

Winter 2018

University of Kent

# theGradPost



Celebrating our  
European Centres



How to manage  
stress



Test your brain



A newsletter created by postgraduates for postgraduates

# Editorial

Salutations to all readers!

The newly formed committee of *The GradPost* team would like to warmly welcome you to our first winter edition!

This year we plan on changing up a few elements of the newsletter with the hopes of making it a more striking, entertaining, and interactive experience for you all.

Unlike previous issues over the years, we plan to provide a wider variety of article themes, ranging from psychology all the way to practical sciences. In this issue, we have an article about the transition from undergraduate to postgraduate, a creative piece on winter at Kent's Canterbury campus, a feature about a student's experience at the 'Global Entrepreneur Challenge', a message from Kent Union's Vice-President (Activities), some advice from official Woolf College Cat Gandalf, and also a feature from the KGSA President. But that's not all! For Kent's 20-year anniversary as the UK's European university, we have an article all the way from a student studying in Brussels!

On page 10, you will find a new section to *The GradPost* that is being introduced in this issue: Test Your Brain! Here, you can have a go at solving a uni-themed puzzle with friends. Are you up for the challenge?

Winter is coming, so dress warmly, and please get in touch with *The GradPost* via [gradpost-submissions@kent.ac.uk](mailto:gradpost-submissions@kent.ac.uk) if you have any stories, research or experiences that you would like to write about and share!

## The Editors

### **Antonio Kostalas**

Msc International Business and Management

### **Shelly Lorts**

PhD Medieval and Early Modern Studies  
KGSA President

## Cover image

Christmas lights in Brussels

# KGSA update

## Looking towards 2019

For those in academia, the Autumn brings with it our New Year. Come September, the excitement on campus starts to buzz, and we all prepare to hunker down for some good-old-fashioned productivity. Although we've probably started to slow down now, as the days are darker and that initial excitement has buckled under the pile of deadlines and reading lists, I want to take a moment to reflect on our first few months as the 2018-19 Postgraduate community here at Kent.

Thanks to a rambunctious and dedicated group of volunteers, our KGSA Welcome Week was quite the smash. It was such a hit, in fact, that the turnout far exceeded our plans (we had more attendees than any year in our history). For those who didn't get pizza on the promised occasion, we offer our sincere apologies – there will be more pizza in the future. Despite the hiccup, we hope that life-long friendships were forged, and that the first-week fatigue was worth it as we walked you into town to see the Cathedral, or served you fish and chips before a high-street pub crawl. And to those who slipped Bilbo scraps at the Afternoon Tea or the Welcome Reception, he extends his eternal love.

Although our schedule of events has lazied, making way for myriad hours of study and research, the KGSA has remained active around campus. I attended the first of three formal meetings with the University regarding postgraduate accommodation on campus. While improvements have been made since the accommodation task force was formed last year, there is still plenty of work to be done to ensure that accommodation at Kent is comfortable, functional and worth its cost. We will soon be inviting current students living on campus to fill out our survey and voice their opinions. I'll be taking that information, as well as data gathered from complaints throughout the first semester, to our next meeting in February.

Also in the works for the KGSA is fostering our relationship with Kent Union. We've been taking meetings and working closely with Union sabbatical officers to raise awareness of postgraduate issues. Our representation is growing, and the Union is eager to get more involved with our students.



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Our meeting with the Union President in November was productive; we shared our experiences, thoughts, and goals, and forged a constructive relationship that is sure to manifest in future events and meetings.

Coming up in 2019, the KGSA is excited to host more events. Our focus this year is on building relationships within our community; as postgrads, the people we meet at Kent are likely to become colleagues and friends for life, so the seeds we plant here are important for our future. Continue to reach out to those around you: make plans, have study dates, co-work at local coffee shops, and explore South-East England while you can.

Don't forget that being a postgrad is just as much about the experience as it is about the academics. And through it all, never hesitate to reach out to the amazing officer team of the KGSA. We're here to be your voice within the University as well as your friends.

### **Shelly Lorts**

KGSA President



1 At the KGSA's Afternoon Tea event during Welcome Week, Woolf College's unofficial dog, Bilbo, enjoys his first cup of tea as a British citizen. (Image: Rowena Bicknell)

# Celebrating our European Centres

## University of Kent – Brussels

The best things can be found in small boxes



The Belgian capital is what any city aspires to be, but in smaller proportions. According to the government of Brussels, the city spreads over 32.61 km<sup>2</sup> in area – not very big.

The first week I was in Brussels, I expected the city to be an urban chaos, due to cultural differences that I had been told about, and to the great political power it hosts. On the contrary, the city is very simple to manage; it is easy to walk around as long as you are in decent physical condition and not afraid of the weather. Brussels is a diverse city with a lot to offer. Keep an eye out for the chocolate, beers and Belgian icons!

Tag along with the thousands of tourists at Grand Place to appreciate the quintessential architecture, learn about historical events, how Belgium survived two world wars, and finally how Brussels managed to become the European capital we know today. For those more inclined towards art and painting, areas for which its neighbours, France and The Netherlands, are famously known, Brussels is blessed with a high density of museums: the Fine Arts Museum, the Magritte Museum and the Musical Instrument Museum. There is even a 'Monts des Arts' where you can walk and experience a spectacular view of the city of Brussels, which I would say is the best view.

All the exciting aspects of Brussels, such as the beer, the chocolate, and even the World Cup 2018 – where Belgium placed third (which the country celebrated more than the actual winners) – are not enough to say that Brussels is what a great city aspires to be.

Indeed, what Brussels offers is diversity. Diversity of thoughts, nationalities, religions and beliefs around the world. Regardless of where you come from and what you are looking for, you will find a small (or large) group of people who are similar – a place where your heart feels at home.

Differences are observable around the city: Catholics, Muslims, Protestants, Jewish; Africans, Latin Americans, Europeans, Australians; or students, young professionals, adults, and more. Any division and point of view that you want to compare exists in Brussels. Everyone co-exists and lives side by side. That does not mean that inequality, discrimination and social segregation do not exist here. Like every major city, Brussels does face challenges; however, it not only seeks solutions at a local level, but also provides elucidation for problems throughout Europe. Brussels is where the heart of European institutions and international development agencies is situated, including those that search for solutions to the most complex problems in the world.

Yes, everything happens in these 32km<sup>2</sup>. So, if you are someone who would love to work in international politics, this is your place. But you can also find opportunities as an internal auditor of a cheese company (a corporate multinational company), or if you want to develop a biotech start-up, or participate in other diverse activities such as stand-up, rugby or rock-climbing. For sure, you will find it in Brussels! Also, connections with Paris, Luxembourg, Amsterdam and London are so easy that you would barely notice you are travelling to a different country.

Bottom line, I can tell you that if you are coming from a small town, don't be afraid: Brussels is not that big. And if you are coming from one of the biggest cities in the world, don't be afraid: Brussels is not that small. This little city demonstrates that the best things can be found in small boxes.

**Itzel Yunueh Cuevas Yañez**  
Brussels School of International Studies  
MA International Political Economy



# On the borderline

## 'The Irish question' and Brexit

In 2018 the University of Kent celebrates its twentieth anniversary in Europe, having welcomed its first cohort of students at the Brussels School of International Studies in 1998 before expanding to Paris, Rome and Athens.

This year marks another important milestone – twenty years since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement in Belfast on 10 April 1998. To mark both of these historic dates, the University of Kent's Chancellor and former BBC host Gavin Esler invited Irish Fine Gael MEP Brian Hayes for a discussion on Brexit and the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.

While the UK's national borders featured heavily in the debates in the lead up to the 2016 Brexit referendum, these were framed in the context of immigration; however, the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic was largely ignored at that time. Given that this border, which has such an unstable history, is the UK's only land frontier with the EU, it perhaps deserved greater attention, given that it has dominated the withdrawal negotiations between the UK and the EU.

The signing of the Good Friday Agreement is largely recognised as the turning point of the Irish peace process, heralding the departure from the time known, rather euphemistically, as the Troubles, a period of violent conflict concerned with the constitutional status of Northern Ireland.

Where nationalists wanted a united Ireland and therefore wanted Northern Ireland to leave the UK, unionists wanted Northern Ireland to remain in the UK. The two main religious groups in the province tended to identify according to historic alignment, with Protestants favouring unionism and Catholics supporting a united Ireland. The violence that ensued as a result of these divisive politics included bombing campaigns, riots, sectarian clashes and targeted assassinations. The victims of the Troubles were mostly civilian. A culture of fear and division was cemented in the communities which became increasingly segregated. As a result of the ongoing violence, the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic was heavily militarised. It was difficult to police and hard to avoid, as its snaking nature meant a direct route from one town to another could require more than one border crossing.

But after 22 months of fraught negotiations, the terms of the Good Friday Agreement were finally agreed and delivered to the people of Ireland and the UK. The process had been a notoriously trying one, with inter-party fighting, political snubs and walkouts, all amidst ongoing political turbulence and violence. The talks continued 17 hours past the midnight deadline on the Thursday. Mo Mowlam, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, who was undergoing treatment for a brain tumour at the time, was said to have thrown her wig on the table in frustration. Ultimately Bertie Ahern, the Irish Taoiseach, Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, and Bill Clinton, the US President, interceded to help get the deal over the finish line.

Alongside the provisions for the joint governance of Northern Ireland and disarmament of paramilitary groups, a key concept of the Agreement is what it is not: it is not a permanent answer to the question of the partition of the island of Ireland, nor is it a definitive mandate concerning the identity of the people of Northern Ireland. The Agreement recognises that Northern Ireland is part of the UK, and will remain so unless and until a majority of the people of both Northern Ireland and the Republic wish it to be otherwise. In addition, it allows the people of Northern Ireland to choose their own identity so that they can be British or Irish, or both. It took the spotlight away from the question of UK or Irish identity by giving the choice back to the people.

Currently, the existence of the border does not impinge on trade, industry or everyday life. Business can be conducted north or south of the border, and many people regularly drive back and forth to work, to visit family, or to access services. Aside from convenience, the common EU membership has also given citizens of the Republic and Northern Ireland a joint connection and common identity above that of being Irish. They are all European.

Now, this important question of identity in Northern Ireland has arisen again in the wake of Brexit.

During all the discussion about a hard versus soft border, customs controls, and the economic and political implications of Brexit on Northern Ireland, the deeper impact of the border question has been lost. The prospect of Northern Ireland leaving the EU not only raised logistical concerns, it increased awareness of the border's symbolism in the minds of those used to the seamless integration of the Republic and the North.

The separation of the UK from the EU is not merely a practical exercise; the question of the border has been raised and with it questions of unity, nationalism and identity. Where the Good Friday Agreement took the spotlight away from the issue of identity in Northern Ireland, Brexit has put it back in the limelight.

It is impossible to know the minds of the politicians debating the more esoteric issues surrounding Brexit, but perhaps to them the Northern Ireland peace process had been relegated to the history books and no longer warranted much thought. However, in Northern Ireland, there are certainly visible reminders of its fractured past. The border, although non-invasive for all intents and purposes, is dotted with abandoned customs houses and police checkpoints. Murals depicting paramilitary soldiers, heavily armed and wearing balaclavas, emblazon walls across towns and villages. Marches and parades in support of the different allegiances continue to stir controversy.

There has been some bewilderment at the apparent lack of interest and, at times, the profound ignorance surrounding the border and the status of Northern Ireland and, even sometimes, the Republic itself. Jacob Rees-Mogg, a prominent Brexiteer and Tory MP, was heavily criticised for his decision not to visit Northern Ireland as part of his efforts to understand the interplay between Brexit and the border, believing that 'wandering across a few roads' would not provide him with any further insight. Andrew Bridgen, a British Conservative member, stated in an interview on BBC Radio Ulster his belief that as an English person he had the right to an Irish passport. David Davis, former Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union, seemed to ignore the fact that the Republic of Ireland was not part of the UK by referring to the border as 'internal'.

Michel Barnier, the chief Brexit negotiator for the EU, has said that although he is convinced that a deal with the UK is necessary and is 90% agreed, problems over the border could lead to the failure of the Brexit talks. At a high level, Britain, Ireland and the other EU countries all agree that a hard border should be avoided; however, there has been discord on how to actually achieve this goal.

The UK's approach has been to contemplate the future relationship between the UK and the EU, and to focus on technical solutions – such as IT systems to track goods and calculate tariffs, or electronic customs declarations – that could be employed so that the post-Brexit border would remain as frictionless as possible. Whether this infrastructure is even feasible remains to be seen; however, Ireland and the rest of the EU do not want merely a promised hodgepodge of technical fixes but rather an overarching holistic solution to the border issue, with clear commitments from the UK at the withdrawal stage. Although there is now agreement that there should be a legally binding backstop arrangement (which would ensure that an open border is maintained until a new trade deal between the UK and the EU is negotiated), there is still no accord on the actual terms of this backstop.

With Brexit scheduled for 29 March 2019 and the political wrangling ongoing, the UK has the option to seek an extension of the post-Brexit transition period, which would allow further discussions on the border issue. This would leave Northern Ireland at centre stage and the status of the border uncertain for an even longer period.

But as MEP Brian Hayes pointed out in his discussion with Gavin Esler, the issue of whether there is a hard border or a soft border, or if it can be resolved by technical solutions, is really beside the point. The issue is not one of trade, but rather one of emotion, and Brexit has opened up a Pandora's box of nationalist sentiment.

There has been concern, and some might say scaremongering, that the renewed visibility of the border may also give rise to renewed violence. Ireland's current Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, drew the attention of fellow EU leaders at the recent EU summit in Brussels to an IRA bomb attack at a Newry customs post during the height of the Troubles, warning that violence was a real risk should a hard border become a reality.

Whether these fears are legitimate is up for debate. In response to the Taoiseach's comments, Gregory Campbell, MP with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), maintained that there was no evidence of increased violence; however, Senator Neale Richmond, Fine Gael Brexit spokesman, stated that the Taoiseach was following expert opinions from, among others, the Chief Constable of the PSNI and the Deputy Commissioner of An Garda Síochána.

The Taoiseach was heavily criticised for his reference to this historical incident of violence at the border, with Sammy Wilson, a DUP MP, calling it 'the bottom of a very deep barrel of threats, deception and rhetoric' and warning that such comments stir up 'false fears'.

There have also been accusations that fears of a return to violence have been used as a threat rather than a warning, and more as a political chess piece to obtain the best deal possible in the Brexit negotiation process. Where the Taoiseach was accused of stirring up fears to further Ireland's agenda in Brexit negotiations, Mr Wilson warned of the potential of the Taoiseach's remarks to further the Republican agenda.

The Pandora's box mentioned by MEP Brian Hayes has certainly been reopened, and feelings of national identity, although important, should not be used as a tool to further a political agenda.

Whether the course of Brexit would have been different had these implications been considered at an earlier stage or not, it is hard to imagine the fate of Northern Ireland taking much precedence in the heated rhetoric of the 2016 referendum. What started as a dispute essentially over regulatory divergence seems to now be deeply entrenched in issues of identity and belonging.

Given that the Good Friday Agreement left the option for further referenda on the constitutional status of Northern Ireland should there be evidence of sufficient public appetite, the impact of any further rhetoric regarding the border should be carefully considered. With the Brexit and backstop negotiations ongoing, perhaps it would be wise for those involved to take an approach that recognises the complexities and historical context surrounding the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic, rather than merely seeing it as the final obstacle or a bargaining chip.

Written by **Silke Shanley**, with **Stephanie Woronko**

Silke Shanley is from the Republic of Ireland, born in the United Kingdom. She is currently an MA candidate in Political Strategy and Communications at the Brussels School of International Studies.

*Information correct as of 13 November 2018*

## 20 Years in Europe

To celebrate Kent's 20 years in Europe, the Brussels centre commissioned one of their students to draw their internal academic staff. A large canvas of this wonderful piece can be seen in the Brussels student study area. From left to right, the academic staff pictured are: Dr Maria Mälksoo; Professor Yutaka Arai; Dr Tom Casier; Professor Harm Schepel; Dr Amanda Klekowski von Koppenfels (Academic Director); Dr Bojan Savić; Dr Yvan Guichaoua; Dr Albena Azmanova.

Many thanks to Daniel Medina for creating this piece. Medina is a political cartoonist whose work can be found at [instagram.com/dansdoodles](https://instagram.com/dansdoodles)



# The Global Entrepreneur Challenge

Sybil Mayard, an MSc Computer Science student, was delighted to be announced as the winner of the Big Ideas Competition in April 2018.

Her business idea, Codable, is an online platform that connects software developers and IT professionals with potential employers by focusing on the skills that are less easy to demonstrate on a traditional CV. Candidates can use the platform to upload videos, projects and portfolios, creating a dynamic and interactive way to showcase their skills to companies.

As a result of winning the competition, Sybil, together with her business partner Olcay Kilincci of Kent Business School, were awarded an all-expenses-paid trip to the US, mentoring from Santander, and one year's free desk space at the Hub for Innovation and Enterprise.

The trip began on 17 August 2018 with two days of sightseeing around Washington DC, where they met the other teams taking part in the competition, explored the museums at the National Mall, and toured the historic US Capitol building.

A five-hour bus ride then took the group to Virginia Tech University in Blacksburg, Virginia, where they were greeted by their host families. Sybil and Olcay were hosted by Rick and Nancy Furr, a retired couple who have been providing accommodation for students of Kent in recent years.

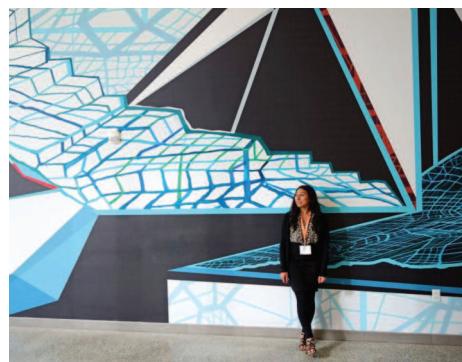
'It was my first experience of living with a host family,' said Sybil. 'Rick and Nancy's hospitality was wonderful; it was truly a pleasure to stay with them during our trip.'

During the following week, the teams took part in campus tours and various business skills workshops. Team Codable was supported by Marcus Wright of the Hub, and a host company, Qualtrax, a firm that develops compliance management software. With the help of Qualtrax, Sybil and Olcay were able to get advice on all aspects of their business, from financial planning to delivering the perfect presentation.

The event culminated in the Global Entrepreneur Challenge, which took place on 23 August 2018, where all 13 teams pitched their ideas to a panel of judges. Later that evening, the winners were announced at the Awards Banquet at the German Club in Blacksburg. The Grand Prize of \$30,000 was awarded to team GRACE of Universidad Adolfo Ibañez in Chile, which is developing a biomedical device for sufferers of essential tremor and Parkinson's disease. The Information Technology Award and the People's Choice Award went to team FeetBack from Germany and team Babycer from Chile, respectively.



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Although team Codable did not win a prize, Sybil and Olcay were very grateful to be offered the chance to participate in such a prestigious event.

'It's a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity,' said Sybil. 'We made valuable contacts with businesses and networked with student entrepreneurs from around the world with whom we will be keeping in contact.'

'We learned so much from the experience, and we can apply this knowledge to develop Codable into a profitable business,' said Olcay.

The event concluded with a day trip to the nearby town of Roanoke, where the teams visited Mill Mountain and the local markets.

Sybil and Olcay would like to thank Marcus Wright and Elena McCaffrey of the Hub for Innovation and Enterprise, and Lindsey Eversole of the Apex Center for Entrepreneurs for dedicating their time to organising the event and making it a success.

**Sybil Mayard**  
MSc Computer Science

# From undergraduate to postgraduate

## A consultation with the unconscious mind

A BA in Drama and Theatre. That's the degree I obtained after completing three years at the University of Kent. However, now, for my Master's, I study International Business and Management. So why the big change, you may ask? Let me tell you a story. It all started with three words: I. Don't. Know.

I don't know. Three simple, recurring words that seemed to roll off my tongue, time and time again.

'Where do you see yourself in five years?'

I don't know.

'What will you do when you finish university?'

I don't know.

'What are you going to have for dinner tonight?'

I don't know.

Sometimes I felt like I followed a path, blindly, simply because it was an exuberant path to walk. This is good to an extent, because as the widespread saying states, 'Do what you love and love what you do.' Then I graduated. I graduated more confused than ever. 'So, what's next?' I thought to myself.

'I. Don't. Know.'

I had procrastinated over one of the most important decisions of my life for three years. When I finally reached the end of my undergraduate chapter, I squinted deeply to try to figure out where the next page started.

During my undergraduate studies, I was encouraged by several lecturers to further my education with a Master's in Physical Actor Training. There was a period during my BA studies when I was convinced that this was the right path for me. It all changed when I investigated my unconscious mind.

Now, let me briefly explain a psychological phenomenon. As humans, we are governed by our mind. Our mind sends signals to the rest of our body, telling certain muscles, organs and cells what to do through neurotransmission. What we fail to comprehend, though, is that there is more to our mind than we realise. Our minds can be divided into three separate units: the conscious mind, the unconscious mind, and the subconscious mind. In our subconscious mind, we tend to store every thought or feeling we experience in our lives. It is our conscious mind that decides what to do with these thoughts and feelings; it either asserts action upon them or passively lets them persist internally. I'm sure most people know about these two units the most.

It is the unconscious mind, however, where things begin to get tricky. The unconscious mind refers to the mental processes that occur automatically; these include memories, interests and motivations. Think of it this way: imagine you have a deadline in three days and you have not yet started the work for it. You are consciously aware that you must complete this task, but it is your unconscious mind that is unmotivated to start it. Thus, it can be suggested that the unconscious mind is home to procrastination. To break this vicious cycle, one must address one's unconscious mind, time and time again.

Continuing the scenario that I have mentioned, one way to do this is to think about the outcome of the continued procrastinated state and realise the repercussions that it would have on the rest of one's academic career. Then, think about the ways in which one can go about solving this inaction. One example is writing down future goals along with a step-by-step guide on how to achieve them. That's what I did.

I realised that the reason why I was not truly convinced about undertaking the MA in Physical Actor Training was because, unconsciously, I knew that there was another alternative that could fulfil my studious needs.

It took me the whole of the summer vacation period and many books on psychology to understand what truly motivated me and for what reasons. Don't get me wrong; on a lot of levels I am still confused. I am still not 100 per cent certain about my career path; however, I do know that I am now on track.

So, for those who are stressed out about what the future holds for you: don't be! As students, we are all in the same boat. Look at me; I jumped ship when I was right on the edge of the storm of doubt, only to resurface with a stronger sense of certainty in my voyage. Don't be afraid to take that leap. Remember, if you find yourselves automatically doing something that you don't want to be doing, that's when your mind needs an unconscious shake up. Don't forget to ask yourself the right questions every now and again.

**Antonio Kostalas**  
Msc International Business and Management



# How to manage stress

## Insights from Kent postgraduates

*“Every day, I try to do one thing that is purely for myself. Something completely unrelated to my work, whether it is painting my nails, going to the gym, or bingeing on my favourite shows on Netflix. Having something that is just for me motivates me to earn this treat, and allows me to relax in the evening.”*

**Megan Batterbee**

*“I have a tendency to think I need to spend every waking hour doing something productive, especially during exam time or paper deadlines. I try to remind myself that it is okay to take breaks, to prioritise seeing friends, to watch a show or to go to an event. In fact, restricting my study time and taking rewarding breaks tends to make me more productive (and keeps me sane!).”*

**Elsa Lilja**

*“Some would describe the amount of herbal tea I drink as ‘impressive’, if not ‘unhealthy’. I’ve always got something brewing at home, but the best cups are undoubtedly in the middle of a tough day. There’s a ritual quality to preparing the same thing that I use to unwind and that helps me let go, at least for a few minutes.”*

**Khalid Aadan**

*“I personally find many ‘stress-busting’ tips quite tokenistic and unhelpful, for various reasons. But something I have found to be quite helpful in moments where I need clarity and to slow down is tapping the tips of my fingers with my thumb on rotation across all my fingers. This works as the tips of fingers are pressure points for the head and brain. It’s only a small tip, but I find it to be worth its weight in gold.”*

**Krysia Waldock**

*“When I’m overwhelmed, it usually helps to write all of my upcoming tasks onto a single list. The process goes like this: brew a steaming coffee or tea, locate a distraction-free space, and download all of those stress nuggets onto a single page. I find that putting tasks on paper immediately makes them feel accomplishable, and having them all in one location allows me to refocus my attention on each individual task. Finally, at the top of the list, I always make sure to write ‘create a list’ and cross it off, because it feels good to start accomplishing!”*

**Chris Brown**



*“I have a de facto stress reliever in my dog, Bilbo. Having him around forces me to get up from the computer and to go outside several times a day. Our daily, hour-long (at least!) hikes are the key to my stress management – no matter how tired or busy I am, knowing that he deserves to have some fun gets me up from my desk each afternoon. I also tend to leave my phone behind so that I can use the break to be in the moment, clear my head, breathe some fresh air, and get my heart rate up. Engaging in and protecting that mental processing time has become crucial in slowing down my brain and teaching me to enjoy the journey.”*

**Shelly Lorts**

*“Between work, assignments, and my partner’s kids at the weekend, making sure I have time for me is so important. I’m a gamer, and scheduling a few hours on my days off where I can play games guilt free has seen me through many a tough week. Or, if gaming isn’t an option, having one of my marathon-length baths with a good book!”*

**Lydia Hall**

*“Talking to someone always helps me when I am feeling particularly stressed with work. Whether that is your friend, flatmate, parents, or even university tutor, they will be able to offer advice and solutions you may not have thought of. Keeping everything to yourself makes it seem far more overwhelming than it actually is!”*

**Charlotte Wilson**

*“My schedule is that I spend an hour or two working, and then 10 or 20 minutes relaxing. This is anything from watching an episode of a series, to working on a side project, to being involved in extracurricular activities. Teaching is also a great opportunity for a break.”*

**Lee Harris**

*“I usually pull my trainers on and go for a run, which helps clear my head, or if I don’t feel like heading outside, I binge watch on Netflix for a couple of hours. I also find it helps to plan a couple of things to look forward to in the forthcoming weeks or months; for me that’s usually looking at upcoming races or a short break away.”*

**Irene Beck**

*“I like to work in a system and set myself goals for each day. For every few tasks I accomplish in a daily period, I will take appropriate break times. My breaks normally consist of either watching an episode of a series on Netflix, enjoying a nice hot cup of tea/coffee, catching up with friends, or even taking a nap. I love naps – guaranteed to increase one’s level of relaxation and productivity upon awakening.”*

**Antonio Kostalas**

# A mist falls on Canterbury

The rain let up over Canterbury, leaving a cold, thick mist that spread across the University's hilltop campus in a cloudy wind. The walk from my residence hall took me past the Gulbenkian café, where droplets formed and ran down its large windows. The outdoor tables, spotted with groups of students during sunnier days, were now empty. Winter had hit suddenly for all residents of campus. Even the seagulls' screams seemed more distraught than usual. I could only hope that the campus cat, Gandalf, had found shelter on the warm rug of some pitying student's dorm or in a faculty office.

I passed students, their faces obstructed by scarves and large jackets, as the cold slapped my maladapted California nose. Thinking of a snow jacket I'd left back home, I cursed the smattering of winter clothes I'd brought.

I walked through campus faster now than I had in the days following my arrival in September. Partly, this was due to a growing understanding of the maze of paths that run throughout campus and the surrounding woods. Partly, it was the result of an inevitable loss of appreciation that comes with the familiarity of one's environment.

Today, however, it was mostly because I had conservatively estimated my day's coursework to take eight hours (give or take two or three) and had let my alarm run a few snoozes too many. Well, all that and my ears were starting to numb.

Templeman Library rose on my right, sturdy in the frigid wind. I remembered the library's café, with its promise of warm, caffeinated drinks and chocolate muffins, and my legs diverted me through the building's revolving doors before my conscious mind was aware of the decision. The café in Templeman was bursting with activity. Students talked and laughed over steaming cups, while others were intent on their studies (as I should have been), headphones audibly walling them off from the liveliness around them.

I grabbed an Americano, with three shots of sweetly bitter espresso, and sat with my laptop open to Word. The empty page stared at me blankly and I did the same back.

This contest of wits ended when I resigned and shut the screen, deciding another campus café may provide the appropriate inspiration.

Outside, the mist had already subsided and the sun was drilling its first holes through the clouds. 'The weather changes so quickly in this place,' I thought, leaving the library. As the sky cleared, the town of Canterbury revealed itself beyond the fields and trees at the edge of campus.

The Canterbury Cathedral rose up from the city center. Its architectural beauty summoned the immediacy of the history around me. It brought forth images of artists, scientists, and warriors who piled upon each other in the strata of the past. It brought forth countless stories of ancient Christians, Romans, and Celts before them. Untold stories lived by people who stood on a hill similar to this and felt winter approach. The air felt brisk in my lungs, contrasting with the warm sunlight spreading over campus like a blanket.

My coffee was nearly finished. I turned towards the nearest café and walked off, un hurried and decided.

**Chris Brown**  
MA Creative Writing



# Kent Union presents...

## A message from your VP (Activities)

There are many opportunities for postgraduates when joining a society, community action group or student media organisation. When joining different student groups, there is the community aspect that you gain. In some cases, joining cultural societies brings people together, making them feel as if they are at home. In addition to that, we pride ourselves on the diversity of our campuses, whether someone is joining a society as a hobby, participating in a community action group, or giving back to the community alongside RaG (Raise and Give). As well as joining student media as perhaps a passion, there is a place for everyone. We encourage all student groups to be as inclusive and supportive as they can be.

There are societies that don't drink alcohol and societies that party all the time. Making a hasty generalisation of what a postgraduate will and will not like is what we do not want to do. For these reasons, we support all student groups that have our Kent Union values in mind when hosting different events, because we want all students to be mindful of the diversity we have here on our campuses.

Joining a student group is also great for future employability. Postgraduates can log their volunteering hours on their KSCV (Kent Student CV), which gets put on to your HEAR (Higher Education Achievement Record) when you graduate. By joining a society and participating in unpaid work, you can collect these volunteering hours and show your future employer how much you gave back to the community while pursuing your studies.

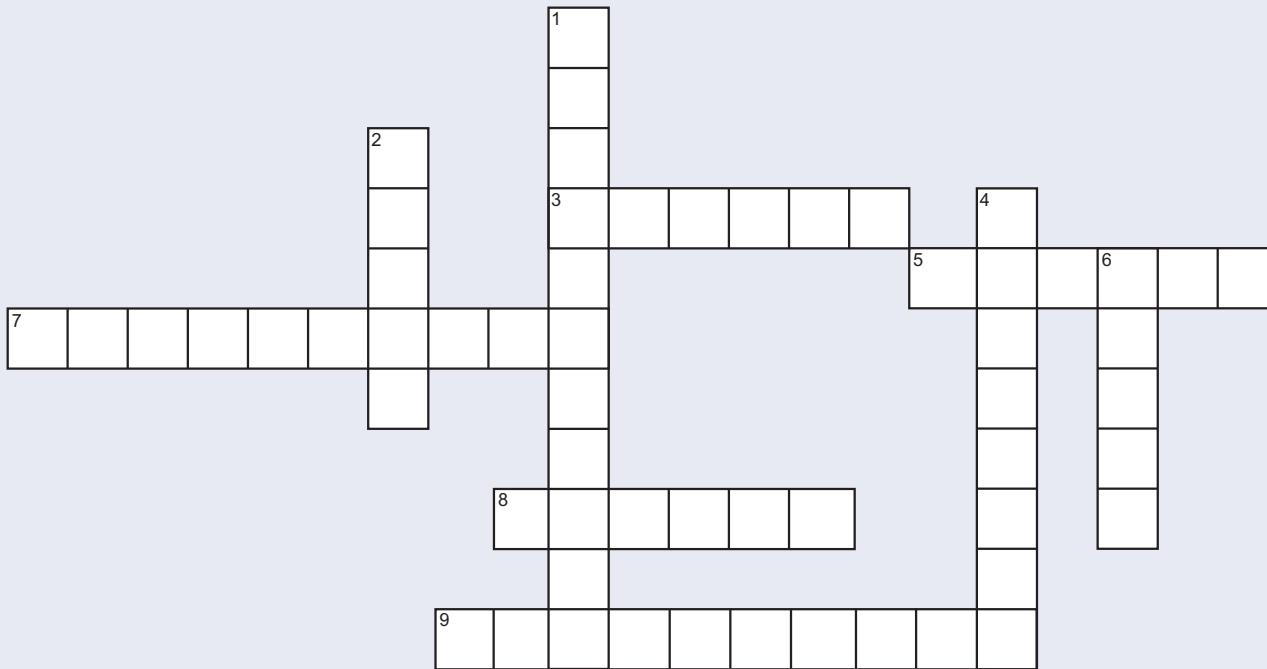
I recommend that postgraduates join a student group or, if you cannot find the right one, make your own by filling out a new application online. Joining Model United Nations as an undergrad changed my whole experience. That is where I found my home and that can be the same for postgraduates.

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## Test your brain

### Places at Kent



#### Across

- 3 The Student Accommodation Office is situated in the car park of this college.
- 5 This college was named after an individual who theorised the concept of evolution.
- 7 There is a hill named after this college.

- 8 HUT8 can be found in the middle of this college's complex.
- 9 The dining hall in this college is exquisite. Don't wander too much, you may get lost.

#### Down

- 1 One of the smallest colleges at uni.
- 2 Footpath.
- 4 A community far, far away.
- 6 The college that is home to Gandalf.

# Competition time

## 2018-19 photographic competition

The *GradPost* is pleased to announce the launch of our photographic competition.

Prize-winning submissions will be showcased in the upcoming editions of *The Gradpost*, and the winning photo will be featured on the cover.

We are looking for high-quality, original photos taken during your time at Kent.

We welcome submissions from all readers, regardless of photography experience.

Send your photos for the editorial team to review via [gradpost-submissions@kent.ac.uk](mailto:gradpost-submissions@kent.ac.uk)

Happy snapping!



## Gandalf's Corner

### Hey Gandalf,

I am returning to study after a break from education. Any tips to help me settle back into academic life?

### Settling in

#### Dear Settling in,

As the patron and protector of those in pursuit of higher academic learning, I command your super-smart decision to join us in these learned halls. Now, since I'm a cat, who is as free as an elf with a sock, I'm not the best to consult on time management; however, my postgrad advisors assure me that this is an important thing. The biggest hairball to deal with (see what I did there?) will be getting used to having work to do at night. I'm nocturnal, and the night is my hunting ground, but you humans love to settle in with Netflix and snacks once the sun sets (I know because I watch through your windows...it's not creepy; I'm protecting you). Not being able to do this any more will be the hardest part for those who came from the working world. You'll need to get used to doing work outside of normal hours, so block out time specifically for this every day (just like I block out a few hours for bathing and basic beauty upkeep...you're welcome for the shiny, soft coat..these striking good looks are earned).

My next piece of advice is to make lots of lists. If I had opposable thumbs, I'd have a whole mess of lists on where to find the plumpest and laziest mice, or rankings on which blocks in Woolf hand out the best snacks. Did you know that studies suggest that making lists decreases stress levels? I read it once in a newspaper while I was scavenging a dumpster. It has something to do with getting things out of your brain and on paper. So list away! And keep those lists with you so you'll never worry about forgetting a thing.

Lastly, remember that your time here is about the journey. Earning a degree is a process as well as an experience. You'll have ups and downs as part of the process, but don't forget to enjoy the experience! When else in your life do you get to take a break from the 'normal', working world to learn about a topic you love, or have the chance to get involved with the energy of a university campus? Join some societies, or start a Gandalf Cuddle Club (it's well overdue). Explore Canterbury; it's a one-of-a-kind city. And may I recommend the Crab & Winkle Way? It has the best pigeon hunting this side of the Stour. But avoid the outdoors when that liquid evil starts to fall from the sky – I hear that enough of it will devour you whole and steal your ability to purr. Cringe. Without purring, how will humans know to keep stroking me?!



### Gandalf the Black and White

House of Woolf, the Second of His Name,  
Catman, Bestower of Academic Blessings,  
The Night, The Great Protector, the Taker of  
Naps, and the Patriarch of Pets

# What's on

**Got spare time or need a break? *The GradPost* team recommends these events...**

## 'Kent, its Regiments, and the First World War'

**1 Nov 18 – 4 Jan 19**

**Templeman Library, University of Kent**

This exhibition explores how the city of Canterbury and the surrounding region maintained interest in its local regiment, even after conscription led to great changes in its demographic during the First World War. Home and fighting fronts are often thought of as very distinct and separate entities, but this exhibition will highlight the degree to which they were inextricably linked and that communication between the two was continual.

## British Wildlife Photography Awards 2018

**10 Nov 18 – 17 Feb 19**

**The Beaney House, Canterbury**

An exhibition on the British Wildlife Photography Awards, celebrating both the work of amateur and professional photographers and the beauty and diversity of British wildlife. Winning images are chosen from thousands of entries in fifteen separate categories.

## Cinderella

**23 Nov 18 – 6 Jan 19**

**Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury**

Don't miss this year's fun-filled, family pantomime *Cinderella*, with a star-studded cast including Harry Reid (*EastEnders*), children's favourite Phil Gallagher (CBeebies' *Mister Maker*), Sally Lindsay, and Marlowe legends Ben Roddy (Dame of the Year 2017/18) and Lloyd Hollett.

## Dick Whittington and His Cat

**7 Dec – 31 Dec 18**

**The Central Theatre, Chatham**

Join Joe Tracini, Ian Good and Ray Quinn in the rags-to-riches tale of a young man and his loyal cat on their exciting quest to find fame and fortune. Will our hero defeat the evil King Rat and his gang of vile vermin? Will Sarah the Cook suffer yet another soggy bottom? Will the streets of London really be paved with gold?

## Cinderella on Ice

**17 Dec 18**

**Planet Ice, Gillingham**

This winter, Planet Ice hosts a magical retelling of the classic story: a fairy Godmother, glass slippers, carriages made up of pumpkins and other such delights await on the ice. It's sure to be spectacular!

## Sleeping Beauty

**24 – 30 Dec 18**

**Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury**

Let's All Dance present a much-loved ballet for the whole family. Dazzling dancers, Tchaikovsky's sumptuous score and gorgeous costumes bring this glittering classical ballet to life.

## Curious About Canterbury

**5 Jan 19**

**Canterbury**

Are you curious about Canterbury? Take one of our self-guided walks with a treasure-hunt theme, looping around the better-known sights, as well as some of the more unusual and quirky ones, which combined make Canterbury a charming place to explore!

## What's In Store?

**8 Jan 19**

**Maidstone Museum, Maidstone**

A new monthly event inviting you to come behind the scenes and discover some of the hidden objects in our amazing collections.

## Produce and Craft Market

**13 Jan 19**

**Wimereux Square, Herne Bay**

Come and meet a host of traders and local and guest producers on the second Sunday of every month. There is something for everyone; shoppers can pick up a wide range of authentic products and chat to the producers directly.

## Kinky Boots

**14 – 26 Jan 19**

**Marlowe Theatre, Canterbury**

The fabulous feel-good musical. Winner of every major Best Musical award, including the 2016 Olivier Award for Best New Musical. This 'dazzling, fabulously sassy and uplifting' (*Time Out*) musical celebrates a joyous story of Brit grit to high-heeled hit, as it takes you from the factory floor of Northampton to the glamorous catwalks of Milan!



**University of  
Kent**

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