

State-censored media in China

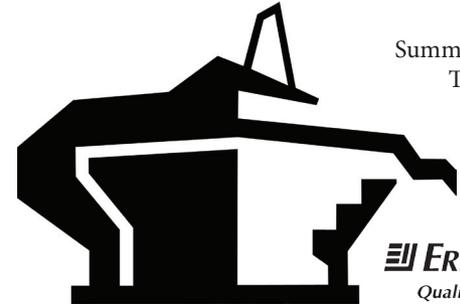
Who's watching Facebook? >> M6-7

COLLEGE CUP
WALLCHART
Inside Muse

Summer Term Week Two
Tuesday 1 May 2012
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Quality In Everything We Do

NOUSE



Club budgets
£80,501

PETER IVESON

Sabbatical Officers
£105,723

YUSU

Society grants
£56,058

SAM NEWSOME

NEWS

Catering: students have expressed their dissatisfaction with the University catering service in James

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Uncovering the effects of alcohol on the body

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Cuban liberation art comes to York



FOOD & DRINK

The revision boost
24/7 flapjacks



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University donations could drop by £1m under proposed charity tax cap

Joshua Boswell
NEWS REPORTER

DONATIONS TO the University could fall by up to £1m each year due to the new charity tax cap proposed by the government, according to figures obtained by *Nouse*.

A Freedom of Information (FOI) request to the finance department has found that since 2006 an average of £945,000 would have been lost each year in income taxes from charitable donations under the proposed cap.

Funds available for student services would be at the front line of these reduced donations, with student support, societies, colleges, and departments all relying on alumni donations.

The York Annual Fund Disbursement Group agreed grants this year totalling £52,005 to 27 different projects, along with loans worth £9,000. The Yorkies Fund

awarded bursaries valuing £17,432 to 25 students from low-income families who will be starting at York in 2012.

However the funds, which according to the group aim to "benefit thousands of students and help them get more involved in the local community", are provided by alumni donations threatened by the charity relief cap.

From 2006 to 2011, potential income tax relief from donations to the University totalled £9m, lowering the average cost to individuals of donating by 38 per cent.

In the current system, higher income earners making charitable donations can claim back some income tax on the amount donated, lowering the effective cost of donating for 40p and 50p rate payers.

The new policy for 2013 outlined by the Treasury limits the amount of tax that may be claimed back to the greater of £50,000 or

25 per cent of the individual's income.

Mary Haworth, the University's Director of Development said: "Across the [Higher Education] sector philanthropy is one of the growing income streams. Legacy donations, grants from charitable trusts and lower level regular gifts will not be affected by the proposed gift aid cap but mid-level and major gifts may well be, and at a time when we need to encourage more charitable giving towards student scholarships and bursaries."

She highlighted the provision of "Annual Fund scholarships for postgraduate students which are made possible by the generous donations of University of York alumni" but that "the current proposal... could mean that donors may recalculate their giving."

Prominent philanthropists and charitable organisations such as Thomas Hughes-Hallett, Chief Ex-

ecutive of Marie Curie Cancer Care charity, and Marcelle Speller of Localgiving.com, have also expressed fears that raising the cost of giving for higher earners will cut their donations.

Universities UK Chief Executive Nicola Dandridge has said: "Because universities are the preferred cause of major donors - gifts over £1 million - we anticipate that they would be particularly hard-hit by the change in the Budget."

She said in the past 12 months British Universities raised £560m from philanthropic gifts towards bursaries, scholarships, facilities and research.

Dandridge warned, "After a period in which universities have stepped up their game in

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News

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fundraising, this could undo some of the excellent progress they have made.”

The news follows the closure of the Matched Funding Donor Scheme for Higher Education, a £200m government pot that gave £1 for every £3 donated to the University, which may compound the fall in donated revenue York faces. The scheme added 66 per cent to donations in combination with Gift Aid from 2008, but ended in August after providing the University with £2.75m.

Haworth said: “These proposals are also at odds with the matched funding scheme... donors are receiving mixed messages about the value of charitable gifts to universities.”

If donations remain at the same level in the future, those donating larger sums will have to pay income tax of 50 per cent on their gifts, which according to Paul Clark, Director of Policy at Univer-



MATT GRUM

Under the new charity tax proposal the University may lose donations

sities UK, sends out a “very bad signal” to potential university donors.

However, Haworth added: “There is little evidence-based re-

search into the impact tax incentives have on major giving. We will continue to direct our energies towards seeking support for areas of

greatest need and will continue to engage with alumni, while at the same time monitoring the situation as it unfolds.”

A ComRes survey of MPs commissioned by the Charities Aid foundation found that two thirds of coalition MPs wish Osborne to drop the new policy.

71 Conservative and Liberal Democrat backbenchers were asked if “tax relief on charitable donations should be exempt from the proposed cap”, to which 65 per cent agreed.

“Our University, as with most other universities, benefit greatly from the donations of alumni. This support helps with all aspects of university life.”

YUSU Student Activities
James Croydon

Although the Treasury claims it is losing out on £50-100m per year to charity tax relief, the Government has now announced a consultation on the plan to cap charity tax relief.

James Croydon, YUSU Student Activities, said: “Our University, as with most other universities, benefit greatly from the donations of alumni.”

“This support helps with all aspects of university life including the vast range of student activities we have available here at York.”

York academic receives award to explore the role of village pubs

A University academic has received a British Academy award to explore the role of village pubs in creating community cohesion in rural England. Dr Ignazio Cabras at the York Management School will look at the importance of the village pub as a place to meet and talk, and will analyse the impact of pubs on the level of socio-economic activity generated in rural parishes. Dr Cabras said: “In rural England, pubs are often the nodes and centres of the local social network and perform important social, economic and community functions in maintaining village life.”

University IT Academy manager receives international accolade

The manager of the University of York’s IT Academy has received a prestigious international award from the Microsoft Corporation. Andrew Bettany has been awarded Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP) status, an annual award which recognises exceptional technology community leaders worldwide. Bettany said he hopes that this will help increase the profile of the IT Academy and the service the University offers.

York research Interns create Jubilee Wood at Flamingo Land

A new area of native woodland at a North Yorkshire zoo will act as a lasting tribute to the Queen in her Diamond Jubilee year as well as providing a haven for wildlife and food for the zoo’s animals. During a two-day community planting event organised by University of York research interns, around 20 volunteers planted 2,000 native trees next to the camel enclosure at Flamingo Land Theme Park and Zoo.

Reporting by Tim Wingard and Laura Hughes

Charity Tax effect on University donations



University Radio York played on ‘Campus Hopper’ Bus

Joshua Boswell
NEWS REPORTER

UNIVERSITY RADIO York is now being played on the free ‘Campus Hopper’ bus running between Heslington East and West campuses. The station went live on the Buses yesterday.

The bus, ‘UB1’ has been fitted with speakers and a receiver paid for by a Department for Transport grant to TransDev, the UniBus parent company that took over the UB1 service from York Pullman in February.

To advertise the new service, URY is putting together some “jingles” to be played on its station.

Jack Lockett, University Radio York’s Assistant Station Manager and Head of Music, told *Nouse*: “Here at URY we are very happy to now be playing on the Uni Bus. It is great to be able to reach a wider part of our student audience with our award winning radio shows.”

The idea to install the radio station on the buses has been attributed to Fiona Macey, Travel Plan Coordinator for the University.

She said: “While the Unibus service has been a great success with students and staff, we are always looking for ways to improve the user experience. Having URY playing during the day on UB1 seemed like a good way of providing both information and entertainment for passengers.”

Commenting last week through its Twitter account ‘@yorkunibus’, a spokesman for the service confirmed “Yorkunibus URY is to be broadcast on UB1 it has been installed, few glitches, should all be up and running by the end of the

week”.

Macey added, “The bus company were only too pleased to assist in implementing the idea. We are constantly reviewing the service and if any students have any suggestions about possible changes they should get in touch with me.”



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Are records making a comeback? >> M19

NOUSE

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James catered students “dissatisfied”

● Survey shows students are not satisfied with several aspects of the service they are receiving

Ross D’lima
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

STUDENTS LIVING in catered accommodation in James College are dissatisfied with several aspects of the service they are receiving, a Customer Satisfaction Survey has shown.

Students were most dissatisfied with the menu variety at dinner, according to the survey, which scored 5.52 out of 10 on the scale.

Value for money was the part of service students were second least satisfied with, rating it at 5.79. Value for money was also rated as one of the more important factors, scoring 8.82 out of 10.

A total of 121 students, representing 51 per cent of those who are catered for in the Roger Kirk Centre, were asked to rate levels of satisfaction between 1 and 10, ranging from extremely dissatisfied to extremely satisfied. Students were also asked to rate the importance of different aspects of the catered service to them.

Student dissatisfaction with value for money brings into question the rise in rent for catered accommodation seen in the last year.

The cost of catered accommodation rose by five per cent for the 2011/12 academic year, and will again for 2012/13. Those who move into James College in October, who will be the first year to pay the new £9000 tuition fees, will pay £122.01 a week, up from £116.20 in 2011/12.



AGGIE TORRANCE

The Galleria, Roger Kirk Centre provides catering for students who live in A,B,C and N Blocks of James College

The survey showed that 43 per cent of students had selected catered accommodation as it was the only option available. This comes despite the University’s expansion of catered accommodation in James College last year.

Members of the Senior Management team have previously informed *Nouse* that such increases in catered accommodation were owing to high student demand. Students were also shown to be

unhappy with the quality of food. This was rated at 5.88 for dinner and 5.99 for breakfast.

Bob Hughes, YUSU Welfare Officer, described the results as “concerning”, adding, “it is especially interesting to see information on why students ended up in catered accommodation.”

However, levels of satisfaction were highest when rating the administration of the service, with the four areas of administration given a

satisfaction rating of between 8.09 and 9.04.

In terms of overall satisfaction, the survey revealed an average score of 6.35.

Commercial Services described their failure to meet their target of 7.5 as “very disappointing”. In total, of the 18 questions asked in the survey, 13 received a score below this target.

In a document providing feedback on the survey, Commercial

Services stated: “It appears we have [a] considerable amount of work to do.”

New measures have since been implemented in response to the disappointing results, including additions to the menu to improve variety for vegetarian students, and a

“I welcome the changes... but we need to look at this issue in much greater depth”

YUSU Welfare Officer
Bob Hughes

new cooking system to improve the freshness of the food.

Ian Dickson, recently appointed as Deputy Executive Chief, will also become responsible for monitoring food standards.

In an email to students, Neil Lunt, James College Provost, stated that a focus group will also be set up between Phil Kember, Head of Hospitality, the University Head Chef and student and staff representatives to discuss the issues raised in the survey.

Hughes added: “I welcome the changes the University are working on, and the focus group that is being arranged, but we need to look at this issue in much greater depth.”

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LEADER >> Page 14

V-Bar delay confirmed for August 2013

PHILIPPA GRAFTON

Rose Troup-Buchanan
DEPUTY EDITOR

THE RENOVATION of Vanbrugh’s bar has now been confirmed to have been delayed until August 2013.

Commercial Services have stated that work on V-Bar has been scheduled to start on this date and that the delay is due to failing to make a profit in the last year.

Jon Greenwood, Director of Commercial Services, who is coordinating the on-going project, has stated that V-Bar will be renovated at “the first chance I get,” however he did maintain it would not be possible this summer as previously expected.

Matt Stephenson, Vanbrugh Chair, has expressed his profound discontent with the outcome over his college’s bar: “Naturally I am very disappointed that the refurbishment is no longer going ahead this year.”

Former Vanbrugh Chair Kallum Taylor, who oversaw a campaign to renovate V-Bar, stated: “V-Bar needs its re-furb sooner rather than later. It is outdated and looks more like Peter Kay’s Phoenix Club rather than an attractive student bar.”

Stephenson said although he understood the financial difficul-

ties faced by Commercial Services, “I am very disappointed that there seems to be an inherent lack of faith in the student body regarding V-Bar. In order to make V-Bar the college establishment which Vanbrugh students deserve, Commercial Services need to trust that students will make use of a refurbished V-Bar.

“It is outdated and looks more like Peter Kay’s Phoenix Club rather than an attractive student bar”

Former Vanbrugh Chair
Kallum Taylor

“This is exactly what the JCRC is doing, and will continue to do.”

Stephenson added that Vanbrugh JCRC is looking into other possibilities for obtaining the funds, discussed at the last meeting, in order to implement some kind of action.

Greenwood continued that although Commercial Services will hit their budget target for the year, there will not be enough to “do a decent job.” The estimated cost of



Commercial Service’s failure to make a profit in the last year has caused delay to the V-bar refurb

the refurbishment is £135,753 plus VAT.

Taylor commented that V-Bar’s lack of renovation will be contrasted against the development of other bars on each campus, and said: “It’s in Commercial Services interests, as well as those who use it, to invest before it gets left way too far behind.” He continued: “I’d be interested to see where their money is instead going, given their impressive turnover.”

The proposed date for the ren-

ovation has been a contentious issue since Christmas of 2011, when the previous Vanbrugh JCRC announced that the building works would take place in the summer of 2012.

This was later refuted by Commercial Services who stated the project was not a part of their capital budget of 2011/12 and was therefore contingent upon annual profit.

Taylor has said: “The decision to flip-flop on the refurbishment is

obviously gutting, and frustrating too. For Commercial Services to declare that the job was definitely going to happen – after a long campaign to drum up support and win the arguments – and then to reverse on that really is bad business. I’m sure they don’t do this with their non-student partners in other areas.”

Last term *Nouse* released the initial plans for the renovation, although the date of the works was, at that time, still in doubt.

YUSU Accounts: where does your

Martin Spurr
Jonathan Frost

AS THE National Union of Students calls on universities to “come clean” and students’ unions, such as Warwick, make their financial statements easily available online, *Nouse* can reveal what YUSU spends its, and your, money on.

The University publishes its financial statements on its website and although YUSU’s accounts are available on request, Tim Ellis, YUSU President, has said he will not be publishing the accounts in full on the YUSU website at the moment.

The accounts show that YUSU had a total income of £1,034,603 in 2011, with the majority coming from the University in the form of a £830,000 grant. This fund has increased by 6.8 per cent since 2008, with the biggest increase occurring in 2010/11 (4 per cent) in order for two new staff positions to be created. In the 2011 statement, £319,532 was spent on administrative staff salaries, whilst £105,723 was spent on the six full-time sabbatical officers.

A notable loss in 2011 came from the summer ball where, in contrary to previous years, a £10,029 deficit was recorded. YUSU have said the summer ball is run as a service and therefore should break even and has done so over the last 10 years. *Nouse* cannot confirm this, but since 2008 YUSU has taken £44,146 in profit from the last four summer balls.

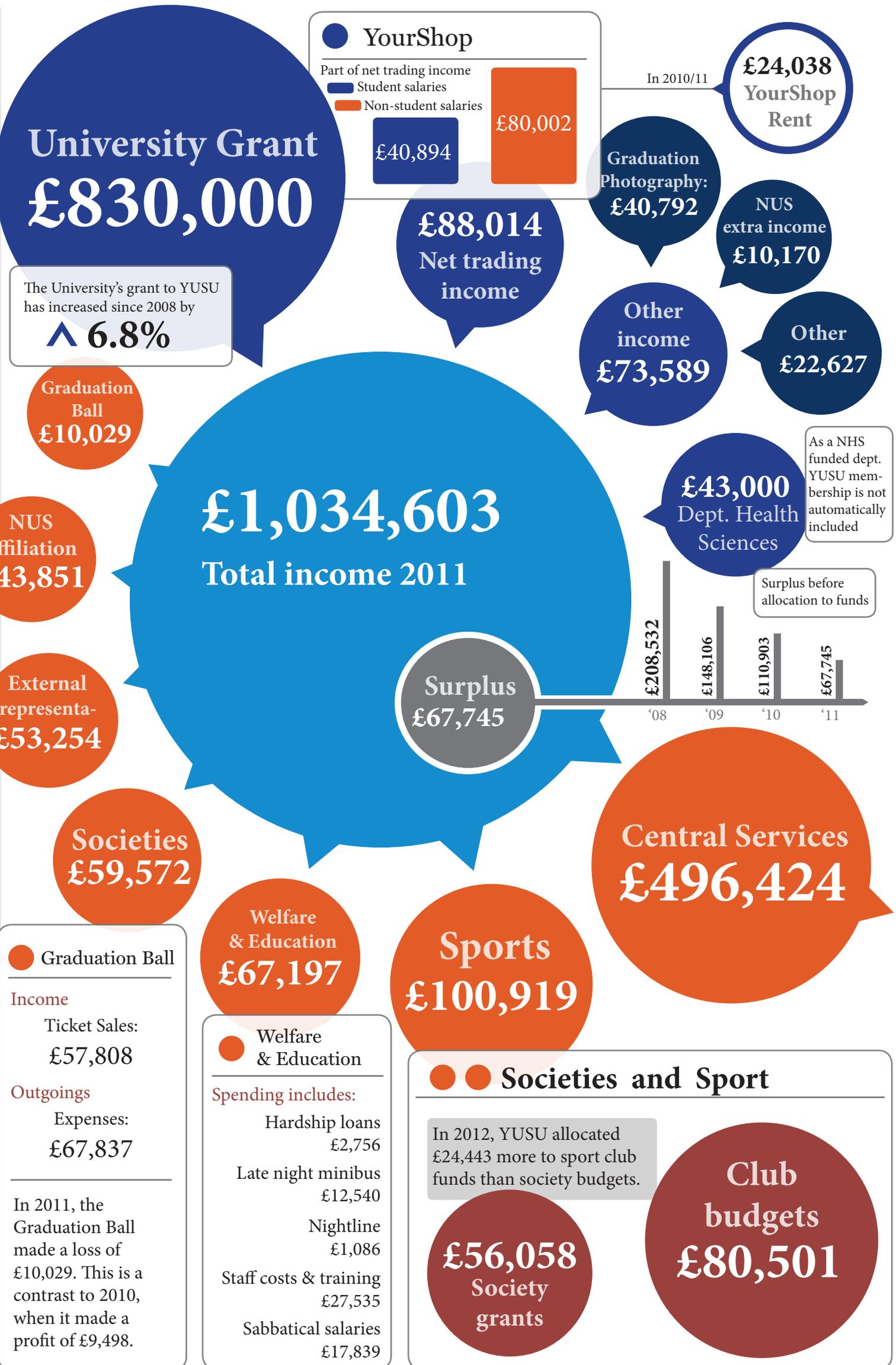
In terms of direct investment into the student experience, sports clubs received £80,501 in grants from YUSU in 2011, whilst societies received £56,058. YUSU states in its 2010-2013 Strategic Plan that the reason for this difference is due to “the higher level of resources involved in running student activities”. The difference between the grant allocations of sports clubs and societies has fallen over the last four years. In 2008, sports clubs received £46,701 more funding than societies, and this dropped to only £24,443 in 2011.

Ellis stated: “YUSU’s accounts will be up for scrutiny at our first Annual General Meeting on Thursday of Week 8 where students will be able to ask questions, query anything and finally vote on them. As a newly registered charity, all our accounts are also sent to the Charity Commission and as such are publicly available. Students are free to request them either from myself as Chair of YUSU Trustee Board or the YUSU CEO. Currently, content on the YUSU website is being overhauled, and ensuring that our members know they are able to request our accounts is part of that new content.”

In comparison to other similar size universities, YUSU has a relatively small total income. Durham University’s students’ union has over double the amount of income. Whilst their block grant from Durham University is lower than YUSU’s at £573,450 in 2011, their income from “charitable activities for students”, including “events and venue rentals” and “bars”, contributes to a total income of £2.1 million.

The YUSU accounts also show that YourShop, run by YUSU, generated almost £50,000 in profit in 2010/11. However, YUSU states that all the profit from its commercial activities is invested back into the student community.

Ellis added: “Every year, the budget is looked into and with the increases that have been secured over the last few years, YUSU has been able to expand the support we give to JCRCs with a dedicated member of staff, employ a Research and Policy Coordinator, and increase the support we give to clubs and societies, which includes our campus media.”



money go?

SABBATICAL TEAM COST 2010/11

York Sport President '10/11

Sam Asfahani

£17,931



YUSU President '10/11

Tim Ngwena

£17,856



Academic Affairs Officer '10/11

Ben Humphrys

£17,850



Welfare Officer '10/11

Laura Borisvaite

£17,839



Student Activities Officer '10/11

Nick Scarlett

£17,831



Democracy & Services '10/11

Dan Walker

£16,416



'10/11: £15,782
'11/12: £17,329
Basic Salaries

In total:

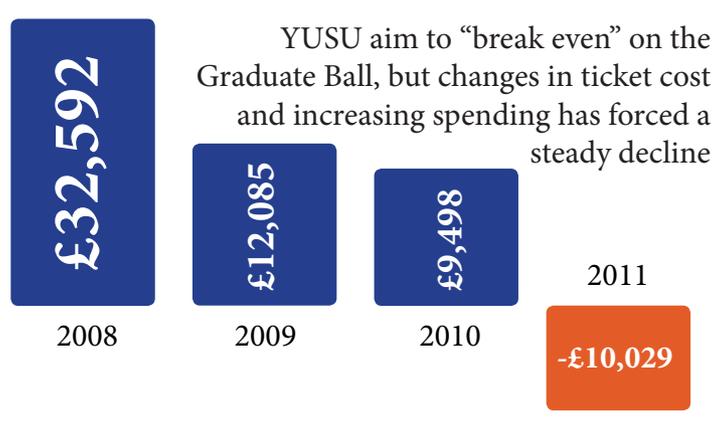
£105,723

This is set to decrease for 11/12, as the Democratic & Services position has been abolished

£319,532

Admin & professional Staff

Graduate Ball profit, 2008-2011



COMMENT

Neil Johnston



In an era where transparency is more important than ever, it is worrying that here at York we don't have immediate access to how our Students' Union spends its money. While YUSU's accounts are available on request, students should be able to find them with a couple of clicks. Many students' unions across the country now publish their accounts online, including Cambridge, Durham, and Warwick. So why is our Union so reluctant to put this data online?

Forget following the actions of other students' unions for a moment. The University publish all of the details of their accounts online. Surely YUSU also have an obligation to do this, given they are directly elected by the student body?

Just as elected politicians at the highest level are being forced towards greater transparency, our elected Sabbs should also be accountable. This year saw more people than ever choosing the new YUSU Officers with an improved turnout at the elections. Now the new officers should ensure students keep faith in them by making the YUSU accounts easily available to everyone online.

Most students I know don't realise they can ask for the accounts:

it isn't advertised on YUSU's website and not letting people know they can request their accounts is pointless. In contrast, if the information was available easily online I think YUSU would be surprised how many students would be interested in scrutinising them.

YUSU are missing an opportunity here. Students often wonder what they actually do and what they invest their money in. Publishing their full accounts online would make YUSU more democratic and students could spot funding issues that may have never come to attention.

"Publishing the accounts online would not be difficult but would make the Union more transparent"

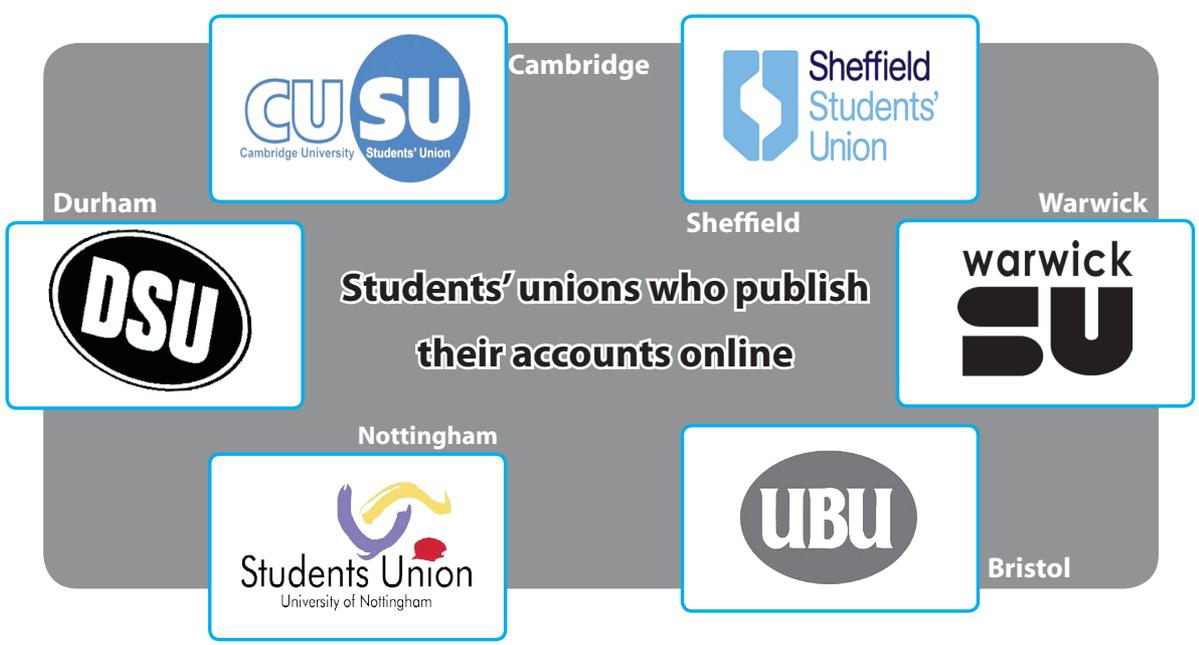
Some might ask why we need to see the accounts. There are several good reasons. Take the funding given to sports and societies for example. Last year sports clubs received £80,501 of funding while societies received £59,752. Sports clubs do have equipment that needs to be paid before, but the point is, if every student can see how their money is spent then real debate could be ignited on funding for societies and sports clubs. This would give students a greater role in the decision making process by making

sure that money is invested where students want it to be. Voting on the accounts at the Annual General Meeting is all well and good, but what percentage of the student body actually attend these meetings? We all know students can be lazy and it doesn't take much effort from YUSU to place a link to them on their website.

Another interesting revelation from the accounts is that last year's graduation ball made a £10,029 loss. I'm not saying it is wrong that money should be spent on a final send-off for third year students, and indeed it has previously made a profit, but if students have concerns on the amount spent, or not spent, they could voice these if they have easy access to the statistics.

Have you ever wondered how much profit YourShop makes and where it goes? The answer is just under £50,000 net profit in 2010/11, and it goes into the main YUSU pot to be reinvested in the student community. But should this be used to lower prices in YourShop? This is why it is vital everyone has quick and simple access to the accounts, so suggestions like this can be properly debated.

Publishing the accounts online would not be difficult but would make the Union more transparent. This would be a welcome step in the right direction and could help generate real interest in how YUSU is run. It would be disappointing if YUSU were to fall behind other unions at a time when transparency is becoming increasingly important.



“ [The] priority this year is to compile a new five year strategic plan, which will include a relocation of the student centre to address membership demands ”

- Tim Ngwena, former YUSU President, outlined YUSU's plans for a new Student Centre in the 2009 Accounts

Nouse was blocked from publishing the full 2008 - 2011 YUSU Accounts online. However, students can request to view these accounts through YUSU.

News

Five feature films planned

Alex Slingsby
NEWS REPORTER

THE UNIVERSITY'S Department of Theatre, Film and Television are celebrating a collaboration with a production company and will help with the creation of five feature films to be aired from the end of this year onwards.

Heslington Studios will provide post-production computer-generated imagery (CGI) facilities to Green Screen Productions, based just outside of York in Bubwith, for each of the five films.

Heslington Studios is set to be paid a minimum fee for each of the five films, giving the Department additional money as well as experience for its students, who will be working alongside award-winning producers such as Stephen Evans, who worked on *Confessions of a Dangerous Mind*.

One second-year film student already anticipates future collaborations: "This experience is exactly the kind of thing I wanted to have access to as part of my degree. Working alongside success stories from the industry will really help us strengthen our own abilities."

The first of the five feature films, *The Knife That Killed Me*, is already in production and is to be aired by Universal Pictures in the UK by the end of this year.

Set in Yorkshire, the 90 minute drama, starring Katherine Dow Blyton and Jack McMullen, tells the story of a 16 year old boy under



HESLINGTON STUDIOS

Five feature films are planned working with Green Screen Productions

pressure from school and family life, turning to crime. Green Screen Productions will be using the CGI facilities in the £30m purpose-built University studios for the finishing touches.

This opportunity not only brings Green Screen Productions and Heslington Studios together in a collaboration that will help both companies generate profit and ex-

perience, but it also gives the University's students some extra real-life experience in the world of film and television production. The Department hope that this experience will pave the way for more partnerships in the future.

Emily Vizard, first-year Theatre, film and Television student, said: "I think this will really benefit the Department as a whole."

University's female scientists recognised

Laura Hughes
NEWS EDITOR

PSYCHOLOGY, PHYSICS, and Computer Science departments have each received recognition from the Athena SWAN Charter, in recognition of their support for women in science.

The national award celebrates good practice in recruiting, retaining and promoting women in Science, Engineering and Technology within higher education.

Physics has been awarded a Silver award, the Psychology Department has had its Silver award renewed, and the Department of Computer Science has received a Bronze award.

John Clark, Head of the University's Computer Science Department, said he was delighted York is now one of only three computer science departments in the UK with an Athena Swan Award.

Clarke commented: "The message has to be that women can do computer science and they can do it at York. There is clearly much work to do, but also a clear commitment to making Computer Science at York an attractive proposition for women already working in the field and for women students considering it as a degree choice."

The University's Head of Psychology revealed he was "very proud to be leading a department

which devotes time, energy, and creativity to supporting all of its staff, and which has been recognised by the renewal of this Athena SWAN Silver Award for the support which it is giving to women in science in particular. 90 per cent of our undergraduates are women and an increasing proportion of our faculty are women. The outstanding reputation of the Department is a tribute to their efforts and achieve-

"The message has to be that women can do computer science"

Head of Computer Science Department
John Clark

ments." Moreover, he expressed his commitment to continuing to support women within the department as "the future of Psychology in York resides with them."

Silver department awards recognise that in addition to institution-wide policies, the department has a significant record of activity and achievement in supporting the careers of female scientists.

The University of York is currently ranked at a Bronze award level. However, the University's Chemistry department is the only department across the UK to ever have received a Gold award.

STYC contract introduced across campus

Celia Scruby
NEWS REPORTER

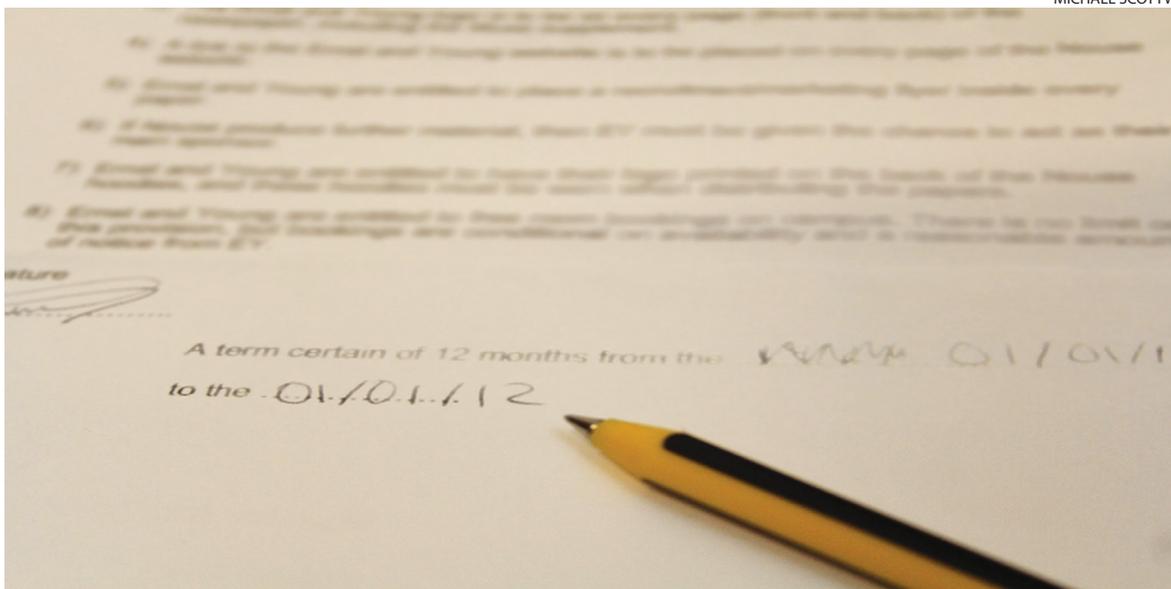
SELECTIVE PROCEDURES for the appointment of colleges STYCs are to be introduced, starting next year.

Introductory talks will be held for prospective STYCs outlining what will be expected of them regarding their role. There will be a team building and training day for all STYCs following their appointment into the position, in order for all the college STYCs to get to know one another before freshers' week.

Bob Hughes, YUSU Welfare Officer, said: "The college welfare reps and I agreed a change to the previous STYC application system, by taking the best bits from last year's applications and standardising them across all colleges."

The colleges and YUSU are planning to make the application process for becoming a STYC more exclusive: students will have to attend a meeting in order to pick up an application form and the deadlines for applications has been moved to week three with interviews scheduled for week four.

Although the proposal has been welcomed by many colleges, Lauren Bray, Langwith Welfare Representative, stated her reservation about the changes: "The downside is that for expanding colleges



MICHAEL SCOTTW

STYC contracts will become a compulsory feature of the process of selecting STYCs beginning for this October

like Langwith being more selective might mean we don't get enough STYCs to cater for the increased intake of freshers, but I guess it's better to have quality not quantity."

She continued: "STYCs give new students a first impression of student life at York so I think extra training is obviously only going to enhance this experience for next year's freshers."

Katy Tinman, Derwent Welfare Representative, added: "We were a little worried we wouldn't

have enough STYCs to cope with the number of freshers for next year," but she said that around 200 people had attended the first meeting.

A contract has also been drawn up by YUSU and the colleges, which is a hybrid of some of the contracts which colleges previously had in place for their STYCs. All of next year's STYCs will be expected to sign this contract on being appointed to the position. The contract is a short document outlining

the responsibilities of the STYCs and the actions taken against them if they do not comply.

These penalties will take the form of STYCs being stripped of their position and privileges, and in extreme cases YUSU have the power to take further action against them. The main emphasis of these contracts is to hold STYCs accountable for their conduct.

Vanbrugh college had previously required their STYCs to sign a contract, and Matt Stevenson,

Vanbrugh Chair, commented on his approval of the change: "I think it gives people accountability and makes for a more professional STYCs system."

YUSU are discouraging colleges from incentivising STYC-ing by offering cheaper freshers' week wristbands because they don't want students to become STYCs so they can have a cheaper freshers' week.

Additionally, students applying for the position of head STYC will be interviewed by a panel made up of different welfare representatives

"Being more selective might mean we don't get enough STYCs to cater for the increased intake of freshers"

Langwith Welfare Representative
Lauren Bray

from different colleges. Group exercises could also be introduced into the selection process so students can be judged on how well they work with others.

Hughes has been overseeing this development of the STYC selection process, and has been sitting in on college meetings about the new procedures.

YUSU warned University over choice of contractors

SEMIRE YEKTA

Martin Spurr
Rose Troup-Buchanan

YUSU HAVE spoken out over the chaotic building of the new Student Centre, after YUSU issued a warning to the University about the financial situation of Killby & Gayford, who went into administration two weeks ago.

Tim Ellis, YUSU President, said YUSU had asked the University to change contractors for the project several months ago.

“We have seen the University act indecisively about hiring new contractors back in the early Spring term when it was obvious that Killby and Gayford were in trouble, and deciding to stay with them.”

He continued: “What was even more frustrating is that this was after our concerns were made about the level of work on site and our lack of confidence in them.”

The University has responded by stating “We did not ignore the YUSU concerns about Killby and Gayford remaining on the project but had to balance the complexities of a change.”

The University spokesperson went on to explain the complexities of changing contractors, continuing: “Having considered all aspects we came to the view that the best option would be to get Killby and Gayford to complete the works.”

The Student Centre was delayed after problems with the ground floor appeared during De-



The renovated YUSU Student Centre was scheduled for initial completion by Christmas, but it has faced delays

ember, and until the completion of the new building the five sabbatical officers continued to operate from temporary offices in James College.

Ellis stated his frustration with another delay in the completion of the building, continuing: “It is obviously extremely annoying for outgoing Sabbs this year that we have had to work out of temporary office

all year and won't see the benefits of the space.”

Killby and Gayford went into administration on 18th April, and are now in the hands of administrators BDO. Established in 1860, they were among the oldest operating building contractors in London and the south east.

They won the contract to build

the Student Centre after competing with three other firms over the tender.

The University stated a new contractor, Richard Alan, is scheduled to finish the project by the end of May.

The new contractors have already worked on Heslington West, and are a part of a general engineer-

ing services provider, the Richard Alan Group. The construction arm of the company was established as a ‘stand alone’ business in 2008.

The new Student Centre is part of a joint project with YUSU and the University's to invest in a “21st

“It was obvious that Killby and Gayford were in trouble”

YUSU President
Tim Ellis

Century campus” and will include a new reception and social areas for students in their union. This was agreed in April 2011, alongside the re-development of the Roger Kirk centre in order to “improve the vibrancy of the south end of the campus.”

The renovation of the Student Centre aims to encourage greater student awareness of the role and activities of the Sabbatical Officers, as well as a Union building which is more “fit for purpose”, and in which YUSU will aim to “continue to provide the level of service demanded by its members” according to recently released financial statements of the past years.

Tim Ngwena, YUSU President during the initial stages of the project, said the building would make it “easier [for students] to see their officers both part time and full time.”

New 24 hour library opening hours provokes mixed response

Neil Johnston
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

THE NEW 24/7 opening times for the University library have been used extensively by students in the first two weeks of opening.

However, while there have been a large number of students using the library until 3 am it appears there are limited numbers of students using the library at around six or seven o'clock in the morning.

Before term started there were an average of 170 people using the library at 11pm. With the new opening hours, by 1am there was an average of 75 students using the first extra hour of opening. While 35 were still in the library at 3am, only eight stayed until 8am, utilising the full benefit of the opening hours.

Since the start of the term the figures have been higher with an average of 275 students using the library at 11pm, with 121 still in the library until 1am.

An average of 65 students made use of the new opening hours until 3am while 32 students were still using the library at 7am.

While there are not significant numbers of students making use of the early morning opening hours so far, students appear to be pleased with the University's decision to

open the library 24/7.

Simran Gill, a first-year Economics student, said: “I think it is much better that the library is now open all of the time. It makes revision much more flexible and I think it makes sense as most other good universities have their libraries open 24/7”

William Proud, a first-year Maths student, was also pleased with the new opening hours: “with all the noise and distractions of living in a student house the new

“The new opening hours are much better. It makes revision much more flexible.”

First Year Economics Student
Simran Gill

opening hours mean it is easier to find somewhere to study late at night and will definitely be of benefit nearer exam time.”

The opening of the library 24/7 follows a long running campaign by YUSU to make the University address student demands.

Graeme Osborn, YUSU Academic Officer, had made longer opening hours for the library one of

his campaign promises in the 2011 YUSU elections.

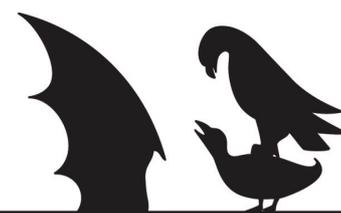
The new arrangements coincide with the completion of the library refurbishment which the University have previously said will be “second to none”. It is hoped the library's improved facilities will encourage students to take advantage of the extended opening hours.

The decision to open the library for longer means York's library now operates for the same amount of time as the UK's other leading universities. Entry overnight is restricted to only those with a University student card.

A spokesperson for the University commented on the new library arrangements saying: “24/7 opening has been well-received and the take-up is encouraging.”

They added that the University was pleased with an increase in the use of the new opening hours, especially after students had returned from the holidays.

“Since term started, we have averaged 275 at 11pm, 121 at 1am, 65 at 3am and 32 at 7am. While some people are staying for quite long periods through the night, others are working into the early hours and then leaving, or taking the opportunity to start work at 6 or 7am, earlier than they were able to do before.”



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English students unhappy with workshops

DAVE & BRY

Thomas Cox
NEWS REPORTER

FIRST-YEAR English students are criticising the introduction of this term's workshops. Students attend two hour workshops twice a week, combined with several lectures.

Workshops previously comprised of two combined seminar groups with two recurring tutors leading. This term they combine groups capped at 30 students, with a single tutor.

Students have concerns that this has resulted in half the amount of guidance, substantially denting the potential stimulation and debate productivity.

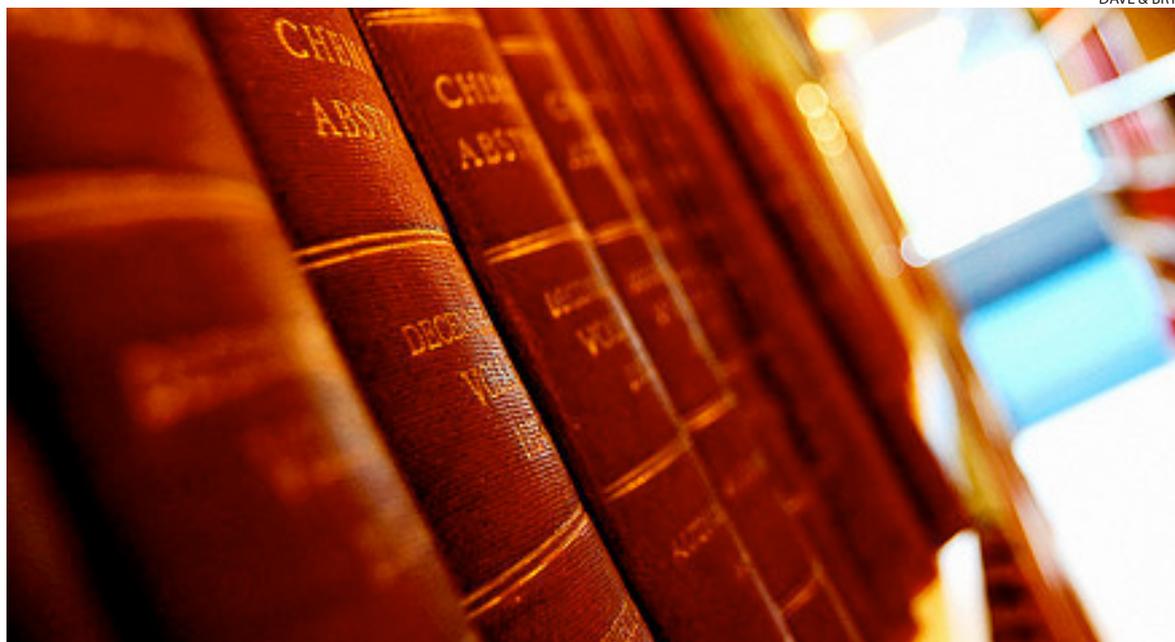
First-year English course Rep. Philip Watson, told *Nouse*: "classes are too large, teachers are too over-taxed and consequently the less confident and forthright students are overshadowed."

"For such a high-ranking institution, and for the hefty tuition fees that we students pay, this fundamentally flawed system is entirely unacceptable and something needs to be done about it."

Dr Zoe Norridge, an English lecturer, commented that workshops work well "alongside seminars", and allow for creative teaching and interactive learning. Last year's workshops received positive feedback and Norridge doesn't believe workshops result in less guidance.

The Department emphasises that staff offer two office hours every week for students to drop in and discuss their ideas.

One frustrated student said: "with too many students to just one



There are currently 18.9 students to every tutor and students are complaining workshop discussions are rushed

teacher, a workshop is the slackers' heaven - the lack of one-on-one attention means you can go a whole term without reading and without contributing."

"There seems little use in discussion that is inherently and invariably incomplete"

First-year student

The multitude of numbers has fired discontent, one student complained: "the size of workshops dilutes students' ability to discuss and often leads to premature or rushed conclusion. There seems little use in discussion that is inher-

ently and invariably incomplete." Students are often told "that's really interesting, but time is short so we've got to move on".

A key concern for one student was the environment, which they feel allows only the confident to speak and dominate discussion.

Helen Fulton, Head of English, wants "students to gain confidence in speaking up and sharing their knowledge and insights".

Tutors will often cut the workshops into groups of five, enabling intimate 20 minute discussions, which are better received due to the increased focus on individuals, and less on group summaries.

Fulton continued to defend the system, saying: "our depart-

ment offers proportionately fewer lectures and more small-group sessions than other Russell Group English departments, so the teaching here is more intensive than in other universities.

"We expect our students to work just as hard as Chemistry students, putting in the hours in the library or reading the set texts in place of working in a laboratory, so when they come to class they can take a meaningful part in discussion.

"And the overwhelming majority of our students do exactly that - we have some of the most outstanding and high-achieving English students in the country and they are a joy to teach."

University maintains league table ranking

Alex Osborne
NEWS REPORTER

THE UNIVERSITY has retained its place in the Complete University Guide's rankings, once again ranking 12th out of a total 116 universities in the UK.

Graeme Osborn, YUSU Academic Officer, commented: "It is disappointing to see that York is still outside the top 10. The main factors are poor scores in 'Graduate Prospects', 'Student-Staff Ratio' and 'Academic Services Spend'.

I am encouraged by the fact that since the start of this academic year the University has put time and money into improving each of these areas and I hope this will be reflected in next year's league tables."

The league table is assessed by nine aspects of university life and activity, namely student satisfaction, research assessment, entry standards, student-staff ratio, expenditure of academic services and facilities, good honours (number of students achieving a first or 2:1), graduate prospects and completion rate.

First place was maintained by Cambridge, while LSE has pushed Oxford out of second place, into third. Other local universities such as Leeds and Sheffield saw a drop in the rankings.

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News

Alcuin

Voting for the new college mascot design closes on Wednesday. Alcuin residents can choose from an owl, a fox or an alligator on the college Facebook group.

Derwent

Students from Derwent are organising a 'No Make-Up Day' on 2nd May. Participants will forego makeup for the day as a statement against the cosmetics industry and bodyshaming in general.

Goodricke

Dr Emma Hayiou-Thomas will be giving the College's 2012 Anniversary Lecture on the theme of children's language development. The lecture will take place at 6:30-7:30 in the Ron Cooke Hub Lakehouse on 14th May, and is preceded by a drinks reception at 6pm at the Hub.

Halifax

This term 'Faxival' will celebrate the 10th anniversary since the college was founded. This will be a series of events and the college are hoping to get a range of acts and entertainment for the celebration.

James

Fergus Drake – Head of Save the Children and founder of the Quad Dash – is giving this year's talk on 22nd May, at 6.15pm "On the side of angels? - The reality of humanitarian aid in a fragile world".

Langwith

Langwith College is also choosing a new mascot. The choices members of Langwith have to decide between are: Kangaroo (Langaroo), Dinosaur (Langasaurus Rex), Bee (The Langwith Bee).

Vanbrugh

The 10th annual Vanbrugh Voices music festival will take place on 26th May. The mini music festival will be happening in Vanbrugh College's bar.

Wentworth

A bingo night will be taking place at 8pm on 2nd May in EDGE. As the GSA website proudly states, "everyone loves bingo".

Reporting by Tim Wingard, Neil Johnston and Ross D'lima

'Edible Uni' to offer students free home-grown produce on campus

ANDY DAVIES

Ben Bason
NEWS REPORTER

A NEW environmental project, 'Edible Uni', is set to grow vegetables on campus which students will be able to access for free.

Set up by the former YUSU Environment and Ethics Officer, Phoebe Cullingworth, the project will rely on voluntary work from students to maintain and harvest beds of herbs, fruit and vegetables and aims to bring students together to utilise the grounds of the University.

The first bed will be planted outside Vanbrugh Kitchen on Sunday 6th May and the ultimate goal is to have a bed for each college of the University. Halifax College has already signed up to the project and James plans to make it the college's summer term volunteering project this year.

The inspiration for the scheme comes from a similar undertaking set up two years ago in York, called 'Edible York', which succeeded in creating several public beds throughout the city. These so-called "guerrilla gardening" schemes have been on the increase in recent years, with other cities like Sheffield seeing a number of community-run projects.

Cullingworth told *Nouse* that the scheme will have many benefits for students at York: "The project



Edible Uni plans to grow traditional vegetables but also various herbs and seasonal fruits in campus plots

is mainly about bringing students together to help and support each other and is about making use of our extensive grounds in a positive way."

"I also wanted to create more of an awareness of food miles and get people thinking about where our food comes from and how much energy it took to bring it to our plates."

The University currently grows vegetables on an allotment, but it is a five minute walk from cam-

pus and its existence is not widely known.

Cullingworth commented: "I wanted to bring the issue of where food comes from right to the doorstep of colleges, [the colleges] will hopefully nurture ownership over their beds and it will add to college spirit and pride."

York follows in the footsteps of many other universities that grow food on campus, but it is not thought that any other establish-

ment has implemented quite as an extensive project as this.

Cullingworth said she wasn't worried about the offer of free home-grown produce to students being abused.

"It is a project by students for students and I have enough faith in people to know that something like that would not happen" she said.

"If it did then I think it would motivate volunteers more to continue to make it a success."

Flooding hits York

The City of York felt the strain of successive days of torrential rain, resulting in the river Ouse flooding, although disruption to the city was minimal

PHILIPPA GRAFTON



PHILIPPA GRAFTON



A wealth of history

As York celebrates the 800th anniversary of its right to self governance, **Lizzie Lynch** and **Laura Hughes** talk to the organisers of 'Celebrate York' and look at the history behind a special day of events

On Saturday 12th May, the University of York and York St John University, are holding an inaugural 'Celebrate York' event, in a bid to encourage the local community to celebrate their heritage. York is celebrating 800 years since the city was granted a Royal Charter by King John in 1212, which allowed York to take charge of its own affairs.

Celebrate York is the first free event of its kind and will see hundreds of students providing a programme of music, dance, sport and interactive activities for local residents of all ages to come along and enjoy. The main stage will feature a wide variety of performances, from a brass band to a mini pantomime.

James Croydon, YUSU Student Activities Officer and one of the organisers behind the event, believes the day will provide an "interactive, fun and free day out," which he hopes will see the local community mixing with the often maligned student population.

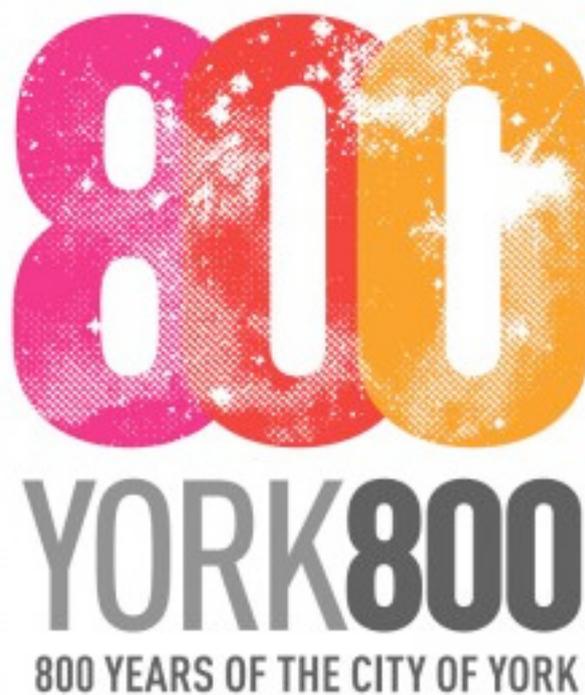
Throughout history York has been of great political importance and was a stronghold of Northern England in the medieval period due to its economic, political, and trading power. King John granted the 1212 Royal Charter to the City of York in an attempt to raise revenue.

The charter was a document of law, and a contractual agreement between the Sovereign power and their citizens, defining the rights, liabilities, and responsibilities of self-government. The Charter allowed towns, such as York, the right to buy themselves the power to collect their own taxes to raise money, and enabled York freemen the right to self-govern.

One first-year History student is eagerly anticipating the event: "The event is a chance to celebrate the history of our great city with the locals, whose ancestors would have been part of this defining moment. The day is a fun remembrance of York's democratic heritage."

Today citizens are represented by Ward Councillors who follow a written constitution, and still meet at The Guildhall, where they debate and vote on various issues. The York 1212 Charter gave York citizens the opportunity to elect their own Lord Mayor. Today, the Lord Mayor is the first citizen of York and is elected by the Council each May. The Mayor is the official resident of the Mansion House in York city centre.

Celebrate York aims to see the coming together of students from across York with the intention of fostering good community relationships. York's stu-



"The event is a chance to celebrate the history of our great city with the locals, whose ancestors would have been part of this defining movement"

dent population makes up approximately 15 per cent of the city's total population, and has had a rocky relationship with the local community over the years.

In the past, a University Community Fund has supported the York Carnival and York Mystery Plays, and offered free legal advice through the University's law degree.

Josh Allen, responsible for the

media and marketing of the event, believes the event on 12th May will help to "build bridges" between the higher and further education institutions in York, and should help maximise student participation on big issues, for example, housing, community safety, the public perception of students, and students' wellbeing.

The University hopes the reputation of students from areas such

as Tang Hall and St. Lawrence Street will improve amongst the residents who attend this student-led event; helping to create a "more cohesive and inclusive community in York."

There is also hope that the event will help to encourage greater networking between sports clubs, volunteering, charities, and societies in general. RAG is currently fundraising alongside a local charity, Arts Barge, which showcases art from their river barge.

The focus on volunteering and work with the Leeds and York Partnership NHS Foundation Trust will also play an important part in the day's proceedings. Whilst the event as a whole is set to enable the most hard done by in society to enjoy a free family fun day out, there is also emphasis on increasing local awareness of the work done by the NHS Partnership Foundation Trust.

As a Foundation Trust, its services for mental health care and for support for those who have disabilities are provided entirely by volunteers. Through volunteering and vital fundraising the Trust aims to encourage greater public discussion about mental ill-health and learning disabilities.

One first year politics student believes "its a great idea of YUSU's to integrate with the local community, and give an opportunity for students across York to come together for a good cause."

As part of a campaign called 'What's Your Goal?' the Trust is aiming to break the world record for the longest line of bunting ever created. Louisa Moorhouse, YUSU Volunteering Officer, revealed, "schools and universities across the country are helping out and we are really excited to be contributing to this." They aim to "make two lots of bunting; one to send back to the world record piece and another to display on the day."

As well as the bunting challenge, the day will play host to over 30 societies and community groups, running stands and sideshows during the day, whilst the main stage will be host to acts including Taming the Savage, PantSoc and Turkish Soc.

Allen is "expecting a few thousand people through the gates over the course of the event. We expect that it will be a fun day for all. Hopefully a good one for all the performers too. And we're currently fervently praying to the Yorkshire weather gods. Personally I am looking forward to getting out there and mixing with the local community."

Celebrate York is happening on Saturday 12th May in Hull Road Park between 11am and 3pm.

SIMON GRUBB



Comment



comment@nouse.co.uk
www.nouse.co.uk/comment

Rob
Thomas



Galleria provision leaves a bitter taste in James students' mouths

Dissatisfaction with catered services among James college students is understandable, given many of them don't even want to be catered

Continuing their righteous fight in the name of customer satisfaction, the University has focused attention on the experiences of students in catered accommodation. Over 800 were sent a survey which was dutifully skimmed, ignored and (I imagine) the subject of one or two tirades, with less than a quarter being returned; chalk one up for civil participation. They were asked to consider why they chose the catered option, how important they rated such factors as food quality, portion size and menu variety, and how satisfied they were.

Fuelling the 'worthless ingrates' ramblings of every pensioner in the country, across the University students responded by saying that the facilities were not as good as they wanted them to be, except in the case of the quality of service. Having said that, the reason most people return surveys is to register disappointment, not slavish admiration of the kitchen staff.

Unfortunately, the award for worst catering facilities goes to my own college. James students rated all but one factor (breakfast menu variety) more important than anything else, yet reported all but dinner opening times to be less satisfactory than the average. So what's the problem - Galleria, or us? Having sampled the cuisine in the name of ruthless investigative journalism, I think it's been unfairly treated. They certainly provide food at a better quality than I manage by myself, although my cooking skills have demanded the attention of the fire service on four occasions, and once, the interest of a biochemical company.

Could it be that with higher ac-

commodation prices come higher expectations? Ask the average James student what they want and it's simple: quality food with good service in a timely manner, preferably via a golden robot butler who has rather a good line in bespoke tweed cricket boxes. Tellingly, though, James students were nearly a fifth less satisfied when asked if they were getting value for money. Does this mean we don't know we're born, or do we just have a hidden penchant for penny pinching? Like most of life's great questions (for example "Should I eat a Domino's or a McDonald's tonight?") the answer is "probably both".

Of course, sentiments are soured when you are forced into paying for a scheme which you didn't want. 43 per cent of James

students surveyed did not choose to be catered. This reveals the extent to which catering facilities are funded by conscripts. One History student unaccustomed to waking

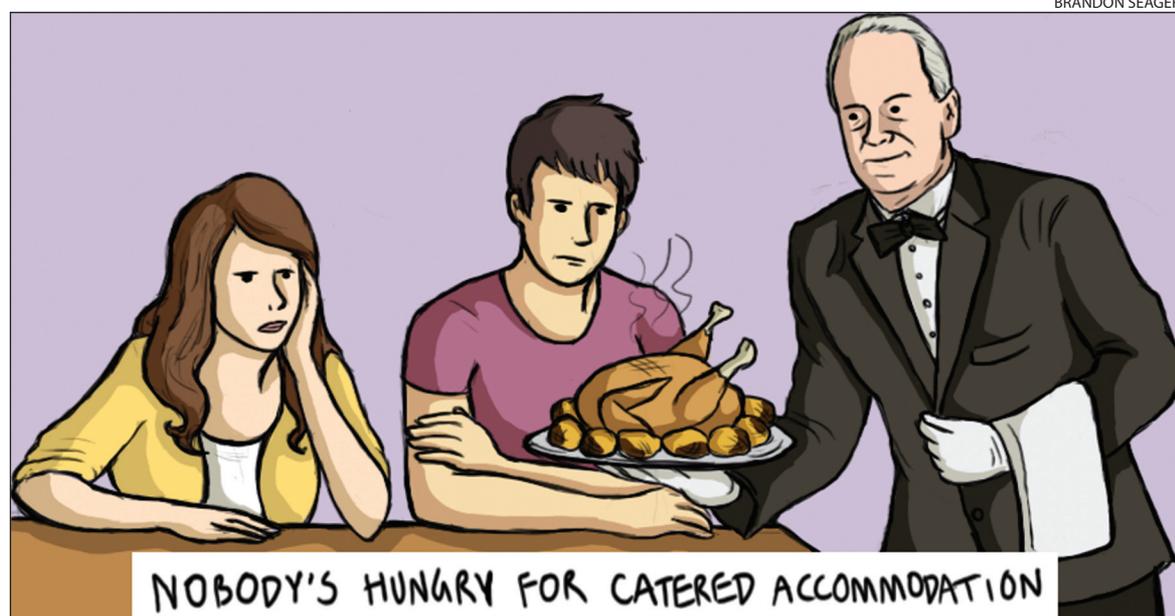
"it's worth bearing in mind that many non-catered students value these facilities"

up before noon especially resented paying for a breakfast that he rarely used - particularly after a night out - leaving him footing the bill for two breakfasts in one day.

Galleria has been maligned by so many of its patrons for several reasons, most of which are unrelated to the efforts of the kitchens themselves. It's also worth bearing in mind that many non-catered students value these facilities, either for reasons of financing, culinary ability, or a lack of effort, combined with the desire to eat something with at least two colours in it.

However, with the University unlikely to change its policy towards filling catered spaces anytime soon, people who find themselves stuck in this situation will just have to compensate by taking as much juice and milk as they can carry in their pockets. In any case, if none of this convinces you it's worth the commitment, there's always a Pot Noodle.

BRANDON SEAGER



Alex
Slingsby
Deputy
Comment
Editor



Is France facing an identity crisis?

As President Nicolas Sarkozy trails behind his opponent François Hollande like a fed-up toddler after a long hard day at nursery, it seems that the days of a country unified by their love for culture are well and truly over.

Sarkozy won over the French in 2007, just in time for the ensuing global financial crisis, and more private-life drama in the press than Katie Price could ever dream of. He went from 'President of the People' to a potential mistake within the space of a few years. And as the French culture seemed to fall from his grip faster than the wealth of the Euro, it's hardly surprising that Sarkozy has lost the voter's confi-

dence in recent years.

'A socialist, a liberal, and a Front National politician...' sounds more like the start of a really bad joke, rather than the top three candidates in the running for president, but this is exactly what it is. And if, after years of culture crisis, France has been left less than unified, it shows in the top three candidates. The question has to be asked: is France facing an identity crisis?

Sarkozy kickstarted the elections, and the culture debate, by saying that he wants to "defend the French way of life", but public support for French culture has taken a back seat for the time being. France yearns for change; they all want to

run as fast as possible from the recession, along with the rest of the world. Why would they want to be

"public support for French culture has taken a back seat for the time being"

held back by a leader bent on defending the past? Is culture really that important anymore, especially

when they've been faced with far more problems than they know what to do with in the recent years?

It's no longer all French bread and berets. The public have realised, and at a much quicker pace than Sarkozy, that more is needed to sort out France as a country, economically and socially, before they get back to protecting their culture.

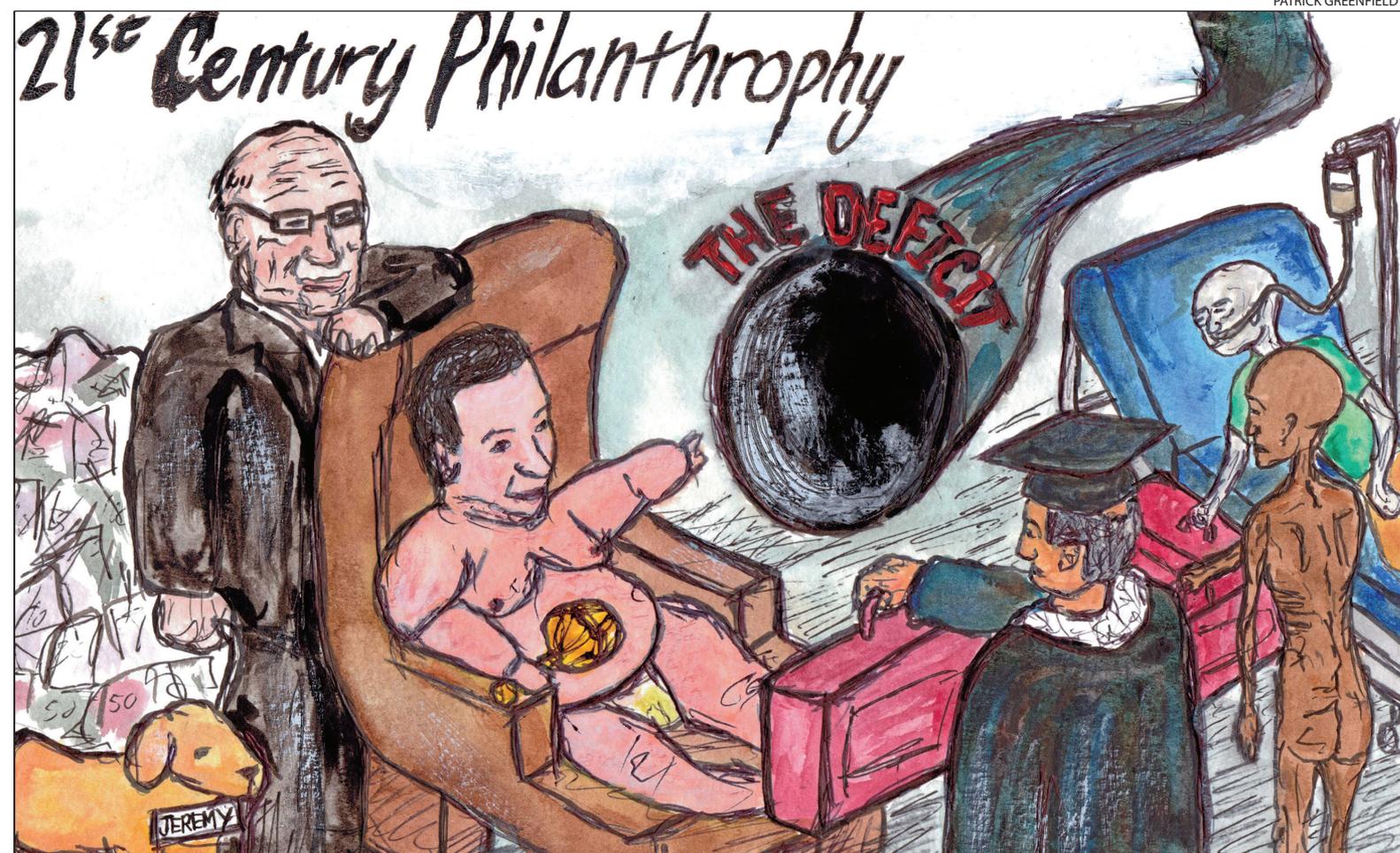
This is exactly why the elections are so unpredictable. Not only are the French having to choose a president, they are also having to choose someone they can trust, someone who can cope with a culture crisis. The country needs someone with a bit of 'je ne sais quoi', or at the very least someone

who won't return as an incumbent president in the next election apologetically for what went wrong.

Sarkozy not only promised the world when he became president, but he wanted to fill the shoes of more personas than he could fit at his dinner table: president, friend of the working-class, friend of the rich, aristocrat, activist, journalist, married man. Perhaps not the best way to wow a crowd still hurting from the recent economic blows.

Who knows what these next few weeks will bring? All I can say is that, when the French vote, they won't be voting to save their culture, they'll be voting to save their country.

PATRICK GREENFIELD



Tesco-ing nowhere

Rohan Banerjee



After a shock profit warning in January exposed the problems in their UK business, supermarket giant Tesco have curtailed expansion plans and pledged to invest a £1bn makeover on existing outlets and the company website.

For the first time in 20 years, Tesco have lost money, and now they face a real battle to win back the faith of some heavily disgruntled customers.

Chief Executive Phillip Clarke has said that they have taken “a little bit too much from the shoppers”, penny pinching to boost profits; and to win them back, he promised Tesco will invest around £200m on new staff for their 2000 plus stores, install new fresh food departments and introduce gimmicked initiatives such as a dedicated “fruit and veg team,” hilariously clad in fluorescent green uniforms.

Tesco’s problems are in part due to the struggle retailers face with structural changes within the industry, namely the expansion of the digital era, with growing numbers of consumers shopping online.

Clarke has slashed Tesco’s physical opening plans by nearly 40 per cent to prepare for this new digital age, but has not extended this curb to the Metro and Extra subsections, which continue to expand at a turbo-capitalist rate among the biggest in the industry.

While I laud Tesco’s attempts to reform, I cannot help but scrutinise the strategy they have chosen. Applying a fresh coat of paint will do little to cover up the underlying cracks within the company itself. It seems a better solution would be to strip away the problems entirely and tackle the core issue at hand. Rather than patronise customers, by assuming they only respond to price cuts and cash back, why not treat them like actual people?

Treat your employees well and they will treat the customers well. Treat the customers well and they will no longer be disgruntled. Tesco must realise that no amount of re-decoration will solve its problems if employees continue to regard customers as an interruption to their day. When a customer walks into a 24-hour store at 2am and the only smiling faces are the ones on posters, you know something needs to change.

So instead of a speck of painting here and there, and pouring money into a largely superficial makeover that fails to tackle Tesco’s falling market share, the company needs to invest instead in decent wages, real service training and build staff morale to a level above slavery.

These small changes might make all the difference, and as Tesco itself so regularly insists, “every little helps”.

Protecting student services in the campus bubble

Ed Grande



There is justification for the charity tax relief cap, but student services must be prioritised, regardless of what happens to donations

In times of any sort of economic fragility, it is easy to drag the government into a quagmire of flimsy criticism over seemingly any move. And indeed, the way in which the government has redefined its fiscal relationship with universities over the last 10 to 15 years, it is almost understandable for students to feel cheated by their government. Yet only almost, and it is this tremendous student close-sightedness which is possibly the real issue. The University must also be – and show themselves to be – unwavering in their resolve to let this gap in funding affect students as little as possible.

The maths is simple and clear: income tax relief from donations in the period 2006 to 2011 provided £9m for the University, and the reorganisation of such relief under new guidelines will substantially cut this figure. The combined effect of encouraging fewer donors through the lowering of the tax threshold, and getting less relief from donation will leave a hole of considerable size in university funding.

This is, anyone will concede, damning news. But it must be placed in the context of the entirety of university funding – particular vis-à-vis the oft-repeated fee hike to £9,000 – and also be seen from outside the Heslington microcosm that, as students, we easily slip into.

In many respects, university accounts are in the running for their biggest financial stimulus for generations. In September, however many thousands of undergraduates paying £9,000 per annum will arrive. A bitter pill for students

to swallow and for the University to administer, there is nonetheless going to be a terrific financial injection in the offing, helping to counteract to some degree any lost income from donations.

Additionally, to vehemently oppose or complain about the Treasury’s moves shows either an embarrassing lack of knowledge of the current financial situation, or a true naivety about how the University fits into the larger economic climate.

Falling back into recession fol-

“the cap on donations will require the university to be more transparent with their finances”

lowing two financial quarters of contraction, the UK is in its largest depression of the last 100 years. The Treasury’s loss of £50-100m each year to charity tax relief is therefore part of the deficit which can and should be tackled.

Similarly, the Matched Funding Donor Scheme for Higher Education, a £200m government pot providing £1 for every £3 donated to the University, is a purely superfluous measure in such times. Much vitriolic ink has been printed on Osborne’s austerity measures, but with the Eurozone sovereign debt crisis showing no sign of de-

mise, attempting to ring fence the UK’s finances in one way or another is undeniably a sensible move.

Yet, in the face of potentially losing such fiscal windfalls in the form of donations, the University must be keen and determined to protect funding for student services, and if the axe must fall anywhere, students concerns must remain the University’s predominant stock.

The funding for societies, academia and sports clubs cannot be jeopardised by this looming deficit in university funding. The cap is a truly necessary move by the government, and though it will undoubtedly have an effect in one guise or another on students, the University must be prepared to tackle the question of how they will guarantee that the student experience goes unaltered.

With higher fees leaving students demanding more for their money and greater accountability, the cap on donations will require the University to be more transparent with their finances, and will be a crucial part of showing students the positive moves they are making.

A fear of this not being the case is possibly the motivating factor for an all too eager criticism of the Treasury’s moves, but they are clear-sighted and progressive changes. Despite primary individual concerns, we must be prepared to look out of and beyond our own campus-centric world. Yet this must be coupled with a university that is more primed than ever to focus in acutely on maintaining, upholding and improving standards.



Students first to lose out on donations

Student support, societies, and the collegiate network are some of the most important elements of life at the University of York. At the moment, this is reflected in the generous level of donations by alumni to these services we all benefit from, that help to keep them afloat.

But philanthropy is by no means guaranteed. It is a worrying fact that over the past five years total donations have fallen. The charity tax relief cap proposed to come into force in 2013 combined with the ending of the Higher Education Matched Funding Initiative last August, leaves us uncertain as to whether student service funding will be able to weather this perfect storm.

The reason we students should be especially concerned with this university-wide potential funding problem is that the vast majority of donations are directed specifically at student services. The York Annual Fund Disbursement Group agreed grants this year totalling £52,005. This money was directed at the front line of just the sort of student provisions that made the experience of York alumni so unforgettable, fostered their development into successful, employed graduates with the means to donate, and made them want to give back to the University.

The University must do all it can to protect these services, if only to

Satisfaction survey confirms suspicions

The results of this latest survey should come as no surprise. Time and again it has been stressed by students to campus authorities that there is no market for the number of catered rooms that exist on campus. Many students are forced into such rooms, which are inevitably, significantly more expensive. Other accommodation disappears in the quick flurry of activity and stress characterising the weeks after results and acceptance letters with many accepting rooms which they do not want.

The current state of accommodation on Heslington West is of a poor standard, and it is to the University's credit they are seeking to remedy this, with numerous cases of repair work and renovation happening across campus on a near constant basis. However, we must be wary that such renovations do not become a smokescreen for the University to convert previously non-catered blocks into catered, for their financial benefit, as evidenced by the recent attempt to convert Vanbrugh Le Page into fully catered accommodation. Those students resident, or previously resident, voted overwhelmingly against such a proposal, and this survey is another indication of our reluctance of such conversions.

YUSU accounts are to be welcomed

YUSU should and needs to make its accounts available online, as have other student unions across the country. Putting the accounts online, and advertising them properly to the student body, sends out a clear message to the students who have elected them. They are a body elected for students, by students.

Nouse had intended to publish YUSU's accounts online, but YUSU's refusal to allow online publication is a missed opportunity for YUSU to capitalise upon ready publicity and provoke a campus-wide debate on the spending and allocation of funds. Engaging fully in such a debate can only increase understanding in YUSU's role and thus their ability to improve the student experience. Once Officers and students start a frank discussion on the use of funds, an improvement in the student experience at this University is only to be expected.

An explanation of the allocation of funds will help to improve understanding where priorities are being fulfilled, and where perhaps YUSU needs to re-direct money to better facilitate the needs and wants of the student body. YUSU need to realise they are an elected and therefore accountable body, and should publish the accounts online where they are readily available to the entire student population.

NOUSE



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Contribute: editor@nouse.co.uk

Government surveillance: A justified invasion of privacy?



Mary O'Connor

The proposed 'Snooping Bill', which gives the government power to monitor digital communication by UK citizens, has been met with opposition on all sides - especially from Sir Tim Berners-Lee, a public data adviser to the Government, who has said today that passing the bill would constitute a "destruction of human rights." This comment is particularly disconcerting, in light of findings by an independent review that the Government has been found to be hiding, and in some cases destroying thousands of documents pertaining to atrocities committed in the final years of the British empire. Tennessee Williams' immortal words are all too appropriate here: "The only thing worse than a liar, is a liar that's also a hypocrite."

New information has come to light, that documents regarding British military personnel being involved in the alleged torture and murder of Kenyan insurgents during the Mau Mau rebellion (1952-1960) which, as well as many other cases, have been systematically destroyed or hidden. These documents should have been made available in the public domain in 1980, according to one historian.

This duplicity was all in the attempt not to "embarrass Her Majesty's Government" in the words of the then Secretary of State for the Colonies, Iain Macleod. Surely, the cover-up of this situation is far

more embarrassing for the Foreign Office?

The general public are the victims, with these revelations effectively slandering any credibility the Government had in attempting to press on with the new measures; which they hope to begin to implement following the Queen's speech next month.

Personal internet browsing and use of social media is an extremely private activity, one which many law-abiding citizens resent being infringed by government 'spies'. This is certain to be amplified by recent events, giving greater gravity to claims of corruption, and to fears of our data being used inappropriately, stolen, or for other purposes by ministers.

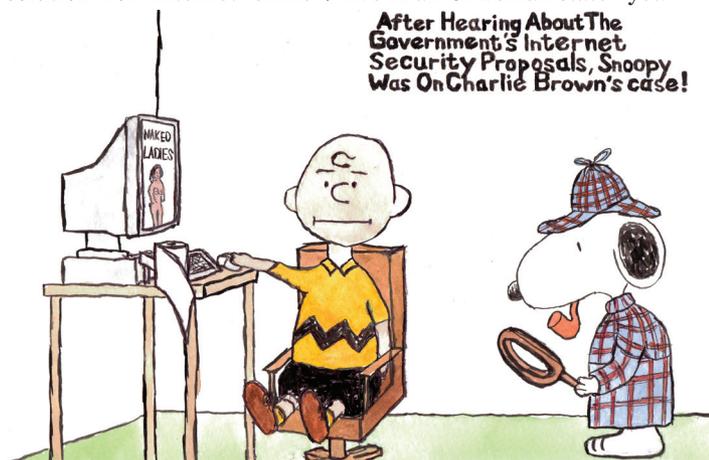
Snooping can never be a long-term solution for internet crime

and terrorism. Criminals will find more sophisticated ways to avoid detection, and the UK government will have already done the damage to the human rights, evoking echoes of the totalitarianism characteristic of the USSR.

Scandal after scandal of government duplicity and sleaze emerge, and it is still UK citizens who are being termed the criminals. A piece of legislation which proposes to remove all boundaries of privacy cannot be founded on such a relationship of distrust and hypocrisy; one which the Government is so often the culprit in.

We would all do extremely well to echo the sentiments of Berners-Lee, in our championing of an "open internet," free of intrusive surveillance. After all, we do not live in an Orwellian state - yet.

After Hearing About The Government's Internet Security Proposals, Snoopy Was On Charlie Brown's Case!



Tom Lubek



Apathy or indifference: we're spoilt for choice

Whenever elections come around it seems that numerous people appear telling us why it is so important that we all vote, and that with our little bits of paper and oversized egos we can make a difference to the way things are run, locally or nationally. Unfortunately, after the happy event, many of us are brought crashing back down to earth when the party or candidate that we vote for is swatted aside in the face of the opposing party or candidate's comfortable majority.

If you live in a safe seat, of which there are unfortunately many, the chances are that either your vote for the incumbent is meaningless because they would have won without you, or your vote for the opposition is equally meaningless because they could never have won. In cases such as these, the moral high ground may be all well and good, but it's hardly going to take away the bitter taste of seeing the MP or Councillor you loathe comfortably win another term, knowing that there is nothing you can do about it. It seems many people are coming to this conclusion, and voter turnout has been dwindling for a very long time.

If you want to vote for a party

that might actually win you have to vote Labour, Conservative, or in some areas Liberal Democrat. Occasionally figures such as Caroline Lucas for the Greens, or independent candidates like George Galloway, buck the trend, and in local council elections the 'fringe' parties experience some success, but most of the time it's a two-horse race between two of the three main parties.

"most of the time it's a two horse race between two of the three parties"

And they are almost identical, having converged towards the centre for the past 50 years. There seems to be little point in voting for any particular one. Of course, they differ in the details of what they are offering. By all means vote for them on that basis. See where it gets you. However, if you're of the opinion that this country has to undergo some fundamental changes, you're likely to end up disappointed when

the new guys you voted in prove to be just as ineffectual as the old guys you voted out.

The chances are that you're going to be voting for a career-politician, at least on a national level, and a candidate who has been thoroughly vetted by their party. The problem is that instead of doing what's actually best for all of their constituents, they do just enough to avoid pissing too many of them off. Party whips don't help things either. Instead of your MP doing what's best for you, they will simply vote with his or her party.

Essentially, I think the only way that the powers that be are going to recognise that we have a problem with our political system is if more people exercise their right not to vote. There will come a point when so few people are voting that they recognise things must change. A spoiled ballot does not just represent pure apathy. It represents disaffection with the current way we elect officials and form governments, and disillusionment with political parties that are out of touch with the needs and desires of their electorate. A spoiled ballot is a protest against a political system that needs to be changed, and that is worth the bother.



Rose Troup-Buchanan

Sensationalism will gift column inches, not results

The NUS student outreach idea isn't bad, but combined with confrontational demands for funding, it is unlikely to be well received

The amount university vice-chancellors are paid has reared its head yet again, after Liam Burns, NUS President, called for university heads to donate the money saved by the 50 pence tax change to facilitate a student-led outreach program. Our own Vice-Chancellor is due to benefit from the change. In 2011 he earned a basic salary of just over £200,000, putting him well above the top tax threshold of £150,000.

With the tax change coming into force next year, he will receive about an extra three grand. This is what Burns has estimated as being the average amount each Vice-Chancellor should be able to contribute, suggesting £440,000 could be raised, with that amount matched through businesses investing.

This would be invested in an extension of a recently piloted scheme which empowered student unions across the country to launch outreach programs, and will facilitate the creation of a student centre to expand the initiative.

Aside from the fact that this

estimation assumes that the vast majority of vice-chancellors are earning a comparable amount to our own, this sounds like a sensible and moral idea. Vice-chancellors don't lose out as the money they are donating would have gone to the government previously, and as oft stressed they probably have more than enough to keep them driving their Audis to their stereotypically decadent indulgences anyway. The NUS gets money towards a worthwhile program to encourage school leavers to aim for university, and everyone gets to skip towards a future un-blighted by falling university applications created by tuition fee hikes.

However, by framing such an idea in such overtly aggressive and unnecessary terms Burns has no doubt immediately alienated the majority of those he is "challenging" to donate.

The tone of such a message surely would have been more effective had he sought a more measured approach, the phrase, "we are not in it all together" (whilst perhaps true) is not going to engender

affection from those who it is aimed towards. Nor is it likely to result in them reaching into their own pockets.

Unfortunately, this is the crux of the issue. This is a laudable proposal, but is it really practical?

This proposal appears to have been hastily conceived and announced in a futile attempt to garner publicity for a conference too easily ignored by the adult and mainstream media. I suspect many

"the impetus should be on encouraging rather than challenging [chancellors'] involvement"

for whom it is intended will have already ignored it, or, as our own Vice-Chancellor has, refused it.

So what can we, as current university students, make of such a statement? At its very worst it hints of a president seeking column

inches days before his re-election, and at best it portrays the naivety of an organisation whose principal role is to fight our corner. Neither are particularly appetising options.

By phrasing an initiative in such terms the focus has been skewed. We are directed towards another look at the inequalities of the hierarchies of university institutions (and a rather unobvious political jab at Clegg and Cameron) rather than a useful approach to the proposal itself.

By all means Burns should be encouraging vice-chancellors to donate their savings, but the impetus should be on encouraging rather than challenging their involvement in a system to which they already donate a part of their salary.

There should be attention placed upon garnering current students' support and involvement, as well as a huge drive towards dispelling myths about the fee rise. It is this, rather than the unobvious political message, which should have been the focus of a conference for students.



Josh Boswell
Comment Editor

Generating solutions

An energy plan to reduce carbon emissions, in time to prevent destructive rises in global temperature must involve nuclear power

The possibility of meltdown in the core of the Coalition has significantly increased, after harmful information was leaked from the Whitehall power station, fuelling runaway reactions from Lib Dems. The effects on the public of high levels of leaked information are unknown, and the only comment given by the Deputy Prime Minister who is regularly exposed to information from the Coalition was ambiguous nonsense.

Unfortunately, it seems like 'green' groups Friends of the Earth, the Green Party, and the Lib Dems are being about as constructive as the Hulk in their reactions to uncovered government nuclear subsidies.

Former heads of Friends of the Earth, engaging in the most British form of activism, wrote Cameron a

"Dismissing nuclear generation because of Fukushima is just not an option"

letter about how funding nuclear is so very naughty, and the Greens in Europe are taking legal action against the government.

This is exactly the sort of short-sighted, not-in-my-back-yard environmentalism that allows governments to do nothing while activists squabble and the world burns. We

are nowhere near our 2020 emissions targets, and the only viable way we can reduce our CO₂ levels enough to prevent a rise in global temperatures above two per cent is via nuclear energy generation.

If nothing is done, we are looking at rising sea levels directly harming the UK and displacing millions globally, causing an influx of 'climate refugees'. As more expensive forms of fossil fuel extraction become necessary, energy prices will rocket up, and food prices too, as destruction of temperate climates severely affects water supply and global agriculture. This is merely a 50-year timescale, and we're already seeing the beginning.

Anti-nuclear protesters clearly are not taking the problem seriously. There has been over 20 years of talk about meaningful reductions, while our options became narrower and narrower. Now we have very little time to make a big difference.

Even Germany, a relatively green country with a government fully behind massive investment in renewable energy generation, simply cannot reduce its emissions by enough, quickly enough, without nuclear assistance.

The UK, with a Chancellor who can't even achieve his ignorantly single-minded target of economic growth, has no hope of encouraging enough investment in renewables before it is too late.

Dismissing nuclear generation because of Fukushima is just not an option. For a start, the reactors



Pick of the twittersphere

Nouse @yorknouse
Breaking news: Contractors for new @yorkunisu Student Centre fall into administration tinyurl.com/7qwblpx

mirrors and stuff @mirrorsandstuff
@yorknouse @embrownbill That's embarrassing... someone's in trouble.
← Hide conversation

Wail Qasim @WailQ
Lol, you may wonder why #NUS are so awfully ineffectual, and then you realise these people think activists need 'training'. #nusnc12 25 Apr

Tim Ellis :YUSU Prez @yusuprez
Looking forward to voting against the boycott of NSS. The main reason our uni knows which depts are failing students @yorkunisu #nusnc12 25 Apr

Emma Brownbill @embrownbill
@yusuprez @yorkunisu Would be interesting to see delegates' preferences disclosed (voluntarily, of course)
← In reply to Tim Ellis :YUSU Prez 25 Apr

were old, generation II models with insufficient safety systems that have been out of production for at least 20 years. Secondly, the meltdown was caused by a 9.0 earthquake followed by a tsunami. Even with more extreme weather events from climate change, this simply does not happen in the UK.

The pretension to being the 'greenest government ever' is completely hollow, and investors know it. The likes of EDF and Shell pull out of green energy projects because they can't rely on a supportive environment in which to embark on projects with high initial costs. Energy companies are incredibly coy

with their capital - we won't get investment in renewables until there is a clear message from government that they will support it.

So given the small-minded attitude of the Tories to renewables, 'green' groups should jump at any chance to secure investment in reducing our CO₂ output.

We are at a point where (given our apathetic and short-sighted government) if we do not support every resource for reducing emissions available, the consequences will be universally dire. Global warming is a global problem, but you can be sure that the effects will reach your own back yard.

Comment

Stephanie
Milsom

Ched Evans: Consent, Crime, and Punishment

Is a five-year prison sentence really enough as punishment for a rape?

Ched Evans, up-and-coming Sheffield United striker, has been given a five-year jail sentence this week for the convicted rape of a 19-year-old last year. I can't help wondering whether this sentence is long enough. Evans has testified he believed that the sex was consensual. Whether it was, no one may ever know, but the girl claimed that her drink was spiked. It's a scary thought for women everywhere, men as well - although it happens less frequently. Another scary thought is that it was not only Evans that had sex with her; Port Vale player Clayton McDonald also had his turn, watched through the window by Evans' brother.

The problem evidently is that the men don't seem to view their actions as wrong despite the girl being clearly far too drunk - or drugged - to be in her right senses. Not only did they not consider her feelings when sober, they then treated her like meat. This fact itself is enough to anger me, but the blatant disrespect for her worth as a person is more worrying.

Unfortunately, many men are under the impression that sleeping with a drunken girl is okay. But

the fact of the matter is, if she's too drunk to stand, she's too drunk to have sex, and it is simply taking advantage of a girl in a vulnerable situation. Evans needs to serve as an example to others, who don't believe he has committed a crime.

But the men themselves were clearly too far under the influence to listen to their consciences over their hormones. Clause 1.C. of the 2003 Sexual Offences Act states that rape is committed if the perpetrator "does not reasonably believe that the victim consents"; how can a man make a 'reasonable' decision on this when not in his right mind? And how can a woman 'reasonably' consent when not in her right mind either?

Perhaps the woman was just incredibly drunk, in which case, without being cruel, she should have taken more care of herself. I don't think any woman should willingly get herself into a situation where she is so drunk that she has to rely on the good hearts and minds of others. Regardless of the fact that we shouldn't necessarily have to feel the need to protect ourselves, the truth of the matter is that this world isn't perfect, and

neither are many of the people in it.

However, it's undeniable that there is a 'spectrum' of severity, and the Judge must take this into account. At one end, we have Evans' case: it wasn't a premeditated attack. While that doesn't exonerate him of all blame and responsibility, it is less awful than what's at the other end - the famous 'Central

"the truth of the matter is that this world isn't perfect and neither are many of the people in it"

Park Jogger case', where five men were convicted of raping and beating almost to death an unsuspecting woman. Rapists who act in such a way are beyond all help, and life imprisonment is the only thing that should be in store for them.

However, rehabilitation would most likely not be lost on Evans. Essentially he took advantage of

her, which is slightly different to overpowering and forcing himself on her. I'd say five years is probably enough for him.

But of course that's not what he'll get - 'five years' essentially means 'about two with good behaviour', and that's not good enough. A sentence is a sentence, and it should be served. The justice system is there not only to rehabilitate but to punish too, and that sense seems to have been lost. It should be the responsibility of the State, not only as law enforcer, but also as protector of the people, to ensure that the correct punishment is served. It appears the rights of the prisoners are more important at the moment.

The percentage for repeat offences is astounding - in some UK prisons, as many as 70 per cent of the inmates have already served time for their crimes. It is imperative that the criminal justice system serves as a deterrent, a punishment, and a form of rehabilitation. Most people deserve a second chance, and while prison should give them that, it should be a punishment first and foremost. Perhaps for Evans, losing out on his hopeful career as a footballer will be enough.

Comment Bites: from the *Nouse* website

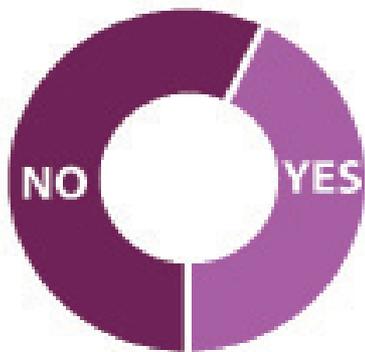
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The Burning
Question

This edition, *Nouse* asked:

"Do you feel A-levels prepared you effectively for university?"

115 people voted, with the majority stating NO



48 people voted
Yes
(42%)

67 people voted
No
(58%)

Vocation, vocation, vocation

Grammar_educated says:
April 16, 2012 at 12:31 pm

Middle class parents are still far superior at pushing and getting their children into grammar schools, despite a minority of bright working class kids being given a great opportunity. This is the darker side of the grammar school, which can undermine its place as a leveling force. Although I do agree private school dominance must be tackled by a free, meritocratic alternative.

Will Haydon says:
April 16, 2012 at 10:16 pm

My experience of grammar schools was that they fostered attitudes of elitism that would raise eyebrows

at the most expensive of private schools. 11-year-olds and up were taught not how to use their intelligence, but how best to inform the world about exactly how intelligent they were.

The place overflowed with precious children who were constantly 'very tempted to regale you with some self-indulgent merito-scholastic academic odyssey, that saw me captain my house and be awarded school colours'; children who grew up to tell people of their Oxbridge ambitions and 'more than a few A*s at GCSE' whenever the opportunity arose. These children were fixated with the idea that they, the 'faster learners', were simply better than those others 'who required a little more time', because the grammar-school system tells them exactly

that.

What they forgot was that, in the majority of cases, the selection process - supposedly made 'entirely independent of class and income' - was made long before they sat down to take the 11+, a test that determined not aptitude but how many hours a parent could afford a tutor to drill the right answers into their child, and the end result was that I was lucky to meet someone whose mother didn't drive a 4x4. So much for your meritocracy.

Devolution for Yorkshire Proposed

MR says:
April 8, 2012 at 9:54 pm

Over my dead body. Another layer

of bureaucracy rather than governance! Considering that people often claim that the areas that are devolved are those most important to them individually it should be that the election and representative body with the largest democratic mandate should have control over those areas. In Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland the turnout and mandate is less than the UK elections yet they are entitled to rule on areas most voters claim as close to their own: Education, Health, the Environment etc. There is therefore a democratic deficit that is not addressed sufficiently well by the main parties. This scenario should not be brought to Yorkshire as well just to satiate the political ambition of this councillor.

Plus sized models: is bigger better?

Misinformed says:
March 31, 2012 at 3:25 pm

"as far as I can recall, however, there haven't been many hilarious adverts involving an anorexic emptying her stomach in the Nando's toilets."

...that's because those with anorexia nervosa don't tend to do that - it's generally bulimic people who vomit after eating.

Medic says:
April 1, 2012 at 3:44 pm

Chill out, that's a totally irrelevant point. The important thing here is the growing prevalence of obesity and the larger impact it has on health here in the UK.

2012 college cup draw

The black magician says:
April 22, 2012 at 11:55 pm

Derwent 1s have no strikers, Yfks Derwent till i die

Cup Coup makes liverpool's season a success

Daniel says:
April 24, 2012 at 5:07 pm

Look at Arsenal. They haven't won a trophy for quite a few years now. Yes, they consistently finish in the top 4 and have had a couple of semi-decent runs in the champions league. But their team won't be remembered for qualifying for the CL lots of times, or for the scorer of that oh-so-famous goal in the quarter-finals before they got knocked out etc. Whereas, pretty much every football fan can tell you about Gerard's long-range goal v West Ham in the FA Cup final or the final in Istanbul. Football is for memories of cup finals and trophies. Anyone writing off Liverpool's season as a failure due to the poor league finish should think about how ecstatic they'd be with a (possible) cup double.



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AZEALIA BANKS ♦ ALABAMA SHAKES ♦ KEVIN SAUNDERSON FEAT.
INNER CITY LIVE ♦ GALLOWS ♦ RIZZLE KICKS ♦ BURAKA SOM
SYSTEMA ♦ SAGE FRANCIS ♦ GRIMES ♦ BELLOWHEAD ♦ EARTH
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MAD AND THE LOVELY POSSE ♦ THE CUBAN BROTHERS ♦ TOP
CAT FEAT SIR COXSONE OUTERNATIONAL ♦ CHAIRLIFT ♦ ICEAGE ♦
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FIRST AID KIT ♦ GESAFFELSTEIN ♦ DAUGHTER ♦ ZULU WINTER

Politics



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EKENITR

The Hague: Former Liberian leader Charles Taylor was last week convicted of aiding war crimes in Sierra Leone. The trial has finally come to a conclusion after nearly five years.



MALCOM STANLEY

Portugal: Officials do not plan on reopening the investigation into the disappearance of Madeline McCann. It is now five years since she went missing.



PJOTTEROS

Nigeria: At least six people have been killed in explosions at two offices of major newspaper, *ThisDay*. Three were killed in the head office in Abuja, with a further three killed in the northern city of Kaduna.



FORD APA

China: Disgraced politician Bo Xilai ran a wire-tapping operation reaching as far as the President, the *New York Times* has reported. Mr Bo is currently under investigation for "serious discipline violations".



GUPPYDAS

India: Cricketer Sachin Tendulkar has been nominated by the Prime Minister for a seat in the Rajya Sabha. If accepted, the revered 39 year-old will become the first active sportsman in Parliament.

NUS urges vice-chancellors to give tax savings to universities

NUS SCOTLAND

Neil Johnston
POLITICAL REPORTER

THE NATIONAL Union of Students (NUS) has called on university heads to give the windfall they will receive from the reduction in the top rate of tax next year to students.

At its National Conference in Sheffield this week, the NUS urged vice-chancellors and businesses to invest in its new programme for student-led outreach giving support for fair access to higher education.

Liam Burns, NUS President, argued that chancellors have no excuse not to contribute to this fund given the recent tax break they received in the budget. He argues they should donate all of the money they save from the cut in the 50p tax rate to the scheme.

This proposal follows on from piloted projects by the NUS where student unions organise outreach activity, but the new programme would be much more substantial than existing plans.

Burns put forward a strong case for the proposal arguing that while costs have gone up for students, university heads are earning substantially more money: "The government has increased fees and cut taxes, so that the average undergraduate will face thousands more every year in fees, while the average vice-chancellor will be paying £3000 less every year in tax." He added: "Nobody can argue that we



NUS President Liam Burns has called on vice-chancellors and businesses to invest in a new scheme for fair access

are all in it together, not when those are the rules of the game."

However, support from vice-chancellors for this proposal has not been forthcoming. Brian Cantor, University of York Vice-Chancellor, who earned £258,473 last year including employers' contributions to the USS pension scheme, has already ruled himself out of any contribution.

A spokesperson for the Univer-

sity said: "The Vice-Chancellor will be making, as usual, a substantial personal donation to the University of York during 2012-13, and therefore declines to support this cause, worthy as it is."

Burns added the new proposals could be funded if vice-chancellors chipped in a significant amount.

"To get more student involvement in the access effort, we want to create a new centre for student-

led outreach - which we will fund by challenging every vice-chancellor to donate their tax savings from the cut in the 50p rate to make it happen, and get those donations matched by big business."

As a result of this, Burns said, close to a million pounds could be raised each year.

COMMENT >> Page 15

Brand calls for new drugs policy

EVA RINALDI

Pippa Holman
POLITICAL REPORTER

APPEARING IN Parliament last Tuesday, renowned comedian and former heroin addict Russell Brand called for a pragmatic and compassionate approach towards dealing with drug use in the UK.

Having battled addictions with heroin, alcohol and other substances over the past decade, Brand advocated an "abstinence based" approach to the cycle of drug use that he regards as an "illness". Appearing to a board of MPs alongside Chip Somers, Chief Executive of Focus 12, a charity that provides rehabilitation for substance abusers, Brand promoted a refocused attitude of "love" towards those suffering addiction.

He stated that this approach does not require "airy fairy liberalism" to addiction, but "truth and authenticity" to each individual. Brand clarifies from his own harmful experiences, that what is required is a change in "the way we socially regard the condition of



Comedian Brand wants to push for greater understanding of drug addicts

addiction" through genuine, constructive support.

Brand, who became a patron for Focus 12 in 2005 following his recovery, claims his own mental and "spiritual malady" resulted in escapism sought in drugs and alcohol and subsequent "rough" years

under the penal procedures.

From his experience Brand stressed that like psychological conditions, addiction should be treated as a health matter, avoiding ostracising drug addiction as a "social toxic".

Brand advocated that through

implementing a pragmatic approach, time and money for both the user and the government could be better spent in providing "truth and authenticity" for struggling addicts rather than trying, and failing, to "teach them a lesson" through the current judicial procedure.

Although the former addict felt he was not qualified to pass comment on the legalisation of criminal substances, Brand expressed that in light of current legislation he felt "the legal status [of a drug] for an addict is irrelevant". Somers, later speaking to the MPs, recognised that legalisation is not necessarily what is in question here, but decriminalisation. The focus should be towards the illness, rather than the criminality, which refuses to tackle the root causes that lead to harmful drug abuse.

Peter Hitchens, a journalist, has also spoken out in Parliament, saying that a more "hard-line policy" should be taken to tackle the rise in drug users, because of lax legislation in the UK. The inquiry continues.



Double-dip dilemma for Osborne

Sam Shepherd

With political uproar over the government's relationship with News International, the news that the country had slipped back into recession has culminated in an utterly disastrous start to the year.

This is the first double-dip recession since 1975, and on that occasion the IMF was called in to bail the nation out, something which this government will be desperate to avoid. George Osborne's insistence that the best stimulus was low interest rates driven by market confidence appears to be failing.

Not only did the economy shrink 0.2 per cent in the first three months of 2012, following a 0.3 per cent contraction at the back end of 2011, the economy is now smaller than it was when the Coalition took power in 2010. Since Cameron and Clegg assumed office, the national output has declined by 0.2 per cent.

Moreover, looking at the detail, the Chancellor receives little respite. Manufacturing has delivered pretty much no growth in the last 15 months. Services, the UK's most important sector, scraped growth of 0.1 per cent, thanks for the most part to a 0.2 per cent increase in government activity.

Some economists are, however, casting doubt on the disappointing figures. The construction sector suffered a shock contraction of 3 per cent, a level not seen since the depths of the recession. Yet many economists are said not to trust the data, which even the Office for National Statistics said enjoys "a tendency for upward revisions of between 1 per cent and 2 per cent."

Indeed, the figures released are provisional and are based on a limited amount of data. Many analysts expected a positive figure, since recent business surveys have been somewhat more upbeat, and unemployment fell last month.

However, even if the construction figure is revised upwards, the overall reality is that the economy is flatlining.



THE CBI

The Chancellor now has a tough few months ahead with questions being asked of his economic strategy

But does this really justify Labour's claim that the government is cutting "too much, too fast?" Possibly, however Labour's own econom-

"The overall reality is that the economy is flatlining"

ic policy remains unsound, conforming to the populist view, which is disappointingly short-termist.

In defence of the government, it is worth looking at the wider picture. The Eurozone crisis has

sapped confidence, deterring businesses from investing, costing both growth and jobs. This will leave the government with at least an inch of breathing space.

It was a big ask of this government to change things immediately. Arriving in office with public finances in a perilous state was always going to, in the long run, lead to huge unpopularity. Indeed, it can be argued that this Parliament was going to be something of a poisoned chalice. Decisions needed to be made which were always going to lead to displeasure, and it seems like this prediction has come true.

Even so, the austerity package does command the authority of the markets, and that, whether the public likes it or not, remains cru-

cial. This allows the government to borrow at good rates, which in turn gives the Bank of England the freedom to keep the cost of borrowing low.

Whilst it would be incredibly foolish to jeopardise this during a tentative recovery, the Chancellor should not merely sit back and wait. Whilst conditions are expected to ease later in the year, a tinkering with policy would not go amiss.

A few tax breaks here and there, coupled with some savvy spending, plus assurances from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that the economic strategy is the right one, could see growth return later in the year. For Osborne, this can't come soon enough.



Twice as many French support a new tax rate of 75% on income over €1m a year as oppose.

YouGov, Apr 23



72% think there should be a referendum on Lords reform; just 22% oppose.

ComRes, Apr 23



Boris Johnson now leads by just 2% in the London mayoral election, down from 6%.

YouGov, Apr 23



56% support the concept of elected mayors; 17% oppose.

YouGov, Apr 17



75% think most government ministers and MPs are tax avoiders.

YouGov, Apr 17



Labour have opened up a clear lead in the polls. They lead by an average of 12 points.

YouGov, Apr 23-25



@DianeAbbottMP
Diane Abbott, Labour MP

"Cameron says Jeremy Hunt has his 'full support' Unassailable? #justsayin."

25 April



@BBCStephanie
Stephanie Flanders, BBC Economics Editor

"I'm not sure which is more striking - the doubts hanging over today's ONS numbers, or the confidence of their critics."

25 April



@anntreneman
Anne Treneman, The Times

"Re Hunt and perm sec: they go on about being transparent and open but in real life are opaque and closed. We are in octopus black-out."

26 April



@VincentKompany
Vincent Kompany, Footballer

"As to @NicolasSarkozy he's an unstable two faced character and his politics are dangerous as its based on exploiting the fear of people."

23 April



@NickyAACampbell
Nicky Campbell, BBC Broadcaster

"I keep expecting Robert Jay QC to hunch over a guitar and burst into 'Watching the Detectives' #Leveson #Elvis-lives."

26 April

Politics

House of Lords reform can wait

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

Ellie Swire

It is not the most exciting of issues, nor is it likely to be a major priority for voters, yet reform of the House of Lords has been discussed and discarded, championed and challenged for decades. And with the recent publication of a parliamentary report which outlines details of proposed changes to the current system, it has once again cropped up on the agenda of things to discuss in Parliament.

At present, the House of Lords is comprised of nearly 800 peers, none of whom are elected by popular ballot. Under proposals put forward by the report, 80 per cent of peers would be elected by the public, with 20 per cent of peers still appointed, as "a means of preserving expertise and placing its mandate on a different footing from that of the Commons." The change would also see the number of peers reduced to 450, with peerages held for a non-renewable term of 15 years.

Since 1911 the House of Lords has not been able to truly block government legislation; its legislative power has been greatly reduced over the course of the past century. However it still maintains a significant role in scrutinising and improving legislation, and its composition therefore matters.

One of the central aims of the reform would be to do away with the remaining 92 hereditary peers, individuals who simply 'become' peers as a result of their birth right. In a democratic society, the idea that anyone may enter into Parliament purely because their father did so appears as a blot on Britain's political landscape. The reform would, then, appear to suggest a much fairer system - one in which the public decide who is elected to the House of Lords.

But those in favour of maintaining the status quo point to the depth of experience held by many nominated life peers, who are often drawn from the public, academic and business sectors. The expertise



Lords reform was one of the key concessions Nick Clegg and Liberal Democrats won in the Coalition Agreement

they offer can be invaluable in improving government legislation.

Reformers argue professional experience would still remain an important factor in selecting candidates for election, but the fear is expertise would rank secondary to political allegiance. One of the benefits of the House of Lords is that it is only moderately party political. Unfettered by the constraining squabbles, slander and double-dealing of party politics, the House

of Lords is largely free to examine legislation with impartiality.

Changes will, in any case, be slow to come into effect, as reform will depend largely on the potential for a future referendum. Speaking on the Today programme, David Cameron described the case for a referendum as not being "a strong one", but added that "we shouldn't rule it out".

With the failure of the AV referendum a little over a year ago and

the prediction that another could cost the government as much as £100m, it is little wonder that Mr Cameron questions its necessity.

Furthermore, given that the British economy is hardly flourishing as it is, one cannot help but reflect that the government would do better to invest more of their time and money in dealing with other areas, rather than in changing what is, although not ideal, an already well-operating system.

Mayoral election not worth the name

Ed Schitwer

As I sat watching the London mayoral election debate a week ago, I was stunned. Not by the candidates' burning desire to solve the problems affecting Londoners, nor by their wealth of knowledge. But because neither of these two things were apparent.

Instead, I was greeted with the childish bickering I would expect from a primary school playground. Whilst all politicians engage in a fair amount of political point scoring, one of them really stood out this time: the current Mayor of London. Boris Johnson made no effort to engage in a sensible manner with what anyone said.

As if coached by the famous "Patches" O'Houlihan from the film Dodgeball, he expertly employed

"Boris has fewer policies than Blair had legitimate reasons for Iraq"

the 5 d's: dodging, ducking, diving, dipping and dodging away from the questions. But even the legendary Patches would have had a hard time avoiding the humiliation when Ken handed Boris his own transport plan mid-debate to correct him. It got even worse when Andrew Neil had to ask him, "is that the first time you've seen that?"

But this is not a joke. Think for a second. Ken really hit the nail on the head with what the problem is here: "if this was the contest for the permanent host of *Have I Got News For You* I'd stand down." And yet, Boris won the last election and still leads in the polls, despite having fewer policies than Tony Blair had legitimate reasons to invade Iraq.

This could mean two things. It could mean people just do not care about who the Mayor of London is and so vote for who makes them laugh the most. If this is the case it is extremely sad. At a time when other cities are deciding whether or not to have a mayor it seems a pointless venture if Londoners see their own as little more than a joker.

It also means people do not realise the importance of the Mayor, especially for transport and housing in the capital. Or it could just mean people find the other candidates even worse. Ken Livingstone is undeniably not perfect, but I find some of the accusations against him to be somewhat exaggerated.

Surely it is a sad day for democracy when we conclude that either the people do not really care about elections, or the candidates do not care about the people they are seeking to represent? What is even worse is I expect it is a mixture of the both.

Looking ahead: The Festival of Ideas

15th June: Debate on the value of social organisations

The CEO of the Higher Education Funding Council of England and the Chief Operating Officer of the BBC will discuss the challenges facing public organisations.

16th June: Anthony Horowitz in conversation

The former York student and now distinguished writer will return to his former university to discuss all in Central Hall.

27th June: Debate on the financial crisis

A host of distinguished journalists and an Economics professor from the University will be among those discussing the crash.

28th June: Professor Immanuel Wallerstein

The Yale professor will examine the structural crisis of the capitalist world system, with particular reference to recent years.



14th-20th June

yorkfestivalofideas.com

Need we pay attention to protest votes?

The successes of George Galloway in England and Marie Le Pen in France are a potentially alarming development, argues **Lauren Stevenson**



Marie Le Pen's surprising success in the recent French Presidential elections brought into question protest votes

Since this publication's last issue George Galloway has returned to Parliament. In greeting the result he confidently asserted that his result in Bradford West was "the most sensational in British by-election history", labelling it "the Bradford spring". Like the rest of the political establishment, the Labour Party misjudged his popularity. Such was their confidence of a win they had already planned Ed Miliband's victory visit to the city, which was swiftly cancelled.

Galloway's victory was widely described as a protest vote, with Ed Miliband attributing the win to local factors that needed to be addressed by his party. But will such a high profile result have the desired effect on Labour, forcing them to listen to the particular concerns of the people of Bradford West? Or does it indicate a more serious break with mainstream politics, perhaps stemming from the high percentage of ethnic minority groups in the area?

Only time will tell whether the people of Bradford West will be easily tempted back to Labour during the run up to the next election. The BBC's Nick Robinson epitomised the reaction of political commentators when he labelled the result a "one-off political coup by a political one-off."

This may prove to be the case, but the possibility that over 18,000 'protest votes' may indicate a wider, more serious and long-term disillusionment with mainstream political parties cannot be ruled out.

The platform that made Gal-

loway so popular must be evaluated. It is possible that the Respect Party's support for bringing troops home from Afghanistan immediately, as opposed to a structured withdrawal, won him support in a region with a large Asian community. I would agree with Salma Yaqoob, the Respect Party leader, that it is "patronising" to assume that Galloway only won because he had the support of local Muslims.

It would, however, be foolish to assume that his public identification as a Muslim had no effect,

and it is a result that could prove to be ethnically divisive. *The Guard-*

"The possibility of protest votes indicate wider disillusionment cannot be ruled out"

ian reported seeing a white man throwing eggs as Galloway boarded

his victory bus, and a white woman swearing at him in the street.

If the election of Galloway is an expression of something more long-term than simply a protest vote it could spell disaster for Bradford's multiethnic community.

Similarly, the recent elections in France have shown the potential problems with dismissing unwanted results as 'protest votes'. Nicolas Sarkozy said in a recent interview that there is no one in France who believes that Marine Le Pen is able to govern or lead France, dismissing

the 17.9 per cent of people who voted for the French National Front.

But the situation in France is very different from George Galloway winning a local seat in a by-election. 25 per cent of young people in France said that they would vote for Le Pen's party and their success in the Presidential election is nothing new; the party also gained 17.8 per cent of the votes in the second round of the 2002 elections against Jacques Chirac.

This suggests something very different from a knee jerk reaction against mainstream politics. Or rather it indicates a more substantive reaction - a very real disapproval of mainstream policy and a belief in the views of the far right by 6.5 million French people.

The election of Galloway in Bradford may well succeed in changing the priorities of the mainstream parties in the region but, even if the Respect party maintains their lead, it appears to be a regional issue that is unlikely to have long lasting effect on national government.

In France, the National Front now commands so many supporters that Sarkozy has to try and woo the far right ahead of this Sunday's second round to have any chance of winning re-election in the Presidential election against François Hollande.

When the views of those at the extreme end of the political spectrum have to be incorporated in order to have a chance of success the issue goes way beyond that of protest votes and into new, and potentially worrying, territory.

If this is what it is to be a Democrat, why bother?



THE LAST WORD
Harry Lambert

Last week Kent Conrad, the Senate Budget Committee Chairman, seemingly introduced a budget. But the bill he marked up will not be brought to the floor of the Senate - doing so would be pointless in the partisan environment he now operates in.

With no one party controlling all the institutions of government, one might expect legislative gridlock. But divided government has not always led to such inaction. For all but two of the 28 years Presidents Eisenhower, Nixon, Ford, Reagan and Bush Sr. were President, Democrats were in charge of at least the House. And yet those Presidents managed to govern.

As David Mayhew has argued, divided government did not lead to the introduction of fewer innovative policies. And while the innovativeness of policies is contestable, what is undeniable is that a spirit of

bipartisanship existed then and no longer does.

Olympia Snowe's recent deci-

"The only way for Democrats to pass anything now is to capitulate"

sion to not seek re-election attests to this. A long-serving moderate Republican Senator, she highlighted Reagan's 1986 tax reforms, which passed through a Democratic House, as an example of a bipartisanship that no longer exists. As Snowe said, "there's no longer a reward for consensus building".

Why is this intractability so acute now? It has a great deal to do with the rise of the Tea Party. This rise of the Republican Party's less moderate and more ideological wing has enforced an ideological unanimity, and deterred policy



Things have changed since July '08

makers from compromising. As this publication noted in August, moderates feel far less able to make a deal with Democrats when the threat of a primary challenge from the Right hangs over them.

Those that do, face the prospect of being ousted, as three-term incumbent Senator and moderate Bob Bennett was in 2010. The Republican Senator Orrin Hatch only survived a recent Tea Party challenge because he moved to the right over the past two years.

The power of this wing of the Party has helped leadership whip their members into an uncompromising block. One might expect this would marginalise the GOP, but quite the opposite has happened: Republicans have managed to drag politics to the right. The only way for Democrats to pass anything now is to capitulate to the absolutist position Republican leadership sets down.

The GOP's refusal to countenance tax rises during the August debt ceiling crisis led to a deal made up solely of spending cuts. The recently passed Jumpstart Our Business Startups Act forced Democrats to gut investor safeguards in a bid to get any legislation on jobs - a deal which even Bloomberg thought inadvisable. As Paul Krugman has said, bipartisanship in Washington now really means a compromise between the centre-right and the hard-right.

Part of the problem for centre-left Democrats is that there is no equivalent ideological force discouraging moderates in the Party from compromising. But, even if

there was, that would not come without its disadvantages. When Democrats took back the House in 2006 they did so largely because they chose centrist candidates to compete in Republican districts.

This 'big tent' approach gave them majorities in both Houses two years later, but meant they had a large number of Democrats In Name Only when they attempted to enact the leadership's agenda following Obama's election.

Many of these Blue Dogs were voted out in 2010, but by forcing those who remain to follow the party line Democrats would imperil their colleagues' re-election chances. The consequence of the 'big tent' approach is that you are the party who compromises, because you are the party who has moderates.

But if the price of accommodating moderates is capitulation, for what purpose are you accommodating them? If doing so does not help Democrats achieve what they ran for office to do, perhaps they should try adopting the uncompromising absolutism that has served Republicans so well.

Science



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Bioengineering: a brave new world?

Imogen Breen
SCIENCE REPORTER

It seems to be alarmingly socially acceptable to parade a lack of scientific or mathematical understanding, yet the same attitude towards literature and the arts is ridiculed. An arts student can comfortably say, "well, I barely passed my GCSE maths" when faced with dividing a restaurant bill, but a undergrad scientist claiming "I only got a D in English Literature" when stumped by a pub quiz question on the author of *Romeo & Juliet* is very brave indeed. So why is it acceptable to lose all scientific and mathematical know-how during the post-GSCE booze-up, whilst science students are required to have a general knowledge of the arts?

This subject is covered in great depth, and with greater degrees of anger, all over the internet, so I shall refrain from going into it further. Instead, I offer a possible degree of balance in providing a background understanding to the science seen in the media and in literature.

In 1931, Aldous Huxley published his seminal work, *Brave New World*. Generally filed under that grand umbrella title "science-fiction", it is a thought-provoking work of satirical fiction. Its dystopian future features developments in reproductive technology, brain-washing, sleep-learning, and the placation of the masses with the wonder drug soma.

But from a biological perspec-



AVRENIM_ACCEBER

With the possibilities of glowing fish and designer babies, are we on the verge of Huxley's Brave New World?

tive, the stand-out technology Huxley introduces is the concept of bioengineering. We now live in an age where our ever-increasing knowledge of our genome and development could (and will) escalate us rapidly into having the ability/possibility to design the perfect children, the clones of lost loved ones, and perhaps, eventually, the perfect workers.

So how does this work? Well, to start with, we can consider the processes necessary to create transgenic mice - mice whose genomes contain genetic information intro-

duced artificially from another organism. These mice were first created nearly 40 years ago in 1974. Transgenic animals are used to produce therapeutic drugs for humans. Tracy the Sheep (no relation to Dolly) was one of the first. Created in 1990, she produced a protein called AAT in her milk, due to the insertion of human DNA into her genome. This protein is used to treat patients suffering from cystic fibrosis. Tracy made it to the ripe old age of seven and inspired the cloning of Dolly.

One method of creating trans-

genic animals is the Embryonic Stem Cell Method. The foreign DNA is introduced to embryonic stem cells of the target species by processes such as electroporation (the cells are zapped with a quick burst of electricity which creates tiny holes, allowing the genetic material to enter) or by treatment with specific chemicals.

These stem cells are then inserted back in to the blastocyst (very early stage embryo) and then the whole thing is implanted into a foster mother and born normally.

The animal produced here

is considered chimerical, like the Greek myth, an animal made up of parts of different creatures. Some of its cells will have accepted the foreign DNA, some will have not. Conventional breeding techniques, which have been in use for hundreds of years, can then be used to produce offspring that are fully transgenic.

So what is the difference between creating a mouse or a sheep with foreign DNA and doing the same for a human? Could we make a human with an ape's strength or, more excitingly, could we create glow-in-the-dark babies?

Frankly, there is very little difference from a purely biological point of view between creating fluorescent puppies, as done in 2009 in South Korea by Byeong-Chun Lee, and doing the same with a human. Time and money are factors; it takes many more years and a great deal more lab space to raise a human to maturity than it does a mouse. Ethical concerns, on the other hand, play a greater role.

So are Huxley's visions of production lines of children, each carefully specified to the role that they will play in society unrealistic? Well, yes. Scientists are people too; we have the same ethical concerns as the rest of you. But is it impossible? Certainly not. Bioengineering is a rapidly growing field - and who knows, perhaps someone out there with enough funding really does want to create a *Brave New World* all for themselves.

And, as for the book, well I think it is a damn good read.

The Big Bang Fair sparking interest in science

Naomi H
SCIENCE REPORTER

You don't have to visit every stand at The Big Bang Fair to understand why it has kids running around like they've had too many E numbers.

In fact, it feels a little like walking into a vast sweet shop, with each stand bringing a new flavour to the mix of scientific applications on display.

Everywhere you turned in the

Birmingham NEC on Saturday 17th March; there was another company with a shiny board and an experiment to amaze you, or a gadget to entertain you. Indeed without even leaving The Society of Biology stand where I was volunteering, the whole show was remarkable.

In between staring in wonder at the shiny helium filled objects (which to this day are still a mystery) flying overhead and restraining yourself from pushing in front of a six year old to get to the "walk-

ing on flour" display, you also notice the range of people at the fair.

There are those children whose parents are clearly having to drag them around, but become curious once they have the chance to engage with the activities at the stand. Then there are those children running from stand to stand with their parents dragging their feet behind them.

The Society of Biology's main attractions were real plasticised goat's hearts for visitors to explore,

alongside a video of a real heart and lung dissection showing their functions in visceral detail. The reality of the demonstrations captured the attention of visitors of all ages, and encouraged them to take an interest in biology.

The sight which most inspired me to think about the impact of this sort of event was of a father stood at the edge of the stand, behind the children playing with model hearts, quietly explaining to his son what all the parts of the heart are for.

Being on the other side of the stand allows for interaction with the families visiting the fair, and it was clear from their reactions that fairs such as this one really do reach people on a personal and intimate level, wherever their interests may lie.

The Big Bang Fair and similar events showcase such a variety of scientific applications, that it is guaranteed to surprise and entertain, making events such as these both valuable and fascinating to all.

Top five: Crowdsourced Science

Nicola Farthing and Sara Farish summarise the latest examples of crowdsourced science

Crowdsourcing is the outsourcing of data processing to members of the public which is done because in some instances, humans are better than computers at spotting patterns in data. It also allows large amounts of data to be processed far quicker than by individual researchers.

Galaxy zoo was launched in 2007, allowing members of the public to sort through vast quantities of images from the Hubble

Galaxy Zoo

archive in order to classify the galaxies present. Due to the many varied shapes of galaxies, this was a task where the human brain was more adept than any computer programme. The sheer volume of data (all collected by a robotic telescope and processed automatically) has meant that users can often be the first person to view the galaxy image they are classifying. Data is then used in research into the formation and evolution of galaxies.

Springwatch

GRANT MACDONALD



From 2005 to 2007 the BBC program 'Springwatch' asked its viewers to record their first sighting of six key species, which can be found throughout the UK and are generally considered to be indicators of spring. Almost 150,000 sightings were recorded, providing an incredibly detailed picture of spring's progression in the UK. The survey is still run by the Woodland Trust (now called Nature's Calendar) making it the world's largest survey of phenology.

Ethanol uncovered

Heather Powell goes beyond the bar and investigates the effects of alcohol on the body

ERIK JAEGER

A ticket to Mars

James Cameron

How would you like the next ticket to Mars? Well, that's the dream of billionaire entrepreneur Elon Musk. Billed as the inspiration for Robert Downey Jr.'s Iron Man character, Musk made his millions with PayPal, before sinking his fortune into realising some of his dreams. He set up Tesla Motors, the purely electric car company behind the Tesla Roadster, and Space X, a private space company. Tesla Motors was the first to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles and to prove that an electric car can actually be "better than a gasoline powered" car, and to bring commercial space transit to the masses.

In order to do this, he has set about applying the mindset of a start-up company to these challenges: prototyping quickly, failing often in the early stages, whilst failing has few consequences, in order to work out the most effective way of solving problems.

One of the hopes of the company is to level the playing field away from Russia's current monopoly on human space travel, and open space to all those who can afford a ticket.

NASA has awarded Space X a \$1.6 billion contract over the coming years to provide the International Space Station with supplies for a minimum of 12 missions, going up to \$3.1 billion for additional missions if required. This contract will be fulfilled using the combination of Space X's own rocket, the Falcon 9, and the Dragon Capsule.

The Dragon Capsule represents the peak of Space X's technological innovation, designed to be capable of handling either six thousand kilograms of cargo or seven astronauts. Importantly it is capable of accommodating those up to 6' 5", unlike NASA's original Mercury capsule missions which limited the astronauts height to 5' 11".

It is also reusable, an important feature to bring the costs of space travel down to a manageable figure, and reducing the costs of space travel to those similar to airline's costs, i.e. maintenance rather than the construction of disposable vehicles. It has already managed a trip into orbit and back, a feat which until then had only been accomplished by government funded organisations.

Tests beginning later this summer are the first of three that will assess the Dragon Capsule's ability to rendezvous with the ISS and if these are successful, it will be the day when the first private company pioneered the way into space.

If all that wasn't enough to convince you that Musk has vision, maybe this will. Musk has plans to send a mission to Mars within the next two decades, and later establish a self-sustaining colony, and begin sending people there soon after.

And with his track record, it isn't entirely unbelievable.



These may look very different to you, but to your body this range of alcohol is simply ethanol and the effects upon individuals are virtually the same

You may refer to it as vodka, beer, wine, tequila, or 'whatever he's having', but the thing you're actually getting is ethanol. Certainly if you drank it in its pure form you wouldn't last long enough for the next round, let alone the rest of the night. But what does ethanol actually do? How is it affecting your brain and body? And perhaps more importantly for many students, how can you avoid its side-effects?

Alcohol dissolves in the blood and is distributed to the parts of the body with greatest water content, for example the liver and the brain. There it inhibits the production of an anti-diuretic hormone known as vasopressin, meaning that the water from your kidneys is sent straight to the bladder, rather than being reabsorbed into the body. This dehydration leads to your desperate thirst the following day – your body's way of telling you to replenish the water lost by your organs. It is important to note that it is the loss of water from the brain

that causes the hangover headache. So in reality, those painkillers you may rely on the next day are not so much of a miracle after all – the solution has more to do with the glass of water you're washing them down with.

The amount of water content in the body explains why alcohol tends to have a greater effect on females. Since alcohol is more soluble in muscle than in fat, and females tend to have less muscle and more fat than males, the alcohol is less highly distributed around the body. Furthermore, females are generally smaller, and so the effective concentration of alcohol in their body is greater.

When ethanol is broken down by enzymes in the liver, ethanol is formed. This is toxic and so is quickly converted by more enzymes into glutathione, which goes on to form a substance similar to vinegar, this results in the 'acidic' feeling you may experience in your stomach. However, when too much ethanol is drunk too quickly, the liver's glu-

tathione source starts to decrease, causing a build-up of this toxic ethanol.

Naturally, your body does what it can to expel it – commonly sending it back the way it came in. Again, males have the upper-hand, as they tend to have a larger amount of glutathione available to them, and more of the enzymes

“Loss of water from the brain causes your hangover headache”

needed for the process. In other words, they can break down ethanol more effectively.

Sugar is one thing that helps remove toxins, and if it comes in the form of fruit juice, this can also replenish some of the vitamins that are lost with the expelled water. Eating eggs is another good way to combat any side-effects of alcohol, because they contain the com-

pounds needed to help break down toxins.

Ethanol is able to pass through the protective blood-brain barrier into your central nervous system, where it affects the way in which your neurons transmit electrical impulses across synapses.

Alcohol inhibits some neurotransmitters, like those which control your reflexes and muscle function, then stimulates others, which leads to the release of the 'happy hormones' serotonin and dopamine. Several parts of the brain are also affected, causing behavioural changes and influencing your judgment, emotion, memory and movement – not that I need to tell you that.

So next time you're out in town, or enjoying a couple down at the Charles, you'll know exactly what's happening to your body and brain. You always knew what alcohol does, but now you know exactly how it works its magic – or perhaps its evil – inside you. As to which of these it is, that's up to you.

Foldit is a game that asks players to fold proteins using rules and tools provided. It is run by biochemistry researchers to help improve protein-folding algorithms. Scores are kept for how well folded a protein is and users can also work in groups. Foldit saw success in 2011 when after only a few days, users generated the structure of an enzyme from an AIDS-like virus, when researchers had failed for over a decade.

Foldit

Planet Hunters

Planet Hunters asks the public to look through data from NASA's Kepler telescope in the search for exoplanets. The collected data arises from sweeps of areas of the sky which can contain over 100,000 stars. The light intensity of the stars is continuously recorded during each sweep. Users then identify when the light dims and if that dimming is periodical. This indicates the potential presence of an exosolar planet.



Whale FM is a project which gives its users access to a huge library of whale song recordings. This is done in the hope that listeners will be able to find patterns in the songs that may enable researchers to decipher potential meanings hidden within each different sequence. Participants are asked to choose the segment which is most like a given whale song from a total selection of 36 unique segments.

Whale FM

Sport

PARK LIFE

Luke Gardener
SPORTS EDITOR

Roses 2012 takes place this weekend in Lancaster with York looking to impress on their way to winning the tournament. Despite BUCS taking centre stage for two terms a year, Roses is the pinnacle of sport at York. The rivalry is second to none, the competition is fierce, and there is the annual opportunity to overcome the arch-nemesis, Lancaster.

Exams and dissertation deadlines will be temporarily forgotten as the York's sporting elite choose to sleep on Lancaster lecture hall floors. They will compete in over 40 different disciplines and will be looking to end their seasons on the ultimate high, a Roses victory.

Once you have a taste for the competition you realise there is nothing quite like it. I played in a 3-2 football win last year with an incredible atmosphere. The feeling afterwards was one of great pride in wearing the black and gold of our University. I imagine the only way to beat it is to defeat Lancaster in their own backyard.

“Everything points to a fascinating tournament and one that could boil down to one of the last timetabled fixtures”

A win at Roses can dispel any BUCS disappointment, of which there has been plenty for our teams across many different sports. It will be intriguing to see how our clubs perform with the added pressure, but extra incentives of an old age rivalry on their shoulders.

For us reporters, a weekend in Lancaster is going to prove a real challenge; we have to virtually move all of our equipment half way across the country to bring everyone the best coverage possible. This has meant countless hours working out how to cover nearly 150 fixtures, ensuring that all sports are covered.

A unique challenge but one that the sportspeople of York deserve, while they do everything they can to avenge the loss York suffered two years ago. Everything points to a fascinating tournament and one that could boil down to one of the last timetabled fixtures.

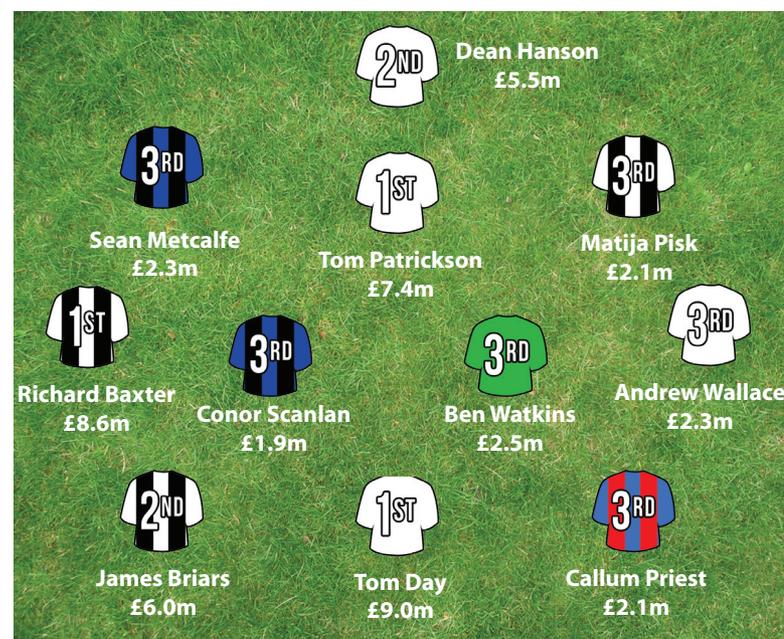
Once Roses 2012 finishes on the Sunday afternoon, there is the small matter of the College Cup bursting onto the scene the very next day. With the ever popular Fantasy Football returning, and *Nouse* covering every game, the summer term promises to be jam-packed with sport.

Hopefully the term will be one of shocks and surprises but most importantly success for the University of York at Roses 2012.

College Cup Fantasy Football returns

Dan Holland and Luke Gardener make their picks ahead of College Cup Fantasy Football 2012

Dan's Team



Luke's Team



THIS IS my first go at College Cup Fantasy Football, but I've tried have a look through last year's standings to help me judge how to best structure my team.

Dean Hanson was one of the highest scoring goalkeepers last year and I fancy Halifax seconds to maybe sneak second spot in Group Four, so £5.5m could look a bargain later in the competition.

At the back I've picked Tom Patrickson, who's bagged himself a few goals this year and is likely to keep a fair number of clean sheets, even in the supposed 'group of death'.

In midfield, Richard Baxter will be a big player for James, while Conor Scanlan could do well

again this time after being one of the most popular selections in last year's league.

I'm backing Halifax firsts to lift the Cup this year, so Tom Day seems an obvious choice in attack, as does James Briars. I watched Briars play for James firsts last term and he got his fair share of both goals and assists; with James seconds placed in Group Three I think they could well progress.

The £50m budget cap does leave you juggling with your choices somewhat, as you have to be incredibly selective with your most expensive players. It becomes a gamble as to who you select for some of your last remaining places but that is all part of the fun.

AFTER MY dismal showings in College Cup Fantasy Football, finishing 269th last year, and 248th in 2010, I have gone for a team which has players who have proven their ability on the JLD pitch.

Dan Atherton of Derwent firsts came second in the overall standings last year and with the draw they received I can see him scoring a lot of points once again.

Similarly, Phil Taylor of Vanbrugh firsts was in the top 10 as a forward this time last year. This year he has been classified as a midfielder and is well worth splashing out £9.4m of the £50m budget for some guaranteed points.

The novelty of including yourself if you are participating is definitely

something worth doing, having said that being £7.4m has taken a large chunk out of my budget which probably could have been better spent.

Once you have chosen your star players, picking the best players from the seconds and thirds is crucial. I have gone for Ben Cooke of James seconds and Ben Smith of Halifax thirds in attack, as both have been impressive for their college teams over the course of the year.

Likewise, Harry Lambert in defence is a bargain as he has played for Derwent firsts regularly this season, while in central midfield Jack Fisher will definitely score points.

York City seeking two trips to Wembley ahead of pivotal fixtures

YORK CITY are on the verge of two matches at Wembley, as they seek both promotion and cup success.

A return to the Football League is within sight, with the Bootham Crescent side facing Mansfield Town in the Blue Square Premier

playoffs.

That is before they travel to Wembley a week on Saturday to take on Newport County in the FA Trophy final, looking to avenge their defeat to Stevenage Borough in the final three years ago.

MATTYTHEWHITE



Bootham Crescent hosts the play-off semi final with Mansfield this week

The Minstermen guaranteed fourth place in the league with a win over Forest Green Rovers on Saturday, courtesy of a late goal from Adriano Moké, and will host the first leg of the play-off semi final tomorrow night. The second leg will be held at the One Call Stadium on Bank Holiday Monday.

Gary Mills' team finished the normal league season on 83 points, comfortably making the play-offs, though they were a full 20 points behind runaway champions Fleetwood Town.

Should they progress to the play-off final, they will play the winners of the other tie between Luton Town and Wrexham on Sunday 20th May, and will enjoy a second trip to Wembley in just eight days.

York were relegated to the fifth tier of English football in 2004 after 75 years in the Football League, and were denied a return in 2010 when they were beaten 3-1 by Oxford in the play-off final.

Reporting by Dan Holland

York Sport funding approved

IT HAS been confirmed that York Sport will receive a £2,500 grant from the York Annual Fund for a pre-season training camp.

The plans, as revealed in the last edition of *Nouse*, will give sports clubs the opportunity to build up fitness and be properly prepared for their opening BUCS fixtures.

A £4,000 grant to buy a new coxless pairs rowing boat to be used by the University Boat Club has also been approved.

Sam Asfanhani, York Sport President, said he was very happy the money had been granted as the "rowing club has done remarkable things."

Finally, £1,750 from the York Annual Fund, which has been raised by York alumni, is to be spent on installing a piece of Olympic legacy art for the Heslington East campus.

Reporting by Luke Gardener

Captains in confident mood ahead of College Cup

Luke Gardener
SPORTS EDITOR

WITH JUST under a week to go before the College Cup begins, the leading contenders have been keen to outline their ambitions, with no shortage of confidence existing within the camps of the leading contenders.

Halifax firsts captain Jack Beadle says that his team are “going into the tournament very confident” and is adamant that his team “won’t be complacent” because of their pre-tournament favourites tag.

With a squad that includes such a wealth of University football players, the Fax will be desperate to replicate their title success of last year.

If Halifax are to win the tournament they will have to defeat the other two fancied teams, with Derwent and James firsts both set to challenge.

“So, is it a three horse race as many are suggesting? Well, the simple answer is no.”

Newly elected Derwent captain, David Kirk praised the quality of the fresher intake for his college as well as the already established members of his squad.

Kirk hopes that by “blending the two together” his team will have a great chance of a successful competition.

When asked whether his team will win the College Cup this year his response was: “Hannibal once said as he crossed the Alps ‘Aut inveniam viam aut faciam.’ we shall find a way, or make one.”

The Derwent skipper is certainly confident his team have what it takes to go one step further than last year after gaining an advantageous Group 1 draw.

The other leading contender, James firsts, also have a comfortable path to the knockout rounds, but they will be wary after being knocked out in the group stage last year.

Captain Richard Baxter stated, “We have the best James team I’ve seen during my three years here, and I have full confidence that once the competition is up and running we will be one of the favourites for the title.”

So, is it a three horse race as many are suggesting? Well, the simple answer is no.

Vanbrugh firsts should not be underestimated as their squad is extremely strong, while Alcuin have a rich history in the competition, having lifted the Cup in 2009 and 2010.

Goodricke have also improved their chances since moving to the Heslington East campus.

In addition to the main first teams, Langwith firsts captain



James skipper Richard Baxter fires in a shot during their match with Vanbrugh in last year’s College Cup

Andy Hutt believes that his team have a chance of upsetting the odds if they can ‘become more clinical in front of goal’ while Wentworth firsts captain William Paes believes his team has ‘the ability to exceed expectations this year’.

Last year both Halifax seconds and James thirds reached the College Cup semi-finals proving that

anything is possible in the tournament.

Halifax captain, Jack Beadle believes that the tournament is so popular because “everyone knows that on their day anything could

happen.”

The College Cup promises to be no different this year as Halifax, Derwent and James will have to play to their potential in order to progress to the knockout stages.

Don’t miss our College Cup 2012 Wallchart >> Centre Spread

BUCS promotion joy for five York teams

ANDY DAVIS

Will Light

DEPUTY SPORTS EDITOR

AS THE anticipation for Roses 2012 reaches its peak, the interest has long since diminished in the bread and butter of the York Sport world, the BUCS leagues, which reached their conclusion at the end of last term.

However, despite the fact that their achievements have slipped somewhat under the radar, the performances of the five promoted York sides are certainly worthy of note.

In a breathless finale, the men’s futsal firsts were able to achieve the title and a remarkable promotion to the Northern Premier League on the final day of play.

Needing their main rivals Northumbria firsts to drop points, the York seconds team did their colleagues an incredible favour by holding the league leaders to a 2-2 draw, the only points dropped all season by the impressive Tyneside team.

Buoyed by the success of their counterparts, the firsts then faced the Northumbrians in a pivotal title decider.

In a tight and tense game, York emerged as champions after a display worthy of champions with a 5-3 victory.

Captain Tom Day told Nouse, “I have never seen a team work



The women’s hockey firsts, one of five University teams to win BUCS promotion this year, celebrate on the JLD

so hard for each other, everybody played their part.

“Winning the title was our goal all season and to fulfil it is a dream come true.”

The men’s table tennis firsts also achieved success this year, straddling their division with a dominance that saw them easily crowned as champions.

Despite a narrow 9-8 defeat to second placed Northumbria on the final day of the campaign, York’s

consistently powerful displays throughout the season meant that their rivals’ brave efforts were in vain.

In their matches of 17 games, the White Rose dished out two whitewashes, as well as four 16-1 thrashings.

A class above the rest of the league, their promotion to the second tier of the University sport tables was richly deserved.

Undeclared, the women’s rug-

by firsts will be playing the game in Northern Conference 1A from next season.

They were able to keep a convincing distance from their rivals all season, posting some great results along the way. A 62-20 victory away to Sunderland particularly catches the eye.

Playing in this championship-winning side was hooker Izzy Lewis, who stated “We lost a lot of good players at the end of last year, but

luckily we had a good fresher intake as well.

Despite the fact that a lot of them had never held a rugby ball before, we had a fantastic season and I couldn’t be prouder of the team.”

Finally, there was double promotion joy for women’s hockey, after both the firsts and seconds won their respective BUCS championships.

The firsts, under captain Hannah Gage, played an exemplary season.

Whilst narrowly missing out on a place in the Northern Conference Cup after defeat to Durham, they were irresistible in the league, only losing to Newcastle seconds all season.

Playing with consistency and skill, they will play in Northern Conference 2B next year.

Meanwhile, the 2nds managed to lift themselves out of the bottom tier of the BUCS system.

After being dumped out of the cup in chastening style by Durham in October, the side bounced back to achieve an undefeated season.

The title was decided by a showdown match versus Leeds Carnegie fourths, who needed to win at home for the cup.

Despite the pressure, York hands remained steady, bravely earning a 1-1 draw and the championship.

Sport

Roses 2012: Your guide to

Dan Holland and Luke Gardener preview Roses and pick out the weekend's key battles

Roses by numbers

117

The total number of scheduled events at this year's tournament

72

York's margin of victory in the 2011 Roses competition

3

Fixtures being played on Wednesday and Thursday (equestrian and cricket seconds)

24

York wins in the tournament's history, from a possible 47

2008

The year of York's last away win, by 124 points to 122

8

The number of York wins from the last 11 tournaments

64.5

The number of points separating York and Lancaster in the BUCS standings

105.5

York points accumulated in 2010, the last time Roses was held in Lancaster

MEN'S FOOTBALL FIRSTS

Time: Sunday, 12:30pm

Points on Offer: 4

These are two sides with a point to prove. Both were relegated from their respective leagues by the narrowest of margins this year, so expect a tense battle this time around. Dan Atherton grabbed the only goal of the game last year, as Lancaster had a man sent off, and this is set to be another close call. The overall Roses result should be settled by kick-off, but this is still a fixture worth watching.

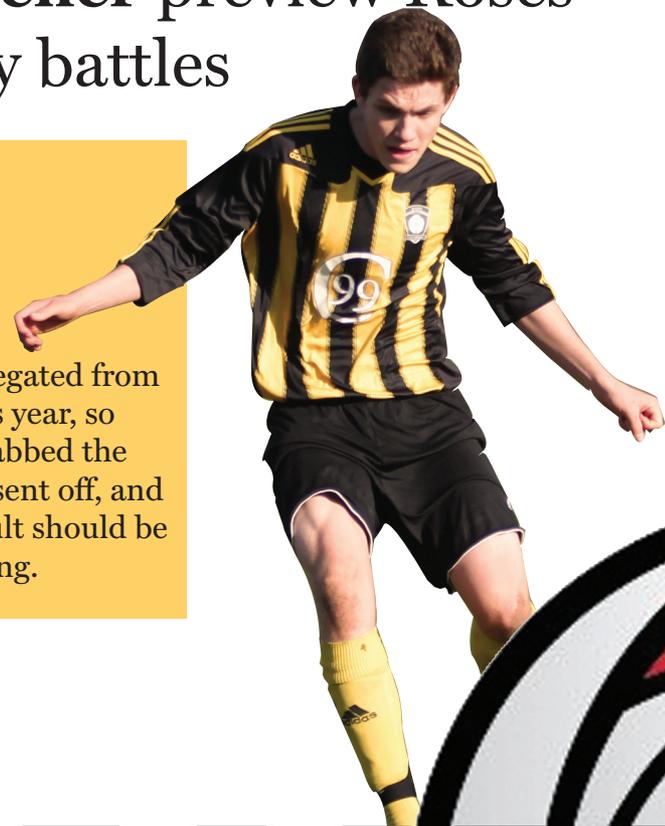
BASKETBALL FIRSTS

Time: Sunday, Women's at 12:15pm,

Men's at 2:30pm

Points on Offer: 8

Lancaster will be clear favourites in the men's, but the women's could really go either way. The two teams are reasonably well matched in terms of their league finishes, and York have been in fine form of late. A six point win for the White Rose last year was the result that brought the Carter-James Trophy back to York; if things are tight going into the final fixtures then this could be another nail-biter.



ROSES

WATER POLO

Time: Saturday, Men's at 7:30pm,

Women's at 8:15pm

Points on Offer: 8

York's men were team of the tournament last year, after completing a thrilling 7-6 win over their Red Rose rivals. It's been another successful campaign for Chris Snowden's team, and there should be a cracking atmosphere and a big crowd for the Saturday night showpiece, while the women will be out to avenge their 12-1 defeat in the 2011 tournament.

WEEKEND TIMELINE

FRIDAY

10.15

The weekend kicks off with three badminton fixtures - 10 points on offer

12.00

The men's cricket firsts are in action at Morecambe CC



20.00

Friday's action concludes with the men's darts

SATURDAY

12.30

Men's and women's tennis and trampolining take centre stage



14.15

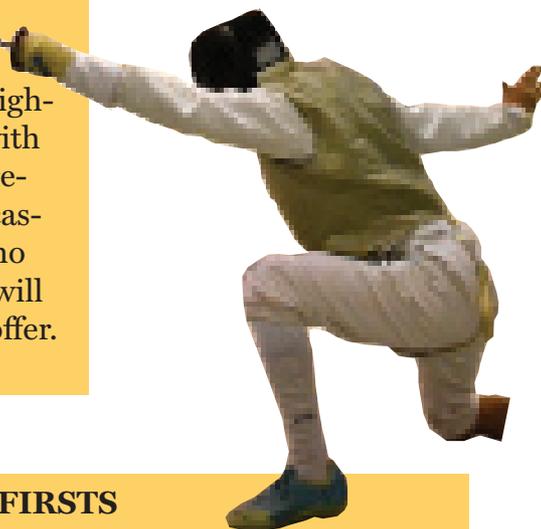
The men's firsts contest is the last of four Saturday rugby fixtures

this year's tournament

FENCING FIRSTS

Time: Sunday, 10:15am
Points on Offer: 8

These encounters could be two of the highest quality matchups of the weekend, with all four of the firsts teams on show representing some of the best York and Lancaster have to offer. The Red Rose will be no pushovers on home territory, but York will be expecting to take all four points on offer.



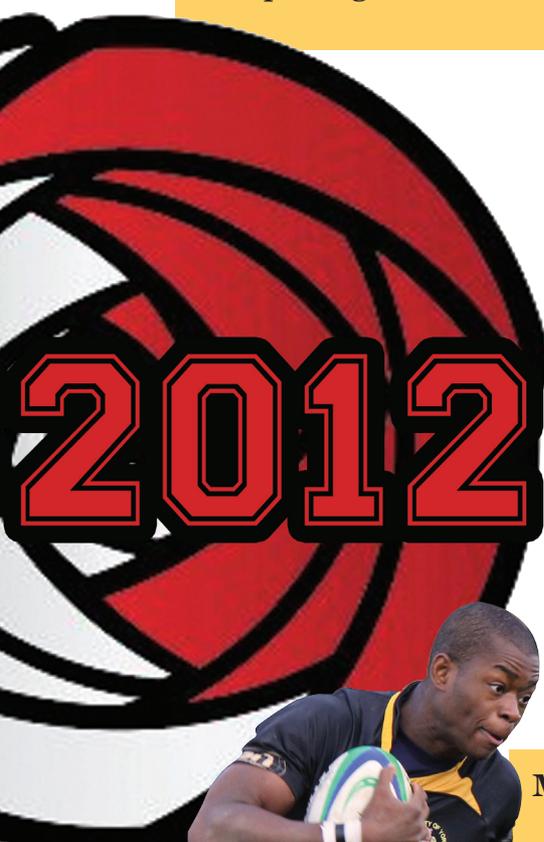
The Roses Torch



NETBALL FIRSTS

Time: Saturday, 4pm
Points on Offer: 4

Lancaster may be a couple of divisions ahead of York, but don't write the women in black and gold off. They have a habit of rising to the occasion, losing narrowly in last year's Roses and at Varsity, and although Lancaster will be the favourites going into this one, an upset isn't beyond the realms of possibility. These could be four very valuable points.



MEN'S RUGBY FIRSTS

Time: Saturday, 2:15pm
Points on Offer: 4

The two sides competed in the same division this year, York finishing third and Lancaster relegated. York won comfortably when the sides met on 22 Acres in October, but the Red Rose recorded their only victory of the season when they triumphed over James Faktor's side in January. On paper, York should win if they play to their potential, but if they aren't at their best then Lancaster could easily take the points.

During week two, the newly created Roses Torch will be taken across campus to celebrate and to honour the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games happening in London this summer.

The relay will take place between 6:30pm and 8:30pm on Thursday 3rd May, with 13 people who have made a contribution to sport at York taking part.

Sam Asfahani, current York Sport President, will start the relay at the Sports Centre before handing over to Andrew Kirkwood, Roses Player of the Year 2011, who will take the torch through James College, while Louise Highton, who will compete in fencing, swimming and water polo at Roses 2012 will run through Wentworth and Biology.

Joe Boughtflower and Jamie Criswell will carry the torch through Derwent and towards Heslington East before the relay is completed by Charlotte Winter, York Sport President Elect, at the

New Sports Village on the Heslington East campus.

The following day, 12 prominent members of the York sport community, will cycle from York to Lancaster with the torch, aided by York University Cycling Club members Jess Taylor, Ben Snowden, Kaj Scarsbrook, Luke Fox, Sam Godfrey Mayes, Greg Markin and Greg Melia.

Past, present and future presidents of the Rugby Club, Netball Club, Rowing and Lacrosse will all be involved as torch bearers while cycling to Lancaster as well as Kay Masterson, the York Sport Tournament officer for this academic year.

The York Sport Development Officer, Chris Unsworth, whose idea it was to create the Roses torch will also be part of the relay.

The Roses torch relay represents the theme of participation for Roses 2012, with RAG, York Sport, JCRCs, arts and media societies and college sport all having been involved in the project.

Photos by Philippa Grafton, Peter Iveson, Andy Davis and Justyn Harcastle

SUNDAY

15.00

The women's hockey firsts take to the astroturf, with York looking to emulate last year's dominance



19.30

Men's and women's water polo are the final events of a very busy Saturday

10.15

Men's and women's fencing start the final day of Roses

12.30

Both the men's and women's football firsts take to the field, looking for four points each



14.35

The tournament concludes with the men's volleyball

College Cup pullout

Your essential guide and wallchart for this year's College Cup

>> Centre Spread

Fantasy football preview

The Sports Editors make their picks ahead of this year's College Cup Fantasy Football

SPORT >> Page 24



Summer Term Week 2
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SPORT

Adverse weather hits Roses opener

JUSTYN HARDCASTLE

Dan Holland
SPORTS EDITOR

SUNDAY'S ROWING events, which were set to begin this year's Roses competition between York and Lancaster, had to be cancelled due to high winds and heavy rain-fall.

Mark Handley, Lancaster University Students Union Vice President for Student Activities, confirmed on Saturday that the races would not go ahead.

He said on Twitter, "Confirmed: All Rowing events are called off tomorrow due to adverse weather conditions in Lancaster."

Strong winds in Lancaster meant that neither crew were satisfied that racing conditions were safe, while the flooding on the River Ouse meant that the York team could not access their boats.

There were originally seven races scheduled to take place on the River Lune, though Lancaster had already pulled out of the Women's Novice IV and Women's Senior VIII, but it is now expected that the points will be removed from the overall available total.

However, with York having already secured the six points from the two races Lancaster had forfeited, it remains unclear as to whether these will still be included.

Catherine Oliver, University of York Boat Club President, commented, "It's really unfortunate that the races have had to be cancelled, especially as the UYBC were eager to reaffirm the victory that we had over Lancaster last year."

Pippa Maloney, Senior Women's captain, added: "We were really looking forward to the race, especially given the cancellation of our other crews. It could have been a very close race and would have been great to have the chance to compete on the water and defend the Roses title, so it's a disappointment."

"However, we wouldn't want to risk putting anyone in dangerous situations and given the weather in York over the last few days [we] can only imagine what it's been like in Lancaster."

Rowing, the event on which the annual contest was founded in 1965, was also cancelled two years ago in 2010.



PETER IVESON

PHILIPPA GRAFTON



Full Roses preview inside >> Pages 26-27

1.05.12

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