

The word on Societies

Retrospect Journal.

One of the tried and tested ways of finding your feet at University is by joining a Society. Tristan – 3rd year MA (Hons) Ancient and Medieval History – started with a journal

and ended up in Crete.

Undoubtedly one of my biggest anxieties about enrolling at the University was whether I would fit in. This was certainly heightened by the fact that I'm a somewhat more mature student, but it is a worry shared by many, regardless of age. Despite my fears, I was determined to find my place and make the most of my time here – something I realised through my involvement with 'Retrospect Journal', a student-led History, Classics and Archaeology publication.

'Retrospect', one of more than 290 societies available to join at the University of Edinburgh, centres on the online and print publication of articles written by a team of columnists and proofed by copy editors. Uploaded weekly, they cover all disciplines relating to History, Classics and Archaeology in the form of academic writing, historical fiction, and reviews, to name just a few. It also publishes several thematic print editions throughout the year. In 2020, they included 'Prejudice and Pandemics', 'Histories of Hope' and 'Race in Retrospective' (in collaboration with RACE.ED), whilst 2021's first offering will be 'Development and Deterioration'. If it wasn't already apparent, we also enjoy alliteration.



The Minoan Palace of Knossos, a day trip whilst in Crete.

Whilst the publication of our journal is the crux of the society, it is also a place where I've had the opportunity to get to know and socialise with those involved. Our common interests and working together to produce engaging literature completely mitigated my worries about fitting in. It has made my student experience one which extends beyond the classroom – although the experience of writing for publication has certainly helped that. Of course, it isn't the only society with links to the School of History, Classics and Archaeology. There are those named for the respective disciplines, all of which offer a huge variety of social and academic events. In February 2020, as part of Flexible Learning Week, I travelled to Crete with the Classics Society; not only a fantastic opportunity for an Ancient History student but through which I've formed close friendships.

If I could give one piece of advice to a prospective student, it would be not to let anxieties hold you back. Through getting involved with societies, whether those affiliated with the School or the University more broadly, you'll not only

have a much more valuable experience, but you'll get to know your peers, many of whom may have a background similar to yourself, in a welcoming environment.