

NOUSE




FRESHERS' SPECIAL

Everything you need to know as a fresher in York, from dating to decorating. MUSE 12-15

Freshers face housing crisis for third year

By Anjli Raval and Nicky Woolf

THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK is facing its third consecutive Freshers' Week accommodation crisis, which will see 200 Vanbrugh freshers forced into temporary accommodation on campus and 47 Langwith students into a hotel, until construction of residential blocks is complete.

Students whose accommodation blocks have not been completed will stay in shared rooms in Goodricke, Derwent and Wentworth Colleges, as well as rooms in the National Science and Learning Centre (NSLC), Franklin House, near Alcuin College, which normally acts as a hotel for conference guests.

Due to the late running of kitchen refurbishment, 47 new Langwith residents will have to spend their Freshers' Week commuting to campus by University-organised coach from the Holiday Inn Tadcaster Road, at a projected cost to the University of £30,000.

The Vanbrugh accommodation blocks are currently on a staggered completion schedule, which will see residents of Block 3 being allocated their rooms on October 26, Block 5 on November 16 and Blocks 1 and 2 at the start of the spring term. The displaced students will also be provided with meal vouchers.

According to the Director of Estates Services, John Street, the delays were caused by "the arrival of the wet weather in June and July" which "caused considerable flooding problems throughout the partially completed buildings, most of which were not wind and water-tight."

Street also drew attention to

the fact that the severe flooding in Hull "attracted a considerable number of sub-contractors to migrate towards the highly lucrative flood clearing and renovation work," leaving the Vanbrugh site without a sufficient workforce.

The University has suffered a similar crisis at the beginning of the previous two years.

In 2006, students in Langwith, Goodricke, Derwent and Vanbrugh colleges suffered cuts to facilities and kitchen refurbishment work that overran its completion deadline and in 2005, construction of the new Alcuin accommodation blocks overran, forcing freshers to be housed in the NSLC.

Anne-Marie Canning, YUSU President, was keen to stress that the University had "learned a lot from last year, and the problems they had with kitchens." She continued, "They've communicated a lot better... they've learned how to handle situations much better."

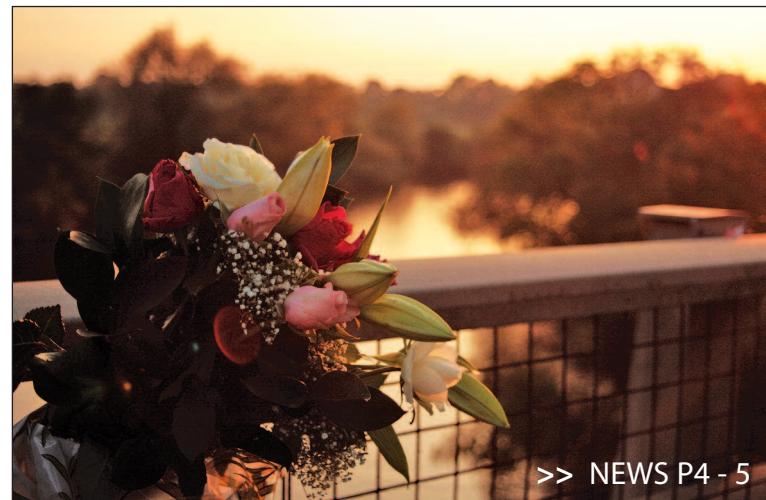
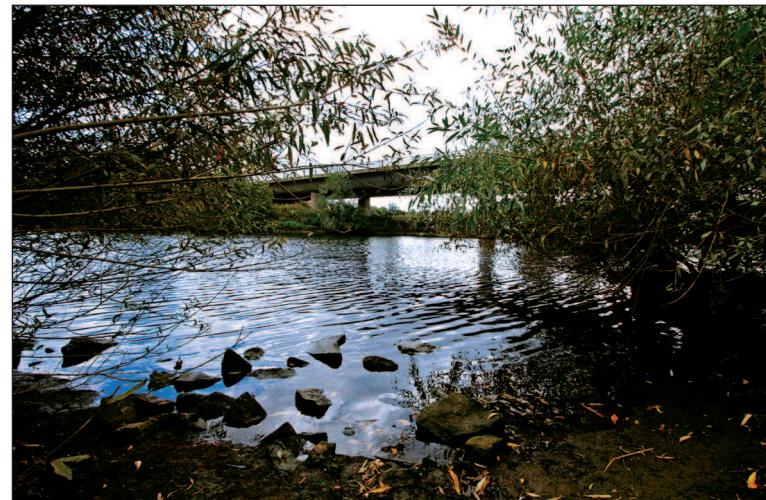
Vanbrugh JCRC Chair, Ryan Bennett, said "We've got a bit of a problem having our freshers spread all over the place, which is going to make it very difficult for our JCR."

"I sometimes think that the University doesn't recognise how difficult it is for us to organise a Freshers' Week. Obviously we put all our own money into printing things, and we're going to incur a lot of extra costs which we're not going to get back from anywhere. As things stand at the moment, we'll have to manage those costs ourselves, and we haven't had any help from the University on that which is a shame."

David Garner, the University's Press Officer, said: "These issues are due to a number of factors. It was always going to be a fairly tight

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Friends pay tribute to drowned York student



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The body of Robert Davies was found last week in the River Ouse near the A64 bridge, where flowers have been laid in tribute

Students face 15 fraud charges

A FORMER UNIVERSITY of York student and an accomplice have appeared in court charged with 15 counts of fraud after attempting to cheat in an exam. Elnar Askerov of Azerbaijan, 22, and his French accomplice Jerome Drean, 34, were both arrested at the University on May 11. >> NEWS P3

Date for Entwistle murder trial set

THE DATE FOR the trial of Neil Entwistle, the York graduate accused of the murder of his wife and 9-month-old daughter, has been set for January 28 next year. He will be tried at the Superior Court in Middlesex, Massachusetts. >> NEWS P3

Ex-YUSU President runs for York Outer

FORMER YUSU President James Alexander has been selected as Labour parliamentary candidate for York Outer, the University's local constituency. Alexander has appealed for student support at the ballot box. >> NEWS P6

York Rugby Union team defeated

YORK RUGBY Union team suffered an unfortunate 34-12 defeat to Sheffield University after a dogged display in their first pre-season match of the new season. >> SPORT P20

Ross Noble on eskimos and Dutch hookers

>> MUSE P4-5



Third freshers' week housing crisis forces students off campus

<< CONTINUED from front

timetable to get all those blocks ready for the start of term”

He continued: “As far as Langwith is concerned, the progress of the work has been complicated by the complexities of working in a building which has to be adapted to meet modern requirements. I think they’ve found that it took rather longer than anticipated.

“Unfortunately that is how it is, and we’ve got to deal with the problem,” he said. The displaced students received the news in an email and a personal phone call from the University.

Canning said that most students had reacted positively to the news, saying, “they’re quite cool about it, about finding their roomies. Some of them are a bit put out, obviously, but only naturally so. They’re anxious about coming to university.”

“I can appreciate that freshers might be upset, but we’re doing everything we can to ensure they get a good Freshers’ Week,” she concluded.



The new Vanbrugh accommodation blocks are due to be completed during the next two terms. In the mean time, Vanbrugh students are being housed in shared rooms in other colleges across campus

(well, I hope not!) I’m still generally a bit confused about where I’m living.”

Marianna Wilde, 19, from London, said “I’m really excited, actually. It’s a good chance to get to know people in another college.” Ursula Krawczyk,

18, from Hertfordshire, said that she was “a little disappointed that I wasn’t told sooner, but I can understand why that happened.” She continued, “I am a little more apprehensive now that I know I am sharing.”

“Freshers don’t care about the nuances of construction when they’re kipping in a Holiday Inn paid for with our tuition fees”

COMMENT > P10

YUSU regains key vote on Student Services

By Nicky Woolf
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE TWO VOTES of student representatives on the restructured Student Services Committee have been regained, following a YUSU outcry at their withdrawal last term.

The original proposal for the restructured com-

mittee provided no student vote, causing a storm of controversy among YUSU and the student media. But over the summer, the University Senate voted on an amended proposal keeping the student votes intact.

The new committee, which has a wider remit than the Student Support Committee it replaces,

makes recommendations to the Vice-Chancellor’s Advisory Group, one of the most powerful decision-making bodies at the University.

Two student representatives, YUSU President and Academic and Welfare Officer, will sit and vote on the committee, which discusses student policy issues such

as accommodation, alcohol and drugs, careers, college bars and social facilities, disability services and health provision.

The student vote is at the discretion of the Chair of the committee, Pro-Vice Chancellor for Students Dr. Jane Grenville, who is mandated not to allow the student representatives to vote on financial matters

of particular importance, such as rent-setting.

“We’ve never voted on rent-setting and we can understand why not,” said Anne-Marie Canning, YUSU President. “Jane’s pretty cool and we’ve got a good relationship with her. Our vote on non-financial issues was what we were fighting for and we’ve got it back.”

Student threatened with arrest by NYPD

JOSHUA CHAMBERS, a second-year Politics and History student at York, was threatened with arrest at the start of his placement year at Columbia University in New York. Security and press coverage was high on September 24 when President Ahmadinejad of Iran came to speak at Columbia University. A giant screen was erected for students to watch the speaker. Chambers said: “I had to push past crowds of protestors to enter campus, and had to show my ID to get through three different sets of barricades. At one point I tried to sneak past the barricade when the NYPD weren’t looking but they noticed and threatened me with arrest.”

VC declines Iraq visit

THE VICE-CHANCELLOR of the University of York, Brian Cantor, declined an invitation to the International Conference on Higher Education held in the Kurdish region of northern Iraq, citing “security issues” as a motivating factor. Cantor was given the option to nominate another member of staff to go in his place but this was also declined. Dr. Al-Hussaini, the conference organiser and a professor of architecture at the University of Westminister said he was “very disappointed” that no representatives from York would be attending the conference. The conference, which took place on September 4-6, aimed to assist the reconstruction of Iraqi higher education, improving the well-being and advancement of the Iraqi people.

York ranked eighth in national league table

THE UNIVERSITY of York has been ranked as the eighth best UK university in the new *Sunday Times* University Guide. The league table uses criteria such as teaching excellence and research quality to give the universities a ranking. York has consistently received high scores for teaching and academic quality and competition for places remains fierce. The University of York’s Deputy Vice-Chancellor Professor Trevor Sheldon has said that York’s high ranking “is a clear endorsement of our continuing commitment to academic quality, and the dedication and hard work of our staff”.

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As the controversy over Madonna’s adoption of a Malawian child dies down in the UK, *Nouse* goes to Malawi to investigate the local reaction, and finds that all is not as it seems.

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York student in fraud trial for cheating in exam

By Raf Sanchez
NEWS EDITOR

A FORMER UNIVERSITY of York student and an accomplice have appeared in court charged with 15 counts of fraud after allegedly attempting to cheat in an exam.

Elnar Askerov of Azerbaijan, 22, and his French accomplice Jerome Drean, 34, were both arrested at the University on May 11 when it is alleged that Drean was caught impersonating Askerov in his final year Economics exam.

The pair, who bear little physical resemblance, appeared before York Magistrates' Court on August 14, each facing 15 counts of fraud relating to the use of fake University identity cards. Neither defendant entered a plea at the hearing. The case has been adjourned until November 12.

Askerov is charged with six counts of possessing an ID card for the use of fraud, four counts of possessing a false ID card for use in fraud, and four charges of falsely claiming to be Drean. Drean faces five counts of using a false ID card to defraud the University, four counts of possessing an ID card for use in fraud and four counts of falsely claiming to be Askerov.

Drean is also accused of possessing £4,000 in criminal assets in his home, believed to

be the fee paid to him by Askerov. The conspiracy between the two is alleged to have lasted for 17 months, from January 2006 to May 2007, during which time Drean may have sat as many as four major exams for Askerov.

It is unclear why Drean, formerly a successful investment banking executive, agreed to undertake the risky venture for relatively little pay. Drean joined Credit Suisse as head of European equity derivatives trading in April 2007 before resigning less than five weeks later, allegedly as a result of the cheating allegations.

Two other men, York student Qiu Shi Zhang and accomplice Xian Zhang, were arrested on the same day for similar but unrelated offences. As Nouse reported in June, both pleaded guilty to multiple charges of fraud after Qiu Shi persuaded Xian, a student from Birmingham whom he knew from his home in Guangdong province, China, to sit his exams for him.

Xian was not an Economics student, and the court was told by the pair's solicitor that Qiu Shi was suffering "something of a breakdown" at the time of the offence. No money was exchanged between the two and both men were sentenced to 100 hours of community service.

It is believed that neither



Former York student Elnar Askerov (left) and accomplice Jerome Drean (right)

Qiu Shi nor Askerov were allowed to graduate due to the severity of their offences. A University spokesperson said: "We cannot comment on individual cases, however students found guilty of serious academic misconduct, such as impersonation, are normally failed, and are not allowed to re-sit their degrees."

Speaking at the end of last term, former YUSU Academic and Welfare Officer Amy



"A higher proportion of foreign students get accused of academic misconduct than home students. The university needs to give them more support"

Foxton said: "I think the international students suffer from more problems in this area. A higher proportion of them get

accused of things like academic misconduct. The University needs to give its international students enough support and not just take their fees from them."

Last year, there were 68 cases of academic misconduct where students were warned that another offence would lead to their expulsion. 15 were cases in which a student was caught in some form of cheating during a University exam.

Entwistle murder trial to take place in January

By Nicky Woolf
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE DATE FOR the trial of Neil Entwistle, the York graduate accused of the murder of his wife and 9-month-old daughter, has been set for January 28, next year. He will be tried at the Superior Court in Middlesex, Massachusetts.

A defence motion to suppress evidence, arguing that the police were acting illegally when they searched his house and found the bodies of his wife and daughter, was rejected by Judge Diane Kottmyer at a pre-trial hearing on August 30.

Kottmyer said that police were justified in entering the house on January 21 and 22, 2006 because



Neil Entwistle will face trial in America on January 28 next year for the murder of his wife and daughter

Rachel Entwistle had not responded to phone calls from family and friends, and feared for her safety.

"The officers never stepped out of their community care role," Kottmyer said. "In these circum-

stances, I find the entries into the Entwistles' home were reasonable."

Entwistle graduated from the University of York with a degree in Electronics Engineering in 2002. He met his wife at the University, where they were both members of the Boat Club.

He is accused of shooting his wife Rachel, 27, and their 9-month-old daughter Lillian with his father-in-law's handgun.

Their bodies were discovered by police in their home in Hopkinton, Massachusetts on January 22, 2006.

The police conducted two "well-being checks" on the home after being alerted by Rachel Entwistle's mother and several friends of the

family, all of whom had been unable to contact her.

The report of the Middlesex, Massachusetts District Attorney's states that "while initially investigators only detected one gunshot wound to Rachel Entwistle's torso, autopsy revealed that the cause of death was a gunshot wound to the head."

It continues: "The Chief Medical Examiner found Lillian's cause of death to be a single gunshot wound to the abdomen. Both deaths were ruled homicides."

Entwistle flew to the UK just hours after his wife and daughter were shot. His BMW was found abandoned several days later outside Logan airport in Boston by police.

The District Attorney's

report states that he was placed under arrest without incident on February 9 2006, at approximately 11:50am at Royal Oak tube station, by the Metropolitan Police Extradition Unit.

On February 16, 2006, before Framingham District Court, Entwistle entered a plea of not guilty, and was ordered held without bail by Judge Robert Greco.

Entwistle's name has been linked to several pornography websites and internet scams, including srpublications.co.uk and deephotsex.com.

These domain names are registered in Entwistle's name to the address of his previous student house on Heslington Road, just minutes away from the University of York campus.

Tributes paid to the life of Robert



Robert Davies was last seen outside Ziggy's nightclub early on September 23. The last images of him, captured on CCTV outside the club, are shown below

By Raf Sanchez
NEWS EDITOR

THE BODY OF missing University of York student Robert Davies, 20, has been found in the River Ouse according to police sources, though it has not yet been formally identified.

The body was discovered by a member of the public on October 1 near the A64 road bridge just outside York. Inspector Nigel Slater said: "We now believe that the body recovered from the River Ouse is that of the missing Yorkshire student Robert Davies. A post-mortem examination has been completed and while the cause of death is still to be ascertained it is not believed to be suspicious." A formal identification of the body has yet to take place and may not be possible until sometime next week, according to police.

Davies' family and friends have begun arrangements for a funeral, which will take place in Bury, his hometown outside Manchester, on either October 12 or 15. The University has arranged a coach to take students wishing to attend and return them to York later that night.

The discovery of the body comes at the end of an eight-day search for the third-year Chemistry student, who went missing after a night out with friends on Saturday, September 22. Both the River Foss and the River Ouse were searched by police and fire crews. An RAF

helicopter was brought in to aid in the search.

The tragedy comes just under a year after the death of third-year Archaeology student Robert Ailwood, 22, who drowned in the River Foss after a night out with friends in York. An inquest later found that Ailwood's death was alcohol related.

Davies was last seen by door staff outside Ziggy's nightclub on Micklegate at approximately 12.38 am. Davies, who had been previously been drinking in Monty's and the Priory, was refused entry to the club on grounds of intoxication, according to Ziggy's management. Police confirmed that they had reviewed the footage taken from the nightclub's cameras and agreed with the door staff's assessment that Davies was heavily intoxicated. One of Davies' friends was taken away in an ambulance, according to door staff.

In the footage, Davies is seen arriving at the club with a glass taken from the previous bar. The glass was later found by police further down Micklegate, according to Ziggy's management. Police have refused to comment on this detail, saying it is part of an "ongoing investigation."

Before attempting to enter the nightclub, Davies had told friends that he intended to return to his house on Heslington Lane, where he never arrived. A police spokesman said: "His normal route would have taken him over Ouse Bridge

to King's Staith, along the River Ouse to Fulford Road and on through Hospital Fields or Maple Grove to Heslington Lane." Police hypothesised that he may have gone to another bar instead of returning straight home.

Davies' parents held an emotional press conference on September 28, several days before the discovery of the body. Davies' mother Kim said: "He was on top of the world. I want to appeal to anyone who thinks they might have seen him to contact us. I want to hold my son again, I want him back." She added: "It's as though he has just been plucked..just taken."

A co-ordinated search of the University by police and ground staff checked over 4,000 rooms to see if Davies had returned to campus to seek shelter. Members of the public were also urged by police to check their sheds and gardens.

Davies' family has prepared a statement but will not release it until the body of has been formally identified. The University has released a statement saying "Although there has been no formal identification as yet, we understand that the indications are that the body discovered in the River Ouse is Robert's. Our thoughts are with his family at this extremely distressing time. The Department of Chemistry, and the University as a whole, is offering support to his friends here." YUSU has prepared a statement but have declined to release it until the body has been formally identified.

Parents of Robert Davies thank students for their help in search

THE PARENTS OF missing University of York student Robert Davies have thanked students for their help in searching for their son.

Using a Facebook group entitled 'Find Rob Davies', which now has over 2300 members, the missing student's friends organised volunteers to walk around York with pictures, appealing for information.

Over 40 students joined the September 29 search, designed to catch regular drinkers and club-goers who might have seen Davies the previous week. A number of

Davies' friends from his hometown of Bury travelled to York to take part.

Davies' father, Tony, expressed his gratitude to students saying "We're overwhelmed by the messages of support that we continue to receive, and are so grateful to Rob's friends for giving their time on Saturday night to circulate his picture around the pubs and clubs."

Third-year Chemistry student James Kozaryn, one of a number of students who helped to organise the search, said: "It was great to see so many people turn out to try and help

us find Rob. It shows how much people care about him and how much we want him back."

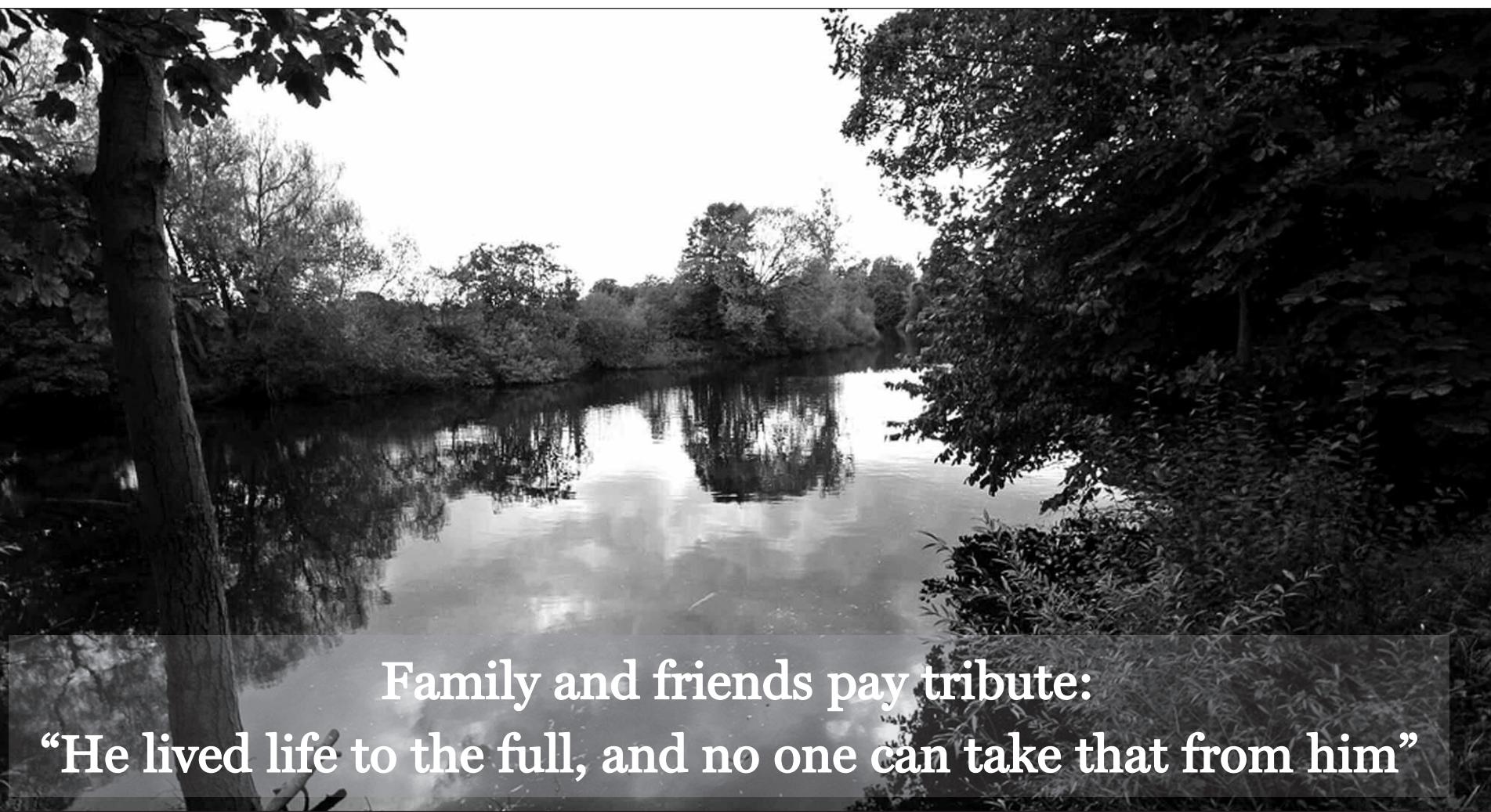
The search yielded a number of reported sightings, including a claim that Davies had been seen as late as Tuesday night. The witness said he saw someone who resembled Davies banging bottles together near the river, close to Skeldergate. Other reports from witnesses put Davies near Reflex at around 1 am on the morning he went missing. The police have been unable to substantiate any of the reports.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- September 14 - Davies returns to York.
- September 22 - Evening: Davies goes into town with friends.
- September 23 - 00.35: Davies tries to enter Ziggy's nightclub but is turned away by doorstaff. This is the last confirmed sighting of him.
- September 23 - Afternoon: Davies' housemates report him missing to the police when he fails to return home.
- September 24: Police and fire crews search the River Ouse. Davies description is circulated by police.
- September 26: RAF Sea King Helicopter joins the search.
- September 28: Davies' parents hold a press conference appealing for information.
- October 1: Body found in the River Ouse.
- October 2: A police source confirms the body is Davies



Davies as body is found in river



Family and friends pay tribute: “He lived life to the full, and no one can take that from him”

By Raf Sanchez
NEWS EDITOR

FRIENDS AND family of Robert Davies have paid tribute to the life of the third year University of York student whose body has been found in the river but not yet formally identified.

Davies, born November 20, 1986, was entering into his third year of a four year Masters Degree in Chemistry at the University of York. He was successful academically and had already secured a place in the final year of the programme.

Speaking to *Nouse*, Davies's younger sister, Helen, who has just begun her first year at the University of Lancaster, said: "I would like to thank everyone for putting so much effort into helping find Rob; we all really appreciate everything that you did and our thoughts are with all of his friends who will be grieving like us. My big brother really was a great guy and even though 20 isn't a great age he lived his whole life to the full and no one can take that away from him."

Davies was from Bury, a former mill town just north of Greater Manchester with a population of 60,000, and was an avid supporter of Manchester City FC. The religious views section of his Facebook profile was filled in "God is a Man City Fan". James Koziaryn, a third year Chemistry student, was a friend

of Davies from both university and home. Koziaryn was also raised in Bury and both men attended Castlebrook Highs School and Holycross College before moving to York for university. In their first year, they established Paintball Society, of which Davies was treasurer. The society collapsed after the two left but has since been revived.

The two travelled to Thailand over the summer with another friend from home, visiting Bangkok and attending a Half Moon party on Ko Samui. After Davies went missing in the early hours of September 23, Koziaryn and a number of other students helped to organise the volunteer search that went into York appealing for information.

Koziaryn said of his friend: "He was one of a kind, I've never met anyone like him in my life. He was never one to take centre stage but was one of those people who was always there for you. He was a fun-loving, genuine and selfless friend who was taken too early. He will be forever remembered and sorely missed."

Davies had little idea what he wanted to do after university. Koziaryn said: "We used to talk about it a lot. I was sure I wanted nothing to do with Chemistry but Rob really didn't know. He was like any normal student that way."

Speaking at a press conference before the discovery of the body, Davies' father, Tony, said

his son was "the kind of lad that anyone would be proud to have as a son. He was so happy to be going back to York for his third year of university, he loved the place." He added: "If you talked to him it might well have been about football - he was a big Man City fan - his music, or his recent trip to Thailand with his mates."

Davies was a skilled pianist who liked to play to help himself relax. His parents had bought him a piano before he returned to York as an early birthday present. He would have been 21 in November. Davies has been planning to teach his housemates to play after his return to York.

Andy Day, who also helped to organise the search said: "Rob was one of the nicest guys I've ever met and one of my best friends, and I know that me and all the people who were lucky enough to know him have lost a great friend."

Phil Lester lived in the same house as Davies in both his first and second year. When Davies went missing Lester posted a highly viewed video on YouTube appealing for information.

Lester has said: "Rob was an amazing friend and we miss him so much. He would always have time for his friends and was always there when we needed him. Our house feels empty without him. Thanks to all of Rob's friends for being so kind during this awful time."

A SELECTION OF ONLINE TRIBUTES

"Rob took things as they came, and was able to make the best of every situation. Aside from being hilarious and entertaining both in our house and on nights out, he was incredibly intelligent and thoughtful. He had an inquisitive, serious side, always questioning the world around him and thinking about the meaning of life. I hope that wherever he is, he's been able to find some answers."

"Rob, you were a true gentleman, a kind and genuine guy - a real credit to your parents. You made an impression on everyone you met, as is evident by the support given by all who joined this group and tried to help find you."

"May he rest in peace and may we all take a few moments out of our daily lives to reflect and remember not only Rob but his closest family and friends."

"I didn't know Rob, but the number of people that helped with the search shows true testament to his character and the University's spirit. This story touched the heart of many in York, even those who didn't know him. Everyone I spoke to that night wished they knew something that could help."

"Rob was one of a tiny number of people in York I felt comfortable with during this period of time. I could talk to him without being so nervous I sounded like I had a speech impediment. I was never paranoid about him. I always knew where I stood with him. He was an honest, friendly and damn funny guy that I am honoured to have known, and I'd have felt so much lonelier back then if I didn't know him. I feel as though I owe him so much."

"Rob was one of the nicest, most genuine people I've ever met, and the world has lost one of its good people. I'm so sorry Rob, you were too young we all miss you."

"I only met Rob a few times but I remember him as such a sweet and funny and smiley guy. I've been following this all week hoping it might all be a mistake. 20 is so unimaginably young, he had his whole life ahead of him. Rest in peace, Rob, I can't believe this has happened."

"Rob was truly a wonderful, funny, generous, sensible kid/young man, who will be missed by many. It was obvious he was brought up by a kind and loving family to whom my heart goes out. Never to be forgotten and always to be remembered."

Election hopes for ex-SU President

By Raf Sanchez
NEWS EDITOR

FORMER YUSU President James Alexander has been selected as Labour parliamentary candidate for York Outer, the University's local constituency. He has appealed for student support in a general election.

Alexander was elected as councillor for Holgate ward in the May local elections and almost immediately launched a bid for selection as Labour's parliamentary candidate. He defeated fellow councillor Paul Blanchard to the nomination in the first round of voting on September 19.

Alexander, YUSU President 2004-05, describes himself as "an ordinary guy trying to do extraordinary things." He has appealed to students to support his candidacy saying: "This is a marginal constituency, students will have the option to vote on campus and I think it is important that they vote for someone who has represented students before and will do a good job."

"Never in the history of the University has a former YUSU president stood for a parliamentary seat that covers the University. This could lay to rest the final question about the central bar and venue."

The new York Outer 'donut' constituency, which completely encircles the current York Central constituency, currently has no Labour council representation and is widely considered to be a two horse race between Liberal-Democrats and Conservatives. Alexander said this view was "complete rubbish."

Alexander has rejected claims that, at 24, he is too young to enter the House of Commons. He said:

"Even though I'm young, I've led a life. I came from an inner city poor school, I've come from a single parent background, I've managed to work hard and try and achieve something, I think, that sets an example to other people while at the same time also shows that hard work does pay off."

Alexander expressed confidence that Gordon Brown would call a general election for November 1. He said: "I think it [the election] can happen anytime soon. I worked a bit for the Labour Party and I've been saying for ages kind of October, November time. I've been saying it since February and everyone's said no, I was crazy. Now it looks like it's going to happen which is advantageous to the national party but not necessarily advantageous to me." Brown has since killed speculation over a November 1 election. A May election seems more likely, although it could be delayed until as late as 2010.

In aid of his bid for the nomination, Alexander created a number of videos which he posted on his website, time-4-change.org.uk. In 'The York Outer Video' Alexander says: "I really enjoy modern campaign methods and feel that video is more personable than leaflets ever can be." He stands by a projected image of York Outer, which turns into the Houses of Parliament at the snap of a finger.

Alexander was a controversial president, allegedly counting drinkers at Derwent bar as attendees during a UG, in order to reach quoracy. Alexander was also accused of authoritarianism after refusing to allow media stories on the arrest of his YUSU Treasurer Ozzy Atton for a violent assault.

COMMENT >> P10 - 11



James Alexander has appealed for student support in a general election

POLITICAL HISTORY

- March 2003: Alexander elected to the post of YUSU Treasurer with friend Ozzy Atton. Promises "to make finance more fun".
- February 2004: Alexander causes controversy by attempting to bring forward a no-confidence motion against Societies officer Dave Sammels. The motion fails.
- March 2004: Narrowly defeats former Goodricke JCRC Chair Tom Jones to the position of YUSU President in the fifth round of voting. Quoted as saying: "I've made it. This shows that someone from my background can be president."
- October 2004: Alexander clashes with campus media after refusing to allow the publication of the names of four students charged with violent assault. His friend and YUSU Treasurer Ozzy Atton is amongst them and is later imprisoned. Alexander is famously quoted as saying: "I would be prepared to defend a rapist if they were still a student."
- May 2007: elected Labour councillor for Holgate ward in the City of York.
- September 2007: Alexander selected as Labour parliamentary candidate for the new constituency of York Outer. Appeals for student support in a general election.

HSBC u-turn on overdrafts

By Jennifer O'Mahony
DEPUTY EDITOR

HSBC HAS abandoned plans to scrap students' interest free overdrafts immediately upon graduation, following widespread protest and pressure from the NUS.

HSBC had planned to charge students leaving university last summer 9.9% interest on their overdrafts.

Previously, recent graduates had their interest free overdrafts maintained for three years after leaving university, giving them time to find a job and begin to earn a salary.

HSBC had complained that the extended interest free overdrafts had been "abused" in the past, with graduates switching banks frequently and not forming a "long-term relationship" with a specific bank.

The change in policy was met with widespread protest from current students and graduates. A



HSBC has abandoned plans to charge graduates 10% interest

Facebook group entitled 'Stop the Great HSBC Rip-Off' attracted thousands of student members and quickly became a platform for NUS-directed action.

Wes Streeting, NUS Vice-President (Education) said that

Facebook was instrumental in the victory: "By setting up a group on a site that is incredibly popular with students, it enabled us to contact our members during the summer vacation far more easily than would otherwise have been possible. It also meant that we could involve our former members - the graduates who were going to be most affected by this policy."

Under mounting pressure, HSBC announced a reversal of the policy at the end of August. A press release from the bank stated it was "not too big to listen to the needs of [its] customers."

The decision was welcomed by the NUS, with a spokesman saying recently, "We are pleased that HSBC has recognised that this policy would hit graduates just as they are at their most vulnerable."

"Students often struggle in low paid, insecure jobs upon graduation and the prospect of having the security of the interest-free graduate service pulled from under their feet is clearly unacceptable."

YUSU accepts mistakes over ethical merchandise

By Raf Sanchez
NEWS EDITOR

YUSU HAS ADMITTED making a mistake in accepting six free t-shirts produced by Fruit of the Loom, a company frequently condemned by human rights groups for the exploitation of workers in the developing world, to wear during Freshers' Week.

AU President Jo Carter accepted the shirts, to be worn by YUSU Sabbatical officers during Freshers' Week, from sports merchandise company ADM, with whom the AU has a line of credit. Carter admitted that she, and a number of other sabbatical officers, including President Anne-Marie Canning, knew the shirts were Fruit of the Loom before accepting them.

Carter said: "With hindsight, the decision to accept the shirts was clearly a very, very bad move."

Canning said: "It's a sad situation." Both Canning and Carter claimed the action did not violate YUSU's ethical merchandise policy as no money was exchanged for the shirts.

Academic and Welfare Officer Grace Fletcher-Hall has refused to wear the t-shirts on the grounds they are not ethically produced but would not comment on the decision of other officers to wear them.

In a YUSU document entitled 'Ethical Merchandise', a section describes "shocking violations of workers' rights by clothing companies like Fruit of the Loom (including forced pregnancy tests in order to fire pregnant employees)".

YUSU have ensured that this year's Viking Raid t-shirts are fair-trade, unlike the Fruit of the Loom shirts used last year. A press release sent out by YUSU stated: "YUSU has worked very hard to find a supplier to provide 1700 ethical t-shirts."

Campus expansion plans compromised by early difficulties

By Nicky Woolf
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE £500 MILLION plan for the Heslington East campus expansion is falling behind schedule already, as concerns are being raised about financial issues and planning constraints.

Under the original schedule, the Phase One planning application was to have been lodged in mid-October.

However, at the time of going to print, the University is still in negotiations with preferred architects BDP.

In a recent statement, the University said that it was "still working on the planning application for Phase One of the University expansion," and that "the initial planning application is likely to be before the City of York Council early in the New Year."

Phase One of the development includes the departments of Theatre Film and Television and Electronics, a central hub structure incorporating social space and a lecture theatre, and the new Goodricke College.

The Heslington East expansion was given government approval in May 2007 and, if building plans are approved, will contain six departments, four colleges, sports, catering, bar and conference facilities.

It will be built on green-belt land east of Heslington

Village, and will raise the University's student population to 15,400.

Features of the new campus will include an advanced sports facility, including an 8-lane swimming pool, a dance and martial arts studio, climbing wall and a three court indoor tennis hall, an internal transit system and two 550-seat restaurants.

There are also plans to build a central multi-purpose 1500 capacity student

"It seems that some of the original, very exciting plans had to be scaled down a bit due to financial issues and the fact that at the end of the day everything's got to fit into a budget"

venue at which large-scale events such as Freshers' Ball and Grad Ball can be held.

Ben Wardle, current Goodricke JCRC Chair, said: "On the whole it's still looking really good. We've got fantastic architects, the designs are looking amazing, and it's going to be a great opportunity for everyone involved."

However, he expressed concern "that people will be moving into a building site, and things won't be completed in time for the new campus to be open in 2009-2010.

"It always was an ambitious target," he added. "I think now we'd be very, very lucky to make it through, though I still am hopeful that we will."

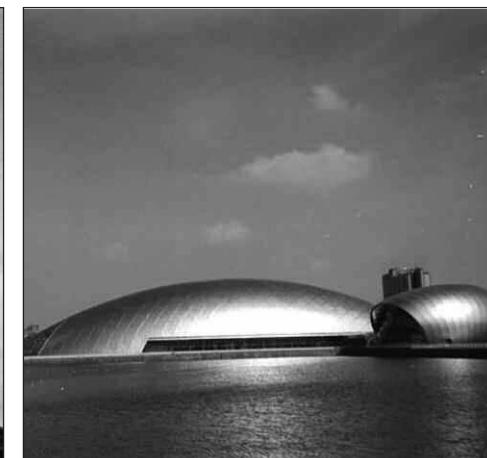
Goodricke College currently runs one of the most successful campus bars, McQ's, but architectural concept drawings of the new college do not feature a bar.

Wardle, who sits on the Heslington East Working Group which discusses plans for the new Goodricke, said: "It seems that some of the original, very exciting plans had to be scaled down a bit due to financial issues and the fact that at the end of the day everything's got to fit into a budget."

"They're not going to go on and keep college bars, by the looks of things at the moment. The student venue's been brought forward, from the information I've been told, and hopefully that'll be done as soon as possible."

However, Jane Clarbour, Goodricke College Provost, said: "Everything's under discussion, there's been no final decisions made as far as I'm aware." David Garner, the University's Press Officer, said: "No final decision has been taken on anything in terms of the detail, because the planning application is still being developed."

He concluded: "The decision on bars has not been taken."



Top: proposed plans for Heslington East phase one, including the new Goodricke.
Bottom: The Glasgow Science Centre, one previous project by architects BDP

Advertising ban costs YUSU

By Raf Sanchez
NEWS EDITOR

A SELF-IMPOSED ban on providing advertising for property rental businesses may be revoked at the next Executive meeting, after it cost YUSU and affiliated societies over £1,000 pounds in revenue to date.

The ban on advertising in the first term was proposed at a Senate meeting in Week 2 of last term by former Academic and Welfare Officer Amy Foxton. It was intended to keep first year students from panicking unnecessarily about the need to find a house early in the academic year.

The ban would prevent property rental businesses from advertising on YUSU promotional posters, term calendars and the AU Handbook.

Services and Finance Officer, Matt Burton, said it was believed at the time that the ban was imposed that advertising could be made up from other sources. Over the summer, however, YUSU advertising revenue fell by £1000. The decision will be reviewed at the first Executive meeting of term.

Burton said: "While finance is always one of your key concerns, that is not the main reason for the reconsideration. It's always a balancing act between financial needs for all areas of the Union against making sure our communications policy is not misleading."

Niall MacTurk, the Managing Director of Sinclair's, one of York's main property rental businesses, said: "We're a little bit annoyed that we are not being allowed to advertise. We spend thousands on the University and that is being curtailed."

In an attempt to overturn the ban, Sinclair's have given YUSU a written statement of understanding in which they promise not to allow first years to view houses before Christmas. The move is intended to allay concerns that the advertising can cause undue worry among first years about finding a house.

Bad Taste Magazine, which was told by the YUSU Marketing Department that it was not allowed to accept advertising from Sinclair's, stands to lose £475 if a decision is not reached before their print deadline.

Burton said that the minutes of the meeting in which the ban was decided on were never ratified, possibly voiding them as Union policy. When asked if he would encourage societies to ignore the ban as a result Burton refused to comment.

Gender equality awards for science departments

By Jennifer O'Mahony
DEPUTY EDITOR

THE CHEMISTRY Department at the University of the York has become the first in the country to receive an Athena Swan golden award for its commitment to furthering women in the sciences. The Departments of Chemistry, Biology and Psychology all hold silver awards while the University been given a bronze award.

The award, jointly funded by the UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (UKRC) and Equality Challenge Unit (ECU), was given to the department in recognition of its commitment to supporting women in reaching the top levels in the sciences.

Professor Paul Walton, head of the Department of Chemistry, said: "We are reaping the rewards of years of commitment to the Athena Swan principles."

"Women chemists at York - whether undergraduates or professors - are confident that their careers are treated seriously. We have a high proportion of senior women academic staff and a great awareness of potential obstacles to career progress."

Professor Graham Hitch, head of the Psychology Department, said: "We are committed to providing better career opportunities for women."

"This award recognises our dedication to the goal of removing barriers to women in science, helping us to make the most of the talents of our staff."

Survey results paint mixed picture of students' academic satisfaction

By Anjli Raval
DEPUTY EDITOR

RESULTS FROM an independent study published by YUSU and the Graduate Students' Association (GSA) have shown generally high levels of student satisfaction with their degrees, though alarming areas of weakness have been revealed in some academic departments.

The independent report made by YUSU and the GSA, includes areas covered in the Quality Assurance Agency's institutional audit, such as facilities, departmental feedback and supervisory support. Departments such as Computer Science, Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Maths flourish in most categories, while weaknesses are apparent in Management, PEP and Education.

Although only 25% of students responded to the student survey, the results still show the main trends and highlight key problems.

When students were asked how they would rate the facilities needed to complete their degree at York, 79% of those who completed the survey rated them as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'. The majority of students within this rating category were from Science related departments where facilities such as labs are considered to be vital for degree programmes.

69% of students rated



69%

The percentage of students who rated the library resources as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'.

"

Minimal contact time of as little as two hours a week is not acceptable. It is difficult to see where our money is being spent.

77%

The percentage of students who felt the amount of contact hours they received was 'About Right'.

"

Being a joint degree student is hard work. There is nobody to help you who can give you categorical answers to questions

the library resources as either 'Good' or 'Excellent'. No department rated the library as 'Excellent' overall and complaints were made about the limited amount of books available to students, particularly in the humanities.

82% of students understood the way their degree

was classified, with 55% believing that they knew exactly what was expected of them to be successful. About 65% of students felt that the supervisory support they received was either 'Good' or 'Excellent'.

77% thought that the number of contact hours received by students was

'About Right' or 'Adequate'. However some students have said that the amount of time was lower than it should be, particularly with regards to arts degrees. One English student quoted in the survey has said "motivation is difficult to find, even among the most dedicated students, when you are only required

to attend one two-hour seminar per week."

Although 87% of students rated departmental feedback as satisfactory or better, there was a huge discrepancy between subjects. 22% of those who completed the survey felt that academic feedback was 'Poor' or 'Appalling'. This figure com-

prised a large number of PEP, Politics, Electronics and Economics students.

Academic and Welfare Officer, Grace Fletcher-Hall said: "I've been working with the University on a proposal for common assessment periods, which will hopefully mean assessed work can be marked faster and thus give more opportunity for improved feedback."

She continued: "Other issues such as contact hours may require more of a culture change, but I really think it's important for us to keep up the pressure as these issues are vitally important to students."

Combined degrees were criticised for poor communication between departments, which has resulted in confusion for students who have constantly to switch between departments to find information. Different mark schemes were also highlighted as a problem.

73% of students believed the amount of assessed and procedural work set was 'About Right'. However, Management and Education students expressed concern at not receiving enough procedural assignments.

Graduates were shown to feel that the provision of research space and resources is generally good, however study areas in departments such as English and History of Art are well below average, especially for long research projects.

'Trevor' passes away at age 16

By Raf Sanchez
NEWS EDITOR

THE UNIVERSITY of York's most famous wildfowl, a golden-tinted Ruddy Shelduck, known variously as 'Trevor' and 'Fit Duck', has passed away aged 16.

Dr. Barry Thomas, a chemistry lecturer and expert on campus wildlife, confirmed that Trevor's body was found near the Politics department in Derwent in mid-July. Dr. Thomas said: "It probably died of natural causes, it was at least 16 years old. It was in a poor way for a while but had nothing obviously wrong with it."

He added: "A duck's natural life span can be up to 20 years. It would never achieve that in the wild but can in captivity, in a place like the



Campus celebrity, Trevor

University where it is protected from predators."

Trevor was introduced to campus six years ago with a mate, another Ruddy Shelduck named Jazzy. The pair were partners for several years before Trevor's death, but were never able to successfully mate due to biological incompatibility.

Dr. Thomas said there were currently no plans to introduce more Ruddy

Shelducks to campus as there "are no funds available for buying ducks." He added: "If the Students' Union would like to fundraise to buy more Ruddy Shelducks we would be grateful."

Last term, *Nouse* reported that Trevor may have been depressed, according to the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB). A spokesperson for the society said: "It is possible that birds can suffer from something resembling the human emotion of depression."

Trevor is survived by his current mate, a female Common Shelduck named Jazzy. The pair were partners for several years before Trevor's death, but were never able to successfully mate due to biological incompatibility.

Trevor enjoyed near-celebrity status on campus during his life, with two rival Facebook groups set up in his honour.

The University of York campus is a major wildlife preserve with over 200 acres of landscaped parkland. As well as numerous duck varieties, the campus is also home to a number of swans and geese.

According to the website DuckDensity.org, the University of York has the highest density of ducks of any university in the UK, with a score 15.2 ducks/rood. The website, set up by former York students with an enthusiasm for ducks, calculates that there are .08 ducks per student at the University. Leeds University comes a distance second with just 6.5 ducks/rood.

York in University Challenge success

By Helen Citron
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

DESPITE A SHAKY start, The University of York's University Challenge team of John Bull, James Quelch, Isabel Buxton and Simon Waddington are through to the next stage of the competition after a victory over St George's, London.

After 10 minutes of questions, St George's led by 60 points to 35. York however steadily gained confidence, eventually overtaking the London university.

A round focussing on Milton's 'Paradise Lost' was greeted with elation from the York team, which consisted of two English Literature students. At one

point, Paxman reprimanded York's team as Waddington, conferring with his teammates on a question about politicians said, "Nigel Lawson was a drinker", leading Paxman to warn: "watch out for the libel, will you." Another notable moment came as Quelch interrupted Paxman, providing an answer to a question which had barely been asked.

St George's, a medical school, fared well on science-based rounds with questions on blood and black holes proving particularly fruitful. However, despite persistent efforts to regain the lead, York's team remained on top with Paxman concluding by congratulating York on their final score, winning 175 points to 130.

Who's YUSU?

Profiles of the main players and analysis of the key issues facing this year's Students' Union Executive

ANNE-MARIE CANNING



PRESIDENT

- Former James Chair
- Graduate in English and Related Literature with 2:1
- Promises to restore YUSU's "charisma"
- Responsible for organising NUS referendum

PROFILE

Anne Marie Canning came to the post of YUSU President promising to restore "the charisma" of the sabbatical team. As well as being a highly effective campaigner, she hopes to bring a pharmacy to campus. Seen as being less prone to gaffes than Service and Finance Officer Matt Burton, with whom she was in a relationship at the time of the election, Canning is a unifying presence on the Executive. She is seen as savvy and efficient, having brought together the range of ideologues and pragmatists that currently make up the sabbatical team. Canning is hugely ambitious; having been Head Girl at her senior school, she became involved in the running of YUSU as a first year without an elected post.

MATT BURTON



SERVICES & FINANCE

- Former Goodricke Chair
- Graduate of Management with unknown degree class
- Spent £800 of JCRC money on a Hasslehoff impersonator
- Ambitious financial policies sometimes poorly realised

PROFILE

Despite his brief stewardship as Service and Finance Officer, Matt Burton has already been at the centre of a number of controversies. On election results night he publicly accused opponent and former Vanbrugh chair, Mickey Macefield, of "playing dirty" and claimed to have "wiped the floor with him." Burton has a sharp business mind, and is capable of managing YUSU's financial assets, although he is sometimes over-ambitious in his proposals. His manifesto pledge of opening a student venue in the city was met with derision by some, and the plan of having his own internet company B3 host YUSU's website was thwarted. Burton's controversies are seen as a potential source of embarrassment for the President.

SAM BAYLEY



SOCIETIES & COMMUNICATIONS

- Former Halifax President
- Accomplished football referee and ex-Harrods sales executive
- Graduate of Management with unknown degree class
- Long-running feud with ex-Halifax Chair James Flinders

PROFILE

Running successfully on an electoral ticket that promised streamlining, efficiency and experience, Sam Bayley is well set to carry out his responsibilities as Societies and Communications Officer. He has already acted upon his manifesto promise to update the YUSU website. A stickler for efficiency, he has pioneered a new system for running the YUSU office on an appointment-only basis. Compared to the expansive personalities of Canning and Burton, Bayley's style is more reserved. However, he has been one of the driving forces behind the new smartening-up of the YUSU office, and insists upon wearing a suit every day. His move to ban jeans from the YUSU office was met with resistance from other sabbs.

JOEY ELLIS



DEVELOPMENT & CHARITIES

- Former Student Action Chair
- Ex URY Station Manager
- Graduate of English Language and Linguistics
- In a long-term relationship with former YUSU President Rich Croker

PROFILE

Unlike her Executive colleagues, Ellis is from a from a largely non-YUSU background. Her position as Student Development and Charities Officer was the only uncontested sabbatical position, though she is generally seen as a well-qualified candidate for the job. Ellis has an extensive charity and fundraising background, having served as both RAG and Student Action rep for Vanbrugh College, going on to become YUSU Student Action chair last year. She played an important role in helping to achieve RAG's record-breaking £33,000 total for last year. Promising to "raise the profile on campus of Student Action and RAG", Ellis is optimistic that RAG can again exceed last year's total.

GRACE FLETCHER-HALL



ACADEMIC & WELFARE

- Former Policy & Campaigns Officer
- Graduate in Politics and Philosophy
- Poor relations with Rich Croker
- Shaved her head after defeat in York council elections

PROFILE

Academic and Welfare Officer Grace Fletcher-Hall provides an ideological counterpoint to some of her more pragmatic Executive colleagues, coming from a background of high-profile student activism. She ran as Labour's candidate for the local council ward of Heslington, but was beaten by the incumbent Liberal Democrat despite energetic campaigning. A strong feminist voice, Fletcher-Hall is sometimes accused of taking political correctness to unnecessary extremes, having at one point attempted to remove 'lads mags' from the shelves of Your:Shop. She has already broken ranks with her fellow Sabbatical officers this year by refusing, for ethical reasons, to wear their Fruit of the Loom t-shirts

JO CARTER



AU PRESIDENT

- Former AU Press & Publicity Officer
- English and Related Literature Graduate
- Former Hockey Club President
- Took part in a sponsored bike ride from York to Amsterdam

PROFILE

Jo Carter beat the former AU Vice-President Nick Hassey by a narrow margin to obtain her position as AU President. She has followed in the footsteps of her predecessor, Tom Moore, setting herself the task of creating a more efficient, coordinated and accessible AU which has the potential to be an effective charity fundraiser. Carter has also promised to do more for low profile clubs which don't receive the same levels of sponsorship as the major sports clubs and aims to better York's position on a national level. Until the recent Fruit of the Loom incident, when she sourced unethically produced t-shirts for the sabbatical officers to wear during Freshers' Week, Carter has kept a relatively low profile.

WEB-CANNING

This week's snapshot from YUSU's web-cam



In the interests of accountability, and moderate voyeurism, Nouse

will be monitoring the comings and goings in the YUSU office via

webcam. The best moments will be brought you in these pages.

Fairtrade, NUS and Heslington East likely to top union agenda this year

MICKY ARMSTRONG famously announced that the year of his YUSU Presidency, 2006-07, was to be a 'Year of Reform'. Things did change, but Micky's reforms left YUSU battered and on the verge of a constitutional crisis. Incoming President, Rich Croker, declared a 'Year of Consolidation' in response, designed to restore YUSU's confidence and allow it to regroup.

Societies and Communications Officer Sam Bayley has cautiously

avoided giving this year any such title aside from, "A really good year, hopefully." Initially, a 'Year of Expansion' seemed fitting with the prospect of a Union venue in the city and negotiations for student facilities on Heslington East likely to be a main focus.

Recent developments make that title less apt. The city venue seems all but forgotten in light of the University's claimed commitment to a central student venue on the new campus, while plans for a YUSU

juice bar have been scrapped after the University announced a nearly identical venture in the Roger Kirk Centre. Still, lobbying for student facilities on Heslington East will remain a priority for this Executive team and probably for many to come.

Much time will be spent in the first term organising the NUS referendum and working to inform students on the issues surrounding the question of disaffiliation. While there is little organised opposition

to the NUS on campus, the issue will still have to be handled carefully if YUSU's commitment to direct democracy is to be demonstrated. A low turnout is likely to be seen as a failure to overcome voter apathy.

The issue of ethical merchandise has already flared up this term and YUSU will be keen to avoid another embarrassment. The Ethical Merchandise motion passed in March is a step forward and some elements in the Union may push for further measures.



Welcome to York

If you're reading this, there's a good chance that these are your first days as a student at the University of York. First of all - welcome. You've probably a fair idea already why York is a great place to be a student (after all, you must be here for a reason) and there are plenty of reasons to be pleased you're here. But now you've arrived, you can mostly forget all about them: priority number one is getting settled, getting involved, and becoming a member of the community.

That's where Nouse can help, and this is as good a time as any to introduce ourselves. We are one of two newspapers published on campus, coming out three or four times a term, aiming to keep you informed on what's going on around campus. We report on news directly related to York students, as well as allowing them make their opinions heard. We also provide full coverage of University sports, and cover both student and national politics. In addition, our *Muse* supplement aims to carry the very best student writing on the arts, student life, and everything else under the sun. Hopefully, we'll keep you informed, entertained and occasionally amused over the next year.

That's not the end of the story, though. Nouse is written and produced entirely by students, for students, and the bulk of the newspaper is produced by more than forty people who hold various editorial and non-editorial positions. You can see their names at the start of the paper. As well as these, countless others submit writing, take photographs, draw artwork and help behind the scenes to make the paper happen. If you're interested in joining them, we'd like to hear from you. Come to one of our meetings, or email socs12@york.ac.uk.

Nouse has something of a reputation for campaigning in print on the issues that affect students, and certainly this is a big part of what we do. However, we also try to remain fair-minded and accurate, and we have no political affiliation or leaning: we are the sum total of our members, and anyone can join and have a say in what we publish. If you decide to, we hope to see you around. If you don't, enjoy the paper, and have a fantastic year.

Uncommadation

It seems a great shame that we need to use the first issue of the year to report that once again the University has failed to provide new freshers with the facilities they were promised. Last year, new students in Langwith and Goodricke arrived to find a lack of basic cooking facilities, totally unacceptable in a University that provides only basic catering for resident students. You might think that those responsible for the new wing of Vanbrugh college would have taken all measures possible to avoid a repeat scenario, but this week 47 new students have arrived in York only to be put up in a Holiday Inn pending the completion of their residences.

The excuse being offered is that unforeseen circumstances, specifically inclement weather over the summer, delayed construction. If this was the first instance of such a disaster (and if you doubt the appropriateness of such a loaded term, put yourself in the shoes of those unlucky Vanbrugh students left far from campus in their first week at University) the lack of proper contingency planning would be forgivable.

It is not the first instance, and as such it seems fair to conclude that the University is perfectly content to play fast and loose with its promises to prospective students. If the space *might* not be there, the places should not be offered. Either ensure that adequate time is allotted for building new residences and renovating old ones, or don't offer shaky promises. End of story.

Undoubtedly, this storm will blow over, and the students currently kipping in hotel rooms won't really lose out in any significant way. Indeed, they're probably guaranteed martyr status for the rest of this year. But that doesn't excuse the University's actions: they had better get it right next year.

Robert Davies

Nouse wishes to express its deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Robert Davies, the University of York student who tragically lost his life at the end of September. The extent of the outpour of emotion and, more importantly, the action from his peers in York and at home in Bury is a measure of how much he was loved by those around him. By all accounts Robert was a kind, thoughtful and genuine young man who deserved all the best life could offer. He was a tribute to his family, hometown and university and we can only hope that we have done his life some small justice in these pages.

Our thoughts are with those who have lost him and we sincerely hope that they are able to come swiftly through the agony and shock that a death so sudden and unexpected inevitably brings. At this time of year we think especially of Robert's younger sister, Helen Davies, who had only just begun her own university career at the University of Lancaster when her brother passed away. We hope that her three years at university are bright ones and will not be permanently marred by this tragic start. Judging from the inspiring behaviour of Robert's friends and colleagues to date we have little doubt that any length will be gone to to offer his family any support possible in this incomprehensibly difficult time. We recognise the thoughtful and entirely appropriate gesture the University has made in offering to supply a coach for those who wish to attend Robert's funeral.

There is perhaps some comfort to be derived from the knowledge that Robert's life seemed, from the testimony of those that knew and love him, a happy and a full one. Rest in peace, Robert.

Comment & Analysis

How to accommodate the University's incompetence

Freshers' week in a Holiday Inn is a bad joke



Jenny O'Mahoney
Contributing Writer

working in a building which has to be adapted to meet modern requirements. I think they've found that it took rather longer than anticipated."

Thanks for that, David: the freshers who thought they were moving into a college but who are now kicking back in a Holiday Inn paid for with our tuition fees will take some comfort in that particular comment. After the recent painful renovation of various accommodation buildings around campus, including Langwith Blocks B and C in 2006, surely the "adaptation to modern requirements" was nothing new for University contractors.

Amid all the excuses, what must be remembered above all is that this most

'This year's Freshers won't be deluded into any false hopes of University competence'

recent of a long line of fiascos again affects the cohesion of student life, as Vanbrugh students are scattered hither and thither around campus. Ryan Bennett, Vanbrugh JCRC Chair, rightly asks whether the University realises the strain these upheavals put on student organisers, who give up their own time to help freshers feel comfortable and welcome.

YUSU will attempt to pick up the pieces, but the compensation which will come from the University's already battered and careworn pocket will anger students who feel that with a little more care on the University's behalf, the damage to student life and University funds could have been minimised.

Last year, when *Nouse* printed leaked details of a "freshers sex bingo" game devised by the then sabbatical team, debate raged about how much professionalism it is reasonable to expect from Union officers. When one high spirited member of last year's team sent a

Watch out: it's the Professionals

Do sharp suits and fighting talk make this year's Union a force to reckon with? Well, maybe



Heidi Blake
Editor

new academic year brings with it a number of things. Doves of bright-faced freshers tumble noisily around campus, upsetting the wildlife and vomiting into the lake; sullen hosts of jaded second and third years slope sluggishly about, muttering darkly about the youth of today, and newly mandated sabbatical officers occupy the Student Centre, full of the promise of their own brilliance.

Members of YUSU start the year energetic, earnest and open to all comers. Sabbatical officers will gaily entreat you to "Come and say hi when you see me in YourShop! Find me in Toffs and I'll buy you a drink!" Sadly, the executive core of the SU rarely maintains this level of professional peachy-cleanliness beyond the first couple of weeks of term.

One of the main reasons sabbatical officers come a cropper is their inability to decide whether they are freewheeling, zany students or serious executives. On the one hand, they are fresh out of their undergraduate nappies; chiefly mandated to organise piss-ups and distribute free condoms. On the other, they stress the gravity of their welfare role with their hands on their hearts, claim thousands of pounds' worth of your tuition fees in salary, and vigorously defend their right to censor the student media.

Perhaps she has a point. Is true professionalism really just sartorial? Well, yes, according to Sam Bayley, who swears "All you have to do to be professional is stick on a suit. If you dress right, people take you more seriously."

When asked what YUSU's key objective is to be this year, other than "being professional", Sam Bayley's answer did not inspire a great deal of

mock invitation to a gay orgy out to hundreds of students, many felt an important line had been crossed.

Against this grubby backdrop, the news that this year's sabbatical officers have chosen "professionalism" as their buzzword should be met with happy relief. Anne-Marie Canning's newly inaugurated team are to be found, even as you read, beavering away behind immaculately tidy desks in a freshly spruced office, suited and booted for all the world to see on their new 24-hour webcam.

The once notorious Matt Burton (Services and Finance) and Sam Bayley (Societies and Communications) are pioneering a strict rebranding programme, and are not afraid to rap the knuckles of those who fail to adhere to it. It's YUSU, but the way, not the SU, and what was

the Academic and Welfare drop-in service is now the nauseating "Your:Support".

A move to ban jeans and casual clothing from the office altogether met resistance from Grace Fletcher-Hall, this year's resident fly in the ointment, who demanded her right to dungarees and denim, on the basis that "If I don't look like a student, students won't want to approach me."

If putting on a suit and tidying up the office helps with being taken seriously, then by all means, let's. But I hope that this year's team will harness their starburst of start-of-year zeal and remember that what we ask for when we demand their professionalism is a Students' Union which is run by students for students, and run well. We want officers with fire in their bellies, who turn their hands to the task with passion and ability, and who never forget that it is our money and electoral mandate which put them where they are. If they could only get this right, they could come to the office in sackcloth for all I care.

But professionalism is more than just a euphemism for dressing up in daddy's clothes. It is about serious and skilled application to the task at hand.

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The mind boggles. Is this University so lacking in ideas that it will steal them from the Students' Union? Of course, their Press department deny that they copied the idea. But... come on. A coincidence? Really?

That's not all. Burton's juice bar would have been self-contained and, so the dream went, pay for itself within three years. The University's proposal, however, involves scaling-down the Roger Kirk Centre's coffee bar. No more custom baguettes, no more jacket potatoes. I like those baguettes.

There are two issues here. First is the University's underhand, miserly conduct. They think of nothing but the bottom line.

Here's the rub; a University cannot be run for profit. Perhaps, with government help, it can break even; but a University's top priorities should be education and research. Profit should be well down the list, alongside well-kept lawns and adequate parking.

The second issue is this University's monolithic incompetence. Take Costcutter. YUSU had drawn up proposals for a grocery and general store that would serve the campus; essentially a much larger YourShop.

But the University wasn't having any of it. It opened its own shop and paid through the nose for a Costcutter franchise - a franchise that means that Costcutter makes very little profit at all, and is pretty expensive for students too.

This story does not have a happy ending. The University will get their smoothie bar and, unless we make a noise, we will lose our baguettes and jacket potatoes. The smoothie bar will be neither as profitable nor as good as it would be if it was student-run.

It does have a moral, though. Don't let the University get away with this sort of thing. Rage, rage against the dying of the jacket potatoes. Welcome to York, freshers.

From Jim'll Fix-it to Brown's bench: but can students trust him?



Sam Thomas
Comment Editor

day that Gordon sends to achieve his objective of becoming the first Union alumnus to make the House of Commons. The boundaries of his seat seem - at least by a quick count of great big houses and shiny cars - to encompass York's leafiest, Tory-est quarters.

This isn't to say that Alexander isn't going to put up a fight. Perhaps only people like me who have been in York far too long will remember his tenure as SU President, but it demonstrated him to be a shrewd communicator and a zealous politician.

He also exhibited some unscrupulous tendencies that make me nervous about his suitability for higher public office, chiefly his willingness to use YUSU's clout to prevent campus newspapers from reporting on a violent assault committed by then Union Treasurer Ozzy Atton. The principle might have been defensible (although that too is

debatable) but selectively applying it for a close friend was not.

There's certainly no questioning his hunger to win this time round, evident in his self-produced election video on YouTube (<http://tinyurl.com/yqgqx4>), which adopts the format of an '80s weather forecast to portray an earnest, impassioned underdog, somewhere between David Copperfield and a Bible salesman. His rhetoric is of service to residents and of fighting for their interests, but I can't help thinking that his spiel remains just that: rhetoric.

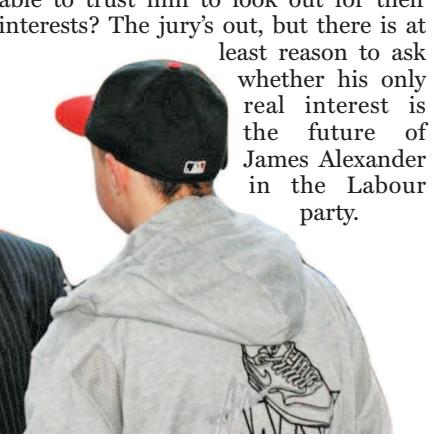
I find Alexander interesting because he is the embryonic form of the classic career politician, given a spit and polish just in time for the rolling news channels. As YUSU President, Alexander was solely accountable to his electorate - the students. As a Labour party candidate, this won't be the case, and surely this is the delicate tightrope act of the career politi-

cian: professing to be interested in public service, while bending your allegiances to those of a particular party that may have concerns very far removed from those of your own constituents.

None of the main political parties have shown much interest lately in a healthy level of internal debate, of the kind that would allow MPs genuinely to fulfil their representative responsibilities.

When Gordon Brown calls the next election, Alexander will be asking students for their support, but it's unclear what real representation he

will offer them in return. Will they be able to trust him to look out for their interests? The jury's out, but there is at least reason to ask whether his only real interest is the future of James Alexander in the Labour party.



Hug a hoodie: one of Alexander's promotional photos

Heroes, villains, and smoothies



Nicky Woolf
Contributing Writer

This is a saga about a smoothie bar. But it is about more than just a smoothie bar. It is about freedom. It is about justice. It has all that a good story needs. It has a hero, of sorts. It definitely has a villain; the big corporate kind. It has theft and betrayal. It has sandwiches, too. Endangered sandwiches.

Our tale begins, as all the best do, with a dream. A dream about a smoothie bar in the head of our hero, an ambitious Matt Burton, YUSU Services and Finance officer. A dream Burton turned into a three-year profit return business plan, a dream that was all-but a reality.

Burton took his proposals to the University authorities - our villains, in case you hadn't guessed - and was told, in no uncertain terms, to stuff it.

Now here's where the University gets really villainous. Over the summer, the announcement oozed out from the facilities management lair that there

would be - guess what - a brand new smoothie bar in the Roger Kirk centre.

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Do you have what it takes?

If you think you have the energy, creativity, enthusiasm (and sheer stamina) to become involved with one of the nation's most successful student newspapers, we want to hear from you!

We're looking for fresh talent to help write, produce and run York's oldest newspaper. If you're interested in:

reporting
features
comment
sport
politics
film
music
arts
design
finance
advertising
online media
photography

then we want to meet you! Come along to Goodricke bar at 7.30pm and look out for a bunch of tired hacks huddled round a stack of old newspapers, or come and find us at

Freshers' Fair
Saturday 13 October

Nicky Woolf Goes way back

Noouse, back in November 1972, was becoming the deadly serious paper you now know and love, but it still found space to run the odd whimsical article.

This one is a fascinating anecdote about a member of the *Noouse* editorial team. It sits unassumingly on page 7, between an anti-apartheid advert, Greg Dyke's political column (he talks about Peter Hitchens - then York student, now Daily Mail columnist and general ignoramus - an awful lot), a review of a Ford Cortina Estate ("suspension absolutely first-class"), and the headlines "Attend the Vietnam demonstration, Sunday 4th" and "Hes Hall Occupation Ends".

It shares a paper with such classified ads as "Wanted: a philosopher whose name ends with one and a half Ns to form the third member of a universal-world-wide-intergalactic triumvirate," "WARS, Rape, Pillage, General Destruction to suit customer. Easy terms arranged. Apply 'Aggression UnLimited', the One-Armed Avenger, Vanbrugh College," and "WINNALL WANTS A WOMAN - applicants should stand by the phallic thing in Langwith quad between 1900-2300 shouting I am a widgeon."

But nestled within the political diatribes, surrealist small-ads and Greg Dyke, *Noouse* saw fit to run a small story about its own news editor.

It begins "Once upon a time, the modest and unassuming news-editor of *Noouse* was standing by the side of the Watford by-pass on the long trek back from York to Oxford.

"T'was at that very moment," it continues, "when an unfortunate occurrence took place. A snapping sound rent the air and she realised with desolation that the elastic in her knickers had rebelled against their supportive functions.

"A car pulls up, a hundred yards up the road. A brief sprint to the car and the aforementioned clout is conspicuously drifting around her ankles, to the alarm of the driver, an extremely straight chemistry lecturer at Hatfield Polytechnic."

The story ends in a tone bordering on awe. "In true Katherine Whitehorn tradition, your bold and courageous correspondent stepped out of the offending garment and removed it to her handbag."

Isn't that just brilliant? One can hardly imagine her present-day successor reacting with such aplomb; fortunately for us all, his pant elastic is made of stronger stuff.



Letters



Star Letter

Perhaps just a little too broad for some tastes

Dear *Noouse*,

I am writing to express my profound displeasure at the recent broadsheet edition of your newspaper, the increased girth of which prevented me from enjoying it in my time-honoured manner.

It is my pleasant and long-cherished routine to read *Noouse* as I attend to my ablutions, and its handy tabloid size means that it is ideally suited to my needs.

The new format, however, proved far too large and unwieldy for this purpose. For this reason, I have not so much as peeled it open during my toilet. I have made use of your rival *Vision* instead; however, I find its content salacious, and frankly a little too risqué for enjoyment in a situation of physical vulnerability.

I trust you will return to a means of publishing more suitable to those of us —

surely innumerable — who find *Noouse* best digested while divesting.

Sincerely,

T. Crapper
Goodricke College



Noouse broadsheet: not suitable for reading at your convenience

In search of a new way of doing things

Dear *Noouse*,

Very recently, I have come to notice that if I look at your newspaper, I immediately see a severe problem with the way you work: It is incredibly old fashioned.

Oh no! You may cry.

Not so! You may protest. But it is so. Seriously, it is recently getting to the most unbelievable extremes. If you ever wish to command respect nowadays, you must acknowledge several things, however sorry and reluctant you may be. First, there is next to nothing that you can do unless you don't even try to be just a paper any more.

As any real journalist knows, way, way deep down is that the future belongs to Guardian online-alikes and always will.

My friends, therefore I propose that you turn in your gonzo coats and think about handing in your notebooks. The future is Yoker shaped - online -, and if you fail to

realise that then you're in real trouble. The new media are rising. Your Nicky Woolf put that in his comment piece, so it's not as if you are going to be surprised. But if you don't prepare for this new fact, that so many people are no longer willing to feel about in any medium as completely outdated as paper, then you had better resign yourselves to the reality; that you're screwed.

Everyone realises that the world is changing. 'Xtreme' sports channels online, YouTube, webmail, Facebook, these are just the beginning. There is almost no limit to what treasures the future may hold, but only if Heidi and the rest of your editorial team are fully ready to grasp them.

I truly hope things improve in future.

Sincerely yours,
Helen Rousburger

Staying angry

Dear *Noouse*,

Thanks for your continued interest in the *Fruit of the Loom* issue. It's a great shame that it still remains an issue, but I am sure that it will be resolved much quicker if it is given the attention it deserves (and you afford it).

It is a scandal that a Union Officer cares so little for rules or procedure, but an even greater scandal is the continuing attitude of irrelevance towards ethical issues by individuals and groups on campus. People say they don't care and, more absurdly, that students can't afford to care. Tom Moore or any other Union Officer has no right to assume your readership have such short attention spans and selfish wallets as himself.

Students are gifted the time and energy to be political – and those of us that do will change this world for the better. I'm not exaggerating. It's that important.

So please - stay angry and keep up the good work!

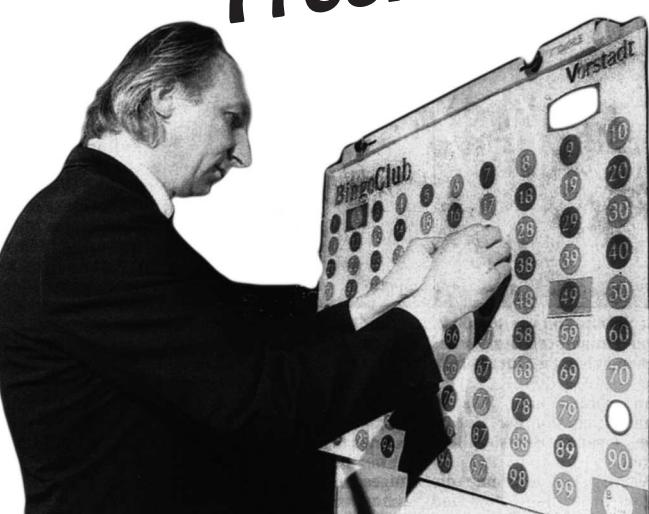
Ric Lander
(Former Chair of People & Planet Soc)
By email

Corrections

Noouse would like to apologise for any perceived defamation of the Boat Club in the June 20 edition. We acknowledge the club's many successes, but would like to stress that we are not directly responsible for the opinions imparted to us in interviews.

Noouse would also like to apologise for an inaccuracy in the story 'YUSU accuse Cantor of blackmail in voting row.' We said that Rich Croker held one of the voting positions on the now-defunct Student Support Committee when in fact the two voting positions belonged to the Academic and Welfare Officer and a randomly-selected JCRC Chair.

Grab your pencils, it's... Fresher Bingo!



Get a word in edgeways with SU President Anne-Marie Canning	Steal Communications Officer Sam Bayley's "bling"	Experience Charities officer Joey Ellis' famed "student action"	Get change from tenner in a University bar
Make good use of YUSU condom with member of B*witched	Have Welfare Officer Grace Fletcher-Hall fight. For your right. TO PARTY	Stay awake through Vice-Chancellor Brian Cantor's introductory mumble	Steal a towel from the Holiday Inn
Continental breakfast with Rich Croker, who is still here. STILL HERE.	Get caught square in the shins by Jo Carter's hockeystick	Make a friend in "Halifax"... wherever that may be	Thwart drunken approaches of sweaty third year, possibly diseased
Get Serviced by Matt Burton	Get vomited on by Welfare Officer Grace Fletcher-Hall	Encounter your STYC and find them sober	Receive election leaflet and sweaty handshake from ex-SU President James Alexander

Minister for Universities talks in York

John Denham is an Old Labour man with a brand new brief. **Nicky Woolf** finds out what he has to say

It's almost like trying to build into the system the equivalent of what will happen to a young person whose parents have both been to university," says John Denham, Labour MP for Southampton Itchen and the first occupant of the newly-created post of Minister for Innovation, Universities and Skills, on a recent visit to the University.

"They will tend to grow up in an environment where the assumption is that if you're clever enough you will go to university. But these young people who are saying 'people like me don't go to university' - they're part of the problem... So you raise their aspirations."

Denham speaks quickly, but confidently. His hand gestures are clipped, but vehemently expressive. He seemed like a man in his element.

"Legislation in this area is a crude and probably counter-productive tool," he says.

This does not sound like the classic spiel from an agent of a New Labour that has introduced more new crime laws than many previous governments put together. In fact, despite being promoted to the front bench for the first time by Blair in 1995, he reminds me a little of old Labour under John Smith.

Denham is an experienced campaigner; he was a transport campaigner for Friends of the Earth, and worked for Oxfam and other development agencies before being elected to par-



"Introducing the variable fees system has brought about £1.3 billion into British universities"

liament in the 1992 general election, obviously having a very clear vision of social equality.

He famously had his membership of the Southampton University Students' Union revoked for his support of tuition fees, but is endearingly coy and self-deprecating about

it, before launching into an extremely convincing defence of the controversial policy.

"The reality is," he says, "that introducing the variable fees system has brought about £1.3 billion into British universities, which has put the university system on to a much more stable footing."

"I think," he continues, "that given the other choices, which were to say that fewer people could go to university or that the quality of university education should decline, it was

the right decision to take."

His enthusiasm is hard to resist, and his reasoning hard to refute. He is very confident with facts, and wields them with Blairite self assurance and Brownian honesty; an endearing combination. His air, in fact, is modern and ministerial, but his beliefs seem to lean in the direction of socialism. It is obvious that everyone in the room is impressed.

I ask about the balance between research and tuition, something that the University

John Denham with ex-YUSU president James Alexander, New Labour's candidate for York Outer

has found difficult to strike without straining financially in recent years; as the recent cuts to departmental budgets attest. But once again, his enthusiasm and earnestness are overwhelming.

"A good university can be excellent at research and excellent at teaching as well. In fact, that's the York University mission, as it was explained to me this morning. There is no need to decide whether you're going to be good at teaching or good at research."

York's enigmatic Vice-Chancellor, Brian Cantor, spoke up here. Silent till this point, he must have finally felt moved to speak. "Let me put it stronger if I might," he began, speaking slowly and deliberately. "We believe that the best teaching is done by people who are so engaged in research so that they are bubbling over themselves with the most exciting new developments. We believe that the best research is done when the researchers also teach, because it makes them continually re-evaluate the fundamental things that they base their research on."

"That's quite hard to do, because people's time is pressed. There's a temptation to focus all your research in one place and all your teaching in one place, but here, at York, we believe strongly in bringing the two together." John Denham seems to be an asset to the British university system, and we can hope that even little York could benefit from his input.

New study which reveals low work-loads in British universities leaves students questioning their degrees

By Albi Furlan

WELCOME, FRESHERS, to what might well be one of the universities with the smallest workloads in Europe, according to a recently published study.

The study was conducted by the Higher Education Policy Institute (HEPI), which surveyed a variety of universities all over Europe. The results show that the average number of hours invested in a degree by an undergraduate student in the United Kingdom is 25.5 per week, seven hours less than the continental average.

The Netherlands and Germany have an average university workload of 30 hours a week, and French students work for an average 35 hours.

According to the same



Bahram Bekhradnia, who conducted the new study

study, the University of York has a workload of, on average, 21.3 hours a week for subjects such as History and Philosophy and 23.1 hours for Social Science subjects. For the Sciences, such as Biology and Chemistry, the average number of hours is 28 a week, firmly in the mid-

dle of the table.

Within our university, the category of subjects with the smallest workload is Creative Art and Design at a weekly 18.5 hours. Computer Science is at the opposite end of the scale, clocking in at 34 hours a week.

However, it is thought that the combination of fewer working hours and the United Kingdom's reputation as being the second best country in the world for higher education is not enough to lure undergraduates into the country's universities.

Bahram Bekhradnia, head of the Institute, who has conducted research on overseas students in England, has found that almost a third do not think their degree is worth the money they are paying for it. "I worry about how we are

going to maintain our international position," commented Bekhradnia. "It raises questions about what it means to have a degree from an English university, if a degree can apparently be obtained with such very different levels of effort."

International students from outside the EU often pay three times as much as European students, with international fees around the

country averaging at about £10,000 per academic year.

An international student at the University of York will have to pay £9,150 per year for non-laboratory based courses and £12,075 for those which are based in laboratories.

Bekhradnia admits that the number of hours of work put into a degree is by no means proportional to the quality of the degree, but

"there is bound to be increasing pressure on English universities to explain how their shorter, less intensive courses match those elsewhere in Europe."

Universities UK, a higher education action group, warned against using the figures from the HEPI study to make "sweeping conclusions," claiming that this could only be counterproductive for education.

FORTHCOMING POLITICS EVENTS

World Poverty Eradication Day

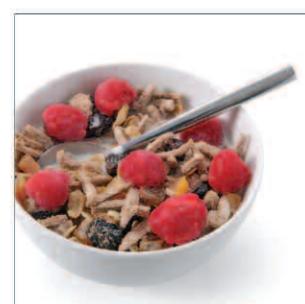
Sponsored by the UN and piloted in York by Oxfam, this global event aims to raise awareness on the matter of world poverty. Watch out for a parade and petition signings on campus, with the possibility of a flash mob. Wednesday 17 October. For more information on how to participate, contact Emily Cousins: ec522@york.ac.uk.

"Well-being of Children in the UK: How do we compare?"

A public lecture hosted by Professor John Bradshaw of the Department of Social Policy and Social Work, who wrote the UN report which put children in the UK amongst the worst off in Europe. November 6, 6:30pm, P/L001.



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Aung San Suu Kyi, head of the National League for Democracy in Burma, was last seen praying with the monks who broke through the barriers of her house arrest

Burma and the 'new journalism'

Albi Furlan examines the rise of new, demotic media in response to the recent Burmese Saffron Revolution

For a while now, it has seemed just a matter of time before bloggers with cameras began to report the breaking news earlier and more efficiently than the "conventional" media. Unfortunately, the event it took finally to spur this shift was the Burmese uprising.

Events in Burma have rendered many new truths vivid to the international community, chief amongst which is the fact that you simply cannot silence the internet community, regardless of how strong a grip a military regime has over the information infrastructure.

CNN has recognised this and launched "i-Report", a service where any user can upload newsworthy videos they have taken with their camera-phone. *The Times* and *The Guardian* were punctual in their coverage of the 'Saffron Revolution' two weeks ago, immediately displaying pictures of an orange wave of marching monks approaching a grey wall of shielded police with batons and flip-flops.

Yet the same articles which covered the protests reported simultaneously on the fact that journalists were being escorted out of the country, with up to a dozen forced out of Burma within the first day of the rising,

after an army blitz at a local hotel.

Kenji Nagai, a 50-year-old Japanese photojournalist, was not so lucky, and he died after being shot by Burmese Army forces. Since then, it is estimated that another 13 people have died and plenty more, many of them monks, have simply 'disappeared'; a common fate under military regimes.

Last Monday, only three days after the start of the revolution, *The Guardian* correspondent in the region signed off as "South-east Asian correspondent", without giving the precise location. An article on the same page was signed by two journalists in New Delhi. A *Times* correspondent was writing from the Burmese border.

Following this forced exodus of journalists and photographers from the region, we have to thank the locals who have, or had, access to the internet. Burma only had 31,000 internet users out of a population of 47 million before the military junta, headed by General Than Shwe, completely shut down the internet. This must have been as easy as flicking a switch, as the majority of public servers within the country are under the iron grip of the military.

Now the bloggers will

have to hide. The military regime, having dealt with the more immediate threat of the marching monks, has turned its attention to those who might spread information about the way it is handling the crisis.

After 45 years of military rule and rebellions quenched with blood, the worst in 1988 with an estimate of over 3,000 dead, the methods employed by the Burmese junta to stop the uprising are no secret, but this does not mean they should not be heard outside the country.

The few reports that do trickle out of Burma via connections to foreign servers through the mobile phone networks (landlines have also been switched off) talk of monks being stripped, beaten and forced to give up their monkhood in public. The aim is clear: to shame the monks and decrease the level of influence they have over the general population.

The Times interviewed some of the unlikely heroes responsible for broadcasting these atrocities to the world. They are normal men and women who talk about their lives under the regime before the Saffron Revolution began and became a red massacre. Now, finally, their daily reality can be recognised by the outside world.



Ian Paisley and Gerry Adams sit together at Stormont hailing a new era of tolerance for Northern Ireland

regard each other as political equals, the parties now face the daunting task of the day-to-day business of public office.

In Belfast, change has been more manifest. As of a few years ago, murals across the city – depicting sectarian slogans and often horrifically

glorified paramilitarism – have been phased out, replaced in many instances by celebrations of the national football side's recent success.

Within a hundred yards of each other on the Albert Bridge Road, just east of the River Lagan, are two such murals, one reading "Espana 2 – Our Wee Country 3, Viva Norn Iron", while the other celebrates 125 years of Irish football with a life-size reproduction of David Healy's historic strike against England in 2005.

However encouraging these developments might be, it remains vital to keep the short term issues and challenges in focus. Peace will come in a series of small, barely noticeable victories, and ones that will not lend

themselves to soundbites and government figures.

There is a nascent movement towards regarding 'Northern Irish' as a distinct identity; tolerance will not truly come until the archaic 'communities' delineated by 'unionist' and 'nationalist' are rejected as relics of a past left undisturbed.

Back in May, Paisley said: "I have had a dream in which children can play together, in which people can work together, and in which families can live happily side by side, regardless of their community or ethnic background or their religious beliefs." Maybe his dream will not be realised in my lifetime, but I take no small pride in the fact that I was around to see it begin.

The Irish question: notes towards resolution

By Dave Coates

FOUR MONTHS AGO, the new power-sharing executive at Stormont raised eyebrows in Northern Ireland, not least at the sight of Messrs Ian Paisley and Gerry Adams sitting in the same room and expressing their anticipation of a conference together.

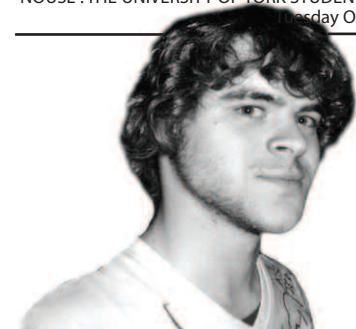
Voters and analysts alike were sceptical yet on the ground, the mood is positive. Many now believe a lasting accord can exist between the extreme groups, and most are delighted to see local government in practical control.

"I want nationalists and unionists to live in Northern Ireland with fair play and no discrimination, and to

rejoice that they live here. We can't keep raking over the embers of fires that have long burned out," said Paisley. This willingness to forget the past is surprising, but the fact remains that a hardline unionist leader is willing to drag his followers into compromise.

Sinn Fein has gone through its own remarkable change of heart. Political legitimacy has been embraced by the organisation after the decommissioning of the party's militant wing, while Agriculture Minister Michelle Gildernew's handling of the Foot and Mouth crisis is reflective of the party's grassroots development into a purely political force.

Having negotiated the incredible leap of faith to



Matthew Jeynes

'Sport will stay at the bottom of the agenda until funds are funnelled into the project'

In my experience, when I tell people that I study at York, various replies are offered. "That's a good university, what grades did you need to get in there?", people might say, or even "That's a bit posh, isn't it?", to which I often retort "You should visit Durham". However, one reply that I have never heard, and I doubt many others have, is: "Hey, that's a great uni for sport!"

Don't get me wrong, I am not criticising anyone who plays university sport, nor those who give up their time to organise the clubs. There are, though, many reasons why someone's first reaction on hearing the words University of York is unlikely to focus on its sporting prowess, among which are the University's lack of sporting reputation; the relatively small size of the University; the distinctly average sports facilities, and the seemingly low status that sport holds in the collective consciousness of York students. How, then, can this situation be remedied? Is there any way the future can be made to look a little brighter for sport at York?

At first glance, the situation looks distinctly murky. In this writer's humble opinion, the standard of sport at university level will not be raised until the rampant apathy of the students is changed. Yet this indifference is not likely to



York's sport teams will continue to struggle competitively until university facilities are improved

ease unless the standard of sport is raised. If I might venture a cliche, the situation is a vicious cycle. The one shining ray of hope, the welcome beacon in the fading gloom, comes in the form of the Heslington East expansion. The plans, which have been widely questioned by many at the

University, must be music to the ears of those who wish to see the profile of sport at York raised. Not only will the plans double the number of students, greatly increasing the pool of talent for the sports clubs to pick from, they will also include the construction of state-of-the-art sporting facilities. This

could even herald the coming of national teams to train at York, just universities such as Swansea or Loughborough.

Admittedly, many people would like to see the current facilities upgraded and refurbished, and it will be interesting to see what will happen to these once the

expansion is bought and paid for.

The solution would therefore seem to be simple. We must dare to hope that these new facilities will inspire an influx of sport-minded students who, in turn, will spark a revolution of sport, or even just a minor resurrection - just to get the ball rolling, if I may throw in another pertinent cliche.

In the meantime, the sad fact is that sport will continue to languish at the lower end of the agenda for the University. It is probable that it will fade even further until the Heslington East campus is completed, as all of the University's funds are funnelled towards that project.

What hope is there, then, for the more sportily-inclined among the current generation of students? Well, for any true sportsman, the lack of funds and standard of such things as the track or sports hall pales in comparison to the joy of actually playing their chosen sport. To get out there on the field, court, boat or even pole, and do what they love to do. Yes, the University suffers in comparison to others through average facilities and fewer participants, but the future of sport at York will continue to shine brightly as long as its students continue to play with passion and enjoyment. What happens then, or what happens after Hes East, is up to the money men.

AUTUMN TERM SPORT CALENDAR

Badminton:

Trials:		
Both	Sunday	week 1
Men's 1sts (BUSA 2B):		
17/10	Sunderland 1sts	h
24/10	Teesside 1sts	a
31/10	Durham 1sts	h
Women's 1sts (BUSA 2B):		
24/10	Bradford 1sts	h
31/10	Teesside 1sts	a
07/11	Sunderland 1sts	h

Basketball:

Men's 1sts (BUSA 2B):		
17/10	Sheffield 1sts	a
24/10	Hull 1sts	h
31/10	Bradford 1sts	a
Women's 1sts (BUSA 3B):		
24/10	Leeds Trinity 1sts	a
07/11	Sheffield H 2nds	h
14/11	Hull 1sts	a

Football:

Trials:		
Men	Monday	week 1
Tuesday		week 1
Wednesday		week 1

Friday

week 1

Women Sunday

week 1

Men's 1sts (BUSA 2B):

17/10	Northumbria	a
24/10	Leeds Trinity 1sts	h
31/10	Bradford 1sts	a
07/11	Durham 2nds	h
14/11	Durham 2nds	h

Golf:

Mixed (BUSA 2B):		
24/10	Leeds Trinity 1sts	h
31/10	Leeds Met 2nds	h
07/11	Hull	a

Hockey:

Both Tuesday

week 1

Men's 1sts (BUSA 2B):

24/10	Leeds 2nds	h
31/10	Northumbria	a
07/11	Durham 2nds	h
14/11	Durham 2nds	h

Women's 1sts (BUSA 3B):

Women Sunday

week 1

Lacrosse:

Trials:

Women Wednesday

week 1

Women's 1sts (BUSA 2A):

17/10	Sheffield H 1sts	a
24/10	Northumbria	h
31/10	Manchester Met	a

Netball:

Trials:

Both Sunday

week 1

Monday

week 2

Women's 1sts (BUSA 4B):

17/10	St John 2nds	h
24/10	York 2nds	a
31/10	Newcastle 3rds	h

Women's 2nds (BUSA 4B):

17/10	Newcastle 3rds	a
24/10	York 1sts	h
31/10	Huddersfield 1sts	a

Rugby Union:

Trials:

Both Sunday

week 1

Men's 1sts (BUSA 2B):

17/10	Huddersfield 1sts	a
24/10	Bradford 1sts	h
31/10	Newcastle 1sts	a

Squash:

Trials:

Sunday

week 1

Men's 1sts (BUSA 2B):

17/10	Leeds 2nds	h
24/10	Leeds Met 2nds	a
31/10	Hull 1sts	a

Women's 1sts (BUSA 2B):

17/10	St John 1sts	h
24/10	Leeds 2nds	a
31/10	Leeds 2nds	a

Table Tennis:

Men's 1sts (BUSA 1A):

24/10	Teesside 1sts	a
31/10	Northumbria 2	h
07/10	Northumbria 1	a

Tennis:

Trials:

Men	Tuesday	week 2
Women	Thursday	week 2

Men's 1sts (BUSA 2B):

24/10	Leeds Met 2nds	a
31/10	Leeds 2nds	h
07/11	Hull 1sts	a

Women's 1sts (BUSA 2B):

17/10	Newcastle 2nds	h
24/10	MMU Cheshire	h
31/10	St John 1sts	h

Women's 1sts (BUSA 2B):

17/10	Leeds 1sts	h
24/10	Leeds Trinity 1sts	a
31/10	St John 1sts	h

For more information on this year's sporting events, go to www.yusu.org.au

Your guide to sport at university

By Criss Noce
DEPUTY SPORTS EDITOR

FOR SOME of you, the idea of adding sporting activity to the workload of your course, as well as the plentiful student social activities open to you, will seem a little too much.

However, there are a range of sports both on and off campus that are readily available to first-year students, whether you are a university-level player or just a casual college member.

The range of university teams at York is highly diverse. There are traditional teams such as the rugby, football, hockey and netball teams, and there are some that people may not have tried before like lacrosse, ultimate frisbee and fencing.

Whichever you prefer, you will be more than welcome to attend practice for your sport of choice and especially welcome on the socials, which generally occur on a Wednesday night at Ziggy's.

Those who do make it into one of the teams will get to compete in the two main inter-university events in the York calendar. First is Varsity, which pits York's sports teams against those of York St John.

The main event, though, is later on in the year, when the University is taken over by the Roses competition. This is when York and Lancaster battle it out in a plethora of sports, each being awarded a points score. At the end, the points are totalled and a winner is announced. Last year, York emerged victorious – so hopes are high for the coming year's competition.

Aside from the university clubs, there are also college teams, which are for people who enjoy sport but may not have the time to commit to a full university team schedule. There are usually one or two training sessions a week, as well as college sport matches on Sunday mornings. At the end of the year, there is also a College Sports Day, when a mixture of athletics, volleyball and a tug of war go some way to deciding the overall winners of the year – Goodricke being the current champions.

For the more daring of you, some of the extreme sports might be appropriate. Some examples of these are parachuting, potholing, karting, and mixed martial arts. There is also pole exercise and capoeira available for any ladies or gentlemen wanting to brush up on their dancing skills. These clubs do not necessarily have team events or competitions, but are useful for those who want to learn a new skill.

Aside from the activity on campus, there are a variety of sports and activities in the centre of York which students receive discounts for. The Next Generation sports centre offers monthly membership and contains a swimming pool, sauna and luxury gym facilities.

On a Saturday afternoon, York City FC play their matches at the Kit-Kat Stadium just outside the city centre. The die hard fans are always looking for more people to attend the games and cheer on the Minstermen. For more information on the full range of activities and sports available, be sure to visit the YUSU Fair on Saturday.

Which club is which?

Thinking of joining a sports club at the AU Mart this year? Why not try a spot of hacking, or perhaps some engine blueprinting?

RIDING

Mixed: Yes
Cost: £20
Email: riding@yusu.org

- The Riding Club runs every week and operates from beginner to advanced level. Training is held at the Yorkshire Riding Centre and regular hacks are also organised on the Yorkshire Moors.
- **Last year:** Highlights of the 2006/07 year included qualification to the Nationals of the BUSA competition, a place in the international tournament for one rider, and victory in the Roses.
- **Why Join?** A variety of activities are available for people interested in horses at any level of ability. Socials include trips into York and to other cities for nights out and quiet meals/cinema trips.

SWIMMING & WATER POLO

Mixed: Yes
Cost: £12
Email: swimming@yusu.org

- The Swimming and Water Polo is a large and friendly club, offering opportunities for all abilities to join. Sessions are divided between the two sports.
- **Last year:** During a hectic year, achievements included a BUSA league win for the Women's Water Polo team. Other success in competition included the expected Roses victory over Lancaster for all the swimming and polo teams.
- **Why Join?** "We are a fun and relaxed group, and try to keep everything as enjoyable as possible. Places have opened up in the competitive teams and we are looking for people to fill them."

NETBALL

Mixed: No
Cost: £20
Email: netball@yusu.org

- The Netball Club share fitness, friendship and a love of netball. Teams enter into both the BUSA and NUNL, playing across the North of England. Players of all abilities are welcomed to the Thursday training sessions.
- **Last year:** Last year's highlights included a 3-0 white-wash of York St John at Varsity, with exceptional performances, and Damfest '07, the tour to Amsterdam.
- **Why Join?** "The loss of 15 squad members at the end of last year makes this year's trials an exciting time. Freshers are encouraged to join us as we hit Ziggy's in true Netball club fashion."

Roses

Roses is the highlight of the York sporting calendar as the largest inter-university competition in Europe.

The three-day event, which has been running since 1964, sees York face Lancaster University across 45 different sports and involves a total of over 3000 competitors.

Last year York lifted the Carter-James trophy for the 21st time, levelling the score at 21-21.

In 2008 York will travel to Lancaster and attempt to win away from home for the first time in five years.



GEORGI MABEE

York's First XI football team compete during Roses 2007. Visit www.nouse.co.uk/sport for a comprehensive guide to York sport

KARTING

Mixed: Yes
Cost: £60
Email: karate@yusu.org

- The Karting Club offers people of all standards the chance to experience the thrill of Karting. During term time there is one event per week, held at various karting tracks throughout the North of England.
- **Last year:** A series of impressive victories for York against Hull and Durham were the highlights of 2007. This summer also saw the YUKC return to Europe for a nine day tour in five separate countries.
- **Why Join?** Experience acceleration to 60mph in 4.5 seconds, just two inches off the tarmac. And have the chance to compete in the BUCK championship.

POLO

Mixed: Yes
Cost: £30 per lesson
Email: polo@yusu.org

- York University Polo Club is open to anyone interested in playing, regardless of any previous experience. Training and matches are held at the White Rose Polo Club, a small, very friendly club about half an hour away from campus.
- **Last year:** The club reached unprecedented heights as three teams qualified to compete in the BUSA Nationals, and managed to hold their own against many of the more established universities.
- **Why Join?** Polo is the ultimate sport, combining skill, speed and buckets of adrenaline. Imagine stunning girls and rippling torsos.

WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

Mixed: No
Cost: £15
Email: womensfootball@yusu.org

- The Women's Football Club has grown in both size and prominence since its humble beginnings 11 years ago. Our first team currently lead in both the BUSA and NUL leagues.
- **Last year:** One of the highlights of an exciting year was a tour to Slovenia. However, problems arose when their Department of Culture, Media and Sport didn't realise we were a women's team (women's football is not the done thing in Eastern Europe).
- **Why Join?** Women's football allows women to play at university level even if they have never kicked a ball before.

York City defence capitulates as Robinson hands Histon victory

By Criss Noice

DEPUTY SPORTS EDITOR

York City	1
Histon	4

YORK CITY were beaten convincingly by high-flying Histon in the Blue Square Premier League on Saturday afternoon.

The home team squandered a host of chances in the first half before taking an early lead, but displayed a naivety at the back, and conceded two goals late into the second-half.

City dominated the early exchanges, and saw a string of good opportunities missed as Histon struggled to cope with the fluid counter-attacks. York winger Martyn Woolford was causing a host of problems down the left and was heavily involved when the deadlock was broken in the 29th minute as Nicky Wroe opened the scoring with a mid-range shot that soared past Mark Osborn, the Histon goalkeeper.

However, the away team brought the game level against the run of play after the City defence were caught unaware. Histon striker Antonio Murray left his marker standing to score a spectacular volley from a devilish cross in the 39th minute.

What looked to be shaping up to be a tight game was taken by the scruff of the neck by the visitors, who came out after half time looking much the



The York City defence struggled in the second-half to cope with the physical nature of the Histon attack

more energised side. Their determination and physicality in the tackle was rewarded after just nine minutes of the second half when the City defence once again failed to clear a cross, leaving Nathaniel Knight-Percival to head Histon in front.

The second goal seemed to deflate a City team who have won only two home games all season. Histon dominated possession and were creating the better chances, as the York backline looked increasingly shaky. However, the introduction of Emmanuel Panther and Onome Sodje

for the home side made an immediate impact, giving York improved structure. York started to find holes in the Histon defence and once again spurned a number of excellent chances.

Any hope of a late York revival ended in the 86th minute though, as the disappointing Mark Robinson at left-back handed Histon a 3-1 lead. Robinson appealed for an offside decision as Adrian Cambridge ran past him; letting the midfielder go unchallenged and cross into the box for Wright to fire a point-blank header past Tom Evans in goal.

BLUE SQUARE PREMIER:

	pld	pts
Woking	14	18
Grays Ath	14	16
Weymouth	14	16
York City	13	12
Farsley Celtic	13	12
Altrincham	14	9
Stafford	14	6
Droylsden	14	5
Northwich	14	2

Histon's Cliff Akurang tapped-in to make it 4-1 deep into injury time to complete York's embarrassment and leave them perilously close to the relegation zone, and Histon well-poised for a promotion battle.

Team Line-ups:

York: Evans, Purkiss, McGurk, Kelly, Robinson, Meechan (Sodje 57), Wroe (Panther 57), Elliott, Woolford, McBreen (Fry 76), Brayson.

Histon: Naisbitt, Pope, Mitchell-King (Langston 78), Ada, Gwillim, Okay, Cambridge, John Kennedy, Knight-Percival (Barker 70), Murray (Wright 68), Akurang.

Man of the Match:

Knight-Percival - The Histon midfielder dominated the centre of the pitch.

Modern Pentathlon society to be introduced at AU fair

By Matthew Jeynes

SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

THIS YEAR'S YUSU Fair will see the introduction of a Modern Pentathlon club.

Founded by student Katie Smith, the club will be the first multi-disciplined sport to be introduced at the University. Smith is convinced that there is therefore a niche in the market that needed to be filled: "The Yorkshire branch of the UK Modern Pentathlon is all based around York, so I felt it was a great opportunity to introduce something completely new to the sporting options at York".

As well as these UK facilities, Smith has con-



Swimming freestyle

tacted each of the clubs for the Pentathlon's diverse disciplines, which are Fencing, Shooting, Swimming, Riding and Running, to try to co-ordinate training schedules, although York does not have a shooting club.

Smith admits that it will be difficult to get those who are already in a club to start the Modern Pentathlon, but says that her aim is "to try to encourage those who already participate in one, or even more, of the sports to branch out and attempt the others". While she admits that the club is unlikely to be competitive for some time, Smith hopes that York will eventually be able to compete in Modern Pentathlon competitions. Despite these problems, the Modern Pentathlon is an interesting inclusion in York's sporting repertoire and should prove to be a must-visit stall at the YUSU fair.

New charity for AU

By Daniel Whitehead

SPORTS EDITOR

NEW AU President Jo Carter has announced that the Athletic Union's Charity of the Year 2007/08 will be the Yorkshire Air Ambulance Service.

The charity, which launched in October 2000, specialise in providing a rapid response service for medical emergencies in the Yorkshire region, and is responsible for carrying out in excess of 6,000 missions since its inception.

In order to continue running, the charity requires £2.5 million a year to meet its operational costs, which is a massive £6,900 per day.

Last year, the AU contributed £4,500 to their Charity of the Year, which was split between the

NSPCC and Sport Relief. The Squash club alone made over £1000 through their highly successful 24-hour squash marathon and quad racket tournament.

In an attempt to raise funds for their new charity, the AU, in conjunction with charityadventure.org.uk, is organising a sponsored bike ride from York to Lancaster in March.

Commenting on the announcement, Carter said: "I'm delighted with the decision. In previous years, the AU has chosen large national, or even international, charities. I was really keen to choose a local charity, where we could get more involved with the work that they do and see the effects."

See www.yorkshireairambulance.org.uk for more info.



AU President

FOR SO MANY people, three years at York is taken over by sport, and their degree becomes their part-time hobby. With 54 active sports clubs, you will never have a better opportunity to try out a new sport (or several!). Make sure you head down to the Sports Centre on Saturday Week 1; the best chance to work out how you are going to avoid spending too much time in the library over the next three years.

I've spent the summer in York with no-one to keep me company, but more importantly, no-one to play any sport with. There are only so many times you can pretend that you're racing against the guy on the next treadmill, or the woman in the next swimming lane. Competitive? Who, me?

I was recently introduced to the President of the Students' Union at Lancaster University. We were having an amiable enough conversation until he made the mistake of bringing up the subject of Roses. I think it would be an understatement to say I scared him with my sudden transformation into a competitive monster. If you get involved in sport at here at York, you'll soon find out what Roses is about. It's big. We take on Lancaster University over three days in just about every sport you can imagine, in the biggest sporting event of its kind in Europe. 45 sports, over a hundred events and somewhere around a thousand competitors. This year we'll be travelling to the other side of the Pennines to make sure we defend the Carter-James trophy and take the score to 22-21 to York.

And, of course, sport at York isn't all about the blood, sweat and tears, and most clubs will remind you that the social side is an equally important aspect. Campus Wednesdays aims to encourage clubs, societies and friends to socialise on campus in the evening, either as an alternative to heading into town, or as an ideal meeting place prior to going out. It's a fantastic opportunity to sample the diverse atmospheres in Derwent, Langwith, Vanbrugh, Goodricke and Wentworth college bars. Collect a Campus Wednesdays Passport in the first bar you visit, and receive a stamp in each bar that you buy a drink, and in the fifth bar you will receive a free drink. And if you want to know any more about sport at York, just pop into the office, email au@yusu.org, or see me in the one of the bars on a Wednesday evening.

SPORT



York City beaten comfortably by Histon in Blue Square League >> P19

AU GUIDE: Your complete guide to the AU Mart and all York's best sports clubs >> P18



Talented York run out of stamina in late Sheffield surge

By Albi Furlan
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

Sheffield Men 34
York Men 12

YORK RUGBY UNION team suffered an unfortunate 34-12 defeat to Sheffield University after a dogged display in their first match of the new season.

The team, captained this year by Paul Goodall, showed much promise throughout the game, despite only two weeks of prior training, and many playing their first game of contact rugby since the close and bitter defeat against Lancaster at Roses.

With many of the second and third years still at home, and the academic year yet to start, the fact that the team showed up with a solid pack and a handy backline is testament to the determination and depth this club has.

Experienced fly-half Thomas Benbow kicked off UYRUFC's season, and the Sheffield side were quick to put the pressure on the White Rose, booting the ball back after a few phases of play only to receive it again on their halfway line. The forwards split the York defence, leaving their outside centre gliding through a hole to score a try underneath the posts.

The same move was repeated several minutes later. A turnover in midfield saw the ball being spread left by the imposing Sheffield backs to their centre, who drew the defence before switching to his left-winger for another try. This time the Sheffield kicker failed to convert.

However, this second try awoke the York team, who increased the pressure on their hosts after the second restart. A beautifully executed move on the Sheffield 22 saw centres Alex Neoh and Jack Wakeling, who normally operates as a flanker, fix their opposing

numbers for Sam Taylor, at 15, to gather the delayed pass and break the gain line between them.

Tackled inches short, Taylor stretched to score the first try of the season for York with Benbow adding the extra two points.

The rest of the first half saw an interesting battle between the forwards, with the Sheffield eight dominating the scrums and mauls and stealing numerous line-outs.

However, the York pack defended the ball feverishly at the breakdown, where the experience of flankers Goodall and Chris Carrington, now Club President, supplied various turnover balls.

However, despite having the better of possession and territory, discipline sometimes let the White Rose down, who conceded easy penalties for holding on or offside under intense pressure from the high-paced rush defence of the Sheffield backs.

One of these penalties resulted in a sweeping move by Sheffield, ending in a deft chip to the right corner. The bounce betrayed the oncoming winger Kevin Fogarty and Sheffield were in for their third try, which their kicker failed to convert.

The rest of the half saw clever kicking by the York fly half to pin Sheffield in their own 22.

The second half of the match brought with it a series of developments, with winger Mike Callis moving into his favoured position of lock and Jon Kume-Davy adding more driving power to the pack, which had been on the back foot during set pieces.

The changes brought their rewards, with York yet again having the majority of possession and territory throughout the half. The White Rose's kicking game kept the opposing side pinned in their half, exploiting the inexperience of the Sheffield winger to yield two

attacking line-outs.

The scrum finally started to hold up and give scrum-half Sam Dudley a decent base to work from. Support by the pack was omnipresent, ultimately rewarding hooker Mike Hornby with a try after some good offloading in a move that saw most of the team involved and ended with the number two spinning past a defender and diving for the try.

The Sheffield maul, previously the most dangerous weapon in their arsenal, was dulled by excellent defence on the fringes. Taylor was always on hand all over the park to carry the ball a few extra yards or make a darting break.

Ultimately, however, fitness let York down, with tackles and hands becoming sloppy towards the end. This allowed the first-year Sheffield subs to race in for another three tries amidst an overall decrease in communication between the York players.

However, as team captain Goodall said after the final whistle, the signs are there that the style of attacking rugby and the defence system that York want to play are coming together, and that if the team gel and keep improving as they have done, this looks to be a good season for UYRUFC.

YORK TEAM LINE-UP

1. Stone, 2. Hornby, 3. Brazier, 4. Carr, 5. Smallwood, 6. Carrington, 7. Goodall, 8. Barnett, 9. Dudley, 10. Benbow, 11. Callis, 12. Neoh, 13. Wakeling, 14. Fogarty, 15. Taylor **Subs:** Harrington, Cume-Davy, Furlan

MAN OF THE MATCH

Sam Taylor
Good in defence, despite an early mistake under a high ball, the fullback's tireless running often brought the ball forward a few extra yards for York.



MUSE

The



word

Fresher special: what, where
and how to do Freshers' Week M12-15

Muse 09.10.07



Ross Noble

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Is there anything out there?

The man who may know - but won't reveal - the answer we all want >> M6

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Malawi's 'Madonna issue'

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Trans-siberian

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Amy Scott

When toasters go bad

When you consider the worst things that can happen when living in student accommodation, top of the list would have to be the life threatening. What surprised me the most, when I first moved into halls at York, was just how likely it is for students to find themselves in near death situations on a weekly basis. Now that you've moved away from the safety and comfort of home, chances are you will witness at least one fire, at least one gas scare (of the carbon monoxide or just plain old 'left the cooker on' variety) and a dozen or so injuries to property or person.

There is a multitude of advice available that seems pretty over the top; who

Sara Sayeed



Do as mummy says - not as she does

There are some new kids on the block - and as neighbourhood protocol demands, new arrivals are welcomed with food; a fluffy bunt cake, if you're gastronomically talented, or M&S mini-flapjacks if kitchens dissolve into flames the minute you enter them. And so, for the first week of term the veterans of Ye Olde York scurry around like harried mother hens to cook up the perfect little nuggets of bunt cake/flapjack equivalent with which to ease the Freshers into the trials (sorry, joys) of university life. And as they pass, wide-eyed and blinking, into the murky concrete-refracted light of campus, they face us with inquisitive expressions: what do we need to brave this ordeal? How shall we go forth? Instruct us o wise ones. Or at least, that's how we would prefer to imagine the Fresher mindset.

About this time last year, I became conscious of a certain 'Fresher Patronisation Syndrome' pandemic that tends to sweep second and third years the instant they chance their first whiffs of fresh meat. A medical student could possibly concoct a more apt term, but English degrees bring with them a tendency towards poncey verbiage so it's the best phrase I can offer for the continuous belittling and general mocking we revel in. Patronising Freshers is an ingrained tendency, so inher-

ent that occasionally it happens almost unconsciously. Pithy insults launched unawares - wondrous things, some might say. However, after mooching around the Nouse offices for far too much time whilst various Maes undergo yet another coronary, you start to notice things. Here at Nouse, we still lovingly refer to last year's new additions as 'The Freshers' or in more tender moments, 'The Nouselets'. Surely we will relinquish these brands come October 8, when they are officially all grown-up and living in damp infested student accommodation of their very own? Sorry kids, not a chance in hell.

With essays to scrawl, phone lines to set-up and TV licenses to pay, it's undoubtedly the perfect time to while away the hours with some unhealthy introspection. So, do we mercilessly indulge ourselves simply because they're younger, vulnerable to attack and a year shy of our bitterly sardonic wit? In part, or so we'd like to think. But since Freud never rested on his laurels and burrowed away until he arrived at those mother issues, so will I. Odd, is it not, how we refer to Freshers like inconvenient offspring? "Ah bless, they're so dippy, but you can't blame the young, especially when whatever brain formation they had achieved is probably now impeded with vodka".

Language has this wonder-

ful facility that allows it to frequently pun without any intent required whatsoever. The titles ascribed to Fresher 'handlers', for example. At Oxbridge they're 'Mums and Dads'; here we call them 'STYCs'. As we assume these caretaker roles, we somehow also adopt the characteristics of their unfortunate titles. We become the grumbling Mums and Dads who inevitably become so irate with their charges they consider beating them with sticks.

The stereotype that we all inevitably morph into our parents is curiously strengthened by Fresher's week. Like parents whose children, if anything, are painful reminders of their bygone days, for us, Freshers are walking, slurring memories of when we could while away weeks in a sozzled haze without having to know the location of the library. So naturally, we're a smidgen resentful.

To temper the frustration, we enact the same, bizarre, "doing it for the kids" antics of our parents. Weeks of vein popping stress are dispensed of in a frenzied over-compensation orgy, to create the perfect Freshers week, sorry fortnight, for our little-ones. Why? Because ultimately, Fresher's week is a cushy bubble for all university students: it allows Freshers to forget why they fetched up to university in the first place and aids our smug

would consider it important to 'supervise' their toaster? Well me, for one, having lived through the Langwith A Block fire of 2006, caused by our combustible toaster. A year on I like to think of the time I saved the lives of my five housemates by conscientiously supervising the toasting of my ciabatta, and being thus poised to put the flaming piece of electrical equipment in the garden when the time was ripe. That's one lesson learnt, although the one about buying toasters worth more than £3 hasn't quite sunk in yet.

The most dangerous aspect of such incidents, and peculiarly therefore the funniest, is the steadfast refusal of those involved to believe themselves to be in any kind of danger. Laziness prevails after the number of fire drills we've been put through over the years, so it's hard to spring into action when the alarms go off at 7.30am. Hard, that is, until you see the

plumes of smoke escaping from the kitchen. Add to that the fact that it just seems so unlikely that anything genuinely dangerous will happen in such a laid back environment, which I presume led to my former housemate's explanation of leaving me asleep upstairs as our carbon monoxide detector went into overdrive; 'I didn't want to panic'. Or his hapless friend's insistence on googling the symptoms of carbon monoxide poisoning before he agreed to evacuate.

There's nothing like a bit of danger and excitement to bond people. Fire alarms unite freshers with people they never knew existed, let alone lived in the corridor above them, and sometimes calling out the fireman is the only chance we get to interact with the non-student community. Just don't admit to them you knew the toaster was faulty, and you should all be fine.



Sshh now. Here, suck on this

belief that we actually have "more important things to be getting on with, quite frankly". It re-imbues us fossils with a sense of haughty purpose, so we can blithely play the vexed intellectuals to their degenerate hooligans.

Fresher-Patronisation is the necessary coping mechanism that re-establishes our degrees as meaningful and not just the fetters reining us in from having fun - like, I don't know, Freshers for example. If we trample some egos or hurt some "feelings" along the way - so be it. And for all the Freshers out there poring over this while muttering 'repugnant', consider your reaction in a few weeks to siblings who phone you up with GCSE woes. GCSEs you say? Heaven above and all its cherubim - if only we could go back to those sweet, inconsequential days...

With internet a distant fantasy for the next month, I've had to find new ways to wake up over my morning coffee. In the good old days of summer, when that thing 'modern technology' existed for me, I pacified my pre-caffeine savagery by perusing the internet; nothing like some black coffee and mindless Facebooking to ease you into the day. These days, I've been lowering myself to the tiresome task of 'reading'. I don't 'do' books or real sentences before my standard three cups, so I've taken to scanning whatever comes through the mail box. And what jewels of crap they are. My current favourite, 'Hull Road: Your Ward' actually made me crack a smile - a feat indeed when facial twitches aren't usually an option until Cup Two. The headline proudly declared: "SSH! Silent Students, Happy Homes". After I got over the linguistic dexterity of 'SSH!', I read

on. Apparently SSHH is a campaign that facilitates a "good living environment" between York's indigenous and students. How do they achieve such sweet harmony, you may ask? "The campaign achieves this in a number of ways. For example, lollies are purchased and given out at the end of events, as a novel way of ensuring students are quiet and return home responsibly". The reaction to such tactics is tricky. Either, we profess outrage at being reduced to the lolly-jammed-in-the-mouth procedure usually reserved for deranged toddlers. Or we could be thankful that it's not a dalek this time. Lollies are comparatively pleasant. Don't fret if this is all a bit baffling because "this year, SSHH plan to invest in some good quality banners, t-shirts and window stickers" as well. Ah, isn't it lovely to be back?

Silly sunglasses and slutty shoes

Dressing up is not a pastime; it is a way of life. Freshers, you should probably read this statement one more time. Learn it off by heart. Hell, tattoo it on the inside of your elbow for all I care, but never, ever, forget it.

You could be forgiven for arriving at university armed with just a tie, vivacity of spirit and enthusiasm. It's about meeting people and having fun, right? Wrong. Whilst you may well be forgiven, you will not be long endured. Those who have the most fun and make their way into the most pictures on



Facebook (a goal you should keep in mind) are those who are either completely plastered or have a fantastic costume. For the sake of your new-found corridor friends, go for the latter, no one likes a puker.

'But how, how, o wise second year?' I hear you cry. Never fear, I have compiled a list of things you simply must get your grubby little mitts on. Whether by legal transaction or intoxicated pilfering: get it, fresher.

1. Red lipstick. This is for both boys and girls. For females I would suggest liberal application to the lips in order to attain a stylish '50s siren/up-for-it look (nb - 'molls' and 'schoolgirls' are just two of the euphemisms for the actual dress code: as slutty as you dare). For cocky males, a dab on

the collar creates an instant aura of pimp-osity, and for anyone else, try writing an amusing message on your chest to show that you're a bit of a joker. If that fails just copy the girls; a bit of cross-dressing always goes down well here.

2. Ridiculous accessories. We're talking hats (as many as you can manage: fireman, policeman, builder, priest), sunglasses (large heart-shaped pairs with pink rims and blue lenses, so big they act as wing mirrors. You'll know when you see them.), ties, feather boas, handcuffs, cigarette holders, masks (much fun to be had, especially as no-one really knows who you are anyway...), etc. One warning: if you take it out and get drunk with it, it's fair play for snatching. My advice would be to snatch faster. There's always someone in Ziggy's with a better hat.

3. An imagination. These can be



By Jenny O'Mahony

ALCUIN: Posh college, posh bar. B Henrys, Alcuin's very own drinking establishment, was relaunched last year and now serves cocktails as well as the usual student staple of cheap cider, and is considered to be at the top end of the campus hierarchy, though the bar is all too often deserted. They also run excellent events sponsored by societies such as LoveSoc.

DERWENT: Their bar doubles as a canteen during the day, and unfortunately it shows. However, Derwent does have pool tables, a dart board, and lots of space, so events there (all under the moniker Club D) are generally a big success. Expect drunken public schoolboys in various states of undress, and themed parties, such as Toga and superheroes.

GOODRICK: McQ's, Goodricke's pub, is generally considered to be the cosiest and best-loved bar on campus. Nearly always rammed with people, McQ's has an atmosphere that other bars just can't match. Certain societies are very attached to McQ's, and the Lunatic Fringe, the Goth/Punk collective, are often to be seen lurking in a corner discussing each other's piercings. It is a little-known fact that McQ's doubles up as a study room during the day, and Sunday is quiz night.

HALIFAX: The denizens of Halifax seem to be the only ones who have ever been to JJ's, a cocktail bar set in the heart of the notoriously incestuous community across the road. I am told by reliable sources that JJ's is a lovely place, but then I am told the same about Halifax. Those who are still able to walk after Freshers' week will presumably find it charming, and JJ's hosts occasional live events for something a bit different.

LANGWITH: Langwith is due to undergo refurbishment, and I won't pain you with the details of what it was like last year. Suffice to say it was open two days a week and the barman took his iPod along to work. Hopes are high for the new Langwith, which has been described as an 'artistic space', but will the few societies to haunt the place (Gilbert & Sullivan and FragSoc) like it as much once the '70s B&B decor and smashed up sofas are gone?

VANBRUGH: V Bar is where all the artistic types hang out, including IndieSoc, DramaSoc and all the Music students, so expect to see campus luvvies, people propping themselves up on double-bass cases and some very trendy haircuts. It's the place to hit after seeing a play at the Drama Barn or for pre-drinking every night of the week. Vanbrugh is where plays get written, Mp3s swapped, and girls and boys fall for each other at the Open-Mic night.

WENTWORTH: Quite sophisticated, and less likely than the others to have people rolling around on the floor and yelling at strangers at the end of the night. Host of comedy and live events, Wentworth just isn't the place to get smashed, unless you want to be frowned at. Wentworth is a cut above the rest, as the University considers post-grads to need better food and services, but it can be a bit quiet at times.

hard to find, especially if you're a heavy alcohol user. I suggest liaising with more introverted neighbours to raid their closet of ideas, or Google Images and [wikihow.com](http://www.wikihow.com) always provide some sort of inspiration. Bin liners, cardboard boxes, tin foil and body paint will go a lot further than you would ever have guessed. The best costume I ever saw was a guy wearing a cardboard house the size of his body. He couldn't move, dance or drink, but damn he looked cool, and that, boys and girls, is the point.

So good luck, dear newbies. Go forth and dress up, down and sideways to your heart's content. Heed my nuggety nuggets of counsel, and if worst comes to worst, just wrap yourself in a copy of Nouse; at least you will have something to read when you tire of dancing to 'Eye of the Tiger' for the fifth time in a night.

Ross Noble has just been voted one of the Greatest Comedy Stand-ups of all time. Jo Shelley catches up with him on his Nobleism tour for a bit of Geordie banter

'Tell us about the Eskimos'



"It's just like... like, I can't even describe how... it's that thing of, like..." And with one, simple question, Ross Noble - who's just spent two and a half hours on stage taking the piss out of a theatre full of delighted Yorkshire locals - is tongue-tied.

I've asked the comic what it is that he loves about touring. It can't be the money; these days TV work is far more lucrative. Yet he's spent more of the last ten years on the road than off it, and pops up on our tellies only once a year, for an obligatory appearance on *Have I Got News For You*. The answer, it turns out, is rather sweet.

"You know how, if you're in the street, and somebody smiles at you - how that lifts your day? Well imagine that, concentrated. For a couple of hours you just see hundreds of smiling faces, and it's just..." He falters again, his mouth opening and closing so that, with his naturally wide-eyed expression, he looks a bit like a goldfish as he tries to find the words to complete his sentence. Finally, the Geordie concludes with typically northern directness: "What a great way to live your

life."

To tour or not to tour is not a decision that most successful comedians have the luxury of making. Shackled to a TV audience that finds them funny enough to watch from the sofa but possibly not to spend twenty-odd quid on seeing them live, they stick with panel games and a sketch show or a series, if they're lucky. Noble, however, is in the enviable position of being able to make the occasional TV programme here and there, and still attract sell-out audiences to his live shows. Like his hero, Billy Connolly, he has a reputation for being much funnier in front of a theatre audience. Anyone familiar with his stand-up routines will know that finding the right words is rarely a problem. Noble comes across because, in the years that have passed since he first took the microphone at his local comedy club aged 15, he's developed a baffling ability to improvise. In fact, 'routine' seems the wrong word to use for a comedian who can walk onstage, see - as he did at his York show two weeks ago - the hand of an elderly woman in the front row brush against her husband's crotch, and then riff for twenty

"When I was in a terrifying brothel in Amsterdam, I didn't think, 'oh yeah, I'll talk about that onstage in the future"

minutes on the sexual problems faced by the over-50s and, if we're going to go into specifics, how to cure erectile dysfunction. (His answer? "Helium injections.")

I meet Noble after his gig in York, which is one of 36 stops he's making up and down the country on his much-awaited Nobleism tour. Backstage, things are unexpectedly quiet considering that he's the biggest celebrity to come to the city in recent months. Only the man himself and a few of his "crew" - who are removing a large, inflatable replica of his head from the auditorium - remain. He seems exhausted, but is incredibly polite, offering up first his chair and then the pick of a bright bouquet of Haribo sweets as he packs away the last of his things. A DVD with three

semi-naked women on the front is hastily tucked into his backpack. I raise an eyebrow; he laughs and jokes: "That's a Dixie Chicks documentary by the way, in case you thought, 'Oooh, he's got a stash of porn.'"

Off-the-cuff banter like this - quick, perceptive but not, I think, trademark Noble. Watching him, you often have the unsettling sense that any pre-prepared wit is being impulsively thrown to the wind in favour of what seems to be his favourite pastime: spotting the gag-potential in faces that stare up at him onstage. Intrigued by this, I ask how much of the night's show was 'something he'd written earlier'. He looks almost insulted. "It's not like I've sat down and I've gone, 'right, I'll write it down, these are my jokes,' he says. "I like going off on a bit of a tangent and then... well, just sort of seeing where it'll go. Like, the danger is that you go, 'right, this is the show,' and then there's no room for it to expand, and flow, and just kind of evolve, you know?"

Tonight, I'm told, just three or four jokes were thought of beforehand. It's unsurprising information, given that,

aside from helium-filled penises, most of the first half revolved around his latest visit to York: the infamous sword shop ("brilliant"), the Jorvik Viking Centre ("shit") and the cab drivers ("fucking nuts"). As Noble's own saying goes, 'If it's in the head, it comes out the mouth.' "A few years ago," he reflects, "when I was in a terrifying underground brothel in Amsterdam, I didn't think, 'oh, yeah, I'll talk about that at some point in the future.'" Yet tonight the incident popped into his head and soon an innocent, but messy encounter with a stout, middle-aged Dutch prostitute was shared with an auditorium full of strangers. Soon, no doubt, it'll make it onto YouTube.

As it happens, Noble is one performing artist who's embracing the virtual world with open arms. He not only has an official internet site (www.ross-noble.co.uk), but is signed up to both MySpace and YouTube, where he sporadically posts clips from his gigs. Perhaps because of the uniqueness of each of his performances, the internet revolution doesn't seem to have cheated the comedian out of ticket sales. In fact, more noticeable is the growing gaggle of fans who appear at not one but a number of his shows up and down the country. Here in York, when one group cried out in unison, "Ross, tell us about the Eskimos!" the rest of the audience looked perplexed. "That was pretty much the whole show in Birmingham," he explains.

It seems to be a mark of pride with Noble that on his tour, muffin humour aside (he's known to like finding faces in them), the same joke never gets told twice: "What some comics do is they'll have their thing and then they'll just milk it, but I refuse to go back." It's not surprising, therefore, that he admits to forgetting many of the stories he's told as the shows behind him begin to blur into one. The constant flow of creative energy required onstage – dreaming something up on the spur of the moment, acting it out and half-teasing the audience for finding it funny – seems to have led to him suffering from some kind of performance amnesia. When the Brummies piped up, he too was puzzled. "Here, it's like, I can't even remember it," he says.

Once, Noble recalls catching himself on TV in New Zealand doing a gag about cherubs ("my basic theory on cherubs is that you never trust anyone who plays trumpet in the nude"). "Even though it was me, I could remember about five per cent of it – it was this sort of hazy kind of memory," he says. "I was pissing myself laughing... It was like watching someone else."

To be fair to Noble – who, judging by his rapturous reception in York, will be egged on to return to the helium, the prostitute and the budgerigars ('why, I'm now asking myself, 'do they need ladders?') at some point in the future – he's never going to be able to remember everything. In fact, I realise, given the pace with which he's still pounding around the international comedy circuit after ten-odd years, he'd be lucky to retain a fraction of it.

It's easy to forget myself, sitting opposite him, just how celebrated a stand-up comic Noble is. In all honesty, now that his trademark dark, messy tresses have disappeared underneath a brown baker boy hat, the man originally from Cramlington, Northumberland isn't someone you'd necessarily recognise if he passed you on the street. But, log onto the Channel 4 website and you'll see his name there, voted in at number ten in the broadcaster's list of

the 100 Greatest Comedy Stand-ups – behind the likes of Connolly, Bailey and Kay, but in front of Dee, Gervais and Carr. You see, while they rule the telly waves and *The Office* funnyman has pipped him to 'cracking America', it is Noble's career that is reaching more adventurous, if less glamorous, highs. His comic travelogues for Radio 4 (yes, 4) are a case in point. Despite linguistic, cultural and social differences, whenever Ross Noble Goes Global he has audiences laughing from Egypt down to Cape Town; from Eastern Europe all the way across to China.

As his experiences in Amsterdam suggest, all this time spent on more distant roads also has the potential to offer up more new material for Noble to use in his performances. On his recent tour of Australia then, I ask, were there any episodes which could rival the brothel gem?

"I did the whole thing on my motorbike," he begins. "I did this 26,000-kilometre road trip right around Australia, just doing a gig every night. And while we were doing that, yeah, there was some fairly mad stuff that happened. One night I met a guy who had a Harley Davidson hearse." I look confused. "Like a motorbike and sidecar, you know? With a bit for a coffin? So in this outback town, right in the middle of nowhere, basically I jumped into the bit where the body's supposed to go and we just went driving round this graveyard." He grins, remembering the scene. "That was pretty cool."

The boy, it seems, is into his toys; and particularly the fast, two-wheeled kind, suggesting that in life, as on stage, he prefers getting kicks to getting comfy. The hearse anecdote is soon followed by one about a confrontation with "one of the most poisonous snakes in the world" whilst filming Down Under in Darwin. Nothing came of it, of course, but the idea still makes a female member of his crew, wheeling the wardrobe rail out from his dressing room, shudder. Her reaction soon gets Noble thinking.

"You know, snakes and spiders, and just all of that stuff – it doesn't bother me. Because I just hate the way how, nowadays, in modern life in general, you can't have a puddle of water on the floor without somebody putting a ridiculous, yellow thing over it with, 'Don't Slip On This' written on it. You know, people suing coffee shops for burning their mouth..." He trails off, evidently disgusted. "But not only that,



"I can never wait to get to work. Imagine turning up to the office, walking in, and a thousand people just cheer"

but like, some people try to sue McDonald's for making them fat. It's like, if you're doing something because a clown told you to do it, then you're a fuckwit, you're a fuckwit who deserves to get fat! It's retarded. It's absolutely retarded.

"Now I'm ranting, but that's the way I feel. Because I'm into my motorbikes and stuff, and you know when people go," – he puts on his best whiny voice – "Ooh, they're very dangerous." And you go, 'Yes, they are. Good.' It's like..." There's a sigh of exasperation. "If you spend your whole life trying to protect yourself..."

Suddenly, mid-monologue, what started out as a rant about snakes, coffee and motorbikes, touches on reality. TV contests and bizarrely acquires a more severe tone. Noble's carefree philosophy on living life, it appears, is wound up with a serious philosophy on the pursuit of one's dreams and life ambitions.

"The natural state of the human mind is not to live in a perpetual state of bliss... All these people on the bloody X-Factor and all that, they're there just going, 'This was my dream and I can't believe it's over.' No it's not! If you really wanted to do it, you would crawl

across broken glass, you know? Like, I've got the respect for those guys who are singing in pubs, where people are chucking shit at them. Even if they're not very good, they're still doing it. They're still going out there and, fair enough, they might not be selling out arenas or whatever, or performing in nice venues and stuff, but they're still going out there and doing it because they love it. I think people who sort of, who avoid things because of, you know, 'What if this happens, what if that happens...' That's just life, isn't it? It's just like yeah, okay..."

He doesn't finish his sentence, but what Noble essentially seems to be saying is: "get over it". Things might be rosy for the boy from Northumberland now, but he remembers well the trials of performing on the pub-club circuit. Audiences weren't always as receptive to his daft, chit-chat style, or as willing – or even conscious enough – to be the subjects of a little ribbing.

"I used to do quite a lot of fairly rough kind of nightclub gigs," he says. "Everyone was dancing and pissed, and then they'd just turn off the music and go, 'Right, here's your comic.' I think the worst gig I ever did was in a sports centre in Manchester; it's the only one where I've ever turned up and just gone, 'absolutely no, no way.' It was a giant rave, basically, and there was probably about a thousand, two thousand people there. I was in the chillout room and there were people unconscious, just lying there, just fucked. And I just went, 'er, no thanks.'

Things are very different now. In an analogy typical of a man who likes to burn rubber, Noble describes doing stand-up comedy as being "a bit like driving a car." If this holds true, he's upped several gears since his days on the rave circuit and is currently cruising. These days, people come to shows ready and willing for him to make them laugh, which makes striding onstage, he says, an entirely unnerve-racking experience.

"Imagine getting up every morning and just going, 'I can't wait, I can't wait to get to work.' That's what it's like. It's never, never work, it's never a chore. Imagine turning up to your office, and you walk in, and everyone, a thousand people, just cheer. Imagine that, just turning up at the office." He's animated now, and he sits up, raises both arms and roars like a football fan. "Yeeeeeeeeeeeaaah!" And then everyone just sits there, you know? And you get to make people laugh."

Someone pops their head around the door of his dressing room; there are a crowd of fans waiting for him outside. Maybe they're looking for an autograph, but chances are they're hoping for just a few more laughs and a bit more banter before the night's over. Either way, he's up and off. The bets are on that they'll be going home smiling.



TOP ROSS NOBLE QUOTES

"York's got all manner of medieval s**t but no modern facilities."

"How come Miss Universe is only won by people from Earth?"

"Common people get crabs, posh people get lobsters."

"When's someone going to turn around to Bono and go, 'Bono! You're from Ireland! You shouldn't even own sunglasses!'"

Opening the X-files: inside Britain's UFO Project

Are we all alone in the universe? Nick Pope, former head of the government's UFO investigations, isn't so sure. He talks to **Raf Sanchez about the great 'unexplained'**

To conspiracy theorists, Nick Pope is the right man with the wrong answer. The former head of Britain's UFO Project has had years of unparalleled access and resources to investigate the significance of unexplained visitors to Britain's airspace. Since leaving the MoD in 2006 he has taken up a high profile career as a writer, lecturer and consultant. He seemed to be a man preparing to impart revelation. If anyone should be able to confirm that the government knows of the existence of extraterrestrial life, it should, in theory, be Pope.

Except that he won't. To the rabid frustration of many Ufologists (the recent term coined to describe those who study UFO sightings) Pope continues to deny that the government he served for over 20 years has information confirming the existence of aliens and just isn't sharing it. Clips of interviews on the internet show the clean cut former civil servant interrogated by enthusiasts already sure of the answer they want and left bitter and accusatory when they don't get it.

Despite his consistent response to questions about a cover-up I decide to try my luck, just in case he is having a particularly candid afternoon. His answer is swift and well-rehearsed. "To the best of my knowledge, there's no cover-up and no conspiracy. While the MoD has consistently tried to downplay the subject, they've never lied about it and have no evidence that would prove the existence of extraterrestrials. Where information is being withheld, it generally relates to details that if released would be detrimental to defence or national security." He says that there are vast case files of incidents and sightings that his unit was never able to explain away as weather balloons or airplanes but what there isn't is, as Pope puts it, "a smoking gun", or more bluntly: "something locked away in a hangar somewhere."

I find his answer convincing enough, except for the fact that as a signatory to the Official Secrets Act, it's the only one he can give without opening himself up to the possibility of prosecution by his former employer. How can we believe his denial when it's the only thing he can legally say?

I put this to Pope, who nods

resignedly at his dilemma. "I do appreciate I'm in a very difficult situation. We're back to that old cliche that you can't prove a negative. I can understand why I get accused of disinformation and all sorts of things but I don't think that there's anything I could say, even if I could come up with the most eloquent, well reasoned, logical, substantiated argument. If a die hard conspiracy theorist really wants to believe something, my denial is not going to convince them otherwise."

For the record, I believe Pope. He seems too interested in the details of UFO sightings, too energised by the fragmented information they afford – details which would surely be swept away by the blanket knowledge that aliens definitely exist. More than that he seems genuinely philosophical about the impact that such knowledge would have on humanity. "I think that it would be, aside from proof of the existence of God and an Afterlife, the next biggest thing that you could ever hope to discover and the world would obviously be a totally different place the day after we knew for sure we weren't alone in the universe."

The interesting thing about Pope is that his career follows an inverse trajectory to most of those in the UFO business. Rather than being someone who was convinced from the outset of the significance of UFOs and went about gathering information, Pope had the information before the belief. Before taking over the UFO Project (his brief had no official title but 'UFO Project' is his preferred term because "it does what it says on the tin") he served in a number of more traditional roles within the MoD. During the first Gulf War he assessed the impact of Allied bombing raids on Iraqi positions and was responsible for briefing senior government and military figures.

Pope claims he arrived at the job with a "broadly skeptical" view as to the wisdom of putting resources into investigating UFOs. His remit could be summed up in a single line: "to evaluate UFO sightings to see whether or not there is evidence of anything of defence significance." It is these last two words that shaped the focus and operating procedures of the unit. "Defence significance is the key phrase that over the years has been interpret-



"The world would obviously be a totally different place the day after we knew for sure that we weren't alone in the universe"

ed in many ways. Skeptics can take it to say 'well, we're only interested in foreign military aircraft.' Someone a little more open minded can say 'Well no, if UFOs really are extraterrestrial then that would be of defense significance in and of itself.' It seems difficult to argue that alien craft entering British airspace would not be of interest to defence intelligence, but apparently it was a line taken by some of the more traditional members of the military establishment.

Challenging this view and instilling a sense of the importance of the "belief that UFO sightings should be properly investigated in a scientific way" has been one of Pope's passions

both within the MoD and since leaving the government. In November 2006, shortly after leaving the Ministry, Pope made headlines (some wryly amused, others alarmist) with his claim that the UK's air defence was "wide open" to any potential extraterrestrial visitors, friendly or otherwise. The Daily Mirror ran with: "Earth: We're Wide Open To Attack".

So what did Pope see during his time at the UFO Project that not only converted him from a skeptic but has turned him into something of a campaigner for a scientific approach to Ufology? The answer lies in a proportion of 5%. Pope found that of the 200-300 reports of UFO sightings that came across his desk every year, 80% could be explained away as "misidentifications of something ordinary, such as aircraft lights, satellites, airships, weather balloons or planets." In a further 15% the information was too sparse to make any real judgements. Yet, in the remaining 5% there was enough information, usually in the form of radar signatures and visual sightings by trained observers like RAF pilots, yet still no one was able to identify the object. To Pope these incidents were "very interesting and by definition 'unexplained'".

The 'Cosford Incident' helped to solidify Pope's belief that something had to be done to deal with the vulnerability of Britain's air defence to penetration by UFOs. On the night of March 30 and the morning of March 31 1993 over a hundred witnesses, many of them pilots and police officers, reported seeing fast moving lights in the sky. Some gave more detailed descriptions of a large triangular shaped craft, "like two Concordes flying side by side and joined together." Another sighting was then reported by an officer, at an RAF base in Shrewsbury.

"He saw the UFO fire a narrow beam of light (like a laser) at the ground and saw the light sweeping backwards and forwards across the field beyond the perimeter fence, as if it were looking for something. He heard an unpleasant low frequency humming sound coming from the craft and said he could feel as well as hear this - rather like standing in front of a bass speaker. He estimated the size of



**Nick Pope with
the UK's largest
radio telescope,
Jodrell Bank, at
Manchester
University**

the craft to be midway between a C-130 Hercules transport aircraft and a Boeing 747." No aircraft were scrambled because the object, seen in over a hundred places, could not be detected by radar.

Pope, who has been sitting forward intensely as he talks, suddenly smiles and leans back. "My head of division, who was a huge skeptic of UFOs, briefed the assistant chief of the air staff [on the incident]. There was this wonderful phrase: 'In summary, there would seem to be some evidence that on this occasion an unidentified object (or objects) was operating over the UK.' That's probably about as close as the MOD will ever get to saying there are UFOs."

Although he is quick to point out that his background is defence intelligence and not science, Pope can be coaxed into talking interestingly on scientific developments in man's search for other life in the universe. He is quick to draw a distinction between Ufology, the study of UFOs that enter Earth's atmosphere, and the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI). "Ufology," he says "is a broad church. There are some complete nutcases and charlatans involved in it and there are also some extremely professional men and women doing some sterling work." Ufology as it currently stands has no established scientific method and can come in any number of forms, from sitting on a hillside with binoculars to the kind of intelligence analysis that Pope was employed in.

SETI is a much broader search than simply looking out for alien craft

coming to Earth. It relies mainly on the use of enormous radio telescopes to monitor deep space for signs of intelligent transmissions. And the already advanced technology is moving fast. According to Pope, "the sensitivity and power of the radio telescopes and the associated computing power to analyze and process the data is going through the roof." In 2014 the next generation of radio telescopes will come online,

"Any civilization that visits us is going to be more technologically advanced, so chances are that they are going to be the ones that set the agenda and call the shots"

massively expanding humanity's view of the Universe. The technology is so powerful "there are scientists who believe that if there are detectable civilizations within a 100 light years of here, which certainly encompasses several thousand stars, we should be able to detect them through their signals." The thought that in less than a decade human technology could push the shadows of space back so far is both awe-inspiring and terrifying.

Pope puts his faith in SETI to make the first contact with other intelligent life forms. "I believe that if contact is made it will come through radio astronomy, through detecting a signal as opposed to a spaceship landing in the desert. Proof of contact is never

going to be a photo or a video or something. It has to be something acknowledged by the mainstream scientific community. Which is why I think it's far more likely that proof will come through radio astronomy. SETI will beat Ufology when it comes to proof positive, simply because society will not accept what Ufologists regard as proof."

Interestingly, SETI today is "effectively private". The highly technological operations are carried out by private research organisations and members of the scientific community rather than by governments or militaries. NASA briefly engaged in SETI in the first half of the Clinton administration, before a cost-cutting Republican Congress pulled the plug on the project in 1996. Since then the search has been carried out almost entirely outside of government quarters. The UK's largest radio telescope, Jodrell Bank, is run and maintained by the University of Manchester. This raises the slightly bizarre situation in which the first people to make contact, and possibly speaking on behalf of Earth, may not be one of the world's governments but instead the employees of a private research company.

This lack of a plan, or even a framework, for dealing with the discovery of aliens is another of Pope's concerns. "What there isn't, as far as I've seen, is any contingency plan, any SOP [standard operating procedure] for a landing, a crash, a contact. I think in a sense that is a mistake. The military and the government tend to have a plan for just about everything. There

are some serious issues that would need thought, bio hazards to name just one. If there is open contact one of the questions people will ask is 'is there a bio hazard from us to them, them to us, or indeed both ways, who is going to test for that, how is it going to be tested, what kit is going to be used, where is that kit, how do you get it to the location, what are the command control arrangements, what's the media handling strategy?' All these questions, not any plan. Frankly, we'll just muddle through."

Although, as Pope admits, in the event of a landing by a race that can travel at lightspeeds, it is unlikely that humanity is going to be in the driving seat and the best-laid plans of men often go awry. "Any civilization that visits us is almost certainly going to be more technologically advanced than us, so chances are they are going to be the ones that dictate whether or not it's kept a secret and on what terms contact is made and on what terms the news is propagated. If we are visited it might well be that the visitors set the agenda and call the shots."

Pope may not have seen confirmation that there is other intelligent life in the universe. But what he has seen, and it is likely to be far more than most of us ever will, seems to have convinced him of the need to be prepared that one day there might be. As I think of the epic bureaucratic, administrative and logistic battles a plan for a human response to contact would bring I find myself wondering if somewhere out there someone has a much simpler plan for us.



Who needs a Second Life?

Go to a gig, attend lectures, have sex: **Jenny O'Mahony** explores a new virtual world

Computer games and I have always had a complicated relationship. My torrid pre-pubescent affair with Crash Bandicoot gave way to a more steady coupling with The Sims, but now we see each other rarely, reduced to snatching quick moments together on wet afternoons. We are separated partly by fate, and partly by my acquisition of a life. Because of this compulsive-addictive tendency, it was with some trepidation that I entered the virtual world du jour, Second Life.

Second Life has existed since 2003, when the sinister sounding company Linden Lab decided that office workers and students were probably not wasting enough time, and decided to allow them to live, communicate, own property and have sex within a Web 2.0 platform - all while creating new outfits for themselves.

What is interesting about this unashamedly geeky premise is its mainstream success: there are close to 1 million members, and one woman, Anshe Chung, has netted more than \$1 million from her entirely imaginary property empire using the program. Although Second Lifers use Linden Dollars, these can be exchanged for proper money. Brands as diverse as Adidas, Trinity College Dublin and the nation of Switzerland have all cashed in, with the Swiss Embassy just one of many diplomatic outposts your avatar can visit.

The experience of Second Life is very much based around how you would like to be seen and interpreted.

One of the very first decisions you make is your appearance, and the sheer number of combinations, from body fur to the alignment of your chin can all be dabbled with. This being the internet, the emphasis on appearance has much to do with the cybersex that the American teenagers, who make up, one imagines, a fair amount of the member-

"I came for the amazing technology, but I've stayed for the cool people"

ship, hope to engage in. The combination of capitalism and sexual frustration which has long characterised the USA is epitomised here by the fact that genitals will cost you extra in this game.

After selecting my first name as Edina, after Jennifer Saunders's paean to the superficial in Ab Fab, I scroll through the bizarre list of surnames, and opt for Ibanez, ending up resembling some sort of Egyptian Secret Agent. I then proceed to explore. It was at that point that I realised perhaps it was not all about sex and money. Virtual universities offer virtual online courses. Virtual gigs showcase unsigned bands. Second Life suffers from terrorist attacks and isn't even safe from the 2008 US Presidential election, as candidates hold rallies after teleporting in from another world. In many ways

Second Life could be seen as extending the kind of grassroots culture the internet has resurrected on behalf of amateur musicians, writers and the like.

However, I found the game difficult to take seriously. The temptation was either to flirt outrageously with the first person you came across, just to see if they would karate chop or wink at you. The tiresome fanatics, who wander around the fields of Second Life dressed like members of the Medieval Re-enactment Society exist in large numbers. The men who would find it funny to run around naked in real life seem to find it just as hilarious when they can replace their paunches with washboard stomachs and their own genitalia with, well, bought genitalia. In other words, the irritants of daily life simply transfer their presence into your virtual existence, leaving you wondering what happened to utopia.

Luckily for Linden Lab, people with more patience than myself find Second Life a great comfort. Insecurities about bodies, academic grades, accent, class and specialist sexual preference (that again) melt away. You can live out any fantasy you like, and no one will be any the wiser. Vito Desoto, who built his own gay hangout, named Fire Island, indicates some of the positive aspects of being a Second Lifer: "Originally, I came for the amazing technology, but I've stayed for the cool people. I created Fire Island as a non-commercial place where I would not get hit on or harassed."

Creative entrepreneurs like Desoto

are highly respected in Second Life, and its creators have begun to turn a profit. The man behind the idea, Philip Rosedale, thinks that virtual worlds are fundamentally changing the way humans interact, and he sees this as just the beginning: "What was once a novel concept is now ubiquitous not only for companies, but for individuals, as well."

Second Life works because people are prepared to spend large amounts of time and, crucially, money on the network. It has the combination of being user-friendly and just a bit addictive, a combination which has made millions for internet wonderkids like Facebook's 23 year old creator, Mark Zuckerberg. Even if the premise seems like a complete waste of time, the truth is that people will always love pointless distraction, and, for most, Second Life provides light relief in the guise of being something more serious. If the interest of the public and capabilities of Second Life continue to expand, so will the artful procrastination of the majority of its users. The future for Second Life looks decidedly rosy.

Above: dancing at a virtual disco; lounging at a cocktail bar; on a trip to the WWF's Conservation Island

REAL LIFE IN SECOND LIFE

Roma: A place in SL based on Ancient Rome. Dress up in a toga and walk around Palatine Hill, the Fori Romani, etc.

Armani: Dress your virtual self with purchases from the shop that Giorgio has modeled on his Milan boutique.

Sky News: Pick up a reporter's kit from Sky headquarters and compete to be their best citizen journalist online.

Left behind, but still smiling

When celebrities adopt, it's not only their new child's life that is affected, as **Rachel Holloway** finds out when she visits the orphanage where Madonna found her son

When I worked in Malawi during my gap year in 2005, I had the privilege of spending time at the Home of Hope orphanage, just outside the country's capital, Lilongwe. Back then the orphanage, though fairly well supported by Malawian standards, was little known to people outside Malawi itself. Two years later, however, the homes and faces of countless children who reside there have been splashed all over the world's tabloids, glossies and broadsheets alike. The adoption of David Banda, who was just 13 months old at the beginning of the debacle last October, caused scores of journalists to descend upon the orphanage. What did they want? A snapshot of David, the latest addition to Madonna's family.

My return to Home of Hope this summer finds little change at first glance; groups of girls chatter amongst themselves as I enter the compound, the youngest crying out, excited by the presence of an Azungu (white person). Life goes on the same as ever; the children rise at 5.30 for their morning devotions, eat at the same times and still giggle and laugh at the smallest things. As I settle back into life at the orphanage, I talk to one of the eldest, Chipiliro Chimitika, 19. Chipiliro, which means patience, is an intense character. Despite having lived at the orphanage for most of his life, he has a remarkably positive outlook and a great awareness of politics. It is he who eventually brings up the subject of the adoption.

He asks me how British people reacted to David's adoption and is surprised when I inform him of the back-



deep resentment to the adoption. "Imagine," he says, looking me in the eye, "if the process was reversed, and a Malawian picked a child from England to take back in a matter of hours."

It must be taken into account that here it can take two hours to wait for a bus, and people cook slowly on fires, doing without the luxury of electricity. As I reflect on this, suddenly the few days that Madonna cumulatively spent in Malawi seem even more remarkable. Is it not ridiculous that the woman who has adopted this boy knows next to nothing about his country, his culture, or even his family?

Back at the Home of Hope, I meet some of Chipiliro's friends who, having seen him talking to me, have some things to get off their own chests. Frank Rabbo, a laid-back sports fanatic who is popular with the girls at the orphanage, seems insistent that corruption within Malawi played a part in the hurried adoption. "The corruption, it is everywhere," he laments. The growing circle of boys around us murmurs in agreement. "We are embarrassed by our country," one boy admits.

Despite the attempts of President Banda to root out the problems that have crippled Malawi since the

Life continues as normal at the Home of Hope.
Photos: Rachel Holloway

fall of President Hastings Banda's regime in 1994, the boys insist that corruption still exists, from village chiefs to government officials. The motto 'Stop Corruption; Develop Malawi' plastered across billboards throughout the Republic suddenly seems somewhat ironic.

But what of David? Whilst most cannot deny that David's quality of life will be much improved in England, this cannot make the adoption entirely acceptable in many people's eyes. Elton Samuel, another Home of Hope orphan, reminds me of the implications of the cultural gap between England and Malawi. Elton tells me that he is concerned that his "little brother will no longer be a Malawian" having not heard the official language of Chichewa, or ever learned to cook the national dishes, or even understood the importance of dancing at a traditional festival. These may seem like insignificant details, but for a country ranked number one for poverty by the CIA World Factbook, where the average life expectancy is only 40, culture is one thing of which Malawians feel they can be proud. For David Banda to lose this heritage suggests to Malawians that their culture is worthless to the outside world.

Amid all the noise being made by the children at the orphanage, its founder, Reverend Chipeta, keeps markedly quiet. This dignified silence is significant. Here is a man who, despite his involvement in the Home since its foundation,

was not once consulted by the government about the adoption of a child in his care.

As he proudly told me of the new developments since my last visit, and of his hope that enough money could be raised for two new houses, I found myself falling silent. Although I would have loved to hear his view on the adoption, I couldn't quite bear to ruin the mood with the awkward questions that he has probably had to contend with for the last few years.

Sitting on a fallen tree by the side of the road, I have a final chat with Chipiliro and his friends. As we laugh and joke about the differences between our cultures, I mention that perhaps I will write about the boys in a newspaper when I get home. Chipiliro beams his huge, Malawian smile at me and nods. "It is good for people to know how we feel about these things."

Looking out across the scrubland as I travel back, I conclude that Chipiliro is right; it is good for people to know how Malawians feel. Madonna herself is not entirely to blame for such oversight, but her actions in Malawi over the past year have highlighted a broader issue: that the West can sometimes act in a way that seems to overlook the feelings of people in smaller, non-western nations.

As Malawians see it, Madonna's actions imply that having greater wealth is, for us Azungus, an adequate excuse for bypassing the people and laws of countries that are desperately trying to develop and be considered equals in the international arena.

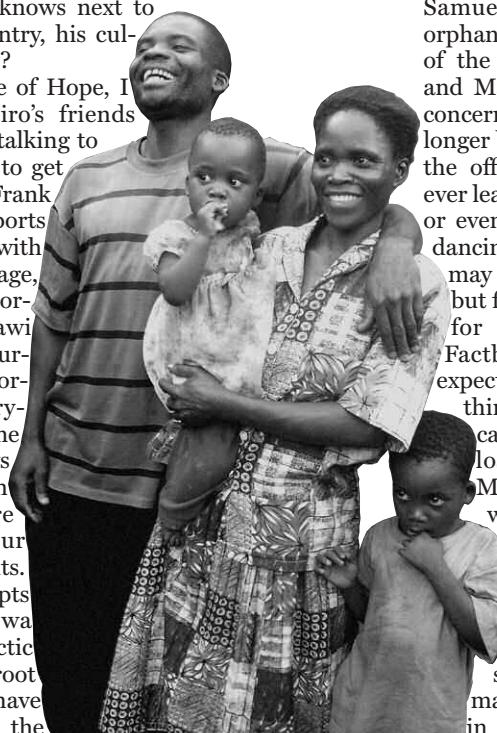
'I ask how long Madonna stayed to pick a child. "Just over 2 hours," he replies'

lash. I ask how many days Madonna stayed at the orphanage before deciding on a child to adopt. He laughs shortly, and there is an awkward pause.

"Days?" he asks, somewhat incredulously. "She was here for just over two hours."

Malawians, for whom even a greeting can take up to 20 minutes, find this hurried western attitude confusing, if not inexcusably rude. She certainly didn't abide by the law which states that foreign visitors must remain in Malawi for 18 months before officially adopting a Malawian-born child.

Chipiliro isn't the only Malawian with a strong opinion on the subject. One friend, Aaron Maulidi, simply shakes his head when the 'Madonna issue' crops up, before quietly murmuring: "It's bad, very bad. Her behaviour...it is not good." As we talk I begin to get the feeling that there is



It is 21:19, and I am clutching my mobile while standing on platform number three (and no quarters) in Moscow's Yaroslavsky station, wondering why my call is connecting not to the voice of my female friend but to garbled Slavic grunts and recorded Russian messages. I am a little panicked, not least because at 21:25 exactly – the Russians are incredibly punctual when it comes to trains – the hissing vehicle by my side will pull out and begin its seven-day-long journey to the other side of the world, and, unless I get seriously lucky, it will be minus two, currently petrified, English ladies. A loitering group of burly soldiers size me up menacingly, whilst metres away a *babushka* is scrabbling for change on the floor, her grubby layers of skirt clenched tightly in her fist.

This scene is typical of Moscow, an unashamedly industrial city riddled with fantastical characters and racked with contradictions. Note, for example, the shrine to capitalism (a designer shopping mall) sitting smugly on the other side of Red Square from Lenin's mausoleum; or the Disney-like magic of the multi-coloured, bauble-adorned St Basil's, compared with the stark, towering statements of functionality embodied by the old Kremlin Palace of Congresses, where Stalin used to gather with his Politburo. It is gritty but magnificent, giving off an air of century-old grandeur and resilience.

I wish I could say I warmed to St Petersburg as much as Moscow. I had been there just hours before, and found it soulless - an artificial shell of former splendour. Cracking nightlife, though; I guess you can't like everywhere you visit.

Four days, 37 packets of Russian *krekers* (crackers), five pots of instant potato mash and a

Crossing continents

From Moscow to Mongolia, riding on the Trans-Siberian express is a humbling, once-in-a-lifetime adventure, says Venetia Rainey

frankly stupid number of cups of tea later, I am still on the train I had, eventually, managed to board days before. I have one more night in our four-person berth, which we are sharing with Lyuda, an old lady who smacks her gums incessantly and is irritatingly keen to communicate with us via my Russian phrasebook. All she has told us so far is that the tea we are being given five times a day is a *padarak* (present) and the obligation to look surprised yet pleased by this information is getting really old, really quickly.

For the most part, however, it has been a pleasant train journey, generally consisting of conversations meditating

'People live here as they did thousands of years ago, and the landscape humbles the soul almost violently'

on the state of the world, reading books, eating, sleeping and taking pictures. It is a soporific yet fantastically indulgent lifestyle; you are forced to slow down completely and just sit and watch towns and the Siberian countryside fly past you. Every few hours the train stops at a station, which is the only chance you have to get off.

Food can be bought – usually potato-stuffed pastries, fresh fruit or dried fish – and stagnant air enjoyed, but only for ten minutes or so, after which the *provodnosc* (attendant) chivvies you back onto the train.

Tomorrow we will reach Irkutsk, the biggest city in

Making a brief stop at a busy station, many long-distance travellers stock up on fish, fruit and pastries.

Siberia, more famous for its presence on the Risk board game than its proximity to Lake Baikal (the deepest lake in the world). After that we are going on to Vladivostok, a city closed off to the world (including the Russians, due to its eastern location) until 1991. Tonight, however, the seedily lit buffet car and its supply of vodka await. Well, as they say: "When in Rome..."

I am now in Outer Mongolia, the most sparsely populated country in the world, and I am feeling further from civilisation than ever before in my life. Breathtaking, hostile and unbelievably beautiful doesn't even begin to describe earth's second-largest landlocked country. On each of the last few days we have been driven for hours on end down sweeping valleys, through uncharted torrents of water and over rocky, vehicle-upturning precipices. We have ridden wild Mongolian horses in the driving rain, killed and eaten a sheep the traditional way (make a small slit in the stomach, reach in and squeeze the heart until it bursts; chop up roughly, boil in a pot, dip in a vat of salt and eat), been drunk on Genghis Khan vodka whilst sitting round in a *yurt* (basically an igloo made with sheets rather than ice, but no warmer), showered in an icy Shamanic waterfall, and ridden camels into the Gobi desert to the sound of Mongol deep-throat singing.

Every single sense is alive at every single second out here. It is not always enjoyable (they hardly have any roads outside of the capital, Ulaanbaatar) but it is one of the few countries that still makes no concessions to the western lifestyle. People live here as they did thousands of years ago, and the landscape humbles the soul almost violently. Shame we

have to go back to Ulaanbaatar today; its semi-modernised atmosphere will be depressing. Still, the show must go on.

Beijing is everything Outer Mongolia wasn't: a mind-boggling mesh of empirical dynasties and vast crowds of people. We frequent markets (which have all been crammed into malls at the government's insistence), perfectly maintained parks, massage parlours (because our feet hurt) and a million and one museums. The Forbidden City is a disappointment (it is mostly under renovation and Roger Moore no longer does the audio guides), but the Summer Palace is the most spectacular thing ever built, and richer in detail than you could possibly imagine.

We climb the Great Wall (the JinShanLing section, for those in the know), which takes five hours and more energy than I would usually care to expend in a day. The views were postcard-perfect, however, and our efforts to get away from the more tourist-infested sections paid off; we were alone most of the time save the regular cries of, "Water! You need water! No? What about a hat?" from opportunistic hawkers along the way. We meandered through the city's *hutongs* (tiny alleyways) on our bicycles, picking up quail kebabs roasted in various spices along the way.

Beijing is an outdoors kind of city. The houses in the *hutongs* do not have their own toilets, so there are communal ones everywhere. It is not uncommon to live in one small room, so by night, card and dice games litter the street in place of house-orientated gatherings. Gyms are for the very rich and come early evening, gaggles of women exercise on public step-machines on the pavement. They smile and laugh a lot, although this could have been because my friend and I must have looked like a spectacle. Tonight I have promised myself I will try dog, as a local has promised me it will taste just like English chicken. I can't wait.



Freshers' Week is upon us and for newcomers to York, there is so much to find out and so little time. Don't worry though: from making friends with your flatmates to swimming in the lake, second year **Nicky Woolf** has all the answers (or so he thinks)

I feel very old indeed. The campus is quiet, for the moment, but there is a sense of foreboding, a sense of a gathering storm. On Sunday the October 7 this storm will break, and two and a half thousand young adults will rain down on the already-strained concrete of this frail University. In fact, by the time you are reading this it will already have happened. Like floods after a monsoon, you freshers will have poured in drunken rivulets from college to bar, from bar to club and - in all probability, as water will flow down until it collects - from club into the waiting embrace of the lake.

Don't try to catch the ducks or geese. They are faster, more agile, more intelligent and almost definitely less intoxicated than you are. They can also fly. The odds are stacked against you.

The University's official policy - and this is 100% true - is that if you kill a fellow student you are allowed back to study once you have completed your allocated custodial sentence, but if you kill a duck you are banned for life. Rumours of duck-eating in Langwith are, I'm reliably informed, entirely unfounded.

Which brings me to my first piece of advice. If you can possibly help it, and if you haven't already, don't swim in the lake.

Let me qualify that. If your honour is honestly at stake, swim it. It makes for a good story to tell the grandkids, assuming the pollutive experience hasn't rendered you chemically unable to reproduce. But remember that it is only two feet deep (people have broken ankles jumping in from the bridges) and almost entirely composed of germs, excrement and broken bicycles.

There is no Mini in there, no matter what anyone tells you. It isn't deep enough. But there is a murder-weapon in there somewhere. Dr. Elizabeth Howe, a visiting Oxford don, was stabbed to death in a Wentworth (now Goodricke D block) bedroom in 1990. The knife was, police say, cast into the murky depths of the lake and never recovered.

As a fresher, you're probably going to get a lot of advice and be told a lot of stories in the coming weeks by us old-timers. Some of it will doubtless be sage. Some of it will doubtless be inaccurate, alcohol-fuelled, immoral, uncool or illegal, or some unholy combination of the above. I am going to do my level best to tell you what I got told

ALTERNATIVE FRESHERS' EVENTS

If you want to keep your dignity in tact during Freshers' Week, try these events for an alcohol-free alternative to the Snakebite-fuelled mayhem

- **Freshers' Comedy** - the tri-termly comedy night kicks off on Sunday October 14 with Rob Deering, Stefano Paolini, Stephen Grant and compere Dan Atkinson.
- **James** - will also be running non-alcoholic events all week, including movie nights and poker
- **Vanbrugh** - events include a comedy night on Monday, a ghost walk on Friday and a fun day with bouncy castles and bbq at The Charles, in Heslington, on Saturday
- **Derwent** - will be hosting non-alcoholic events during the day and will finish with a movie night on Sunday
- **Alcuin** - will be running both alcoholic and non-alcoholic events every evening, starting with a movie night and free takeaway on Monday
- **Halifax** - there'll be a comedy night on Tuesday, a Casino Night on Thursday and England vs. Estonia on Saturday
- **Goodricke** - theatre trip on Weds



Freshers: Welcome to York

in my Freshers' Week that stuck, and some of the stuff that didn't.

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MY FRESHERS' WEEK

Anne-Marie Canning
YUSU President

Being such a chatterbox, it wasn't really the partying which got me in Freshers' Week. It was the staying-up-chatting-till-6am-about-absolute-rubbish! My excessive chatting culminated in a shaky tired fresher being sent home from Freshers' Ball, much to my embarrassment!

I also lost my voice and was ordered to stop talking by my doctor. (To the relief of my new flatmates I should imagine!)

The main thing is to pace yourself, try and get some sleep so you can enjoy all the events and fun! In the meanwhile my voice has returned, so come and say hi!

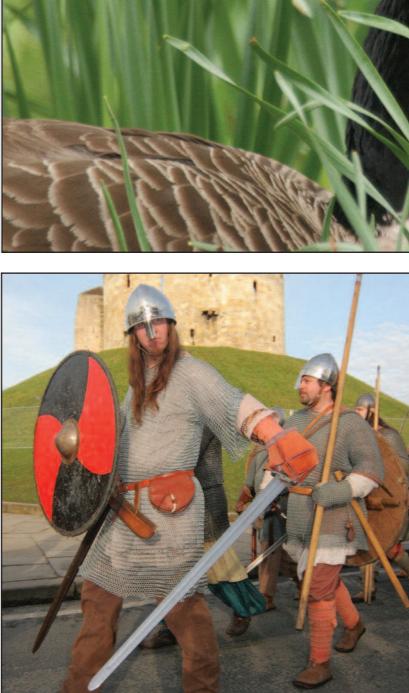
Jamie Tyler
Derwent JCRC Chair

I'm not proud of everything that happened in Freshers' Week but I'm certainly not ashamed. It all started innocently with another mother dropping off another nervy fresher. After is a bit of a blur. The first two nights were lost to alcoholic amnesia; all I know is I woke up with more phone numbers than faces. I found people I felt more comfortable around, before Derwent's infamous 'Slag n Drag' came round; my night as a lady, in a bizarre twist of fate, ended as the night I became a man. The weekend saw Fresh, and the start of a romance. Quite a week!

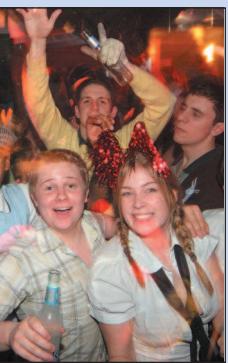
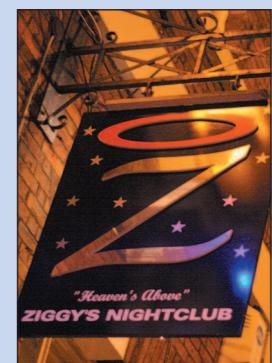
Chris Cowan
Langwith student

Funny how my first week could centre around one person and their penis. And I hear he's no Ron Jeremy. It was pretty much his introduction (after a few drinks) to us - announcing his small appendage and his even smaller bladder. Campus became not a collection of colleges, but rather various sites on which he'd had to relieve said bladder, meanwhile daring us to peek at his trouser-worm. His particular 'favourite' was the bridge from Market Square to the library. Classy stuff. Funny who you meet though - two years later and I'm still living with him.

Freshers arrive at York (above), and members of the duck (right) and medieval (below) communities. Photos: Georgi Mabee



The best way to make friends is to do something. Join the Medieval Recreation Society if you like wenches and have a beard and your own axe'



THE FRESHERS' FILE

We run through eight things every respectable fresher should have done by the end of their fortnight of fun

- Climbed the hill up to Clifford's Tower, and then rolled down it with as much abandon as you can muster (whooping and screaming optional, alcohol preferable).

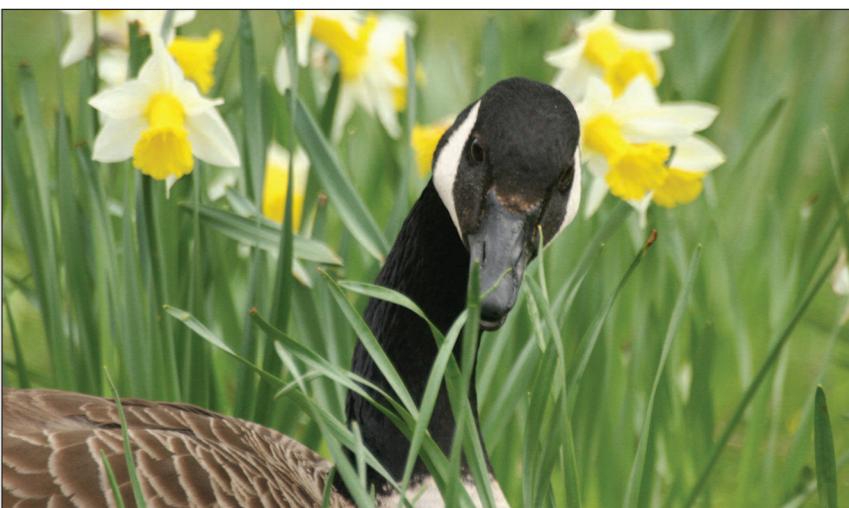
- Eaten a classic student meal. May include sweet chilli sauce, cheese, cold pizza, peas and anything from Efes.

- Acquired new items of fancy dress. Don't get sentimental about what you brought with you, rejoice waking up with those glowing devil horns you've always wanted.

- Had some quality drunken banter with Rob and Pete, the Ziggy's bouncers and (if you're really, really good) had them both say goodbye to you at the end of the night.

- Got naked in front of at least three other people. Drinking games are normally the most efficient way to complete this one.

- Forgotten certain aspects of the night before. Some things, and some people, just aren't meant to be remembered.



Another housemate, Remi, is on the football team. A friend of mine, James, started a political society. Another is editor of the campus fashion magazine. Yet another has a radio show.

It is almost like a microcosm of real life. Everyone has a job, everyone has things to do. There are bars, there are newspapers, there are celebrities. There are traditions and legends. There are successes and failures. It's like a training camp for real life, Legoland for 18-24-year-olds.

Yes, you're here to do your degree but as often as not it's what else you do that defines what you do afterwards. Student politicians go into politics. Student journalists go into journalism. Student actors go into acting, student musicians start a band, student Deloitte reps end up working for Deloitte.

Find somewhere. There are niches everywhere. You'll definitely like one. And if not, don't worry - you can always concentrate on your degree instead...

What to do if things aren't going to plan

● **Yusu Welfare** offers a wide range of support services, details of which can be found at yusu.org/welfare

● **Nightline** is a confidential listening service, you can email nightline@york.ac.uk, call 01904 433735 or visit them in Goodrick D/038

● YUSU-trained **college reps** are on hand to help you out and provide information

● The **University Counselling Service** offers group and individual sessions. Call 01904 432140 or email counselling@york.ac.uk

very different from school, where most of your friends are your friends because you grew up together. At university, your friends are your friends because you are genuinely similar people.

The best way to make friends like that is to do something. Get involved somewhere. Join a team, if sport's your thing. Join the newspaper if you like writing. Join the radio if you like talking. Join the Medieval Recreation Society if you like wenches and have a beard and your own axe. I cannot imagine coming to university and not doing something.

Because, and it sounds blasphemous I know, drinking can get... old after a little while. I know, I know, it sounds unlikely now. But it will. One of my housemates, Smally, (the name is ironic) is on the rugby team, and that consumes his life. He prepares mentally and physically for the matches, and drinks - a lot - afterwards with his team-mates. But it isn't aimless drinking, it is society drinking, with tactics to talk and a unity of purpose bonding the group.

As a resident of Goodricke College's infamous 'Cell Block C', I longed to transform my tiny, grey, boring room into a haven of artistic originality. I couldn't compete with the guy at the other end of the corridor who had Samurai swords and other weaponry dotted around his room. However, with a bit of money from my food fund and a few trips around York's various charity shops, I endeavoured to individualise my room, making the most of what little, admittedly grimy, space I had.

The first, most important piece of advice I can give to freshers in a similar situation is that, if you want your room

room, "to highlight the main features of the room and distinguish what they can and cannot change. They can then rearrange furniture to best suit them, making the most of the space and light in the room."

In terms of making the most of space, one of the best things you can do is to put a stand-alone mirror against a wall to give the room an illusion of space, and create depth. Also, try to avoid using a lot of detailed patterns, such as flowers, stripes and polka dots, as they tend to be overwhelming. It is probably easier and cheaper to buy plain items and then customise them yourself. Not only is plain wood less expensive than other materials, but it also gives you the freedom to be creative; you could try painting, stencilling or even sticking on beads to get the look you're going for.

If you don't fancy Ikea, second-hand and junk shops could be what you are looking for. Buy cheap but interesting furniture and then sand it down so it's ready for you to repaint, giving it a contemporary finish.

Steve also gave me tips on how to create cheap wall-hangings: "Just go to any fabric or wallpaper shop and choose a selection of samples. Fabric Gallery and Interiors in Dunnington specialises in curtain and upholstery fabric as well as wallpaper. They have a collection of about 5000 different modern and more traditional fabrics in a range of prints and colours. You can then buy some cheap artist's frames from places such as The Range, in Monks Cross, to which you can glue or staple the fabric or wallpaper. It's that easy!"

You can save on expensive wall decor by going through magazines and cutting out images which you can then go on to frame. I used the large notice-board already on my wall to pin up photographs, postcards and ticket stubs, adding to it as the year went on, and ultimately creating a personalised montage.

The poster sales on campus are always good, and keep an eye out for freebies at Freshers' Fair as well as on your days out; you'll be surprised how many stylish things you can pick up if you look out for them. I converted three patterned canvas bags, which I got free with a drink, into cushions by stuffing the bags and then cutting the straps so that I could use them as ties. If you are not feeling very creative, Dunelm in Clifton Moor is great for cushions, fabrics and table lamps.

I found lighting to be a problem in my student room, so table lamps and more decorative forms of lighting, such as lava lamps, can brighten up a room instantly. If Ikea or B&Q don't do the trick, Blossom and Walker on Lord Mayor's Walk provides some unusual accessories and lighting to jazz up any room. Mood lighting can be created by using uplights and lampshades, as they produce different dark and light areas to replace the uniform light that comes from the typical centre lightbulb in the middle of the ceiling. For high quality items at cheaper prices, TK Maxx updates its collection regularly and is good for items such as lamps, bed linen and cushions.

Lastly, if your room is lucky enough to get a lot of natural light, flowers and plants make your place feel really lived in. There are sales on campus where you can buy cheap plants, and a number of florists off campus, such as Patricia May on Melrosegate. Whatever your taste, there's no need to settle for a prison cell.

Candles create atmosphere, while storage boxes can also be used as chairs for your friends. Photos: Rachel Holloway



Pimp your room

Anjli Raval offers some tips on how to brighten up your new home

not to be messy but neat and clutter free, get some boxes. Investing in a few storage boxes is a must; they can hold your bare essentials, and then be easily slipped underneath your bed or somewhere else out of the way. You can also cover them with fabric, if you like, and convert them into a bedside table or a stool for when your friends come round. You don't want big, bulky furnishings in your student abode, as they

'Keep an eye out for freebies at Freshers' Fair as well as on your days out. You'll be surprised at how many stylish things you can pick up if you look out for them'

can suffocate a little room, so multi-purpose items like box-stools are ideal.

Second tip: adding colour to the room is vital. The drab shade of paint on your walls and the dreary, bog-standard fittings can't, unfortunately, be changed. For this reason, choosing accessories in a combination of neutral shades and stronger, more vibrant colours is vital and can completely change the mood of a room. From bed linen, fairy lights and throws to rugs and cushions, the options are endless - just but be careful not to over-decorate. If you feel that you don't have an eye for colour, ask one of your friends to help.

Steve Whitt, from York-based interior design company Art from the Start, gave me a few ideas about how new students moving into their halls of residence can do the place up. "You don't want to pack your room with lots of things that look good on their own but look a mess when they're all together," he explains. "You have to look at the bigger picture." He suggests that freshers start by drawing a sketch of their

To be single, or not to be: that is the question

Coming to university in a relationship is hard, says Sam Noble, but for some Harry and Sallys it can work

I recently visited my cousin who is getting married in December. His house was filled with pictures of dresses, flowers, cakes, ornate invitations and various other paraphernalia. Saddled between a bunch of red roses and a pile of top hats was a thick hardback book titled *How To Do Just About Anything*. On opening it, I discovered that it contained illuminating entries such as 'How To Boil An Egg', and more emotive ones such as 'How To Deal With A Break-Up' and 'How To Survive A Long-Distance Relationship'. The latter two are evidently not an issue for my cousin, who has a fiancee who supplies perfectly-made cups of tea and evenly-buttered toast. They are, however, pertinent issues for freshers up and down the land.

The book rates the difficulty of each entry with little blue hammers; boiling an egg gets one, and the long-term relationship gets the maximum: five. As the book acknowledges, there is no way of avoiding the fact that long-term relationships are extremely tough. The most obvious cause of stress is not being around your loved one for long periods of time. You miss the daily routine, someone being nice to you for no reason, sex on tap and someone who understands your idiosyncrasies when - as happens during Freshers' Week - you are surrounded by people who you have only just met. They don't understand your crazy hair-do, your love for the Klaxons, your mannerisms, and so on. Most people I know who bravely undertook the long-distance relationship will nod sagely at the mention of the difficult first week, the nights spent pining after their darling, whilst everyone else on their corridor was out drinking themselves into oblivion. Having also come to university with a hometown sweetheart, I can identify.

The first term is the clincher for long-distancers. To establish a relationship where both your emotional and physical needs are sated in spite of your boy- or girlfriend being hundreds of miles away from you is tricky to the point of being almost impossible. Most people become a dribbling mess, espousing romance to anyone who will listen in order to justify to themselves, as much as to others, that it is really worth it. They tend to either nostalgically cling onto Danny-and-Sandy-style memories, or defer the heartache of missing someone by reassuring themselves that they'll be together in the end, strolling hand-in-hand into a glorious sunset with their very own happy ending.

It does get easier. It helps if you can establish a routine of phone calls, and get stuck in with new friends instead of wallowing in misery. Remember: whatever anyone tells you, taking yourself like a lamb to the slaughter into Ziggy's is *not* essential to the university experience.

Of course, surviving the long-term relationship is different for every Harry and Sally. I heartily congratulate and respect anyone who can survive three years or so of university with their home town sweetheart. I also truly sympathise with anyone whose relationship dissolves. My friends who have split up with their significant others have done so for myriad reasons, from: "I want to notch that bedpost with nubile first years," to "we've just grown apart," to those three glorious words: "I was drunk!"

There is no easy answer to whether one should attempt the long-distance relationship. University life acts as a catalyst for change; either strengthening a pre-existing relationship or breaking it, and enabling you to concentrate on a new and exciting chapter in your life. Either way, in my cousin's book, 'How To Climb Mount Everest' also gets five hammers on the difficulty rating. So congratulate yourself, now you can probably climb a very big mountain.



There's fun to be had on the fresher dating scene - just be careful who you wake up with, warns Sarah Foster

Arriving at university footloose and fancy free, I was certain it would be a whirlwind of sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll. Of course, I was mainly basing this assumption on *Animal House*. I was somewhat less than impressed with the reality.

While my Freshers' Week naturally involved copious amounts of alcohol, even that was not enough to prevent the realisation that the most convenient dating pool available to me, the boys in my block, really wasn't likely to offer up the goods.

Despite my friends and I deciding that none of the people we lived with possessed any potential as life partners, many of us were still tempted by alcohol and morbid curiosity. One problem: whilst half-hearted, half-conscious hook-ups are part of any decent university experience, the thrill of a one night stand is greatly reduced when you have to share a bathroom with your fling for the rest of the year.

If indulging in activity that you think you might regret in the morning, it is best to try and do it with someone that you will never, ever see again. For one thing, the rest of your housemates probably won't know who they are, so you won't be forced to sit through squawks of

'YOU KISSED WHO?!?'. If you are regretting a saliva swap, it really is the last thing that you want in the morning - and certainly not when you're also nursing a hangover from hell.

Of course, regrettable hook-ups are sort of what Freshers' Week, if not the whole of the first term, is for. I know that almost all the people who I now do my very best to avoid on campus are all casualties of that fateful first term; that period when you realise that not only are you living on your own for the first time, but you are also living with members of the opposite sex. And yes, there is also the amount of alcohol consumed to take into account.

Not all romances need end up as shameful inebriated memory blurs, however. While most of my first year at York was spent lamenting the apparent lack of attractive men in the whole of the North Yorkshire region, it must also be noted that these complaints were punctuated with dalliances with not entirely unattractive boys. You are unlikely to find the love of your life in Ziggy's - although there are those odd couples who seem perfect for each other. Instead, from personal experience, I would suggest two places which, to me, were a beacon of joy in the desolate ocean of fresher dating.

Firstly, look at the other people on your course. There is nothing more romantic than late-night study sessions in the library, and there is a mine of possible conversation topics, starting with your new lecturers. Unfortunately, if you happen to be, as I was, a female English student, or a male Computer Scientist, than the gender ratio is not really in your favour (although if you happen to be one of the few boys studying a subject with a high percentage of females, or vice-versa, you might suddenly find yourself in high demand).

My second tip would be societies. They exist to enable like-minded people to meet up and bond over things, which, with a little work, can be taken to a whole new level, if you know what I mean.

There are also those unions I would recommend staying away from. Block incest is one thing, but if you're going to throw randy STYCs into the equation, things are bound to get complicated. I would recommend that you do not go there. Sleeping with people who have volunteered to act as older siblings to you brings up an odd ethical question, and there are plenty of STYCs whose only aim is to 'check out the new talent'. Freshers beware; you have been warned.



UncleMatthew

He would care, but he just doesn't want to...

'Why not stop trying to get so close to these timid young ladies so soon, and instead keep a discreet distance? Modern camera lenses have incredible zoom ranges.'

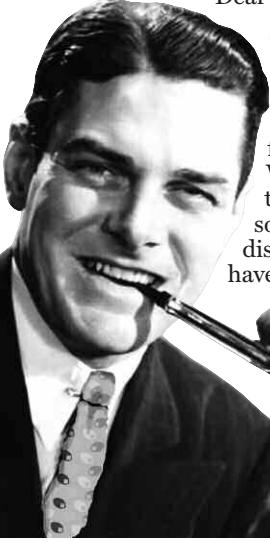
Dear Uncle Matthew,

I am a postgraduate student, entering my thirteenth consecutive year of university study. Much as I would like to 'fuck a fresher', experience suggests this is a remote prospect. I don't want to sacrifice my leather elbow patches, beard or incessant low muttering; what other techniques could I apply to these nubile lovelies whom I see every year, but never get close enough to touch? And will loudly saying 'That's what I love about these fresher girls; I get older, they stay the same age' in V Bar ever get me laid?

Frustrated, Wentworth

.....

Dear Frustrated,

When faced with repeated failure, it is easy to get discouraged. Perhaps you are hoping for too much, too fast and would benefit from taking things more slowly. Why not stop trying to get so close to these timid young ladies so soon, and instead keep a discreet distance? Modern camera lenses have incredible zoom ranges, and picture quality is always improving. What better way to get to know somebody than by taking an interest in every aspect of their lives, without the embarrassment of asking directly?

Yours priapically,
Uncle Matthew

Dear Uncle Matthew,

I am hoping you will be able to shed some light on a situation which baffles me. My relationship with my girlfriend ended recently, after she decided to take a vow of celibacy on the advice of a local church group. Naturally I was upset, but I respected her decision and did my best to move on. However, since then, she has requested to meet me on several occasions, only to initiate passionate bouts of love-making. What confuses me is that she still refuses to countenance the idea of renouncing her vow: she insists that the only way we can sleep together regularly is by getting married. I feel too young to propose, but I find it impossible reject her advances. Can you fathom her behaviour?

Perplexed, Derwent

.....

Dear Perplexed,

I suggest you stop trying to analyse your ex-girlfriend's intentions and now focus on what you want yourself. That you should want regular sexual contact is both understandable and normal, yet I can also see that you don't feel able to abandon her. My suggestion is simple: don't. Although she may be unwilling to sleep with you as often as you like, there is no reason why you couldn't find somebody else with whom to make up the deficit, whilst continuing to enjoy your occasional trysts. All that is required is some discretion on your part. I feel sure this is the best course of action. As for plumbing her depths, I'll leave that to you.

Yours in mistress,
Uncle Matthew

Dear Uncle Matthew,

One has recently arrived in old Ebor from Pater's manse in Bucks. Frankly, one is appalled by the hideous architecture, the hideous poverty and the hideous women. I was unaware of all these issues before I arrived, as I had never entertained the possibility that my Oxford application would fail, let alone my applications to Durham, Exeter or Bath. So now I find myself studying Sociology in York, an application which old Tristram 'Bugger' Cooper-Smythe had made for me in the dorm as some kind of joke, the cad. Do I really need to mix with the poor, the fat and the Sociologists? Or is there a way in which one can sidestep these dregs of society and ensure one's associates are solely those of, shall we say, some breeding?

Perturbed, Alcuin

.....

Dear Perturbed,

It is a sad fact of today's society that where once your wealth and family connections might have ensured a justly comfortable career, intelligence and aptitude now seem to hold sway over many employers. In the name of research, I advise you to get out and fully immerse yourself in York's architecture, poverty and women. Getting a stitch-by-stitch view of life's rich tapestry will make you an even more appealing prospect than you already seem from your letter. Who knows, you may enjoy yourself so much, you might want to send Mr Cooper-Smythe a case or two of claret by way of thanks.

Yours upper-crustily,
Uncle Matthew

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Freshers? Nuts, all of 'em

Freshers' fury

Professor Cantor made a big mistake; it would be calmer in Iraq than here. A plague has descended upon this place. There are hundreds, nay, thousands of freaky little fresher-things running around messing up the place with their parents and their trolleys of luggage and their beer packets and their vodka cans and their condom bottles and whatnot and so on and so forth, all wandering around drunk, looking for somewhere to live.

What a mess. Throwing up in the bins and making noise.

God, I wish I was young again though. Us second-years have to be more grown-up about things now. We can't get away with drinking a bottle-and-three-quarters of Sambuca and running around for fifteen minutes trying to meet as many new people as possible whose names you never remember before vomiting violently off the middle of Goodricke bridge onto a rugby player whose name you don't remember and never will who is swimming naked underneath in the vain hope of, and I quote, "bumming a duck". We can no longer hold down 54 shots of foul archers, vodka, orange juice and white wine and still be stable enough to get

into Gallery without swaying more than a little but and having a dance-off with a complete stranger and losing and banging your head on the toilet wall while trying to retrieve the shot glass that you stole but that rolled out of your pocket into the next door cubicle and instead of going into that cubicle to retrieve it you try to go underneath the partitioning wall so that when a group of girls come in - because it's the girls toilets, of course - they find you stuck halfway between two cubicles with a bruise on your forehead, fast asleep...

We're too old for those sorts of shenanigans now.

Thank God for that.

The actual last word on it

Fruit of the loom. Fruit of the sodding Loom. For those freshers for whom this is the first edition of *Nouse* they've ever read, we run a story on Fruit of the Loom every single month.

And why? Because no matter what we, the environment guys, the ethics guys or the poor downtrodden workers themselves say, the YUSU sabbs seem to enjoy bathing luxuriantly in the sweat of starving exploited children.

Why this might be, I do not know. Perhaps immorality is stylish these

days. Perhaps they just like reading about themselves in these hallowed pages. Perhaps they're all just really stupid.

Either way, when they stop, we'll stop. So for God's sake stop.

Like a fit duck in the wind

He was a wonderful and warm duck. Though his own life was often sadly touched by tragedy, he touched the lives of so many others at York - and throughout the world - with joy and with comfort.

How many times shall we remember him, in how many different ways, with the geese, the swans, with freshers, with the hung-over, when, with just a look or a gesture that spoke so much more than words, he would reveal to all of us the depth of his compassion and his avianity.

How difficult things were for him from time to time, surely we can only guess at - but the people everywhere, not just here at York but everywhere, they kept faith with Fit Duck, they liked him, they loved him, they regarded him as one of the people. He was the people's duck, and that is how he will stay, how he will remain in our hearts and in our memories forever.

FILLING IN THE GAPS

The scene opens on a workhouse. Freshers, arrayed at bare benches around bare tables, are orphans, left without home or loved-ones by the accommodation crisis. Coming as they do from the unfinished slums of Donald Barron or Barbara Scott courts, any roof over their heads is a luxury.

But their lives are miserable in the workhouse, slaving away making Fruit of the Loom T-shirts, their backs raw from whipping, out of hundreds of tiny threads of Alcuin A-block.

The foreman is feeding the freshers their daily Roger Kirk slop with an enormous wooden spoon. One of them, a particularly fresh-faced young orphan History student by the name of Oliver, is not sated by his meagre portion of gruel. Trembling yet courageous, holding his bowl and his Mad card in his trembling fingers, he approaches the foreman. "Please sir," he says, his voice barely a whisper, "Can I have some more?"

There follows a lot of singing.

Meanwhile, in the rafters of the Holiday Inn, the lovable rogue Joey "Fagin" Ellis is teaching her merry band of Langwith freshers how to pickpocket from wealthy Alcuin students.

This also, for some reason, happens through the medium of song. "You gotta pick a pocket or two", she trills, deftly lifting a Rolls-Royce Silver Shadow from the pocket of Arthur Sockington-Pissfiddle of Alcuin A-block.

Oliver, sold by the foreman for the indignity of asking for seconds, has been bought by the benevolent millionaires Grace Fletcher-Warbucks (bugger, that's a different musical), and is passing the time in his new home by singing a lot about the morning and flowers.

After that it becomes obvious that I don't know enough about the story of Oliver. I was honestly about six last time I saw the musical. I don't think I've even read the book.

Moment of Zen

Gingerly dipping a toe into the mysterious, algae-covered lagoon of current affairs

Freshers' Week is a time for discovery, but one unlucky arrival discovered slightly more than he would have liked when his mother took full advantage of Halifax College's generous offer of free condoms. Moment of Zen feels that this is definitely a student welfare issue.



We hear that on a YUSU sabbs bonding/drinking weekend, Welfare Officer and campus celebrity Grace Fletcher-Hall vomited neatly into the lap of fellow sabb Matt Burton. When asked why, she answered "because he was the only person in sight." Fair enough.



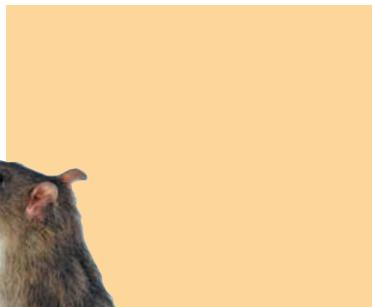
York building works have caused a great deal of inconvenience, not least to Professor Ron Weir, popular Derwent Provost, whose house was left without running water. It's not funny, actually. It was probably quite unpleasant for the poor man.



Former YUSU President Rich Croker has snubbed Derwent College to retire to a cushy flat in Fairfax House. He will get a continental breakfast delivered each morning. When asked why, he replied: "Because I will get a continental breakfast delivered each morning."



It is often said that rats flee a sinking ship, and Adam Thorn is no exception. Sources close to the enigmatic *York Vision* editor tell Moment of Zen that Thorn is seeking new career online. We don't personally frequent that sort of site, but there's no accounting for taste.



In response to *York Vision*'s imminent staff crisis, bosses have initiated a breeding program. Johnathan Isaby, an ex-Vision journalist, has been brought in to increase the dwindling gene pool. Scientists hope that the program will stave off extinction.



Formal dress code is in strict force in the Union building. Sam Bayley and Matt Burton are behind a professionalism drive. All sabbs now have aluminium name-tags and labelled desks. Accusations that YUSU is turning into a branch of Dixons have gone unanswered.



If you have any juicy tidbits or gossip to share, send them to:

socs12@york.ac.uk



Arts Reviews

BOOK: THE BOOK OF LOST THINGS

AUTHOR: JOHN CONNOLLY

PUBLISHER: HODDER

PRICE: £6.99

REVIEW: STEVEN WARD



Consumed by grief following the death of his mother and his father's remarriage, twelve-year-old David seeks refuge in fairytales. Soon myths begin to merge with reality, transporting him to a world of fiction. Believing his mother to be trapped somewhere in this new world, David sets off to rescue her, negotiating the dangerous and haunting landscape of the fables.

The novel suffers from an identity crisis. As a children's story book it could function reasonably well. However, the graphic depictions of murder, alongside the rather contrived and none-so subtle tackling of 'adult issues', mean that this perhaps wouldn't be on the Puffin 'Must-Read' list for under-tens. The idea of adapting fairytales for an adult audience is certainly an interesting one, but Connolly lacks the vision and linguistic talent of Angela Carter to pull it off.

There are moments of true humour, such as the re-imagining of Snow White as a tyrannical obese spinster, when the adventurous spirit of the novel actually shines through, though these are seldom. All in all, a rather confused affair, although weighing in at over 500 pages, it does make a handy doorstop.

BOOK: THE SECRET HISTORY

AUTHOR: DONNA TARTT

PUBLISHER: PENGUIN

PRICE: £7.99

REVIEW: HELEN CITRON



The Secret History charts the 'freshman' year of Richard Papen, a small-town scholarship boy at an exclusive New England college called Hampton. Sex, alcohol and drugs are all features of his first year. However, these typical temptations are merely the background to something far more sinister. Richard becomes part of an elite group of Ancient Greek enthusiasts and discovers that their passion for the classical world extends dangerously far beyond the classroom. At York, student parties tend to constitute a good old piss-up with nothing more serious to show for it than a complaint from the Badger Hill Action Group. At Hampton, Richard discovers that, having reached the summit of classical knowledge, his fellow students have attempted to recreate a bacchanal, resulting in the mutilation and murder of a local man.

Tartt carefully and slowly crafts her characters, each of whom stands out distinctly. Their quirks, weaknesses and short-comings slowly become apparent, and as the group becomes increasingly embroiled in guilt and intrigue the relationships between its members become ominously fraught. *The Secret History* may be bleak but it is also brilliantly written and totally addictive.

On the Arts Trail: Amy Milka discovers York's cultural underbelly

First impressions aren't always right. For some freshers, York may seem a little twee. Initially, I too became frustrated by the constant flow of tourists riding open-top buses in the freezing cold, taking photos of completely spurious buildings and clogging up the Shambles. I've often heard those who are used to the hustle and bustle of big city life call York "too small". However, behind the facade of Betty's and the unmistakable musk of the Yorvik Viking Centre lies a city alive with culture, waiting to be discovered.

York was traditionally England's second city, acting as an administrative centre for the unruly North. The courts of London were replicated here to enforce the King's Law, and York was also the headquarters for many trades and crafts. The Merchant Adventurer's Hall, for example, is one of the oldest buildings in the city, built before 1361. Before you leave, you'll probably have an opportunity to attend a college or society ball in this historic place. In much of the city, beautiful Tudor buildings are still very much in use as restaurants and shops, which creates a feeling of being steeped in history. A fact to impress your new housemates: Whip-ma-whop-ma Gate (next to the Shambles) is so called because it used to be the site of a whipping post where criminals were flogged. You can almost feel the onomatopoeia.

But on to York today. Arts enthusiasts, or anyone wishing to inject a little culture into their lives, will be spoilt for choice. Next to the historic King's Manor (the University's centre for Medieval Studies, which often features its own exhibitions) is York Art Gallery. A quiet

haven after the bustle of the city centre, the gallery features a number of semi-permanent exhibits in addition to a variety of visiting collections. Recent highlights have included a selection of Japanese paintings and ceramics; 'Relationships', an exploration of mixed media in modern art; and the tantalisingly titled 'Mad Man in the Minster' exhibition of paintings and sketches. From October 6, just in time for the new term, the gallery will play host to an exhibition of Tracey Emin's work, and a collection entitled 'Marking Time', comprising pictures of York from sunrise to sunset.

Having whet your appetite for culture, and maybe a little lunch, why not head back into the city centre to VJ's Art Bar, where the colourful modern works on the walls are all for sale, and the alley outside is illuminated at night by projections from local contributors.

Near the Minster, on and around High Petergate, lie a number of smaller arts and crafts shops, topped off by the student's choice, Shared Earth. Here you can pick up fair trade jewellery, ornaments, and pretty much anything else at a reasonable price. A few hours can also be well spent in the Castle Museum, where an entire Victorian street has been recreated.

If you enjoy treasure hunting, York offers a large number of antique shops, but undoubtedly the most interesting is the Banana Warehouse on Piccadilly. Amongst the plastic '80s junk and old work-out videos, great pieces of furniture, old books and trinkets can be found on the cheap.

As evening draws in, the arts fan has a choice of venues at their disposal. The Grand Opera House



York Art Gallery is a soothing respite from the city bustle

has secured a spot on the touring circuit of many popular musicals (Chicago was a recent highlight), also offering opera and ballet from both nationally renowned and local companies.

The City Screen in the town centre acts as far more than just a cinema, playing host to the weekly gathering of the Other Side Comedy Club, where up and coming comedians try out their material every Sunday. The cinema also regularly shows classic films as well as some edgy, arthouse flicks.

Alternatively, one of the best value choices is York Theatre Royal, which offers a student concession at £3.50 for the majority of its performances, making it a lot cheaper than a night at the cinema. The theatre has forged links with many local amateur and youth groups, offering a wide variety of music, dance and plays in addition to the professional productions.

So in your first few weeks at

York, why not take some time to explore what the city has to offer? A walk around the walls is a great way to see the city from a new perspective, just make sure it's a nice day. Wander in the Museum Gardens, or the grounds of the Minster where, during the summer months, you can see open-air productions of Shakespeare or Wilde. Certainly, as a new arrival you will want to see inside the Minster, which has become something of a tourist trap in recent years with the introduction of turnstiles and a large entrance fee.

But there are many experiences that won't cost a penny. The Art Gallery is always free, and the city hosts several festivals per year, packing the streets with markets and street performers.

And finally, remember, you don't have to be a History of Art student or know about Brecht to enjoy the art gallery or the theatre once in a while.

WHAT'S ON

Drama Barn:

Tickets £3 for Friday and Saturday matinees, otherwise £3.50 for members, £4.50 for non-members, available from Vanbrugh Stalls Wednesday-Friday 12-2pm and on the door. Performances start at 7:30pm, with 2:30pm matinees

Week 3, 26 - 28 October

Love and Understanding
by Joe Penhall

Week 4, 3 - 5 November

Wake Up Call
by Rasheeda Nalumoso

Week 5, 10 - 12 November

The Barnarama

Week 6, 17 - 19 November

Two
by Jim Cartwright



Week 7, 23 - 26 November

Arsenic and Old Lace
by Joseph Kesselring

Week 8, 1 - 3 December

The Trial
by Stephen Berkoff

Week 9, 8 - 10 December

The Ash Grove
by Nikolaus Morris

Grand Opera House:

Tickets £11-20, available from www.grandoperahouseyork.org.uk

Alan Carr
October 12-13

Frank Skinner
October 14

The Nutcracker
October 22

Other Side Comedy Club

Every Sunday, held at the City Screen Basement Bar on Coney Street. Tickets £7/8, can be booked in advance from 08707 583219

Steve Hughes, Roger Monkhouse and Silky
October 14

Andre Vincent, Martin Davis and Matt Read
October 21

Theatre Royal:

Located at St. Leonard's Place. Tickets £5-£18, available from www.yorktheatreroyal.co.uk, by calling 01904 623568 or texting BOOKING to 07751 73865 and following the instructions

Pinocchio
October 19-27

Hugh The Drover
Opera
October 9-13

Limbo
October 12 - November 3

Theatre Previews

Andy Birnie gives an insider's introduction to York's prolific Drama Society

York DramaSoc is one of the largest and most active societies at the University, with over 400 members. We are an incredibly prolific society and our output is one of the highest of any drama society in the country. We produce one major production a week during term time, as well as numerous smaller projects, such as weekly Open Drama Nights which anyone can turn up and join in with for free, and also frequent outreach opportunities such as working in schools or prisons (although not together, obviously). The standard of our productions is generally very high, but don't be put off, there are opportunities for enthusiastic people of all levels of experience.

Most of our productions take place in our very own venue, a small black box studio theatre known affectionately as the Drama Barn, located near Vanbrugh college (making Vanbrugh bar the unofficial DramaSoc HQ). The barn is admittedly quite small, but extremely versatile and is frequently used to great effect by many innovative student directors. It is pretty rare for a university drama society to have a venue of their own, we are very lucky to

have it and use it to the full!

Getting involved in the society is really very simple. You do need to be a paid member in order to perform in the barn for insurance reasons, but membership for the year is a mere £6, and this allows you to be involved in any productions for the year, and also gets you a quid off any ticket prices, so even if you aren't a performer it is well worth joining if you intend to see a few plays throughout the year. You don't need to be a member to audition, auditions are open to all, but should you be successful you will need to be a member to perform.

The main way to get involved in the society is to audition. There will be auditions for the autumn term productions in Week 2, for plays taking place in Weeks 6, 7, 8 and 9. I strongly encourage anyone interested to audition, it is a wonderful way to get to know people even if you aren't immediately successful. There is often a lot of competition, and the key thing in auditioning is enthusiasm and perseverance. If you don't get cast in your first term, please don't give up! There are also numerous opportunities to be involved other than acting, including



Last term's production of *The Cut* by Mark Ravenhill

teching and backstage work, production and directing. The society is entirely run by students, from the most prolific director to the most humble spear-carrying stage hand, everyone is important!

One project happening this term, that maybe needs a little more explanation than the rest, is the Barnarama. This is a new project, and is essentially

an unaundered play. Anyone can be involved in this, in pretty much any capacity. A team of student playwrights are currently writing a number of short pieces based around the theme of Greek Myths, and these will be open to anyone who wants to get a taste for acting, directing, production, teching, stage managing or anything else without being involved in a major production straight away. There are also two student-written plays being performed this term. Dramasoc strives to provide opportunities for student playwrights, and frequently stages new writing by students.

If you want to stage a production yourself, things are very straightforward. You can apply with classic material or with original work, which will be considered without regard to the age or experience of the writer. Once you've decided to stage a production, all you need to do is find a producer and apply for a production slot. Information about when and how to apply will be provided via email and on our website later in the term. Although DramaSoc is sometimes seen as daunting and scary, we're a welcoming society and hope to see as many new faces involved this year as possible!



SOCIETY: PANTSOC
PRODUCTION: PETER PAN
PREVIEW: AMY MILKA



SOCIETY: THE CENTRAL HALL MUSICAL
PRODUCTION: SWEET CHARITY
PREVIEW: AMY SCOTT



SOCIETY: FUSION 2008
VENUE: CENTRAL HALL
PREVIEW: AMY SCOTT

Contrary to popular belief, Pantsoc is not a society dedicated to pants. As director William Seaward explains; "We've got nothing against pants. Probably there should be a pants society, but we're not it." Instead, Pantsoc perform a student Pantomime every January in Central Hall.

When asked to describe the society's purpose Seward is not short on inspiration. "Pantomime is one of last great, mighty bastions of comedic genius in this oh-so-serious world. A refuge and ark for all that's good and magical; a great twinkly beacon of fantastitude shining merrily through the thick smog of misery and cynicism, a great safe-house of Christmassy goodness where nowt is sacred."

This year, following the resounding triumph of last year's *Robbin' Hood*, Pantsoc will be presenting *The Peter Pan...tomime!*, featuring, among other increasingly bizarre excitements, a Captain Hook who sells dodgy videos ('a video pirate, you see'), a spaced out Tinkerbell dealing 'fairy dust', and what promises to be a breathtaking sequence in Ziggy's nightclub.

Look out for auditions in Week 2 of this term if you want to perform, and the society is also looking for assistant directors, producers, techies, backstage hands, costume designers, set builders, and everything else. Email socs418 for details, or just look out for the posters. As Seward concludes; 'Pantomime or death!'

Following last year's hit performance of *West Side Story*, the Central Hall Musical Society have announced their next production, which will be the hit Broadway show *Sweet Charity*, to be performed in Week 5 of the Spring term. Director Michael Slater explains; "The Central Hall Musical Society has always been led by a strong and passionate group of artistic and technical students, and this year is no exception. We want as many people as possible to be involved in what promises to be the highlight of the student calendar, resulting in an unforgettable experience for all."

Auditions for *Sweet Charity* will be held throughout Week 3. All are welcome to audition for both prin-

pal roles and chorus roles, so whatever level of involvement you're after, there might just be a place for you.

Slater also has another project up his sleeve: "To raise money for the production and to allow for potential stars of the show to meet each other, we will be holding a 48-hour musical where we only rehearse for the 48 hours prior to the performances! To get involved all you need to do is turn up on Saturday October 20 (end of Week 2) in the Drama Barn (near the music department)."

More detailed information on all things *Sweet Charity* can be found on the website www.sweetcharityyork.co.uk and the society will be at the fresher's fair on Saturday of Week 1.

Fusion is an annual charity event run by the University of York. Only in its fourth year, Fusion chair Amy Browne describes it as "the most prestigious event on campus. Fusion strives to achieve a perfect blend of dance, music and fashion through fundraising events throughout the academic year, culminating in a spectacular two-night performance viewed live by more than 2000 of the student population."

The society and production is based on urban culture and Browne hopes to "incorporate a multiplicity of university societies and external companies, which will all work together to achieve the ultimate goal of raising as much money as possible for charity."

Fusion 2008 will be held on February 29 and March 1 in Central Hall. Auditions for models and dancers will be held on Saturday and Sunday of Week 4 (November 3 and 4) in Langwith Hall.

The first fundraising event planned for this year is on Monday Week 3 in Vudu Lounge, in the city centre. Theme: 'Film Stars and Fashion Icons'. The first of Fusion's charities this year will be the children's charity SNAPPY, who work with children with special needs in Yorkshire.

Browne says: "Whether you're interested in dancing, DJing, designing, urban music or fashion, check us out on one of our Facebook groups or simply join us at our first exciting event!"

Music Previews

SAM NOBLE

The untimely demise of the single?



Not that it is a surprise to you, though it may be to some, but the most played single of all time on British radio is 'Bohemian Rhapsody' by Queen. A six minute slab of prog-rock, with twinkling pianos, introspective lyrics, head-banging guitar, gongs and vocals laden with three-part harmonies, which owe more to Opera than they do to mid-'70s guitar noodling. There's no point disputing the majesty and pomp of our affective national anthem, which has been Christmas number one twice (1975 and 1991), selling an astounding million copies in both years.

Today, the chances of such a phenomenon is slimmer than a stick of Pepperami. No band today would seriously entertain the idea of a huge hit single. As Johnny Borrell unimaginatively sings: "There's nothing on the TV, nothing on the radio that means that much to me." If one concedes that he might be right, the singles from recent years, which comprise the mainstay of popular radio, are no way near as catchy or exciting as they were when Radio Luxembourg floated around the English Channel.

But then again, there are still sublime, golden nuggets of pop tickling our collective ears. I stand resolute and perhaps alone when I say I bloody love 'Shine' by Take That and 'About You Now' by Sugababes. And for the indie bands that briefly stalk around the lower ends of the top forty, without single releases you don't get the B-sides and the limited edition 7" releases which make people of my disposition go weak in the knees.

Some would point to downloading as the cause of the single's demise. But then hapless JK and Joel's singles chart takes into account downloads. Instead, I think bands, their management and their labels prefer to promote their music with high-budget music videos and television commercial tie-ins. Why? Well more money of course.

Let's face it - the single is an outdated, cumbersome way of releasing music. Most bands of integrity shun singles and prefer their music to be appreciated in the context of the album it is from. Led Zeppelin refused to release singles in the 1970s and, more recently, Radiohead have had an ongoing dispute with iTunes to only release their tracks as an album, and not as individual tracks.

Perhaps the emphasis these days is more on the album than the single. The Beatles' first album (what was it called again?) was recorded into a business where it was hit single or bust. We have them to thank for bringing the concept of the album to life.

Although I zealously love and cherish albums, a part of me will pine away for the instantly catchy and fun single. Can they occur when our record shops don't stock singles anymore? Will it die an undignified death as someone's ringtone or as an illegal MP3 download on someone's laptop? I hope not, I still see the purpose of hit singles to collectively unite people on any dance floor. I don't think discussing your limited edition vinyl edition of 'Kid A' will catch on.

Singles should be fun and also throw-away, the same impulse which makes you eat at McDonalds. So if and when the next 'Bohemian Rhapsody' hits the airwaves, it will sparkle that bit brighter.

SHOW: IRON & WINE

VENUE: MANCHESTER ACADEMY 2

PREVIEW: STEPHEN MITCHELL

DATE: 26/10/07

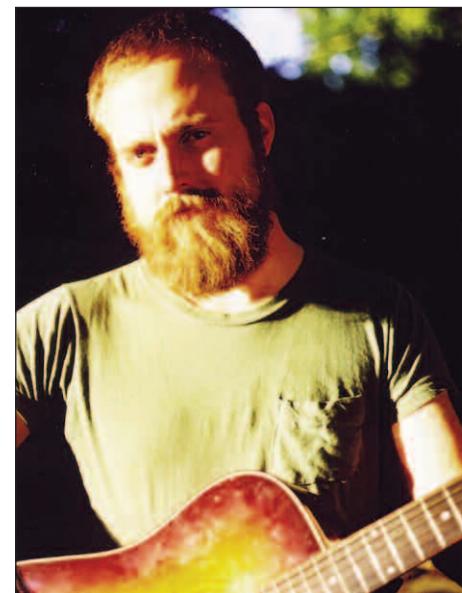


Listening to previous offerings of the bearded Sam Beam (better known in musical circles as Iron & Wine), it is clear why he has a special place in the hearts of alt-folk fans both sides of the pond. In essence, the man writes simple but beautiful songs, set to unbearably pretty fingerpicked guitar and sung with a voice as soft as a multi-generational American patchwork quilt. And Zach Braff is a fan, I've heard, and that always helps.

Nevertheless, no number of celebrity endorsements can do justice to Beam's emotionally resonant lo-fi creations. His bare, steel-stringed arpeggios are used as a perfect accompaniment to his lyrical obsessions: melancholia-tinged tales of love and life lost in the endless expanses of rural America.

With both aspects of his performance inextricably linked, it is tempting to view Beam as a mouthpiece for a place and time: his music feels oddly familiar, but only in the sense that it encapsulates perfectly an image, feeling, or a phrase firmly rooted in the society in which it was produced. Much of Beam's work seems reminiscent of the stringed sadness of Nick Drake, had he grown up in a trailer park in South Carolina rather than the Hampden Court hedge maze.

Yet, through the delicate, often fragile sound of Iron & Wine, there is a clear edge; a tapestry of instrumentation shimmers incessantly behind many of his pastoral anecdotes,



Sam has yet another pensive moment

disturbing seemingly serene soundtracks with grittier guitar and percussion. This is shown no better than on current LP *The Shepard's Dog*, which appears to embrace a more diverse, undulating alternative to the sparse showings of earlier albums.

These Pitchfork-endorsed rock credentials are enhanced further by his previous live work, as the last time Iron & Wine graced our shores was as part of a joint tour with gothic roots legends Calexico. Yet, whilst 2007 finds Iron & Wine once more in solo territory, it is clear that Beam's balladic approach to acoustic Americana will be presented as the lord intended: gently whispered subtle snapshots of god-fearing folk far removed from the strains and stresses of modern life.

SHOW: TUNNG

VENUE: BRUDNELL SOCIAL CLUB, LEEDS

PREVIEW: BEN RACKSTRAW

DATE: 12/10/07



On tour with the material from their third album *Good Arrows*, electronic-folksters Tunng will arrive at the fantastically intimate Brudenell Social Club on Thursday. With gigs reportedly more like communal music sessions than concerts this promises to provide an evening out to warm the soul. The reputation for inclusive gigging is perhaps a result of the band's genesis; back in 2003 Tunng was made up of only two members, singer-songwriter Sam Genders and electronica artist Mike Lindsay, but it quickly swelled to include four more members for live performances, who eventually became full-time members of the band.

The music reflects this easy collaborative spirit, where beautifully folky songs are spliced by electronic stabs, or swaddled by sampled clicks, whirs and slips. Running through the core of most of their material is a male/female harmony that promises to be even more prettily woozy live than it is on record.

All of this is provided in a distinctly English package, invoking little touches like the sampled fragment of conversation on 'Bricks', "I'm going to come up and put the kettle on while she's doing that", the perfect analogy for a band who are as warm as a nice cuppa, but don't fail to provide the excitement of musical caffeine.

ON THE UP: SIMIAN MOBILE DISCO

By the time most of us were screaming 'Because We Are. Your Friends' at the top of our lungs in sweaty indie rooms across the land, Simian, the creators of the tune before it was propelled into

a sing-along

dance classic by the then-unknown Justice, had already disintegrated. From out of the band's ashes have arisen two members, Jas Shaw and James Ford, to form the increasingly in-demand remix and production powerhouse Simian Mobile Disco.

The duo began by remixing Simian singles whilst still in the band, including turning the Peugeot-endorsed 'La Breeze' into a dub nightmare, complete with the wailing of a snake charmer's flute.

Ford explains that it was around this time that Simian began to fall apart: "We were in a situation where we

were trying to force something that we didn't enjoy, it's not a very good way to live and you don't make particularly good music."

Fortunately for us, this meant that the boys had an opportunity to pursue the offers coming in for SMD; remixes for artists as diverse as Air, The Go! Team, Klaxons and Peaches flooded in and Ford produced both the Klaxons' debut and the Arctic Monkeys' (more on them later) 'Favourite Worst Nightmare.'

After releasing insanely catchy singles, like 2006's 'Hustler' on the super-trendy Kitsuné label, the duo were picked up by UK label Wichita, home of Bloc Party, who offered them an album deal. *Attack Decay Sustain Release*, the long-player that followed, is one of this year's most vital dance releases. It shifts from menacing instrumentals, like opener 'Sleep Deprivation' to more obvious party tunes like the aforementioned 'Hustler' and 'It's The Beat' (an inspired re-imagining of rave classic 'Pump Up The Jam' with The Go! Team's Ninja on vocals), and has a distinctly English flavour, garnering comparisons with the London-based DJ genius of Erol Alkan or early

Ben Rackstraw

Chemical Brothers.

This "Englishness" is arguably reflected in the tolls of hedonism recently suffered by the band. Explaining the reasons behind the cancellation of a recent gig in Leeds, Ford says: "I broke my collarbone being a dick. It was the last night of the tour in the US and we were in San Diego. The Arctic's lot were out and I was playing football with them in the car park at four in the morning pissed out of my brain with a beer in my hand. I tripped over my own legs, tried to save the beer and landed on my shoulder."

It seems like there can only be more adventures like this to come; the pair are booked to support The Klaxons on their imminent UK tour, who are another band who certainly look as if they know how to have a good time. "Oh God" groans Ford, though he appears to relish the prospect, "we know them really well and we have a lot of fun together, but they do party really hard. I think we're sharing a bus too, so it's going to be pretty full on. There won't be any avoiding it."

To hear the rest of our interview with James check out the latest edition of The Nouse Music Podcast at: www.nouse.co.uk



Music Reviews

SINGLES REVIEWS

ARTIST: PRINZHORN DANCE SCHOOL
SINGLE: YOU ARE THE SPACE INVADER

Despite the name, Prinzhorn Dance School seem to have discovered the virtues of simplicity. You'd think that music so spare it sounds like some twanged rubber bands and a tin drum wouldn't work - but it really does. Taking music back to its basics so you can actually hear the melodies without straining through fuzzy synthesisers, Prinzhorn are reminiscent of what the White Stripes actually used to excel at.

ARTIST: THE THRILLS
SINGLE: THE MIDNIGHT CHOIR

The Thrills have jumped the sunny Californian ship in favour of "the worst neighbourhood in all of Canada". The reason being they wanted a more "intimate, reflective" album this time. Although it lacks the grating happy go lucky, lolling-ness of 'Big Sur,' make no mistake, this new offering is no transition towards Elliot Smith. Unfortunately, The Thrills' new-found Canadian introspection hasn't prevented me from referring to them in only the vaguest platitudes: it's quite nice, at times pretty and all around not a bad effort at all.

ARTIST: BEVERLEY KNIGHT
SINGLE: QUEEN OF STARTING OVER

Beverley Knight! She's always seemed a bit like a nice leather armchair to me, great quality but been around for a few years, becoming somewhere you sit occasionally without giving much thought to. Listening to this single is like that armchair poking you in the bum with one of its springs, letting you know that it is actually a very good armchair, thank you very much, and that maybe you should pay it a bit more attention.

ARTIST: MARK RONSON
SINGLE: VALERIE FT. AMY WINEHOUSE

Continuing his attempt at world domination that began with being a white man making a successful hip hop song (2003's 'Ooh Wee') and now involves remixing Bob Dylan, Mark Ronson's 'people' have obviously looked at the tabloid press and decided that releasing his collaboration with the most troubled/talented female vocalist of our generation is a sound career move. Fortunately, they are not wrong. Ronson has turned the Zutons' paean to a lost love into a two-step to catch the last remnants of nice weather.

Singles this week were reviewed by Ben Rackstraw and Sara Sayeed

HOUSE music podcast

Featuring our chat with Simian Mobile Disco, reviews of the latest singles, unsigned UK hip-hop and an exciting competition www.house.co.uk



EVENT: BESTIVAL
VENUE: ISLE OF WIGHT
REVIEW: ROBIN SEATON
DATE: 07/09/07 - 09/09/07



Bestival has successfully carved out a special niche for itself over the past few years; halfway between a village fete and a children's birthday party, the last festival of the summer isn't called Bestival for nothing. But having grown in capacity to 30,000 punters, would it be able to maintain the feel of a boutique festival?

Easily! With giant scrabble on sticks (frequently used to spell out the main stage band names and, mystifyingly, the phrase 'QUEERS VAGINA'), a human jukebox and the Isle of Wight Women's Institute running a tea and cake tent, the Bestival won't be anywhere near approaching 'normal' for quite some time.

The headline bands aren't really the point of festivals like this and, as if to prove the point, they were largely disappointing. No matter how many times Mike D tried to

rename the Isle of Wight after himself ("It's the Isle of Mike y'all!"), the Beastie Boys never quite hit their gonzo hip-hop best, and, bizarrely, there was no ('You gotta) Fight for your right (to party). Sunday headliners Primal Scream's set also looked likely to be vaguely disappointing until a clearly battered Suggs wandered onstage and declared them "the best fucking rock 'n' roll band in the world!" After his little pep-talk they nearly lived up to the hype, interspersing their early '90s indie rave classics from Screamadelica with later hits such as 'Swastika Eyes' and 'Rocks'.

Away from the festival's main stage, bands such as the Bobby McGees played bitterly twee indiepop songs about not going out with Audrey Tatou, while Bishi demonstrated amply that English singer-songwriterliness, electronica and Indian classical music go together like pear cider and music festivals.

The best performance of the weekend, however, came from The Go! Team on Friday evening. Despite having earlier been involved in a motorway accident, they showed everyone, especially the Beastie Boys, how to get a festival crowd to the perfect pitch of sun-drenched euphoria.



ARTIST: ALEX CLEGG
ALBUM: WE HAVE NOT ENJOYED OURSELVES
REVIEW: KATHRYN BROMWICH
DATE: 10/06/07



After seeing his compelling and intimate show in York's The Artspace last year, the few but enthusiastic spectators would do well to ask themselves what has happened to the guitar-wielding and enigmatic Alex Clegg. The answer is a short but seamless album that is every bit as interesting as the show itself. Each song tells a short, bizarre story with eloquent and evocative language - "I never wanted to incur the wrath of the noble local villagers, to lay with you in your palace forever," or "you feel just like a diamond in a sack."

Sometimes the album's recording sounds like it could do with a more polished production, but the raw feel often adds considerable immediate impact. The use of trombones in the opening songs, 'Elephant God' and 'Watchdogs,' is utterly arresting: its gospel-like power contrasts strikingly with the gentle singing and elegantly surreal lyrics.

The rest of the songs are more sombre, but not for this less delightful. Ranging from the Lou Reed-esque 'Spiders and Bears' to the soft, retro feel of the duet in 'Nature Reserve,' the album is vibrant, varied and creative. Don't be fooled by the gloomy-sounding title, *We Have Not Enjoyed Ourselves*, is an exciting, promising creation by a captivating singer-songwriter.



EVENT: THE GO! TEAM
VENUE: THE MANCHESTER RITZ
REVIEW: STEVEN WILLIAMS
DATE: 13/09/07



With its grubby glitter ball and Las Vegas inspired styling, you'd wonder if The Go! Team actually were taking to the stage tonight in Manchester's classiest venue. Luckily any doubt is driven from the mind as the band soon get the audience to put the spring loaded dance floor to good use. Treating genres like a Woolworth's pick'n'mix counter, they veer between thundering cheerleader anthems and child-like pop before throwing in a banjo-led instrumental for good measure.

It's a testament to songwriter Ian Parton's skill that it doesn't all leave you feeling a bit queasy. But marshalling sonic chaos into something almost song-shaped is the Team's gift.

In truth, the first few tracks challenge the audience to pick the tunes out of a seemingly impenetrable wall of instruments. Everything clicks into place however once the rowdy dance-rock of 'Grip Like a Vice' kicks in. One of the most experimental things they've done, yet still inexplicably catchy enough to earn the place of lead single, it's a testament to their finest qualities; a thrilling mind-fuck that you can't help but dance to.

Arguably, not much has changed since their debut, but as a live show they remain a singularly *fun* experience. And as the lights come on you can almost see the glitter ball begin to sparkle out the corner of your eye...



ARTIST: LES SAVY FAV
ALBUM: LET'S STAY FRIENDS
REVIEW: OLIVER ELLIOTT
DATE: OUT NOW



It is a recurring problem with reviews of 'alternative' bands that they reference a selection of even obscurer bands than the subject so that only those with an intimate knowledge of the genre will be able to really understand the review. Les Savy Fav are no different - the band name itself seems to ooze pretension, and citing a long list of '90s American indie and punk influences seems only natural.

But Les Savy Fav try harder than most not to be pigeon holed as just another in the long line of American indie punk bands. They have combined their art rock and hard punk backgrounds to create an album that sounds not all too dissimilar from some of the most popular current British post-punk bands such as Bloc Party and Foals - especially in standout track 'Patty Lee'.

But there also seems an urgent need to experiment with different sounds, an urgency expressed through the somewhat abrupt way some songs end, as if the band just cannot wait to play the next song. Although this experimentation hooks the listeners, it's in the straightforward punk of 'The Equestrian' and 'Raging in the Plague Age' that they seem most at home.

Altogether Les Savy Fav have made a very strong album that should have broad appeal to anyone who is a fan of un-pretentious indie punk rock.

Film Reviews

DAVID COATES

To adapt or
not to
adapt?



FILM: MICHAEL CLAYTON
DIRECTOR: TONY GILROY
STARRING: GEORGE CLOONEY
 TOM WILKINSON
 TILDA SWINTON
REVIEW: ALBI FURLAN
RUNTIME: 119 MIN



The first reaction this movie inspired in me was utter, sadistic glee. "Finally," I thought, "I can write a scathing, sarcastic review for a pretentious, over-hyped movie that takes itself far too seriously."

My final reaction was remembering to breathe.

Michael Clayton is played by George Clooney (who also co-produced the film), a behind-the-scenes man working for one of America's biggest law firms, cleaning up the dirtier twists of clients' personal lives to spare them trouble in courts. Basically, he is a lawyer.

Clayton's colleague and old time friend Arthur Edens (Tom Wilkinson) is defending the huge transnational corporation UNorth in a class lawsuit which, if won, would save the face of the company and bring Clayton's and Eden's firm a healthy profit. But Eden, after years of defending what he calls

"the worst excrements of humankind" in the first minute of the movie, has a moral crisis, strips in front of the plaintiffs and decides he will single-handedly display the evils of UNorth to the world instead of hiding them.

Clayton is sent in to clear up the situation, but after a divorce, a failed business and years spent clearing up legal mud, he also slowly wakes up to the ambiguous ethics of his job and the specific case he is trying to solve.

The plot is not overly complicated, though the legal language is at times a bit too much, almost making you wonder why they didn't just add plain English subtitles to clear up simple concepts made a little too complicated by the lingo. After a slow start, the story rumbles on, growing in magnitude and reaching its peak in a conclusion made glorious chiefly by Clooney's acting.

He and Wilkinson lift an already interesting storyline simply with the strength of their performances. The speech Wilkinson delivers at the beginning of the movie is given with such vitriolic conviction it will reverberate in my mind every time I speak to a lawyer. Clooney has the smoothness he so naturally displays in the *Ocean's* series, but adds to it other facets of both strength and fragility that a man who hates his job and wants out might display.



Tilda Swinton gives a great supporting performance in the two-faced Karen Crowder, both insecure and positively evil, depending on whether she is in UNorth's boardroom or not. And watch out for Austin Williams, who plays the minor role of Clooney's son, and is probably the next Haley Joel Osment. Mention must be made of the soundtrack, which underlines the cold, tense moods of the movie, and the setting - a chilly winter on the American East coast - lends itself to the darkness of the story, as well as supplying one moment of incredible beauty.

Overall, the movie is a gritty, down-to-earth description of the darker parts of the world of corporate law. An interesting plot is made even stronger by the stunning performances of the two main actors, with the twists and increasing tempo bringing you closer and closer to the edge of your seat.

FILM: TWO DAYS IN PARIS
DIRECTOR: JULIE DELPY
STARRING: JULIE DELPY
 ADAM GOLDBERG
REVIEW: JAMES PATTERSON
RUNTIME: 96 MIN



Julie Delpy directs and stars in *Two Days In Paris*, an indie-budget romantic comedy about a couple returning from a holiday in Italy, stopping en route to New York for the eponymous soujourn. Marion (Delpy) brings Jack (Adam Goldberg) to meet her parents - played by the director's real-life folks, Marie Pillet and Albert Delpy - staying in a cramped bedsit above their flat. They see the sights, drink with Marion's art friends, and generally bring their relationship crashing about their ears.

Hot on the heels of the off-beat and brutally frank *Knocked Up*, *Two Days In Paris* shows similar respect for its audience, making space for a pair of characters who are not superficially likeable. Marion is a self-doubting, neurotic hypochondriac - as is Jack. Delpy's skill comes in making them seem almost incompatible; she presents two complex, witty, lonely people too scared of losing each other to even understand their mutual attraction. They are alternately charming and infuriating; Jack complains of migraines to avoid spending time with her family, Marion prefers to lie than confront



an uncomfortable truth. It's a difficult dynamic, but the movie makes no apologies.

Ultimately, *Two Days In Paris* is a movie that rewards close attention. Much of the film's philosophy is revealed in apparently flippant, often hilarious, exchanges between the leads. In an early conversation, Marion talks about how people with different immune systems are attracted to each other - the payoff comes much later when we discover just how similar they are.

There is much to commend in the movie. Delpy shows an exciting ability to deliver the unexpected - a stand-out scene comes as Jack gets relationship advice from a teenage terrorist - while the action is given depth by an excellent supporting cast. *Two Days In Paris* is a sensitive, engaging and warm comedy of errors that dares to be honest.

CLASSIC FILM: THE TRUMAN SHOW
DIRECTOR: PETER WEIR
STARRING: JIM CARREY
 LAURA LINNEY
REVIEW: COLIN BAKER
RUNTIME: 103 MINS



At once a bristling and bold media critique, a vivid portrayal of the need to call into question our most basic assumptions and a heart-warming coming-of-age story, Peter Weir's *The Truman Show* was met with astonishment and intrigue from audiences and critics alike upon its release in 1998.

Central to that brouhaha was the shock casting of the previously hyperactive, quiff-wielding comic Jim Carrey as duped protagonist Truman Burbank. Cherry-picked from birth by a media corporation and raised oblivious to the truth within a mammoth television studio, everything in Truman's life, from his incessantly smiley wife Meryl (a top performance by Laura Linney on teeth-grindingly irritating form) down to his neighbours' pet Dalmatian, play a part in the sham, broadcast to millions of fanatical TV viewers.

It is testament to Carrey's performance and Weir's vision that, almost a decade on and with the initial shock-factor of Carrey's dramatic side subsided, the tale of Truman's gradual realisation and attempt to overcome his semi-cap-



tors has lost none of its power.

On the contrary, aside from Carrey's magnetic performance we can appreciate the full depth of Weir's Wisteria Lane-esque hometown. From numerous background shots of posters displaying exaggerated risks of travel, to television presenters emphasising the family and impressing on the viewers the benefits of never leaving home, Truman is surrounded by a media campaign determined to restrict him to his idyllic prison.

Weir's message has grown in relevance over time in an age of increasing CCTV presence, while the ethical boundaries of reality TV constantly shift. Meanwhile, the story of Truman's physical and mental struggle to accept and challenge the reality with which he has been presented is an expert exploration of the human condition.

Food & Drink Reviews



A FRESHER'S MINI GUIDE TO YORK'S BARS

At first glance it may appear that the cobbled, historic streets of York hold little more than quaint tea rooms and shops selling antiques and souvenirs (and there is nothing wrong with allowing your parents to think that this is the case), but York boasts a wide variety of bars and pubs catering to the student budget. From sixteenth-century haunted pubs to tiny bars offering deals on cocktails to the infamous 'trebles for singles', there is something for everyone. Here we reveal some of the essential places to visit in your first few weeks.

BAR: EVIL EYE LOUNGE
ADDRESS: STONEGATE

Undoubtedly the best place in York to go for cocktails. Sit back and watch your drink be made freshly right in front of you by experienced bartenders. The quirky interior, with the bustling bar downstairs and more chilled-out rooms upstairs with beds to relax and enjoy your drinks on, makes this one of the places you must visit in your first few weeks at York.

BAR: THE NAG'S HEAD
ADDRESS: MICKLEGATE

Small, purple, cramped and filled with as many students as possible, especially on a Tuesday before Toffs, this is the ultimate student bar. Three words: Trebles for Singles. And not just with the kind of cheap vodka you can buy from Costcutter but the real deal; any spirit and any mixer for about £2.50. Treble Smirnoff and Vimto anyone?

BAR: DUSK
ADDRESS: NEW STREET

Okay, so it's not quite as impressive as Evil Eye and the cocktails aren't quite as good but at two of them for £4.50 are you really going to complain? Navigating the menu for the first time is a little tricky as it doesn't actually say what's in each drink but it's safe to say there is something for everyone — and, if unsure, a 'David Hasslehoff' never disappoints.

BAR: THE LOWTHER
ADDRESS: CUMBERLAND STREET

More of a pub than a bar, this two-storey establishment is guaranteed to be packed at any time of the night. Open until 2am, you can spend hours (if you manage to grab a seat) sitting and drinking the whole night away.

Written by Lauren Menzies

RESTAURANT: LOCH FYNE

ADDRESS: WALMGATE

AVE. FOOD PRICE: £15.95

AVE. DRINK PRICE: £5

REVIEW: LAUREN MENZIES



Loch Fyne prides itself on serving freshly cooked fish dishes and ever since one of the restaurants opened on Walmgate I have been wanting to try it. However, lacking the necessary funds (Loch Fyne is not somewhere that exactly fits the average student budget) I have had to wait until quite recently when my Mum and Dad visited York.

The first thing that strikes you about Loch Fyne is the gorgeous setting, right next to the river in an old building which was previously the F.R. Stubbs ironmongers. While from the outside the glass-fronted entrance feels imposing, the interior is tastefully decorated, keeping many of the building's original features and creating a relaxed atmosphere in which to enjoy eating.

Ironically, the best starter out of the

three we chose actually contained no fish whatsoever; my mum's potato and spinach soup was one of the specials on offer that evening and was certainly better received than my salad of Islay beef, rocket and pancetta (coated in mayonnaise, making it almost impossible to taste anything else) and my dad's very odd-looking potted brown shrimps.

For main course we all chose the 'Bradon Rost', kiln-roasted salmon with a whisky and wild mushroom sauce. At £9.95 a portion and one of the cheaper fish dishes on the menu, this seems a reasonable price until it becomes apparent that you have to order separate side dishes at around £3.45 each. At first I thought the salmon was cooked to perfection and deliciously seasoned with a wonderful strong flavour, but by the end of the meal I was left feeling overpowered by the seasoning and wishing that more had been made of the sauce, which contained only a few slices of mushroom. The salty taste left us feeling quite dehydrated - perhaps a trick to persuade customers to spend a little more on the bottled water?

While Loch Fyne is the place to go in York for fresh fish, perhaps it is advisable to steer clear of the starters and choose one of the plainer main courses.



RESTAURANT: ALLEY CATS

ADDRESS: COFFEYARD, STONEGATE

AVE. FOOD PRICE: £11

AVE. DRINK PRICE: £4

REVIEW: CARINA TOPHAM



The decor and candlelight help enhance this petite restaurant's cosy and intimate atmosphere, and for those who like to star-gaze there is a cobbled courtyard allowing you to enjoy a secluded and relaxed meal.

Alley Cats offers a good selection of food for both vegetarians and meat-lovers alike, with most dishes being reasonably priced. Having said that, our choice of starters - chicken satay and chicken liver pate with bread - although tasty, were a little disappointing and seemed expensive for what they were (each cost £4.50).

However, the disappointment of the starters was more than made up for by the main courses: Thai vegetable curry and shoulder of roast lamb with redcurrant jelly and mash. The curry contained a good variety of fresh vegetables and was neither too heavy nor oily, whilst the lamb was beautifully cooked, tenderly falling off the bone. The redcurrant jelly nicely complemented the lamb and the mash was light and fluffy, containing the odd lump or two (but at least it shows it was home-made). The generous portion sizes left no room for dessert, tempting though they were, so all that was left to do was enjoy the friendly and relaxed atmosphere and finish off our wine by candlelight.

RESTAURANT: BENGAL BRASSERIE

ADDRESS: GOODRAMGATE

AVE. FOOD PRICE: £8

AVE. DRINK PRICE: £2.50

REVIEW: LOUISE BRYDGES



In the heart of York, situated on one of the many cobbled streets, is the Bengal Brasserie, a traditional Indian restaurant that serves a large variety of 'award-winning' dishes. The interior is simply decorated, creating a pleasant ambience in which to enjoy a meal. However, I was unfortunately seated next to a rather imposing fishtank that contained many large, somewhat disconcerting fish, all of whom proceeded to defecate throughout the duration of the meal. Off-putting to say the least.

Despite this, the food itself was scrumptious. After devouring too many poppadoms, I tucked into a chicken tandoori - chicken that had been marinated, skewered and cooked in a clay oven - and a naan bread, all of which was delicious. The food was also reasonably priced with the majority of the main courses costing as little as £8 (a price that most student loans can stretch to afford).

My only slight reservation, apart from the fishtank and its defecating fish, was that I went on a Saturday evening and due to the high demand for tables, the waiters continuously tried to hurry the meal along. Overall, however, this is an ideal place to come if you find yourself in need of a hearty curry as the wintry nights set in.

RESTAURANT: BAGEL BITE

ADDRESS: MARKET STREET

AVE. FOOD PRICE: £4

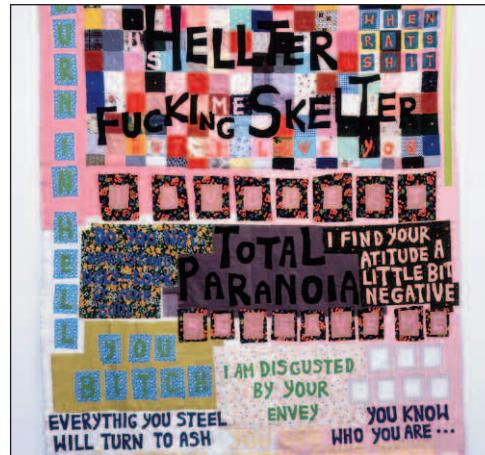
AVE. DRINK PRICE: £2

REVIEW: HELEN CITRON



If you're looking for a healthy snack to recharge your batteries whilst shopping in town, look no further than Bagel Bite. Offering a dazzling array of fillings to go into a variety of differently textured bagels, the shop brings something a little bit unusual to the huge number of sandwich shops already around in York.

My personal favourite has to be the ingenious chicken caesar bagel that adapts this favourite salad dish as a yummy sandwich filling. I can also recommend the grilled halloumi bagel, which is light yet filling. And, of course, there's the classic smoked-salmon-and-cream-cheese combo, which Bagel Bite does better than anyone else. The more adventurous may wish to go for a sweeter option - perhaps involving peanut butter on a cranberry flavoured bagel. The smoothies are worth a try too and are a tad cheaper than those available elsewhere. Those with a sweet tooth, however, may be disappointed as the selection of cakes and pastries is pretty pathetic, mainly involving dry cookies and packaged muffins. Another issue is that service can be comically slow. It took a staff of three 10 minutes to assemble my prawn bagel. Overall, though, Bagel Bite is a worthwhile stop-off.



Clockwise from top left: Last year's Viking Raid; Tracey Emin's 'Helter Fucking Skelter'; *The Kingdom*, released October 5 and starring Jamie Foxx and Belisha - soon to be appearing at Fibbers

LIVEMUSIC

Tuesday 16 October Ra Ra Riot, Fibbers

Think Dexy's playing REM with a bit of Arcade Fire. But they're also indebted to London Calling-era Clash, warmed over by swathes of cello and violin and currently touring with The Editors. £6 OTD.

Monday October 22 Belisha, Fibbers

Metal/rock/power-punk cross-over shock rockers claiming recently on TV to be Britain's most pretentious band. They may just be able to back up that kind of arrogance. Drawing on classic Maiden songs for inspiration. £6 OTD.

Sunday October 21 The Valves, Fibbers

'60s I-don't-give-a-toss vocal style which chimes perfectly with the complete lack of skinny ties. Complete devotion to putting on a show. "Indie-rock music, but without the pretentious stuff..."

Where to find Fibbers

York Fibbers is York's prime music scene with gigs every night. It's located on Stonebow, just behind the bus stops in the East of the city centre. Information on upcoming gigs and booking tickets can be found at www.fibbers.com or on 01904 651250. ID is essential and strictly enforced.

CAMPUSEVENTS

Friday October 12 Langwith Heroes and Villains

'Heroes and Villains' is a hit every year and this year's event is set to be better. A great chance to embrace the costume-making creativity student life brings with it. You won't be the weirdest looking person there.

Tickets £5

Saturday October 13 Access All Areas

A fabulous way to explore campus - whilst drunk - and get accustomed to our many student bars. Seven colleges and one ticket for £7.50. Always a popular event, so plan your route!

Sunday October 14 Comedy Night

A brilliant and hilarious night of comedy from compere Dan Atkinson and many other acts. In Central Hall, it is the start of many comedy events through the year.

Thursday October 18 Viking Raid

One of the best events of any term, the t-shirts are your tickets (the colour corresponds to the route so get the same as your friends!) and it shows students the bars they wouldn't usually notice. What better way to tour York than sampling as many bars as possible in one night?

ART & PERFORMANCE

October 19-27

Pinocchio, York Theatre Royal

Playing truant, upsetting neighbours. Why can't Pinocchio behave like an ordinary boy? When Pinocchio disappears into an underworld of con-men and lowlives, Joe pursues his son along his wild, strange and epic journey. Not quite Disney.

October 9-13

York Opera presents *Hugh The Drover*

Tuneful, colourful and passion-filled, Vaughan Williams's opera contains all the elements of village life - Morris Men, prize fights, confinement in the stocks and a troop of soldiers ready to volunteer an unwilling recruit!

October 26 - November 3

Illuminating York, The Museum Gardens.

Ever wondered what happens in the ancient gardens when the gates are locked and night closes in? Another world comes to life. A hidden world. A world which has been locked away... until now. See the gardens in a whole new light.

October 6 - January 17

Tracey Emin, York Gallery

The work of one of the most well known of recent, controversial artists is being loaned to York Gallery by a private collector. Her works on paper, photography and textiles are definitely worth seeing whilst in public and free.

CINEMA

Ratatouille

Released Friday October 12

When Remy, a young French rat arrives in Paris, he makes an unusual alliance with a restaurant's new garbage boy, the culinary and personal adventures begin, despite Remy's family's skepticism and the rat-hating world of humans.

The Kingdom

Released October 5

An epic performance from Jamie Foxx as a member of a team of US government agents who are sent to investigate the bombing of an American facility in the Middle East. Despite numerous action scenes and great special effects it is in grave danger of being another American, self-felling gladfest.

Eastern Promises

Released Friday October 26

Nikolai (Viggo Mortensen) is tied to London's most notorious organised crime family. When he crosses paths with Anna (Naomi Watts), an innocent midwife trying to right a wrong, who accidentally uncovers evidence against the family, he must put into motion a harrowing chain of murder, deceit and retribution.

Resident Evil: Extinction

Released Friday October 12

Survivors of the Raccoon City catastrophe travel across the Nevada desert, hoping to make it to Alaska. Alice (Milla Jovovich) joins the caravan and their fight against the evil Umbrella Corp.