

Freshers? Nuts, all of 'em

By [Nicky Woolf](#), Muse Editor (2007/08)

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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 human dignity.

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.



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