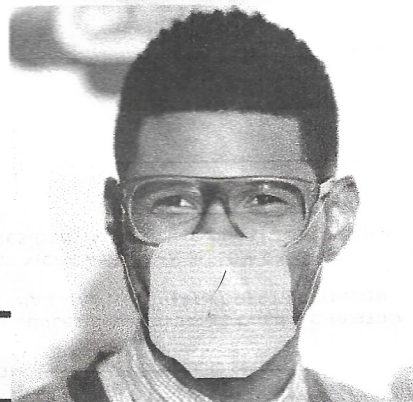


The Usher

MAY 26TH #4

FREE



Postcard from Durham

Greetings from sunny Durham!

We thought we'd make the best of the long weekend by getting away from the lashing winds of Edinburgh to take in the invigorating gusts of Durham. We're currently sitting on a petrol station's compost bags just outside Bishop Auckland, balancing our Costa machine lattes and custard-filled doughnuts on stacks of the Daily Mail. This lockdown business really isn't so hard after all - if you squint and hold your nose to keep out the fumes, you can just about imagine you're in a real cafe, with real opening hours and real staff, except, when they say 'any petrol', you have to pretend they're saying 'any milk', and then you have to pretend you don't want any milk, even if you do, because otherwise you have to pay £40 for it, which we think we did by mistake a couple of times, because for a while we really did think we were in a cafe. Like we said, hold your nose!

Anyway, we've been having buckets of fun here in Durham, we really can't recommend it enough. Lots of good cafes. There was one cafe stop just outside Carrville on the A1, where a policeman asked us what we were doing and where we were going. We thought our lockdown-busting was up, but when we told him we were going for a break in Durham, he smiled warmly and gave us each custard doughnuts, before disappearing into thin air. They were the best we'd ever tasted, Durham! What a town! A dreamworld outside this lockdown cage, where anything is possible!

Oh, looks like we've got to sign off now, there's another couple of friendly policemen coming over - hopefully to deliver another dozen Durham doughnuts!

Skip Henshaw & Saoirse Hammer

XX

RING FINGER

BY KARA HEWEN

In week three, I decided now was the time to invest in a Skincare Routine (TM). Targeted ads seemed to think it was a good idea; one went so far as to say, your late 20s is the perfect time to start taking care of your skin. I didn't have any good arguments to the contrary, and this time being the perfect time for anything was certainly an appealing thought. And to be fair, I didn't really have much else to do other than moisturise.

I started with an eye cream. I chose one that I read someone say something good about on Twitter, someone well-off and well-known enough for me to believe she knows what she's talking about, but not to the point that I thought she had been paid to say it.

The eyecream cost £54. This is more than ten times the cost of the cream I use on literally every other part of my body. It came in a nice box, inside another, unnecessarily large, nice box. The side of the bottle instructed me to use my ring finger to apply it 'to the wider eye area'. I wasn't sure how wide the wider eye area is, especially as I have long suspected my face itself is less wide than your average face. The ring (continued overleaf)

WHO FANCIES WHO

Let out your lockdown love and lust frustrations. Who's somehow managing to make social distancing sexy?

To the tall man in the denim jacket with the salt and pepper curls walking past Lidl on Easter Road: your smile lit up my day.
- Shy shopper

Easter Road's Kevin McCloud, I saw you again and honestly, I think you're the Grandest Design in town.

- A lady in the street but a freak in the ambitious self-build project

I feel like before he moved in for lockdown I had a chance, but if he gets boring fast, come knock on 2F2 when this is all over
- Dalziel's the Place

To all our readers - we fancy you. To all our rip-downers, you make us feel so bad. Do it again, Daddy, please, do it again
- Skip and Saoirse

(Continued from overleaf) finger at least was a clear instruction, and although I didn't suppose that using any of my other fingers would have made it less effective, I obeyed none the less.

Each morning, after applying it diligently to the 'wider eye area', I let it absorb for a few minutes while I make coffee, before then putting my Superdrug own-brand moisturiser on the rest of my face. I need this time window between the two because I feel apprehensive about them meeting, like friends from home and friends from university.

Last week, when buying a bottle of wine in Lidl, I stepped back to let the cashier come over to approve my age. I smiled compassionately towards him - O! Noble Keyworker for Whom We Clap - to show him that I understood the confusion and did not mind him asking my age. I opened my purse, tugging at the corner of my driving licence in order to speed up the process. I looked up as he pressed the 'visibly over 25' button.

THE BALLAD OF DAVID LLOYD

PT. 1

1. David Lloyd is a 42 year old investment banker who lives in Edinburgh. He is divorced, with two children, aged 6 and 10. He has an agreement with his ex-wife that they stay with him every other weekend, but he's flexible about it.
2. He lives in one of those luxury apartment blocks out in Newhaven, surrounded by marshy wasteland. He would have liked somewhere in New Town, or perhaps Trinity, but he lost a lot of money in the divorce.
3. He liked the modern fittings in the apartment, and the idea of living in a luxury apartment block made him feel like he wasn't just an investment banker in Edinburgh, but perhaps an investment banker in London or New York. He liked that too.
4. He has a standing Asda delivery with the same food and drink delivered every Sunday morning at 11am. The order includes 3 bottles of mid-range merlot, a bottle of Prosecco, a large bag of mixed nuts, two packets of bacon rashers, a fillet steak, two ready-made curries, a Shepherd's pie, oven chips, a pack of Rennies, a four pack of toilet roll, milk, and a box of Rice Krispies.
5. He has takeaway delivered, usually Indian, on average once a week. He never tips. He lost a lot of money in the divorce.
6. He has a heating and lighting system in the apartment which he controls from his phone.
7. He's been at the same firm in Edinburgh's West End for 13 years but was recently overlooked for a promotion in favour of his 33 year old colleague.
8. You can find him on Tinder, with photos from 8 years ago that he's cropped his ex-wife out of. His age limit on Tinder is set from 23 - 34.
9. When a woman he has met on Tinder agrees to come over, he pays for their Uber. He lights the White Stuff candle he was given as a Christmas gift from his sister-in-law, and he puts on Joop!, a fragrance for men which he got for 40% off on the plane back from a business trip in London. He lost a lot of money in the divorce.

(untitled poem)

BY DES GRUNTLED

Without the parties and crazy nights out
My whole identity is thrown in doubt
It turns out I've nothing going on in my mind
So I'll just stay inside all day
Alert, waiting for the next thing to be outraged about
But not Tory party donors again having their way
Or the fact that things won't be "fine" in time
As long as I don't have to think for myself
I like the feeling of being a good citizen
And proclaiming a heroic deed as
Putting a tin on the shelf

LETTER(S?)

I have nothing to add (yet) but your little double sided A4 sheet absolutely made my day. I noticed the plastic pocket and wee sign on the side of a wall a week or two ago and been checking it whenever I pass. Today I was on my way to pick up a Just Eat electric bike to cycle round Arthur's seat, because I fancied a cycle but couldn't be bothered with an actual cycle. Today there was an A4 sheet there. It's been crunched in my pocket and then in my bag all day. Literally just lay on my carpet and read it now. What a perfect little piece of lockdown paper. I really loved it, honestly it's cheered my evening right up. If you get an Instagram page I'll be an early adopter.

Thanks for your whimsical contribution to society.
Suzy

We're glad you enjoy the sheet, Suzy. We would send you a £20 WHSmith voucher for being this week's Star Letter but a) they're closed and b) it seems to devalue Star Letters if there are no other letters to compare them to. We recommend you send in 2 letters next time to be in with a chance.

Apologies that you've found the the content whimsical, we'll do our best to address this in future issues.
- SHSH

NEWS, ANNOUNCEMENTS, MISCELL

PEOPLE IN LEITH OFFICIALLY NO LONGER EVEN PRETENDING TO TRY AND SOCIALLY DISTANCE ANYMORE

UGLY RUG WHICH DALMENY STREET WOMAN BOUGHT AT THE START OF MARCH AND HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO RETURN IS BEGRUDGINGLY ACCEPTED INTO THE FOLD

DOING YOGA WITH ADRIENE VIDEOS ISN'T A SUBSTITUTE FOR A PERSONALITY

MAN CAUGHT STEALING BACON IN LEITH WALK SCOTMID . PROMPTS ONLOOKERS TO FANTASISE ABOUT WHAT THEY WOULD STEAL FROM LEITH WALK SCOTMID

SAOIRSE IS WATCHING BURLESQUE FEATURING CHER & CHRISTINA AGUILERA. READING OLIVIA LAING AND THAT ROBERT PATTINSON INTERVIEW
SKIP IS WATCHING THIS NICHE AMERICAN SITCOM CALLED LIBERTARIAN PARTY PRESIDENTIAL NOMINEE DEBATE CALIFORNIA