

'There is logic in a transsexual
merman having a mangina'

Relaxing with BBC3's **The Mighty Boosh**

Tributes to drowned student

The body of Robert Ailwood, a 3rd year Archaeology student, has been found in the river Foss after a six day police search



Professors asked to 'spy on students'

A leaked government memo from the DFES has led to worries that students could be under surveillance from professors, based on their ethnicity. The report encourages the monitoring of "Asian-looking" students and states that campuses can be a breeding ground for extremism. Professors and students have reacted with anger to the alleged proposals.

York students face overhaul of modules

Plans by the University to implement wide-reaching reforms to the assessment of degrees and modules has been condemned as a "decline" by Professor Tom Baldwin, and "outrageous" by students angry at the changes. It is expected to create a heavier work load for students in the summer term and limit the choices for those who are taking joint honours degrees.



Orson

The Hollywood soft rock group talk about their transformation from working in McDonalds to having their debut single chart at number one and selling out a nationwide tour.

MUSE M5

York XV victorious in Derby day match

University of York 22 - 12 St John's In a thrilling encounter, the University rugby first team came out on top against their York neighbours after taking an early lead and continuing their domination throughout the 90 minutes. The success will act as a building block on which confidence can be founded for the rest of the season.

SPORT Page 16

SU Officer arrested in fight against aviation emissions

By Heidi Blake
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

ROSE RICKFORD, a YUSU LGBT Officer, will stand trial later this year following her arrest at a 25-strong sit-in at Nottingham East Midlands Airport in September.

The sit-in, which lasted four hours and delayed up to 1,000 passengers, was part of the 'Plane Stupid' campaign aimed at drawing attention to the environmental damage caused by flying.

The 25 participants, who breached a perimeter fence before holding a sit-in on the taxi-way between two cargo holds, were subsequently arrested and charged with aggravated trespass and causing a public nuisance. Five are also charged with causing criminal damage. All 25 will face trial later this year at Leicester Crown Court.

Several of the protesters, including Rose and her sister Ellen Rickford, say they were held in solitary confinement for 36 hours without being allowed to make a phonecall to inform anyone of their situation. Their houses were raided by police, and computers, mobile phones, diaries and address books were confiscated.

Rose Rickford claims that her 15,000 dissertation was stored on a computer which police seized from her student house in York.

Francis Rickford and Brendan Martin, parents of Rose and Ellen, spoke

out on behalf of their daughters last month in an interview with *The Observer*.

The pair claimed that their daughters had been released at separate times late at night on September 25 following 36 hours of solitary confinement in a police station in Leicester.

The two were allegedly told not to talk to one another as a condition of their bail. Their money, keys and mobile telephones were confiscated. Frances Rickford said she was "particularly horrified at how the girls had been released in a way that seemed almost calculated to put them in the way of harm."

Rose Rickford spoke to *Nouse* on Monday of her commitment to the battle against the aviation industry. She said: "Aviation is a hugely important issue if we're going to save the planet and save human life.

"It's the fastest growing source of CO₂ emissions, releasing 80 million tonnes of CO₂ per year, which is more than 10% of the UK's total. Aviation on its own will exceed the government's 2050 emissions target by 134%, even if we turn off all the lights and shut down all the factories.

"The fact is, 45% of the flights that leave Europe travel no further than 500 km, which is less than the distance between London and the Scottish border. There are obviously many far more sustainable ways of travelling that kind of distance.



Rose Rickford was arrested during a 24-strong sit-in on an airport runway

"Despite this, the government is investing massively in the aviation industry, and obviously that's just mad."

When asked if she would be willing to face arrest again in the fight against aviation, Rickford said: "Basically, my attitude is that the situation of the planet is urgent, and we have to do all we can using peaceful means to get it on the agenda. Direct action is the way to do that, so yes, I will continue with this."

"Plane Stupid" wants to bring short-haul flights to the fore in the battle against the aviation industry. To this end, it called a "day of action" for Monday November 6, during which the group claimed a number of national organisations planned major disruption to airports nationwide.

"Plane Stupid" wants to bring short-haul flights to the fore in the battle against the aviation industry. To this end, it called a "day of action" for Monday November 6, during which the group claimed a number of national organisations planned major disruption to airports nationwide.

Knife attack

YORK POLICE ARE investigating a knife attack on a York University student during Freshers' Week. The attack took place on Lawrence Street at 3 am on Sunday 8 October. The victim, Alan Patel, fought back and escaped his assailant. He acknowledged that he was drunk and it was "not wise" to be walking home alone late at night.

Vandals break into Langwith

SAFETY MEASURES AT Langwith College have been revamped following a security breach by second-year ex-residents who returned to the block during Freshers' Week.

Having entered the block, the second years stole a number of photographs and welcome mats, attempted to forcibly gain access to a locked room, turned on all the showers on the top floor, and scrawled "C Block Sucks" in mud on the wall. After leaving to swim in the lake, they re-entered the block, semi naked, to run through the corridor, darting in and out of students' rooms. Two doors were severely scratched and kicked and numerous peepholes smashed. Some members of the block complained of verbal abuse and intimidation which resulted in the Provost offering them new accommodation or an internal phone line to report any future trouble. As a consequence of the events, the door code was changed immediately and all those involved were banned from the block.

Nouse scoops second award nomination

NOUSE HAS BEEN nominated for Best Student Publication in the NUS and Mirror Student Media Awards 2006, an award which it won last year. This is the second nomination of its kind that *Nouse* has received this year, having been nominated for the Student Newspaper of the Year in the Guardian Student Media awards last month. Toby Green, the outgoing Editor of *Nouse*, was also nominated for Best Student Features Writer in the NUS and Mirror Awards.

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Your essential supplement, *Muse*, has exclusive interviews with Orson and the Mighty Boosh as well as an investigation into student surveillance

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Leaked memo urges university staff to spy on "Asian-looking" students

By Sam Thomas
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

A LEAKED MEMO sent from the Department for Education and Skills to university lecturers and support staff encouraging them to monitor the activities of Muslim and "Asian-looking" students has drawn harsh condemnation from all corners of the academic community.

The guidance, distributed to universities across the UK and reported in *The Guardian* last month, advises that "universities and colleges provide a fertile recruiting ground" for those involved in terrorist activity. It urges particularly close scrutiny of Islamic student societies, which it claims are susceptible to radicalisation by "extremist individuals."

Responding to the leaked memo, Professor Haleh Afshar a York academic and leading expert on the politics of Islam and issues of racial equality likened the government's stance to that of the American government treatment of suspected Communists during the McCarthy era.

Professor Afshar suggested that the memo provides evidence that the government "have now categorised Muslims as 'the enemy within'."

Professor Afshar also urged the government to engage with rather than target Muslim students, and to avoid crude approximations of their attitudes.



Concerns have been raised by academics about the implications of surveillance on students based on ethnicity. Photo: Ally Carmichael

"If you actually go to the Islamic societies then you will discover a huge diversity of opinion, that Muslims are not monolithic with one view about everything," she said.

The Equality Challenge Unit, an action group promoting equality and diversity in higher education, also stressed the importance of better communication. "The danger of targeting

Muslim students is that it may have a discriminatory impact and any guidance which recommends discriminatory treatment has no place in campus life," said ECU Chief Executive Nicola Dandridge in a press release. "The guidance should instead address extremism as a whole. It should promote good relations as an established way of minimising conflicts on campus."

The University has an equal opportunities policy, part of which is intended to implement legislation passed in 2003 to prevent discrimination on grounds of religious belief.

Lecturers and staff across campus dismissed out of hand the notion that they would consider keeping watch on students of a particular race or religion.

"I suppose if I did stum-

ble across some terrible plot, whether constructed by Muslim students or anyone else, I would feel the need to contact the appropriate authorities," said Dr. Helen Smith, a York English lecturer.

"But that's a long way from being asked to 'check up' on students who are under suspicion only because of their surname or the colour of their skin."

'Terrorists arriving in York would survey the white, smugly middle-class students and head to Bradford instead'

Campus terror watch? See M2

University attacked at Heslington East inquiry

By Heidi Blake
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE UNIVERSITY has come under fire from residents and local officials over its plans for campus expansion at the ongoing inquiry into Heslington East. An ex-University bursar, Roger McMeeking, was among many to raise concerns about the proposals.

The inquiry, which is examining the viability of plans to build a new £500 million, 65-hectare Heslington East campus on green belt land, opened in the Spring and is due to reach a verdict in January.

During the inquiry, concerns have been raised about the encroachment upon greenbelt land, increased



The University plans to expand into nearby fields

traffic and pressure on the private housing sector that could result from the plans.

Speaking at the enquiry, Mark Hill, a Green Party City Councillor, said:

"This is basically a land grab, using the University's good reputation to get access to greenbelt land for a lucrative business park. The effect on the surrounding

parts of York will be severe: extra congestion, reduced air quality and increased house prices."

Dave Taylor, a former director of York's Inward Investment Board, disputed the University's claim that the development should be exempt from greenbelt rules.

He said: "There would have to be very good reasons to build on greenbelt land, particularly to build workplaces in locations where there is inadequate public transport and an already strained road network with air quality problems."

He also raised residents' concerns about increasing number of students at the University. "If the University expansion goes ahead but it fails to provide sufficient stu-

dent accommodation, we will see more of the surrounding housing being converted to multiple-occupancy, and further deterioration of communities in the area."

Representing the views of Heslington residents at the inquiry, Councillor Cederig Jamieson-Ball said that while a minority of residents supported the scheme, "the majority do not".

He also raised residents' concerns about the amount of traffic the new campus could generate, late night noise and parking problems.

McMeeking, who worked at the university between 1964 and 1999 and was bursar from 1980 to 1996, raised concerns over the demand for student housing if the expansion goes

ahead.

He said he still fully supported the application, but added that the University had underestimated the demand for student housing by 1,200 because it had overestimated the percentage of part-time students who would not require student accommodation.

These students would either have to be housed in the private sector or require an additional 33,694 square metres of space on the new campus.

Richard Frost, chairman of Heslington Parish Council which is opposing the expansion application, said: "It is very important that the legal agreements governing how much accommodation the University must build onsite are robust."

Student's body found after

By Daniel Whitehead
NEWS EDITOR

TRIBUTES HAVE been paid by friends and family after the recent death of 22-year-old University of York student Robert Ailwood.

Ailwood, a third-year Archaeology student, was discovered dead in the River Foss on Tuesday October 17 following a massive police hunt of the York region after his initial disappearance on a night out with friends the previous Wednesday.

Close friends have since described their "shock" at the death of a fellow student who was "always up for a party" and was a "very nice guy".

Katie Elliot, also a third-year Archaeology student said, "Rob was very kind and funny. He enjoyed a good night out. He loved York and he loved his long-term girlfriend. Everyone in our year will miss having Rob around".

Ailwood's father, also called Robert, spoke to his son for the final time on the day of his own birthday, two days before his son's disappearance. Speaking at an appeal for information before his son's body was discovered he described him as "more than happy - he was



Police divers trawl the Foss as they search for Ailwood after he was reported missing. Photo: The Press, York

over the moon."

"He enjoyed York very much [and] had no financial worries...there were no problems." Adding "how would you cope if you lost a son? It is very hard to describe...My guts are in my mouth".

York University Students' Union President,

Rich Croker, who attended the funeral, held in late October, also spoke of his distress at the tragedy. "Unfortunately I didn't know him; I attended the funeral as a representative of the student body, in the same way university staff attended. I can tell you it was a very nice

service and it was clear from those who attended that he was held in the highest regard by his friends and the academics at this University.

"The overriding message from those who spoke was that he was a warm and generous person who will be sorely missed by those who

knew him".

Ailwood was initially reported missing by his girlfriend after he failed to return to his home on Wednesday October 11 after a night out with her and other friends. He was last seen in St Sampson's Square in the city centre at approximately

11:40pm when he left the group and walked in the direction of his house on Lawrence Street, in the Tang Hall area.

Police discovered during the investigation that an ambulance had been called at 11:55pm after reports of a young man collapsing in Piccadilly, between the centre and his house.

However, upon attendance, the young man was no longer at the scene, and paramedics were unable to locate him. Ailwood's mobile phone was then found hours later in the same area by a passer-by and handed to friends who were searching for him. Police used the phone in an attempt to trace his whereabouts.

The following day a full-scale search began with local emergency service officers and a specialist 40-man police team including divers searching the York region in an attempt to find Ailwood.

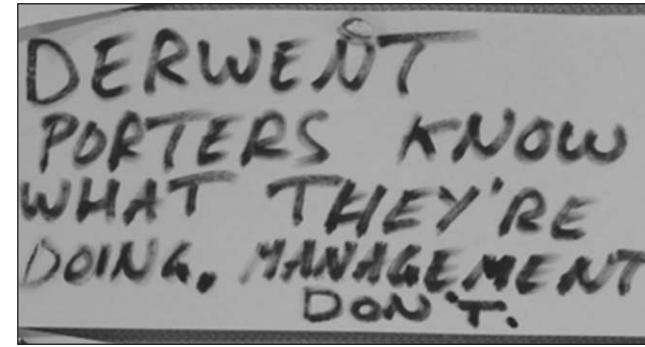
Finally, after a six day search, the body of a young man was found in the River Foss near the Blue Bridge next to the Foss Barrier in Fulford on the morning of Tuesday October 17. A week after the search for the student had begun, the body was confirmed to be that of Robert Ailwood, aged 22.

University row with porters intensifies after University's 'union-busting' tactics

By Heidi Blake
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE ROW BETWEEN the University and its porters over contract changes has intensified, following the use of what Unison describe as "union-busting tactics" by the University.

University officials so far have refused to enter into collective negotiations with staff through their union, following the refusal of almost half the portering and security workforce to sign the University's new contracts, preferring to meet with staff



Students make their feelings known to management

individually.

Speaking to the York Press last week, Phil Booth, Unison Regional Officer, said

the union had reluctantly agreed to individual meetings, but said there was strong support among the

workforce for industrial action. He said: "It's clearly hotting up now. Management are playing hardball."

Despite this, a University spokesman recently said, "our door is always open to Unison and the University has a good relationship with all recognised trade unions."

"Some individuals have expressed concerns about the new arrangements and by meeting on a one-to-one basis, we have sought to find out whether we can accommodate those concerns. The

University requested that Unison representatives attend those meetings, even though the union initially advised their members against attending."

The dispute surrounds

changes being introduced under the Framework Agreement, a grading and pay structure which includes changes to employees' contracts, which Unison says will lead to a "complete change in lifestyle". Most controversial is a flexibility clause which compels porters and security staff to work varying shifts between

different colleges.

Of roughly 50 porters and security staff, 22 have refused to sign the new contracts. The deadline for doing so has been put back from November 19 to December 17.

A University spokesman said of this, "The University believes that this issue affects a maximum of 22 employees out of a workforce of 750 in the Directorate of Facilities Management. The proposals set out in the Framework Agreement have been accepted by the vast majority of staff."

**Nouse AGM -
tonight at 6pm
P/X/001**

Come along to our yearly elections tonight in P/X/001. Every position will be up for vote, with the vast majority not requiring any experience of any kind.

Posts include writing, subediting, photography and much more. If you would like any more information please email: socs12@york.ac.uk.

police search



Tributes have been paid to student Robert Ailwood

An inquest was opened and adjourned into the cause of death on Thursday October 10 until around Christmas time in order for a proper investigation to be carried out. The coroner involved with the case was unable to disclose whether the circumstances are suspicious.

In recent weeks a funeral service has been held, which was attended by family, close friends, University officials and Ailwood's long-term girlfriend, a foreign student. She has since left University and returned home to grieve.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, YUSU Academic and Welfare Officer, Amy Foxton attempted to quell students' safety fears of going out in the city centre. "I think the [city] is safe, York was voted the safest city this year, we don't want to scare students but we want to encourage them to look after themselves and each other."

"The most critical thing is when you are drunk you will not be able to make the most reasonable decisions".

She also spoke of her opinions of the current efforts being made by the University and YUSU to improve students' safety,

adding "I think we can always do more but we are trying really hard. Telling students not to binge drink wouldn't work".

Foxton added that she

has made efforts to increase student safety by handing out much smaller attack alarms to encourage students to carry them around in case of danger.

Deaf student wins City Council appeal

By Daniel Whitehead
NEWS EDITOR

A STUDENT FROM the University of York who suffers from severely impaired hearing recently won an appeal worth several thousand pounds against the City of York Council after contacting her local MP.

Louise Moody, 25, who is currently studying as a post-graduate in the Philosophy department, applied for Incapacity Benefit in her first-year on the grounds of her disability. For two years the council paid between £35 and £55 per week to assist with accommodation payments, until June this year when Moody received a letter informing her she was not entitled to the payments and that they would be stopped immediately.

The Council also ordered that Moody repay the £1900 which she had so far received. The Council stated that this was because her student loan had excluded her from the "vulnerable" group throughout the period of payment, despite the fact she had stated her financial



Louise Moody, 25

income in full in her initial application.

The City of York Council website states that "most full time students cannot claim housing benefit", and a spokeswoman said at the time "we appreciate Ms Moody's concern over the issue and accept that the overpayment was due to a council error".

After receiving the letter, Moody contacted University Welfare Officer Sam Marsden who built a case for appeal at a scheduled tribunal. This included contacting local MP Hugh Bayley from the City of York Press, and the MP.

She added: "The reason I receive benefits is because I'm profoundly deaf and I can't get a job like other students to support myself. I handed in lots of paperwork about my incapacity benefit and student loans when I applied".

Constituency, who communicated with officials, asking them to overturn their decision.

On Friday November 3, a letter of apology was sent to Moody from the head of the Benefits Office, stating that the error was the fault of the Council and apologised for her not receiving the "normal level of service".

The reversal means that no reimbursement will be required, and payments of £52 per week will continue because she is no longer in receipt of a loan as a post-graduate.

Speaking of her relief that the problem was resolved, Moody said "I was most annoyed at the extreme levels I had to take. I am relieved the problem has been sorted, but disappointed I had to escalate it to an appeal tribunal, the York Press, and the MP".

She added: "The reason I receive benefits is because I'm profoundly deaf and I can't get a job like other students to support myself. I handed in lots of paperwork about my incapacity benefit and student loans when I applied".

University kitchens crisis escalates

By Milda Sabunaite and Hannah O'Shea

THE UNIVERSITY Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Felicity Riddy, has apologised to students for inadequate kitchen facilities after a campaign by York University Students' Union (YUSU) to improve facilities.

Students have criticised the University for unequal and limited kitchen facilities across campus. Despite the completion of renovation work to Goodricke A block, on October 30, around 300 students are still without proper cooking facilities in Derwent, Goodricke, Langwith and Vanburgh colleges.

In a letter posted in the affected kitchens, Professor Riddy admitted a failure of communication and apologised "very sincerely on behalf of the University".

Rich Croker, YUSU President, said "after extensive lobbying and discussions by YUSU to the University there are plans in place to improve cooking facilities in

Derwent C&D, Langwith A, Vanburgh A&B, Goodricke B blocks. There is also a commitment [from the University] to provide compensation to students living in the blocks listed above".

Currently however parts of Derwent college see 18 students attempting to self-cater with only two microwaves and a toaster.

Students of Derwent B block have also complained that basic facilities such as dining tables and chairs haven't been provided.

Laura Latridou, a B block resident said "we have to sit on someone's floor and eat, it's not very hygienic".

Other students have expressed concerns about how not being able to cook their food properly will affect their health. "Because of my special dietary requirements, I find cooking in a microwave very restrictive" said Tom Seal, a member of Derwent College.

Students in Derwent, Langwith and Vanburgh colleges have expressed anger at unequal facilities between

colleges, where facilities in colleges such as Alcuin and James dwarf those of Derwent and Langwith. "It's not fair that we pay the same amount as people in James" said Jill Smith, of Derwent B Block.

Student anger has also led to creation of an online campaign group with 146 members and a petition has been circulated.

YUSU however has consistently campaigned for

equal rent across campus to counter the creation of a two-tier accommodation system, between richer and poorer students.

Matt Burton, Goodricke College Chair, has welcome the completion of building work on Goodricke A Block. "They are a massive improvement on the level of facilities we had last year" whilst Hetal Pandit, an A Block resident, said "it was

definitely worth waiting for".

During the construction period students were given free meal vouchers as a compensation for the temporary lack of facilities. However, some students were dissatisfied with this offer.

Rob Goodyer, Goodricke A Block, said that he couldn't have breakfast before early morning lectures as the canteens only began serving at nine o'clock. "We want compensa-

tion" said Goodyer.

A recent addition has

also been made to the University Catering Service's brand new 'Mad' scheme, with the introduction of 'Mini Mad'.

The new addition will mean that students who don't wish to eat breakfast and dinner on-campus seven days a week can now eat only dinner for an approximate saving of 12%.

Health implications of using Microwaveable Ovens:

Lack of varied diet

Options for microwavable food are limited, mainly to ready meals, meaning students are prevented from ensuring a balanced and varied diet.

Problems cooking meat

It is strongly recommended by health & safety officials that meat is not prepared in a microwave. Red meats in particular cook in a pool of fat.



Dietary needs ignored

Students with special dietary requirements such as vegans or those with food allergies are now even more restricted by most microwavable foods.

Fattening diet

Microwave foods encourage snacking and the eating of high-fat content foods leading to increased obesity and severe health implications.

Anger of students and lecturers as admin cut course module options

By Alex Stevens
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

THE UNIVERSITY has plans to implement wide-ranging changes to module choices and assessment which threaten to have a serious effect on the academic welfare of students.

The consultation period on the Teaching Committee's Review of Modularisation has just closed, having received widespread criticism both from students and academic departments.

Recommendations include a compulsory dissertation module of 40 credits, while taught modules of 30 and 40 credits are to be phased out entirely. In addition, combined courses are to have strict credit proportions, limiting choice for undergraduates, while the pass mark is to be raised from 35 to 40.

Most controversial is the move to introduce "a standard progression requirement, based on the achievement of 120 credits, at the end of each year. All student assessment is therefore completed by the end of an academic year". This would require that all assessments take place at the beginning and end of terms 6 and 9, creating a particularly heavy workload for students in the summer term. Teaching time in that term would have to be reduced to allow for revision and writing essays.

Such a change would also concentrate the workload for staff during this term, as it would be neces-



Lecturers and students have expressed displeasure at the changes due to be introduced. Photo: Adam Sloan

sary to mark all work from the year's first two terms during the summer term so that undergraduates' summer term work could be marked and collated in time to organise resits.

Professor Tom Baldwin, Chair of the PEP Board of Studies, predicts that "the

quality of teaching in term 6 would decline" as a result of greater demands on academics' time, and that would be a slip in standards separate from the necessity of fewer weeks' teaching in the Summer term.

According to Prof. Baldwin, the new proposals

are motivated by "the worst kind of reason for change. Why does this have to be university-wide? If [a department] can make good use of its resources, why should the university know better?"

Some University staff have suggested that changes

to courses which have been tailored over time to best suit the requirements of students and staff are unnecessary, and that decisions affecting courses should be taken by those who are most familiar with them.

But, according to the Teaching Committee, a new

system is required, after current assessment procedures have been criticised by the Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education on the grounds of being "difficult to justify in terms of the University's responsibility to ensure that students are treated equitably."

Meanwhile, external examiners have suggested that variations in classification procedures from department to department render University procedures "transparently inequitable and vulnerable to litigation."

YUSU's Academic and Welfare Officer, Amy Foxton, noted that current methods of assessment and classification "can be confusing". YUSU, she said, has had "some involvement" with the process. But there are concerns from students about the new proposals.

Adam Russell, a third year physics student, said last week "I'm all for clearer methods of assessment, but the idea that teaching standards should slip just because of difficulties in university administration is outrageous."

David Hughes, a third year PPE student said, "I haven't had any problems between my three departments so far. I'd be particularly sorry to see the back of 40 credit modules - I'm doing one in the next two terms and it's fantastic."

"And I'd rather not be forced into a dissertation when my course is so broad because it would be pretty hard to pick a topic which would work."

Noisy students anger residents

By Karen Lynch
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

A HOUSE PARTY on Hull Road hosted by University of York students was the latest in a series of events to anger local residents.

The party, which involved around 50 people, was reported to the Environmental Protection Unit at City of York Council in the early hours of Sunday morning. The officer who attended the scene reported seeing "lots of people in the road milling around" causing "general disturbance."

This comes at a time when both the University and YUSU are working to promote positive relations between students and local residents, after complaints from Badger Hill residents.

YUSU President, Rich Croker, said "living as neighbours is about compromise", adding that these incidents involve a small minority of students and are "never malicious".

Over the weekend in which the party took place, City of York Council's Noise Patrol received over twenty complaints, just one of which involved students.



'A ghostly apparition'

what they meant to her respondents.

Respondents have reported a wide range of experiences. Those who have had near-death experiences often claim to have seen

blindingly bright lights, tunnels, or a review of their lives and to have felt the presence of passed on loved ones or a separation from their physical self.

Others have reported visions or apparitions that have appeared to them. Castro tells of one male respondent who, having recently come out of hospital, was visited by what he later described as 'an angel'. Despite his lack of traditional religious belief, the man felt certain the angel had come to confirm that he was going to live. For many participants this is the first time they have spoken about their experiences.

Castro is reluctant to

apply labels to her research. The aim is not to "categorise experiences in a way that respondents wouldn't categorise it themselves".

She believes her research could help further knowledge in the field of human consciousness, something "we know so little, relatively speaking, about". As well as the academic value of the research, Castro also hopes it will make a "very small contribution to helping people see these experiences as normal and without stigma". Castro's research is ongoing and those interested in contributing should get in touch at mc512@york.ac.uk or log on to www.theperiphery.co.uk.

Paranormal research at York

By Raf Sanchez
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

A UNIVERSITY OF York researcher has launched a potentially groundbreaking study into 'mystical' experiences and their effects on the lives of those who have them.

Madeleine Castro, a postgraduate researcher attached to the Sociology Department, is investigating 'extraordinary experiences' and their interpretation by her respondents.

The research focuses not on whether or not these experiences "happened", a judgement Castro claims is "not relevant to this project", but instead frames them in a sociological context, asking

Angry students march on London

By Matthew Kilburn and Antonia Moura

ON SUNDAY October 29, 150 York University students joined a National Union of Students (NUS) organised march across London in protest against the plans to lift the £3,000 cap on tuition fees.

Under slogans such as "education is a right, not a privilege" the students marched from Bloomsbury to Trafalgar Square in protest at plans to lift the cap on top-up fees which could see tuition fees rise as far as £15,000 at some institutions.

The number of students attending was significantly lower than the 12,000 students estimated to be attending by the NUS. Despite this, YUSU Campaigns officer, Matt Balding, said: "This is a very different protest than before. The decision [to lift the cap] isn't being made by

parliament for a number of years."

Rich Croker, YUSU President, said "This year for the first time it [fees] shows the effect its had on the applications to university" and that Leeds Metropolitan University, who have introduced a reduced, fee have "had an application increase of 8% compared to a 3% decrease, nationally."

Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Felicity Riddy, said that "[her] personal view is that higher education ought to be free for all because it is a social good and not merely a personal good. The difficulty in the higher education sector is, and has been for a long time, under funded and has to have additional sources of income. It seems pretty clear that the taxpayer is not willing to pay. The only other source then, at present looks as if it is student fees."

Gemma Tumelty, NUS President said, the position

of the NUS is, that we "firmly believe that education is a benefit to society as well as the individual. We believe education should be free and funded by the public purse."

A student in Langwith College, who asked not to be named said that tuition fees "almost put me off going to university. When I leave I will be in £20 000 worth of debt. It's ridiculous."

However there is consensus amongst the political parties on fees. The Shadow 'Blair's mantra, "Education, Education, Education," could do with a reworking'

The problem of fees M6

Home Secretary, David Davis, said in a recent talk given at York that as unfortunate as the situation was, there doesn't seem to be any alternative that isn't at least as expensive. Rich Croker acknowledged this: "[the abolition of fees is] not going to happen over night, it's part of a longer process, we know that."

However, Tumelty refuses to be put off, saying: "Students are angry, we still care. This issue is not dead and we are not going to go away. We need to start building all these student activists so that when we have another battle ahead, when our education is under threat, we've got the next generation of 'fee fighters'."



Students converge on London in top-up fees protest



Photos by Adam Sloan.

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By Nicky Woolf
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

UNDEGRADUATE degrees in the sciences can require as much as double the workload of degrees in the arts, an Opinion Panel survey published last month has revealed.

Medicine, dentistry, agriculture and engineering average the highest weekly workload at around twenty hours, whilst sociology, English literature, history and philosophy require the lowest, averaging just below ten hours.

The survey, which polled fifteen thousand first and second-year students around the country also exposed worrying discrepancies in the number of 1sts and 2:1s awarded by English universities.

This means that among students of similar ability, some can spend significantly more time working for their degrees than others, and be faced with a lower chance of achieving a 1st or a 2:1.

For example, Engineering students at University College London have a similar average UCAS points figure to those at Warwick (366.6 and 389.6 respectively), but while those at UCL work over ten hours a week longer, those at Warwick are around twenty per cent more likely to be awarded a high class of degree.

York, however, whose entrants typically hold high UCAS points, awards a large proportion of 1sts and 2:1s with comparatively low work-hours.

Workloads at Oxford and Cambridge are comparatively high across the board, but the percentage of students awarded 1sts or 2:1s by Oxbridge are similar to those of Durham, Bristol, Warwick and York; whose graduates are, according to the Cambridge careers office, equally likely to find good careers. Of this, Gordon Chesterman, the director of the Cambridge careers office, said "the world of employment is a much more level playing field now."

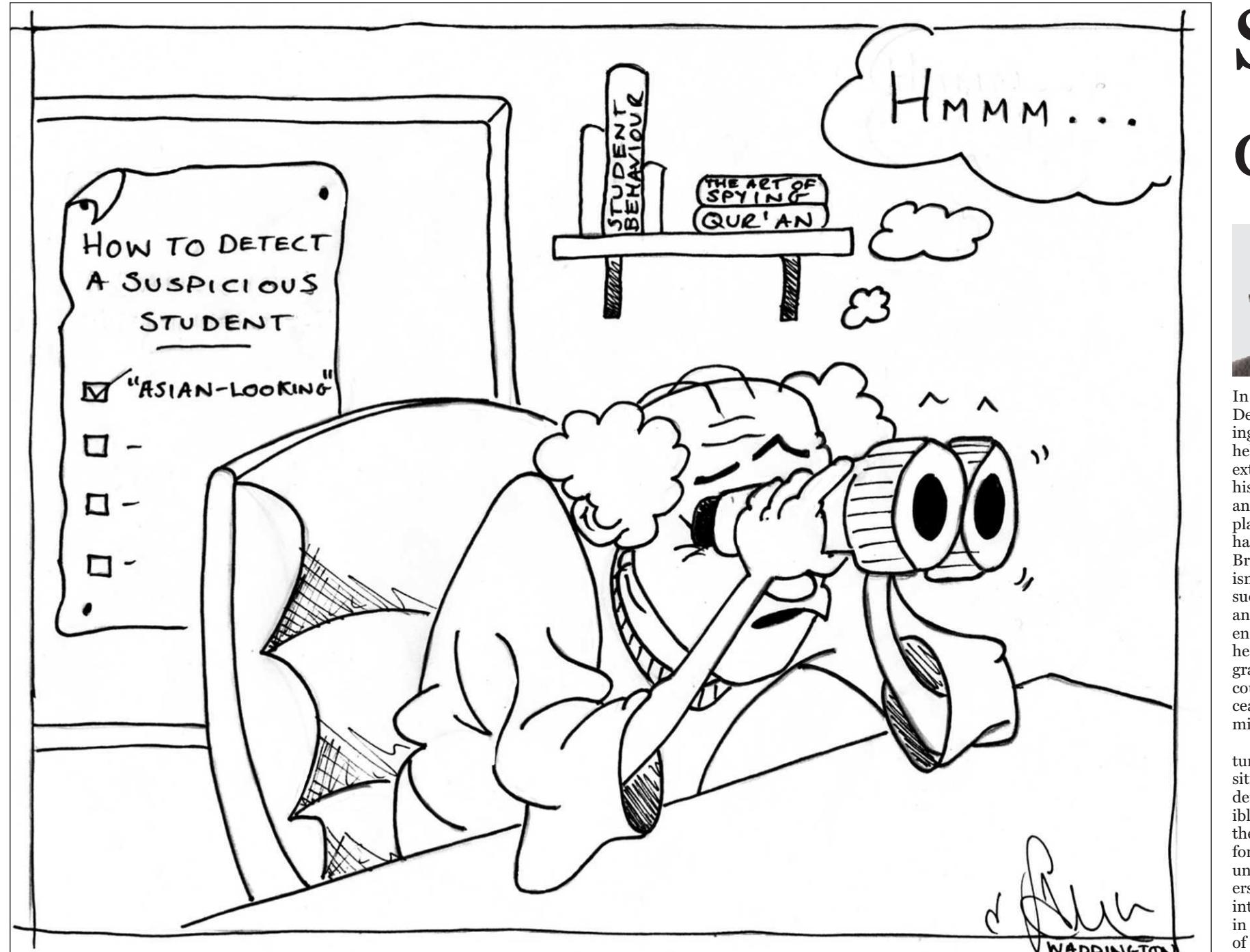
EST. 1964
NOUSE
Editorial

It is heartening for the campaigning student in all of us (ok, some of us) to see a member of YUSU take an active stance in something they truly believe in. Ok, so I'm not talking about the top-up fees demonstration (although those who made the trip to London should be congratulated even if the disappointing national turn out is sadly indicative of students' indifference acceptance of the rise), but LGBT officer, Ross Rickford, who, along with other members of 'Plane Stupid', occupied the runway of Nottingham East Midlands airport to protest against short-haul flights. The sit-in, designed to raise awareness of the damage caused to the environment by air travel, led to Rickford and others allegedly being held in solitary confinement for 36 hours and having their houses raided. The case is due to be heard later this year, but whatever the outcome, Rickford is a rare breed of a student still following the 60s protest ideals.

As the kitchen saga continues, students are growing weary of making a fuss and are instead beginning to contemplate the effect that having to cook their meals in a microwave will have on their health. With many justifiably pointing out that they should not pay the same accommodation costs as those in other colleges with access to far superior facilities, perhaps now is the time for the University to really examine what each college is providing. We don't want a campus where those who can afford it live in luxury, while the rest reside in the cheaper slums; there ought to be a reasonable standard which every student should demand.

Congratulations must be passed on to Louise Moody, the University of York philosophy student. Moody, who suffers from severely impaired hearing, was shocked to discover that her Incapacity Benefit was being cancelled because of an "administrative error". Thankfully, the City of York Council have come to their senses and reinstated the benefit, yet this only came after a concerted campaign by Ms Moody. That she had to go through such lengths to gain a financial necessity is a disgrace.

The death of Robert Ailwood is a tragic end to a life which showed such promise. Those who knew him have said he was fun, kind and simply a genuinely nice guy. Our thoughts are with his family and his friends at what can only be described as an incomprehensibly difficult time.



SU
President
**Rich
Croker**

As I sit here writing this column, dressed up in my best D.I.S.C.O. outfit and ready to go to what seems like my millionth Club D, I am finding it increasingly difficult to write a piece that fully encapsulates everything that has happened already this term whilst also looking forward to what is coming up. How do you sum up the Freshers' Fortnight that left most of us reaching for the Nurofen and a quilt by the start of week three; the kitchen saga that I have lived and breathed for the past month and the first major NUS National Demo in three years in so few words? I guess the answer is you cannot, so I won't try. Instead, I will touch on the NUS Demo - something that has far wider-reaching implications than what next is.

The National Demo on October 29 was a great day; thousands of students marching in London in an attempt to ensure that everyone has fair access to education. The York contingent numbered around 135 -



Local MP
**John
Grogan**

You may recall in the General Election campaign of 2001, John Prescott was hit with an egg by a protestor. In a copycat incident on York University campus a student decided to do the same to me. Unlike the Deputy Prime Minister Having been attacked with flour the previous day, I was rewarded by a local newspaper editorial saying that all I needed now was some milk to be a living Yorkshire pudding!

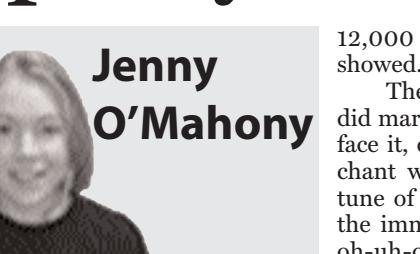
I tell the story because it is one of many occasions that I have been campaigning at York University and had cause to be grateful to the porters. The duty college porter helped clean me up that night, but on many others they have pointed me in the right direction or assisted in the staging of meetings. For many generations of students away from home for the first time, the porters provide a great sense of safety and security. Their reassuring presence I know is valued by many parents.

Given all this I am dismayed

that once again the University appears to be in confrontation with this vital section of its staff. Some years ago the campus authorities seemed intent on abolishing 24 hour portering all together, provoking the only student occupation I know of at York. This time porters are facing radical changes in shift patterns. For those used to working at night, a change to day shifts will destroy childcare arrangements. The University have offered talks with affected staff but the macho management style is having an effect on morale and absenteeism. I am advised that on one recent weekend night there was no night time cover at four college lodges.

For me 24 hour portering is a crucial part of The University's vision for the future. On Friday December the University court, of which I am a member, meets to hear annual reports from the Vice-Chancellor, YUSU's President and the President of the Graduate Association. I hope to hear all three acknowledge the importance of the porters as a crucial part of the collegiate system. In the meantime, I would ask those academics and provosts of colleges who have told me privately that they sympathise with the porters to at the very least make their views known to the campus personnel managers. Now is the time to stand up and be counted!

As with anything, there were a variety of motivations. A £5 trip to London is sweet music to the ear of any seasoned shopper, tourist or of course firebrand protester and, therefore, the 'Admission: Impossible' demonstration was the end goal of only some of our party, and for this I felt disillusioned, as should any self-respecting young adult who likes to fit into their assigned political demographic.



Jenny
O'Mahony

Why on earth would you drag yourself from your cocoon-like bed at 4:30 a.m. on a Sunday, of all days, only to stand around freezing in Goodricke car park for an hour, allow yourself to be herded onto a colour-coded bus (primary-school style) and find yourself in London, 5 agonisingly slow hours later, to march along the streets as anarchists scream in your ear?

As with anything, there were a variety of motivations. A £5 trip to London is sweet music to the ear of any seasoned shopper, tourist or of course firebrand protester and, therefore, the 'Admission: Impossible' demonstration was the end goal of only some of our party, and for this I felt disillusioned, as should any self-respecting young adult who likes to fit into their assigned political demographic.

statement and stand up for what comes down to a basic human right: education.

When Jack Straw was the Chairman of NUS, instead of a full-time hypocrite, the opposition to fees would have been savage. Student radicalism simply does not exist in the same way as it did in 1969, for example, when students briefly forced the closure of LSE after breaking through 7 security gates to protest against the appointment of the new Director, Walter Adams.

Tony Benn made his point quite forcefully once we had gathered in Trafalgar Square, urging that students "must do more" to make a real mark upon government policy. I believe that it is safe to say that we are mildly annoyed by tuition fees, but we'll acquiesce and pay back that £20,000 because, in the main, you must go to university to get a decent salary. Of course you will never see 9% of that salary, so when you're struggling to get your foot on the first rung of the already steep property ladder, you will know who to blame.

Now, that sounds like a very

Daily Mail concern, but what about

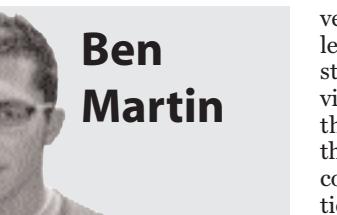
the 15,000 young people, largely from poorer backgrounds, who did not apply to university this year because of the massive costs associated with it? Despite the Government offering larger loans and some form of grant for applicants whose parents earn less than £37,500 per annum, young people from poorer backgrounds have been discouraged. Apparently, the top-up fees system was designed to make things better for students from less privileged backgrounds, but this has clearly been a grave misjudgement on the Government's part.

education

Perhaps with more support from the student body as a whole, higher education would be based on a desire to learn, rather than the ability to pay the fees.

The 'Admission: Impossible' protest may fail to achieve anything at all, but that is surely not the point. The point is that it should make people sit up and take notice, to see that they do not have to be held back in adult life, either by not attending university at all or by losing 9% of their salary as soon as it's decent enough to live on. Education should be free, and should not be denied to anyone.

Spying on students leads to disintegration of community



**Ben
Martin**

In a document leaked from the Department for Education, outlining plans for university lecturers to help in the fight against Islamic extremism, Jack Straw announces his distaste for the Muslim niqab and there are riots in Windsor over plans to build a mosque; October has indeed been a dark month for Britain's celebrated multiculturalism. The Muslim 'issue' now has such dominance over column inches and airtime that one could be forgiven for thinking that we're running headlong into the complete disintegration of communities across the country. If this hysteria does not cease, there is a real danger that we might be.

The idea that our beloved lecturers are in a position to relay sensitive information about their students to the Special Branch is so risible that one wonders whether any of the mandarins in the Department for Education have ever set foot in a university. My experience of lecturers to date has been in the far-from-intimate setting of the lecture halls in the Exhibition Centre where, short of sitting on the front row and wearing an 'I-love-Osama' t-shirt, there is

very little I can do to point anybody, let alone the lecturer, towards my stance on the Middle East. The most vital aspect of university education is the development of independent thought and, to this end, limited contact with the university authorities outside of lecture time is essential. How, therefore, this proposed 'Thought Police' is supposed to function is beyond me.

In essence, the notion that universities must attract special attention in combating extremism has some truth to it. As students, we are indeed more likely to be drawn to radical political ideas than older sections of society. The view, however, that our forays into different areas of the religious or political spectrum must be monitored by our elders who, of course, know better, is fundamentally patronising.

As the more immediate grievances, such as the lack of employment and suitable housing in Muslim areas, go completely unnoticed, the Muslim community will continue to be perceived by the public at large as innately at odds with the national agenda. The problems of Islamic extremism and community integration will only be solved by taking a comprehensive, systemic approach that starts with the re-thinking of policy at a governmental level. University lecturers are the last people the government should be talking to.

Bureaucracy over academic rigour?



**Tom
Smith**

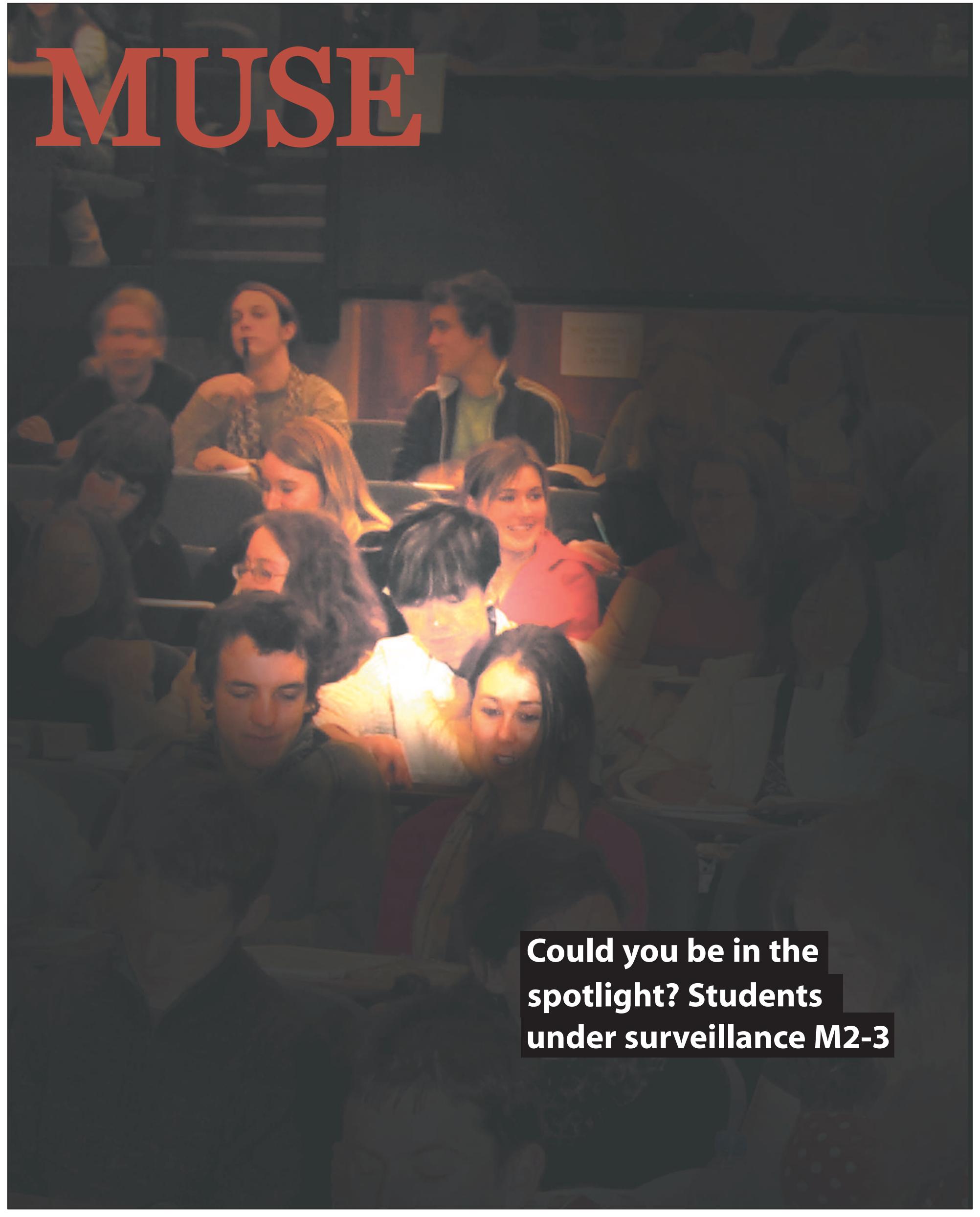
their degree programme shatter into ever-smaller pieces. The report comments that students receive "less teaching" and "fewer opportunities for feedback" in smaller modules; the other sides of the coin presumably being lack of time for independent study and student over-assessment. Later, the true intentions are betrayed as partly administrative, providing more information for student transcripts. Surely the scrapping of larger modules would partly wipe out the administrative gains made through standardising module weights and other measures?

The proposal to progress after 120 credits' worth of study at the end of the year, completing all assessment, would lead to increased student workload, with students unable to balance their degrees as they chose. Term 6, for example, would include the usual assessment in Weeks 1 and 2 of the work from Terms 4 and 5, but there would also be further assessment in Weeks 9 and 10 for the work completed in Term 6.

Some of the recommendations are inevitable and brought about through national and international forces to do with the practices of other universities. Such is the adoption of credit levels for all modules so that the overall award can be compared with those from other institutions. The individual departments generally have a system that serves this purpose anyway, but it is not made very open to students. This appears to be one of the least contentious of the recommendations made and is purely a matter of definition.

One of the main casualties of the review, however, would be the 30- and 40-credit modules; the loss of which would perhaps be felt most by those doing multi-disciplinary degrees, who would be likely to see

MUSE



Could you be in the
spotlight? Students
under surveillance M2-3

Student watch: the dangers

According to a leaked report, lecturers will be asked to watch out for signs of extremism in their students. **Jo Shelley** discovers what this possibility could mean for our campus

Tube stations, mosques and now universities: according to the *Guardian*, the campus is the government's new focus in its fight against 'extremism'. In a report published a week last Monday, the newspaper claimed to have obtained a document from the Department of Education and Skills warning of the potential spread of radical Islam amongst undergraduates. Worryingly for civil rights campaigners, the 18-page file also laid plans to ask academic staff to spy on suspicious-looking students. Suspicious, and - in a spectacularly un-P.C. twist - "Asian-looking" students, that is. After suggestions of snooping that had critics screaming 'McCarthyism', came a disastrous new low for relations between Downing Street and the Islamic community that any 'extremist' would have been happy to have orchestrated.

Time, yet again, for the government to shift gears and accelerate into damage control mode. The Communities Secretary, Ruth Kelly - an experienced handler of these potentially problematic political situations - predictably rubbed the *Guardian's* report. There was absolutely zero possibility of "picking on individual students or spying on them", she reassured listeners of BBC Radio 4's *World At One* programme, and the Labour government would not dream of discriminating against Muslims or Asians, or anybody else.

Amidst all these denials, however, was an admission from Kelly that the government did consider it its duty to "protect" university students. She defended what she tactfully described as the "sensible monitoring of campus activities", arguing that it was necessary in the ongoing - and ever expanding - War on Terror.

Her words had the National Union of Students fuming. In a statement, President Gemma Tumelty said the Union was "deeply concerned" that the proposals could border on "contempt" for students' "basic civil liberties".

Professor Anthony Glees, Director for the Brunel Centre for Intelligence and Security Studies, is one of a number of academics - and Kelly supporters - who disagrees. An advocate of an aggressive approach to the War on Terror, who also supports imprisonment without trial, he believes that university campuses are liable to infiltration by Islamist groups. Writing in his online blog, he claims that "campuses offer a secure space for extremist activity" because of the value that universities traditionally place on freedom

of speech. Last year, he conducted research that depicted extremists as keen recruiters to their causes on campuses. In 'When Students Turn to Terror: Terrorist and Extremist Activity on British Campuses', he said that extremist organisations, such as the BNP and various Islamist groups, including Hizb ut Tahrir, had been detected in more than thirty higher education institutions. Many of those institutions were high-profile, such as London School of Economics and the University of Manchester. The BNP was suggested to be at work in York and an Islamist group in nearby Leeds.

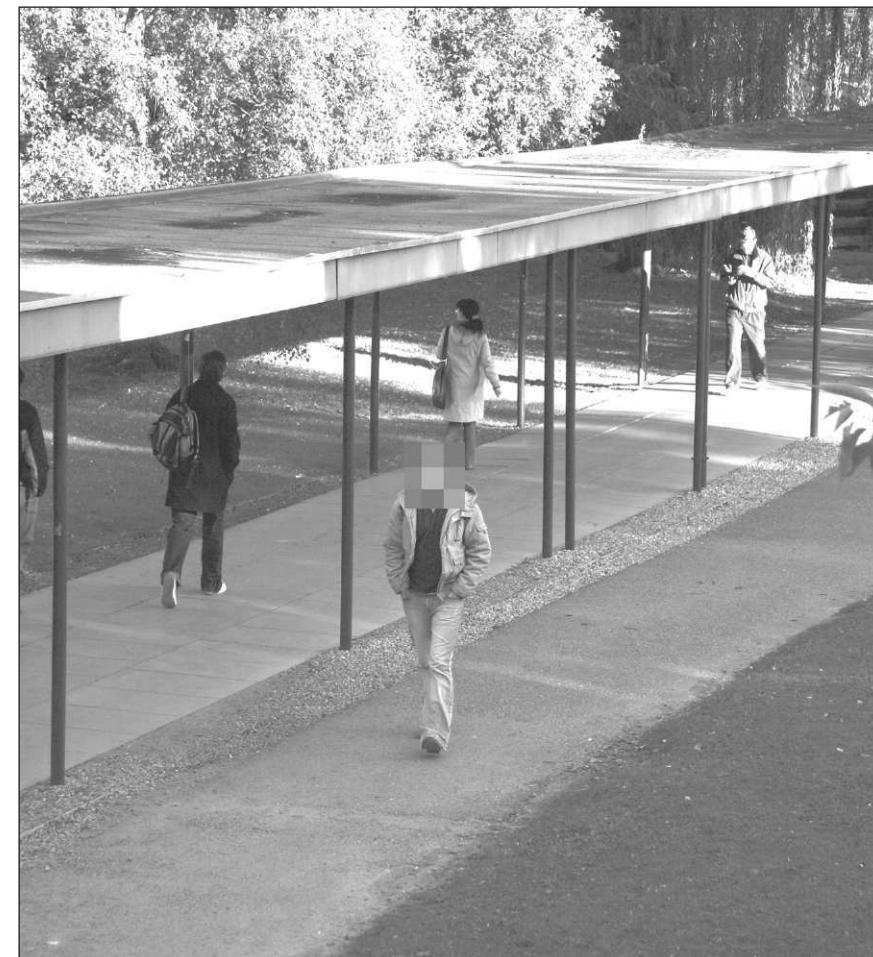
The case made by politicians like Kelly and academics like Glees forces us back onto an age-old but ever more relevant debate: how far can the government justify an intrusion into people's private lives in the name of public protection? There are two striking

'Talent-spotting terrorists arriving in York would survey the overwhelmingly white, smugly middle-class student population and head down the road to Bradford instead'

aspects to these proposals, however, which help explain the unanimous fury that the report has provoked from academic, student and religious bodies. Firstly, the suggestion that universities, an arena of free speech and supposedly healthy, intellectual debate, may be subject to supervision by the state. And secondly, the idea that one group, Muslims, should be singled out as a danger - despite all the reassurances from British Muslims to the contrary.

Both of these prospects have set alarm bells ringing amongst some of York's Muslim students. "It is freakishly reminiscent of Hitler's time when you'd have kids sitting in school spying on Jewish neighbours and reporting them to their teachers," says Sara Sayeed, a non-practising Muslim in her second year of a degree in English Literature. "It just doesn't breed a good atmosphere at university, which is often the first real opportunity that people have to find their own voice."

Sitting around a table in Vanbrugh Dining Hall at lunchtime, members of the University's Islamic Society committee, past and present, agree. Heads nod as Ogtay Huseyni, the current President, says that: "One of the great



things about British society is that we have free speech." The worry is, as they go onto explain, that in the future, Muslim students may feel unable to openly discuss the sensitive issues that some other people find 'uncomfortable'. Their main concern about this form of self-censorship is that the implications of stifling discussion and debate could be counterproductive, and even lead to the extremism that the government fears.

"We need to be able to debate things," says Ogtay. "If people can't express themselves through free speech at university, they are going to turn to other avenues. If they can't air their own views, they're going to turn to more extreme views. We at ISOC encourage discussion, even amongst ourselves. It's an important part of our society."

Indeed, the Islamic Society at York considers itself "a forum for debate". Its members include Muslims and non-Muslims, practising and non-practising, moderates and fundamentalists. They invite speakers to the University, celebrate religious calendar events together and hold weekly meetings exploring the religion and the Quran, which anyone at the University can attend. Its current society membership has decided not to use itself as a tool for outsiders to use; e-mails considered to be attempting to stir up opinion amongst young Muslims, for example, are deleted rather than passed on to its members.

With this self-moderation already in operation within the society, the immediate implications of the government's proposals for ISOC will, in all probability, be limited. The chances of 'extremism' reaching York in the first

place are minimal. Our concrete campus seems to be a barren, rather than a "fertile recruiting ground" for extremists. Any talent-spotting terrorists arriving in the city would survey the overwhelmingly white, smugly middle-class student population and likely head down the road to Bradford or Leeds instead.

Furthermore, the proposals themselves seem unworkable, in York at least. The response from the academics who were approached for this article was unequivocal: they would not take up this government-issued directive if it meant jeopardising the trust that they have built up with their students. Dr. Paul Chirico, a lecturer in the York English Department, says: "I expect this kind of racial profiling would be pretty universally unacceptable. It's obviously not the job of lecturers to spy, or to take guesses at students' non-academic ideas or intentions, or to spend teaching time trying to investigate their political opinions."

Fellow English tutor and lecturer, Dr. Helen Smith, agrees with her colleague: "I suppose if I did stumble across some terrible plot - whether constructed by Muslim students or anyone else -- I would feel the need, after consultation, to contact the appropriate authorities, but that's a long way from being asked to 'check up' on students who are under suspicion only because of their surname or the colour of their skin." She adds: "I feel strongly that universities should offer support and understanding to those who may become victims of racism and the current culture of fear, rather than add to the dangers of oppression and misinformation."

It's not likely, therefore, that our

of the war on extremism



small campus will turn into a haven of spying and intrigue. For its part, the University says that it is "unaware of any communication from the Government to members of the University on this issue" and there has been no "suggestion in the past about monitoring Asian or Islamic students."

In the current political climate, however, members of the Islamic society committee say that government-authorised spying on British Muslims is not, in their opinion, unimaginable. "I believe that this leaked report is probably true," says Ogtay Huseyni, President of ISOC. "It's the gradual next step in the 'War on Terror' on the domestic front. I am surprised at it happening in Britain, but then politicians just do whatever they want now, anyway - they don't care what Muslims think. They reckon that they can do anything and justify it by saying, 'we need to protect Britain'."

In a worrying statement, he adds, "For me personally, Tony Blair, Jack Straw and Ruth Kelly - they are inherently against Muslims, as seen in the last couple of weeks."

Ogtay's view is one being rehearsed over and over again in the media by those on the frontline of Britain's increasingly angry Islamic community. Only the day before the Guardian's report was published, the Muslim Council of Great Britain, responding to what it considered an inflammatory speech delivered by Ruth Kelly in Parliament, said that while the Communities and Local Government Department she headed claimed to be "promoting community cohesion," it appeared to have subscribed to a "blinkered anti-Muslim vision."

Accurate or "inaccurate," as Ruth

Kelly described the Guardian report, it has been taken by many followers of the Islamic faith as evidence of the government's antagonism towards their members and religion. That even a reported leak of a draft document can really upset things is evidence of the extreme sensitivity of the relationship between the Muslim community and the government.

Professor Haleh Afshar is a prominent Muslim academic at the University who has sat on various committees set up by the government to look into race and related issues. She says that the government must be careful, in its fight against 'extremism', not to demonise the Muslim community. When I made an initial telephone call to Professor Afshar about this article, she dismissed the proposals as "a load of rubbish". When we meet the next day, she is more thoughtful.

"It's would be very problematic to identify one particular group, be they Catholics, Communists or, in this case, Muslims, and then decide to supervise their activities but not other people's," she says. "It just feeds the fact that they have now categorised Muslims as 'the enemy within'. It's like saying, 'They are the baddies and we are keeping an eye on them.' It's very reminiscent of the Americans persecuting the Communists and there's a danger that Muslims will see themselves as under siege."

The picture Professor Afshar paints is one of a government not really trying understand the situation and being too ready to 'think in snapshots', instead. "My problem is that the government's approach here is not participatory. The government is into snapshots, and snapshots don't tell you any-

thing. They're superficial and more trouble than they're worth.

"They're targeting universities only because it's more manageable. They can't get into the mosques, they've tried. The universities seem much more permeable - anybody is allowed in, anybody is allowed out."

If the government wants a greater understanding of the Islamic faith and Muslim students, they should join Islamic societies on campus, says Professor Afshar. "Spying isn't good. I don't think you can just get names and say, 'This is a baddie, and this is a goodie.' If they're interested in Islamic societies or want to monitor activity, they should join the societies. They should come in, and they should find out what's going on. They would be very welcome. Muslims have nothing to hide - put this in big letters! And if it's a learning process then I don't see any reason why anybody would not welcome it. If measures are intrusive, if it's

Students have responded angrily to suggestions that they could be spied on by academic staff.
Photos: Ally Carmichael

about finding 'the enemy', then of course it's a problem. No society wants someone who's spying on them. Every society welcomes people who want to participate."

Participation, according to Professor Afshar, is the only way to avoid taking a simplified snapshot of British Muslims. "It would be jolly good for them to come and see that these Muslims are not the 'enemies within'. They do have conversations about controversial issues, and some are for and some are against in the debate, but there is a dialogue. If you actually go to the Islamic societies then you will discover a huge diversity of opinion, that Muslims are not monolithic with one view about everything. The dialogues within universities are very vibrant between Muslims when they discuss their different interpretations of their religion. It would be very instructive. The government might learn something. Come on in!"

Which other societies could be targeted?

Scott Franklin, Christian

"If these ideas come into force, it won't affect my behaviour at all. When you look at countries around the world where, every day, Christians are persecuted and murdered for their beliefs, it really puts into perspective how lucky we are to live in a democracy. There's little that the government could do that personally would make me feel less comfortable about talking about things that I believe to be true. So long as we all approach sensitive topics with maturity and love then, in my experience, we can all have discussions without a problem."

Michelle Wheeler, Socialist

"It is shocking that such measures can be proposed. Everyone has the right to think independently, even if their views are not universally acceptable to the overwhelmingly white and middle-class based political norm.

"If socialists were to be monitored, I would feel victimised by an oppressive and Orwellian government. I see these proposals as severely misguided and threatening to democracy; my opinion of the government has only been further battered after these measures came to light."

Michael Rutherford, Tory

"We at the Conservative Association would be very worried if professors were spying on us. We might feel unable to express our opinions and under pressure to conform to mainstream thought. I am completely against these proposals - they would compromise civil liberties and, in a liberal democratic system, anything that could compromise free speech must be avoided. Sadly, this Labour government has not stood up for liberty. As Britons, we must defend free speech - otherwise, what have we spent decades fighting for?"

an amazing time: "playing with Duran Duran was like a birthday party every single day in my brain. It was the most fun you could possibly imagine. I still had rent due at home but here I was in the NEC arena, it was pretty far out!"

Still fairly unknown during their tour with Duran Duran, lots of publicity came from playing every night with such a well-followed band. "A lot of the Duran Duran crowd went to every single show because they are fanatical fans, [but by the end of the tour] people were going crazy for us and that really did help out a lot" said Johnny. The hype spread infectiously towards the end of 2005 and with that came airtime on several UK radio stations including plays of their hit single 'No Tomorrow' on Scottish radio station Fife FM and Jo Whiley's weekday morning show on Radio One.

At this point it became obvious Orson were going to make it big. Critics purred over their brand of catchy soft rock which was a sure hit with teenagers and adults alike. In February of this year, only four months since they first ventured into Britain, their single 'No Tomorrow' went to number one in its second week of release amidst a plethora of media attention, breaking the iTunes record for the most single downloads in a week. As we discuss this point of their journey Johnny seems visibly awoken from his slumber, as if he is actually re-living the moment when Orson realised they had fulfilled their dreams; they were stars and, amongst an ever-crowded indie scene, they had emerged among the brightest talents and biggest names of the year.

A springtime release followed for their debut album *Bright Idea*, as did a high-profile UK tour and the opportunity to support Robbie Williams over the summer months, after the Ordinary Boys pulled out of the opening night. Despite being given the chance to tour European cities such as Vienna, Stockholm and Berlin it seemed that the band were truly under whelmed by the experience of being a support for the Robbie Williams circus: "Duran Duran are one thing because they are rock n' roll legends. They were the coolest... great great guys, but Robbie doesn't have the same status in America as the rest of the world". However Johnny doesn't seem too concerned about that: "It's all a blur, I can't believe I've played in front of more than a million people!"

Orson slipped into the public consciousness rapidly, but such instantaneous fame wasn't without its problems as follow-ups to their hit 'No Tomorrow' and their album *Bright Idea* failed to live up to expectations. Popular music review site Drowned In Sound described their album as "leaving a disgusting trail of musical filth", but this didn't prevent it hitting number one in the album charts following its May release. When asked about critical reviews of their music, Johnny shrugged dismissively, smirking slightly, "I don't really read the reviews so I don't hear that kind of stuff too much". Somehow, his statement didn't really ring true; he seemed a little despondent at being accused of lacking soul.

Perhaps a lack of soul is evident, but

there is no denying that Orson's music is produced with the confidence of a band who are much more experienced than might be imagined. Their style is varied; lead singer Jason Pebworth writes songs on the piano but has never learnt to play the guitar, and admits to an obsession with Jeff Buckley and Radiohead. Other influences come from the Flaming Lips and Led Zeppelin. Each member describes their music differently; "two-guitar power pop"; "rock and roll girls can dance to it"; "funky soul band" and "poppy punk band". Johnny sums up this lack of cohesion by responding "good question man". A worrying sign of a band who don't know what they stand for?

It's clear that instead of aiming for Dylan-esque lyrics Orson are much more comfortable sticking with their image of a cheesy dance-rock band. Much of this artificial coolness seems to come from the band's upbringing in Hollywood where - as their song No Tomorrow says - "funny hats" and "shiny pants" are unequivocally good things to be associated with.

However, Johnny was keen to stress that the difference between the East Coast and other parts of America may not be as great as people generally perceive. "Growing up in Los Angeles? It's like growing up anywhere else. I guess it's a lower pace than London but I'm not a real big city fan, it's so spread out, it's just one giant suburb. We were at a party just before we moved to London in January with Paris Hilton and Mike Tyson. Kevin knows some of those cats



"We were at a party with Paris Hilton and Mike Tyson, but I don't really fraternise with those types too much"

but I don't really fraternize with Hollywood types too much, it's not my thing."

As for the future, Orson have already moved back into the studio to begin recording their second album, and they have plans to crack the ever-elusive American market once their current UK tour ends with the release of their debut album in November. Johnny ends the interview by describing their ride to fame as a "fantastic experience" but admits "we're really just an indie band that got lucky".

Mad musical hatters: who's into headgear?



Jay Kay



Slash



Bizarre

Famously never removed his massive hat between 1994 and 1999, Jay Kay fronted one of the most bland and risible pseudo-dance/funk bands of the last millennium, Jamiroquai.

The Stoke-on-Trent born Velvet Revolver guitarist wears an outsize top hat and loves snakes. You can, if you wish, buy a Slash action figure (which comes with its own tiny topper).

The D12 rapper is never seen without his shower cap, but is just as renowned for lyrics such as: "I f*** two twins, with a midget on top. A sick mind, raping an old lady."

The scientific briefing with Luke Boulter

Is there life on Mars?



been realised in the immediate vicinity of Earth.

Once you have PAHs scattered all over the place, all you really need is a star to give light and heat and coax molecules to rearrange, combine and break down. There has often been some question about stars and their actual importance in the formation of life. After all, a lot of stars are binary (i.e. two stars per solar system), they can be too hot, too cold, and the way they were thought to form was generally seen as not conducive to the formation of planets. Stellar nurseries are where stars form; massive gas giants about three light years across churn out clusters of stars, often in sibling pairs. However, research submitted earlier this year to the Astrophysical Journal suggests that red dwarfs, which are suns with a lower energy, are born singularly, meaning there is a greater chance that an extra planetary system, such as our solar system, could occur, without the worry of a jealous sister star ripping us to shreds.

Firstly I must make it clear that I do believe that there is some form of life other than ours; it is far more implausible that our planet alone is occupied than the converse. However I do have concerns as to whether the massively evolved brains and feeble bodies stereotypical of extraterrestrials are credible. Having said this, we may soon find those elusive beings. In our search for life, and in an attempt to isolate the beginnings of the universe, new radio telescopes are being commissioned. These shiny new receptacles are designed to pick up radio waves emitted by neutral hydrogen molecules in the early, primordial universe. In times past (billions of years ago in fact) the wavelength of these signals was 21cm, but as a result of universe expansion this wavelength has stretched to several meters, corresponding to a frequency of a few thousand megahertz. It is a lucky coincidence then that the signals constantly being pumped out by us in the form of TV signals, radio and radar fall in a similar range, meaning if an alien culture is listening out for the local weather or watching alien Family Guy then we are increasingly likely to find them. Telescopes such as these should also be able to discern the tilt and revolution of a planet, as well as speculate whether there is surface water present, just in case there aren't any inhabitants.

One of the more reassuring points made recently is that alien life (no matter how basic) can exist throughout the universe; Life's little building blocks seem to lurk even in the darkest corners. Polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), which are readily abundant in space, seem to have more in common with Earthly molecules than originally thought. In late October 2005, Douglas Hudgins and colleagues at the NASA-run Ames Research Centre in California showed that many of these compounds contain nitrogen, one of the principle components in proteins and DNA, both necessary for the perpetuation of life, but also required in chloroplasts and haemoglobin, both of which are indicative of higher life - so the potential is there, even if it hasn't

Having said this I realise I haven't really discussed the likelihood of finding ET on a planet near Earth. That could be because we have been looking in totally the wrong place; for years we have been looking at stars, picking out the wobbling silhouette of a terrestrial planet and mapping it down just in case. Ultimately though the future of alien life may not be on these shadows at all, they could be on our moon. Ian Crawford, a researcher from Birkbeck College, London told SETI researchers earlier this year that if in the next 20-30 years we land on the moon again, we should sift through a portion of its surface looking for elusive alien artefacts. It is not actually as ridiculous as it seems; both Voyager 1 and 2 carry gold plaques containing information as pictures and sounds, which are meant to give any alien civilisation an accurate representation of what we, the human race, is about. In 2004 it was suggested in Nature that this transient "message in a bottle" approach may be the best way of telling other intelligent races what we as humans are about, but we are talking interstellar distances, so if you were waiting for a reply, you may be holding out for a while. Far-fetched, I appreciate, and scientists seem to back this up. After all, some 382Kg of lunar material was brought back to earth by astronauts, and they've been through it and found nothing of interest, in fact rocks from Earth and Mars show more evidence of impact than that of our majestic satellite.

So the jury is still out on whether we are likely to find extra terrestrial life soon: we can plough the moon for clues; look at distant planets and dream; attempt to listen in on ET's evening news, or we can down a bottle of Sprite, stick a note in and send it into space... failing that I can always find a film with Jodie Foster and no aliens!

An unavoidable fiscal

Top up fees are on their way, but Sara Sayeed examines whether there are any possibilities left for those who still want to rebel

It has been ten years since Tony Blair first coined the mantra, "Education, Education, Education" and as with all things outmoded, it could probably do with a little re-working; a cover version, perhaps, to revive it in contemporary popular culture. Copyright issues aside, "Money, Money, Money" might suffice, given the current fiscal aura which ominously surrounds any mention of Higher Education. Forget bird flu, fear-anxiety is the new disease threatening to infiltrate every recess on campus and luckily for government proponents of top-up fees, it's currently incurable. Not to say that the most pro-active of the nation's student haven't had a valiant stab at it - on Sunday 29th October, thousands of students headed for London to join a national demonstration in an attempt to combat the potential removal of the current £3,000 fee cap.

However, despite the successful turnout, it seems the vast majority of students are still steeped in apathy and cynicism. The University boasts a 9,000 strong student population, yet only a meagre 150 were estimated to have attended the London protest. Matt Johnson, a 2006 graduate, gloomily voices the general disillusionment with the current situation: "It can never get better though can it? It's been going on for so long now and nothing's really changed. It's just gone the other way and personally I just see things getting worse".

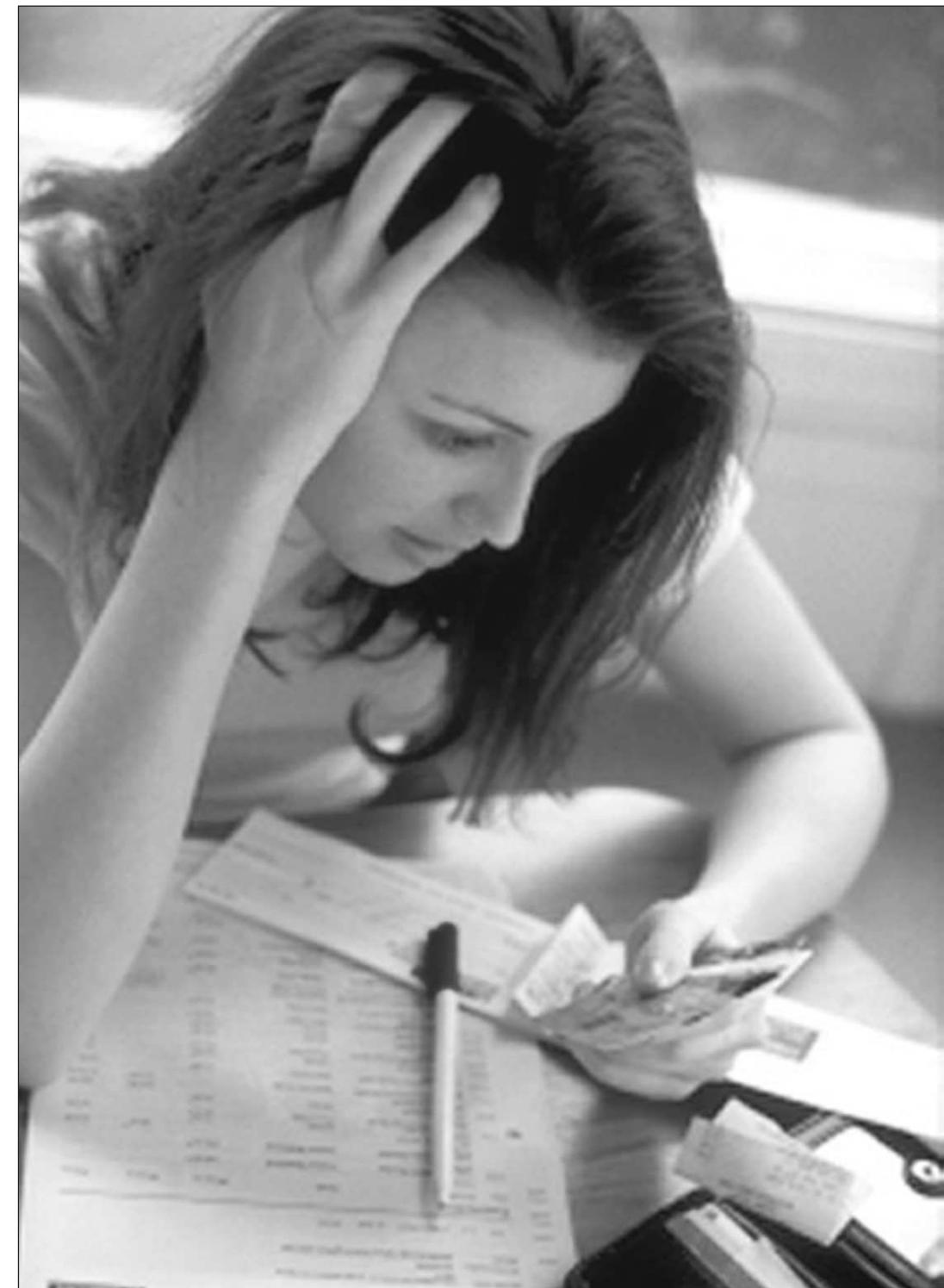
"The best days of your life"? University seems to have left graduates more soured than inspired as memories of their sweetly hedonistic days dissipate into financial anxiety. A few of you may have seen that eerily relatable Capital One advert - for the unenlightened, it's the one with the woodpecker incessantly jabbing the head of the poor guy who's in debt, while his smugly suited and booted friend waxes lyrical about the joys of the Capital One programme. Generally I find debt adverts to be the most vacuous, mindless, irritating interruptions to my much needed T.V. time (especially the Churchill advert - the only use that giddily enthusiastic dog could possibly serve is shooting practice). Nevertheless, the woodpecker makes a good point. After university, there doesn't seem to be much opportunity

for nostalgia; financial worries overwrite the drunken Toffs' and Ziggy's memories and you start to wonder whether that £6 pizza was really all that necessary.

Top-up fees are apparently going to make like Spiderman and save the day. With the new system, there are no upfront payments and the Student Loans Company foots the tuition fee bill until you have graduated and are comfortably earning at least £15,000 per year. 9% of your earnings over £15,000 will be siphoned off to pay back the fee-loan; this amounts to a feasible £270/year for £18K salaries. Sarah Foster, a fresher of the new top-up fee generation, surprisingly said: "Some of my friends actually really like the idea of top up fees, because it means that they can wait and pay when they actually have money, so they feel more self sufficient".

Many are so convinced by the future success of the new system that they have dubbed the protest students as misinformed and naive. Gabriel Rozenburg, for instance, reported on the October demonstration and entitled her piece 'March of the Student Dinosaurs'. Rozenburg compares the UK's situation with the leading universities of our ever-friendly neighbours, the United States, who charge students there at least the equivalent £10,000 per year: "It is no coincidence that all this year's academic Nobel Prizes were won by Americans". So it seems increased fees will make us smarter. Brilliant!

Sadly all it currently seems to be achieving is churning out a bunch of paranoid and financially fixated students. Monetary concerns have become an endemic part of University life. Apprehended by fiscal anxieties instead of their intellectual interests, students today are unavoidably tangled in a performance-obsessed, career-fixated web. Degree choice is determined by the course which will ultimately best justify the cost of education. Concerns over remuneration precede the actual investment and consequently the ghost of financial future will be a constant companion for students. Forget expanding your mind, university is now about enhancing your future career prospects. A recent *Guardian* article astutely summarised the issue: "If you're paying tens of thousands of



Financial worries can affect students' studies

pounds for something, you'd want more than an in-depth knowledge of the poems of Emily Brontë to show for it".

Higher Education is the new consumer market. Ever-expanding and increasingly competitive, it's starting to seem more ruthless than Wall Street on a particularly testosterone-infused day. Universities have always vied with each other for the best minds, but recently the stakes have changed and institutions now manipulate their prospective students on a fiscal level. For example, Leeds Metropolitan University has made the financially-savvy choice of charging a considerably lower fee of £2,000 and consequently have seen an 8.3% increase in applications. This financial rivalry will only be amplified if and when the fee cap is lifted.

Unfortunately, it seems that York will be one to watch - YUSU welfare

officer, Amy Foxton, believes that "York will definitely amplify their fees" once the cap has been lifted. The University's decision to charge the maximum amount of £3,000 and the looming Heslington East prospect (it could need a little funding) is bleakly indicative of its future decisions. Not forgetting that unlike many other Universities, York has not experienced a decrease in applications, but instead boasts an overwhelming ten applications per place. Consequently, it would be economically logical for them to exploit the demand and charge more for the goods.

However, the goods don't really seem to have that wow-factor. Last term saw an uproar over the potential closure of campus bars due to their failure to make large enough profits. This term, Derwent's kitchens in all their Baby Belling glory are set to disappear

nightmare



Photo: Georgi Mabee

"All increased fees seem to be achieving is churning out a bunch of paranoid and financially fixated students"

into the ether and I don't think I've ever set foot in the library without hearing frustrated whispers of "where the hell are all the books?" (just to clarify, this is not uttered by post-Ziggys still-drunks in last night's clothes, but actually the ones who look a tad more academically focused and have pencil cases).

Just to add some icing to the cake, last March the University's academic staff initiated a strike over insufficient pay. Their ensuing boycott of assessments and examinations threatened to jeopardize the degrees of many graduating students. (An interesting note - what do seem to have enjoyed a dramatic improvement are the Vice-Chancellors' salaries, which have increased by 25% over the last three years. The average V.C. banks a comfortable £154,000 per year and thirty-three Vice-Chancellors now earn more than the Prime Minister.) Ultimately, by the end of last term, not only were students addled with worry over their looming debts, but there was a viable chance that all their hard work and expenses wouldn't even guarantee them a degree.

Unfortunately, regardless of NUS Extra's current effusions, students aren't actually that spoiled for choice in career pathways, as fresher Sarah

points out: "I had friends who were angry about the fees but nobody went as far as to not apply, what are you going to do? There's no choice". Even if there is a choice, it's a meagre one: "leave 'em or join 'em". About 13,000 have chosen the former - there was a 3.5% decrease in applications to university this year, but as you can see, the majority have made like sheep and done the latter. But as Sarah points out, you can't really blame them: "At the end of the day a degree is still a degree and necessary for when you need to get a job".

Worryingly, in graduate Matt's case, this turns out not to be the case. Matt has achieved a feat which many would only attempt with some trepidation: two degrees - an undergraduate BS in Electronics and an MA in Music technology. According to Education officials, with two degrees from a respected University, job offers should be practically suffocating him - however, Matt says he's "pretty much on the dole".

So far, prospects seem to be looking quite bleak. Your best bet could be to enrol on an Economics course, learn the tricks of the trade and then try and exploit the system from within - realistically speaking, that sounds a little too 007 for most and there's probably not a martini or a fawning bikini-clad blonde at the end of the road. In a Utopian world, education would be "free-for-all" and Ben & Jerry's would rain down from the heavens in fat-free glory. Unfortunately, even the most buoyantly optimistic would have trouble envisaging either being realised in the near future.

However, what the recent demonstration shows is that students have the ability to try and change the situations - to create the choice for themselves. Apathy and pessimism are inevitable, but hardly helpful. The 'Education not for Sale' anti-top up fees petition gathered 800 signatures, but the attendance for the 2.45pm handover to the Vice Chancellor was a little scanty in comparison. Universities have cast students as the new consumers, so why not demand your money's worth? After all, if we're going to become the 'future creative minds of tomorrow,' asking for just three years of enthusiastic work and a little indulgent play, minus the deranged woodpecker, is hardly overly demanding. Wouldn't you agree?

Academic & Welfare Officer Amy Foxton

The importance of looking after your sexual health



There are some things people are reluctant to discuss or talk about. Chlamydia and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs) probably come fairly high up on the list. And yes, campaigning on sexual health and ordering thousands of condoms is probably the part of my job description I omit when talking to my grandparents.

Your sexual health, however, is vitally important. HIV and AIDS may have faded from the media's radar, but they certainly haven't disappeared. Every day, 20 people in the UK are diagnosed as being HIV positive. There's also been a shift in the groups diagnosed with HIV; since 2003 it has been the practice of heterosexual sex, rather than homosexual sex, that has been responsible for the majority of new HIV diagnoses in this country. Complacency about the risks of HIV and other STIs is perhaps to blame for the consistently rising number of new cases that are being diagnosed. In 2004 there were 7,275 new reported cases of HIV in the UK, which was nearly double the number reported for 2000, at 3,851.

Many people mistakenly believe that they will escape STIs; for many it takes the shock of finding out that someone they know has contracted an STI for them to change their habits and always use a condom. There's no excuse not to, free condoms are readily available (from me, from the Student Centre reception in Goodricke, from College Welfare reps or from Nightline) and there should be no need to feel embarrassed about asking for them - they can also be sent via internal mail if you request them by email, should you feel embarrassed about requesting them in person.

Over 30,000 young people were surveyed during the summer as part of MTV and Radio One's Bare All Survey. It revealed that 38% of people don't always use a condom with a new partner. The reasons given for this were most commonly either because the girl was on the pill (which of course provides no protection against STIs), or because they were drunk. If you are going out (drinking or otherwise) carry a condom with you; it doesn't mean you have to have sex but it saves you having to make a potentially upsetting trip to the GUM clinic.

Sexual health in the UK is in crisis; in the last 10 years diagnosis rates of syphilis have increased by 1497% and Chlamydia rates have increased 222%. We have the worst overall sexual health in Europe. Unfortunately, the stigma of sexual health combined with poor sex edu-

cation - it still isn't compulsory in UK schools - will only intensify the problem. Contracting an STI doesn't mean you're promiscuous, it simply means you have had unprotected sex. Naturally, the more sexual partners you have had, the more likely you are to have been exposed to an infection. However, you only need to have had unprotected sex with one person who happens to have the infection in order to catch something. There is no way to tell if someone has an STI just by the way he or she looks or acts. After all, you're not just having sex with that person but with everyone they've ever had sex with, and everyone they've ever had sex with, and so on.

Here's the promotional aspect of this article: Chlamydia testing will be taking place on Wednesday and Thursday of Week 5 between 12pm and 2pm in the toilets near Vanbrugh Stalls. All you need to do is to be tested for the infection is collect a pack, fill your details in on a form and pee in a pot. You will then be contacted to give you the results of your test by phone or in the post; if the test comes back positive, you will then be given free antibiotics to cure the infection.

Why do YUSU organise and promote Chlamydia testing? Firstly, Chlamydia is by far the most common sexually transmitted disease. One in ten students has Chlamydia. It's really important to get tested even if you don't have any obvious symptoms: 70% of women with Chlamydia and 50% of men with it experience no symptoms. Like all sexually transmitted diseases, Chlamydia can be transmitted by oral, anal and vaginal sex. Untreated, it can cause infertility along with all sorts of other unpleasant side effects.

All you need to do is to take ten minutes on Wednesday or Thursday to get tested; it's free, painless and completely confidential. Bring along your housemates, your partner and your friends. A common misconception with Chlamydia is that it is often seen as a problem only affecting women, but this is untrue and it's just as important for men to get tested.

Chlamydia is the most common cause of inflammation in the testicles and sperm-conducting tubes in men under 35, so it's important to get it diagnosed and treated as soon as possible.

If you notice anything unusual about your sexual health, get it checked by your doctor. 90% of all STIs are treatable if they are spotted and dealt with early enough. You can get tested for all STIs, including HIV, at the GUM Clinic in town, ring 01904 725417 for an appointment.

Where to find help if you're struggling financially

York University Student Financial Support Unit

This service offers various funds and bursaries to help out any York students who are in financial difficulty. For information or advice, email them at student-financial-support@york.ac.uk, call (01904) (43)4043 or visit them between 10am and 4pm in the Sally Baldwin Building, block B.

Unidaid.org.uk

A charity designed to help students deal with financial barriers to entering and completing higher education. As well as helping students access financial advice, and featuring a student budget calculator, it provides free or supported accommodation to students at risk of dropping out of university due to money problems.

NUSonline.co.uk/info/money

Provides information on the new student finance system and compares different credit cards, bank accounts and insurance in terms of their benefits for students.

National Debt Line 0808 808 4000

Will discuss your debt problems and ways to resolve them.

Willow Restaurant

37a Coney Street, York Y01 9QL - Tel: 01904 654728

EAT AS MUCH AS YOU LIKE FONDUE MENU

terms and conditions apply

Fondue comes with **noodles, sauce** and all of the following **seafood, meat** and **vegetables**.

Seafood

King prawn, mussels, baby squid, king prawn wun tun, & crab flavoured sticks.



Meat

Beef, pork, lamb, & chicken.

Vegetables

Shredded yam, chinese mushroom, seasonable veg, fresh beancurd, & wind dried beancurd.

Please choose 2 stocks:-

Szechuan chilli (**very hot**)

Lau Gan Ma chilli (**medium hot**)

Satay (**mildly hot**)

Seafood

Spare rib & mooli



Minimum of 2 people

£12.95 per person

2-5 people, one hot pot

6 people or more, two hot pots

EAT AS MUCH AS YOU LIKE HOT CANTONESE BUFFET

served from 12pm until 10pm

EVERY DAY

Prices:

£5.49 per person



£7.49 per person

£9.49 per person (Saturday Only)

Children 11 years old and under eat for **HALF PRICE**



OPENING HOURS

Sunday to Thursday 12pm - 12am

Friday to Saturday 12pm - 2am
(kitchen closes 1am)

Weekend Disco until 2am



A LA CARTE MENU available during our opening hours

TAKEAWAY BUFFET

Lunchtime 12pm to 6pm

Large £3.00

Small £2.50



Dinner 6pm to 10pm

Large £4.50

Small £3.00



Nan Flory



The perils of being too damn popular

So, parties. Students love them, can't get enough of them. Parties bring us together, giving a population of 10,000 students a common interest. Parties are where we leave our academic loyalties at the door and humanities, arts and sciences mix it up. Parties let us dress up, drink, dance and hopefully make a good impression.

The first few weeks back at uni after the summer holidays are always full of parties. Everyone who came of age in the break has to celebrate it, then there are housewarming parties for everyone who has moved house, welcome back parties for students returning from foreign exchanges, end of summer parties, beginning of autumn parties, Halloween parties, bonfire night parties and completion of essays/exams parties. On top of all these calendar specific events there is the constant flow of dinner parties, tea parties and trips to the pub that turn into parties.

Of course the other type of party which becomes an inevitable feature of the first few weeks back is the non-attended party. The incredible volume of plastic cups and cheap wine or cordoned-off areas of bars that are up for grabs make it near impossible to maintain a good attendance record. University is the opposite of those primary school days when the only parties available were your classmates' birthdays.

Say there were 30 kids in your class; probably only about 18 of them will have been socially adept enough to throw a party at all, and possibly only 15 of these had the means to provide a high calibre goody bag that would ensure attendance. Give or take a couple of kids who were particularly socially precocious, that was only about 2 weeks worth of parties a year, and there were no guarantees you would be getting invited to all of them. If only 4% of your year involved parties, you did not fanny about, even if it was awkward and you had to cancel Brownies, you made time to celebrate. A seven-year-old me took Winnie the Pooh-party invitation notelets a whole

lot more seriously than a 20-year-old me takes a Facebook event invitation.

Seven-year-old me, licking my wounds at home on a Saturday afternoon (that's another thing, remember when parties weren't at night?), because Amy Jones wouldn't invite me to her eighth birthday - she thought I copied her book report - couldn't have imagined staying home on a Saturday night out of sheer party exhaustion. Staying up all night drinking and, horror of horrors, smoking, can make the daytime a singularly unpleasant experience, which, in the third year of an extremely debt inducing degree, is not something I'm sure I have time for. Cutting down on parties is hard to do, however. Running around the Willow with a fake moustache, or getting drunk to the point where you start inventing fake love affairs, is more enticing than staying in with a fat book and a good conscience.

I reached the point of no return, however, the day I didn't get dressed. I woke up on Friday morning, still wearing my dress from the night before, cuddling my laptop on which *Spaceballs* had been playing on repeat all night long. I had decided to watch it when I got in at 3am in the morning to prove to myself that I was perfectly sober and sensible (surely my choice of film is the first clue in exposing this as complete bollocks), and passed out before the opening shot. It hadn't disturbed me at all but the poor girl who has the pleasure of using my ceiling as



Providing old-fashioned entertainment would ensure high attendance at your University party

her floor, couldn't sleep for sci fi. As the day progressed, I just didn't get changed and that evening, I found myself drinking in the same pub I'd been in the night before, in the same clothes I'd been wearing the night before. The icing on the cake came in the fact that my fake moustache wasn't drawn on fresh, the one from the night before just needed a little touching up and I was ready to go. Not only a 48 hour outfit, but a 48 hour eyeliner moustache too, have led me to the conclusion that non-attended parties are the new party.

The etiquette of non-atten-

dance is a difficult one to judge. No one complains if you show up hours late, pissed, sporting a tit tattoo and have in fact not been invited at all, but not going to parties might just lose you all your friends. Student values include a clause that states no party, no friends. If you don't go to parties, especially birthday parties, you are a rude, unsociable kill joy and a bit lame. However if I keep going to parties, might I end up hermetically sealed into a single outfit, with a full beard of eyeliner and my puckered breasts covered in ink?

Maybe the primary school

percentage thing wasn't such a bad idea. 4% seems a bit tight, and since England does have the unhappiest children in Europe I wouldn't want to emulate their lifestyles, but 40% seems fair - parties would still be in the minority. 40% party, 60% getting dressed and reading fat books. And then it would be clear to everyone that my non-attended parties were part of a strict, scientific regime of life style improvement rather than a lack of personality, and I'd be able to have my cake and eat it too. Oh I am pleased, so pleased, I might just have to have a party.

Why the telephone brings out my stupid side

Often the flip side of parties, and the other element of student existence which unites us all, is embarrassment. That sinking feeling, that adrenalin kick when you spot the witnesses to one of your more inelegant moments in Vanbrugh dining hall - it's familiar to the lot of us.

And it's not just drunken party antics that can get you down; anything from falling off

your bike or being particularly obnoxious in a seminar gets that paranoia buzzing. The combination of youthful naivety, an over-active imagination and an exaggerated sense of self-importance can make existing at all seem an offence.

One of my least favourite things to do is talk on the phone. I hate it; without fail, it makes me blush. Face to face, people can see your narcissistic nerves, making

you speak like a grammatically inept loser, in the tremble of your wrist; over the phone, they just think you're stupid. The telephone takes away that reassuring feeling that everyone else is equally self-obsessed and won't notice all your little slip-ups as they're too busy mentally noting their own.

When I'm old and zen, I hope to call people all the time, sometimes even when I don't need something - just to chat. I like to

think that looking back on my undergraduate years I'll realise that what I learnt in three years of study was not how to deconstruct constructivists, but how to cope with myself. Even when I ask someone returning from Venice, 'Oh lovely, don't you love Austria', or when I smash things in bars and get a standing ovation, I'll just sigh and remember that my cats will always love me, so long as I keep feeding them anyway.

Inside the marvellous imagination of The Mighty Boosh

The stars of the BBC3 show have found themselves exposed to the true hardcore of their fanbase on a recent tour. **Eli Capitani** talks to Julian Barrett and finds out why he's an uncomfortable comedy icon



"The Boosh is just born out of stuff that makes us laugh, we're not fans of weird stuff just for the sake of being weird"

For a duo responsible for the original and wacky 'The Mighty Boosh' TV, radio and theatre show, rolling down the hill around Clifford's Tower doesn't seem the most original activity to pursue on a visit to York, but Julian Barrett and Noel Fielding (also known as Howard Moon and Vince Noir, respectively) found time in their busy touring schedule to partake in the tradition beloved by York students. Currently taking a stage version around the country (and with a live DVD about to be released) the true extent of The Boosh's fanbase has come to light with hardcore fans turning out in their droves to pay homage to the pretentious jazz fan, Moon, and the impeccably coiffured Noir.

Transferring a TV show onto the stage can often be a daunting process, but The Mighty Boosh appeared to feel no trepidation. "We knew it was like a hidden weapon that we had," said Julian Barrett, "because everyone who got into The Boosh via the TV show hadn't any idea what we did on stage. However, we knew we were good live and therefore it was like having a hidden skill you can get out and have some fun with." In fact it was in the theatres and clubs that the duo first created their alter-egos, both separately starting out as stand-up comedians before Fielding paid a visit to one of Barrett's shows and "sort of accosted me afterwards."

"It was instantly a good pairing as we both come from very different worlds. Noel's a sort of South London cockney whilst I came from a North English jazz background, but we instantly seemed to understand each other."

He trails off, but it's quite clear that he's bemused by the adulation the duo receives. "I'm a bit like, 'well

why do they like us so much, what's going on here, what do they think I am? People were trying

to take photos of you or grab a bit of your hair. But you only ever meet the really full-on fans when you do the tour, and I was just a bit taken aback by it all. Noel is a lot more at home with that sort of thing, with being adored. He tells me to stop thinking about it too much and just enjoy it. I understand what he's talking about but I'm not really made for that kind of thing."

Despite its recent critical success and recognition, The Mighty Boosh has always been a show for the fans rather than the comedy experts'. When it first premiered on BBC3 it was either panned or ignored by the critics, and by Barratt's own admission, "the figures were crap, no one watched it and no one rang me up the night it went out on TV... apart from my mum of course." Though the show had worked well on the radio and stage, and much effort had been made to transfer it successfully onto the TV, there were

times when the duo doubted its quality. "When Victor Lewis-Smith (York-educated critic and satirist who had a long running spat with Chris Morris) reviewed us in the London Evening Standard and said it was a pile of shit, then we thought 'Oh my God, we have made an absolute disaster!' As the series carried on no one really paid any attention to it, apart from Time Out who completely slagged us off every week. You get this very close-up view of your whole vision dying and you go through it all in your head thinking, 'well maybe we made a mistake here or we should have done this bit like this.'

Mixed reviews followed the second series as well, but behind the critics there was a core fanbase steadily developing. "We'd been used to performing live where you get a very immediate response and you know if what you're doing is right straight away. We just didn't understand how it worked when we went to TV and got really depressed by the reaction. However what BBC3 are really good at is letting things grow and letting the audience find us. Then when we did the tour all these Boosh fans suddenly all came out of the woodwork! But it's just a long learning curve trying not to get knocked back by the way TV works."

The Boosh were helped by the fact that they were picked up by Steve Coogan's production company, Baby Cow, and Coogan himself acted as executive producer on both series. "Steve is brilliant as an actor and he saw us and thought we were good and that counted for a lot in the industry at the time. He went to the BBC, and when it's Coogan saying, 'Oh, these guys are great' everyone did go, 'wow they must be', so he was very useful in that way. He didn't do too much hands-on stuff as at the time he was concentrating on his film career, but

he does come in and read through stuff and lets us know what he thinks, and that can sometimes be really useful." The writing process starts off as improvisation between the two, although the freedom offered by the alternate reality in which the show is based can be a curse as much as a blessing.

"You can stare at a blank piece of paper for ages, and it's not a sketch show, so we're not able to say 'we need the man-who-has-a-funny-walk sketch and then the woman-who-pukes-on-herself sketch.' We can't do that, all we have is

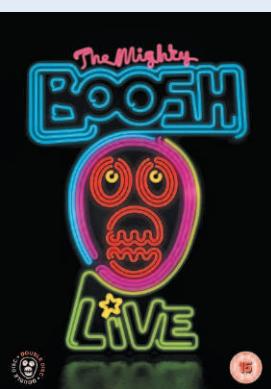
me and Noel and then we have to invent an entire world around these two characters which is hard but also very exciting. "It's something we take very seriously, so you have as much fun as you do with anything that you work hard at. The idea is just for it to look like effortless nonsense but that's always quite a hard thing to achieve. It's like stand-up. There

is a hidden agreement between the audience and the comedian that it's made for them that night, which is obviously not true because if you only spent two seconds thinking about your act before you came on stage it would be completely impossible. But people let themselves believe it's unique for them, there is a suspension of disbelief."

Viewers of the series have certainly had their suspension of disbelief stretched to incredulity, at least compared to many of the bog-standard Britcoms on our screens. Included in the cast of characters are Bollo (the "oldest ape in captivity", whose press age is 29), Naboo the Enigma (mysterious yet very short shaman who worked as a kiosk operator in the zoo where the first series was set) and Bob Fossill (owner of the aforementioned zoo despite his limited knowledge of animals, demonstrated by calling the zoo's bear "the hairy Russian carpet-guy"). As a result they have, quite understandably, been labelled surreal, although this is a tag Barrett doesn't agree with.

"The show's not set in reality and it is in a parallel universe, but it's no more surreal than shows like Sinbad, which was written thousands of years ago. The Boosh is just born out of stuff that makes us laugh and we're not a fan of weird stuff just for the sake of being weird."

"Our weirdness actually often comes out of things, such as the merman who is confused because he's got a mangina. I mean there is logic to a hermaphrodite mermaid; why wouldn't a mermaid be a sea transsexual? Sea creatures are hermaphroditic. What we are doing has been done before with Python, Time Bandits, Terry Gilliam and all the stuff that inspired us. This idea of creating a world and having magical things and giving them humanity is not all that differ-



The Mighty Boosh: Live

Released November 13

of introducing the main Mighty Boosh characters to any newcomers in the audience whilst providing fresh gags for the veteran fans.

The rest of the show is taken up with an 'adventure', similar to the second TV series, in which Howard Moon and Vince Noir seek the elusive and mysterious 'Ruby of Kukundu' through various adverse terrains and via several fantastical characters.

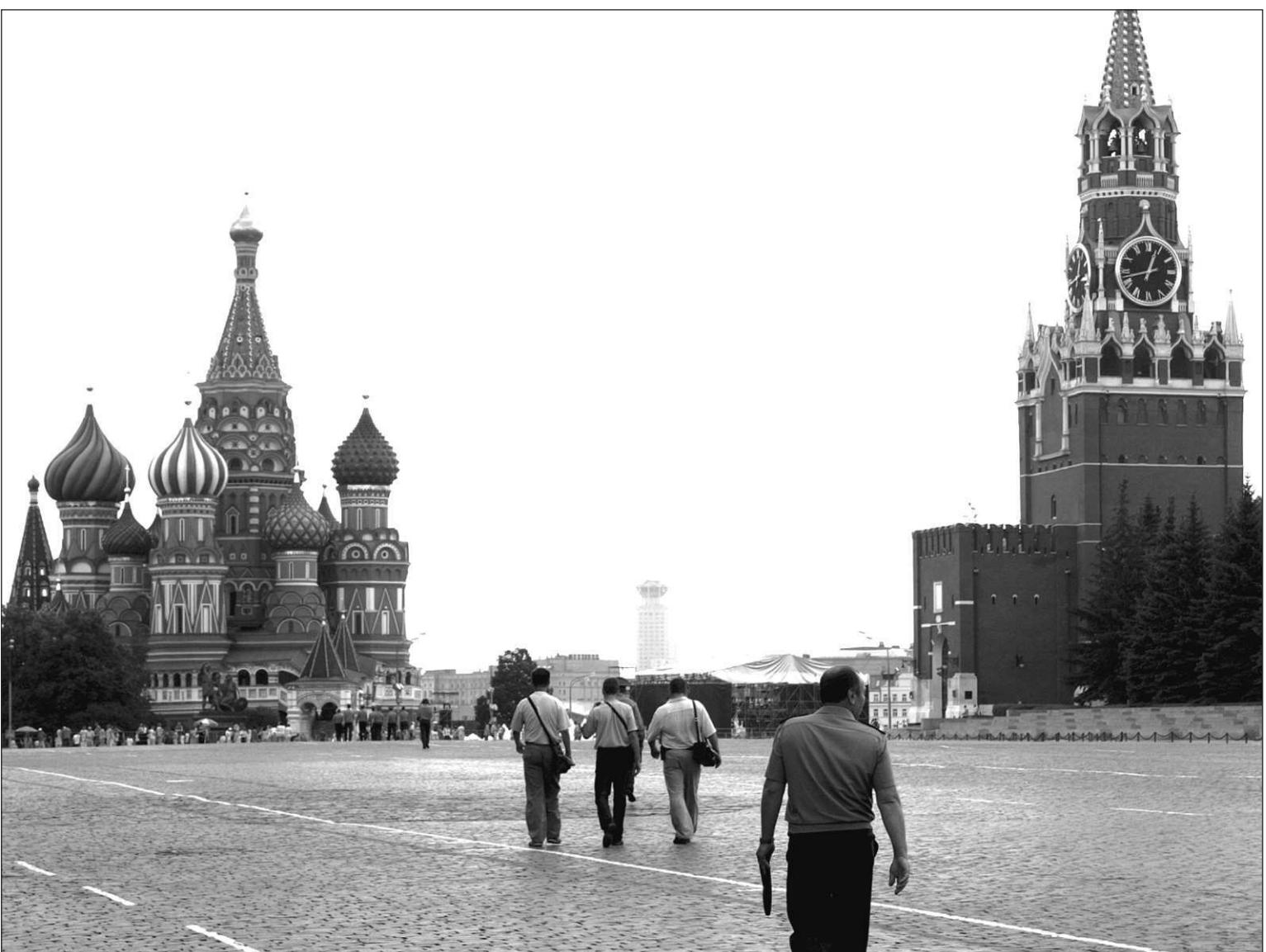
Naturally the intrepid duo are joined by Bollo, Naboo and Bob Fossill, who seems to take childish delight in the ad-libbing nature of the performance, at one point spitting into the face of a shocked Noel Fielding.

It's this element of exuberant spontaneity that the live show provides, whilst maintaining The Mighty's Boosh's characteristic comic timing, that elevates this DVD above that of the average comedy live show.

The live show starts with what is basically stand-up, and although this section is a tad overlong it does do a good job

ent, but we are doing it in a way that's modern, with modern visuals, modern music and a modern dialogue style. Basically we're just trying to create stories that grab you."

An aim that they have seemingly appeared to have achieved, and, as with a rock band, the next obvious step appears to be America where the show's gaining a following. "It's not big or anything over there, but there are just a few types of people who seem to love it. We received an email from Frank Zappa's widow saying that their whole family love it and have been watching it all the time, and you hear stuff like that and go, 'really?'" With a third series set for the Spring, and even a feature film in the pipeline, the members of The Mighty Boosh look set to expand their fanbase, gaining them yet more attention, wanted or otherwise. **The Mighty Boosh Live** is released November 13, RRP £21.99.



The domed Kremlin is a perfect example of Russia's distinctive and breathtaking architecture Photo by Adam Sloan

Two countries of incredible contrasts: Adam Sloan travels around Russia and Ukraine

Eastern wonders

The immigration officer looked at me, puzzled, before somewhat reluctantly stamping my visa and allowing me into Russia. It was only later that I realised that where it asked for my visa number on the Russian immigration card, I had written my passport number and my date of departure where I should have my date of arrival. I crossed the border by bus, excited that after so many years of dreaming, I had finally made it here.

I admit that I was quite nervous stepping off the coach in St. Petersburg. I have never travelled anywhere that gives quite as much of a cultural blast as soon as you step onto its soil. I was alone, armed solely with my Lonely Planet guide and Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment* to direct me.

Picking up my senselessly overloaded backpack, I made my way to the metro, and my nerves quickly gave way to a sense of amazement as I stepped into one of the incredibly grand stations.

Both the St. Petersburg and Moscow metro systems were built as part of Stalin's grand modernisation plans for the Soviet Union. As well as being arguably one of the most efficient

metros in the world, the St. Petersburg system is also filled with socialist-realist art. The walls are adorned with huge murals, and statues linger between platforms. Elegant chandeliers hang from ceilings so high that they look like they could stretch back up to the surface.

Despite its beauty, St. Petersburg was originally built on a swamp by Peter the Great in the 18th century. He had in mind an aristocratic capital resembling a European city, a step away

'To fall asleep leaving St. Petersburg and wake up on the way to Moscow is like travelling between different worlds.'

from the heavily Russified medieval capital of Moscow. The architecture is grand and elaborate, and the city is criss-crossed with canals, earning it the nickname "the Venice of the North".

The hugely eminent Winter Palace is the epicenter of the city, and houses the main collection of the State

Hermitage Museum. First founded by Catherine the Great, it was established with the aim of showing off her art to visiting European aristocrats. Students get in free with an ISIC card.

Close to the Palace is the onion-domed and dramatically named "Church Built on Spilled Blood", erected by Alexander III on the site of his father's assassination. The church's outside is ornately decorated with painted depictions of the gospels, as well as bright, multi-coloured minuets.

Like many of Russia's Orthodox churches that were given more "practical" uses during Soviet times, the "Church on Spilled Blood" spent the Stalin period being a potato and vegetable warehouse.

My next destination was the ancient capital of Moscow. I travelled there in style on train number 001, the historic "Red Arrow", and the same train that famously carried the first Soviet government from St. Petersburg to Moscow.

To fall asleep leaving St. Petersburg and wake up on the way to Moscow is like travelling between different worlds; the two cities are almost complete polar opposites. Whereas St. Petersburg is calm and regal, Moscow is fast paced and brutish. Tourists are replaced with businessmen (and their glamorous wives), and the enormous wealth of the city, which is home to more dollar billionaires than any other in the world, hits you slap-bang in the face. This impression of wealth is quickly followed by one of poverty, as grandmothers accost you for change on arrival.

I could not come to Moscow without visiting Lenin's mausoleum where he lies proudly on display to the gawking public. The queue to see the resting place of Russia's first communist leader is permanently swollen, and made up of

an interesting mix of elderly, moustachioed Russians, and tourists in "CCCP" T-shirts. The walk around the coffin is lined with armed guards, and when someone later asked me, "Do you know why there are so many armed guards in Lenin's mausoleum?" and I shook my head, they replied, "It's in case he moves...then they can shoot the bastard."

I walked from the mausoleum out into Red Square, where I was greeted by the incredibly colourful domes and red-brick architecture of St. Basil's cathedral. The building of St. Basil's was commissioned in the 16th century by Tsar Ivan "The Terrible". As a child, Ivan's hobby was to go to the top of the tallest tower of the Kremlin and drop live cats down onto the ground below. After the completion of St. Basil's, he blinded the architect, to ensure that nothing of comparable beauty could ever again be built.

Moscow grew on me. Although I'm not sure if I could put up with the fast paced, cut-throat attitude for long, I hardly even scratched the surface. To get under the skin of a city as huge as Moscow would take weeks, possibly months.

My next train was the brand new "Moscow-Kiev Express" which took just nine hours to travel the 765km between the two countries' capital cities. I knew almost immediately that I was going to like Ukraine's capital, Kiev, or Kyiv in Ukrainian. It was a big city without being overbearing, and dotted with hills and beautiful golden domed monasteries. I made my way almost immediately to the central 'Independence Square', which is permanently bustling with activity.

The most beautiful place in Kiev must be the hilltop monasteries of Pechersk-Lavra. This is a complex with huge golden and green domed monasteries glittering in the sun. A cradle of orthodoxy rising above the right bank of the Dniepr river, I found it incredible that such a beautiful place could exist in the middle of such a bustling city. Pilgrims wandered throughout, and I spent many happy hours strolling through the cobbled streets and well kept gardens, admiring the magnificent churches and enjoying the serenity.

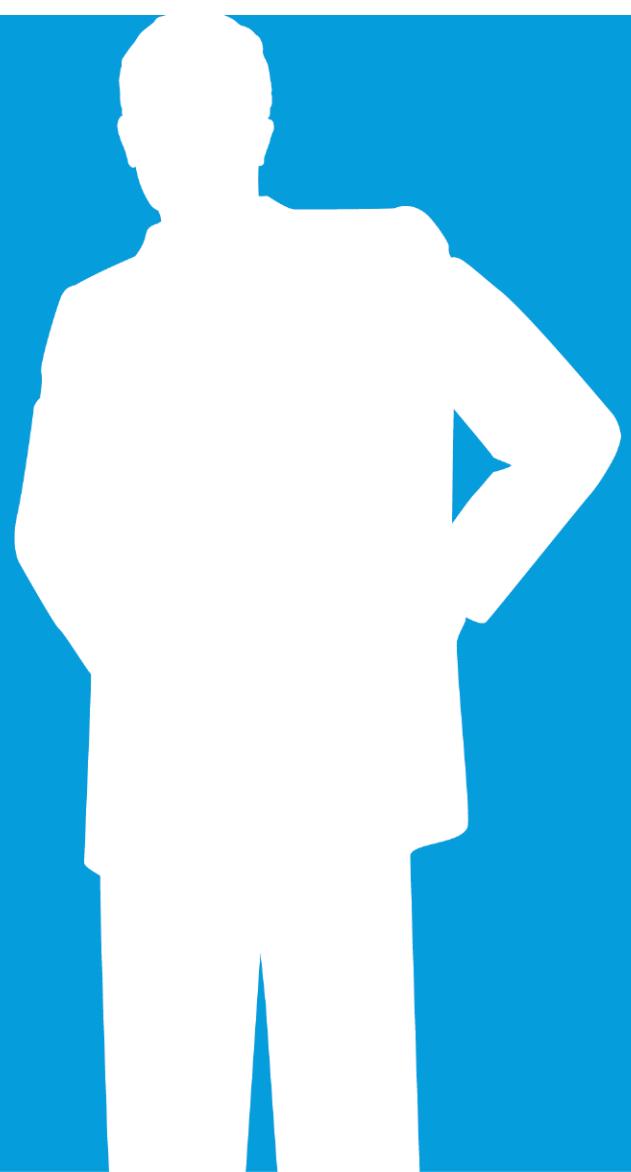
Packing my bag again I took a train West across the country to Lviv. The capital of Ukrainian nationalism, it was one of the country's few cities that wasn't bombed during World War Two, meaning it still has a fantastically preserved medieval old town.

One of the reasons I ended up liking Lviv so much was because, despite being so well preserved, the Old Town wasn't "museum like", and still operated as a working city, instead of being simply a slave to tourism, into which many of Europe's finest Old Towns seem to have been transformed. Old men in flat caps played chess in the central square, and workers attended city centre churches at the end of the day.

There was a slight air of decrepitude: holes in the streets, buildings that looked like they were ready to collapse in on themselves. A couple of kids were playing football and when the ball hit the wall and bounced back off, it was followed by a large chunk of plaster and a cloud of dust.

One of the best indicators as a traveller of how you feel about a place is whether you can see yourself returning. The Ukraine is such a huge country, with so much to see: cities, mountains, quaint villages, and more. I would definitely go back, but for now, I had to move on: I had another train to catch.

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Penpal to the rich and famous

Holly Williams chats to Duncan McNair about his inquisitive alter-ego, R.M. Morello

Have you ever wondered what Tony Blair's favourite wild flower is, how John Prescott would feel about having a bull terrier named after him, or what to do when your pet goat gets diarrhoea at the sight of Dale Winton? Well, neither had I, but in the manner of all good novelty books, *The Morello Letters* gives you answers to questions you never knew you wanted to ask.

Asking the questions is R.M. Morello, an Italian immigrant somewhat confused by the idiosyncrasies of England. This highly entertaining book comprises his letters to the great, the good and the silly institutions of Britain (from the Post Office to the Old English Goat society), and their responses. Morello is the alter-ego of Duncan McNair, who explains that he began sending out these spoof letters ten years ago, using the responses as a way to cheer people up. The bemused or knowingly humorous replies proved so popular that he began to think "maybe there's a future in this". Despite never intending to get them published, the book has proved a massive hit, climbing the Amazon best seller list, and gaining enthusiastic endorsements from the likes of Jon Snow, who - as the cover proudly claims - considers them the funniest spoof letters he has ever read.

The comedy is gentle, and McNair stresses that the intention was never to catch people out. One of the joys of the book is identifying the "tipping point, the one mention too many of gerbils" that gives the game away. While many of the respondents clearly 'got it', and appear to relish writing suitably silly replies ("while Sir Cliff would be delighted to have his privacy invaded by a group of



Morello's quirky spoof letters have uncovered Cliff Richard's secret llama allergy

Competition

We're giving you the chance to get a unique signed copy! Simply email us at contact@nouse.ac.uk saying why you'd like a copy, and the funniest three will win. McNair will also be doing a book signing at Borders on 3 December.

warbling nudists, he regrets that, due to the undesirable side-effects of his acute llama allergy, he is unable to offer hospitality to your group"), others offer embarrassingly polite replies. Due to health and safety, Selfridges 'would not be able to accommodate access for your goat, Enoch.'

Much of the absurdity of the letters

comes from liberal references to Morello's menagerie of ridiculous pets. Many of the appeals to the famous are requesting permission for new arrivals to be named after them, and the idea of a backyard in Ealing being full of rodents named after the Marquis of Bath, the Archbishop of York and Oliver Letwin is rather enjoyable. Although permission may be conditional - Oliver Letwin was

keen that J.Prescott, the bull terrier, be kept away from Oliver the gerbil's cage.

Sadly, the Morello pets are as imaginary as the man himself. McNair explains that despite coming from a big animal-loving family, and coveting a sloth or two, all he has is an elderly cat, who wouldn't be able to cope with any new arrivals. The neighbours too might have something to say about llamas looking over the hedge.

When approached for copyright, the various correspondents almost all embraced the gentle humour of the venture, and some things that managed to get published seem astonishing (for example, Blair's cringeworthy "list of favorite things" reveals his penchant for bluebells, fruit'n'fibre, and - urgh - Simply Red). The only refusal came, surprisingly, from a man who "has made a career of indiscretion: Boris Johnson." Despite privately agreeing to be the namesake for a guinea pig who resembled him, it seems that he found this too embarrassing to be printed.

The Morello Letters follows in the footsteps of other prank letter-writers, and you'd be forgiven for feeling the world doesn't need any more. If, however, you've never come across any, you won't find a better collection. Ideal dip-in reading, it would make the perfect addition to any toilet. The obvious market is Christmas - it would be an ideal stocking-filler, or gift for that awkward relative.



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Arts Reviews

Amy Scott is grabbed by *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* in the Drama Barn

The Drama Barn's first production of the year got off to an appropriately dramatic start. Having failed to obtain the rights to the play during the rehearsal process, it seemed like James Spinney's production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* would have to be performed for free in the Dixon Drama Studio in the far-away land of Wentworth. However, in the world of theatre it seems it's not what you know but who you know, and DramaSoc's recent visitor, director David Thacker, pulled a few strings after his recent Open Drama workshop and the cast were allowed to take up residence in the Barn after all.

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? has had a successful performance history, but is perhaps best known for the 1966 film version, starring Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. The significance of the play's title derives from a spoof of the Disney song 'Who's Afraid of the Big Bad Wolf?' which one of the characters coins early on in the play. The title sums up well the play's mix of petty childishness and intellectual sharpness. Our protagonists are a married couple called Martha and George. George is a professor of History at the University of which his wife's father is president. So far, so discontent. After a drunken faculty party, Martha has invited a new teacher called Nick and his

wife, known only as 'Honey', back for drinks in the couple's home. As the evening continues, Martha and George's marital difficulties become clear, and the bickering escalates, making the younger couple extremely embarrassed, if still somehow fascinated.

And so, one rather tired director and a very nervous producer later, we arrive at what can now officially be referred to as DramaSoc's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*. Firstly we have York's very own Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton; Anna Rohde and Patrick Rogers, as the catty Martha and George. As supporting cast we had Alan Stewart playing Nick, and Emma Charnley as his wife, Honey. With a cast this small, a running time of three and a half hours, and a very wordy text, there was a lot of pressure on the four to hold it together, and they did a fantastic job.

Rogers, continuing his position in a fine tradition of tortured academics after last year's *Hedda Gabler*, walked the line between intellectual wit and crazed madman. His unpredictable delivery kept his house guests on the edge of their seats, as well as the audience (if any other position is possible in the Drama Barn). Stewart, although playing a character mostly designed for Martha and George to bounce off, did admirably. His despair after failing to 'get it up' after a



Virginia Woolf - the real one, not the play

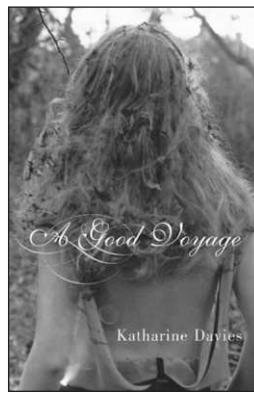
romantic clinch with Martha has to go down as one of the most memorable moments of the night.

Charnley perhaps had the hardest job, in an underwritten character, drunk for most of the play, though still capable of making somewhat astounding revelations. However, she pulled it off with aplomb, very funny, very cute and very, very drunk. But, the show stealer award has to go this time to Rohde's heavy-drinking, stocking-flashing Martha.

Engaging from the start, certainly funny, but also painfully sad, even a somewhat awkward wardrobe malfunction in the second act couldn't stop her.

The set was perfected to the last detail, except for a sign on the piano which read; 'The show may be cancelled at any point without any notice, for no reason whatsoever!'. Whether a cast in-joke or a reference to their ongoing difficulties obtaining the rights, it seemed a shame to lower the professionalism of the production like this. The intricacy of the set was impressive; a study area and full bookshelf, a piano, a record player and Laura Ashley wallpaper being just a few examples. However, the majority of the set dressing was superfluous, especially as the cast was so strong. All these actors really needed were the seating and drinks cabinet.

There were only a few minor difficulties overall, such as the debate over Martha's green eyes, when Rohde has perhaps the most obvious bright blue eyes I've ever seen. However, the only real problem was the length. If DramaSoc are going to keep giving the go ahead to productions this long, they really need to consider installing some form of back rest in the Barn. It was a shame to end what should have been a fantastic night in extreme discomfort. Still, a great night and a great production.



Reviewed by
Helen Citron

A Good Voyage

Katherine Davies

£12.99
Chatto and Windus

★★★

Reviewed by
Jonathan Kerridge-Phipps

Kingdom Come
J.G. Ballard



Reviewed by
Jonathan Kerridge-Phipps
£17.99
Fourth Estate

★★

To know the work of James Graham Ballard intimately is to understand how limited in scope we are as mere mortals.

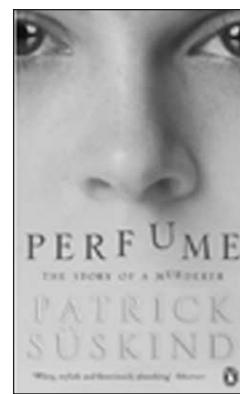
At his best, Ballard writes like a perversely erudite angel; a transcendent thinker capable, as Jean-Luc Godard is in his films, of lifting the veils from our faces and showing us a completely different world.

Sadly, in his new book, *Kingdom Come*, Ballard struggles to break new creative territory. This is essentially the fourth book in a continued exploration of suburbia and bourgeois values.

The novel opens ominously with the rhetorical "The suburbs dream of violence" and the narrative follows an unemployed advertising executive who is trying to uncover the facts behind his father's sudden, brutal murder, but instead finds himself in the heart of a militant consumerist world.

Fans of Ballard will enjoy his common leitmotifs surrounding the motorway exit ramps of the M25, but those new to his work may be disorientated by his rather particular vision.

Reviewed by
Patrick Suskind
Perfume



Reviewed by
Alix Odgers
£7.99
Penguin

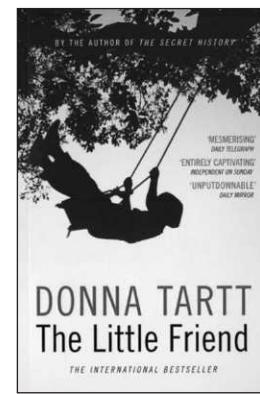
★★★

As its name suggests, this novel is primarily concerned with smell, not least in plot. It follows the life of Jean-Baptiste Grenouille, a baby born amongst the horrendous stench of Paris but with no apparent scent of his own - an ironic notion given that he possesses the most incredible sense of smell.

We follow him as his nose guides him through life, witnessing his apprenticeship to a perfumer and his subsequent pursuit of the perfect scent. However underneath, as we find out, lurks a murderous and curiously erotic twist.

Despite the novel's apparent lack of exciting plot and its rather hurried and bizarre ending, it is still an engaging read. The reader is constantly enchanted by Suskind's incredibly descriptive passages, and is drawn into the world he creates. Like the protagonist we experience the world through smell and it is this very original and new way of storytelling that gives the novel its strength.

With a film of this book about to be released, I would urge you to read it; it is wonderful and weird and well worth a read.



Reviewed by
Amy Shackleton

The Little Friend
Donna Tartt

£7.99
Bloomsbury

★★★

I've never liked the cliché of everyone having "one novel inside them", but perhaps with Donna Tartt it is true. Her first novel, *The Secret History*, was stunningly epic with a dark, haunting beauty, tracing the dangers of obsession and passion. Once finished, I had to buy her second book, *The Little Friend*.

It certainly starts well, the best writing of the whole book being contained within the first few chapters, tracing the sudden disappearance of a much-loved child from his own backyard. Here, Tartt uses rich, sensuous imagery to draw us into the storyline, genuinely conjuring a sick, dry despair at the situation unfolding on the page.

However, the story doesn't do itself justice. The opening promises a long and intricate narrative, but what we find are detailed portraits of the family in the aftermath of loss. These are very well written, but leave us in a dream-like state too acute to properly deliver the messages of the novel. Although beautiful, static writing, it doesn't do justice to Tartt's capability to produce a truly gripping tale.

The novel contains all the elements of a satisfying love story, but far from falling into the trap of cliché, Davies's narrative is one of such subtlety that the unrequited love and misunderstandings charted by the plot are almost painful and can, at times, be disturbing.

Guiding us through Illerwick - the modern equivalent of Illyria - Davies introduces us to an array of characters, all linked through their fascination for Melody, a beautiful English teacher.

The plot culminates in spectacular fashion at a garden party held in honour of Melody by the complex and solitary musician Leo Springs. Here, Davies skilfully brings together the carefully crafted strands of her plot to create an ending as beautiful as it is unexpected. This modern fairy tale cannot fail to delight.

Film Reviews

Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan

Director: Larry Charles

Runtime: 82 min

Reviewed by
Steph Crewes



Borat, the Kazakhstani TV presenter, a creation of Ali G comedian Sacha Baron-Cohen and the subject of a new film directed by Larry Charles, is brilliantly offensive.

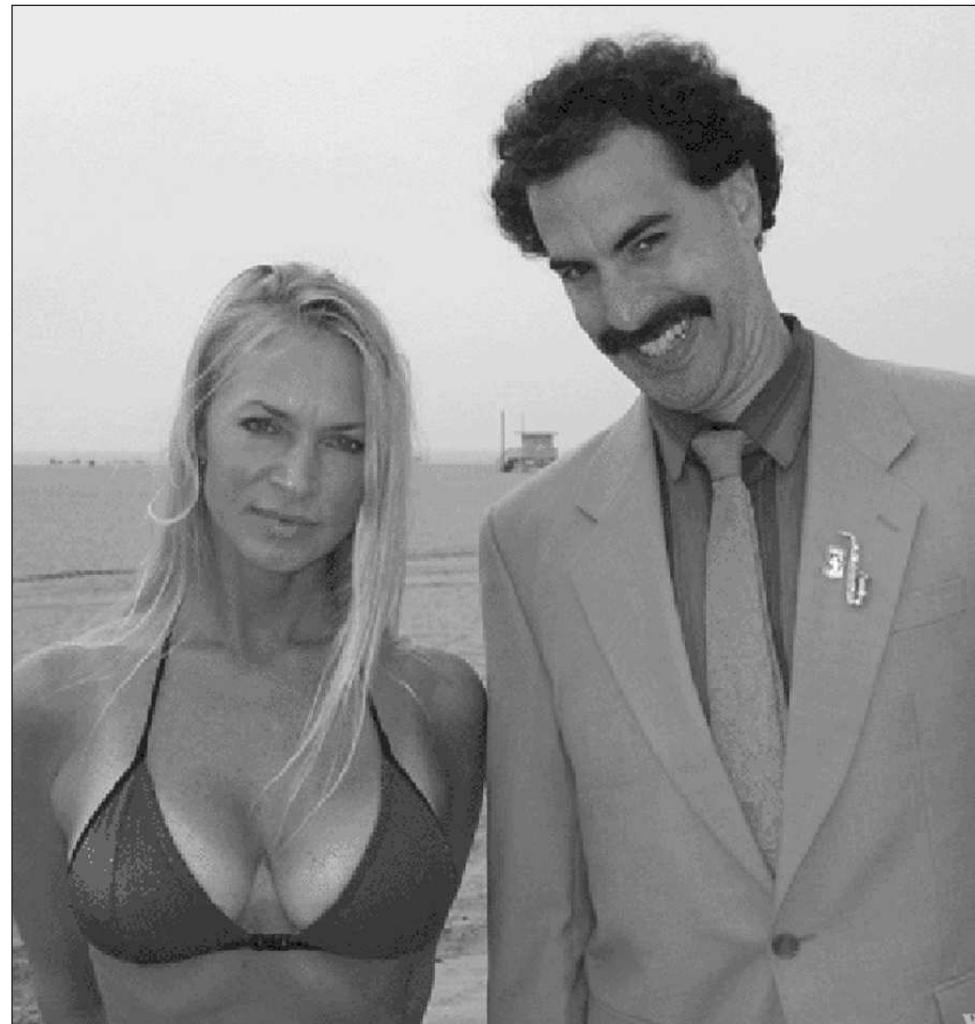
The character rose to fame on Baron-Cohen's 'Da Ali-G Show', in which he gave interviews to unwitting celebrities from America and the UK with excruciatingly embarrassing and comic results. It is thus fitting that he gets his own film in the midst of today's worldwide religious, cultural and political upheaval. The film explores Borat's journey to America, the "greatest country in the world", in search of a cultural experiences that he can bring back to his country and thus modernize it. Its full title, *Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan*, underlines its spoof-documentary style, with the credits presented in Kazakhstani with English subtitles. Kazakhstan is treated as a backward country, in which women are slaves, and 'The Running of The Jew' is a popular form of entertainment, in which hags lay 'Jew eggs'. This is a stereotype most hilariously challenged when Borat unintentionally stays at a Jewish B&B in the US.

Of course, the linguistic and cultural dif-

ferences form the crux of the film's comedy, as shown in his first journey on New York's metro, and his attempts to kiss men hello is verbally abused. This was interesting insight into our inherent suspicion of cultural differences. However, a chance encounter with the American TV series *Baywatch*, and its star Pamela Anderson in his hotel room, changes his aims entirely, and he falls in love with her because she has "the a**hole of a seven year old".

Consequently, he travels cross-country to California in a quest to meet and marry Pamela. Along the way, Borat encounters the crux of America's underbelly, people who simultaneously define and negate the myth of America, Christian fanatics, University frat boys, Bush-loving Republicans, a prostitute and a hip-hop crew. It reminded me of BBC journalist Louis Theroux's recent book, *The Call of the Weird: Travels in American Subcultures*. Indeed, revealed so poignantly in this film are our prejudices and ignorance. A frat boy chillingly says to Borat, "Do not let a woman ever, ever make you who you are." Admittedly, he is drunk, but the comment sticks all the same.

What was most interesting about Borat was that none of the people Baron-Cohen encountered and humorously insulted seemed to be aware that he was playing a fictional character. Baron-Cohen's brilliance emerges in his ability to humanize Borat, rather than just make him a cultural parody. Borat bridges the popular conventions of hilarious and ironical toilet humor with a poignant, powerful insight into the state of modern America.



Saw III

Director: Darren Lynn Bousman
With: Angus MacFayden, Tobin Bell

Runtime: 107 min

Reviewed by
Adam Luke



"Do you want to play a game...?" There is no doubt that the *Saw* franchise has been hugely successful and I know that I, along with many others, enjoyed the new inventive/sadistic horror that came across in the first two films. It wasn't just what it said on the tin; it had that but it also had something else: a bloody good concept!

Any big *Saw* fan is going to want to see this so I'd like to give you some advice. Do not go expecting anything new, or a fresh film with new ideas: it does what the first two films did, but gets lost along the way. And whatever you do, make sure you are up to

speed with the previous films because the past plays a large part in the plot.

Overall this film was largely disappointing, and it doesn't have the same power to hook the viewer as *I* and *II* did. It fails in attempted character development leaving the audience with no feeling or understanding for the victims, and the story seems predictable yet unbelievable at the same time. *Saw III* does not create fear, but rather goes in for moments of gore you cannot bare to watch, rather than moments of sheer terror. An example of this lack of fear is shown by Jigsaw – someone who lies half dead on a bed for an entire film holds less powerful fear than a man stroking a cat. OK bad example, but you know what I mean.

The plot focuses heavily upon Jigsaw's apprentice, Amanda (Shawnee Smith), who struggles to deal with her master's illness and her need to continue "his work", leading to a battle within herself as well as with others through typical manipulative games. Unfortunately, director Darren Lynn Bousman clumsily brings the tale of torture and of Amanda together in a thoroughly unsatisfying conclusion. Twist, what twist?

Saw III, for its clear weaknesses, does showcase some unbelievable, and perhaps unviewable, moments. Watch Jigsaw's favourite toy, the rack, amongst other gruesome deaths. What if that was your leg or your arm?

No matter how effective the scenarios of horror are, there is an overriding feeling after watching this film that it was basically a poor attempt at linking different cases of torture together into a sketchy story; ideas of death that writers had before they had a story rather than vice versa. However, if you want to see blood and guts and power drills making holes in people's skulls go and see it, but it nowhere near reaches the impact of previous attempts. "Live or die, make your choice..."

Marie Antoinette

Director: Sophia Coppola
With: Kirsten Dunst, Jason Schwartzman

Runtime: 118 min

Reviewed by
Paul Becker



Marie Antoinette is an Austrian princess who is married off to the future king of France as a teenager, in 1770. Life at Versailles is stuffy and stifled by convention. Marie's husband is dull and unresponsive to our young lady's needs, which breeds some considerable anxiety since failure to produce a royal child will humiliate her and corrode her position at court. She is lucky to have to put up with all the gossip and frustration. If she didn't, she'd feel the full extent of the boredom which governs the first third of this weird little movie.

The director, Sofia Coppola, treats us to a painstakingly detailed initiation into this

remote world, so familiar from history books; every greeting, change of costume and carriage ride seems to matter, though it's not clear why. Marie has no history in Austria that we know of, apart from a sombre room in which she bids farewell to her mother, which makes her the universal lonely girl – one that knows herself as little as we do.

That is her arc: she arrives, desperate as she's deprived of her dog, confounds the French with her innocent cheer, suffers as she's deprived of sex, confounds the French with her ravenous spending sprees, then suffers like a Queen as the Revolution deprives her of everything. Your average voyage of self-discovery and a brief history of the French court dressed up in Kirsten Dunst.

Cunningly, Coppola composes a soundtrack of some very unhistoric tracks by Aphex Twin, Air, The Strokes, et al, setting her heroine against our glorious present into which she would fit so well, since all she wants is to have fun. But Coppola is too insecure for her own good. In a wonderful moment, everything comes together as the royal couple's crowning ceremony is underscored by "Plainsong" – then that moment is over. To help her story achieve transcendence, she enlists the help of The Cure but cuts them off after about 30 seconds, afraid that her film will be eclipsed by the music.

As the mob storms the palace in the closing minutes, Marie presents herself at the balcony; she bows; the crowd goes quiet, their torches illuminating the courtyard. She has become a rock star, though, as with her process of maturity, the hows and whys are largely left unanswered. Do you buy it? What is there to buy? With its gorgeous but aimless cinematography, costumes and production design, the movie resembles a music video with nothing to sell but itself. For myself, I am on the hook. Just sixty thousand more monthly instalments to pay off, and Versailles will be officially mine.

Food & Drink Reviews



The Biltmore Bar and Grill
29 Swinegate

Reviewed by
Laura Street



The newly opened Biltmore restaurant is situated on fashionable Swinegate. Arriving through heavily glassed doors, the slick modern architecture gives an exceptional first impression. The former Elim Pentecostal church has been transformed into York's most stylish bar and grill restaurant. The extensive modern interior has a ground floor restaurant serving a cheaper bistro menu, and a mezzanine floor which runs the perimeter of the building serving a classic style menu for vintage dining.

Having chosen the luxury menu for the restaurant upstairs, we were escorted to a comfortable table overlooking the busy downstairs bar. The restaurant has a church-architectural style with exposed beams in a classic yet modern environment. There are also eye-catching features throughout the

restaurant: upstairs is a walled glass wine rack, boasting a vast selection of wines and champagnes. We ordered the 'parfait of chicken liver and foie gras' at £6.95 and 'escabeche of red mullet', £6.50, to start, followed by 'pan-fried fillet of cod', £14.50, and 'confit of duck leg' at £14.95. The parfait was beautifully smooth and complimented the accompanying sweet red onion marmalade well. We found out that all of the Biltmore's ingredients are bought from the Yorkshire area, excluding the fish, and the vegetables are all organic. Shortly after we finished our starters our main courses arrived. The duck had a crispy skin with tender flaking meat, which was well flavoured with a sweet caramelised carrot puree and the cod was so tender it melted easily in your mouth.

For dessert, we chose a sticky toffee pudding with vanilla crème fraîche and a chocolate fondant with banana ice cream. Both were delicious and priced at £4.50. The service was warm, but on reflection it took over a quarter of an hour to have a food order taken. Even with the disappointing service at the start of the evening, the Biltmore is certainly a place worth revisiting.



Which Cake?

The Bar and Restaurant team like eating lots of food and never do any exercise. The section was on the verge of being shut down by the combined force of Jamie Oliver and Ian Wright, and so we launched a campaign against our collective inertia. The campus run was highly successful but we were sad to learn that it did not count as a healthy activity owing to the frequent cake stops. Here is what we found...

Chocolate Fudge Cake, £1.05, Vanbrugh.

This was upsettingly bad, tasting neither of chocolate nor fudge. The cake was made from some kind of saccharine sponge substitute that had a wartime feel. The icing was dry, thin and terribly dense - Goodricke inhabitants could probably use it to construct a new kitchen, but as food it would be a waste of their meal vouchers.

Blackcurrant Cheesecake, £1, Vanbrugh.

This went down very quickly, presumably to remove the lingering aftertaste of the previous concoction, but it felt a little like a Radio 2 compilation CD or a tin of beige paint. There was nothing technically wrong with it but it didn't make your heart beat faster like good cake should. The base was soggy, but the (scarce) blackcurrants gave it a buzz. There were only three blackcurrants on our slice - perhaps they were being rationed.

Stem Ginger Sponge, 80p, Roger Kirk Centre.

Quality cake of epic proportions, this was described as being "like school dinner food, only nice". The ginger levels were perfect, it was definite but not overpowering, and, as ginger spice could possibly help cold and flu prevention, we would recommend a daily dose of this cake on health and safety grounds. Those with advanced cake skills will smuggle this one out of the Captain Kirk and drench it with custard.

Flapjack, 50p, Browns of Heslington.

Robin Seaton, an expert of international repute in the field of oat-based puddings, declared that this contained too much flap and not enough jack. He later admitted that he didn't really know what he was talking about, but we decided that the jack is the tasty sugary goo that holds the operation together. On paper it looks bargain-licious, but ultimately it's excess of complex carbohydrates make it too healthy to hold the B&R team's interest.

Tasters: Vicky Hallam, Lucy Peden, Robin Seaton and Laura Street.

Cafe Rouge
52 Low Petergate

Reviewed by
Lucy Peden



Why, when York is filled with tiny independent restaurants that serve reasonably priced, delicious food, go to a chain restaurant for dinner? You may as well dine upon a small child drenched in unethically produced ketchup and use a brass buttoned blazer as a napkin. Well, having spent an hour in search of a tiny independent restaurant, when every suggestion is vetoed by a very fussy dining companion, there comes a point when you fall back on Café Rouge.

Fortunately, the waiting staff are too courteous to make the experience completely Gallic. With French cooking, as with French kissing, it's best to play it safe, so we chose a beef casserole and salmon fishcakes. The casserole was served with dauphinoise potatoes which were satisfactorily firm yet drenched in cream. The beef, splashed with red wine and cooked in its own jus, was meltingly tender and full of flavour. The Very-Fussy-Diner even enjoyed his fishcakes which were well flavoured but not overpowering and had a consistent texture. The dessert menu is epicurean pornography starring a cointreau laced hot chocolate. Almost everything on the menu contains garlic, which ensures there are no problems should patrons wish to progress to French kissing.

Ristorante Bari
15 Shambles

Reviewed by
Jamie Merrill



Location, location, location. Sadly that is pretty much all Ristorante Bari has going for it. Nestled half way along the Shambles, York's most historic and atmospheric street, this 'authentic' Italian seems to offer a lot, yet sadly delivers little.

After a longer than acceptable wait, my trout cooked in a parcel of fresh seafood arrived as a bland trout wrapped in tin foil with a few overcooked prawns which I can only assume came straight from a freezer bag. The side dishes that accompanied it can only be described as bizarre - roast potatoes & boiled carrots. Who expects to be served roast potatoes in an Italian?

My girlfriend's choice of smoked chicken, ham and mushrooms in a white creamy sauce defeated her after half a plateful. At first this seemed like her usual food cowardice but when she rushed to the toilets to vomit I suspected the potent Italian sauce could have been the culprit!

To be fair this little place offers reasonably priced Italian staples, with pizza and pasta dishes from £6, but when your date spends most of the time in the toilet and you are stuck in a corner with a loud Yorkshire woman smoking away in the non-smoking section, that doesn't seem count for much.

The Blue Fly Cafe Bar
10a New Street

Reviewed by
Farsheen Husain



It's cute, it's trendy and it looks quite strangely like a little blue greenhouse. The Blue Fly can be found just off Coney Street and is a convenient place to sit down for a quick lunch whilst in town.

By way of food, they may only do sandwiches and cakes, but it's worth a trip there if only for that. Served in crusty and delicious ciabatta bread, the sandwiches make use of incredibly fresh and juicy ingredients that always make the mouth water. At £4.50 each, it is on the steep side for the size of the portions, but I'd still pay that again for the Parma ham and tomato sandwich I had last week.

Come night time, the mood goes from cool and relaxed to completely packed and loud. It's definitely not my favourite bar in town, as you can barely hear yourself speak and is simply way too small to host the crowds it attracts. Still, seeing as the cocktails are good enough and their alcohol measures extremely generous, I can't complain too much.

The Blue Fly is at its best during the day when you can listen to some chilled music and enjoy the pleasant atmosphere that it offers. It is a great place to sit down, book in hand, and watch the world go by.

The last word

Andreas Masouras commemorates the end of the Nouse year by offending as many people as possible

Cavity Search

The Government has recently ordered members of staff at York University to be on the look out for any 'Muslim extremist' or 'terrorist' activity. These spotters will be required to keep an eye on particular students (the tanned, Middle Eastern looking ones like me) making a note of strange behaviour and performing strip searches if necessary. Any student who wish to take part will be rewarded with beer tokens, however it is more difficult than it seems since many York students had never even seen a dark person in real life until they came to university. Wearing a coat, carrying a backpack and drinking explosive coke on your way to the airport are some of the features they are looking for. Oh, this why the library security barriers keep going off every time I walk through. I swear I'm innocent.

I have prepared a brief guide for any non-pasty people so they can avoid going from York to Guantanamo Bay. Firstly, don't actually take part in terrorist activity. This tends to help. Secondly, Don't ever run otherwise you might end up like Jean Charles de Menezes who was shot by police at Stockwell last year for moving like a terrorist. Note this is mainly applicable to tube stations. Thirdly, smile at security members whilst simultaneously uttering phrases such as 'I like fish and chips' or 'I love Tony Blair'. Fourthly, rather than wearing a black military style coat with concealed weapons inside it and matching

head scarf, trot around campus wearing a navy blue Ralph Lauren jumper and chequered shirt. Dressing like a toff will reduce your chances of being singled out. Adding pale foundation to your face will help even more. Lastly, if you're a member of The Islamic Society, well basically you're screwed. Join the Tories instead.

The Tesco Value of campus media

Apparently members of Vision's editorial team were found engaging in an undignified, hysterical rant about the latest episode of their rapid downfall. Once upon a time, Vision was at the forefront of UK student media. Now you're probably thinking hard,

trying to remember when this anomaly occurred. This is because it was 5 years ago. Yes, when many of us were doing our GCSEs.

Even so, Vision still found it appropriate to use the same outdated Jon Snow quotes to attract freshers at the fair, thereby falsely luring them into the clutches of trash media.

Vision's latest complaint was aimed at Nouse's supposed over reaction to being nominated for the Guardian student newspaper of the year award. I'd like to remind them that on winning this award many years ago, their response was simply to dedicate the front page of their next edition to praising themselves. As if this was not enough, they supplemented their lavish self absorbed front page by running a full page on their greatness at the heart of their news section. I wonder if

they'll do the same if they win the one category they were nominated for in the Guardian awards: best budget paper? Haven't times changes.

Well, all's not bad for Vision. The addition of a cheap, square, glossy (the first page) magazine in future additions should help to keep Vision at the forefront of the best budget newspaper category for years to come. I wonder what Jon Snow would make of this.

The End of an Era

As the current editorial team prepare to step down after this edition, and I am flown to Guantanamo (they caught me this morning in the library), I can feel a tear in my eye. Damn that pepper spray. Well, I'd just like to thank Slowby Green for providing students with, to quote him, "what they need, not want they want". This explains why my request for topless women on page three was rejected. Instead, Nouse has helped the culturally under nourished masses to broaden their awareness of campus life.

For example, I bet you didn't know that York University now has a resident Ghostbuster who is researching the paranormal. Or that York students are amongst the bravest in the country. One even took on a hooligan brandishing a potato peeler. He kicked him in the balls and pegged it. Also, a naked student walked into their bath on campus, only to find a builder mixing cement in it. Hang on, someone's just knocked down my door...



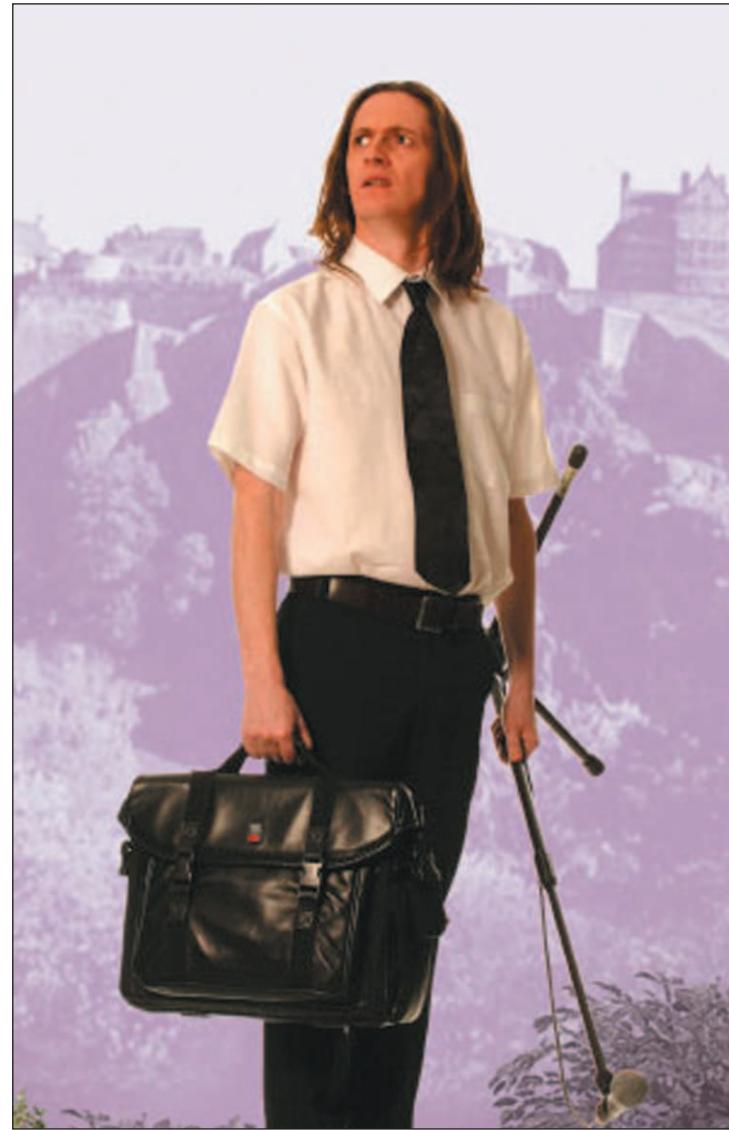
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Clockwise from top left: The Bluetones are back up North this week in Leeds; Daniel Craig - the first blonde Bond - in his new role as the legendary MI5 agent; comedian Ed Byrne comes to York on his UK tour and Kirsten Dunst shows us the flair and glamour required to play the infamous Marie Antoinette.

Live Music

Tuesday 7th November, InMe, Fibbers

Set soon to release their third album, this band from Essex are supported by the interestingly named Death for a Day in Fibbers this week. Tickets are available online for just £10 from www.fibbers.co.uk.

Sunday 12th November, The Bluetones, Leeds Cockpit.

Showcasing their recently released self-titled album, The Bluetones look set to become as popular as they were in the nineties in the noughties! Doors open at 7.30pm.

Sunday 12th November, Viva Machine, Fibbers

Take the chance to see this band right now. On tour with The Automatic in October, they are set to be huge. Catch them in Fibbers before they move on to bigger venues where the tickets are sure to be more than £5!

Monday 20th November, Leeds Met Union, Rodrigo Y Gabriela

For something a little more exotic, head to Leeds Met Union to be amazed by the range of music played by this pair. The two talented Mexicans play unique and unusual Latin rhythms on their guitars.

Campus Events

Wednesday, Week 5

Vanbrugh Bar Quiz, Vanbrugh

Every Wednesday head down to Vanbrugh bar for the best bar quiz on campus. Answer a few questions right and you could win one of the fantastic prizes that are always up for grabs.

Friday, Week 5

Planet V, Vanbrugh

It's time for Planet V again this week. The only event on campus with three rooms of entertainment and two bars open until 1.30am. Try the infamous and weirdly coloured cocktails with intriguing names - Hairy Navel anyone? Not to be missed.

Wednesday, Week 6

Music Request Night, Goodricke

Head down to McQ's this week to the Goodricke music request event. Usually a good night and something a bit different to other campus events.

Saturday, Week 6

Playboy Mansion, Goodricke

Next week sees the return of Goodricke's popular late night Chocolate event. The Playboy mansion theme means its time to drag out those bunny ears and tails again! You know you want to! If you like RnB music then this is definitely the place for you to be.

Art and Performance

Monday 6th November, The Vagina Monologues, Grand Opera House

Women from all walks of life share their most intimate thoughts, feelings and experiences. The 'Vagina Interviews' are not to be missed by any self-respecting woman! Guys- you may find this funny too!

Saturday 11th November, Ed Byrne, Grand Opera House

The Irish stand-up comedian is in York for one night only as part of his UK tour, which has seen him travelling the country since July. This is bound to have you laughing in the aisles.

Until 11th November

Art, York Theatre Royal

This sharp comedy drama sees three well known actors take to the stage. Andrew Dunn of *Dinnerladies* fame, Stuart Organ from *Brookside* and Daniel Hill who you may recognise from parts in *My Family* and *Judge John Deed* all shine in this play.

Until 14th January , The Art of Conversation exhibition, York Art Gallery

For the art lovers amongst us, this exciting exhibition showcases some famous eighteenth century pieces by Gainsborough, Stubbs and Devis.

Cinema

Marie Antoinette (12A)

Kirsten Dunst plays the young French queen in this Sofia Coppola film, which also has an unexpected role for English actor Steve Coogan. This is more a look at the fashion and style of eighteenth century France than historical fact. Will she utter the immortal line 'Let them eat cake'? Find out for yourself. A colourful and intriguing movie.

The History Boys (15)

Meet the boys who are making history! Based on the award winning play which has been on Broadway, this is one of the most talked-about films of the moment. For those who haven't seen the play, the film combines

themes of comedy and tragedy whilst looking at the English education system.

A Good Year (12A)

Based on the bestselling book, *A Year in Provence*, this film sees Russell Crowe team up with *Gladiator*'s executive producer Ridley Scott for a second time.

Casino Royale (12A)

The long awaited new James Bond film sees Daniel Craig stepping into Pierce Brosnan's shoes as the MI5 agent. Expect an action-packed two hours of the usual 007 shenanigans. Not out until 16th November but you can book in advance.

The terror of occupation

Nina Gora tells of her experiences in the West Bank and questions the legitimacy of the Israeli position.



Children in front of the controversial West Bank wall. Photo: Nina Gora

Imagine not ever being able to leave York. Not being able to travel to another town for work or even to visit friends and family. If ever you were issued with a 'pass' to leave - a rare and momentous occasion - then you would be travelling, trembling with fear, through numerous checkpoints. Soldiers with machine guns watching and restricting your every move from watchtowers and tanks whilst they swagger through the streets, fully armed.

This is a daily reality for almost 1.4 million Palestinians (the number of Palestinian Arab inhabitants in the 1967 occupied West Bank and Gaza strip). However, what I experienced in just a month was part of the torment shared by the 345,000 people who live in the overpopulated refugee camps dotted around the occupied territories which are separated by illegal settlements. During my time there I saw and heard things I never imagined I would ever be exposed to, things we would never imagine happening in today's world. This I found shocking, especially when you consider that it is done at the hands of soldiers of a country viewed by some to be the beacon of democracy in the Middle East. I was forced to watch while my Palestinian friends were kicked and hit with weapons; never flinching, because the humiliation was enough on its own, without the added shame of showing their weakness.

In the camp, we were sub-

ject to the constant presence of the nine metre high concrete wall, designed to segregate the population. Watchtowers - tall concrete instruments of intimidation that make up part of the wall every hundred metres or so - contain soldiers surveilling you from the inbuilt slits in the concrete. Within your own town, you feel and see a constant military presence. Soldiers have settled on annexed land, building beautiful and ostentatious housing, a contrast to the makeshift domiciles of Palestinians who were forced to flee their homes in 1948. For the majority of us, occupying another's land and then building on it is illegal, and according to international law this is supported by numerous regulations.

Children are also often the victims of the violence that occurs between the two conflicting sides. As I was teaching in a school for children I took some children on a school trip, an experience which was nothing like my memories of my school days. At the checkpoint the Israeli soldiers asked the whole bus load of children to leave the bus. We stood outside, silent as commanded, as the four soldiers walked up and down in front of us, analysing us like goods at the local cattle market.

Our documents were taken and then our names were called one by one. I was not overly patient, knowing full well that often whenever you leave one town to go to another the process of passing check points

can take hours. When my turn came, I had become pretty irate, and so when I was asked whether I was British I responded with a terse "Yes, unfortunately. My country supplies your weapons" at which the two soldiers laughed, saying "Yes, yes it does". Needless to say my feelings of pride for my country reached a new low, considering that these guns were being pointed at children and toddlers standing in the blistering heat.

In my opinion, this is what terrorising a population really is. I experienced first hand the unrelenting restriction of movement, the watchtowers from which soldiers can fire at any moment and the humiliation through physical and mental oppression. In short, this is what has become daily life in an occupied territory.

We have learnt to associate terrorism with individual actions that take place on sacred western soil. While these actions are horrific and indeed a form of terrorism, there is another kind of terrorism occurring on a daily basis in the occupied territories. This involves people living in a constant situation of well-founded fear because nothing in their daily lives is free from their personal awareness of the army's presence.

In Hebron, West Bank, 400 settlers are protected by 2,000 soldiers. This kind of terrorism should surely warrant greater media coverage, and yet it seems to be considered as almost unworthy of our attention.

International pressure for green action

By Tom Smith

The government-commissioned report on the prospects for the world economy, 'Should We Continue Polluting As We Do?', was released last week. Headed by Sir Nicholas Stern, the Government's chief economist, it catalogues the different economic possibilities that await us in different environmental situations and proceeds on a worst-case scenario basis. In this case, global temperatures would rise by five degrees Celsius by the end of the century, which, through various knock-on effects, would reduce global consumption per head by as much as 20 per cent. Poorest countries would be hardest hit. It

would cost us 1 per cent of global GDP to avoid economic catastrophe, which would involve stabilising greenhouse gas levels, which in turn is brought about through the reduction of emissions after allowing them to peak in around 10-20 years' time. We would, in effect, be swapping a massive recession for a mini one.

Reaction from the three main parties was unsurprisingly similar. The Prime Minister reacted to the report with front-page-grabbing clarity: "We can't wait the five years it took to negotiate Kyoto - we simply don't have the time".

The massive weight this report carries can be judged by the fact that both parties have stepped up their green PR recently. The environ-

ment secretary, David Miliband, announced a major green tax plan, while David Cameron has been feeding the media hints, from taxes on air travel to installing a wind turbine at 10 Downing Street. Gordon Brown said he wanted Britain "to lead the world in creating a stable and sustainable economy founded on low carbon".

The responses are both global (extension of emissions trading schemes to other countries) as well as national ('green taxes') in scope. The response from some of the major polluters has, however, been decidedly muted. The US, still the largest emitter of carbon dioxide, has yet to commit to any significant reduction in emissions. With the admin-



There is no unified action on tackling climate change

istration currently committing all its energies into the midterm elections, and the considerable power of the car and energy lobbies in congress, it looks unlikely that any comprehensive national programme will come out before the next presidential election. There does seem to

be more hope over the level of individual states; in August California became the first state to impose caps on carbon dioxide.

Large-scale action can work when all the participants are willing (EU), but is disastrous when the central authority lacks the will to do

anything politically or economically unpopular (as in China or the US at federal level). Tackling climate change through a patchwork basis will surely take too long - more than the 10-20 years recommended by Stern for the commencement of reductions. Without the kind of positive central authority to implement these measures, the market will surely circumvent the local regulations by moving the problem to a less-regulated region, probably developing countries - the people most at risk from climate change. Environmental consultant Dr. Matt Prescott recently said that these measures would require "immense moral courage" - not only to do it, but to be the first to do it. But who should act first?

Tories on the turn: Davis strives for policy direction

On a return to his hometown, David Davis speaks to Adam Sloan about his party's future

Life hasn't slowed down for David Davis, MP for Haltemprice and Howden, as might be expected after losing the battle for leadership of the Conservative party almost a year ago. Originally from York, David Davis grew up mostly in South London, later earning qualifications from Warwick University, the London Business School and Harvard University.

Prior to becoming an MP, David Davis was also a member of the Territorial Army's SAS unit and a senior executive for Tate and Lyle, with whom he spent 17 years. Under the government of John Major, he served as a minister in the Foreign Office before becoming Party Chairman and later shadowing Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, whom he jokingly describes as "less of a shadow, more of an eclipse really!" David Cameron has also recently appointed him as the party's Shadow Home Secretary.

For the first time in years, his party is enjoying a lead over Labour in the polls, but accusations of "style over substance" have been abundant. Many aren't quite sure where they stand anymore and they have yet to commit to any firm poli-

'People think of me as being right wing, but I am a libertarian'

cies.
"People think of me as being right wing, but I am actually a libertarian, and we as a party are becoming more and more libertarian." Since losing spectacularly in the 1997 General Election, many would agree that the Conservatives have been suffering from something of an identity crisis, and last May they lost their third consecutive general election.

"The first two of those elections we were never going to win, the public wanted to give New Labour more time to prove itself. What did happen though, was that William Hague started off with a very modernising agenda and veered to the right later on, and this was unwise. It is always unwise though to shift your principles."

Davis was quick to refute accusations that his party was "obsessed" with immigration in the run up to the General Election in 2005: "I was being interviewed for Sky News and they asked me six questions about immigration," he said, "question seven was 'why are you obsessed with immigration?'"

Hints of a change in direction in Conservative policy have been made since the start of the new leadership. The party has recently dropped its pledge to abandon university tuition fees.

"We are not going to reverse the Labour party policy. The funding of universities and having high quality universities is the most important thing."

Davis also made his views clear on the numbers of students now entering higher education. "I don't believe in the 50% target [of school leavers into higher education]. I don't think it is good for students and I don't think it is good for the economy."

On whether he was concerned about the possibility of students being deterred from coming to university by the prospect of higher fees, Davis said his concern was "less about deterring people, and more about the social deterring of graduates starting out their working life with huge debt hanging over them."

"But every alternative is more expensive, and this has happened because it is the only way that is affordable to the taxpayer."

Overall, Davis put across a very positive outlook



Shadow Home Secretary, David Davis, delivers his speech to University of York students. Photo: Adam Sloan

for the future of the Conservatives and more specifically his plans for being a future Home Secretary. "It is often said, 'Oh well, this is an impossible job' and there has even been talk in the last few months of breaking up the Home Office. This is nonsense. Of course, it has always been a difficult job, but not impossible. It has been made much more difficult in the last few years by the Labour government's behaviour."

Not known for his public speaking, and having admitted that it was his "crap speech" that led him to lose the Conservative leadership contest, Davis last week entertained a packed lecture theatre of 160 students on a fleeting visit here to York. Of course, there were no policy proposals, but there was plenty of rhetoric.

Many commented afterwards that he offered much in the way of problems and little in the way of solutions. Others were left with the distinct impression that the political tide was indeed turning and that the Tories' ten-year stint in opposition will soon to be coming to an end.

The Campus Soapbox

By David Toze
Amnesty International

For many, Amnesty International's total opposition to the death penalty may seem like one of its more controversial stances and there are some in the UK who argue that steps should be taken to reinstate it here rather than seeking its abolition elsewhere.

I, however do not believe any of these arguments to be adequate. Firstly, while it may be true that the death penalty leads to fewer criminals re-offending, this does not justify its use. There are of course criminals who are not executed but nevertheless do not re-offend after they have served out their prison sentences, yet in other nations these people may have been considered for the death penalty. To have executed them would have been to stamp out their life and future just in case they might commit crimes again.

The death penalty is irrevocable and as such must



Electric chair - still in use

be opposed if only for the sake of the innocent, victims of miscarriages of justice. New evidence can be obtained that clears supposed criminals and in the cases of those imprisoned they can be immediately released.

This is of course impossible in the case of those executed. One example is that of Nie Shubin, a farmer from North China. He was executed in 1995 for the rape and murder of a local woman, a crime that was later confessed to by another man. Judicial authorities admitted their mistake. The death penalty

can do irreparable damage to innocent people and their families and in some cases it follows unfair trials or confessions obtained through torture.

I believe the death penalty should be rejected even in the case of the guilty, as a violation of the right to life and as the ultimate display of contempt. To sentence a person to death is essentially to judge that there is nothing about them that could make them worth saving. Nobody is in a position to make such a judgement.

I do not mean to undermine the seriousness of the many terrible crimes that are committed nor to suggest that their perpetrators be treated lightly, I only ask that life imprisonment be employed instead of the death penalty and that these people be given time either to establish their innocence or to come to terms with their guilt. Most of the people in question are indeed vile people, but they are still people.

Blast from the Editorial Past

This week, **Nicky Woolf** delves into the Nouse archive and offers an insight into the history of personal ads and why they should be revived

"FOR SALE - One amphibious shredded wheat. Slightly soiled." was what first caught my eye as, yesterday night, still distressingly hung-over from the night before, I was scanning the microfilm of Nouse from May 9th, 1968. It was in the Personals section. I looked closer. "LIZ - how is your bikini?" confused me but "SUE - I love you really. Robin." told a touching story of a lovers' tiff reconciled. "SUPPORT the haircut for Cushman fund" was obviously a college in-joke, and "HARV. Won't attack you in Trieste if your Munich army supports me in Burgundy. Pete." speaks of insider dealings in an important game of Risk.

What I had on my hands was a sort of alternative history of the university; each little short was an insight into the life of a student, couple, or college. Intrigued, I read further. I found myself drawn into the world of 1960's studenthood. It was addictive. They were not so different from you or me back in the Swingin' Sixties. The left-wing political atmosphere among of students of the era crept into some of the ads: "FOR SALE: Cyprus. Apply Foreign Office" as did the sexual freedom of the time- "JILL- can I have my shirt and jeans back please -D." Some of the messages were utilitarian- "WHICHEVER of my friends has left their glasses in my room, please collect them. Sally Mitchison." -or cuttingly sarcastic- "STEPHEN wants to be a disc jockey. What a shame." -scarily voodoo- "WANTED: wax replica of SCR president. Also 2000 pins to accompany above." -or just plain odd- "COME BACK Banks, all is forgiven!" and I loved them all.

This, then, is an appeal to the powers that be to bring back Personal ads, and an appeal to you, the readers, to send in your Personals for the section. I'll do my utmost to get them published in the next edition, I promise. I have runneth over my word limit, so I'll leave you with one of my very favourites. "EXPERIMENTAL film group requires (a) Rog. Byron (b) Albatross (c) a Faerie Queen. Anyone who can supply one or all of these items, get in touch with C. Harries, Derwent. (Also needed: a Venerable Bede and a seaworthy shredded wheat.)"

Letters

Please send your comments and complaints by email to letters@nouse.co.uk or by post to Nouse, Grimston House, Vanbrugh College



Star letter

Porters praise

Dear Nouse,

I am shocked to hear the porters are going to be trashed. They are a college resource and if you love your college you should want to keep them; they are at least as important as college bars. I love the porters - especially Keith (followed closely by Ron then Phil!).

The porters have always leant a listening ear for the students. When you're down and lonely they are there with genuine concern. When you're locked out of your room in just a towel they're

there with banter (which I think they must be repeating by now). When you have post they tell you with a smile.

Now they are going to be pooled together. From one night to the next you will get a new porter. You will not know their name and they won't know yours. The days of the porters being a face you know in your college are numbered.

I cannot see why they are changing something which not only works, but works well. Maybe they are trying to get rid of college spirit or cutting down on the numbers of porters by stealth. Whatever the reason, all I see a loss for the next generation of York students.

Name supplied
Derwent College

Xtra-time for Halifax events

I was saddened to read that Daniel Whitehead doesn't like Xtra events, and as such is dismissing the Xtra VIP Card as a waste of money. It also surprised me, as I can't remember seeing Daniel at any recent Xtra events, and his article left me wondering where he collected his obviously highly-informed and balanced information from. Despite the fire alarms disrupting the Xtra Beach Party this Freshers' Fortnight, everybody I've spoken to so far has told me they really enjoyed the event and will attend in the future (whether or not they have a VIP Card).

I have also been offering students who were unsure about the VIP card the chance to try our events before they bought the card, with a refund on any discount they would have picked up had they bought in advance. Anybody who accuses me of wanting to "rip off" Halifax students has obviously not spent

any time with me as I've been working since January to get Halifaxers the best deal on everything they do here. Any student who hasn't enjoyed one of our events should get in touch, via complaints@halifaxcollege.com (or just by seeing me in person).

Also, the only people who college-loving students should be making voodoo dolls of are those who dismiss events run by the college committees that get people into campus bars, where the atmosphere is better than anywhere else, drinks are cheap, and the venues are far safer. On my dartboard will be going the faces of all those who make no effort to save bar provision (and the college spirit which that creates) on campus, and then blame failure on me and the JCRC chairs.

So far, the feedback I've heard from students only reinforces the work we've been doing, and I'll make sure we keep going until they tell me otherwise. If Daniel would like to help, he need only let me know.

Sam Bayley
President of Halifax College



After reading Daniel Whitehead's last editorial, a keen reader was inspired to create this voodoo doll of Sam Bailey, HCSA Chair.

Breakfast Blues

In response to last issue's 'Last Word': we have received food vouchers for the Roger Kirk Centre and yeah, it's pretty generous of the University. Officially.

However, since we have been given breakfast vouchers, the University must assume that we can't make it without a kitchen. But with Roger Kirk only opening at 9am, needing to be up at the library at 9:15, I can't get it from there. By the time I'm free, the Roger Kirk centre has finished serving breakfast.

I do have food in my room. I came prepared and there's nowhere else to keep it. But the Uni doesn't believe that this is good enough stuff for breakfast.

I haven't actually eaten anything at the Roger Kirk I've disliked - however, my nose is completely blocked and I haven't been able to taste a thing for a fortnight.

Hannah Bunn,
Goodricke College

Correction

On page 6 of Nouse dated 11th October we stated that the York VIP card costs £7. In fact it costs £6 and always has done.

It is the policy of Nouse to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please quote the date and the page number. Readers may contact the office by emailing socs12@york.ac.uk.

Your:Platform

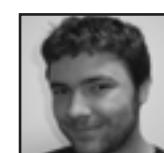
Enough of what our writers and editors have to say; we sent reporters to find out what York students think of today's issues

1. How safe do you feel walking on your own in York? 2. How do you feel about reductions in module choices?



Name: Helen Evans
College: Vanbrugh
Course: Archaeology
Year: Third year

1. It depends on the time and the area. I don't feel so safe walking alone after 10, so I try to walk with friends.
2. I don't like that idea. Students won't do the work unless they're interested.
3. No, everyone has the right to an education. Top-up fees will put people off and make university more elitist.
4. I've never noticed students being particularly noisy. Besides, it's not just students; my neighbours used to play really loud music.



Name: James Best
College: Alcuin
Course: PPE
Year: Second year

1. I feel fairly safe in York. I am aware of students being intimidated by people on the streets; a boy threatened to put a 'log in the head' of a friend of mine once.
2. I'm against restricting students' choices. I think it's spoonfeeding students instead of allowing independence.
3. I think non-work related courses will become unpopular with people from lower pay-scales.
4. Obviously student lifestyles can pose a problem for locals. If it only targets students, however, it's absurd.



Name: Olive Craig
College: Halifax
Course: Philosophy
Year: Third year

1. Generally I feel very safe, but that doesn't mean I'm not careful.
2. Cutting down on module choices isn't good, but making some modules compulsory isn't necessarily a bad thing.
3. To a certain extent I think university should be free for everyone but clearly that isn't feasible.
4. Some students can be noisy, but I don't think they should be controlled on campus. We're all students here so we should be allowed to be noisy.

Tennis seconds come from behind to trounce Hull in dramatic encounter

By Adam Luke
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

York University 5
Hull University 1

A COLD autumn evening provided the backdrop for the York University Tennis Second String to show what stern stuff they were made of when they faced Hull University in a Yorkshire battle.

This is now the second year that the Men's 2nds have been part of the Barclays Northern Conference, and after an understandable period of adjustment last year, the team seems ready to kick on upwards this term. They have certainly showed their credentials with this performance against a resilient Hull side, in their third tie of the season.

York got off to an excellent start with an impressive 8 games to 3 win in the first doubles rubber: Tristan Buckley and David Baker came out victorious. The scores were soon tied after a hard fought game was lost by York's Lewis Rujirawirote to the impressive Lee Guest. Things remained in the balance as the light faded.

York's Richard Pinching was able to bag the next point for the home team with a commanding performance against Hull's Martin Leek; Pinching's powerful side spin serve and equally powerful forehand caused problems for the opposition all evening. Pinching and Rujirawirote then teamed up to take both of their former opponents on in the second



Despite freezing conditions, York University's Second String impressed in both singles and doubles contests. Photo: Adam Sloan

doubles match of the night. The Hull pairing took an early 4-1 lead and worked well together at the net with some well placed volleys and smashes. However, a gutsy fight back saw the York pick apart their opponents with effective lobs and handy net play, eventually earning a fantastic 9-7 win.

Possibly the best game of the night was between York University's Tristan

Buckley and Hull's John Cavanagh, which turned into a marathon. After losing the first set 6-3, Buckley was able to turn his game around, winning the next two sets 6-0 and 7-5.

The match was packed full of lengthy baseline rallies, with both players exchanging blows repeatedly, resulting in numerous deuces and making the third set into a battle of bodies as

well as minds. After the encounter, Tristan gave his verdict: "I never really got to grips in the first set, but thankfully I picked up. I think I needed a longer game just to keep warm!"

The final game pitted York team captain Guy Baxendale against Andrew Riley. Baxendale got off to a flying start, winning the first set 6 games to 1; his offensive approach in the opening

altercations was too much for Riley, as sliced backhands and cruelly whipped forehands destroyed his opponent's game. However, the second set was a different story as Riley began to find his feet in the match, using good defensive tactics to stifle Baxendale's play. Baxendale, however, was just able to put Riley away after a tiring second set of 6-4, adding to York's comprehen-

sive defeat of their neighbours.

"I really made hard work of that second set, but I got the victory. I felt comfortable after the first, but went on to make a few silly errors," said Baxendale after his match.

So after a comprehensive defeat of one of York's local rivals, all that was left to do was to warm up with a well deserved drink.

Club greed to ruin international game?

By Chris O'Brien
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

THE VERY future of international football could lie in doubt as Belgian club Charleroi pursue a landmark court case against the sport's international governing body, FIFA.

Charleroi is hardly a groundbreaking name in world football, with perhaps their most notable honour coming in 1993 as losing finalists of the Belgian FA Cup.

However, the club have hit the headlines as they proceed in suing FIFA for an injury picked up by one of

their leading players - Abdelmajid Oulmers - whilst he was on international duty with Morocco.

The club feel they are entitled to compensation for losing Oulmers and are confident of success as they prepare a milestone case. Should the Jupiter League outfit be successful, the consequences could be detrimental for the very future of the international game.

A courtroom victory for Charleroi would pave the way for all clubs, regardless of size or stature, to appeal for compensation if one of their players is injured whilst representing their country.

The financial implications for many footballing nations, including the likes of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, would surely be unaffordable.

Charleroi's case is being backed by the G14 - an organisation which represents, in their own words, Europe's 'top' eighteen football clubs. Their support adds weight to Charleroi's case and has left FIFA sweating over a verdict which could deny the world's football supporters the chance to witness another World Cup.

Victory for Charleroi would see football associations forced to fork out



Abdelmajid Oulmers
mammoth amounts of money on expensive insurance packages to protect themselves, should injury to

players occur. This is absolute madness and cannot be allowed to happen.

International football is an amazing phenomenon. The 2006 World Cup finals showed how, in England and across the globe, the excitement and tension surrounding such a tournament can bring a nation together. The extinction of such occasions would suck the heart out of the game and would mark another success for the money-hungry businessmen who are enjoying an ever-increasing influence in this country's national sport.

It is a bitter blow for fans and officials alike at any

football club if a player picks up an injury, particularly when away on international duty. However, it is a fact of life that injuries do occur and the world's football associations should not be punished as a consequence. International football is a unique and special occasion for football supporters and every effort must be made to preserve it.

The case is waiting to be heard at the European Court of Justice and a Charleroi victory would have unthinkable consequences for the very future of our beautiful game. Let's hope the powers-that-be see sense.



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Postgraduate Recruitment Fair

Date: Wednesday 15th November

Venue: Dunelm House, Durham University

To register or for further information visit www.durham.ac.uk/postgraduate email pg.admissions@durham.ac.uk or call 0191 334 4570

SPORT

Dreaming of the cup: York City push on in their attempt to reach Cardiff in the cup of dreams

Page 15



Rugby firsts come out on top in dramatic derby day action



Impressive forward play and a strong desire for city pride was key to University of York's derby victory in their first clash since Varsity. Photo by Georgie Mabee

By Simon Lickley
DEPUTY SPORTS EDITOR

York University 22
York St. John 12

CROSS CITY derbies are well known for throwing up exciting, well fought matches and this encounter at the 22 acre field proved no exception.

For the University of York's 1st XV, this was a game that simply had to be won, for local pride if nothing else. This could be seen in the vigour with which they

approached this game, yet except for a sin bin late on, and the inevitable crowd taunting, it was generally a clean and fairly fought game.

The University of York's

keenness to win could be demonstrated by their impressive start to the game. Despite a cold wind against them, Paul Goodall opened the scoring which was then converted, giving them a confidence boost. This was enhanced still further after 16 minutes when sustained pressure paid off as another try was scored to increase their lead. Credit must go to

the forwards for this impressive start. Despite York St John being the more physical team, York's forwards were easily the more dominant in the scrums, rucks and mauls throughout the game.

Despite a couple of nasty looking injuries, York's other university slowly began to find their feet and make inroads into York's territory as the half wore on. This improved performance paid off as a converted try gave York St John some hope. However, this hope was to be fleeting, as a cheeky block saw the University of York

score their third try of the game and go into the half-time break 17-7 in the lead.

Keen to make amends for a fairly disappointing first half display, York St John were quicker out of the blocks at the start of the second half when they looked to get back into the game.

However, this pressure did not pay off, and they were soon to fall even further behind after a breakaway University of York try. Not to be deterred, however, York St John continued to pile on the pressure, and in spite of some excellent defending by

the forwards, scored a converted try to leave them trailing by ten points with 20 minutes to go. This was to give them some slender hope of pulling off a surprise victory. However, York St John seemed to lack the guile and desire to take the game to the University of York in order to achieve the desired result.

As a consequence, the University of York's lead was never really threatened for the rest of the game, indeed it seemed far more likely that the lead would increase. York St John's inability to clear the ball, owing to some poor

kicking, meant that the University of York spent the last 20 minutes camped out in their opposition's 22. However, as far as the University of York were concerned, there was plenty of frustration as they failed further to increase their lead.

A series of bad passes and knock ons prevented York from winning by an even greater margin. Nevertheless, a 22-12 victory over one of their fiercest rivals, with an excellent all round display, will act as a massive confidence boost for the rest of the season.

