

A COST OF LIVING CRISIS

With sky-high energy prices and soaring inflation melting our hard-earned money, the financial state of the world is in a historic state, and it does not seem to be getting better any time soon. But why are energy prices this high in the UK? Well, there are a lot of factors to consider, but we will be looking at the main ones.

Why are costs soaring?

To put it simply, it is mainly due to the price of wholesale gas. This is because, on average, roughly 41% of the energy produced in the UK comes from gas, which is used for things such as heating and cooking. Another 30% of the energy produced in the UK comes from renewables, which may have had a small impact on energy prices as we have been having

milder weather recently, resulting in less energy made by wind turbines, which are the most common source of renewable energy in the UK. Therefore, if the price of gas goes up, so will the cost of energy.



So, why have gas prices increased?

The main reason is due to an event that has taken over every news outlet recently: the war in Ukraine. On the 24th of February 2022, Russia decided to launch an attack on one of the former members of the Soviet Union, Ukraine. Russia sent thousands of troops, weapons and military vehicles into the country, conducting missile strikes, bombings, and other violent acts, forcing millions of Ukrainians to leave their homes and flee from the war.

How have the public and the government responded?

This sparked anger across the globe, primarily throughout western nations. As a result, these countries hit Russia with numerous sanctions, damaging its economy. However, these sanctions caused consequences

in the west, as many of their imports, such as gas, came from Russia. Russia was Europe's largest supplier of natural gas, providing around 35% of the gas used across the continent. Consequently, the supply of commodities exported by Russia, such as crude oil, gas and wheat have decreased, while the demand for these products has increased as economies globally recover from the pandemic. Due to this, prices of these goods have sky-rocketed, pushing inflation to record levels and forcing many families to the brink. For example, prices for oil, coal, and gas went up by around 40%, 130%, and 180% respectively. Lack of investment into oil and gas also played a part in the rise in costs.

Going Forward

So, to conclude, energy prices have primarily risen due to the rise in demand as the economy recovers from the pandemic, a lack of investment in oil and gas, and the war in Ukraine. Let's hope that energy costs will be lower soon, for all our benefits.

BY Oliver O'Neill

Edited by Eilidh Reid



Urgency In Ukraine



Although the majority of these refugees have been cared for, there are still a staggering 7% of

Ukrainians finding themselves homeless, trying to get documentation into Britain or just trying find contact with their loved ones. Not to mention the endless number of horrific encounters Ukrainian soldiers have had to experience.

The current situation in Ukraine dates back to 2014 when Russia declared custody over the twin eastern territories, Donetsk and Luhansk of Ukraine. The conflict then escalated in late 2021 and has caused immense problems for both the countries. With over 17000 Ukrainians killed this year alone due to Vladimir Putin's violent attacks on the area, and over 11000 young Russian soldiers losing their lives brutal, the whole battle is really taking its toll.

The Impact

At the beginning of the war, 41 million people called Ukraine home, however, that figure has drastically dropped due to more than 1.7 million of those citizens fleeing to foreign countries such as Poland, Romania, and Belarus.

At the beginning of the war Volodymyr Yarmolenko (a Ukrainian journalist) stated that “This war shows you that individualism is an illusion, when human connections disrupt, you realise how much you depend on them.”



The U.K Response

Currently, the UK as a nation has only deployed 8000 British soldiers to the eastern strife. Though that 8000 has diligently helped the Ukrainians from day one, more action should be taken. On the 22nd of August 2022 it was declared that a grand total of 168 billion hryvnia (around 3.8 billion pounds, a tenth of what was spent over the NHS track and trace) had been aided to the President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and his Nation to help with food, water, clothes, and other necessities the distraught people of Ukraine need.



■ Russian military control ■ Held or regained by Ukraine
▨ Russian advances □ Russia annexed Crimea in 2014

Source: Institute for the Study of War (21:00 GMT, 29 September)

BBC

Despite the savage attacks the Russian forces have decided to distribute, the Ukrainian government have held firm, holding off their pursuers as best they can. With hospitals, shopping centres and nuclear power plants under attack, Ukraine as a community needs all the help it can get.

BY Matthew Wright
Edited by Dilraj Kaur Bal



Are S3 Exams Really Necessary?

As S2s are now in the new term of S3, third year can be an overwhelming year to start. At the end of S2, I personally heard a lot of conversations and lectures on the new-found topic of S3 Exams. For those that are unaware, these are assessments that help determine whether your S4 exams will be at a National 4 or 5 level. With the announcement of the tests also comes a rush of anxiety over the class.

Is Testing So Early Fair?

First things first, I personally think we shouldn't be judged by assessments to determine what level we are at. I know I can't speak for my entire year group, but I often find myself feeling confident in a class and understanding their subject, but during a test environment I overthink and stress to the point where I do not do as well as hoped. On the other hand, I can comprehend how some people feel as though tests tie the topic they have studied together, but again, this is just my opinion.

BY Mary Tompkins

Edited by Aimee Johnstone



Exam Anxiety

As of recently in a variety of schools, over 40% of students were reported to be highly test anxious, meaning that they can suffer from symptoms like; migraines, nausea, light-headedness, and even fainting episodes in extreme cases. Test anxiety is classed as a borderline mental illness but can commonly be overlooked as teenagers being 'sensitive' or 'not preparing enough'. The matter becomes even more pressing to students who may have had bad experiences with tests in the past, for example frequently getting particularly low grades can build a mindset of: "Why even bother, I'm going to fail just like last time."

This is why I feel like prelims sudden and un-called for. **Why should our future be defined by things we did at 14?**



Image of Cartwheel galaxy from James Webb Space Telescope

James Webb Space Telescope

The James Webb Space telescope has recently broadcast its first photos back to Earth. Having been launched back in late 2021, it has finally arrived at its destination and captured a few beautiful pictures of the Cartwheel galaxy. These pictures were only made possible due to the cutting-edge technology used to get this project to the stars.

The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST for short) was launched on the 25th of December 2021 embarking on a 30-day journey to L2, the second sun-earth lorange point which it will orbit having traveled over 1 million miles (over 1.5 million km). A Lagrange point is a point between two bodies where their gravitational pull balances the telescope. After reaching its destination on the 24th of January 2022 it took 7 months

to release its first photos of the faraway galaxy.

The Cartwheel galaxy was formed when an extremely rare event took place, two galaxies collided head on into each other and combined into a galaxy about as big as the Milkyway galaxy!

The extraordinary images were captured using a camera that can move images up the electromagnetic spectrum and reveal parts of the image that otherwise could not be seen with the human eye.

The James Webb Space Telescope's goal is to provide a chance for us to understand the universe and its origins. It will examine every phase of cosmic history and show how things, from planets and stars to galaxies and even our solar system, were formed

BY Charlie Nicolson

Edited by Megan Martin

Electric Cars: Eco or Not?

Electric cars have become a fantasy among modern car manufacturers and owners. Having that green strip on your number plate has become an aspiration for many, a desperately needed accessory. Humans have been led to believe that battery powered cars are the future, but are they as positive as they seem?

Battery powered vehicles consume a great deal of lithium (a scarce metal) and considering the average lifespan of a lithium battery is 8 years, if all cars were electric the planet would run out of lithium around the year 2075. Therefore, this would only provide a temporary solution to the crisis that is the frightening amount of greenhouse gasses filling the atmosphere. So what is the solution? Hydrogen is said to be an eco-friendly solution and scientifically it is, but with only 15 fuelling stations in Britain - a measly 2 in Scotland - it is hardly an appealing option. There are currently around 40

*BY Matthew Wright & Charlie Nicolson
Edited by Eilidh Reid*



different Electric car models available in the UK with more on the way but due to the average price of an internal combustion engine car being 30% less than that of an electric vehicle, this makes the choice to switch to electric much harder to come to terms with. Although the price may not burden some people, the range certainly will with the approximate range of an electric car being around 210 miles.

Yet there are some positives of having an electric car, with gas and fuel prices rising off the charts, having the convenience of charging your car for around £12 can release a lot of stress for those struggling in this economic crisis. There may not be a current solution to keeping your carbon footprint completely clean although the future of technology still has a lot to offer.

THE
**LOVELY
BONES**



The Lovely Bones Review

‘The Lovely Bones’ is a drama/thriller of a young girl who was murdered at 14. This film was inspired by the book that sold over 2.5 million hardcover copies all over the world, but the film didn’t reach the expectations of the director at the box office.

However, many people will say that ‘The Lovely Bones’ checked all the boxes to be a great film. The right amount of suspense followed by the tragic ending that left many speechless and the actors represented the characters in the way that many people imagined. The film was directed by Peter Jackson, was made in 2009 and got 31% on Rotten Tomatoes yet is known for famous actors and the interesting approach to how it was written. Although the film got a

lot of criticism for the overuse of special effects and questionable directing choices, this film was enjoyable to watch but also managed to spread awareness of stranger danger. The story follows Suzie Salmon who was murdered by her neighbour at 14 and whose spirit lived on to see her family grieve and adapt to life without her. This film was interesting because the entire time we watch her family grieving in different ways but in the end understand that her grief was the most important and complex one.

We see that at the start of the film she meets a boy. She immediately likes the boy and hopes that one day she’ll have her first kiss. When she dies and moves to the afterlife, she keeps this hope but knows that it will not be possible.

However, at the end of the film when she manages to travel back to reality whilst her murderer was completing his final step of the plan before eliminating all evidence of him being the murderer, she chooses to use this short amount of time to not tell people and stop the man who killed her but to complete her wish. This shows that no matter how much he might have hurt her, what she wanted was always more important even if it means letting him go. She would rather have herself win than him lose, which for her was more powerful than anything he could ever do. The reason why this film stands out to me is because of the way the story was told, the bounce between reality and different worlds was really amazing to watch.



People will always have negative opinions and reviews, but I can say that this film was worth watching and I'm sure the book is worth reading too. The film may not come under the genre tragedy, but there were many aspects of it in the film. It was clearly a devastating story but there is was so much more than that. For example, the way her death left impacts in ways that you never thought could. How friendships were made and how many ways you can cope with death. Her mum wanted to leave everything, she wished it had nothing to do with her and wanted to leave it all behind and forget, but her dad was invested and would not give until he found out what happened to his daughter. Her sister never forgot but didn't want to be there either, she always remembered her sister but wanted the situation to disappear.

However, at the end she became as invested as her dad because she started understanding things better and she was the reason Suzie's murderer was found.

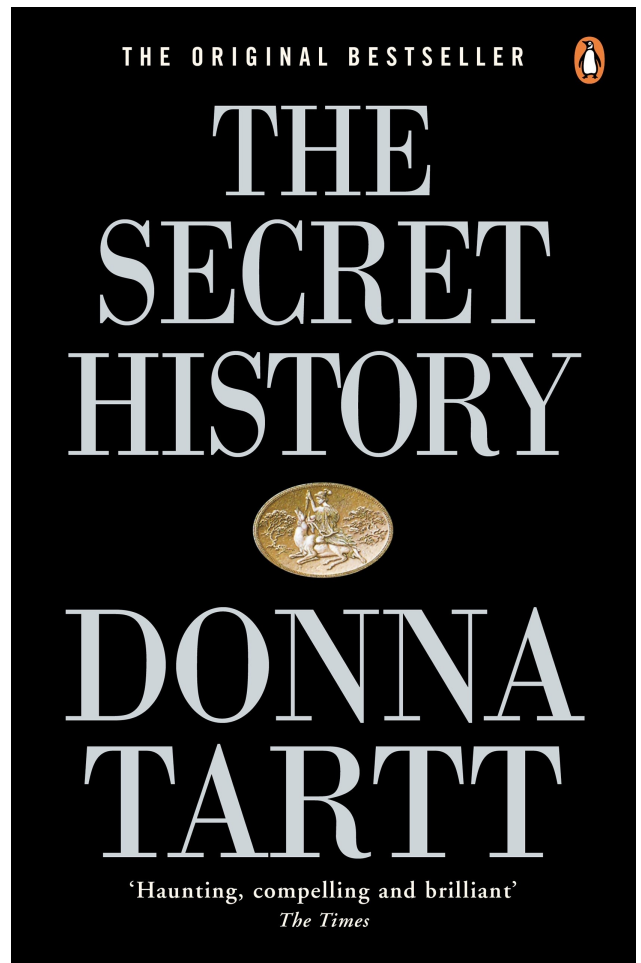
BY Eva Rancon
Edited by Ines Oliveira

The Secret History by Donna Tartt

“A redistribution of matter.”

The Secret History by Donna Tartt, released in September of 1992 is a thriller-crime novel set in Hampden College, America. Richard Papen lived a simple life until he found a leaflet for Hampden college. He applies and surprisingly gets in. After joining the Greek club, he befriends Henry Winter, Francis Abernathy, Edmund ‘Bunny’ Corcoran, and Charles and Camilla Macauley. After settling in and finally finding a group of friends he finds he can be himself with, Richard begins to realise that the group may be hiding more dark secrets that he first assumed.

When I first got this book, it officially took me three times to actually start reading it properly. I re-read and re-read the first chapter, trying to understand what’s going on, until I finally managed to get farther in, and since then I couldn’t put it down. I read it in four days, non-stop.



Tartt's writing is as unique as her characters, and the novel's plot is really fascinating. It transcends from the new-found aesthetic life Papen has found, into a more disturbing, dry but even more gripping tale. One of my favourite things about the book was its ending [No spoilers, don't worry!]. For ages I've been aching to find something that at least resembled a 'good' ending in media, and 'The Secret History' delivered just that.

The whole book was a colourful mix, from beautifully written passages like;

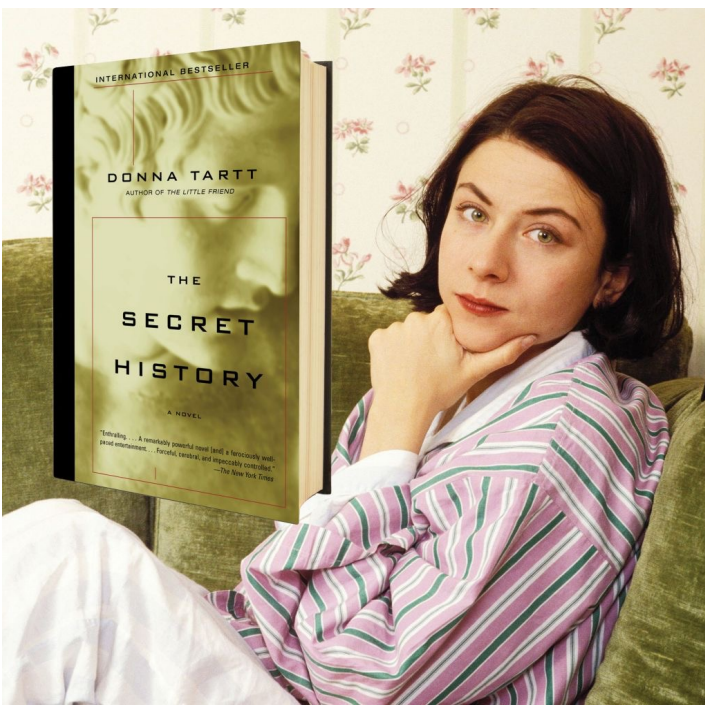
“She was a living reverie for me: the mere sight of her sparked an almost infinite range of fantasy, from Greek to Gothic, from vulgar to divine.”

To the group trying to convince Henry that the moon landing really happened:

“Once, over dinner, Henry was quite startled to learn from me that men had walked on the moon. “No.” He said.”

It’s this juxtaposition of intricately written passages on the life they live to the witty short stories they all share that makes the book so intoxicating.

I would recommend ‘The Secret History’ to anyone I know. Although I may have had to google many Latin meanings and long words that I was sure I'd never heard of before, reading the novel was an experience I would do anything to have for the first time again.



BY Mary Tompkins