipping. You'll also find links to Joe Rogan and Lex Friendman's podcasts. It was only after listening to these titans that I learned AI is going to replace the medical profession in the next 5 years anyway. I failed my MLA but I'm working part-time at Goldman so who's really winning?

### Agony Aunts

*These baddies are back to spit some harsh truths.*

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*Dear Agony Aunt,*

*I'm on outplacement and there's not much to do here so I've somehow found myself within an elaborate love triangle. Well more like a 3D love dodecahedron. I really should be focusing on my finals revision. What do I do??*

*Love,  
Herr Pees*

---

Dear Herr,

What a predicament you have found yourself in. It's almost as if you haven't read our most recent showstopper of an article! Medcest is inevitable - embrace it! I agree that this polyhedral romance encompassing the entire southwest may become somewhat time consuming when it comes to exam season but what's stopping you from multitasking? You're simply broadening your wider understanding of anatomy.

If you are dead set on becoming the over-caffeinated celibate you were always meant to be this Spring, then remember outplacement is temporary! Think of it as a viral infection: self-limiting, occasionally distressing, and best managed with fluids, plenty of rest, and avoiding unnecessary bodily contact.

Akin to Joan of Arc, let your love life become a martyr for all those destined to venture to the lands of district general hospitals and questionable pubs. You shall regale your woeful tails to a table full of Bristol based lucky ducks, enamoured to hear about these goings on in far off lands. Your sacrifice will be greatly well received amidst a Friday night discussion of endpoint deadlines and blagged CBDs.

You're young and free, with a whole life of despair ahead! Do it for the plot sweetheart xx

Sorrows, thoughts and prayers,  
Agony Aunt

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*Dear Agony Aunt,*

*I'm in love with our president but I don't think he knows who I am, please help me!*

*Aero Tomania*

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Dear Aero,

I mean, who isn't? I certainly dream of those luscious curls every night. Fear not: unrequited love towards an authority figure is a medical school rite of passage and can be used as a learning opportunity. Think of it as an OSCE station in emotional resilience.

It's not that he doesn't know who you are; it's that he's probably trapped under 400 emails, 17 committee meetings and the existential weight of organising the next revision lecture on diarrhoea.

While outwardly his heart may be stolen by Ed Carlton, there's always an alternative management plan. Picture this: you glide on over at the Galenicals ice skating social, your eyes meet, *Fairytale of New York* playing in the background, medics holding hands behind Christmas trees, and you strike up conversation. For example, 'Do you also find the GMC's professional guidance deeply stimulating?'. It's as easy as 'Hi, what brings you in today?' (remember to check name and DOB first).

If that feels intimidating, you could always admire from afar. Channel your longing into something productive, like becoming incredibly overinvolved in student politics. Nothing says 'I crave validation' more than volunteering to organise the seating plan for the winter ball.

Ultimately, don't despair. Love in med school is like cannulation, most attempts fail but it's character building.

Sorrows, thoughts and prayers,  
Agony Aunt



### **P2P Teaching**

Hey, 3rd and 4th years !

Peer-2-Peer education directors here, your biggest peer-led teaching series providers.

Spotted – @Galenicals Finals Teaching Series Instagram posting again

Time to mark your calendars, looks like passmed isn't the only thing filling up your evenings.

XO XO, P2P directors

We all know that attending clinical placement 9-5 is tough. Going home to spend your evenings on Passmed even tougher.

Are consultants quizzing you on ECGs you can barely read? Confused about the difference between cholecystitis vs cholangitis vs choledocholithiasis vs cholelithiasis? Struggling to remember all the management rules for a stroke (don't get us started on interpreting a CT head)?

Let us know! Email us or fill in our super quick form and help us stay up to date with all the latest revision (gossip).

Our online and in-person sessions are here to help you smash your exams!

[https://forms.cloud.microsoft/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=MH\\_ksn3NTkql2rGM8aQVG4r\\_oSD2wvZBP1-p4SJZecupUQ1ZFN0xNQzNOTINWOFBSSUVRQ0ZOREdINS4u](https://forms.cloud.microsoft/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=MH_ksn3NTkql2rGM8aQVG4r_oSD2wvZBP1-p4SJZecupUQ1ZFN0xNQzNOTINWOFBSSUVRQ0ZOREdINS4u)



# CBL Bingo



Find someone who match the items on your bingo card and mark off the squares as you meet them. Get five in a row to win!

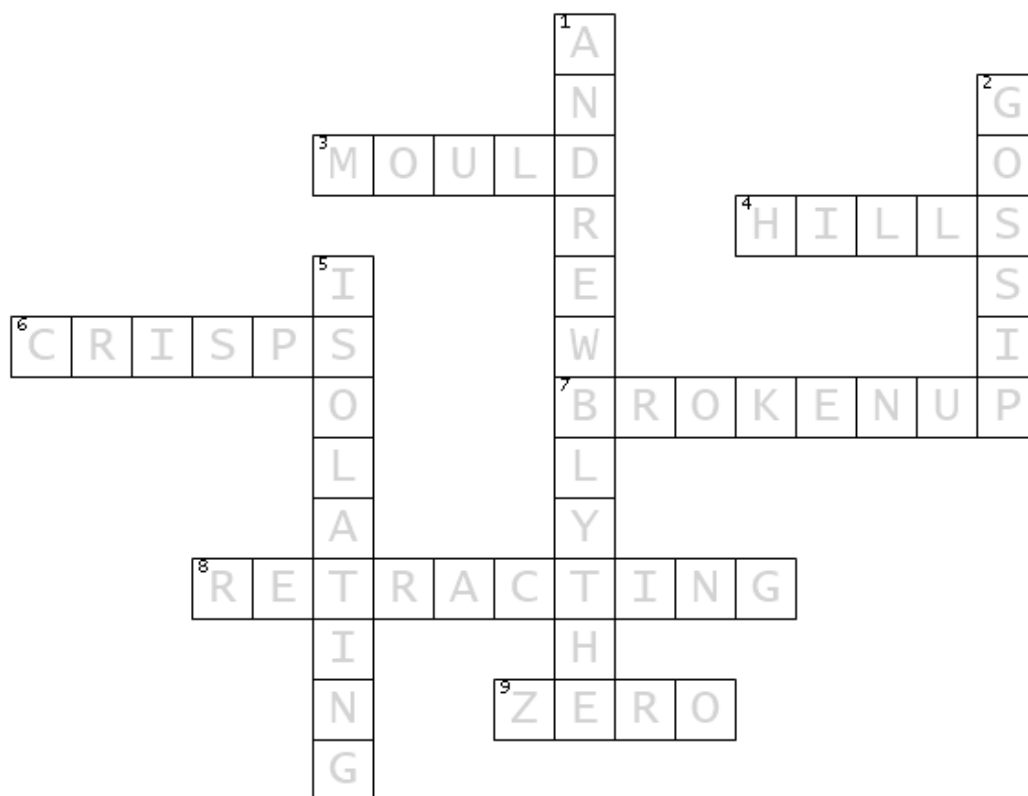
## Find someone who...

is currently making their CBL presentation seconds before presenting it	is watching a sports match halfway through CBL	is looking up all the answers on chat GPT	is always guessing lupus	guesses the diagnosis straight away
is always being corrected by the facilitator	suggests a full set of bloods but can't justify any of them	is booking their holiday	always forgets to send through their kahoot questions	is scrolling through instagram
has put a bunch of memes throughout the slides	is too intense about pathophysiology		has presentations that belong in an art gallery	always shows up with a pret coffee
never bakes cakes for the rota	always tries to get the group to go to the pub	is very judgey about the social history	always has black and white slides with no photos	always wants to scribe #ick
their third cousin twice removed on the left side actually had something like this once	obviously has a crush on someone else in the CBL group	"gets lost" on the way to CBL every week	sucks up to the facilitator	talks too much about their private life



## The Crossword

I know you've all been after the crossword answers forever. So here they are. Have them. And have an entirely new crossword to ponder until the next issue.

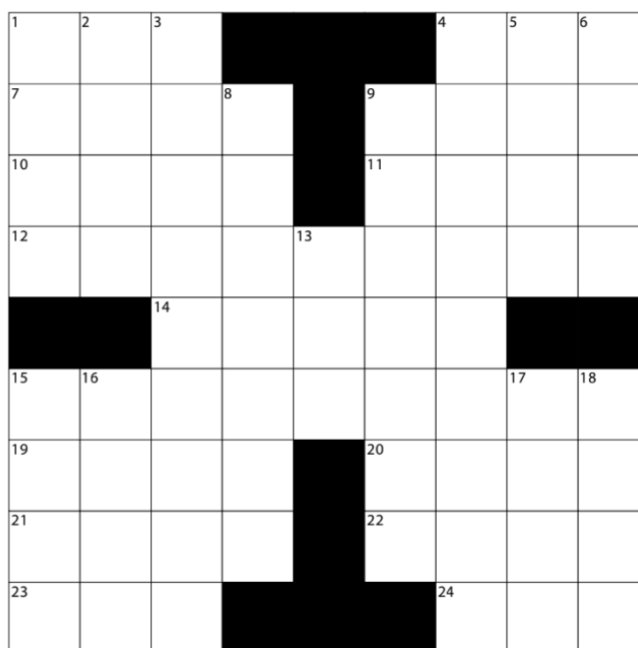


### ACROSS

- 1 Ortho\_\_ (3)
- 4 They need licenses, apparently (3)
- 7 Loos (4)
- 9 Enemy of a Blood (4)
- 10 Thing (4)
- 11 Own (4)
- 12 Delusional one (9)
- 14 Causing dry amusement (5)
- 15 End of 1st year anatomy exams (4,5)
- 19 \_\_ based learning (4)
- 20 Stir up (4)
- 21 Taiwanese laptop brand (4)
- 22 Natural hairdo (4)
- 23 Kpop supergroup (3)
- 24 Charge (3)

### DOWN

- 1 Small deviation (4)
- 2 Pro \_\_ pay (4)
- 3 Alcohol poisonings for example (9)
- 4 Fails to finish a thought (6,3)
- 5 "\_\_\_ Las Vegas" (4)
- 6 Design detail, abbreviation (4)
- 8 Bristol students vis-à-vis Portsmouth ones (7)
- 9 John Snow traced this to a water pump (7)
- 13 "Why \_\_?" (3)
- 15 Blood plug (4)
- 16 Agreement (4)
- 17 Lose steam (4)
- 18 Small, tart berry (4)



## What's next for the Black Bag?

So there goes another Black Bag issue. We hope that you have taken away something positive. I certainly have taken away which writers I need to avoid bumping into!

There, also, goes another year. Black Bag has had a wild year, managing to produce a truly insane 2 whole issues! Just narrowly getting the second issue in there less than a week before the end of the year. Next year, if we really try our best, we might manage 2 and a half issues!

Another reminder that if you have half an issue to contribute, Black Bag is always accepting submissions via email at [blackbag1937@gmail.com](mailto:blackbag1937@gmail.com). The best way to get involved, though, is via the WhatsApp group, and if you want to stay up-to-date on Black Bag goings on, and see extra articles and interviews, then check out the Instagram and Tiktok @blackbagbristol.

Hopefully see you lot at the Black Bag Awards Party. Venue TBC. Date TBC (but most likely it will be in 2026).

Finally, the Black Bag is not opting for a particular charity drive at present, but following on from the opening editorial, I would encourage everyone to look around and ask what they can do to make the world a better place. Consider giving a similar amount to whatever you are giving in presents to a charity. If every Bristol medical student gave just £5 to charity this December, it would raise over £7000. If each student gave £5 every month (less than the cost of a pint), we would collectively raise about £90,000. I know that generally we are a charitable bunch, but I reckon most, if not all of us, could do more. Thanks for tolerating my preachiness, and just be glad it's not one of my overly lengthy woke rants.

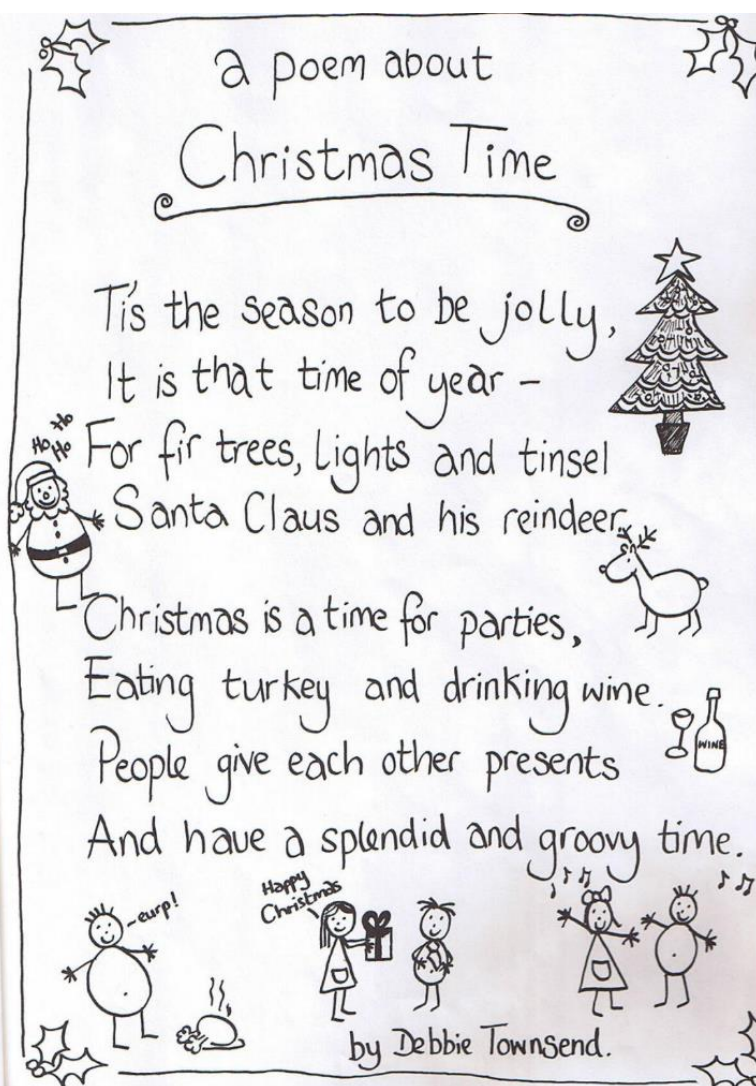
Happy holidays!

Love Will, and the whole Black Bag team!

xxxx

## From the Archives

Here we have a blast from the past, a previous holiday celebration by Black Bag!





# THE BLACK BAG.

Bristol Medical School Student Magazine

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Thanks for reading, see ya round!