

NOUSE



YORK'S SEX TRADE UNCOVERED In Muse M8-M10

Nouse's open letter unites 1200 voices in a single demand:

Bring back our porters

NOUSE

13th February 2007

To Brian Cantor,

The current situation concerning the porters at the University of York is unacceptable. This letter seeks to unify the voices of students, academics, staff and supporters into one single message which carries the full force of our numbers and standings.

We recognise the inherent value of our porters as individuals and for the vital role they play within the University as a cornerstone of the collegiate system. Porters' knowledge of the habits and needs of students, academics and staff; their contribution to security and welfare and the vital administrative services they provide within colleges make them invaluable to the life of the University. Thus, we firmly believe that the closure of porters lodges in either the short or the long-term is damaging to all aspects of University life; academic, residential and commercial.

On the strength of this conviction, we demand a concrete assurance from the Directorate of Facilities Management that the situation concerning porters will be restored to its state as of October 2006 by a pre-specified date. Anything short of such an assurance, and any attempt to settle for an ongoing reduction of service, is unacceptable.

The current situation demands that all available time and energy be devoted to seeking a swift resolution. However, once full levels of service have been restored, an investigation into the causes of the lodge closures must take place in order to avoid the recurrence of this situation. Should such an inquiry reveal shortcomings on the part of any individual or organisation, then that individual or organisation must be held accountable.

This message is a singular and unified expression of will.



Signed by academics, staff, students and alumni >> 4-5



Amnesty International Society stage Palestinian 'check-point'

By Anjli Raval
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

THE UNIVERSITY of York's Amnesty International Society staged a demonstration on Saturday 3 February in Parliament Square to raise awareness of the existing situation in Palestine.

A group of students led by Nina Gora, Co-Chair of Amnesty International Society, together with the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), staged a 'checkpoint' aiming to alert the people of York to the problems in the occupied territories of the West Bank. The 'checkpoint' imitates a system of concrete walls and wire fencing scattered throughout the West Bank to curtail the movement of Palestinians.

Florence Perrett, a third year student said: "I feel very passionately about the situation in Palestine. People do not know enough to do something about it, and this visualises it for the public."



Actors simulated the alleged brutality of Israeli soldiers at the checkpoints. Photo: Ally Carmichael

An attending member of the PSC said, "in the West, we have no idea; normal Palestinians cannot go to school, the shops, even go to hospital to have a baby because of these checkpoints."

Two campaigners in

military costumes, armed with imitation guns, stood in front of the barrier posing as Israeli soldiers. Members of the group queued up in a line and then walked up to the pair, who asked them for their permit and searched every

person. The two 'soldiers' simulated the alleged brutality of Israeli soldiers at times by making people wait for long periods with their hands in the air, or on the floor with their hands behind them. The public were also encouraged to

join in. Gora said, "this is an everyday reality for Palestinians. In the West we completely take freedom of movement for granted. The international boycott is on the oppressed not the oppressor, which is absolutely ridiculous."

Student trapped in flooding Dusk toilet

DUSK BAR WAS FLOODED on 31 January after a University of York student who got stuck in the bar toilets was asked by staff to climb out through the window. This damaged the cistern and caused water to burst from the exposed pipes. The student was rescued from the toilet 30 minutes later when bar staff kicked the door down, despite having refused to do so at the start of the event. The student involved has not been charged for the damage. Dusk management has refused to comment on the event.

JCR budgets decided

ON MONDAY 5 FEBRUARY the distribution of the remaining fund provided by the University for its Junior Common Room Committees was decided by YUSU Finance Committee. The total monetary amount available for collegiate bids for 2007 was £2,177, and bids for this year totalled £6,746.84. Alcuin received the most money, claiming £887.73 of the available total, £740 of which is allocated to the provision of a marquee. Goodricke College received £323.98 to be assigned to various causes, including the provision of a new karaoke machine and publicity for Goodricke events. James and Langwith Colleges received £163.79 and £122.50 respectively. £679 was split equally between the sports rep teams of all seven colleges.

UGM motions fail again

ON MONDAY 30 JANUARY 13 motions were proposed at the UGM. All of these failed to meet the threshold of numbers needed to ratify them as YUSU policy, with the exception of the motion regarding Portering. Topics included ending the lack of 'real' abortion on demand, proposed by Women's Officer Erin McAlister, the scrapping of Top-up Fees, proposed by Grace Fletcher-Hall, and the ending of discrimination based on age, race, gender or sexuality when donating blood, again proposed by Grace Fletcher-Hall. These stances on emotive issues have failed to become YUSU policy due to a lack of the required turnout, calling into question the validity of UGM meetings.

Reporting by Rachel Guest, Hannah O'Shea, Catherine Moore and Jenny O'Mahony

Archbishop speaks out against Reid

By Raf Sanchez
NEWS EDITOR

THE ARCHBISHOP of York has spoken out against the Government for bringing Britain "close to a police state."

Speaking on ITV News on 5 February, the Rt. Rev John Sentamu compared Government plans for 90 day detentions of terror suspects to measures in place in Uganda under Idi Amin.

He said "If you detain people, you must have good enough reason for detaining them and have a chance for there being a successful prosecution... [the Home Secretary] has not produced the evidence that shows that in 90 days you're capable of getting somebody prosecuted." The Home Secretary John Reid is currently looking to make a fresh attempt to increase the detention period from its current

limit of 28 days.

The comments come in the wake of raids by West Midlands Police that resulted in the arrest and detention of nine people in connection with a plot to kidnap and murder a Muslim soldier.

The Archbishop has been criticised by Labour MP Shahid Malik who claimed the comparison to Uganda in the 1970s was "churlish and rather silly." He went on to say "We are

dealing with a unique threat in this country and it is not relevant to Idi Amin's Uganda."

However, the Archbishop's views have received support in some quarters. Lord Ahmed expressed similar views by saying that "There is fear in the community. The British public is genuinely frightened about what is happening." He went on to say that anti-terrorist action was merely used to

distract the public from troubling acts of the Government.

During the interview the Archbishop also urged people moving to the UK to accept and "really cherish the traditions that are here."

This is not the first time the Archbishop has taken a public political stance. During the summer he camped out in the York Minster for a week in protest of the Israel-Lebanon War.

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This edition of Muse, your essential supplement, features this year's talent in the Battle of the Bands heats, as well as an in-depth look at the sex-industry in York, a cynic's guide to Valentine's Day and an exclusive interview with Derek Acorah, the UK's leading 'spirit medium'.

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Derwent student hospitalised following violent attack in bar

By Raf Sanchez
 NEWS EDITOR

A STUDENT WAS hospitalised following a violent attack in Derwent Bar on Saturday after the screening of the Scotland-Wales rugby match. The student, Chris Wiggins, was left bleeding from the head after being set upon by four assailants.

Wiggins said that before the attack he had been "cheering for Scotland" and that "there was a bit of a banter going around, but it wasn't really aimed at anyone." The attackers, who are thought to be fellow students, were sitting a few tables in front of Wiggins during the match, and cheering for Wales. Another student present at the time said he heard them shouting "get that jock of a c***" before getting up to leave following Wales' 21-9 defeat. Wiggins claims that "on the way out they turned over the table, I said something and then they started to hit me."

The fighting in the dining hall section of the bar was quickly broken up by other students, many of whom were still wearing Dalmatian outfits from the RAG parade which had taken place earlier in the day. Attempting to calm the situation, they moved Wiggins out of the bar and into the hallway.

According to witnesses,

Wiggins was waiting for his friends when the attackers emerged from the bar, only to knock him to the floor and kick him repeatedly in the head.

They further told how, when hearing the commotion outside, students in the bar rushed out and again separated the fighting. One student who had been involved in breaking up both fights commented that it was during the second attack that "most of the damage was done."

Wiggins was then taken into the Derwent JCR to wait for security to arrive. The attackers returned to the JCR a number of times in an attempt to continue the attack.

Will Marle, a student who helped Wiggins into the JCR, said that he and others "had to basically guard the door to keep them out." Former JCR Chair Dave Jones, who was involved in breaking up the fighting said it was "at least 15 minutes" before security guards reached the college, saying "it was really shocking how long they took."

When the security guards arrived, they called an ambulance to take Wiggins to York District Hospital, where health checks were performed.

Wiggins does not plan to press charges, saying "I just want to forget about it."

The University is pursuing its own internal investigation into the attack. A member of the bar staff working during the event has given physical descriptions of the attackers.

However, the investigation has been complicated by the fact that the lights in the dining area were switched off during the match, severely limiting the clarity of the existing CCTV footage. The fact that the attack occurred after the match had ended, as many people were leaving the bar, has further hindered attempts to identify the assailants through surveillance equipment.

Speaking after the attack, one student said that it was difficult to break up the fight without the "authority of a porter on-hand" and that had a porter been present it "might have helped stop the situation in the first place."

Bar staff called security as soon as the fight broke out and were told that a security response would be mobilised. However, staff claim that when they called again to see how much longer they would have to wait, they were unable to get through.

The porters at Langwith and Goodricke were also called to the scene of the attack, forcing them to close their lodges, leaving the main campus without any open porters' lodges.



First year Chris Wiggins was attacked by four men in Derwent Bar. Photo: Milda Sabunaite

BNP officer verbally abuses students

By Jamie Merrill
 NEWS CORRESPONDENT

SEVERAL UNIVERSITY of York students have allegedly been targeted and threatened by a British National Party official amidst concerns about increasing BNP activity in York.

Kate Challender, chair of anti-fascism society Unity, and Ogtay Huseyni, chair of the Islamic Society, have both alleged they were photographed and threatened by Ian Dawson, the York-based BNP National Group Support Officer, who told them their photographs would be placed on the far-right website Redwatch, which has a history of incitement to violence. Huseyni has also alleged that Dawson told him to "get



York students were verbally abused while leafletting

out of my f***ing country" as he distributed anti-BNP leafletting by students in Acomb on Saturday January 20. Challender said of the incident, "Whilst giving out

anti-BNP leaflets in Acomb - exercising the right to freedom of speech which the BNP claim to defend - we were photographed by Dawson and told that our

photos would be appearing on Redwatch. There is no place in Britain for any party that relies on tactics of intimidation."

Huseyni said: "Being verbally abused doesn't make you feel good, but I'm not going to get out of this country because of a few nutcases." He added: "It's because I'm a Muslim. If I didn't have a beard, he wouldn't have said anything. It's because I'm outwardly showing my religion". Anti-BNP campaigners have been leafletting in response to increased BNP activity in the run-up to the local council elections in May. The BNP have leafleted the whole of Hull Road, and Acomb Wards and hold a regular stall in Acomb.

BNP leaflets have called

for the burqa to be banned and immigration from Muslim countries to be halted. Ben Drake, head of the York Unite Against Fascism city branch, said "I suspect they are targeting Hull Road because the mosque is nearby, but if they think people in the area have got a problem with the mosque, they are mistaken." He added that Hull Road Ward has a large student population and that the BNP is anti-student: "They are a fascist party and as such they view students as enemies".

YUSU Racial Equality Officers Caren Onanda and Bukky Ojo have condemned the BNP, saying "It's obviously a threat that the BNP have been campaigning in York." Of the comments allegedly made by Dawson

to Huseyni, they said: "This type of behaviour will not be tolerated by the SU, which takes discrimination against students on any grounds very seriously." Nouse attempted to contact Dawson, but received no response. However, BNP National Press Officer Phil Edwards said "I shouldn't have thought he'd say that. Ian Dawson is a good lad."

Edwards criticised student anti-BNP campaigners, saying "Most of them are brainwashed. Some people are born like that - many of them are actually alien people to Britain". Edwards denied the BNP was a racist party, but said "Islam is a threat to Britain" and compared YUSU officials to the "totalitarian Marxists of the Soviet Union".

List of signatories to *Nouse* open letter

Alumni and friends of the University

Tony Benn - ex-MP
Simon Stephens - York alumnus and playwright



Christine Hamilton - Alumna and media personality

'I remember what the porters did for me, so I'm happy to sign and wish the best of luck'

Supporting Bodies

Gemma Tumelty - President, National Union of Students
Brendan Barber - General Secretary, Trades Union Congress
Dave Prentis - General Secretary, UNISON
Colin Smith - Student RESPECT and Socialist Worker
The Socialist Party
Rob Owen - RESPECT general secretary, Manchester Students' Union
Ben Matthews - Editor, York Vision
Heidi Blake - Editor, Nouse

Heads of Departments and Lecturers

Professor Derek Attridge - Head of Department, English and Related Literatures
Professor Ed Corrigan - Head of Department, Maths
Professor Mark Whyte - Head of Department, Health Sciences
Dr. Simon Hardy - lecturer, Biology
Dr. Alison Drew - lecturer, Politics
Dr. Mary Brooks - lecturer, Economics
Dr. Tim Howell - senior lecturer, Music
Pam Wells - research student, Psychology
Marie Prior - masters student, History of Art
Dr. Andrew Webster - lecturer, Biology
Dr. Elizabeth Buettner - lecturer, History
Jacqui Chainey - lecturer, English as a Foreign Language
David Edwards - lecturer, Politics
Dr. Shelagh Sneddon - lecturer, History
Dr. Jill Murdoch - lecturer, Railway Studies and Transport History
Haleh Afshar - lecturer, Politics

Dr. Roger MacGinty - senior lecturer, Politics
Kate Fisher - Masters student, History of Art
Dr. Stamatoula Panagakou - lecturer, Politics
Chris Copland - senior tutor, English as a Foreign Language
Professor Andrew Monk - lecturer, Psychology
Dr. Mary Garrison - lecturer, History
Dr. Margaret Chard - lecturer, Politics
Dr. Robin Wooffitt - lecturer, Sociology
Professor David Howell - lecturer, Politics

Departmental Administrators

Bill Soden - Academic Programme Manager, English Language Teaching
Marysia Koc - Departmental Administrator, Computer Sciences
Kim Sneddon - Departmental Administrator, Economics
Mary Brooks - Undergraduate Administrator, Economics
Karen Prescott - Undergraduate Administrator, Politics
Andrew Wilkinson - Departmental Administrator, History of Art
Valerie Cresswell - General Administrator, Politics
Angela Bailey - Undergraduate Programs Administrator, History
Sally Carter - Administrator, Politics
Brenda Westrope - Academic Administrator, Psychology
Paul Greenbough - Administrator, Computer Sciences
Hillary Eaude - Departmental Administrator, York Management School

Matt Matravers - Head of Politics Department



'York's attractiveness and reputation to potential students risks being damaged'

York University Students' Union

Rich Croker and **Colin Hindson** - YUSU President and

Communications Officer on behalf of YUSU 2006-07
Micky Armstrong - YUSU President 2005-06
James Alexander - YUSU President 2004-05
Chris Jones - YUSU President 2003-04
Jennifer Winter - GSA President 2006-07
John Rose - YUSU Education and Welfare Officer 2004-05
Stuart Leslie - AU President 2004-05
Verity Radley - YUSU Services Officer 2004-05
Neil Barnes - YUSU Education and Welfare Officer 2004-06

College JCRC Chairs

Jamie Tyler - Derwent JCRC Chair
Louis Wihl - Alcuin JCRC Chair
Won Youn - Langwith JCRC Chair
Alexandra Clark - James JCRC Chair

Ryan Bennett - Vanbrugh College JCRC Chair



'So many staff and students really value the service that the porters provide'

Ben Wardle - Goodricke JCRC Chair
Tim Day - Halifax President

College Provosts and Administrators

Dr. Carl Thompson - Provost, Wentworth
Ron Weir - Provost, Derwent
Dr. John R. Issitt - Provost, Langwith
Dr. Jane Clarbown - Provost, Goodricke
Kenn Dodd - Provost, James
Susan Dekker - College Administrator, Langwith
Christina Unwin - College Secretary, Derwent
Georgina Heath - College Administrator, Vanbrugh
Sue Lister - College Administrator, Wentworth

plus 1153 students and counting...

To add your signature to the open letter, visit www.nouse.co.uk/openletter
Full list of signatures >> 11

Pressure protests

By **Raf Sanchez**
NEWS EDITOR

THE VOLUME of protest over the closure of porters' lodges has risen dramatically in recent weeks. An open letter circulated by *Nouse* has collected over 1,200 signatures from students, academics, support staff, and prominent supporters of the University.

The letter demands that management provide a "concrete assurance" that portering services will be restored by a "pre-specified date" as well calling for "an investigation into the causes of lodge closures." The letter is the first time an explicit demand for accountability from management has been made, saying "should such an inquiry reveal shortcomings on the part of any individual or organisation then that individual or organisation must be held accountable".

The message has been supported by the majority of College Provosts and JCRC Chairs as well as YUSU. The letter has also gained the backing of a number of trade unions including UNISON, the Trade Unions Congress, the National Union of Students and the University and College Union.

A number of academics have sent letters of their own condemning the state of portering on campus. On January 17 Professors Matt Matravers and Tom Stoneham, Head of Politics and Philosophy respectively, sent a joint letter to Ken

Batten, Head of Security. It stated that "[the University's] reputation and attractiveness to potential students risk being damaged by your proposals". They go on to say it is "hard to believe that that if it [the closure] goes ahead it will not be used as an argument to show that the College Receptions are not needed and can be closed."

In a letter dated February 12, Professor Simon Parker and 52 signatories told Batten as well as Keith Lilley, Director of Facilities Management, that they were "alarmed and dismayed" at the closure of college porter's lodges. In a second letter they told management: "This is not a situation that can continue for very long without damaging the reputation of the University of York as a first class institution".

Rich Croker, YUSU President, has taken a personal stand on the porters situation, refusing to represent the University at Open Days and other events in protest at the closure of college lodges.

On 8 February a motion proposed in Union General Meeting (UGM) was passed, mandating YUSU "to campaign against any decision which would mean a cut in the number of hours residential lodges are staffed in relation to the staffing of October 2006" and "if portering does not return to the staffing levels of October 2006 after the period of temporary closure, to boycott University Open Days and, if felt necessary by Union Senate, actively cam-

Breakdown of student signatories by college

Derwent	Goodricke
27%	9%
Alcuin	Langwith
19%	7%
James	Vanbrugh
19%	6%
Wentworth	Halifax
9%	4%

on University as begin to mount



The closure of lodges has led to protests from students, staff and academics. Photo: Milda Sabunaite

campaign against the University on any such days". The motion passed with 216 votes, significantly higher than average, and was the only motion of the UGM to reach quoracy.

There have also been a number of incidents in which students have taken direct action outside of the YUSU-coordinated campaign. A logo of a fist with the message 'Fight for your porters' was spray-painted all over campus. It was placed in a number of prominent locations including the window of Costcutter, the

sign outside the library and the door of the YUSU building. In the early hours of January 14 a number of Derwent students stripped the dining hall of its chairs, hiding them in a nearby residential block.

They left a single chair on top of each of the bar's pool tables with a note that read "If Derwent porters' lodge were staffed this wouldn't have happened." The next morning Derwent residents were sent an email threatening students with room searches by the Security Department

and fines if the chairs were not returned.

The email also carried a message saying, "this is not the way forward, it's making more work for everyone concerned, especially the porters!" In private, however, porters have said that they were "absolutely delighted" with the stunt and urged further direct action from students.

There is a history of stand-offs between management and students over the issue of portering. In February 2002 a decision by management

to try and cut the hours of porters' lodges in colleges resulted in a massive YUSU-coordinated campaign of direct action. The campaign culminated in a student occupation of Heslington Hall.

The occupation ended after a fire alarm was triggered in the building, forcing the protestors to evacuate. What triggered the fire alarms still remains unclear, with some speculating that they had been set off in order to clear Heslington Hall. Management quickly withdrew their plans as a result of the protest.

The main players

The targets of the campaigns



Greg Dyke
 Chancellor

Head of the University, but has told *Nouse* that he doesn't comment on policy; he just "awards degrees".



Brian Cantor
 Vice-Chancellor

The real source of power in the University, Cantor has been attacked for a string of cost-cutting measures.



Keith Lilley
 Director of Facilities

Has repeatedly claimed the staff shortages were "unforeseeable", despite evidence gathered by *Nouse*.



Ken Batten
 Head of Security

Feared and respected in equal measures, the former military policeman is under pressure to bring back porters.

Those fighting for the porters

Rich Croker
 YUSU President

Refusing to represent the University at Open Days and other events in protest over the porters situation.



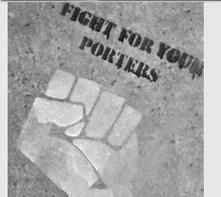
Simon Parker
 Professor of Politics

Simon Parker has coordinated a separate letter to Batten and Lilley with 52 signatures from professors.



Unknown
 Vigilante protest

Graffiti saying 'Fight for your porters' has started appearing around campus, origin unknown.



UNISON
 Major Porters' Union

Have worked to resist contractual changes for porters on campus and continue to support their struggle.



Timeline: the events leading up to the crisis

August 2006:

Management give 90 days notice of a contract change eliminating shift premiums and overtime. A number of porters refuse to work under the new conditions.

November 2006:

90-day notice period ends. New contracts come into force despite numerous protests.

January 21, 2007:

Closure of Derwent, Vanbrugh and Wentworth porters' lodges as a result of 'unforeseeable' staff shortages.

February 2002:

Students occupy Heslington Hall in protest against management plans to cut 24-hour portering. Management back down as a result of the occupation.

August 2006 - January 2007:

Ten porters resign or move departments as a result of the implementation of new contracts.

December 2006:

New rotas brought in, meaning porters now work 12-hour shifts and can be deployed to any area on campus instead of having a designated college.

RAG success breaks records



Costumes generated a carnival atmosphere as students took over the centre of York to raise money for various charities. Photos by Adam Sloan and Georgi Mabee

By Nicky Woolf
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

YORK RAG WEEK has been an unprecedented success this year, raising in excess of £16,000 for charities such as York Nightstop, Survive, Teenage Cancer Trust and the Make a Wish Foundation. This makes it by far the most successful RAG week on record, beating the previous year's RAG week by more than £12,500.

RAG at York has come under fire in recent years for under-performance in comparison with equivalent groups at Durham, Exeter and Bath, all of which have a similar number of students to York.

Durham's RAG equivalent raised a total of £232,000 last year, while the University of Bath's RAG events raised £56,000. Exeter's RAG is estimated to raise £60,000 every year.

Kate Jefferies, YUSU RAG President, claims that these figures are not comparable. "Different universities run RAGs in different ways," she explains. "Lots of universities around the country do street collections. Street collections make a lot of money... we spend more time focusing on our beneficiaries, putting on events, that sort of thing." Ben Griffiths, YUSU Charities and Developments Officer,

estimates that "if we included every single society... if it was all charity work on campus, you'd be looking at about £75,000 [per year]."

Many university RAG committees make a large amount of money on 'raids', where students go to a city centre and make collections. In the past, York hasn't done as many raids as events, but Griffiths claims that this year York has "already raised a considerable amount on

raids compared to previous years... we are building raids back up." Jefferies concurs, saying "we've started to focus on [raids]" and agrees that there is a definite upturn in the figures.

Jefferies comments that York RAG's fundraising is "looking extremely healthy this year", saying "we've about tripled on last year already." Both the Blagathon and the RAG Parade broke all previous University of

York records for fundraising, both making in excess of £3,000. These successes helped drive the RAG week totals far beyond expectations.

When asked about their hopes for the rest of the year, Kate Jefferies and Colin Hindson, YUSU communications and societies officers, estimate that "fundraising by student groups within the SU will raise more than £100,000 this year."

York tensions between 'town and gown'

By Charlotta Salmi
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

YORK HAS BEEN singled out in the *Guardian's* report of their Higher Education Summit as an area where tensions between 'town and gown' are unusually high, as yet another petition is presented to the York City Council by the Badger Hill Action Group against multiple-occupancy lets.

Reports from the recent *Guardian* HE summit show that many universities feel there has been an improvement in university and com-

munity interrelations over the past few years, but cities such as Nottingham and York were cited as areas where "Town-gown tensions may be high".

The root of the Badger Hill tensions lies in the amount of student housing which forms the estate (10%). The Badger Hill Action Group (BAG) claims to represent the views of local residents by leafleting the area and organizing petitions to the local City Council to restrict student tenancies. Paul Hobman, a Badger Hill resident who spoke to the *Guardian* about the high



Badger Hill, York, is the area where tensions are worst

number of student tenancies in the area, referred to it as "balkanisation".

Some feel that there has been a rapid increase in stu-

dent lets in the last couple of years, which has resulted in what one resident called a decrease in "community spirit". Felicity Riddy, Deputy

Vice Chancellor, claims that the University does in fact contribute to the local community, noting that "we stage concerts and provide a stimulating annual series of public lectures, while the Borthwick Institute, our sports facilities and nursery are widely used by the public."

BAG has also vocalized concern regarding the impact of high numbers of students on local businesses. However, staff at Badger Hill Bakery and a local shop assistant agreed that students form a significant part of their customer group, with

one local business owner saying "I get as many students as locals". A local shop assistant commented "the students at York university are some of the best behaved I've ever seen".

A further worry expressed by BAG is that the intake in local schools is decreasing due to rising numbers of student lets. Figures from the 2001 governmental census however reveal that 37% of residents in the area are aged 55 years or above. Thus families with young children are significantly under-represented on the estate.

Investigation reveals weakness in Chemistry security protocol

By Daniel Whitehead
 DEPUTY EDITOR

FEARS OVER the security of dangerous chemicals in the Chemistry Department have been raised after *Nouse* gained entry to a secure building intended only to be accessible to Chemistry students and staff. This has come at a time when the issue of the security of chemicals in universities has been brought to prominence by the introduction of government measures to prevent potential terrorists exploiting laboratories.

Entry to the building, controlled by a key-card system, was obtained when two journalists were let in by a chemistry student without identifying themselves or implying they were a member of the department. The key-card system is supposedly being strictly monitored, with students told to never let people in they do not recognise.

Information obtained by *Nouse* gave details of the days when certain chemicals would be accessible in laboratories. The chemicals available include Acetone, Nitric Acid, Ethanol and Benzoyl Peroxide, some of which can be used in the making of liquid bombs.

A second-year chemistry undergraduate questioned on the matter admitted "If someone really want-

ed to abuse the system they could take dangerous chemicals, but it would take a lot of thought. First years are most vulnerable, as by the third year everyone knows each other". She added that, although it would be possible to gain access if you knew the name of a lecturer, only "a chemistry student would have the knowledge of how to use the chemicals in a dangerous manner".

University spokesperson David Garner defended the security measures in place, saying "The Chemistry department follows government guidelines relating to the security of scheduled chemicals. Radioactive material is stored securely and there are security cameras in place around the department, University security staff patrol on a regular basis.

"Students and staff in Chemistry are encouraged to be vigilant when entering and leaving the building, to eliminate as far as possible unauthorised entry. The key card system is, in the context of laboratory security, simply a first line of defence. The fact that students need access to staff offices means that the key card points are heavily used, however only authorised students and staff are allowed into the laboratories which are normally locked when not in use."

The security flaws revealed by this investigation



Nouse journalists were able to bypass the Chemistry keycard system described as 'the first line of defence'

have the potential to contravene new measures announced recently by the government, which will see all foreign postgraduate students from outside the EU who wish to pursue courses in Biochemistry or Physics having to go through extensive vetting to check their credentials. These regulations are intended to prevent

potential terrorists from gaining knowledge which could be used to carry out an attack. Visa applications will apparently be blocked by the Foreign Office if they are deemed suspect.

The new security check system will be introduced in universities throughout the country to ensure that foreign postgraduates do not

come to study with the intention to use their knowledge in developing weapons afterwards, thus posing a security threat.

Should the applicants fail to provide compelling evidence of legitimate reasons for wanting to study the subjects, or should their previous study records seem suspicious, they could be

denied visas.

The Academic Technology Approval Scheme is seen by the the Foreign Office as an improvement on current security regulations, which targets students from specific countries, such as Pakistan and Israel, which are deemed worrisome and has been criticised for being discriminatory.

Concerns raised over Vanbrugh's future

By Jenny O'Mahony
 DEPUTY EDITOR

THE EXTENSIVE building works taking place near Wentworth College will become a new set of blocks for Vanbrugh College, which will cost around £10 million, according to current predictions. The 'Bleachfield' project, which will divide Vanbrugh over a number of sites, has raised concerns over the cohesion of the college's future.

The new complex will be comprised of six blocks with around 249 rooms. There are currently no plans for a Bleachfield JCR to be built, or for any portering provision on site.

It has been mooted that



The £10m Bleachfield Project will divide Vanbrugh

one of the blocks could be solely inhabited by postgraduates, but this has yet to be confirmed. The rooms are likely to be a similar style to

those in Alcuin currently, with en-suite facilities and well-equipped kitchens which would also be used to house conference guests over

the holiday periods.

Bleachfield was intended to be ready for the academic year of 2006/2007 but due to problems involving planning permission it has been delayed.

It is hoped that the first two blocks will open on 7 October, possibly to house the new intake of Medical students who are currently not affiliated to any particular college. Two further blocks will follow on 19 October, and the remainder will be ready for January 2008, along with a 'services' building which will include a laundry.

The need for an addition to the original Vanbrugh building has come about since the refurbishment of Blocks B and C, which are

now almost entirely made up of offices, and also house the LFA and Language & Linguistics departments. Currently, Vanbrugh students reside in Blocks A and B of the original Vanbrugh building. A number of students are staying in Blocks P and Q of Alcuin College due to the building work and the imminent demolition of the old Language Teaching Centre.

Concerns have been raised by former Vanbrugh College Chair, Mickey Macefield, and its current Provost, Alan Warren, over the physical break-up of Vanbrugh and the effect such changes will have on welfare and college spirit.

The JCR for Vanbrugh students living in Bleachfield

will be situated across campus, which has led to concerns that Bleachfield residents could become isolated from other members of the college.

The fact that the complex will be left without a laundry for the entirety of the Autumn Term has also been highlighted as an issue, which has caused tension on the original Vanbrugh site where laundry facilities are already scarce.

Warren has stressed the need to retain a "physical place where college identity can have some reality." However, he is in favour of Bleachfield, and says the key to success is the "real cross-fertilisation of learning and experience for students and staff alike."

Viking Raid t-shirts bought from an unethical supplier

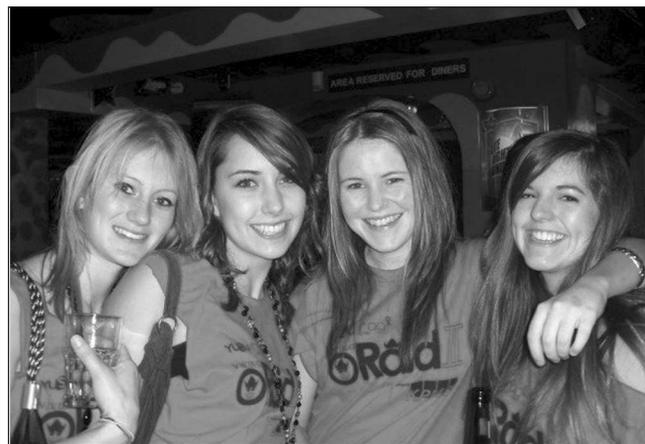
By Rachel Guest and
Steph Dyson

YUSU AND RAG have come under increased scrutiny this week following their use of the non-Fair Trade supplier Fruit of the Loom for Viking Raid merchandise.

Following confirmation that RAG had bought T-shirts from Fruit of the Loom, who are notorious for poor working standards and the use of sweatshops to produce goods, *Nouse* has also discovered that the brand Stedman was the source of last term's Viking Raid merchandise. Stedman operates under the Hanes branch of retail giant Sara Lee, which has also been heavily criticised by ethical lobby groups and medical experts, who have stated that workers in a Mexican factory are "incapable of doing their work due to the irreversible harm caused by workplace injuries."

The decision to purchase merchandise from Fruit of the Loom and Stedman arguably contravenes the spirit of YUSU's Union Code, which states that the Union will promote "Sound Ethical Choice" of products and "will purchase, where practical, from suppliers graded highly by the NUSSE Environment and Ethics Committee."

Ben Griffiths, the YUSU Student Development and Charities Officer, defended the use of these suppliers, saying YUSU "researched using Fair Trade merchandise; however, it would have arrived after the event had



YUSU bought its Viking Raid II T-shirts from Fruit of the Loom, who are notorious for using sweatshops to produce their cheap clothing.

taken place." He also claimed the Union Code "encourages", but does not demand, ethical purchasing.

However, questions have been raised as to whether earlier considera-

tion of suppliers for both Viking Raid events could have enabled the use of a more morally sound companies.

At the end of last term, a UGM motion entitled

"Sweatshops and Ethical Merchandise" was proposed at YUSU. It intends not only to enforce a University-wide campaign against the horrific conditions to which workers are subject, but also to

"mandate the exec" to use a T-shirt brand of a company where "workers receive a living wage, work in safe and healthy conditions and are free to join an independent union."

The motion seeks to reinforce YUSU's Union Code, in which YUSU declares they will encourage the use of fair trade merchandise. This part of the Union Code is linked with the University's Fair Trade status, which it received in 2005.

Michael Wood, who proposed the motion, said "the concept of the union existing to protect student's interests seems completely alien to them." He also felt it was "particularly horrendous for our union to be sourcing its clothing from [Fruit of the Loom]."

Fruit of the Loom's ethical standards were brought into the spotlight on campus in 2005 by a *Nouse* campaign to encourage colleges to terminate their contracts with this company due to its deplorable working practices.

The International Textile, Garment and Leather Workers' Federation condemned Fruit of the Loom for having a "history of virulent anti-union activity" following their dismissal of eight workers in 2001, for attempting to establish a union.

The use of compulsory pregnancy testing for their female employees, silent working conditions and an insufficient wage are also examples of the company's disregard for workers' rights and health.

YUSU Services Officer Amy Woods, who was in charge of ordering merchandise for the events, was unavailable for comment.



Spoof letters spark University inquiry

By Raf Sanchez
NEWS EDITOR

THE UNIVERSITY OF York is carrying out a "confidential investigation" into the running of Derwent College on the strength of spoof letters written by a student to a number of national figures.

The Derwent student sent letters to Tony Blair, the Queen, the BBC, John Grogan, MP for Selby, and Costcutter under the pseudonym 'Julian Bassey', complaining that the college continues to "violently ignore" his letters about Derwent's kitchen facilities.



Bassey sent a spoof letter to HM Queen Elizabeth II

In his letters, he complains about being a resident of Derwent College, "one

that lacks any cooking facilities at all." He goes on to say he is being "treated like a subhuman" and that the only support the college has given him is "tax-free Ainsley Harriott Cous-Cous in one flavour. This is unacceptable. This is very unhealthy."

'Bassey' has received a number of replies, including letters from 10 Downing St. and the Department for Education and Skills. Neither were able to help him. The BBC, however, read the letter with "great interest" and requested an interview. 'Bassey' has yet to reply. Derwent College is now

withholding all mail addressed to 'Bassey', including one which is thought to be from Buckingham Palace. Having apparently been alarmed by the content of the intercepted replies, the University is carrying out an internal confidential investigation aiming to ascertain if there was any truth in the obviously satirical letters. How the University became privy to the contents of a sealed envelope remains unclear. 'Bassey' has since discontinued his letter campaign, saying he is now satisfied with the kitchen conditions.

Derwent abandons catered-only plans

By Milda Sabunaite
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

PLANS TO introduce full catering in Derwent College next year have been abandoned. The college will remain fully self-catered and will go through further renovations of facilities.

According to SU President Rich Croker, who sits on the Catered College Implementation Group and Medium Term Evaluation Group, a survey was carried out in Derwent after the refurbishment of kitchens in

December, which showed that "people were self-catering satisfactorily at the moment and could continue for the coming year."

This summer, all blocks will be fully adapted for self-catering. Dining areas will be created in 2008.

According to Croker, the changes are expected to provide residents of Derwent with "more than adequate" dining facilities adding "The improvements that are happening at speed across campus are a really positive sign."

York struggles to overcome its reputation for lack of diversity

Are we living in a monoculture? **Nicky Woolf** and **Raf Sanchez** take an in-depth look at the underlying reasons for the University of York's lack of ethnic diversity.

Although the British National Party might have us believe differently, Britain is for the most part proud of its status as a multicultural and multiethnic nation. But anyone who spends even an hour on campus at York will be able to tell that Britain's minority population is vastly underrepresented here.

UCAS does not suffer from such a derth of ethnicity with 15.9% of total applications made up by Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) students, compared to 8.9% of the country's total population. But the University of York does. The overwhelmingly white composition of the student body fails not only to match up to the UCAS diversity figures, but the national figures as well.

Connie Cullen, from the University's Admissions and Schools Liaison office, acknowledged this, saying, "The proportion of students at the University of York from minority ethnic groups is smaller than the proportion in higher education nationally."

The University's Equal Opportunity policy states, "The University is committed to equality monitoring of undergraduate and postgraduate applications, admissions, progression and achievement," but the figures would imply that the University initiatives to increase BME representation on campus have not been massively suc-

cessful.

What effect does this lack of diversity have on prospective applicants? Bukky Ojo, one of YUSU's Racial Equality Officers spoke extremely positively about her personal experience of arriving at York. "I am the only black student on my course, but rather than try and push the issue away, they were very welcoming, and on my first day I wrote a profile in the University of York prospectus."

However, Ogtay Huseyni, the chair of Islamic Soc, talks of his surprise upon arrival at York from London and seeing "a sea of white faces... It's very, very different". Caren Onanda, one of YUSU's Racial Equality officers, describes the same feeling.

"For me, it was a bit of a shock the first couple of days, but then I just got used to it." She goes on to say that "for people who aren't used to [being very much in the minority], I can imagine it's quite hard... A lot of people are put off because they know it's not ethnically diverse at all. So, they think, 'What's the point of going there if it's going to be like being in a fishtank?'"

Huseyni's experience of arriving at York from London for the first time is a common one, and stems from the fact that London's ethnic makeup is far more diverse than the city of York's. But why should the University's ethnic breakdown reflect the city's? The introduc-



Ethnic minority students lack equal representation at York

"There was a lot of racist graffiti in the library toilets, and that was just at the end of last term"

tion to the University's Race Equality Policy states that "within the wider local community, the University has a key role in promoting diversity, respect and tolerance which, taken together, enhance society's collective strengths and foster the next generation of learners."

It is arguably succeeding in the second two, as few BME students who reach York complain of not being treated with respect and tolerance.

Onanda describes the few incidents that have been brought to her attention at the Racial Equality office of YUSU. "There was a lot of racist graffiti in the library toilets, and that was just at the end of last term." She continues, "Another student complained that when they

were walking through James, they were semi-attacked. They were leaving a cultural society meeting, and as they left they had eggs thrown at them."

She hints that the motivations were not necessarily racial, and is keen to downplay this as an insignificant, isolated incident, saying, "We reported it to the Equal Opportunities officer and we spoke to them and made sure they were getting the right welfare support, and it never went anywhere past that because they were happy."

Apart from this, the overall picture she paints is of a University that is almost entirely free of racial tensions, and this is generally the belief on campus.

It can be argued that the University has so far seen little success in its aim to increase diversity. Is York stuck in a vicious cycle where its reputation for lack of diversity is putting off the very people it is working hard to try and attract?

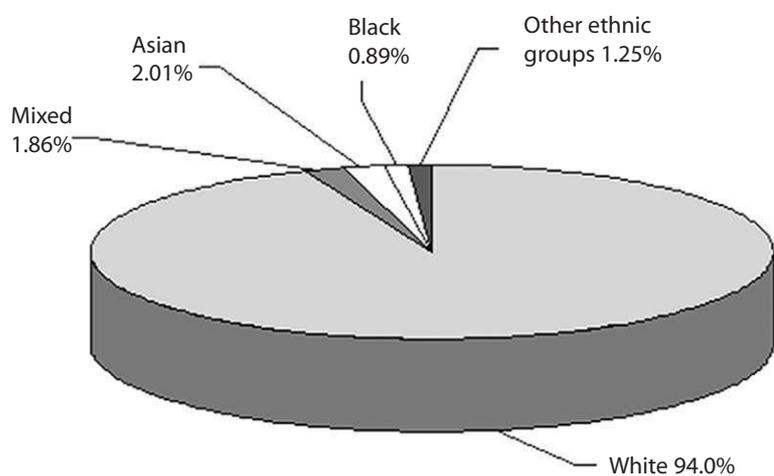
The answer is probably not. All those interviewed expressed hope for the future of

York as a truly multiethnic environment. The numbers of BME students at York is increasing year on year. Onanda helps to put things into perspective; now in her third year, she has seen the number of BME students increase exponentially in the two years since she arrived at York as a fresher.

The numbers may still be small in real terms, she explains, but in terms of percentage increase, "it's huge." This gradual increase is a self-fulfilling prophecy, because the more diverse York becomes the more attractive it will become to students from a BME background.

There is still a long way to go - the presence of ethnic minority students on campus remains small and the percentages are still nearly ten points behind UCAS, but the situation is gradually improving. York is slowly starting to be viewed as a natural choice for high-achieving BME students. The time and effort invested in encouraging BME students to York is, slowly but surely paying off.

Ethnic origins of home Undergraduates - York 2005/6





Comment & Analysis

A high-water mark of bad faith

It is to be hoped that the open letter to Keith Lilley and Brian Cantor featured on the front cover of this edition of Nouse will serve as the high-water mark of administrative and managerial bad faith at York. It is a sign that academics, staff and students alike are sick and tired of underhand, cloak-and-dagger policies designed to sneak budget cuts past all of us under the guise of temporary measures or setbacks.

It is first and foremost, of course, a letter about the porters. We believe that every member of this University, in one way or another, has a reason to be thankful for their presence; whether it is for as simple a service as helping us out with an embarrassing lost key scenario, or assisting our inebriated selves back to our rooms; or as dramatic a rescue as chasing thieves away from a broken window and comforting the weeping almost-victim. There is an endless reservoir of anecdotal evidence for the sterling job that porters do.

Perhaps even more importantly, however, this is a letter that demands a future where all administrative procedures are performed transparently, and in public view. Nobody with an ounce of sense would argue that budget cuts are not sometimes necessary, but if this letter contains any message at all it should be that we as students, we as the population, we as the shareholders and stakeholders in the community that is the University of York, would much prefer to be told, to be asked, and to be consulted about them. It is in this spirit of openness that this letter was written, it is in this spirit of openness that this letter was signed by a broad swathe of the University's population, and it is in this spirit of openness that this letter is published. We very much hope that it is received in the spirit it is intended.

Fairness and charity

Our heartiest congratulations go out to York RAG on their record-breaking RAG week. The total raised represents a spectacular achievement for all those involved. It is unfortunate, however, that a sour note had to be struck by the merchandising for the Viking Raid II. As part of the Students' Union of a University that has worked hard to obtain fair trade status, it is unforgivable that goods could be purchased from a company well known, even on campus, for unethical trade conduct.

This is the same YUSU team whose main brief it is to uphold the very charter in which the pledge to fair trade is enshrined. It is doubly unforgivable that similar oversights happened two terms in a row. It is absolutely no excuse that by the time the issue was addressed the products would not have been delivered in time. The Students' Union must resolve in the future to have more foresight in ordering ethical products in good time for planned events.

Diversity on campus

Ethnicity and diversity are extremely sensitive issues, and should be treated as such on campus. In the absence of properly representative diversity at York, extra care must be taken not to alienate students from ethnic minority backgrounds, and furthermore to ensure that they feel fully welcomed into all aspects of university life. It is simply not enough to produce glossy brochures displaying token diversity; this University must show an interest in diversity on campus from day to day, as well as during the application process.

In fact, York's singular lack of ethnic diversity – both as a city and a university – make the challenges of creating and sustaining a viable multicultural community all the more acute. There is often a tendency for minority groups to become isolated, and insulated from campus life. Not surprisingly, this phenomenon is mutually reinforcing, and if left to develop can cause permanent social rifts as people begin to feel they have nothing to learn from each other. Ultimately, York's diversity should be measured not in percentages but in the meaningful interaction of people from all backgrounds and ethnicities. Quota-filling does nothing to improve the quality of life of students, and we should keep our attention fixed on the real objective: a University where all are welcome and all feel wanted and respected.

Corrections

Nouse is committed to correcting all significant errors.

Rags for riches

Exploitation at the heart of charity



Francis Boorman
Contributing Writer

'Raising and giving' would seem to be a principle that nobody could possibly malign. And indeed the RAG committee do some fine work collecting money for worthwhile charities. However, the principle of helping others goes beyond charity; helping others to help themselves may have become something of a cliché, but it still remains some truth.

It is a shame that a big event like Viking Raid II has to be accompanied by worries over something as avoidable as problems with ethical sourcing of T-shirts. Using Fruit of the Loom as a supplier of clothing is not acceptable, taking into account, amongst other things, their involvement in preventing trade union activity in their factory near the Moroccan capital of Rabat. It seems deeply contradictory to put a link to the Make Poverty History website next to advertising for event merchandise from a

company that prevents Moroccan workers from exercising their right to freedom of association. This can be seen at YUSU.org.

Surprisingly, this isn't the first time this year that merchandise has come from such disreputable sources. With *Nouse* currently raising questions about the ethical standards of Sara Lee, the parent company of the makers of T-shirts for the first Viking Raid, it's disappointing that YUSU have repeated such a preventable error.

After campaigns by individual colleges to make the sourcing of merchandise more ethical, it would seem that there is a desire to buy products that do not encourage exploitation. Then why can't the RAG committee – of all people – follow suit? The Union Code explicitly mentions the importance of fair trade. Such a clear-cut principle cannot be applied selectively.

This may be an unfortunate mistake but, on issues such as this, it is down to organisations like the RAG committee to take the lead. These groups have a responsibility to make sure that we don't let charity begin at home by forgetting about people abroad. It's important to carry on giving, but in using companies that exploit their workers, we can actually be seen as taking away.

Prêt à Porter

Students have had enough of towing the bottom line



Sam Thomas
Comment Editor

As you've probably tired of hearing during your time here, it takes an awful lot to get a York student out of bed in the morning. You're an apathetic, complacent lot, or so your reputation would have it, and quite happy to laze in bed while the rest of the country's student activists are out fighting the powers that be tooth and nail.

Thankfully, this is nowhere near the mark. Extensive personal research has revealed other British universities to be little different from here, except with a lot more self-destructive boozing and a marginally lesser degree of institutional incompetence. And it's the latter to which we must turn if we're looking for the issue that has finally roused you all from your bleary-eyed slumber. The

University, it seems, can take any number of liberties with your education, your social life, your wallet. But heaven forbid they try and take away your porters. In the immortal words of Walter Sobchak, this is about drawing a line in the sand. Across this line: you do not cross.

The act of mictruration that the University has perpetrated upon the college system has not gone unnoticed, as evidenced by the huge number of signatures, from students and faculty alike, that accompany *Nouse's* open letter condemning the situation. Many included their affectionate reminiscences of encounters with the University's famously unflappable porters, ranging all the way from tending to the injured and drunk to saving the modesty of the blushing and betowelled (or those otherwise caught in a state of dishabille). The recurrent theme of students' comments, however, was the sense of security that porters provide, and the peace of mind of a friendly face when other sources of help aren't available.

Maybe there's something slightly regressive about this. Should students really need twenty-four hour supervision in order to feel secure? They certainly wouldn't receive it anywhere else, and in this respect the life of an undergraduate is a uniquely coddled one. Still, it's a stretch to read well-meaning tough love into the University's actions. There's little more reason to believe the official line: that reductions in staffing were "unforeseeable", and not a calculated attempt at whittling down costs.

Only the most naive have yet to grasp the essential drive behind University decision-making: money talks, and administration listens. That the Students' Union has long seemed to be in a state of denial over this speaks volumes about its limited stock of independence and gumption, not to mention the powerful strain of paranoid conservatism that has left successive generations of its officers incapable of putting up a real fight against the bureaucratic juggernaut. As the thousand or so signatures on this page attest, York students suffer from no such delusions.



Little Johnny would become the scourge of the authorities. Big Dave would become head of campus security.

Cartoon by Sam Waddington

In full Signatories to our open letter on porters

Caroline Abbott, Thomas Abbott, Jimena Acevedo Freijo, Ceri Adams, Sarah Adams, Katey Adcock, Charlotte Addison, Philip Adey, Qadar Al-Ansari, James Alan Armstrong, Desi Aleksieva, Chloe Alexander, Andy Alcorn, Helen Amas, David Ambrozeczyk, Lawrence Amas, David Amey, Jack Amiry, Esi Amono-Kuofi, Stephen Andrew Johnson, Charlotte Andrews, Angela, Philippa Anne Bellis, Rebecca Anne Carlisle, Tom Ancombe, Joe Anthony Bell, Francesca Archer-Toddie, Paul Armstrong, Richard Ash, Nadar Atik, Matilda B, Cheryl Brough, Joanna Backrock, Andrew Baghurst, Daniel Baker, Liam Baker, Anna Baldry, Laura Barber, Elizabeth Barker, Joe Barker, Kirsty Barnes, Neil Barnes, Siobhan Barras, Hannah Barrett, Kate Barrett, Natalie Barrett, Jamie Barron, Emma Barrow, Jenny Basford, Richard Batesman, Kevin Bates, Sophie Bates, Laura Batty, Amy Battye, Sebastian Bauerschmidt, James Bayliss, Sam Bearman, Darren Beaumont, Robin Beaven, Helen Beck, Rosie Beech, Helen Beeson, Liz Bellamy, Edward Bennett, Eleanor Bennett, Ryan Bennett, Robbie Beryman, Jocelyn Betts, Christopher Bevan, Kirk Bevins, Sarah Birch, Jenny Birkinshaw, Andy Birnie, Adam Bissett, Jessica Blackwell, Oliver Blair, Heidi Blake, Tim Blake, Andrew Blakeley, Rachel Blakemore, Charles Blundell, Katherine Boardman, Anna Boost, Matt Bodie, Sally Bolitho, John Bolton, Paul Bonner, Christopher Booth, Benjamin Born, Danusia Borucka, Sebastian Bottard, India Bourne, Dean Bowmen, Tim Bradbury, Ruth Bradley, Rebecca Brain, Bianca Brajsha, Thomas Branson, Lewis Bretts, Jon Brewin, Fiona Brice, Adam Broadbent, Michael Broaders, Rachel Brockman, Kathryn Bromwich, Helen Broome, Alistair Broomhead, David Brown, Elizabeth Brown, Helen Brown, Charlie Bruce, Helen Bruce, Megan Bryan, Oliver Bullock, Peter Burgess, Andrew Burlimshch, Nathan Burles, Adam Burley, Hannah Burnham, Amanda Burns, Dave Burton, Matt Burton, Tamar Burton, David Butler, Liam Butler, James Butterworth, Katharine Byrne, Jenny C, Matthew Cade, Andrew Cadwallader, Abigail Cahak, Verity Calder, Christina Campbell, Lucy Campbell, Rebecca Cantano, Michelle Cargan, Rosemary Carlton, - Willis, James Carn, Anna Carline, Tom Cartman, Ellen Carpenter, Chris Carrington, Natalie Carroll, James Carroll, Joe Carter, Joanne Carter, Daniel Castles, David Caswell, Hannah Catherine Bunn, Jonathan Caunce, Jessica Cave, Rachel Cavill, Harriet Chambers, Joshua Chambers, Karen Chan, Richard Chandler, Amrita Chandra, Cynthia Chang, Emma Chapman, Joe Chapman, Kate Chapman, Jessica Chappell, Charalampos Charalampous, Emma Charney, Davina Chauhan, Jing Chen, Julie Cheng, Christina Cheung, Natasha Cheung, Ya-Chin Chuang, Andrew Churchard, Helen Ciron, Rachel Clara Parker, Adam Clark, Alex Clark, Joanna Clark, Sarah Clark, Stephanie Clarke, Vicky Clarke, Paul Clarkson, James Cowan, Sarah Cowan, Michael Cowley, Anthony Cox, Dicky Cox, Ashley Coon, Daniel Cratchley, Katrina Crawford, Lauren Craawn, Joella Creed, Molly Crisp, Allison Crittenden, Katie Croft, Ben Crossland, Emily Crossland, David Crouch, Leo Crumley, Josh Croyer, Sarah Cullen, Helena Cullney, Alice Curling, Jonathan Dadds, Sarah Dahabiyeh, Rebecca Dainty, Caroline Dale, Tom Daltas, Katherine Dalton, Chris Dalziel, Theodoris Danikas, Philip Darling, Stuart Darmlid, Edmund David Van Der Byl-Knoefel, Beth Davies, Sarah Davies, Adam Davis, Philip Dawes, Steven Day, Tim Day, Halifax President, Tom Deakin, Louise Dean, Camille Demaret, Karen Dench, Kirsty Denison, R Diaz, Katherine Dobby, Katherine Duke, Imtiaz Durganwala, Edward Durkin, Emma Dux, Philippa Dux, Michael Cowley, Anthony Cox, Dicky Cox, Ashley Coon, Daniel Cratchley, Katrina Crawford, Lauren Craawn, Joella Creed, Molly Crisp, Allison Crittenden, Katie Croft, Ben Crossland, Emily Crossland, David Crouch, Leo Crumley, Josh Croyer, Sarah Cullen, Helena Cullney, Alice Curling, Jonathan Dadds, Sarah Dahabiyeh, Rebecca Dainty, Caroline Dale, Tom Daltas, Katherine Dalton, Chris Dalziel, Theodoris Danikas, Philip Darling, Stuart Darmlid, Edmund 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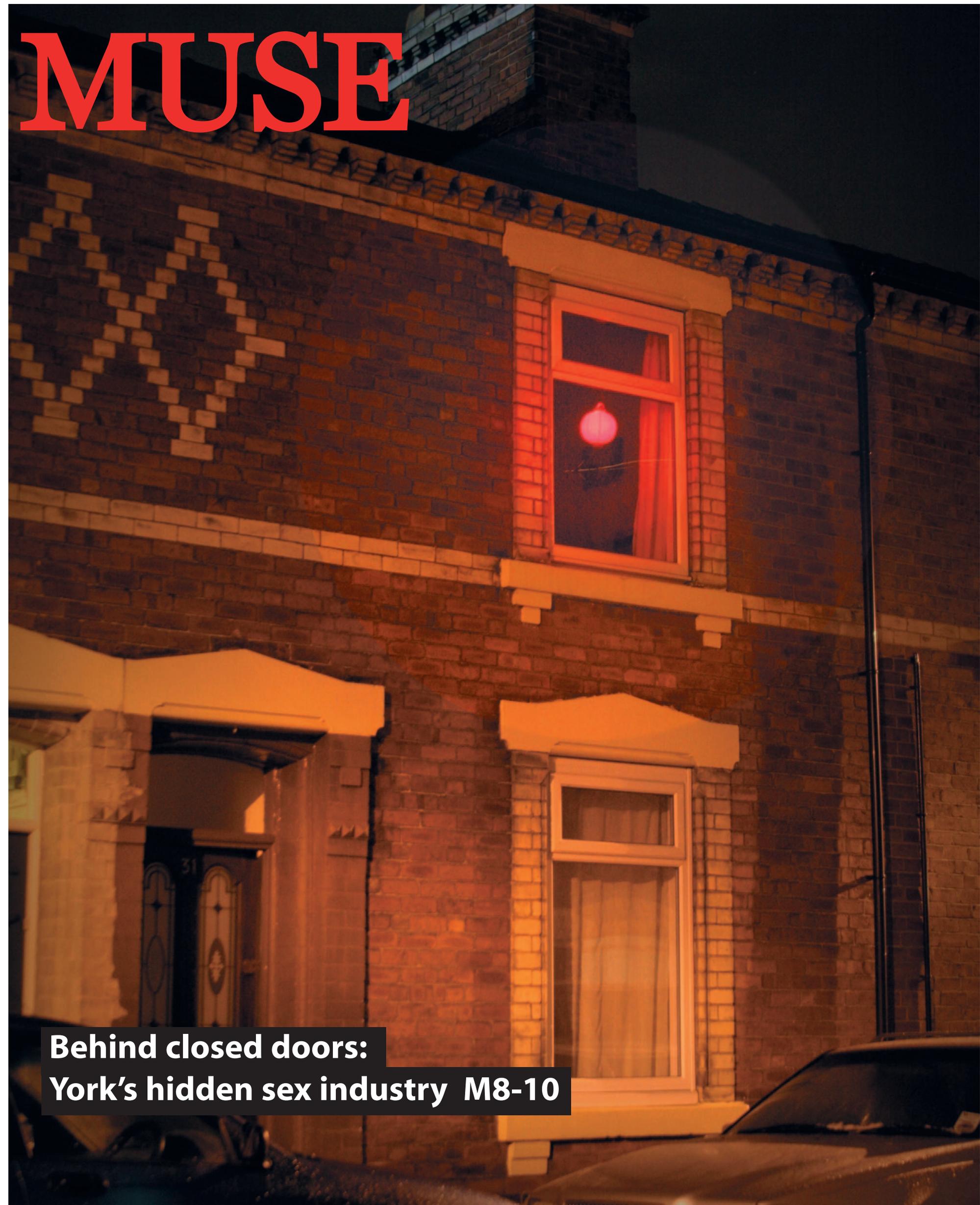
>> DEREK ACORAH M4-5
We chat to the spirit medium

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The biggest music event on campus

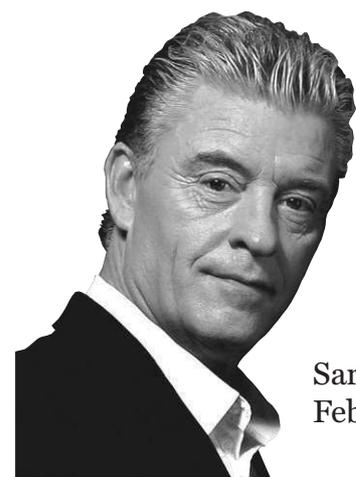
SPRING WEEK SIX
13 February 2007

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York's hidden sex industry M8-10**



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Ben Tattersall Smith

Getting down with the cool kids

If it weren't for the RSI, bed sores and my slightly pungent aroma, I'd be utterly convinced that spending a lifetime online is a healthy and constructive way to live which has turned me into the cool, trendy guy I am today. Certainly, if one wants to be down with the hipsters of the music scene (you know the type, they sing along to every song in the Toffs indie room), then keeping up with what's hot online is a must these days.

Sure, any old hack can tell you Arctic Monkeys were discovered on the net and got big through Myspace, but look a little further and a whole universe of music is open to you, much of it destined to bubble up to the mainstream. It's really just a case of knowing

where to look. Allow me to be your guide.

Keeping abreast of what's going on over the Atlantic is a good start for the aspiring scenester. *The New York Times's* podcasts (<http://www.nytimes.com/services/xml/rss/nyt/podcasts/musicreview.xml>) and NPR's (<http://www.npr.org/programs/asc>) bring insightful and intelligent reviews on new releases in pop and rock. Because they're podcasts, there's not even any reading to do. Easy work so far. Another short-cut is provided through metacritic (<http://www.metacritic.com/music>). This website compiles reviews from all over the media, both print and online, and averages the reviews albums get into an overall percentage score.

Next on our itinerary is the much-hyped

NanFlory



How to overcome a misleading moniker

Earlier today, I had a shock. Apparently, according to the Facebook news feed, there is such a thing as a 'Nan-esque moment of shame'. Someone used that exact phrase to describe the culmination of their previous night's experiences. What? What! How did I become a shame-o-meter all of a sudden?

But perhaps I'm just being presumptuous. They might not have been referring to me at all. Maybe they meant 'Nan' like affectionate-term-for-a-grandmother Nan? Maybe the comment leaver just has a particularly embarrassing gran? Maybe it's rhyming slang?

I don't know, but I'm trying to get over it, and on a productive note, it has got me thinking about my name. (Please pay attention here to the fact that I did not try to advertise my Shakespeare knowledge and say, "What's in a name?" - I'm above that shit. Although I might use it as a nice little linking phrase later - indulge me).

My housemate thinks looks are the single most informing influence on how we perceive people. I'm not so sure. I think names are important too. They can tell you something about the family values that form a person's foundations. They can tell you something about attitudes; for instance if someone goes by their initials or by their surname, uses a nickname or

abbreviation - these habits reflect personality.

My name was an accident. My parents were going to call me Poppy, but when junkies started stealing the namesake flowers from their front garden, they decided it was just too loaded a title. Instead, they went for Penelope, my dad because he secretly hoped I'd marry a man who would bring a massive bow and arrow into the family, my mum because she hoped I'd weave tapestries. And be super chaste.

It turned out to be a tough name to put into practice, however, as my mum could never quite pronounce it (Pen-el-OH-pee, she used to say) and because my big brother, only one-and-a-half when I was born, would just respond "Naaaaan" when asked to say his new sister's name. At this point, my mother luckily 'remembered' that on her side of the family, a girl child is named Nancy every second generation. She's always been a one for inventing heritage to make things go her way. So Nancy it was to be. Unfortunately, they'd already written Penelope on my birth certificate, so I got both.

It takes maturity to appreciate the value of a gimmick like 'Nancy Penelope Langfeldt-Flory'. You know how long it takes me to sign a check? A really long time. I always hated my full name (and had trouble spelling it) and adopted my

brotherly baptism 'Nan' all the way through school. I still use it now, mostly. Some people think it's an odd choice, as it can lead to confusion when people meet me and I'm not 84 and don't carry a cane. For a while, as an excuse, I told people I was named after Nan Goldin and that my parents used to hang out with Andy Warhol. But I have realised nobody believes me when I say things like that, and being caught in a lie is worse than having a name that means old person.

Using Nan has supplied me with numerous comedy moments, like when I met a friend of a friend. I told him my name, he told me I looked like his grandma. Haha! Then I remember the first time I met my friend Phil's twin Paul, I said, 'Hi, Phil' and Paul said, 'Oh I'm not Phil, I'm Paul.' As I didn't realise Phil had a twin, I just assumed I'd been calling him the wrong name for a whole year and that my stupidity had just now become so annoying that he'd been compelled to clear up my error. The laughs multiply exponentially when this story is repeated by others than myself and people think that it was Phil's nan, as in his grandmother, who made the mistake of thinking, for 21 years, that her twin grandsons were in fact the same person. Also, when I was working in Tang Hall Working Men's Club for New Year 2006, I bonded with the clientele by let-

'blogosphere', the community who write and share journals online. There are a number of dedicated music blogs where users talk about music they like and, luckily for us, put mp3s online so everyone can listen. Some other geeks, I mean bloggers, have taken it upon themselves to compile all these MP3s in one place. If you pay a visit to Hype Machine (<http://hype.non-standard.net>) or Elbows (<http://www.elbo.ws>), you can download hundreds of MP3s of the hottest new music for free with none of the virus risks associated with Kazaa and the like. Elbows also provides a chart of artists that bloggers are talking about the most. If a band is getting blogged about a lot, chances are they are a pretty good and b) destined for big things.

The Hold Steady are a band I heard about online and, upon listening, discovered them to be ace (think a modern version of classic Springsteen). Last week, lo and behold, Radio 1's Colin Murray was raving

about the record on his show - clearly someone with his eye online.

So what if you're not feeling too adventurous? You have a particular genre you like but want to explore music within that? No problem. Pandora (<http://www.pandora.com>) allows you to create your own personal radio station. Just type in the name of an artist or song, and, through what can only be magic or complex algorithms, it creates a playlist for you based on that type of music.

So we've got our new music, but what on earth are we going to say about it when we're trying hard to be cool? Song Meanings (<http://www.songmeanings.net>) is a website where users can post what they think the lyrics of a song mean. Some people just write bollocks, but every so often you find some pretty insightful comments.

There it is - instant cool, and all just a few clicks away. Now if only the internet could make me a better dancer.



The world's gone mad

Stories you might have missed

Thurston Fayre of Norfolk has, once again, held its annual competition for the most amusing winter vegetable. The usual carrots-shaped-like-willies cropped up, of course, but there was also a beetroot in the shape of the Pope, an aubergine that bore an uncanny resemblance to Jade Goody and a potato shaped like the House of Lords. A Jerusalem artichoke 'shaped like the cast of 'Neighbours' saying grace in front of an enormous pork pie' was the winner.

Mumbai bus conductor Sanjit Seewa was in court last week, charged with manslaughter and gross negligence. He was training an apprentice driver of a Karnataka Omnibus Company double-decker when he mistakenly directed his student to steer into an overhead power line, electrocuting the trainee and a local seller of rare frogs. Strangely, Seewa escaped entirely unhurt. "The deaths of two people are directly attributable to the fact that you are such a bad conductor" said the judge, who could not resist adding: "This is presumably the reason why you yourself were not electrocuted."

Belinda Carthus of Arthog became so exasperated by her husband's 10 years of infidelity that her patience finally snapped and she pushed his car into the River Dovey. Or, at least, what she thought to be his car – the vehicle in question actually belonged to a neighbour, who angrily told police that his (now former) car was totally different to Mr. Carthus's. In fact, it was a different make, model – even a different colour. "I was angry and confused," said Mrs Carthus. "Love does that to you."

Englishman John Cooling's enterprising business venture in Colombo was seen to be failing last week. Having observed the success of curry houses in Britain, Cooling emigrated to Sri Lanka and established a number of restaurants serving traditional English foods. Since handing control of the franchise to a local chef, Cooling has witnessed the mutation of his original menu into a frightening smorgasboard of soundalikes. Customers may now choose from 'scrambuls of the egges', 'Hole in the Road' and 'full english breakfast with saugages, fries bred, cookies tomato mushpooms and also much to have toast.'

Conservationist Rich Arkwright was arrested at the National History Museum of Aberdeen this week after a tirade about the treatment of specimens in the collection. Arkwright's website alleged that "there is depression amongst arachnids", "pupa are kept like battery chickens" and "the fungi are not happy". His visit to the museum – accompanied by two hundredweight of live maggots – was perhaps unsurprising. His insistence on assaulting the curator and instructing her to 'Live! Live like the maggots!' before throwing them at a disabled steward was rather unexpected though. Arkwright was arrested on numerous charges. 'F*cking earthworm freak-show!' he yelled to startled onlookers, as police led him away.



Bringing sexy back to York

I think I've discovered the secret of sexy dressing; it was revealed at Friday's Battle of the Bands heat. What you have to do, if you want to show some skin, is make the whole thing seem incidental - accidental even. So, instead of undoing your top four shirt buttons to show off your lovely chest, just get a shirt that doesn't have the buttons in the first place.

Even better, have someone give you such a shirt as a present. That way you can be all coy, like, "I got this shirt for my birthday and it's just such nice material and I don't want to offend my friends by not wearing it. It's a shame it doesn't have any buttons up at the top here, but if you can cope with my chest then I suppose I can too." Skin without the sin – SEX!

Another thing you can do to this end is wear Lycra and just pretend you're going to a fancy dress party

later. You can tell people that you see dressing up as, say, a big old rock star as a strict ideological commitment. Misrepresentation can be a dangerous thing, and if Axel Rose wore Lycra then, dammit, so must I! If Lycra is not so much a choice as an obligation, people won't think you're being cocky, just dutiful. The sexy bit is merely a happy coincidence that didn't even cross your mind when you were gazing into the looking glass – only to spot anachronisms, of course.

It works because people don't feel like they're being drawn in. No one likes sexiness when it's being forced upon them. They like to feel they've independently spotted a beautiful quality that comes from within, not as if they've had pheromones sprayed in their faces. So no more excuses please, University of York, let's bring sexy back.

ting them all call me Nan Bread. That was the best.

So it's not so bad, but I am a little worried if 'Nan's' meanings now include social suicide. What if next time I meet the friend of a friend of a friend and introduce myself, they move seats, worried I might vomit on/grope/bore them? Maybe I should start using my full legal title. It could be like a coming of age thing, and who knows, people might start taking me seriously?

Since Romeo and Juliet both die at the end of the play, it could be argued that, actually, there is quite a lot in a name, since having the wrong one might get you killed. But hey, I could have been stuck with Poppy and turned out to be some kind of ugly sentinel for about a thousand Notting Hill toddlers. Once again, be thankful for the small things.

The grimy side of seduction

Having escaped from the inadequate fellow discussed in the previous instalment, I eagerly awaited a renaissance in the bedroom arena. After weeks of submitting to the selfish tendencies of a man, I felt myself entitled to pursue the satisfaction of my own sexual appetite. I threw myself into my new-found freedom with gusto.

I acquired a date with yet another seemingly prominent man and had high hopes for his sexual prowess. Mike, 22, GSOH and drop-



dead gorgeous seemed the perfect recipient for my newly liberated sexual energy. Not being your traditional no-kiss-til-the-third-date kind of a girl (if, in fact, any of those do still exist), we ended up back at his Fulford residence after the first evening together.

He dimmed the lights, poured us a glass of wine each and stuck on some Kenny G, leading me to believe some serious romance was in the pipeline. Contrary to my expectations, however, he whipped out what I believe is commonly referred to in trashy romance novels (and KFC reviews) as his throbbing member, and declared, "I know it's pretty, baby, but it's not just for looking

at". He then tenderly enquired as to the prominence of my gag reflex.

After assuring him this was long gone, I got down to what I assumed to be the first bout of foreplay. I was, therefore, a little surprised when he expelled his population paste into my mouth after mere minutes. It was thus that I discovered a novel, if rather unpleasant, third way between spit and swallow. As jets of ejaculate spurted from my nostrils, there followed an awkward pause as I realised that sex isn't all it's cracked up to be. At least he was gentleman enough to lend me his hankey.

My sexual ambitions once again thwarted, I began to ponder whether there is a happy – and gratifying – medium between the routine of relationship-bound sex and the high potential for embarrassment implicit

in casual sex. As I traipsed home, sniffing, I determined not to let such a minor setback put me off. I must admit, however, that this particular episode has made a minor dent in my sexual idealism.

When did sex stop being fun? I remember the halcyon days when sex was about more than bodily fluids, alarming noises and penile abnormality. Perhaps I've simply matured over the course of my university career. Sex in Toffs and being walked in on by cleaners and porters just doesn't cut it in the excitement stakes anymore. I've come to the conclusion that I should, perhaps, broaden my carnal horizons. Older men? Other women? Both at the same time? I've resolved to explore these options and will report back next time.

'To the true believer, no evidence is necessary'

Derek Acorah is the country's leading spirit medium and 'paranormal investigator'. **Heidi Blake** watches his York show and talks to him about the 'world of spirit', his ability to see into the future and his 1500 year-old Ethiopian spirit guide, Sam

Derek Acorah, the UK's leading 'full-time spirit medium', has brought his roadshow to York, and the Grand Opera house is packed to the rafters; alive with nervous chatter. A banner across the bottom of the stage reads, in gothic script: "To the believer no proof is necessary. To the non-believer no proof is possible." A water-tight disclaimer if ever there was one. Overhead, on a large plasma screen, pseudo-erie clips from Derek's new LIVINGtv show, 'Ghost Towns', flash across the screen. As the house lights are replaced by swirling disco colours, an expectant hush falls over the audience, and as a deep American voice boomingly invites us to "sit back and allow the only modern-day Merlin to impart paranormal information you never thought possible!", Derek Acorah strolls onto the stage.

Derek is a self-styled "full time spirit medi-

'Derek assures me that a terrorist attack on Britain is imminent, and the royal family murdered Princess Diana'

um", operating with the help of his 'spirit guide' Sam, apparently an acquaintance from a former life in Ethiopia some 1500 years ago. Speaking to me before the show, Derek told me that he first tapped into his skills as a medium when he was six, when his late grandfather visited him at night. It was not till later, however, that he made contact with Sam and fully realised his vocation. When I asked him about the nature of his relationship with his spirit guide he told me that it extends into his personal life as well as being a key part of his work. "Sometimes I speak to him when I need something answering, or when I've got something playing on my thoughts, and he's the first person I turn to. He's always constantly around, not always showing himself, not always speaking to me, but he's there. Next to my wife he's the closest soul to me. He's a friend, he's a father figure, he's my mentor, he's someone that I can rely on in every role."

Now, trundling through his well-honed preamble at centre stage in a melee of coloured light and eerie music, Derek's speech is punctuated by interjections from Sam, which he registers with a hint of irritation, muttering "thank you, Sam", and "yes, I'll get to that, give me a minute!" He begins addressing the audience softly, informing us that there is "a supreme place designated for us all, and our loved ones that have gone before: a realm of light and beauty." His tone heightens when he declares, with apparent indignation, "I'm always surprised at the number of cynical and sceptical minds who, when you're having a perfectly normal conversation about the afterlife, completely reject the fact that there is a world of spirit!"

To begin with, it is hard not to be cynical about the integrity of Derek's work, an impression which is exacerbated by the elaborate showmanship of the production. The swirling coloured lights, booming American voice-over and dramatic clips on screen con-

tribute to a general impression of gimmickry and charade. However, Derek, standing on stage in a simple black suit, is almost devoid of affectation; far more natural in person than the theatrics of his trade suggest. Earlier, when I had asked him what he would say to someone who called him a fraud, he had responded: "Well, people have, and they continue to do so. That's of no worry to me, because I know that we're all here on different missions of progression. I don't scoff at cynical minds: I show them the respect that they deserve, however they might not be in my direction. That's of no consequence: I've got the responsibility of maybe understanding a little bit more than themselves, because they are not ready to accept yet."

As Derek begins to communicate through Sam with the spirits which apparently manifest themselves on the stage before him, he speaks of them to the audience in such a matter-of-fact way as to lend an air of sincerity to proceedings, albeit against the odds. One lady who appears to him is described awkwardly as "a bonny lady. Not heavy set, but...you know", all this accompanied by voluptuous hand movements. Later, when he tells us that a middle-aged man has appeared before him, he exclaims "Blimey! He's a big chap! Huge shoulders!" There is something curiously anodyne about the messages these spirits have apparently come to convey; several of them being largely concerned with DIY. One ghostly apparition brings the message that the plumbing in an audience member's house is faulty and needs to be repaired, while a visiting father is concerned that his son in law is not keeping on top of the garden. It's hard to decide if the banality of these messages testifies to their veracity or otherwise. Certainly, contrary to the over-stated theatrics surrounding him, Derek is not interested in putting on a thrilling show.

One thing which seems apparent is that, however dubious the process occurring on stage may appear to an impartial observer, Derek himself is resolute in his belief. When I had asked him earlier whether his preoccupation with the 'world of spirit' ever infringed upon his personal life, he had told me: "If you allowed it to I suppose it could do, but I've practiced the discipline for a long time, and my lovely wife and my family understand that this is my voca-

tion. But if you didn't have time out, if you were continually linked to the world of spirit, that would be a hell state to live in."

Speaking of hell, I felt bound to ask what Derek's take is on the great enigmas of the universe. Is there an afterlife? A God and a Satan? He chuckled nochalently when I put these grand mysteries to him. "Well, there are different dimensions and different realms of the world of spirit. So there's a bottom realm, which in religion would be called a hell, which houses the not-so-goods, the ones who've done horrible things in human time. You can't really separate a heaven from a hell, because they're in the same area. The hell as we are taught in organised religion, being down down down in this chasm type thing with fire and stuff, is not real. Our guardian ruler or God has created this realm, but it's the lowest realm in the world of spirit and in the uppermost realm are the people who've done wonderful things. It takes a long time to be in that top realm - it's like literally being at the right hand side of God. But there's no Satan."

I was intrigued by the grave sincerity with which Derek reeled off this ostentatious if convoluted theory, and was driven to ask him, perhaps cheekily, if he was able to deduce something about me which he couldn't possibly know naturally. He did not appear impressed by this request, and told me sternly, "Well no, of course not, because I'd have to tune in first. All the time you're in contact with that world there's a certain drainage, and Sam and I are going to do a show tonight, so I'm saving all my energy for those people who've paid for tickets to come in."

Slightly abashed, I asked him if he knows his own destiny. His response to this was more interesting. "That's mainly hidden from me, but I do know of one event which will happen in and around my 63rd birthday. At that time I believe I'll be working a lot in Canada and America, and the plane I go on will come down in icy water. I'm going to be one of three survivors on that plane." I asked him how he deals with the burden of such knowledge. "When I was told that many years ago, I asked why they had to tell me that. I mean, how am I going to handle it? What do I do? When I get to that point in time do I just not get on a plane? Do I stand in the queue and tell everyone 'It's going to come down, don't get on it?' Many



Derek Acorah is the UK's leading spirit medium

Want more Acorah?

Derek Acorah's Amazing Psychic Stories Harper, 2006, £7.99

Our favourite medium provides an insight into his spiritual escapades with a series of tales of real-life ghostly encounters and rescues. Derek answers those burning questions we all harbour about the nature of the afterlife and the intricacies of spirit visitations.

Most Haunted Top 50 Moments www.livingtv.co.uk/mosthaunted

If you're hankering after another look at your favourite Derek adventures, LIVINGtv is now providing a download service of the top 50 Most Haunted moments.

Most Haunted Series 9 LIVINGtv, Tuesdays 9pm

Derek and the intrepid gang return for a ninth series of ghost-chasing. The show tracks the progress of the spiritual adventurers as they travel to various locations around the country, tapping their psychic reserves as they go.

Psychic SMS Readings 84010, £1.50 per reply

If you've got a pressing spiritual matter, text 'tarot' and then your query to receive advice from a clairvoyant. "It's a little like having your own personal Angel in your pocket", says Derek.

'The show is not all banality. Some people seem genuinely moved and reassured by the messages they receive'

Derek Acorah provides psychic readings at his live tour, informed by his spirit guide Sam

ing now" says Derek. "But you won't be when you hear the footsteps." At another point, while Derek is relaying messages to a woman from a spirit she does not recognise, another member of the audience pipes up excitedly "Excuse me Derek, I think that's my Grandmother you've got there!" Irked by this, Derek bellows back "No! No it's not! I'd know if it was for you. You can't steal other people's messages!" There are many things one could say about Derek Acorah, but it would be hard to question the strength of his convictions.

Derek winds up the show with an impassioned plea to "unbelievers" to accept the "world of spirit" into their lives. "You can reject it as often as you like, but if you keep searching, I promise that you will be given proof that you're eternal." Then, amidst almost rapturous applause, Derek strides off the stage, calling over his shoulder for Sam to follow him. Looking around at the faces of the applauding audience, most appear to be lit up with belief, though some are sniggering behind their hands. It's difficult to explain away the accuracy of some of tonight's messages, though it's also hard to shake off the impression of a lone man talking animatedly to an empty stage. Either way, however outlandish Derek's beliefs may be, the sincerity of his faith in the 'world of spirit' is there for all to see.



things, but I came to absolute contentment with it when I realised the purpose behind these things: if on that plane of 179 passengers, 176 have to perish, it is because they have all reached their time, they are ready to pass over to the world of spirit. I don't go over, and two other people, because it's not our time. Why do you think it is that when a plane comes down, or in a car accident a handful of passengers will survive? Why? Well, there's your answer." Derek also casually imparts a couple of extra pearls of psychic wisdom, in a kind of "here's one I made earlier" gesture. He tells me that a terrorist attack on England is imminent and vows that the Royal Family was responsible for the death of Princess Diana.

Well, that's as maybe, but I felt the need to ask what Derek feels he is achieving by "championing the world of spirit", as he describes it. He cites two examples of times when he really felt his vocation was worthwhile. He told me he was contacted by a mother who asked him to find a healer for her

young son who needed a bone-marrow transplant. "I saw with my own eyes the spirit working through healing, and his whole leg, which needed bone marrow or whatever, was healed without any operation. It was complete wonderment to my eyes - it was the greatest thing I'd ever seen." Slightly more zani-ly, the other example he cited was of rescuing the spirit of a young woman which had been trapped for hundreds of years in a pub and tortured by the ghost of its former landlord. "Oh, it was a nightmare" says Derek, in a long-suffering tone. "I had to separate the two of them; I finally sent the lovely young lady, who he'd strangled and raped over and over, to heaven. Then I asked for him to be taken to the lowest region of the world of spirit, where he could be properly dealt with. He had been continuing to torment her in the spirit form, it must have been absolutely terrible for her. But she was so so happy that we helped her, and that the angels had come and taken her to her rightful place in the world of spirit." So apparently it is all worth while, after all.

The show itself is not all banality and DIY. There are moments when members of the audience seem genuinely moved by the messages they receive. One woman is told that her grandmother has returned to help her resolve a dilemma which is troubling her. The woman's face lights up, and she asks excitedly: "Does she know the dilemma is about her? Is it true what they've been saying?" Her relief is evident when Derek replies, "No, it is not true. You can put that out of your mind now." Others seem reassured to be told that their loved ones are present and looking over them. Derek becomes visibly frustrated when the spirits with whom he is conversing are not recognised by anyone in the audience. "They get terribly upset when they're rejected" he tells us. "How would you feel if you came back from another world and nobody wanted to know you?" One man in the audience who refuses to believe the messages received by his wife is told that her returning relatives will be visiting him in the dead of night to prove their existence. "You're laugh-

Valentine's Day: what's love got to do with it?

The chubby cherub's cross-bow hasn't made **Sara Sayeed** feel warm and fuzzy this February 14th. She asks whether people really have to say it with flowers and cards

Window-shopping has lost its charm for me. These days, whenever I turn my head to wistfully gaze at Office's newbies, I end up getting smacked in the face by an obese cherub threatening to "spread the love" or else skewer me with a cross-bow. Honestly, I think I'll go for the latter, take a leaf out of St. Valentine's book and just impale myself.

Granted, I'm not one for gooey feelings; however neither am I averse to that whole 'love' concept. What bothers me about Valentine's Day is that its ceaseless onslaught of all things pink and fuzzy has destroyed my savoured perusals and turned my typically rational friends into raving cynics. Frankly, it's an inconvenience; suffered by the people and capitalised upon by the Hallmark moguls, it really makes you ponder, 'what's love got to do with it?'

Before you hastily brand me a bitter singleton, take note that most Valentine's Day angst is suffered by the coupled ones. My housemate who's been in a near two year-long relationship, commented: "Valentine's Day and all who revel in it should be locked away in a room where they can inflict their joy on each other. If I have to celebrate one more stupid Valentine's Day with another bouquet of flowers I am going to make the guy eat it". Later, I sceptically relayed the story to another paired-off friend and suggested that really, underneath it all, Valentine's Day might actually be quite nice when you're in a relationship. She, however, exclaimed: "What, are you serious? It's a f***ing hurdle - like there isn't already enough to deal with in a relationship. It's a case of 'does he want to do something? Do I want to do something? Should I ask?'"

Not so warm and fuzzy then. Buying suitable presents is a particularly fraught issue: what if one person spends more than the other? Is the depth of your love going to be measured by the depth of your pocket? Another friend has decided to throw caution to the wind and buy her boyfriend a pork pie - however, she is attempting to bribe the baker into fashioning a heart-shaped version.

Unfortunately, the high street isn't much help. While gleefully adorning itself with shiny red decorations, it fails to realise the psychological anxieties loaded upon its would-be consumers: "One week to go! Don't forget!" in bold pink lettering is hardly soothing. Instead of creating an opportunity to express love, Valentine's Day is more a reminder of the tedious obligations that come with a relationship.

Significantly, one of the first public acknowledgments of Valentine's Day



took place in Paris on 14 February 1400, with the establishment of 'The High Court of Love'. The court was created to deal with violence against women, fickle married knights running off with swooning damsels - essentially basic domestic squabbles. On a contemporary Valentine's Day, couples are not without their share of moral quandaries. According to Legalmatch.com, divorces, prenuptial agreements and annulments spike around Valentine's Day - 36%, 28% and 21% respectively in 2005. On a more familiar note, if your boyfriend shows up at your door obscured by foliage, the initial response is probably one of embarrassment at not having come up with the goods yourself. Sure, there is always opportunity to compensate later on but, as my housemate reminds me, after all the wine, food

Even some couples are rubbishing romance



and chocolate, the most physical contact you'll actually be able to stand is a belly rub. Thus console yourselves, fellow singletons, with the knowledge that the kinkiest Valentine's Day actually gets is a rosy-flushed commercial orgy.

And what a non-exclusive orgy it has become. There was a time when the monopoly on Valentine's Day parapher-

Out with the trash: gifts don't always go down well on Valentine's Day. Photos: Georgi Mabee

'Console yourselves, fellow singletons: the kinkiest Valentine's actually gets is a rosy-flushed commercial orgy'

nal was tastefully retained within the Thornton's/Clinton's/flower shop circle - not so anymore. A tentative example is Wetherspoons's witty and wonderful Valentine's meal deal: two steaks for £9.99 with the tagline 'Love me tender'. With this extent of commercial exploitation, it is no wonder that my friend Mariella has demanded, "Whoever sainted that bugger should be shot!"

The Greeting Card Association approximates that one billion Valentines are sent out annually; placing it a nose ahead of Christmas in the card-selling stakes. Add all the wine,

chocolates and impromptu trips to Venice and you've got yourself a multi-quillion dollar conglomerate.

The pent up resentment over the commercial frenzy has found an outlet in a number of boycott ventures. There is 'Canada's Largest Singles Anti-Valentine's Bash', the 'lovers-go-to die' party against couples, and of course, Singles Awareness Day. The latter, celebrated on the 15th, involves singles giving gifts to one another in celebration of their unattached status. Unfortunately, according to Wikipedia, "the day is often used by less friendly couples to simply remind the singles about their current, uninvolved status". I suppose it doesn't really help that it forms the acronym SAD either.

The rife anti-Valentine's day merchandise which has recently cropped up presents a more chirpy front. Websites such as cafepress.com offer everything from t-shirts to boxer-shorts emblazoned with pictures of cupid and the words 'Shoo! You little bastard' or slogans such as: 'If it weren't for you, I'd be a different person. Maybe even happy.'

However, all the buoyant Valentine's bashing has been sucked dry by the greeting card industry. American Greetings now offer a plethora of 'novelty' and 'funny' valentines. AG's chief shopper Shannon Coulstan has ominously commented: "everyone's owning a piece of Valentine's Day". Suddenly the jingle 'be mine' has assumed a whole new meaning.

The problematic ethos that all this anti-Valentine's jumble propagates is venerating it as so significant that some form of involvement is compulsory. Whether it's dinner with your boy- or girlfriend or heading to Ziggys with a tub of gin-infused Ben and Jerrys in one hand and a wallet of VK-bound cash in the other, everyone has to have a slice of the proverbial heart-shaped pie. Singletons feel compelled to drown their sorrows with a bottle of Pinot and a cackle of girlfriends raging about why "boys suck". One particularly acerbic online blog lamented, "Valentine's Day is like herpes: just when you think it's gone for good, it rears its ugly head once more. No wonder some people prefer to call it VD". For a day dedicated to those pricked by the arrow of Love, really it seems to induce more piqued and prickling sensations.

The question, it would seem, is not whether you believe in or enjoy Valentine's Day, but rather whether there is any way to actually avoid it. When St. Valentine jumped on a log fire and martyred himself, I wonder if he had any idea of the excruciating Catch-22 situation he was leaving in his wake.

Not for the easily offended

Natalie Carroll talks to the comedy legend that is Jimmy Carr about his tour, political correctness and his lack of a moral compass

Jimmy Carr is one of Britain's most original and distinctive comedians on television, radio, stage and the big screen. His successes include a British Comedy Award for 'Best Stand Up Tour', A LAFTA award for 'Funniest Man' and a Rose D'Or Nomination for 'Best Game Show'. He has recently embarked on a mammoth 10-month tour, arriving in York on 8 April.

When asked what his audience should expect, he laughs. "It's not for the easily f**king offended," he explains. "It's not even for people who are difficult to offend. Essentially it's for people who are without a moral compass." Carr has caused controversy in the past with some of his more outrageous and politically incorrect jokes, but he is unapologetic in his approach. "In terms of taste and decency I think you can say pretty much anything in a comedy show. I think being Politically Correct is important if you are a doctor or a lawyer or a policeman or you work for social services or any of these important jobs in society where people are relying on you. But as a comic, I say rude things and offensive things and it's not for everyone."

He clearly enjoys the freedom that his role as a comedian allows him, and as proof discloses some of the material that he deems so offensive: "I tour every year and this year it is called Gag Reflex but for no real reason - anyone who has come to see the show before will know that it's just a long list of jokes," he says. "It's quite funny, but there's no real theme to it. There's no method in my madness. It's just 45 minutes in the first half and then 45 minutes to an hour in the second half. It does exactly what it says on the tin for a comedy show, which I quite like."

Carr's show traditionally begins at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe. "There's a new one every year, which I write for the Edinburgh Festival Fringe and then tour that basically for the whole year," he says. With a tour of more than 90 shows, and his regular appearances on television, one wonders how Carr fits in all his commitments. "I can only really tour on Fridays and Saturdays because of the TV stuff and other bits and bobs to do with writing and stuff that I do during the week, so I go on Friday and Saturdays all the way through the year." As exhausting as this sounds, he is adamant that he loves his job. The scheduling of his shows seems to suit

Jimmy Carr's activities in 2007 include his Gag Reflex tour and his new book *The Naked Jape*



him nicely. "People like going out on Friday and Saturday," he explains. "Wherever you are in the country - Weston-Super-Mare on a Tuesday night - it's difficult to get people out. They're thinking: 'Hang on, 'CSI: Miami' is on. What you talking about? I'm not going out.' So it's nice to go out when people are out in a good mood on a Friday night. They've got out of work, they've had a few drinks, they are going to a show. Saturday is the same. They're

"My show's not for the easily fking offended, or even for the hard-to-offend. It's only for those without a moral compass"**

really fun days to do it. There are a few Sundays in there and again Sundays are great. You've only got to be funnier than Heartbeat. Nothing to beat on a Sunday night."

The Guardian has recently described Carr as "a comedy hero for our times, and the exposure he has received in the last few years has made him a household name. So when he talks about how he likes to meet his

fans, I'm somewhat surprised. "When you meet people after a gig, you often meet the same people two years in a row and bizarrely you kind of remember some of them. It's like 'Oh, hello. Been well?' Or the heckler from last year heckles again. It's quite a nice thing". A man who has been termed 'No.1 on the Comedy Offender's List' is bound to receive a few heckles, but one night in particular stands out for him: "I was in Belfast, with a cool audience. I walked on and people said, 'f*** off'. I went: 'Hang on. You've paid to see me. This is crazy'. And they went: 'Well, we're quite aggressive'. They were a great audience."

Carr seems to take criticism in his stride, choosing instead to concentrate on those who enjoy his work. Indeed, Carr has many fans in both the public and the media. *The Independent* has described him as being 'a world-class comedian' and 'one of the most polished performers in the business.' He's certainly known as one of the most hard-working comedians on the circuit, and this year sees the release of his first two stand-up DVDs repackaged in a box-set, a DVD featuring the best bits of 'Eight out of Ten Cats' and a book about jokes called *The Naked Jape*. He is proud of his work, and happy to discuss his new releases. "'The Eight Out of Ten Cats' DVD is pretty fun actually. The



guys in the office put it together - so I watched it back and hadn't remembered any of it. I kept thinking, 'Oh, I should write that down. That's a good joke,' he says. "Then there's a DVD - a box set of the last two live DVDs that I've done that's pretty good. 'If you own the other DVDs, don't buy it' is the message. It's the same thing again."

Carr's influences are varied, ranging from seminal US comedians Stephen Wright and Emo Phillips to black American stand-ups Dave Chappelle and Chris Rock. "It's a weird thing, but my sort of taste in comedy tends to be quite far away from what I do," he confesses. "I've been influenced by TV and media - I don't have a great attention span. I get bored quite easily. So the biggest influence on my comedy is boredom. I think: 'I'll say something funny. I won't make it into a long story. I'll say it as quickly as possible and then I'll move on to the next thing'. So there are lots of little bite-sized chunks in my act." He also admits to being influenced by general conversations with his friends. "I love people coming up and telling me jokes. I think that's what jokes are," he says. "The best thing you can do with a comedy DVD is invite three or four mates over, get a pizza and some drinks and watch it. It's a great night. There's no substitute for having other people around you. It's weird how social laughter is. You laugh with other people."

It's this genuine love of comedy and laughter that has encouraged him to write *The Naked Jape*, due out in November. He discusses it with honesty and enthusiasm. "I thought I would write it because I'd be very interested in reading it," he says. "It's quite a labour of love. I tried to make it a joke book too. I've got 400 jokes in the book, as well as all the essays on different elements of jokes and where they come from, the history and anthropology and stuff." But, says Jimmy, he was careful not to over-analyse comedy too much when writing the book. "There's a great quote in the book from a French guy, ironically, who said: 'Analysing comedy is like dissecting a frog. No one is that interested and the frog died,'" he says. On that cheerful note, Carr ends, but you can be certain we'll be seeing much more of him during 2007.

Life behind closed doors:

Prostitution has been much discussed recently, in both the media and Parliament. However, there is far more to the industry than street-walking and drug addiction, as **Heidi Blake** finds out



When I asked Corinne, an escort working in Yorkshire, which image she thought was most commonly brought to mind by the term 'prostitute', her answer was unequivocal. "People think of a mucky young girl, on drugs, standing on a street corner in a dirty area", she said. "But that's a misconception." The issue of prostitution has been brought to the forefront of the public consciousness in recent months, not least by the lurid media coverage of the murders of five women working in the industry in Ipswich in December of last year. The Home Office consultation paper 'Paying the Price', published in 2006, pointed to "organised criminality, including trafficking and substantial drug-misuse, and sexually transmitted infection" as being central problems associated with prostitution. In the then Home Secretary David Blunkett's foreword to the paper, he claimed that it is "vulnerability and need for affection" which leads women to becoming "trapped in a web of fear and deceit in which drug addiction, prostitution and responding to the demands of pimps becomes a way of life".

The attention of the government, lobby-groups and the media is almost exclusively preoccupied with street-prostitution. Those who oppose the legalisation of the industry largely do so on the basis that it is inextricably linked with crime, exploitation and social nuisance. However, in the course of the debate, little attention is paid to the sort of prostitution carried out by well-resourced, educated women behind the closed doors of private residences and hotels.

"My rationale for doing this tells you it's been calculated. I've found myself in a situation and made it something positive"

One needs only to scratch the surface of the industry to discover that the sex trade in Britain today is not all about the drugs, desperation and exploitation which has become synonymous with the highly-visible street-based brand of prostitution. Hidden away behind carefully worded, chic websites and glossy advertisements exists a world of "high-class" prostitution, beyond the range of vision of campaigning groups and government consultations.

I spoke to four women working as what they called "high-class escorts"; all of whom had turned away from mainstream careers in favour of prostitution, three of whom had a degree. Each was adamant that she had never taken drugs, and had not been driven into prostitution by external pressure or financial necessity. So, if not desperation or deprivation, what was it that led these four educated, well-resourced and intelligent women to choose to sell their bodies as a profession? The con-

Most women working as prostitutes in York operate from private residences

the hidden York sex trade

cept might seem anathema to many, but is it possible they might have made a positive, informed choice?

Adeline was bright, articulate and disarmingly frank throughout our conversation. She told me she had first started working as an escort while studying for a degree in Business Management at Leeds Metropolitan University several years ago. "As with most students, I was skint," she said. "I thought about getting a part time job and having to work 10-15 hours a week and still fitting in all my uni. work as well, but when I weighed that up against only having to do one or two hours escort work and getting as much money, if not more, it just made more financial sense. It's not that I love sex or anything, but you'd be surprised how many students do this when they've got debts to pay."

She told me that she always intended to use her degree to get a job in management, so I asked her why it is that she is still working as an escort some years after graduating. "When I graduated, I got a job working part-time in management, so I was able to gain that extra experience while doing my escort work as well, which I've added to my previous experience and my degree to improve my prospects. I was also able to use the money from my escort work to pay off my student loans, because I didn't want to start my working life again saddled with debt. It was never a career path for me, but I have made quite a lot of money from it: I own my own home and I've been able to have it all refurbished. I've also bought an apartment to let and I'm in the process of signing a contract to do some virtual PA work which fits in with my part-time work. Eventually that will be enough to sustain me, and I'll be able to slowly pack up the escort work and stop doing it altogether. My rationale for doing it tells you that it is not about some pimp pushing me, it's been quite calculated. Not in a devious way, but I've found myself in a situation and I've made something positive out of that."

Adeline told me that the thing she finds most difficult about her work is the secrecy it requires: "The thing I really don't like about it is that my family and friends don't know what I do. You have to have a cover story, and I don't like that because I wasn't brought up to lie to anybody, let alone my family."

Denise told me that she made the decision to launch a career as an escort late in life, having first secured the agreement and support of her husband. "I was well over 40 and I just thought 'if I don't do it now, I never will'. I'd never had the nerve or the confidence till I got over 40. Earlier in life it would have been very difficult if my family had found out. I had trained as a professional, I had a degree and I had a very nice career, thank you very much, so it was just something I never thought about. But when I got over 40, both my parents had died and I came to the opinion that if anybody did find out then I wouldn't really be bothered. There are two completely different types of prostitutes as far as I'm con-

cerned. I personally don't feel associated at all with the poor girls walking the streets of Ipswich. I've never taken a drug in my life, I don't even smoke cigarettes and I drink very little alcohol, so I don't do it to feed any kind of habit. I just do it because I like sex, and I like pleasing men, and I know there are a lot of men out there whose wives or partners don't provide what they want, so I just think I'm providing a nice service for gentlemen who can't get it anywhere else."

Melissa started working as a prostitute after giving up a career in nursing. "It was the 13 hour shifts that did it. I wanted to have a few more experiences in my life, and I absolutely love it. I built a basic website and took it from there. I never really expected the phone to ring, but it did. I've never, ever, ever had a bad experience. Everyone is obviously a different personality, but I've never come across someone nasty or arrogant, everyone's been a true gent."

On her website, Melissa describes herself as a "dominatrix" and promises she will "use your dreams and fantasies to enter with you into a world of sexual exploration, domination and fantasy", claiming, rather surprisingly for a former-nurse, "I like to humiliate, watch you crawl and grovel, I like to push you to your limits, to see how far you will go for me." However, she insists that she is not selling sex. "I never ever, ever get paid for having sex. If, as two consenting adults, that is something that happens during that time together then fine, but I have to be in agreement as much as the other person, and I always make that clear to every and every client."

Corinne became an escort shortly after she began to appear in adult films and photographs. Before that, she had owned her own business for 20 years. She told me "I'd done some modelling before when I was younger, but films weren't something I was interested in, although I'd had a lot of offers. But I was having a set of raunchy photo-

"Prostitution is prostitution, whether you're on the street corner or you're an escort. You're still being paid for sex"

graphs taken for my partner's personal use and mine a couple of years ago, and the guy taking the photos suggested that it was a really good shoot and asked me if I'd consider doing DVD work, so that's how I got into the industry. Once I was working in adult modelling, I started being inundated with emails and phone calls from people who'd seen my pictures on the website and wanted me to provide an escort service for them. A bit of extra pocket money is always useful, so I started doing it. I still run my own business now. The films and the escort work are only a sideline."

Corinne is not so unequivocally



Photos posed by a model, and taken by Georgi Mabee. Names have been changed to protect identities



positive about the work as Denise and Melissa. "At the end of the day, a lot of the time you're an actress. With many of the people that you see, you like spending time with them, but you may not like doing what you're doing with them, because you may want to spend a bit more time getting to know them first. Some of the time you really don't want to be with the people you're with, but that's what you do. But the majority of time you're enjoying it. If somebody comes to see me that I really don't like the look of or feel uneasy about, I just won't let him through the door. I'm not in a position where I have to do it for the money."

I was interested to know how the women I spoke to felt about the way prostitutes are perceived in society and the media, and how the reality of their own work differs from this perception. All agreed that women working as prostitutes are stereotyped negatively, though there was a difference of opinion about the degree to which the stereotype is accurate. According to Denise, "The media and public opinion is that somebody who does this sort of

work is the scrapings off your boots, although in reality the people I've met who do this are usually very, very nice people. Articulate, honest, kind, intelligent, law-abiding people. What the media portrays is a terrible thing."

Melissa insisted that "being a prostitute and being an escort are a million miles apart. I've never taken drugs in my life; that wasn't the pull for me. I don't meet someone and have sex in a car. That would never enter my head. There are a lot of gentlemen out there who just want a lady to take for dinner, have a chat or a kiss and cuddle with. Sex isn't a foregone conclusion. That's how it differs. I don't feel associated at all with the poor girls who walk the streets in Ipswich."

However, Adeline does not perceive such a world of difference. "Prostitution is prostitution, whether you stand on the street corner or you're what's deemed to be a 'high-class escort'. But clearly women standing on the street are open to a whole lot of abuses. They're quite vulnerable and they're exploited."

She tells me that she was shocked and dismayed by the media coverage of the Ipswich murders. "Every time it was reported, one of the first things that came out of their mouths was that the women who had been murdered were 'five prostitutes'. It shouldn't matter that those women had sex for money: they're still human beings; they're still somebody's daughter, and somebody's mother; they're still somebody's partner and somebody's friend. Their being prostitutes doesn't give someone the right to murder them, it doesn't give the media the right to report them in a less positive light, and it didn't give the police the >>

right to take it less seriously when they disappeared from the street. It was not taken as seriously or reported as seriously as it would have been if they'd been five middle class women, and that is really quite dangerous, because I suspect that if it had been, not as many of them would have died. It's almost as though those women's lives were not worth anything because they did that for money, but the harsh cold reality is that all kinds of women, from all kinds of backgrounds, do this sort of work. It's not just 'crack-whores', as people call them."

Adeline is right about at least one aspect of the way in which the Ipswich murders were reported. Trawling through the archives of four national newspapers, including two tabloids and two broad-sheets, I found that the vast majority of the articles pertaining to the murders contained the word "prostitutes", or in some cases even "whores" or "hookers" in the first sentence. Tony Parson's December 18 column in the *Mirror* refers repeatedly to the five victims in these terms, at one point even describing them as "poor little cows whoring themselves on the backstreets."

Adeline told me that she feels "choked" by this sort of prejudice. "I live an ordinary life; none of my family or my friends know what I do. As far as most people are concerned, I'm just an ordinary, law-abiding citizen. They'll

"As far as most are concerned, I'm just an ordinary citizen. They sit next to me on the bus and have no idea what I do"

pass me in Tesco's, or I'll sit on the bus next to them, and they'll have no idea. I don't shout about it; I hide my face on my website and I'm discrete about what I do. At the end of the day, people can make all kinds of judgments about the person that you are, but they don't know you. Actually, I did have a good upbringing, and even though I do have sex for money it doesn't make me a bad or an immoral person. I know that deep down I'm a decent person, and I know that a lot of those preconceived ideas are just prejudice really, so I just have to try and accept it."

Corinne, like Melissa, told me she feels little affinity with women working as prostitutes on the street. "I don't agree with girls working on the street; I think that's the wrong way of operating altogether. I don't agree with the pimping side of things where girls are having to work to fulfil their partner's monetary requirements, I don't think that sort of thing's right. But in my situation I'm lucky, because I don't have to do it for money, I do it because I enjoy meeting people. I enjoy sex: it's a laugh, it's a business transaction, it's a contract between two consenting adults, and that's as far as it goes."

Despite the difference these women perceived between their own work and

that of street-based prostitutes, all four expressed grave concerns about the safety and welfare of such women. However, none were clear that the legalisation of the industry would prevent women from entering into unsafe and exploitative situations.

According to Denise, "It wouldn't make much difference at all to the sort of thing I do. And the poor girls who do it at 16 to feed a drug habit would still continue to street-walk and pick up nasty people, whether it was legalised or not. They're desperate girls, because they're drug addicts, and that's not going to change. So I don't think it would make any difference to them to legalise it, but it certainly wouldn't make a difference to me. And I don't think it would have saved those poor girls in Ipswich."

Although Adeline is adamant that prostitution should be legalised, she does not feel it would remove all the dangers entailed in street prostitution. "You could argue that some of the pimping that goes on might stop, but personally I expect women would still be at risk of exploitation, and that's my major concern about this industry. Particularly for the girls working on the street or in parlours, many of the reasons why they do that will remain. Either they're addicted to crack, or they've got a pimp pushing them. Well, just because he can now legitimately send them out to work and take all their money doesn't mean he's not exploiting them. I think the dynamic of that industry doesn't lend itself too well to legitimising it and making it more safe and secure. It would take a long time for people to get out of the mindset of 'I'm standing on a street corner because I can't afford to feed my children'. If you can't afford to feed your children, you can't afford to feed your children. That doesn't change."

One of the key issues highlighted by 'Paying the Price' and the resulting 'Coordinated Prostitution Strategy' was the need to extirpate the demand for prostitution before the industry itself could be tackled, so I asked the women what they thought were the main reasons men came to them. The issues of loneliness, sexual-deviance and commitment-phobia all came up, but the consensus was that by far and away the most significant reason men visit prostitutes was to supplement what they

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

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

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Will discuss your debt problems and provide advice on the various ways to resolve them.

perceive to be inadequate sexual relationships with their wives or girlfriends.

Perhaps the last accusation of social nuisance which could be levelled at women working as prostitutes in a way which is invisible to the surrounding community is that it encourages deviation from functional, loving partnerships within society, by creating the possibility of sex in the form of what Corinne describes as "a business transaction; a contract between two people."

This is certainly not the way Denise perceives her work. "A lot of men who come to see me are in happy marriages. They've got kids, they love their wives, and they don't want anything to spoil it. They don't want to have an affair; they don't want to get emotionally involved in anyone else, but they can come and see me, and I don't put any pressure on them. They can see me every week or every month if they want; they can see me once and then not see me again for six months if they don't want; it's an easy way of going about things for them. They know I'm not going to ring them at home or contact their wives, and I think from a health point of view they think it's safer to come to somebody like me who has regular health checks and HIV tests. They know I'm going to use a condom all the time, so they've got safe sex, but they've got the sex that they want. I think I'm actually helping to preserve marriages through providing that service."

Adeline, however, told me she struggles with the knowledge that many of the men she sees are married or in relationships. "I try not to think too deeply about the clients, because obviously many of them have wives or girlfriends. I know this may seem like a bit of a paradox, but in my personal life I believe in monogamy and when I'm in a relationship then I'm in a relationship with that one person. I certainly wouldn't expect infidelity from my partner, especially if I did ever get married, which is why I've steered clear of being in a relationship while I've had this job. So ordinarily I don't look too kindly on men who think it's all right to play away from home. But I have to remember that this is a separate part of my life and I'm not really here to judge them. I just need to let that go and see it for what it is: it's a very brief encounter and, yes, he's cheating on his wife, but quite honestly that's not really my concern. I mean, I don't want to

Many women working as escorts do so while living an apparently 'normal' life in the community

sound like some kind of hard-faced bitch, but it's his relationship with his wife or his girlfriend and he's responsible for that, I'm not. It's purely about business, really. So you have to be able to compartmentalise your life, though it takes a while to get used to it."

By and large, the women I spoke to were positive about their experiences of working as escorts, but I was interested to know what they felt were the major pitfalls of the industry. Some were more forthcoming than others. Melissa flatly denied that there were any pitfalls at all, while Denise said it was the best job she'd ever had. Of the four only Melissa, however, said she would unreservedly recommend escorting as a career, and that she would be perfectly happy for her daughter to do it.

Adeline, ever frank, told me "If you're not in a good place in yourself, doing this can really mess your head up because it's not always the nicest job to have to do. I've seen that happen to some girls, many of whom were quite vulnerable already, with low self-esteem or abandonment issues. You've got to be quite tough, take your money and use it constructively. The money itself can be damaging, because you can try to self-medicate by drinking yourself into a stupor or taking lots of coke, and you'll still be able to pay all your bills. But at the end of the day, you can't make yourself feel better, because you're doing something that you're not au fait with."

It is unsurprising that the weight of research and consultation is heavily on street-based prostitution. Here the uglier side of the industry rears its head; here aid and attention is most sorely needed. However, beneath benign intentions, there is a degree of hypocrisy in this approach. For those who believe that the act of selling sex is fundamentally immoral, it is convenient to conceive of prostitution as synonymous with crime, addiction and abuse.

All the while middle class society convinces itself that prostitution occurs only in the distant echelons of an anonymous underclass, it is easy to perceive a comfortable difference between 'us' and 'them'. No doubt the sex trade is a hazardous industry; no doubt there are moral and societal concerns. But if those engaged in the discussion first allowed ourselves to conceive that some women choose to sell sex from a position of financial strength and intellectual empowerment; if we were willing to hear their voices, the whole debate would surely be blown wide open.



The Oscars foretold



As the clock counts down to the big day, **David Coates** breaks out the tarot cards and predicts the winners in the 79th annual Academy Awards

There is little more that can be said about the Oscars. Whether condemned for its attraction to fairytale endings and heavy-handed social commentary or acknowledged for its place as the original and most recognised awards ceremony in the media, it remains the most powerful agenda-maker in the cinematic arts.

In the last few years alone, Jamie Foxx, Philip Seymour Hoffman and even behind-the-scenesters like screenwriter-director Paul Haggis have all gained mainstream legitimacy on the back of Academy success (not to mention Clint Eastwood's recent renaissance as a master director). We may chalk up Halle Berry's misfortunes as the exception that proves the rule.

Whoever takes away the prizes on that balmy Los Angeles night, many others will leave disappointed. With all this in mind, some might argue that any prediction based on logic and personal discernment is a vain exercise. Stuff and nonsense.

The competition for Best Actress is the strongest it has been since Jodie Foster's 1991 win for *Silence of the Lambs*, and arguably packs more of a punch than Best Actor. The British contingent of Kate Winslet and Dames Judi Dench and Helen Mirren lead a striking group that also includes Penélope Cruz and Meryl Streep. Streep feels like a token American, and is unlikely to take a gong for a largely comic role in *The Devil Wears Prada*, while Winslet (*Little Children*) may curse her luck after a performance that in other years might have won.

Out of the remainder, it is anyone's guess. Cruz (*Volver*) is a recognisable star, and a flawless performer in her first language; the Academy could be tempted to make her the first foreign-language Best Actress. Mirren (*The Queen*), who has received Supporting Role nominations before, delivered a well-handled and affecting performance and in a typically American vagary, Her Majesty has become a remarkably popular figure stateside. Dench (*Notes on a Scandal*) continues to show her class as a razor-sharp master craftswoman, playing beautifully against Cate Blanchett in her first pure screen villain role since Lady Macbeth. It could go to any one of these three, and the Academy may be just as torn, but my money is on Dame Judi.

The Best Actor race is just as contested, though with a less striking lineup. First-time nominees Forest Whitaker (*The Last King of Scotland*) and Ryan Gosling (*Half Nelson*) take on Leonardo DiCaprio (*Blood Diamond*), Will Smith (*The Pursuit of Happyness*) and the legendary Peter O'Toole (*Venus*), fresh from his honorary Oscar with a competitive nomination.

DiCaprio would have been better served by a nomination for *The Departed* and it seems unlikely that he'll win anything. Gosling is similarly one for the future and, even if he takes nothing away this time, he should not find himself short of work in 2007. O'Toole may seem like a long-shot, but bear in mind both Paul Newman and Laurence Olivier won competitive Oscars after taking an honorary gong.

The Academy has shown that it loves a biopic, though, and both Smith and Whitaker look in great shape. Smith was cruelly overlooked for *Ali*, and although *Pursuit* was rickety at best, he carried it with a charisma few other actors could match. Whitaker's role as Ugandan dictator Idi Amin stunned critics, however, and he may be the only serious threat to Smith. Whitaker takes on an arguably more complex role as a man equally charming and menacing, both fatherly and callous, in comparison to Smith's

'Some might argue that any prediction based on logic and personal discernment is a vain exercise. Stuff and nonsense'

straight-up, hardworking American. Both act beautifully, but Whitaker could take it by a hair's breadth.

The Best Director award could go any of four ways. First-time British director Stephen Frears (*The Queen*) shouldn't realistically hold any hope of winning against Paul Greengrass's stunning *United 93*, Alejandro Gonzalez Iñárritu's Golden Globe-winning *Babel*, Martin Scorsese's *The Departed*, and Clint Eastwood's *Letters From Iwo Jima*. Scorsese picks up his sixth directorial nomination for his



Best Picture nominees include *The Queen* and *Babel*



best picture since *Goodfellas*, but its overbearing score and shockingly uncontrolled turn from Jack Nicholson derails a film of otherwise commendable discipline. *Babel* shows the calibre critics have come to expect from Iñárritu, though it suffers from an insurmountably bleak world view and may tread too much on the toes of last year's winner *Crash* (and indeed, his previous, perhaps better films *Amores Perros* and *21 Grams*.) Ideally, it would come down to Greengrass and Eastwood, who have both broken incredible ground in the past year; *United 93* is a film few directors could have handled in terms of subject matter. Its stubborn refusal to sacrifice realism in favour of militant patriotism and a comfortable resolution deserves recognition. Eastwood's two films this year, *Letters* and *Flags of Our Fathers*, reflect an anti-war movement gaining not only legitimacy, but support with a balanced, eloquent and tireless voice. There could easily be two winners in this category, and if it came down to a tiebreaker, Eastwood's previous wins may sway the judges in favour of Greengrass. Tough call.

Of the Best Picture nominees

(*Babel*, *The Departed*, *Letters From Iwo Jima*, *The Queen* and *Little Miss Sunshine*), most have been previously discussed, save for the surprise entry in the category, the independent dramedy *Little Miss Sunshine*. It boasts an outstanding ensemble cast earning two Best Supporting nominations - including one for 10-year-old Abigail Breslin - and is an incredibly touching film by Steve Carrell, with a straight-forward charm that rarely strays into cloying sentimentality. But Oscar material? It's questionable, and the folks behind *United 93* might feel hard done by.

Judged on quality alone, *Letters* and *The Queen* appear to be leading the way, although *Babel* has the air of a piece that aware of its profundity, which may tempt the Academy. On the other hand, *Lord of the Rings* showed Oscar's love for the popcorn flick, and the sight of Scorsese taking away Best Director and Best Picture on the same night is far from inconceivable. Perhaps more than any of the other awards, Best Picture is wide open and picking the best out of the nominees is a gamble. For the sake of completeness, I would pick *Letters*, but, on the night, anything could happen.

And The Winner Is... Oscar's surprising tastes

Rocky (1976)

The plucky Philadelphia underdog fought his way into Academy hearts, knocking out Martin Scorsese's *Taxi Driver*. Stallone proceeded to rub it in by making terrible sequels.

Forrest Gump (1995)

Tom Hanks's appallingly sentimental war veteran, national sensation and all-round irritating putz inspired Academy judgements to the

extent of overlooking *The Shawshank Redemption*, now accepted as one of the best films of all time.

Crash (2005)

All the hype building up to the ceremony had been pointing towards a resounding victory for Ang Lee's depiction of love and repression in *Brokeback Mountain*. Paul Haggis's stylish and cold presentation of race relations in Los Angeles took the win instead.

Campus bands prepare to do battle

Musical oddities abounded at the heats, says **Stephen Mitchell**, but are we providing them with a big enough platform? He joins the crowds at campus' only music event to assess the competition and ask what York is doing to cultivate aspiring musical talent

Battle of the Bands is many things to many different people: for some, it is the opportunity to swap the chill of a February night for the humidity and over-enthusiastic smoke machine of Goodricke dining hall. For others, it is simply a chance to cheer on their housemates whilst getting in a few drinks at McQ's bar. Most importantly, however, it is the premier showcase of the myriad of talents that compose the University of York's music scene.

A trip to one of the heats displays the variety of aural oddities being written and performed behind the breeze-block walls of the University. I attended Heat 4, which had everything a music fan could expect, with an abundance of theatrics and eccentricity. Participants blurred the lines between catchy, alternative and, in some cases, profoundly strange. From the 'Progressive Dressing Gown' of Juliet Bravo to the pop-punk of Playing for Keeps, the audience experienced live drum 'n' bass, blues, a 'reggae-rock' rendition of 'Eye of the Tiger' and the spectacle of the Ten Whistling Boys' oversized cardboard masks, with an added accordion.

Yet the evening left me wondering what Battle of the Bands provides as part of a music scene divided between

infrequent live college events and individual perseverance. Dom Shaw, of competing quartet Juliet Bravo, stressed that it is "important that students turn out for events like this, as the opportunities for bands in York are quite limited". Whilst there are occasions where students can air their developing sounds, such as termly Halifax Xtra and YUSU live events, the noticeable lack of a central campus entertainment venue suggests that the University music scene will continue to remain sadly sporadic. Groups with limited social followings will continue to compete at events such as Battle of the Bands, but the potential for these occasions to raise the profile of bands will be lost unless they are part of a thriving campus culture.

It is clear that there is no shortage of talent, but campus musical troops who have found success seem to have done so through their own talent and industry. OK Brandy, comprising several members of the University Folk Club, supported award-winning singer Rachel Unthank at the National Centre for Early Music earlier this term. Equally, others are taking it upon themselves to organise underground collectives; semi-finalists Tigernaut have performed at events as part of the

University's Burn the Jukebox group at venues such as the City Screen basement bar and Judges Lodgings. Yet, these remain limited and isolated; too often, awareness and support is reliant on hear'say and peeling paper flyers rather than as part of a regular scene.

'Support for campus bands is reliant on hear'say and peeling paper flyers rather than as part of a regular music scene'

Meanwhile, the musical melee of 2007 reaches its final stages this week and the remaining bands will all be hoping to repeat the successes of last year's winners, Conceptual Misfire. I will certainly be in attendance, exploring the sonic crossways that could someday place York on the musical map. It is only by supporting these occasions that the University can begin to aid and develop the neglected musical talents that are present in every corner of campus. Heading to the semi-finals this week is a good place to start.

Bottom left and below: the guitarist and drummer from Playing for Keeps



Clockwise from left: crowd members cheer on their friends at the heats; Arctic Fury made it through to the semi-finals; Chieftan Tayto didn't. Photos: Georgi Mabee



Meet the bands

We pick the hottest bands that made it to the semi-finals and get the verdict on them from **Mike Errico**, musician and editor of top music US mag Blender (www.errico.co.uk)



Clip the Apex

"Anti-indie ambient angst"

What they say: "We only really came together to make some noise at Battle of the Bands and scare some of the indie kids."

What we say: "Reminiscent of a more sedated My Bloody Valentine and, Clip the Apex provide a valiant attempt at emulating their pin-up Explosions in the Sky. Unfortunately, they lack the innovation and intensity of the former, which leaves their slow-brewing harmonies more a cacophonous jumble than a seamlessly fused instrumental progression."

What Blender says: "Clip the Apex swoop and dive like a British Deftones - not as brutal, but maybe as ambitious."



Playing for Keeps

"Playful pop with promising talent"

What they say: "We play happy, catchy pop-punk with a dash of ska. We're not worried about the competition; all the other bands give great cuddles."

What we say: "Unpretentious giddiness grounded by musical consistency and melodic substance. Nothing groundbreaking, but it'll keep you bobbing along merrily."

What Blender says: "Low cost recording software lends itself to lo-fi musical styles, but when applied to traditional genres, its weaknesses are exposed. The competent playing and structured songwriting here would benefit greatly from equally convincing production."



Santa Caesura

"Great name, dubious sound"

What they say: "We've been together a couple of months, researching how inebriated we can get, yet still be able to play semi-competently."

What we say: "Commercial potential is certainly there, but the catchy hooks are obscured by vocal and instrumental dissonance. The vocals are pleasant enough if they don't waver above an alto and they should do quite well if they remember to sound-check."

What Blender says: "Heavy guitar-based bands with a charismatic female lead vocalist will invite comparison to Evanescence, and the angular vocal harmonies in their radio-ready choruses seem fine with that. It's time to book a session in the studio."



Vudu Guru

"Ali barbar swinging a glow stick at a desert rave"

What they say: "We make music that is fun to dance to whilst trying to look as bizarre as possible!"

What we say: "Bedouin drum 'n' bass with Krishna-gone-electric. You have to give them props for creativity, but the manic jungle trumpeting borders on sounding like a strangled maccaw."

What Blender says: "Vudu Guru's penchant for Eastern harmonies, guitar synths, ska horns and drum 'n' bass beats mix uneasily at first, but if this catches your ear, they will be the only game in town. At the end of the day, originality is a definition of success in itself."

Budget fashion: Oxfam takes on

Collette Kerrigan ditches York's high street fashion stores and heads online to satisfy her strict clothing budget. But just how far will a tenner stretch on eBay?



I must admit, my technological abilities aren't really up to much. In fact, they stretch about as far as email and Facebook. With the aim of becoming more technologically savvy - and, of course, updating my wardrobe for 2007 - I took the new year as my opportunity to make the leap of faith that is being taken by millions of new generation consumers as they say "goodbye" to the the noise and clamour of high street crowds and "hello" to the joyfully simple prospect of no fuss, no hassle online shopping.

For many of us who have irritably elbowed our way towards Topshop in York on a Saturday, the rise of the high street store's online counterpart is being welcomed with open arms. From riverisland.com to the designer mecca that is net-a-porter (however far your student loan will stretch), internet shopping is an activity that is all too easily becoming a way of life for many student consumers in the 21st century. The prospect of sitting in front of your computer with a bowl of cereal and picking out what you want to wear to Toffs next week in between watching episodes from the 'Scrubs' box set is, as my flatmate discovered earlier this term, all too appealing. "Sometimes I just don't have the time to spend hours going in and out of the changing room," she says, her mouse hovering over an intriguingly patterned tunic-dress (apparently identical to that worn by

Peaches Geldof) from ASOS.com. "This way I can pick out what I like in half the time."

Forget popping into town to find a new outfit; she and millions of other consumers are trying internet shopping for size. The worry of giving out your credit card details right, left and centre is being flung aside as fashion magazines are dedicating pages upon pages to cyber retail therapy. Shopaholics everywhere can now indulge their addiction in the comfort and anonymity of their home, trundling virtually through an array of websites, desperately seeking that must-have item.

Looking through a number of popular fashion websites (purely for the purpose of this article, of course), I took it upon myself to become click-happy, see what bargains were in the cyber market and discover next season's essentials. With vintage prints and floral patterns key in February, many websites have added a huge range of 60s paisley and knit dresses to their collection. High-waisted jeans and shorts are also set to make a comeback. Personally, I'm sceptical on this front but, luckily, there is a broad range of sites that will offer me an alternative.

Beyond fashion, the exciting buys stretch further - although unfortunate-

ly so does the danger of going completely haywire. Another third year friend of mine who was previously unconvinced by internet shopping thought he'd branch out this Christmas with a remote controlled helicopter from redsave.com. After waiting over a month for delivery, he then crashed it in under an hour. The same friend debating Peaches's tunic also took the opportunity after a night out in an intoxicated stupor to catch last minute fashion buys, only to realise the next day that she'd racked up a £170 bill on clothes that were actually two sizes too big for her.

Sob stories aside, internet shopping's greatest time-waster is undoubtedly eBay: the famous online auction that's taken the world by storm. Mid-way through my online shopping experience, I felt obliged to browse around for a few more deals. Ten pounds, I was sure, wouldn't stretch too far. But a pair of slippers, an inflatable paddling pool, a poster and an alarm clock later, there was still change to spare. To be fair, it doesn't take a genius to work out that these items weren't great quality, but the principle is still there. And the possibilities of this site are endless: rubber dinghys, fire extinguishers, fancy dress and musical ironing boards - whatever takes your fancy. Huge numbers of people make a business out of eBay stores, selling copious items at reduced prices, but it's never a good idea to get too internet-immersed. I learnt a valuable lesson from a naive friend of mine who thought the site was a great way to make a few bob. Attempting to sell her £250 Tiffany necklace, her highest bid was only £25, which she was forced to

Fashion to your doorstep. Photo: Rachel Holloway

'Forget popping into town for a new outfit; millions of consumers are trying internet shopping for size'

Go click-happy for fashion on the cyber market

> WWW.ASOS.COM

Features fashion ranging from top-name brands to cheap celebrity imitations, all with the unashamed aim of helping you to replicate that outfit Paris Hilton wore out last night. Despite the scary emphasis on impersonating minor celebs, there are a lot of items here that you would be hard-pushed to find elsewhere, either online or in the real world.

> WWW.TOPSHOP.COM

Quite simply the best high-street fashion chain website; you could spend hours browsing the huge array of lines - but only after perusing the 'style tip-off' and 'lookbook'.

> WWW.LAYER-UP.CO.UK

Not the most professional site but underrated. Pull items of reduced-price designer gear together on a plastic mannequin. Cheap and fun.

> WWW.CLOGGS.CO.UK

A hub of brands - brands and almost indiscernable discounts on everything you could possibly desire, from furry bomber jackets to wrap-around sunglasses. Kit yourself out in top-toe designer gear or select just a few choice quality items at sale time. Picks include cheap jeans and the full spectrum of Converse trainers, and all with free delivery in the UK.

accept, according to the eBay terms and conditions.

Nonetheless, I can't help but be drawn to the appeal of computer crazed shopping. Relishing these exclusive online deals, you also avoid the changing room challenges of queuing for twenty minutes to try on an outfit that really wasn't worth the time and effort. But is the online gamble of clothes fitting worth the hassle either? Yes, if you know what you're doing and so can avoid shipping back and forth clothes that don't fit or jewellery that looked far better on accessorize.com. My advice is to save that new pair of faith.com shoes for a better occasion than traipsing through town and jump on the virtual band-wagon.

online shopping

It's not just online shops offering up the bargains. Charity shops cater for the more ethical shopper, as **Heloise Wood** discovers

Bob Geldof has attacked charity shops in the UK, claiming that their 'ubiquitous sprouting' signalled the 'first sign of decline'. When asked what inspired such hatred, Geldof replied: "Shite clothes." Now, Geldof may be famous for many things but style is simply not one of them. He is also gravely in the minority where charity shops are concerned. The public continues to embrace 'conscience shopping'. Equally, charity shops have shown extraordinary innovation, their rising profits in contrast to the recession looming over the high street. Retail insiders agree that it is online shopping that is largely keeping the high street afloat. So how are charity shops 'sprouting' in such a harsh retail environment?

The charity shop is a relatively recent invention; it was only in 1947 that an Oxfam shop was opened in Oxford with profits going directly to charity. There are now over 7,000 charity shops in the UK.

Oxfam continues to set the bar for innovation and has branched into many imaginative outlets. They now have many different types of shop, selling everything from books and music to bridal garments and homeware. York boasts one of the only five Originals shops and the only hospital Oxfam shop resides in York District

Hospital. Oxfam has also been present at the music festivals for the last three years, stocking

items that would be 'unsaleable in a high street' such as fairy wings, stick-on ears, ball gowns and of course wellies. (Next time you donate your old stick-on ears, you'll know where they'll be going.)

So how are the other charity shops competing? Beyond Ourselves Charity Shop, a church-sponsored shop in Durham, opened an adjoining café four years ago. It's oddly comforting to have tea and cake surrounded by clothes and bric-

'Charity shops have shown extraordinary innovation in raising profits'

a-brac, almost like sitting in your friend's bedroom (it was also a bargainous £3.60 for 2 pots of tea and 2 toasties.) Meanwhile, St Leonard's Hospice is a York-based charity whose shops started life as a monthly garage sale. As the queues stretched longer and longer down Tadcaster road, they decided to start an actual shop: the first opened seventeen years ago, there are now seven. I talked to Helen Moreton, the organisation's retail manager. "We opened the first one, not really knowing what was going to happen and it's gone from strength to strength. Everyone talks about our modern, throwaway society but we are able to utilise that in a positive way."

Donations have suffered in recent years with the growth of eBay.

However, like Oxfam, St Leonard's have used eBay to sell highly priced goods. Another threat is supermarket clothing which is now cheap enough to compete with charity shops: "We used to sell t-shirts for a few pounds but now by the time an Asda T-shirt becomes second hand we can't sell it for much." The charitable aspect is almost

taken for granted: charity shops appeal to the fashion brigade because of their unique collectables at bargain prices - the fact that the money goes to those in need is almost an afterthought.

However, the industry is blessed with creativity and innovation: St Leonard's Hospice shops hold a prestigious annual fashion show, showcasing the best items from the shop and creations from local artists and designers, and tickets always sell out in advance. A sense of palpable anticipation was in the air as the manager took to the stage to announce the models as they sashayed down the makeshift catwalk. Many were elderly volunteers and bantered the compe, angrily correcting their supposed sizes ('I've lost weight, remember!'). There is a chance to buy the featured clothes afterwards but such is the flurried excitement of the masses, it is not for the faint hearted. As well as tickets and clothes sold, the fashion show is important because it raises the shops' profile. "People who normally say 'I wouldn't set foot in a charity shop, I'd never buy second hand clothes', get to see some of the amazing stuff we get in."

So what next for charity shops? Well, Oxfam recently announced it was going into second-hand car dealership (the accompanying headline on the press release: 'Now there's a second-hand car dealer you can trust!'). They aim to sell a car a month as part of their Valued at Oxfam campaign, a new bespoke service that specialises in high-priced goods, encouraging people to think more creatively about donations. The latest car to be sold is a 1965 Mercedes 190C Fintail, for £7600, providing clean drinking water for 9000 people.

The British Heart Foundation on Bridge Street is offering the chance to write a message in the shop window for Valentines Day, for the princely sum of a pound. It may sound corny but many are refreshingly frank, such as: 'Wow, I can't believe we made it forty years together!' The bar is continually being raised for innovative working practise and it will be interesting to see how they develop. Perhaps the next step forward is an in-house dating agency where militant old dears can grill potential candidates whilst steaming clothes? Stranger things have happened.

The scientific briefing with **Miranda Addey**



Climate change: who can deny it now?

It was the polar bears what done it. Last month the Bush administration finally acknowledged climate change and global warming, no longer able to ignore the polar bear's plight. The Department of Interior classified the statuesque creature as "threatened" under the Endangered Species Act. In theory this means the US government must not only find a recovery plan for it, but are also forbidden from "enacting, funding or authorising [actions which] adversely modify the animal's critical habitats".

Good news for fighters against climate change, and the battle has an ally in a new UN report, the biggest and most comprehensive of its kind. Compiled by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change it states that there is an over 90% chance that humans have caused climate change, an extreme and dire warning of the consequence of our actions on the world. It says that the process is irreversible and will go on for centuries.

The panel comprises over 2,500 scientists from over 30 countries: not a body to be ignored. It estimates that by 2100 the world will have increased in temperature by between 1.8°C and 4°C. It may not seem much, but the report elaborates on what this means, and it's not a world you would want for your children. Best case scenario: millions left without water, a third of all species extinct and many places become deserts. Worst case scenario: melting ice caps displacing millions of people and wide scale migration as southern Europe becomes desert. Half of all species become extinct and agriculture collapses in Australia. If temperatures reach the higher end of the increase, life as we know it will fall apart. Food supplies will run out and south and east Asian societies will collapse. Eventually humanity will be extinct apart from a few outposts near the poles. Deserts will stretch across the globe, and the oceans will be stagnant. A bleak future.

With the release of Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* last December these ideas are anything but new. The fight against this challenge to humanity certainly has supporters. The Stern Report, by economist Sir Nicholas Stern, provides an extra angle on the UN's report, outlining the benefits of using low carbon technology and refuting the idea that humans are blameless. Unlike the UN report it highlights ways of combating this change, saying that although we cannot hope to affect the next 40 or 50 years, what we do now will have a significant impact in the future.

So how can people possibly argue against all these experts? Can they still say this isn't happening or that we are not the cause? Yet the deniers are out there, not least some of my fellow physicists. When I brought it up around the physics table there pro-

STUDENTSURVEY:

Are you doing enough to combat climate change?

Yes: 20%

No: 80%

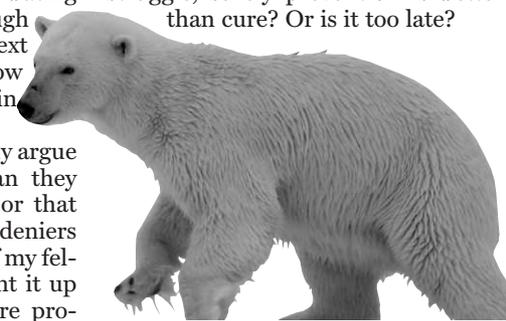
ceeded a long argument as to whether it is human-caused or actually happening at all. Channel 4 has commissioned a show entitled 'The Great Global Warning Swindle' which says that man-made climate change "is a lie, the biggest scam of modern times". Strong words: but is there any truth in this claim?

The main argument is the discrepancies between predicted increases in temperatures and that observed by satellites and weather balloon instruments. This has been refuted by scientists of NOAA, who state that the instruments were in error, not the climate change models. Another argument is that climate change is not man-made, but even if this were true we are feeling the dangerous consequences. It is far more likely that humans are speeding up whatever natural changes are occurring, ending - either naturally and slowly, or induced and quickly - with our ecology being exterminated. The UN report also highlights rising CO2 levels, the quickest rise in the past 800,000 years. The report also goes some way to discrediting the idea that solar activity is the cause of the perceived increase in temperatures.

The greatest challenge to combating climate change is the very essence of the way we live, notably energy sources and the carbon emissions prevalent in our daily routines. The Kyoto Protocol is an international agreement calling for cuts in greenhouse emissions and green trading. Many countries have not ratified it, most notably the US. A follow up plan was due for development but stalled in its early stages. Will the new report force countries to commit?

On a more personal note there are initiatives to help us play our part, including carbon foot-printing and Facebook groups started with this in mind. Did you participate a couple of weeks ago when thousands simultaneously switched out their entire electricity supply for five minutes?

Whatever the solution to this devastating trend, Bush's idea of giant mirrors to reflect the sun's rays seems desperate. In the face of this crucial struggle, surely prevention is better than cure? Or is it too late?





Uncle Matthew

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

Dear Uncle Matthew,

I need your help. I really want to run for a prominent position on the Students' Union next year, but I'm not sure I have the charisma, or the looks, to carry off a political campaign and win votes. I feel politics is in my blood (my father is a Conservative councillor), and that I could really offer something to student society. How can I go about setting my foot on the political ladder and make myself cool enough to be part of the SU?

Ugly, Halifax

Dear Ugly,

You are clearly severely lacking in self-confidence. I would therefore suggest that what you are in need of is a big boost to your sense of self-esteem, something that would make you feel happier in your own skin and more confident in your abilities as a politician. Have you ever considered botox? Not only might this go some way to improving your currently unimpressive looks; a static, unresponsive face would also provide you with a handy excuse for your lack of charisma. Just remember the advice I give to all aspiring politicians: if you want to go into politics, you must first learn to love yourself.

Kiss, kiss,

Uncle Matthew

Dear Uncle Matthew,

Perhaps you can help me. One of my housemates is driving me mad. He literally does not have a personality - he's like an amorphous collection of cells living in my house. Also, he always leaves the toilet seat up, listens to country and western music and keeps a stash of porn under the living room sofa. How should I approach him to talk to him about this? There doesn't seem to be an easy way to tell someone that they have all the personal charm of a dishrag.

Frustrated, Tang Hall

Dear Frustrated,

I always think it is important to try and resolve disputes as amicably as possible. If your housemate seems uncommunicative, perhaps you should try to find some common ground between the two of you? Once you've built up a working relationship the possibility of having a decent conversation, and a chance to air your views, will make your job a lot easier. One of the best ways may be trying to appeal to his interests. From what you've told me, I propose you confront him about his behaviour whilst wearing a Stetson hat and nothing else. Then you should be assured of his full attention.

Big hugs,

Uncle Matthew

Dear Uncle Matthew,

Please, please help me. There is a poltergeist living in my broom cupboard, and I am completely petrified. I tried to ignore it at first, but it has become impossible to sustain the pretence. I know it comes into my room and watches me while I'm asleep. Also, it keeps stealing my milk and knickers. I haven't swept the floor in 6 months, because I can't bring myself to open the cupboard and face its wrath. I can't sleep at night. What shall I do?

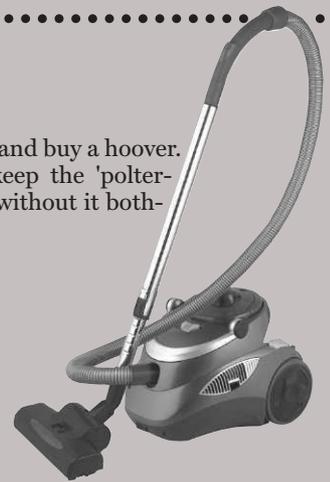
Terrified, Fulford

Dear Terrified,

Forget about the broom and buy a Hoover. That might also help keep the 'poltergeist' occupied at night without it bothering you...

Cuddles,

Uncle Matthew



If you have a dilemma to put to Uncle Matthew, please email it to socs12@york.ac.uk

www.NOUSE.co.uk

Check out the improved Nouse website, with:

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Comments - read what people are saying about the latest articles

Porters petition - sign Nouse's open letter to save our porters

Plus all the stories and pictures from this and previous editions

Keep an eye out for more improvements in the near future

Nouse meeting tonight:

Come along to our meeting at 6.30pm tonight in W/307 to discuss this edition, meet the editorial team and get involved in the next edition of Nouse

Andreas Masoura



Terrorism, violence and alarming incompetence: Welcome to York

Incompetence on campus

As the deconstruction and deterioration of the University of York continues, with Porters being the latest asset to gradually disappear after the closure of so many bars last term, I sit pondering what might go next. Perhaps, with any luck, the Roger Kirk Centre might be bulldozed. The toilets could then be auctioned, providing funding for a facility or two. Many an afternoon has been spent dreaming of the day beer might flow through Roger's disused beer pumps, whilst defiantly trying to digest the ever popular Roger Kirk fishcake.

Yet again the University has displayed a frightening inability to function and organise itself effectively. After three months of summer holidays proved to be insufficiently long to fit some kitchens in Goodricke College, the University now simply cannot hire any porters.

What concerns me more than the

risk of this becoming a permanent cost-cutting solution is the attitude displayed by the SU President. A man elected and paid to represent the views of the students is discouraging any student action. I think the Nouse petition's 1200 signatures suggests that quite a few students are concerned about the situation, as opposed to the pathetic 250 votes cast in the latest UGM.

It's about time students were backed by and represented by a president that they elected on the basis that he would do so. Instead it appears we have a leader who is primarily concerned with avoiding accountability by agreeing to sign only with the greatest reluctance, perhaps in order to keep his name clean and make sure University feathers remain unruffled.



Nothing's changed then. I feel a vote of 'no confidence' coming on, so do feel free to write in with any thoughts.

Oh dear, I'm never going to be able to get into Toffs for free ever again. I'll just stick with Ziggys, since it's free, and make sure I avoid the stairs outside, around the back; a popular Rugby team and SU officer hang out apparently. There's banter and then there's slander.

God bless the Welsh

I send my most sincere hopes for a speedy recovery to the student who was beaten in Derwent after a rugby match involving Scotland and Wales. It's refreshing to see such a strong rise in nationalism with so many people willing to fight for their country. I've always been a firm believer in violence as a solution for most things, especially to preserve national identity. God bless the King. Sorry, I mean Queen. I'm informed she's not dead yet. Unlike most universities, York has maintained its purity by including a record number of ethnic minorities. *Nouse* interviewed 75 percent of them, which isn't as impressive as it sounds, since there were only three of them.

York on terror alert

Security concerns around campus

emerged as a *Nouse* reporter broke into the Chemistry department. Driven by a sudden hunger, he embarked on a mission to find a chemical combination to make food. However, if you substitute our reporter with Abu Hamza, and hunger with desire to make explosive orange juice that could be used to destroy planes (or at least make the seat wet if spilt accidentally), then disaster would occur. I propose that all rucksacks carried around campus should now be clear.

Typical student protest

I would like to offer my most heart-felt congratulations to the two students who protested against Guantanamo Bay by dressing up in orange boiler suits and bending over outside the library. However, I couldn't help going over and reassuring them that there was nothing to worry about, since they came from a good, fox-hunting background and therefore did not fit the Guantanamo criteria. They promptly left.

A vision of a libel case

I'll be expecting a formal apology from *Vision*, or perhaps more suitably *Handicapped Vision*, for falsely alleging I wanted to write for them. I'd rather write on shards of glass using my own excrement. If not, I'm sure we'll be meeting in York Magistrate's Court sometime soon.

Filling in the gaps

The University of York is becoming an increasingly dangerous place to be. Firstly, if you are being robbed, beaten up by a mob of rugby fans or murdered in the middle of Derwent dining-hall, you can expect the porters to be along in half-an-hour or so - but not before (through no fault of theirs, but one must consider costs, dontcha know).

You can't go near the Chemistry Department for fear of journalists trying to make bombs out of things they find lying around (just to prove it can be done), and you can't go near the Physics Department because the Ministry of Defence is paying them to make real bombs. They have fortified the department since a cheeky anonymous letter from Derwent alerted the government to the looming crisis on campus (Tax-free cous-cous? Does that even make sense? No!).

You can't go shopping in York town centre because you'll get stopped and beaten up at Amnesty's Israeli checkpoint (all in the name of bringing the message home to you though, you fascist pig, and all the guns and uniforms are made by Fair Trade

approved manufacturers - no Fruit Of The Loom AK47s here), which doesn't matter, because you can't even get near the town centre now that the RAG parade has reached critical mass and every street from Heslington to Micklegate is filled with drunk Derwenters dressed as dalmations. Or cows. Or whatever they were. Every street, that is, except for those around the Badger Hill area, where residents have barricaded themselves into their homes and are shooting at anyone they suspect of being a student with WWII surplus rifles.

The only ray of sunshine in the whole affair comes when the BNP decide to leave - not because of York Unity's protracted and vicious leafleting campaign, but because they're all terrified by the descent of utter madness. I hear the remaining loyal knuckle-dragging skinhead racists are relocating their operations to somewhere safer, like Baghdad. I think they plan to take that dalek with them, too. Good luck to them, I say. That thing's bloody dangerous.

By Nicky Woolf

STUDENT TAPAS NIGHT
Monday evenings, 5 pm till close

All Tapas
£2.75 each

Melton's
too



Student ID needed from
from one person

Arts Reviews

BOOK: THE WINTER ROSE
 AUTHOR: JENNIFER DONNELLY
 PUBLISHER: HARPER COLLINS
 PRICE: £6.99
 REVIEW: RACHEL HOPKINS

★★★★★

Set in the 1900s against the cruel backdrop of turn-of-the-century London, this epic book is bound to become a favourite on your bookshelf. Donnelly tells the story of a woman fighting against her parents and society to become a doctor. She dreams of changing the fate of London's poor against all the criticisms of her fiancé and boss. In a slightly bizarre - yet not wholly unbelievable - twist of fate, she saves the life of one of the ring-leaders of gangland London. As with all fairytales, opposites attract and they fall for each other: idealistic do-gooder India Selwyn-Jones and king of the brawls, the notorious Sid Malone.

What follows is guaranteed to keep you reading as the real story unfolds; moving from London to Africa and California, the characters are all on a journey of discovery; one filled with murder, corruption and brutality from the most unlikely of candidates.

With plot twists littered throughout, this book provides a fascinating glimpse of a bygone era whilst remaining historically accurate and fabulously gripping. A definite must-read for anyone with a love for both romance and action.

CLASSIC BOOK REVIEW

BOOK: THE REMAINS OF THE DAY
 AUTHOR: KAZUO ISHIGURO
 PUBLISHER: FABER AND FABER
 PRICE: £7.99
 REVIEW: SARAH STRETTON

★★★★☆

This is a novel that both frustrates and compels. In his most celebrated work, Ishiguro presents us with a beautiful and intense portrayal of an ageing butler, Stevens.

The novel is set across six days in which Stevens undertakes a journey to discover himself and the consequence of past decisions. His journey is motivated by his repressed feelings for Miss Kenton, the former housekeeper, as we slowly learn through successive episodes of nostalgia. Stevens is a ghost of a lost profession and generation, and it is through his narration that we are forced to reconsider our ideas of the meaning of dignity, love and life.

One of the most dexterous achievements of this novel is Ishiguro's success in revealing Stevens's character to everyone save the narrator himself. The pace of the novel, like the protagonist's character, has the potential to frustrate. But this appears to be Ishiguro's intention, contributing to the ingenious construction and structure of the novel. Despite being difficult to get into, it is fundamentally a simple story delivered with seamless eloquence, and as such, well deserves perseverance.

Amy Milka slips on her dancing shoes and boogies with some University dance societies

University dance has received mixed publicity recently. The cliquy image associated with performing arts in general is hard to shake off. But, as the build-up to the extravaganza that is Fusion continues, I find out what's going on and how to get involved.

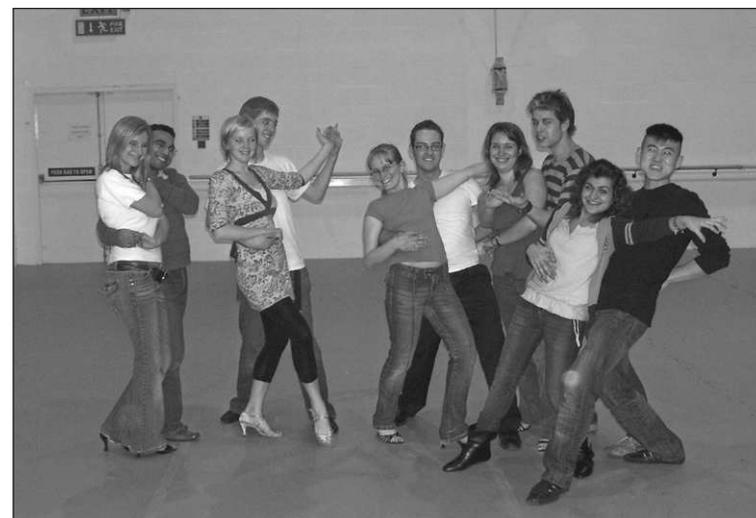
Lucy Davies and Emma Meigh, the Dance Society chairs, are keen to dispel the old myths. "We're not in the least bit exclusive! The society caters for all levels and abilities. We aim to offer something for everyone, from people who began dancing at a young age to complete beginners." The variety of classes that the society offers reflects this diversity - jazz classes, break dance, jive, tap, beginners and improvers salsa and street dancing are all on the menu, plus specialist workshops every term which range from advanced classes, to belly dancing, to afro-cuban body movement.

The society currently boasts over 700 members, making it one of the largest on campus, and it's still growing. Secretary Nat Carter explains, "we're a successful, self-sufficient society, and over the last few years we've grown dramatically. The increased interest means we are constantly expanding our

capabilities and adding new classes." It's not all hard graft though, and with classes comes a varied social scene, from fancy dress to salsa social nights where students can try out the moves they've learnt. "We're keen to see new faces at our socials, and it's a great way to get to know your committee", they tell me. "We're having a dance film night in Week 6 and we hope plenty of people will come along."

Classes aside, this is a very active society. Auditions give all members a chance of strutting their stuff on stage, be it at a charity event such as Stop AIDS or Make Poverty History, or a well-known campus event like Woodstock or the infamous Fusion. "This year's Dance Society scene at Fusion is a really special one", says Lucy, "as this time many classes are taking part." In addition to on-campus performances, a group from the society will be representing York at this year's inter-university competition in Loughborough. "We're entering the hip-hop category, but in the future there's the potential for students to represent us in other categories, too", Lucy explains.

The committee will be holding elections in Week 9 for all



Dance Society's salsa improvers get ready to strut their stuff

positions, including two reps for each class, a secretary and the chairs. Anyone can run for a place, no experience required. "We're a friendly bunch and want everyone to enjoy our classes. You don't have to go with a friend, just turn up and meet some new people!" Ben Dove, salsa rep, says. "And it's definitely not just for girls", he adds. "Salsa is fun and sociable, and I get to meet lots of new people every week." The girls agree, "girls love a guy who can dance! That's our motto - making you look good on the dance floor".

Although the Dance Society provides the widest range of lessons, other societies are also flying the flag for dance in York. Jenny Frankish, chair of Ballet Soc, explains what's going on this term: "We are currently preparing

for a competition in Edinburgh against other university dance societies in the UK. Everyone who went last year had loads of fun and can't wait to go again. It's nice to have the opportunity to perform, as well as practise in classes." Members benefit from a Royal Academy of Dance trained teacher and, of course, plenty of socials. The societies are also succeeding in improving the dance facilities at the University; the last year has seen the transformation of the minor sports hall into a dance studio with mirrors and barres for the ballet dancers.

Dance Society class times are available at www.uyds.co.uk, and information on Ballet Soc can be obtained via email: ballet@yusu.org. Try something new!

WHAT'S ON

Thoroughly Modern Millie
 From the York Light Opera Company
 York Theatre Royal
 13 - 24 February

The Pirates of Penzance
 A production by the University of York's Gilbert and Sullivan Society
 Central Hall
 15 - 17 February

Dead Fish
 An emotionally-charged tale from the Reform Theatre Company
 York Theatre Royal
 22 - 24 February

Mad Forest
 Presented by Out of the Blue Theatre Company
 York Theatre Royal
 27 February - 3 March

The Vagina Monologues
 Does it need an introduction?
 Grand Opera House
 28 February

Blame
 The tale of a young girl who disappears from a council flat
 York Theatre Royal
 3 - 17 March

4.48 Psychosis
 A York University student production
 York Theatre Royal
 10 March

Drama Barn:

Stone Cold Dead Serious
 Week 6

Lying For A Living
 Week 7

Cricket on the Moon
 Week 8

SPOTLIGHT ON

Relationships: Contemporary Sculpture, at York Art Gallery until 13 May

Something exciting is happening at York Art Gallery. That may sound like a contradiction in terms, but it's true. The new exhibition 'Relationships' features artists you might actually have heard of (including several Turner Prize nominees) and is a great way to spend an hour basking in your cultural up-to-dateness. It's small, accessible and refreshingly short on those facetious, self-satisfied, 'clever' offerings that you often find

in exhibitions of this nature ("Look, a bed! I put it here myself!"). Work from the Hayward Gallery in London features alongside the gallery's own pieces, all dealing with the relationships between various aspects of modern sculpture. Highlights include Rachel Whiteread's 'Six Spaces', exploring the idea of negative space through the casting of the spaces under six chairs, and Lawrence Burt's 'Monument', which takes the idea of a monu-

ment such as Nelson's Column and miniaturises it. With contributions from Damien Hirst and Sarah Lucas, this is one of the most important exhibitions held here in recent years. Even if contemporary art isn't your thing, this good, small-scale taster might just convert you.

Isabel Buxton



TheatreReviews

Amy Scott talks to York students involved in the National Student Drama Festival

The annual National Student Drama Festival will this year be joining us in the sunny world of North Eastern Yorkshire or, more specifically, Scarborough. Seven venues in the town will host the crème de la crème of British student theatrical talent, between 29 March and 4 April. Talented youngsters ranging from GCSE students to recent graduates are competing to be selected for one of the ten performance slots available at the Festival. These places are highly prized and competition is high; on average 150-160 shows apply each year.

The main draw of the Festival for the students involved is the attention of theatre professionals, who give feedback on the productions and run workshops on their own area of expertise. The playwright Mark Ravenhill, who will be conducting one of the workshops this year, believes the festival to be highly important in helping the careers of those who pass through, noting that "the NSDF was a vital step in my development" and remarking on "how many thousands [it must] have affected in the past 50 years".

Productions originating here at

York have been successful at the NSDF in the past, and this year regular Drama Barn director Will Bowry is hoping to return to the festival and capitalise on the success of his previous entry *Gagarin's Way*. This year his production will be Adam Rapp's *Stone Cold Dead Serious*, a play which centres around a teenage boy called Wynne, who after becoming a champion video gamer, wins the chance to combat a samurai fighter in New York, 'what working class America's all about'.

Bowry is using two cast members from his previous production, Edward Watson, who'll be playing Wynne, and John Hoyle, who also spoke to me about their previous experiences of the NSDF. All agree with Ravenhill that the event is a fantastic opportunity for aspiring thespians and directors alike, Watson simply because he so rarely hears a positive outlook on the life of an actor. "All you ever hear is 'Don't go into acting', so it's great to be somewhere where you can hear success stories from people who've already made it and get away from the usual negativity". Bowry found the advice from professionals following the performances particularly helpful;



"It really raised the standards of the production to another level. The level of detail these people would go into was above and beyond the sort of consideration you have the time and resources to deliberate in your average student production".

However, although the positives of participating in the festival are apparent, the downsides of the organisational process can be very limiting; especially for those on a student budget. A large proportion of the work selected by the NSDF originates in high schools and sixth form colleges, bodies which tend to have funding for such artistic ventures. There is a £95 application

fee, attendance fees for all involved in selected productions, and the living costs of staying in the designated location for the duration of the festival. Combined, these costs mean that funding issues can be very restricting for university applications, and, as Hoyle points out, this raises a number of class issues about who ends up as a successful applicant.

In comparison to other theatre festivals, such as the Edinburgh Fringe, Bowry believes the potential for success for student productions is higher at an event like the NSDF. At the Fringe, punters and newspaper critics are frequently more inclined, and encouraged, to visit and review bigger scale productions. However, at the NSDF the small number of productions and competitive selection techniques mean that student drama receives the attention and consideration it can never quite receive at a full scale theatre festival.

If you'd like to see *Stone Cold Dead Serious* before its hopeful progression to the stage at Scarborough, it is running for four nights in the Drama Barn at the end of Week 6.

This year's National Student Drama Festival will be held in Scarborough



PRODUCTION: EPITAPH
VENUE: THE DRAMA BARN
REVIEW: HELEN CITRON



PRODUCTION: ROBBIN' HOOD
VENUE: CENTRAL HALL
REVIEW: JENNY O'MAHONY



PRODUCTION: WEST SIDE STORY
VENUE: CENTRAL HALL
REVIEW: STACEY GO



The untimely death of a woman and the resulting grief are not, perhaps, the obvious subjects for comedy. But Ollie Jones's production of *Epitaph* at the Drama Barn had audiences laughing from beginning to end.

The play is a series of cleverly linked sketches following friends Cory and Warren as they attempt to cope with the death of Georgia, a woman they both secretly loved. The character list far outnumbers the cast list, requiring the two actors to constantly flit between colourful roles, including an overdramatic French travel agent and a rather ignorant doctor.

Epitaph's wit is brilliantly absurd, highlighting, for example, the lunacy of our consumerist society as

we witness a brainstorming session in which pharmaceutical representatives consider naming an ambiguous orange pill 'boobs 'n' pussy'. However, its most effecting moments come when comedy chimes darkly with grief, exposing the depth of loss.

The intimacy of the Drama Barn and the stage's absence of props or scenery, save two chairs, meant that a stumble or missed beat in this incredibly fast paced piece would have been painfully noticeable, ruining the dazzling fluidity and off-beat comedy of the writing.

However, Nikolaus Morris and Chris Bush provided flawless performances, injecting complex scenes with spontaneity and capturing the moments of beautifully dark comedy perfectly.

Panto is a British institution. Judging by the crowds on the Thursday night I attended Pantoc's production of *Robbin' Hood*, it is also in rude health among the notoriously fickle student demographic.

The show's director Will Seaward and writers Benjamin Welby and Steve Henneberry have created a production full of in-jokes about top-up fees and conference guests, as well as finding space for the more traditional panto conventions, such as men in dresses and screams of "He's behind you!"

Of course, there were generous helpings of what York does best: pure, unadulterated lunacy. Cut to the scene changes, where the director's very own "Toilet

Stories', very loosely based on 'War and Peace', (ie. the characters in them were Russian) had certain members of the audience in tears of laughter.

The two villains of the show, the bestiality fanatic Gisele, played by Marc Vestey, and the Sheriff of Heslingtonshire (Matthew Lacey) had an excellent rapport (in more than one sense) on stage, and they stole the show with their dance scene.

The show's supporting cast gave it their all, and Robin himself, played by Rebecca Chalk, negotiated the fine balance between masculine and feminine with gusto. If this panto had one moral, it was simply this: cross-dressing is always the answer.

On a cold and wet Thursday night I traipsed over to Central Hall to see the opening night of *West Side Story*, with the hope that the musical would live up to my expectations. Luckily, the cynic in me was pleasantly surprised.

From the opening act, which illustrated the intense rivalry between the two warring neighbourhood gangs, the Jets and the Sharks, *West Side Story* convincingly took the audience back to life in the backstreets of 1950s New York.

From wise-cracking Riff (Oliver Regan) to hapless Officer Krupke (Chris Rowett), both major and minor characters displayed enthusiasm and flair in performing their roles. The cast lit up the stage, lending a

fierce intensity to the fight scenes, and at the same time managing to soften the tone for the romantic moments between Tony (Tom Rogers) and Maria (Miranda De Silva).

The singing was also excellent, with 'Maria' and 'America' deserving special mentions for showcasing several voices with exceptional vocal range. Minor flaws, such as certain actors occasionally lapsing into an English accent and the dance sequences not being quite synchronised, did not detract from the overall superb performance.

Gripping and energetic, 'West Side Story' is something that promises to liven up an otherwise boring night, even for cynics like me.

MusicPreviews

SAM NOBLE

Don't let the man get you down



The music industry would have the music-buying public believe that 'illegal' downloads are killing their industry. Yes, you there, poor student: by downloading MP3s, you're bringing the fifty-year-old thriving British industry to its knees with a gun to its overgrown head by the mere stroke of an enter key. So while you hesitate over whether to download, stuck in a moral quandary over actively supporting gangsters and pirates, perhaps we should entertain a crazy idea and acknowledge the truth.

CD sales have, in fact, increased steadily since the late nineties. Our downloading has hardly dented the rapidly rising graphs that the labels' share-holders read with delight; cigar in hand. Thanks to Tesco, Asda and the like, 80% of all CD sales now occur at the supermarket checkout at a cheap price that no record shop can compete with.

Major labels quickly realised that the music-buying public would never consider paying one pound for 'You're Beautiful' when their nefarious neighbour was downloading *Back To Bedlam* for free next door. Ignoring the shareholders' avaricious pleas, the labels went with their commercial sense and decided that paying full price for a single track, with no artwork, case or CD is short changing the customer. They were right. So don't pay for it.

But as I hesitate over the enter key, thinking of the musical treats I can savour for free, I wonder who, then, pays the price? Are new and exciting bands not getting signed because of my piracy? Are musicians poor, tired and homeless as a result of my online theft? If anything, downloading has provided new bands with the much needed exposure that has boosted their profile earnings. As The Kooks return to Brighton as millionaires and Arctic Monkeys limber up for a Glasto headlining slot, it becomes increasingly difficult to understand how exactly bands are being killed by our naughty, underworld stealing antics. There remains to be found an example of any band being killed by our collective piracy. Oh yeah, because no bands are. The Dead 60s debut album sales in fact suffered as the Copyright Protection built into the CD meant the songs could not be copied and therefore shared.

Maybe the labels just got their verbs wrong: downloading is killing/sharing music. Is this an easy mistake to make? Even our folks were sharing and copying music on tape cassettes, DATs and 8-Tracks in a pre-digital age. The debate over downloading seems to me to reveal a slow and reluctant reaction from an old fashioned industry to embracing a new and exciting time for music. Of course, my argument would collapse under a weight of hippy conjecture if CD sales and legal downloads had actually suffered because, as music fans, we don't want our bands to suffer from our inbuilt student economising.

Downloading has re-invoked a punk rock ethic in music, spreading the word of many bands without the previously restricting need of major label support, and has bred a generation of over-zealous fans whose prolific music tastes threaten to surpass even the mighty Sir John Peel.

SHOW: JARVIS COCKER
 VENUE: THE PLUG, SHEFFIELD
 PREVIEW: ROBIN SEATON
 DATE: 15 + 16/02/07



Jarvis returns! Again! This time, not only has he lost the glow-in-the-dark skeleton suit of Relaxed Muscle but his surname has also been discarded. Fortunately, his ability to craft anthemic choruses and create vignettes in a few couplets remains intact, as owners of the new album *Jarvis* will already be well aware.

Once again, Jarvis is working with Pulp guitarist Richard Hawley, the second time they have collaborated since Pulp went 'on hiatus' in 2002, but these gigs should prove something of a contrast to Jarvis's most recent musical outing, performing 'Do the Hippogriff' with most of Radiohead in 2005's *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*.

Concerns that Jarvis may be less relevant now than during Pulp's Britpop heyday are not unreasonable, but really they were never a part of the movement in the same way that Oasis or Blur were. As it is, the songs on *Jarvis* are probably more of their moment than almost any record currently on release, from the gloriously New Labour-baiting '(Cunts are still) Running the World' to the Mondeo Man-goading 'I Will Kill Again'. And all this despite a Velvet Underground sample forming the backbone of 'Black Magic'.

In any case, the long term influence of Pulp on British guitar pop is by now an



Jarvis can have his chip and eat it too

affirmed phenomenon; the Long Blondes, among many others, bear plenty of the hallmarks of their Sheffield forebearers, in a chain of observational wit that goes back through Pulp to The Jam and beyond.

These two sold out hometown gigs (the one on the 15th added, inevitably 'by popular demand') at the Plug, a mere two and a half miles from Jarvis's Nether Edge Hospital birthplace, are sure to be attended by a hardcore Sheffield fanbase (plus the odd southern fly-by-night) and, for anyone who believes wit has a place in pop, will be the highlight of the year. Tell your housemates, tell your friends and, eventually, tell your grandchildren: you saw Jarvis Cocker!

SHOW: SIGNAL FAILURE
 VENUE: LEEDS BRUDNELL SOCIAL CLUB
 PREVIEW: OLIVER ELLIOTT
 DATE: 15/2/07



On the 15 February, iLiKETRAiNS, the brilliant Leeds post rock band and caps lock mavericks, host a night showcasing their favourite new bands from around Britain. Although a performance by the band itself is unlikely, with a hand picked line-up let's just say chances are you won't be disappointed.

First on the bill are Maps, a curious mixture of post-rock ambience and lo-fi production, with three sought-after singles released so far to much acclaim. The Early Years, on the other hand, offer a purer and gentler, but just as varied, sound, with carefully orchestrated psychedelic guitars, droney drums and swirling synths. Their self-titled debut was released back in September to a very warm reception from the music press.

However, the main draw of the night will be the new band: Troubles. Despite sharing four of the same members as the now defunct Hope Of the States, the newbies have a fairly different sound. Godspeed-like soundscapes dominate and the slightly questionable singing talent of Sam Herlihy is thankfully absent. On top of all this is a DJ set by Ulrich Schnauss, assorted short films and chess. How could anyone say no to that?

With tickets at just £6, and a pleasingly hefty railcard discount, no self-respecting post-rock fan should miss this.

ON THE UP: THE MACCABEES

Sam Noble

"Someone said we sounded like a cross between Cliff Richard and Joy Division", The Maccabees singer Orlando Weeks muses, trying to define their sound. "Cliff Richard used to look really beautiful. Like a man-boy," he wistfully laments.

Not that the decade-spanning, rubber-faced knight's influence can be heard in the band's quintessentially English, spiky-guitar sound - they sound more like a cross between the Futureheads and a happier Interpol. At least their sense of humour and candid,

to Orlando, following a cage fight with the audacious venue-pinching Justin Timberlake, they "brought sexy back".

Sitting in the back of their new, spacious double-decker tour bus, the band go on to tell me about their forthcoming debut album due in April, produced by Ben Hillier and Stephen Street, who've worked with Elbow, Blur and the Kaiser Chiefs. Their impressive, air-tight live performances and catchy songs have managed to inveigle the reputable producers: "We wanted it to sound like the best live show

you could come to." But the band remains as cool as ever about their recording experience. "An album should be a snapshot of what a band's doing at the time."

The snapshot certainly looks promising; selling out almost all dates of their current tour, inciting word-for-word singalongs and critical acclaim to boot. Orlando even does the colourful and energetic artwork, "It's cheaper and less arguments that way." The band, who toured without drummer Robert Dylan Thomas on the last two tours (due to a broken arm from a

shoes. Elliott enthuses that the experience was "amazing, mind-blowing, they're the nicest guys ever."

The guys are extremely nonchalant about their steadily building success and prefer to focus on the music, as well as keeping it decidedly real from any notions of scene or genre. "We're pretty anti-social." Orlando pipes in, "We don't feel a part of any London or Brighton scene. But it's not a conscious effort not to be." With their feet firmly on the ground, there's no reason why this band can't be the mythical heroes the Libertines failed to be. Exciting times for an inspiring band.



MusicReviews

SINGLES REVIEWS

BAND: UNION OF KNIVES
SINGLE: EVIL HAS NEVER

Does the world need more indie bands trying to make dance music? "Genres are so irrelevant!" I hear you scream from your oh-so-cool discotheque. Well then, here's some more indie with synths and a house beat. There are hypnotically repetitive swirly bits and brooding build-up-and-WHAM bits that make it tick along quite nicely. Is this a non-rubbish direction The Killers could have gone for? Only just.

BAND: MUMM-RA
SINGLE: WHAT WOULD STEVE DO?

More synth. More break down/build up bits. But somehow this is really, really great. The anthemic sing-along chorus with a profusion of ah-ah-ing and the naive yet burningly confident vocals of the improbably named Noo means that this is smiling instead of glowering, a tune that pogos instead of performing a hairstyle-preserving nod to the beat. What more could you expect from a band named after the baddie from the Thundercats?

BAND: WILLY MASON
SINGLE: SAVE MYSELF

There's a lot to be angry about at the moment: war, inequality, and, on a more local level, the disintegration of the portering system. So where are all the protest songs? From the incomprehensible moaning of Thom York to the brasher American offering of Neil Young's 'Let's Impeach the President', there's not much new for the demonstrating crowds to sway to... until now! Willy Mason is back to lull you out of apathy. 'The culture's drowning in a bad dream', but he is offering you a raft.

BAND: HERMAN DÜNE
SINGLE: I WISH THAT I COULD SEE YOU SOON

Calypso horns, bongos and swaying acoustic guitars evoking flip-flops, sandals and people with dreadlocks sitting round campfires could be painfully teasing in arctic York, but the charm of the male/female harmonies and chirpy love story of this single means that the beach scene actually seems a tantalising possibility. With flavours of Belle and Sebastian and 'Graceland'-era Paul Simon, this is a fantastic tune for summer dreaming.

BAND: NELLY FURTADO
SINGLE: SAY IT RIGHT

Thank God all that Chris Martin nonsense is over. It's back to the good stuff with Timbaland; crunchy beats and barely-there instrumental accompaniments ripple under floating vocal harmonies. Slower and not as club-driven as 'Maneater' or 'Promiscuous', and apparently inspired by the Eurythmics, this song captures a different side to the collaboration, with a subtlety that the current crop of British popsters can only dream of.

Singles this week were reviewed by Ben Rackstraw, Sara Sayeed, Steve Gardner and Oliver Elliot.

BAND: EXPLOSIONS IN THE SKY
ALBUM: ALL OF A SUDDEN I MISS EVERYONE
REVIEW: STEVE GARDNER
OUT: 19 FEBRUARY

★★★★☆

Let's get this straight: new-rave this is not. With an average song length of seven-and-a-half minutes and an album title more emo than your younger sibling's wonky fringe, *All of a Sudden I Miss Everyone* is a long way from the bandwagon.

Over seven years and four albums, the Texan quartet have perfected their brand of galaxy-sized, emotion-drenched post-rock, often in the shadow of their better-known contemporaries, Godspeed You! Black Emperor and Mogwai. But what sets EITS apart from their peers is their lack of bullshit in a genre ridden with spoken-word samples and 20-minute feedback freak outs. You won't even find any lyrics here - Explosions in the Sky frankly have never needed them.

Using just two guitars, a bass and

drums, the extraordinary power and intensity created by an ordinary and underwhelming setup typifies the band's ethos that no note should be wasted; every sound should be stretched for maximum musical yield.

As a result, *All of a Sudden* is refreshingly organic, and, unlike their previous offerings, plays like an album rather than a haphazard assemblage of instrumentals.

Not that the classic EITS formula has been dispensed with. Drums pound and pound, rising relentlessly as a tremolo-picked guitar screeches and scythes through the thick, delay-soaked walls of another. Turn up the volume and the rising intensity is almost unbearable. This is their speciality: crescendos to implode your head.

And then, about 20 minutes in, relief. The post-climax feels like coming up for air with a huge and desperate gasp. The resulting adrenaline is still present, but now the coupling of tenderly stroked guitars and shimmering piano trills creates a near ecstatic euphoria.

Then it's over: exhausted, both band and listener sit back, light a cigarette, and rest safe in the knowledge that this is their best work yet.



SHOW: THE NOISETTES
VENUE: YORK FIBBERS
REVIEW: STEVEN WILLIAMS
DATE: SATURDAY 27 JANUARY

★★★★☆

Being billed as an 'Amazonian Warrior with an eye for fashion' or 'Billie Holiday on PCP' is something most people would find hard to live up to. But, for Noisettes singer Shingai Shoniwa, channelling the spirit of a dead jazz singer on drugs into the body of a fashionista suddenly seems somewhat restrained.

Over a set encapsulating most of the band's forthcoming album, she makes it clear she was born for such gleefully outlandish comparisons. Fresh from an arena tour with Muse, the Noisettes easily take over Fibbers. A succession of anthemic singles - 'Don't Give Up', 'IWE' and 'Scratch Your Name' - churn the crowd into a permanent mosh pit. The biggest eruption of the night, though, is reserved for the old-timey rockabilly of 'Sister Rosetta', in which Shingai straddles the security barrier before crowd-surfing the set to a finish. Basing a gig's success on audience maiming, the Noisettes can commend themselves on leaving my friend resembling a victim of domestic abuse.

Wondrously, they're also quite happy to ply their adoring fans with alcohol, leading me to a rather drunken purchase of a t-shirt more suited to an anorexic stunted hobbit than an actual human being. Ah well, you can't have everything.



BAND: THE SHINS
ALBUM: WINCING THE NIGHT AWAY
REVIEW: KATHRYN BROMWICH
OUT: NOW

★★★★☆

An impossibly cute Natalie Portman saying, "You gotta hear this one song, it will change your life, I swear" is probably the way most of us were introduced to The Shins. *Garden State* is what The Shins would be if they were a movie: its contrast of light-heartedness and sadness is essential to their music, and once again the formula works.

Don't be fooled by the misleadingly emo album title; The Shins are still a delightful combination of happiness and melancholy, albeit with a bleaker twist than 2003's *Chutes Too Narrow*. The sound goes back to their wistful debut *Oh, Inverted World*, poppier than The Magnetic Fields but darker than The Apples in Stereo, and is fundamentally uplifting. Feedback and layered electronic experimentation have made *Wincing* the first record in Sub Pop's history to chart in the Billboard Top 10. No wonder. The opener, 'Sleeping Lessons', is an understated dark gem, 'Australia' is pure chirpy delight, and the single 'Phantom Limb' is almost a poem.

The album's beautifully bittersweet with an overall atmosphere that's poetic and mesmerising. Life-changing they perhaps aren't, but their enchanting melodies are still something to treasure.



SHOW: CLAP YOUR HANDS SAY YEAH!
VENUE: MANCHESTER ACADEMY
REVIEW: STEPHEN MITCHELL
DATE: FRIDAY 2 FEBRUARY

★★★★☆

Before the Arctic Monkeys and Lily Allen, there was Clap Your Hands Say Yeah! Whilst the former acts found sudden fame and fortune on the digital gravy train, CYHSY contented themselves with mild industry recognition, and built on their own talent and the strengths of those websites championing their initially self-released debut album. A year and a half later, it appears their turn has finally come.

Much of their hotly anticipated set is unfamiliar, but is far from unrecognisable. The second song of the evening, the new single 'Satan Said Dance', will surely become a quirky classic to rival the group's earlier work. The performance is brought to life by an astounding vocal performance: shrill, nasal cries accompanied by constantly convulsing limbs which skip, trip and kick their way through the set.

The unmistakable favourites 'The Skin of My Yellow Country Teeth' and 'In This Home On Ice' are met with bouts of crowd-surfing and general pandemonium. As the band retreat to the still-pulsating sonic effects of the previous song, it is difficult to recall an encore more enthusiastically requested or ecstatically received.

Oscars Reviews

EDITOR'S COMMENT

David Coates **The Filmmaking Soc**

Each term, the York Filmmaking Society produces a number of high-quality short and feature-length films, made on a shoestring budget by a student cast and crew.

This time around, the society is doing some exciting work. One film investigates the nature of fiction and the artist's struggle to realise his or her place in a world increasingly averse to the imagination, while others have slightly lighter ambitions.

So far this term, the Filmmaking Society has made *Angel Wings*, *Puppet Master Soc*, and *Tomorrow's Superstars*, amongst others.

Angel Wings involves a writer suffering a crisis of confidence, who decides that his success is due to the intervention of a guardian angel, and fears he will not be capable of surviving alone.

Puppet Master Soc features a conspiracy theory that alleges the government is controlled by a group of 'ooglatists' and uncovers a most terrifying truth: they control Filmmaking Soc. The trauma of change and growing up is the central theme of *Tomorrow's Superstars*, as a group of 20-somethings are followed through the dreams of their youth into the harsh reality of the world at large.

For those with cinematic ambition, there are still plenty of opportunities to get involved with the society this term, which shoots throughout the year. This week, casting will be held for the fascinating new film *Red Light*. The plot is driven by a request from the lead character's psychiatrist that he keep a video diary to monitor his emotions. The diary documents his growing depression as he loses his job and finds his girlfriend sleeping with his best friend. Featuring intense dialogue and gripping drama, it is worth getting involved in this project. Contact Dominique at dlec500@york.ac.uk to get on board.

Also currently casting is *Immortality*, a dark 20-minute glimpse into a future in which ageing has been eliminated. Influenced by retro sci-fi and modern westerns, it tells a gripping story of three men whose lives are about to change. For casting information, get in touch with peb105@york.ac.uk.

All films made this year will be played at a special viewing at CityScreen at the end of the summer term, and then recorded onto DVD. For more information about making or acting in student cinema, the society's website is www.filmisthetruth.co.uk.

FILM: BABEL
DIRECTOR: ALEJANDRO GONZALEZ INARRITU
STARRING: BRAD PITT
CATE BLANCHETT
REVIEW: STEPH CREWES
RUNTIME: 142 MIN

★★★★☆

Babel is a powerful, mesmerising and unsettling film. It's named after the biblical Tower of Babel, the story of God punishing the Tower's arguing builders by giving them different languages, making it impossible to understand one another. *21 Grams* director Alejandro González Iñárritu brings beautiful lyricism to this multifaceted narrative about the imperfection of human communication and the consequences of one gun.

The film interweaves several storylines, each of which could have been individual films. American tourists Richard and Susan (Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett) can't communicate with local Moroccan villagers, Mexican nanny Amelia (Adriana Barraza) is misunderstood by American police and young Japanese girl Yasujiro (Kôji Yakusho) is unable to tell a boy she likes him because she is deaf and mute.

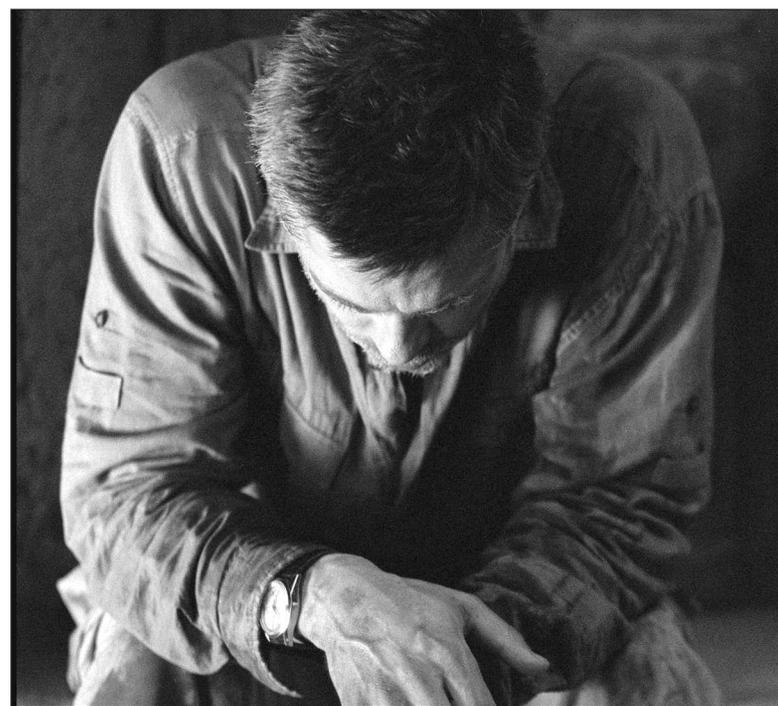
Babel opens with a Moroccan merchant buying a rifle to protect

his goats. In California, a Mexican nanny is taking care of two white children and desperately trying to find a substitute babysitter so that she can go to her son's wedding across the border. In Morocco, the children's parents are attempting to revive their failing marriage.

The innocence of the shepherd's two sons, who show off by shooting at a lone tour bus on the road below, unleashes a tragic chain of events as a stray bullet hits Susan, asleep on the bus. With no medical supplies and fears of a terrorist attack, it detours to the nearest village. The way the American tourists react to the villagers as all being potential terrorists is frighteningly narrow-minded.

The most fascinating and psychologically painful episode in *Babel* concerns Yasujiro in Tokyo, the young daughter of the gun's original owner. Her experience of trying to communicate with a hearing boy who she really likes is portrayed beautifully and Yakusho is a revelation.

Indeed, when she goes with her friends to a local club and the camera films from her perspective, the sudden cut from numbingly loud music to absolute silence is striking. Dancers around her adopt absurd meanings as they gyrate to some unknown beat. It is overwhelming as the viewer realises how she must feel and how utterly



misunderstood she must be.

The difficulty she faces is an expansion of the paradox at the crux of *Babel*. Though humans around the world can be so connected, they are separated by the prejudices that come with speaking a different language and being of a different race, as the Mexican nanny experiences.

The acting in *Babel* is harrowing and captivating. Yet publicity sur-

rounding the film was misleading, focusing on its Hollywood stars Brad Pitt and Cate Blanchett, when the film is so much more than them; theirs is the least interesting segment. Though confusing at times, *Babel*, like last year's Best Picture winner *Crash*, is an important film for what it teaches us about the frailty of human misunderstanding. I left the cinema feeling completely dismantled.

FILM: THE DEPARTED
DIRECTOR: MARTIN SCORSESE
STARRING: LEONARDO DICAPRIO
MATT DAMON
JACK NICHOLSON
MARK WAHLBERG
REVIEW: KATHRYN BROMWICH
RUNTIME: 151 MIN

★★★★☆

One of 2006's best-loved movies, Scorsese's latest is one to bet money on for Oscar night. With more emphasis on dialogue than action, it explores the psychology behind hate and criminality while supplying all the macho police talk and graphic violence you could wish for. Rife with deceit, secret identities, indistinct allegiances and misguided morals, Scorsese gives us a clever, fast-paced plot, sharp dialogue, understated humour and lots of suspense.

Billy Costigan (Leonardo DiCaprio) is an undercover cop infiltrating Boston's underworld who is so convincing that he gets away with ordering cranberry juice in grotty bars. Colin Sullivan (Matt Damon) is an altar boy-cum-policeman who is passing information to the villains. As each attempts to figure out the other's identity, things get intricate, especially when über-evil yet avuncular Frank Costello (Jack Nicholson) enters the picture.

The acting is superb; Nicholson is a memorable mob boss, potty-mouthed Dignam (Mark Wahlberg) steals every scene



he appears in and DiCaprio's acting tour de force matches his performance in *The Aviator*.

The numerous murders and grim surroundings are livened up by the upbeat soundtrack, ranging from Pink Floyd to opera to Irish folk-punk, filling the movie with an energetic life force and making it an ultimately uplifting experience. Sadly, Matt Damon's exaggerated overacting and the somewhat ignorable love triangle subplot detract from the whole, but not irredeemably.

The scenes are beautifully shot, capturing the grime and glamour of crime, and the build-up to the finale through the network of doubt and cover-ups is tremendous. Star-studded, epic and gritty in feel, *The Departed* has all the makings of a modern cult classic.

FILM: LITTLE MISS SUNSHINE
DIRECTOR: JOHNATHAN DAYTON
VALERIE FARIS
STARRING: GREG KINNEAR
TONI COLLETTE
REVIEW: ROBERT PERKINS
RUNTIME: 101 MIN

★★★★☆

The Academy Awards have a notable tendency to favour issue films, conscience prickers or historical biopics, and these genres are indeed handsomely represented this year. *Little Miss Sunshine*, however, is the surprise inclusion - the dark horse.

Emerging from the Sundance Film Festival, it is an oddball comedy following a massively dysfunctional family's roadtrip to California to enter daughter Olive in a national beauty pageant. Its phenomenally high-calibre cast all excel in their portrayals of a nucleus of, frankly, losers.

It is hard to single out one performance for special praise. Kinnear and Collette maintain their traditional high standards, Paul Dano is an emerging comedy talent, and Steve Carell is massively impressive as the suicidal Frank, in a performance of economy and nuance that is a world away from his painfully energetic performances of the Frat Pack inclination.

The shining lights of the film, however, come from the extreme ends of the age-spectrum in Olive (Abigail Breslin) and Grandpa (Alan Arkin). Grandpa in particu-



lar is hilarious - the embodiment of growing old ungracefully. He provides the main body of humour in a plot that is rarely contrived or forced in its comedy.

The plot may be unremarkable and even predictable, but the storyline is not this movie's appeal. *Sunshine's* sympathetic portrayals of its dysfunctional characters makes its tone at once wistful, touching, bittersweet and full of heart. It is reminiscent of *The Royal Tenenbaums* or *Sideways* except far, far funnier.

This film is not groundbreaking or daring, and it does not conform to the stereotypes of Oscar nominees for Best Film. It is, however, a beautifully told story and a simply brilliant movie that thoroughly deserves its nomination, and maybe even the Award itself.

Food&DrinkReviews



WHICH LOVE TOKEN?

Normally Nouse abhors a cliché like the public abhors Heather Mills McCartney. However, even we must acknowledge that Valentine's Day is approaching, and you had better buy your lover a present or there will be no sexytime for you.

We therefore trekked all the way to Costcutter in search of treats to tempt even the shyest of lovers out of their shell this Wednesday; here is what we found.

TREAT: FROZEN PEAS
PRICE: £0.79

If you are going out with a bird who just won't shut the hell up when she's told, or if you're a member of the hockey team, you might be the type who likes to speak the language of love with your fists. No, we're not talking about obscure sexual practices, but domestic violence, which we do not condone in any way because it is very bad. However, if you do have a tendency to smack your bitch up, you might like to present them with a bag of frozen peas on 14 February to hold against their heads until the swelling goes down. Those who don't know their own strength might like to invest in the extra large 400 gram bag. It's a little more expensive at £1.29, but if you really love them...

TREAT: LOVE HEARTS
PRICE: £0.25

Love Hearts, 25p for a 'giant pack'. Sadly, a 'giant pack' is not some sort of crazy pimped-up pack with Love Hearts the size of frisbees, but roughly the same weight as a pack of fruit pastilles or wine gums, approximately the height of a Cindy doll with its head ripped off. They are the confectionery item of choice for the mute romantic, as they express every sentiment for you - you need only open your mouth to chew. Sexy slogans found on recent Love Hearts include "hey buddy" and "u r ok".

TREAT: WHITE STRIKE
PRICE: £1.99

If your other half isn't up to scratch visually, then two litres of White Strike should do the trick, providing the ultimate beer-goggle experience. You will be overcome by an unrelenting urge to take your lover down to Tang Hall common and give them a jolly good seeing-to. Hopefully, if the powers of Strike have turned you into a love machine, your lover will remain by your side until morning to nurse your almighty hangover. Next time, choose more wisely - and that doesn't go for your drink.

Vicky Hallam and Lucy Peden

RESTAURANT: PRETENTION
ADDRESS: THE SUPER-POSH BIT OF STONEGATE
AVE. FOOD PRICE: £7000
AVE. DRINK PRICE: £5-10,000
REVIEW: LUCY PEDEN

★★★☆☆

As president of Rah Soc, I frequently bemoan the lack of pretentious dining establishments in York. Before I lived here I had no idea it was possible to roast a pine nut inefficiently, I have searched in vain for a single malt whisky over 30 years of age and cocktail prices are so insultingly low as to imply that York is full of (avert your eyes if you are easily shocked) poor people. So when I heard about a new restaurant called Pretention, I thought we had found a venue for our socials.

Pretention is a members-only bar but naturally Daddy knows the main stakeholder, so getting in was not a problem. Our secretary, Esmerelda Muff-Manger, ordered a bottle of vintage Bollinger '78 at a bargainlicious £500. (For an extra ten thousand pounds you

can have it served to you with a ladle that the Crown Prince of Uzbekakistan once used to bring his father to orgasm). As a little snack, treasurer Rodney Anal-Lovesitt requested a platter of nachos, a controversial choice until it emerged that the nachos were not made of corn, but dodo egg shells - all the more delicious for being so rare and valuable that eating them is probably illegal. They were accompanied by a medley of guacamole-esque jus based on the tears of the absinthe fairy, and a salsa of tomatoes picked by only the most educated orphans of the southern Mexican provinces. As a privileged person, I was touched by the bravery of their plight. Then I stuffed my face with it. Thomasina Inbred-Pederast was dismayed when she spilled some on her furry rah-boot, but one of the servants (although apparently they prefer to be called 'waiting staff') immediately fell to his knees and licked it off, which we all thought was a charming touch.

Pretention is not without its flaws. There is a little too much glass and chrome to be suitable to entertain Mater and Pater and some of the 'staff' have clearly never had an elocution lesson. Still, we had a lovely time, and the bill was well under a million pounds.



RESTAURANT: CAESAR'S
ADDRESS: GOODRAMGATE
AVE. FOOD PRICE: £8
AVE. DRINK PRICE: £3
REVIEW: ISABEL BUXTON

★☆☆☆☆



My friends and I ended up in Caesar's Italian Restaurant last Saturday lunch time. I had adventurously suggested Caesar's as an alternative to my usual trusted favourite, La Piazza. An unwise decision on my part, it soon emerged.

A bad impression was established the moment we walked into the restaurant. An open canteen-style kitchen towards the back of the dining room revealed a plethora of bored-looking chefs, who regarded our arrival into their domain with the disdainful expressions of people for whom, clearly, the customer is never right.

The waiter too was one of those charmless individuals whose service provision consisted of alternately ignoring and leering at us for the duration of the meal. At one point, I asked for tap water and was met with a long-suffering glare followed by the failure of said tap water to arrive until we were well into the main course.

The food arrived suspiciously quickly (I'm sure I heard the 'ding' of a microwave as it emerged) and my tortellini alla calabresi was bland and sorely overpriced. In short: bad atmosphere, poor service and distinctly average food. I would implore you to save your money and go to La Piazza.

PUB: THE BLACK BULL
ADDRESS: HULL ROAD
AVE. FOOD PRICE: £3.50
AVE. DRINK PRICE: £2
REVIEW: BERTIE DAY

★★★☆☆



Right in the heart of student-land, the Black Bull is ideally placed to become the new Charles or Deramore once you've moved off campus. The pub is split up into a formal restaurant (don't bother) and a slouchy area of squishy sofas and chairs to sink into. Before 4pm it is generally swarming with an odd mix of children and pensioners, but once they're gone it is relaxed, comfortable and well worth a visit.

Food is cheap with large portions; the cheesy nachos starter was certainly enough for two. I had a barbecue burger stack, served with chips and a side salad - not exactly haute-cuisine but for a baked bean-abused palate it hit the spot. It was standard pub fare but for only £3.45 it was a great deal. They also offer two meals for £6 available between 2.30pm and 6pm on weekdays. As you would expect, the menu includes all the usual suspects, including the Kaiser Soze soup.

If you're looking to warm-up before a night of debauchery, Monday's discount offers (£1.50 a pint rather than £1.80) makes the Black Bull the obvious choice for the financially challenged. New additions to the drinks menu make it a great time to check out the Bull - just go steady on the sickly sweet Baileys Chocolate Cup!

BAR: KOKO
ADDRESS: GOODRAMGATE
AVE. FOOD PRICE: N/A
AVE. DRINK PRICE: £2.50
REVIEW: VICKY HALLAM

★★★☆☆



I'd forgotten to put the lid on the smoothie maker again. Covered in banana residue and in a state of strawberry confusion, I remembered that I could enjoy both the fruity goodness and alcoholic privileges of a fruit beer courtesy of KoKo, York's newest watering hole.

Okay, Fruli may not count towards my five-a-day, but it went down an absolute treat. The international bar lived up to its name by providing a wide selection of beers and spirits from around the world; I was highly amused by the prospect of buying some Knob Creek. Misguided by my own amusement, I realised that although this bar may have an excellent range of funny sounding alcoholic beverages, it had missed a real opportunity to endorse the 'international factor'; in actual fact, the only thing international about it was the owner and it's drinks. I just couldn't decide what it was trying to be. The modern-looking booths only served to make me feel uneasy, forcing me to sit bolt upright, as if reminding me that I wasn't supposed to stay for long.

Despite my qualms, I will be going to KoKo again. It will have to up its game to stay busy but it has the potential to do great things, even if it is just with fruit beer.



Clockwise from top left: York transported to the Middle Ages; Odin Dragonfly performing; Battle of the Bands semi-finalists Playing for Keeps; Gaspard Ulliel as the infamous cannibal in *Hannibal Rising*

Live Music

Sunday February 18

Odin Dragonfly, Fibbers

Chilled female vocals over various accompaniments, influenced by the likes of Kate Bush, Stevie Nicks and Tori Amos. Support from Hijak Oscar and Sarah Dean. £8 at the door, £7 in advance.

Wednesday February 21

Levi's One to Watch presents Air Traffic, Fibbers

Piano-led indie. Catch them on the brink of take-off having recently appeared on Jools Holland and supported Snow Patrol. Support from the catchy Snowfight in the City Centre. Door £8, £7 in advance.

Saturday March 3, 8:00

Chunky Butt Funky, The Wardrobe, Leeds

Soulful, funky blues that will make you want to break out the harmonicas and sing about how your woman done left you and took your dog.

Monday February 26

Third Conduct, Fibbers

A pop-punk trio formed by three local sisters. Formulaic yet fun, in the way only good pop-punk can be. Support from good friends The Nicoles as well as Redgate and Kafka. Proceeds from the show go to Candlelighters, fighting child cancer. Door £4, save a pound with a flyer.

Campus Events

Saturday February 17

Battle of the Bands Final, Vanbrugh

Starting at 9pm and with bars until 2am, watch York's finest duke it out for the honoured position. Come along and support your favourites, and if your favourites didn't get through, come for a drink and a giggle anyway.

Friday February 23

Xtra Live, Halifax

If Battle of the Bands left you wanting more, Halifax bar JJ's is hosting a night of live music from York. Running from 9pm until late, tickets are £4, except for those lucky holders of the Xtra VIP card.

Saturday February 24

International Week Fiesta

Most people's favourite part of celebrating different cultures: loads of food from all over the world! Bound to be an impressive (and delicious) spread. Who says you need to get out of York to experience the world?

Thursday March 1

Comedy Night, Wentworth

The time is once again nigh for the thrice-termly comedy night hosted in Wentworth by The Other Side Comedy Club. Having previously drawn such renowned figures as Tom Wigglesworth, this is bound to be worth the trek to the other side of the lake.

Art and Performance

February 14-18

Jorvik Viking Festival

The Jorvik festival is five days of Viking themed shenanigans including craft and musical activities, stilt-walkers, saga-tellers, and of course, the Viking procession through the streets.

March 6, 8 and 10 at 7:45pm

4.48 Psychosis, York Theatre Royal

Explores a breakdown from the point of view of a severe bipolar disorder sufferer. Blurs the lines between reality and imagination, and between the self and the outside world. Harrowing in its suggestion of the sacrifices made to 'survive' in society.

March 7 and 9, 7:45pm, 10 March, 2:30pm

The Madman and the Nun, York Theatre Royal

Examining over-sensitive beings who are obsessively devoted to art, this follows the experiments of two psychiatrists on their patient. Darkly funny and disturbing in its questions about the sanity of the artist and the treatment of insane people.

March 23-25

York Open Gallery

In this annual event around the city, artists open their houses and studios for visitors and buyers. Meet artists and attend demonstrations. Details at whatsonyork.com.

Cinema

After the Wedding

A Danish film with a Dogma-style feel, Susanne Bier and screenwriter Anders Thomas Jensen come together to produce a beautiful and painful account of family relations, personal struggles, and idealism in the face of everything.

Music and Lyrics

Hugh Grant stars as a has-been former boy-band member living off appearances for middle-aged women. When a star wants him to write a song for her (Haley Bennett) he can't quite get the lyrics right until Sophie (Drew Barrymore) comes along and helps him out. It's good, for a rom-com.

Hot Fuzz

The *Shaun of the Dead* team reunites with a fresh batch of characters and a barrel-full of laughs. Simon Pegg plays a cop who is shipped off to the village of Sanford. Everything appears normal aside from a few missing swans until a local couple die in a suspicious car accident.

Hannibal Rising

Attempting to explain the beginnings of our favourite cannibal, *Hannibal Rising* pegs it all on his sister's being murdered and eaten by the SS in war-torn Lithuania. With no real motive given, Hannibal just becomes an over-eager vigilante.

Amnesty and apathy

Bearing badges is simply not enough



Ben Martin
Contributing Writer

beneficial to Amnesty's cause and hence demonstrate that I have "done my bit".

Amnesty International is one of the world's leading human rights organisations.

It campaigns to uphold the values that are most important to all of us, and has succeeded in bringing to light some of the world's most glaring instances of injustice.

Many people scoff at their tactics, asking what good could possibly come from letter-writing and pantomimic protesting. Such people, I would argue, entirely misunderstand Amnesty's *raison d'être*.

Amnesty's protest in York last Saturday against human rights violations in the Gaza Strip is a case in point. Students dressing up as members of the Israeli Defence Force and standing guard over improvised checkpoints are, quite clearly, not going to bring resolution to the conflict between Israel and Palestine. What they can do is

highlight a specific issue, namely the limits imposed on the freedom of movement of Palestinians, to a public and student body that might otherwise turn a blind eye. Even if, as *Nouse* has reported, many of York's Saturday shoppers failed to quite grasp the point of the exercise, and were in fact a little bewildered, Amnesty's actions have made it clear that there exists a cadre within our University who passionately care about justice. This can only be a good thing.

If only I could get around the fact that I'd rather have a nice long lie-in than traipse round the Shambles in an orange jump suit, that I still much prefer the taste of beer to that of the triumph of justice, then I might convert my admiration of Amnesty's work into concerted, active involvement on their behalf. Until then, I've always got my badge, and no-one can take that away from me...

Relocation, relocation, relocation

A sense of belonging in Bleachfield?



Tom Simon-Norris
Contributing Writer

affect college identity, and (dare I speak of such a nebulous concept) 'college spirit'? Well, hopefully, not much at all. There were those who thought 'Valcuin' would be the beginning of

the end for Vanbrugh, but this has certainly not been the case. Hopefully the University will do the sensible thing and call the Bleachfield blocks something like 'Vanbrugh Gardens' (which sounds rubbish at first, until you remember we already have the ridiculous 'Vanbrugh Paradise') and thus create a sense of belonging.

However, a worry does remain, and it concerns the underlying structure behind the York College system. One of the key factors in my decision to come to York was that each college seemed like a self-contained community, centred on a nucleus of local facilities (bar, JCR, events hall, laundry, porters, cafeteria, welfare services). York colleges are supposed to be more than the average university 'Hall', and this is especially important given the absence of a central Union venue.

However, upon completion of the Bleachfield project around

eighty percent of Vanbrugh freshers will be scattered a considerable distance from Vanbrugh itself. This seems to me like a very odd way to apply York's 'college-based' philosophy. Surely it would have been better to retain blocks A, B and C as the epicentre of the Vanbrugh student population, and move Linguistics, Languages and the Computing Service out to the Bleachfield site (with new accommodation too, perhaps).

What is vital to Vanbrugh is the retention of A and B blocks as student accommodation. Although at present there are no plans to the contrary, this possibility requires no stretch of the imagination in what is increasingly perceived as a business and conference-driven university. If the whole of Vanbrugh is turned into neutral office and teaching space, then what will the bar and JCR end up as?

With Heslington East on the horizon it is all the more important to recognise what is valuable about the current campus and collegiate system. Re-development is all very well, but on its current approach, the University stands to lose a lot of what makes York special.

The Rustlers of retail

Students ought to call the shots in overpriced campus shops



Jenny O'Mahony
Deputy Editor

in Sainsburys.

However, this is positively generous on Costcutter's part compared to its spaghetti. Priced at only 30p for 500g in Budgens, it retails at 95p for the same amount in Costcutter. That is a mark-up of more than 300% for a product of exactly the same quality, and for what reason?

Market forces, children. Costcutter opens during the holidays, and as there are so few students around during these periods of time, the demonic blond boy plastered on the front of the store and his ilk make very little profit.

The solution? I propose that we scrap Costcutter, and simply retain Blackwells, which could be extended upstairs, whilst incorporating groceries into the existing Your:Shop. Contracts with local businesses, like butchers and vegetable farmers, could be used to supply fresh local produce to the university, thereby creating a sustainable link with the community.

Meat would be provided which didn't look a uniform grey colour regardless of the animal it came from! Vegetables wouldn't rot on the way home! Being entirely student run, closure during the holidays would be a viable option, or else opening hours could be significantly reduced.

Surely convenience and quality are not mutually exclusive on campus?

Convenience is a mixed blessing. Take microwaveable meals: they're tasty, quick and require a minimum amount of effort to prepare. However, they have made the people of Great Britain obese, flatulent, lazy and chronically poor at cooking for themselves.

Market Square, and in particular Costcutter, is the Rustlers Burger of the retail market; it wins prizes for neither appearance nor value. The upper half of the complex is a desolate set of battered, empty buildings, with Stationery Box soon to be included in this landscape. Below, Costcutter's mascot in a bowl cut: the six-foot high head of a young boy, jaws open, daring you from behind glass to approach and sample his questionable wares.

Of course, aesthetics aren't everything. So what about cost-effectiveness? Perhaps a sample of price comparisons would prove useful here.

In Tesco, a 450g box of Rice Krispies is 87p. Costcutter will charge you £1.99 for the same product.

Mushrooms are £3.65/kilo in Costcutter, but a mere £2.28/kilo



Seconds later, she was devoured. (Photo: Sam Thomas)

Nicky Woolf Goes way back

By the time you read this, RAG week will be over. With any luck, they will have achieved, or at least come close to, their record-breaking target of £15,000- which even by national standards is a splendid achievement! Congratulations all round to Kate Jeffries' RAG team for all their hard work in organising such a successful week.

The RAG committee in 1974, however, were entirely more ambitious than today's. *Nouse* of March 14th, 1974, told a tale not just of charity balls and parades, but also of an audacious sting operation that rivalled the Great Train Robbery for drama. *Nouse* tells a story of several Langwith students, apparently grown tired of the campus-based RAG events, who decide to take matters drastically into their own hands.

They set off purposefully in the wee small hours of the afternoon in convoy, "two cars and one van," in the direction of Hull University. "Meanwhile," *Nouse* continues "back at H.Q. two other Langwithians were phoning Hull, on the pretext that they were representatives of the Leeds student newspaper. Having obtained the information required, they relayed it to the commando unit."

Their target was Steve Green, the newly-elected President of Hull University's SU. Green, blissfully unaware of his danger, walked outside to answer a paged message- and , quick as a flash, he was "bundled into the waiting car," which sped off, as a red herring, in the direction of Leeds. "The message was then phoned into Langwith; 'Mission Accomplished.'"

After what must have been a confusing and scary afternoon for the hapless President, a car was sent to Langwith to collect him, along with the handsome sum of twenty-five pounds, sterling. This ransom duly paid, Steve Green was released in perfect health (though probably a bit grumpy). The ransom was handed ceremoniously to Ivor Borkin, the then-RAG chairman, at the end of the RAG parade, and sent to charity.

The article ends on a sinister note. With a sense of deep foreboding, the author gives his readership a warning. "Watch out for the Hull RAG week in June!" Rich Croker beware. Hull students do not forget easily, and they always bear a grudge...



Letters

Nouse welcomes your letters. Please indicate if they are not intended for publication. We may edit them for brevity. Email socs12 or write to:

Nouse, Grimston House, Vanbrugh College

Star Letter

Dear Sir,

The criticism of the "Chav D" event in the recent article "Stop chavving a laugh" (January 23rd 2007, p. 12) is underpinned by one fundamental, and unfortunately incorrect, assumption. It supposes an equivalence between a relatively new creation, the "chav", and a much older concept, the "working class".

The term "working class", present since at least 1850, refers variously to those without means of production, working in manual jobs for a wage, or to those within families of this description. The term "chav", according to the OED present since around 1998, refers to a subculture defined by brash or loutish behaviour, a typical mode of dress, and respect for lack of an education or job.

A working class person, then, is by no means necessarily a chav. The under- signed would consider themselves, upon economic status, as working class, but

would not at all consider identifying as chavs. Nor is a chav necessarily working class. The term "unworking class" has been coined as a synonym, and one only has to flick through "Heat" or "Hello" for examples of people revelling in chav culture as a decidedly profitable career.

The article has the right sentiments in "[looking] at solutions [...] rather than laughing at the dress sense of the working classes." Yet in this confusion of terms, it itself unfairly and ignorantly insults this entire subset of the population. At the same time, it flatters chavs- a culture glorifying ignorance and petty criminality- as deserving of sympathy, where perhaps in its place a good dosage of mockery and contempt- Chav D- is in order.

Yours faithfully,

James Harrison Fisher, Langwith College
Edward Evans, Derwent College



Rich Croker
SU President

As we approach the SU elections again, the current portering situation highlights how important the collective Union is in decision making. Over the past few years I have been asked why people should vote and how it affects them. The truth is, the Union affects everyone during their time at University.

The Union is more than just a facilitator for societies and clubs, a way to improve your CV through volunteering and charity work, or a number of welfare campaigns. However, the value of these cannot and should not be underestimated. The people you elect represent you and your fellow students on a whole host of issues. From the portering debate, to the direction of the library, from the shaping of colleges on Heslington East, to improvements in disabled access- the range of repre-

sentation is vast. It is crucial that the right people are present to do this.

The coming elections will give you the chance to be part of the workings of the Union. The life of an officer, no matter which area you are in, is unbelievably varied and confronts you with a whole host of experiences. Don't let someone tell you it isn't the done thing for a fresher to run or that you won't win because you aren't as well known as someone else. Experience is a valuable asset for any position, although it isn't a prerequisite for being elected; ideas and enthusiasm are crucial factors as well. Seize the opportunity and do what you want to do.

Over the next few weeks you'll see a host of manifesto posters- don't just vote for someone because their poster looks nice or they're a friend of a friend. Take time to read what they want to do and what they have done. These things will define their time in office. If you want to be at the forefront and influence what happens in your Union and University, make sure you get involved in the elections. And if you would rather let someone else do it make sure you affect who they are; you have a vote, make sure you use it!

A slice of the sausage?

Dear Nouse,

I am surprised that York Vision has not yet properly addressed our concerns on the closure of many portering lodges. Their latest edition merely contained a short article entitled "Croker: 24 hour portering must stay".

From the very start of this term, the University's admin, in the name of lack of staff, has closed several colleges' receptions with a promise of reopening them after Easter. But recent developments clearly show that they are testing our reaction by 'slicing the sausage'. If we remain silent on this matter, the reopening in April may merely be a lip service; the shut-downs might become permanent and a further reduction of facilities will follow.

Porters are important to our security and welfare and a facility promised in the prospectus before we chose to apply to this so-call 'collegiate university'.

Please can both student newspapers have a proper response to this matter?

Jack Chen
PhD student

The Toby Awards

Dear Nouse,

I want to compliment Toby Green on a very well written piece on the issue of homosexuality and Christian faith: "Praying for recognition" (January 23 2007. M10). I thought it was balanced and fair, and certainly wasn't attempting to grab a headline or provoke in any way.

I hope it was clear, during your research, that we are open and willing to engage these and any issues affecting students lives. As you know, this is not an easy subject. Where we can make substantial comment together, we will. As I've already said, we do not always agree, but choose to work together.

Articles on issues like this make a contribution to the debate, by polarising the parties involved, or helping them understand each other better. I believe your article offers the possibility of the latter. I see elsewhere that you were nominated for a journalism award, and I now see why.

Rev. Rory Dalgliesh
Methodist Chaplain to the University of York

Vanbrugh Paradise Corner

This week: student nemesis, A. Dalek, talks exclusively to *Nouse*

“ So, yes. I want to set the record straight. I've no particular beef with students. It's not easy being made entirely of metal. My prongs are spindly and brittle, and not at all adapted to the everyday domestic challenges of living in a quiet cul-de-sac in Acomb. Sometimes I get frustrated; all I really want to do is have a meaningful conversation with someone.

I tried talking to a student yesterday, as it happens. She went past while I was putting out the recycling, so I waved at her, and tried to engage her in some light conversation

about Kafka. Somehow she interpreted my hail-well-met-wench as a vicious threat of ultimate physical harm. Maybe this isn't the place for me. I'd like to travel. Or maybe write a screenplay - I have some really amazing ideas, but nobody wants to take me seriously. I'm trying to get out more, I've joined CAMRA, but I don't have a trachea, and they ask questions about what exactly I'm doing there if I can't ingest liquids. Mostly I just can't see the point in it all any more - I'm all spare parts. ”
Maybe I'll go and write for *Vision*.

In defence of Christian sensibilities

Dear Nouse,

I wish to respond to your article, "Religious protest over gay rights" by defining the consequences of passing the Sexual Orientation Regulations (SORs).

In Northern Ireland, you can be prosecuted for 'harassment' towards a homosexual person by allegedly 'violating their dignity'. The Department for Education and Skills' guidelines, 'Stand up for us. Challenging homophobia in schools', aims to fight "heterosexism"; "...the presumption that everyone is heterosexual" as "individuals...[and] lifestyles are categorised [by] a heterosexual model.' Therefore a school could be prosecut-

ed by a teacher assuming that a male pupil would be seeking a girlfriend. A Christian teacher in a Christian school telling pupils that the norm is, let alone should be, marriage between a man and a woman also falls into this category.

Homosexuals are legally protected from being 'harassed'; where does the law prevent Christian sensibilities from being abridged? We endure discrimination daily yet most do not seek laws against it. Some gay rights lobbyists are enemies of freedom of speech.

Thomas Cahill
Langwith College

Washington moves closer to its next target. Is Iran the next Iraq?

By Albi Furlan

“It is Iraq-redux”, commented Philip Giraldo of the slow but constant build-up of US naval forces off the coast of Iran. Currently, there is one aircraft carrier and its entourage of a cruiser, two destroyers and a submarine, and this is due to double in about 10 days time with the USS Stennis making its way to the Gulf. The comment was sparked by the news that the US is in an advanced stage of preparation to execute an air-strike over Iran, possibly as early as next Spring, although in all probability it will occur next year, just before Bush’s presidency expires and he is no longer in a position to control the situation.

Secretary of Defence Robert Gates has strongly denied claims that an offensive is ever going to take place. However, there is no denying the increased flow of Patriot missiles towards the fleet currently stationed in the Gulf, nor the stock-piling of oil reserves in America. The President has defended these actions as necessary for counter-attack, should Iran strike first. “If Iran esca-

lates its military action in Iraq to the detriment of our troops and/or innocent Iraqi people, we will respond firmly”, he said. Colonel Sam Gardner, a former Air Force officer, commented, “Gates said there is no planning for war. We know this is not true. He possibly meant there is no plan for an immediate strike. All the moves being made are consistent with what you would do if you were going to do an air strike.”

Iran’s President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, since winning the presidential election in 2005, has denied the Holocaust, refused to accept the Israeli state as legitimate and stated that he wanted to wipe it off the map. Iran’s supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei (the President’s religious, and possibly more powerful, counterpart) has vowed to retaliate against the US, should it impinge on the country’s interests. Thus, it is fairly safe to assume that a nuclear-armed Iran would pose a threat. However, analysts and technicians say that it is still a few years away from the actual production of a launchable nuclear warhead. Negotiation and sanctions could suffice to deter



The slow, constant build-up of US naval forces in the Persian Gulf includes the supercarrier USS Eisenhower.

Iran from producing weapons of mass destruction and with China, Russia, America and Europe all agreed on stopping the country’s nuclear projects, international pressure and diplomacy may just do the

trick.

The Economist this week commented on Bush’s failure to reach the goals he set himself during his first term in office, and considering how eager the Bush administration has been to

blame Iran’s influence for the difficulty in meeting these goals, a strike on the country would seem an attempt at redeeming his presidency.

According to other analysts, the US is amassing forces to protect Israel,

which is more likely to strike Iran, given its more direct conflict with it, both via the comments of its rulers and through Hezbollah, the Shia army of Lebanon, effectively a proxy of Iran and directly funded by it.

Social engineering of universities

By Claire Yeo

It has recently been announced that university applicants are to be asked to indicate whether their parents or guardians have had a university education on the University and colleges’ admissions (Ucas) form. Applicants are soon to be asked to indicate not just the occupation of the parent who brings home the greatest income, but also whether their parents themselves went through higher education.

This comes as part of a government drive to see a greater number of working class students attend university. While this may be in the pursuit of the admirable cause of giving a greater number of poorer students the choice of attending university, it may only serve to deter middle-class applicants from applying.



Students may be recruited on background not merit

Such a clause will surely only increase the widespread speculation that government interference in the admissions process is in fact a device for social engineering and postcode lottery tactics, despite the fact that a

Ucas spokesman has claimed the information is to be used only for “statistical purposes” and not in the allocation of places.

The Government has already spent an estimated £350 million in campaign-

ing to increase the number of students from poorer backgrounds, although evidence from the Higher Education Statistics Agency suggest that the middle classes still dominate. It has been said that “equal examination grades do not necessarily represent equal potential”, because factors such as social background affect pupils’ performance.

There is indeed a very valid concern for ensuring consistency in the quality of pre-university education across the board, as differences between state and independent schools may affect the academic achievement of some students. Yet to accept or reject students on this assumption is not only unjust to high-achieving middle class students, it is also highly patronising to those students accepted because of background rather than merit.

What is even more

shocking, however, is that universities will have no way of proving whether this personal information is true, rendering this whole exercise pointless. Applicants are therefore likely to alter information tactically.

The most obvious barrier against equality and fairness in university admissions is, of course, the trebling of the cost of university education this year. There has already been a 4.5% drop in applications across the board, with students from all backgrounds being deterred by the prospect of a high level of graduate debt.

Some statistics even suggest that there has been a particular fall in applications from middle-class students who failed to qualify for new grants because they are on the cusp of the cut-off point, or because their parents’ income is more than £30,000 per annum.

Students are increasing-

ly looking abroad to countries like the USA to satisfy their higher education needs. American institutions like Princeton have already seen an increase of 6% in applications from British students.

More worrying, however, is the prospect that by the end of the decade the cap on tuition fees is due to be lifted and universities are expected to increase top-up and tuition fees dramatically to meet their high-funding demands. Given the current trend, it is likely that this will be accompanied by a general decrease in applications and in particular applications from not only low-income group students, but lower-middle class pupils too.

The solution is perhaps to leave the cap on what could easily become a skyrocketing level of tuition fees and a plummeting level of students.

Shattering the glass ceiling

Anjali Raval looks at the Government's drive to tackle continuing female under-representation.

Over 100 employers have been included under the new government scheme to improve job opportunities for women. More than 30 years since the Sex Discrimination Act came into force, women are still not reaching the top of their profession, despite significant advances made in the workplace.

Companies including Asda, BP, HSBC, IBM, Royal Mail and Goldman Sachs are set to become "exemplar employers", whereby they will put to the test projects aimed at benefiting women. They will cover a number of areas, from mentoring schemes in order to promote female executives to supporting mothers returning from a career break. These 'exemplar employers' include Government departments such as the Cabinet Office, Ministry of Defence and the Department for Work and Pensions, which have committed to reduce the gender pay gap.

Ruth Kelly, Minister for Women, has created a £500,000 fund to aid employers in financing "troubleshooters" to advise on how to create a greater number of part-time jobs for women at senior levels. Kelly believes that just because a woman works fewer hours, this does not mean she should downgrade her status. "The best employers understand the hard-headed business reasons for extending quality, flexible and part-time roles for women," she

said.

Women suffer as a result of a lack of flexibility in top jobs, which is why just over one million women in the UK have become self-employed, with an average of about 38% of UK small business stock either owned or co-owned by women. As women work their way up the ladder, the flexibility of work decreases, therefore they are having to 'trade down' in order to regain flexibility. Unless women can combine work and caring roles successfully, the likelihood is that they will not reach the top jobs.

Currently, more than 50% of women working part-time are carrying out roles below their skill level and the pay gap still remains at 38%. The country is essentially missing out on a pool of female talent which is inherently a "waste of capital and a loss to the economy" with "progression being painfully slow and at risk of going into reverse", deems the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) in their 'Sex and Power Index of 2007'. Flexibility should "be the norm and not the exception" and it should be open to both men and women to negotiate with employers.

According to the EOC index, women represent just 10% of directors at the FTSE 100 companies (0.4% from ethnic minorities) and 20% of Members of Parliament (0.3% ethnic minorities). Britain's Civil Service top managerial positions are still significantly male-dominat-

ed with just over 26% women.

Under the new exemplar programme, employers will be urging girls in school to consider employment in tiers traditionally dominated by men. Employers in the public sector from next April will be obliged to conduct pay audits to ensure equal treatment for women.

Disappointingly, ministers have declined to impose such regulations on private sector companies, despite pressure from unions and lobby groups. However, 90% of the recommendations have been taken on board by the Government. This includes the launch of a £10m two-year programme looking to assist at least 10,000 women in finding careers in employment sectors where there are skills shortages or under-representation.

EOC statistics have further shown that political parties would be more successful if they could address the "daily private struggle of balancing work and private life" by selecting more women candidates. The Labour Party's all-women shortlist has enabled greater female representation, but Britain still has a way to go. On the international scale of female representation, Britain has been ranked 59th, compared to Rwanda (1st), Afghanistan (27th) and Peru (22nd).

At the current rate it will take 20 years to achieve equality in Civil Service, 40 years to achieve an equal number of senior women in



Women are still under-represented in the upper echelons of the business world

the judiciary and 200 years to achieve equal number of women in Parliament. The 'glass ceiling' is even lower for women of ethnic minori-

ties, with just 6% of Pakistani and 9% of Black Caribbean workers ranking as managers or senior officials, compared to 11% of

white British women. Until the major organisations can be held up as examples of equal representation, women will continue to be excluded.

The Campus Soapbox

**By Peter Sanderson
Prospective Green Party
Candidate for Heslington**

Many students who come to York appreciate the community feel that the campus brings. Certainly I felt that, when I was at York, the small size of the University contributed to its success. There's something to be said for a campus where you can walk easily from one end to the other and meet so many familiar faces on the way.

All this could be about to change. For years, the University has been planning expansion. "Heslington East" will more than double the

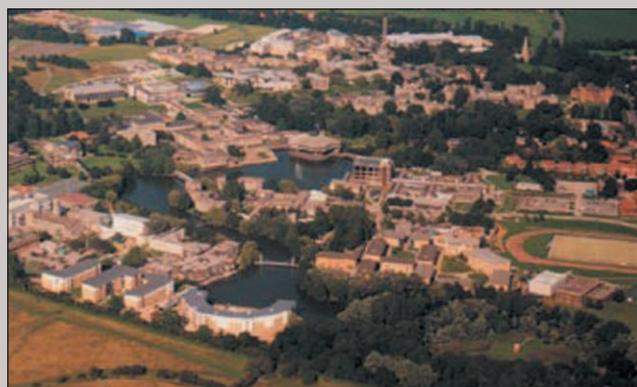
size of the existing campus. It will encompass an area of land bigger than the historic walled city of York. It will make the last remaining farm in Heslington village inoperable and it will put a considerable strain on local roads and housing.

The Green Party has always voiced opposition to this. My opposition to the expansion is in no way anti-student. Small is often beautiful – a university which keeps itself to a manageable size is a much better neighbour for the city than one which sprawls.

Heslington residents have seen their village change drastically in the last

30 years. It is no longer a rural idyll – they accept that – but to double the campus size would lead to a feeling that the University is hemming them in on all sides.

The site for expansion is currently good quality farmland and part of the green-belt. Farmland is important – the UK already imports much of its food and we cannot depend indefinitely on cheap food from abroad. Self-sufficiency in food production is vital. Because of this, we need to have a very good reason to build on good quality farmland. The University would presumably say education is a good reason. However, there is



The Green party opposes University expansion plans

more floor space on the new campus for commercial use than for academic departments. The business model is not about university places for domestic students, but about taking more international students and charging them hefty tuition fees. The new campus is much more about a corporate land-grab than the noble goal of higher education.

Myself and my colleagues in the Green Party have been pressing these concerns, but the expansion plans were approved by the majority of the council. I suspect the government inquiry due to report soon will support expansion, as it fits in with Labour targets.

So what's the alternative? The Green Party suggests that there is not an

overwhelming case for expansion but, if it is considered necessary by the University, there are other more suitable sites in York. There are huge brownfield sites within walking distance of the railway station. These could provide a prestigious campus near to the city centre, within a stone's throw of the station and take the pressure away from neighbourhoods around the existing campus. It is understandable that the University wants to keep its campuses together, but it also has to be a good neighbour to the city.

On May 3, you will have the opportunity to vote for your city councillor. I believe it is important that you are aware of the importance of the issue of campus expansion to Heslington residents, and that it is something you will consider when you go to the ballot box.

Toby Green



Scraping the barrel: why is football cursed with insipid commentators?

We all have our favourite bad commentary quote, an art mastered by the genius that is David Coleman. A God among men, he furnished the bland and generic landscape of sports commentary with such gems as "here's Moses Kiptanui, the 19 year old Kenyan, who turned 20 a few weeks ago"

There have been numerous pretenders to Davey's throne since he retired at the turn of the millennium (Motson's clarification to black and white TV owners that "Spurs are wearing the all-yellow strip" is worth a mention), but ever since he hung up his microphone our TV screens have been a duller place, not least since every analyst that approaches football on TV is irrevocably insipid.

The problem is that if football can be considered an art form, where are our intelligent critics of the game? Those that make their career on analyzing and discussing the greatest authors of the human race can at best hope for a Professorship at some university, yet a former footballer can get away with the most banal statements and still land himself a big pay cheque and a prime time TV gig. One is committed to formulating new



Alan Shearer has proved to be a lot less successful as a football pundit than as a football player

approaches to the thinkings of some of the greatest minds ever produced, and the other gets away with pointing out that "football is all about the two 'M's - movement and positioning"

Alan Shearer and Ian Wright are two examples. Whoever thought of entrusting the ever-charismatic Shearer with entertaining the nation in the 15 minute break between self-inflicted torture

at the World Cup is even more of a sadist than Sven-Goran Eriksson and his insistence on taking Peter Crouch as the only fully fit striker to Germany. The only reason I can see for Ian Wright's appointment is that the Beeb bosses realized their mistake at handing the Geordie wonder-kid a 5 year contract and hired the annoyingly-hyperactive 'Wrightey' to combat the walking personality-vacuum. Now his only

job seems to be to jump around and laugh, whilst stating his thought out opinion that "England will definitely win the World Cup this time".

It's not that there aren't intelligent analysts of the game, and that's my point. When at least half of the population have considered and passionate thoughts about football, why are we lumped with such simple analysis on our TV

screens? You only need to look at newspapers and the internet to find examples of football criticism that would put the current crop of TV talent to shame. Perhaps it's something to do with the nature of TV: in his Guardian column David Pleat provides thought-provoking and insightful comments on tactics, yet commenting on ITV he can't even pronounce 'Chimbonda'.

There are some exceptions of course: Alan Hansen is always an interesting watch, if not slightly defence-orientated, and a lot of people have a soft spot for Andy Gray on Sky (not a view I share: all he seems to do is shout and wobble). But when you pair them with the likes of Lee Dixon or Carlton Palmer then any hopes of a decent discussion about the beautiful game is dead. Critics of referees are always saying that ex-players would be perfect for the job since they've played the game. Yet those that make the transfer from pitch to screen would surely have to discount this theory. Is it really too much to expect decent TV coverage of the country's most popular game?

And you know what the most damning thing is? I haven't even mentioned John Barnes Football Nights yet.

How to overcome the fresher fitness slump

By Simon Lickley
SPORTS EDITOR

As I am sure is true of most people at university, my first year was spent becoming unfit. Sure, I studied, I went out, but the combination of frequent hangovers, my lack of culinary abilities and the fact that, even as a Halifax student, the longest I ever had to walk for a lecture was 10 minutes meant that my sporting abilities, never the best anyway, plummeted to an all time low. Sport at university was something that I saw on 22 Acre Field as I trudged along the path from Halifax to campus.

So to second year and a new start. My sporting outings had been restricted to a few games of rugby at school, so I was looking to start something new. Fencing meant missing

Tuesday at Toffs but this was something I could live with. So, along with my housemate Chris, who had been responsible for most of the hangovers mentioned above, I went along to see if it was any good.

To be honest, I didn't really know what to expect; my sole impression of the sport was from a scene in the James Bond film *Die Another Day*. The first thing I did learn was that being a left hander, I would annoy absolutely everyone I fenced against. So that was a good start. It also made it more difficult to practise the moves taught as my brain had to reinterpret the move for a left hander. On the plus side, it did confuse all of my opponents, which was certainly an advantage.

That said, once the various moves were learned and



Fencing has proven to be not only a good fitness regime but extremely enjoyable

honed, it began to be really good fun. There is nothing like trying to hit someone with a sword to bring out the medieval knight in you. As manouevres were taught and gradually understood, bouts began to look more professional (rather than just the free-for-all sword-swinging

that characterised the first few weeks).

The end of term provided an opportunity to bring out the competitive side in all of us with the beginners' tournament. It was with some relief that I made it past the first round and I was beginning to feel rather con-

fidant about my chances. After all, I had won two out of my first four matches in the heats and I had continued to use my trump card, being left handed, to very good effect.

Sadly, it didn't last and I was soon knocked out. This was while my housemate

Chris went the whole way and won the tournament, leaving me with nothing but a drink owed to him.

What was best about the whole experience was the fact that it gave an insight into a minority sport. Fencing is barely mentioned in the national sporting press. Even though I am now familiar with some of the nuances of the sport I still cannot think of a single well-known fencer. Whilst this article is not intended to be a blanket advocacy of the Athletics Union, the AU does provide a great opportunity to try out sports that usually fall under the sporting radar. It also became a great way to get fit. It may not look it to the untrained eye, but two hours of fencing is an absolutely knacker work-out, but at the same time pretty good fun.

Hockey men remain unbeaten

York Men's 1sts 2
Newcastle Men's 2nds 5

By Simon Lickley
 SPORTS EDITOR

HAVING SWEEPED everything standing in front of them all season in their BUSA league, the York Men's 1st XI hockey team went into this game knowing that victory would see them become champions of the BUSA Northern Conference Men's 3B. Having been unbeaten in their nine games thus far this season, York came into the game justifiably high on confidence and bursting with plenty of spirit.

On a bright but freezing cold day, York showed everyone watching just why they have done so well this season. They were unquestionably the fastest team out of the blocks, and despite some strong Newcastle defending, were clearly a class apart.

It came as no surprise when they opened the scoring on eight minutes, and continual pressure saw them storm even further in front on 12 minutes to make it 2-0. After just 15 minutes of classy hockey they were 3-0 in front. Newcastle had barely got out of their own half, and it seemed that in the sporting sense at least, York were about to inflict a massacre on their hapless opponents. On twenty-five minutes a well covered penalty meant that it was 4-0 and already it seemed that any doubt that York would fail to win the

league, and relinquish their unbeaten run had already been easily dispelled.

Newcastle's explanation for their disastrous start appeared to be that they were too ambitious in their somewhat attacking formation and it left the defence with little protection with the numerous York onslaughts that came their way.

However towards the end of the first half, Newcastle finally began to wake up and look a bit more lively. They began to put heavy pressure on the York defence with a string of short corners, and for the last ten minutes were the better side.

For the most part York defended fairly impressively but eventually the heavy pressure paid off and Newcastle grabbed a goal just before the break. Despite the positive end to the half for Newcastle, the evidence of the first half suggested that it would be an extremely tall order for them to end York's unbeaten BUSA campaign and ruin their day.

Yet at the beginning of the second half saw them make some tentative steps towards doing just that. They picked up where they left off at the end of the first half and it was no surprise when they got another goal to make it 4-2. Suddenly it was the Newcastle team who had the edge in the game and for the first time that afternoon there was the possibility that Newcastle may get something out of the game and jeopardise York's

title hopes.

But any sniff they might have had of getting something from the game was soon to be wiped out as York began to regain the poise that they had shown at the beginning of the game and which had served them so well in the season thus far. York soon got back into the game and added another goal to make it 5-2, which was how it stayed.

Despite York's passing and general play getting a little sloppy towards the end, the lead was never in doubt and they held on for a thoroughly deserved victory to cap off what will go down as an absolutely magnificent season. Winning six of their ten games, and drawing the other four, says it all. It may have been freezing for the spectators but all those there went home knowing they had witnessed something special. Sweeter still was the fact that they had pipped their bitter cross city rivals York St John for the title. Hopefully this can give York University an important psychological edge in their Varsity tie this week. Judging by this performance however, pure skill could prove to be more than enough.

Team Lineup: Will Gibaud, Dan Westley (c), Andy Hook, Josh Beale, Sam Palmer, Billy Walsh, Ali Morgan, Alex Topsfield (sub Rich de Bolz), Ollie Dupenois, Ollie Hughes

Player of the Match:
Ali Morgan

An inspirational performance to inspire York to an easy victory



Ali Morgan put in an excellent performance to inspire York to a strong 5-2 victory over Newcastle. Men's Photo: Georgi Mabee

York Netball 1sts superb show gives hope for 2007 Varsity tournament



The York University Netball 1sts warmed up for the upcoming Varsity tournament with a convincing victory over Teeside 2nds

York 1sts 50
Teeside 2nds 12

By Helen Lock
 SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

WITH THE Varsity tournament fast approaching, this week's BUSA matches provided a vital opportunity for all three of the University's three netball squads to secure not only league points but more importantly confidence.

Having witnessed the York University second team beat their York St John counterparts with only a narrow margin; the Firsts needed to capitalise on their game against Teeside Seconds. First team captain Amy Smith's rousing pre-match talk summed up the feeling within the club by saying "we're ready for this." This match would surely serve as a warm up before next week's grudge match.

The first quarter was characterised by tight-marking and cohesive ball movement across the full breadth of the court. Several inter-

ceptions and a comprehensive reading of the game allowed an excellent pass from centre to goal shooter, which Mary Hunt converted to open the score sheet. Player-to-player pressure from York forced Teeside to make mistakes on and off the ball and their shooting proved to be below par. Great utility of space on court allowed Hunt to increase York's lead at a steady rate and her partnership with Sarah Pycroft worked well against the Teeside defence, allowing numerous opportunities to be created.

Teeside were down 12 goals to 1 as the second quarter opened and the visitors started with off par mistakes. York's superior athleticism and team communication meant that space was continuously created and opportunities seized.

Both York's defence and attack showed commitment and focus, and even though Teeside's keeper let her frustration get the better of her, Hunt did not allow it to affect her concentration in ensuring that they took the lead to 17-3 by this

point.

The third quarter opened 23-5 and proved to be a showcasing of York's close marking especially a great interception by wing defence Katie Brunskill. York's goals continued to fly in whilst the Teeside net stayed empty. This must have aggravated the visitors as they attempted to play under protest, after contesting both umpires. With the final score coming in at 50-12 it is clear that York were in the ascendancy, contested umpires or not. Such a convincing score means that the netball team go into this week's Varsity tournament brimming with confidence.

Team Lineup:

GS: Mary Hunt, GA: Sarah Pycroft & Chaz Blythe, WA: Clare Shaw & Laura Longworth, C: Amy Smith, WD Katie Brunskill, GD: Hannah Martin & Katie Cowper-Johnson, GK: Tess Smith

Player of the Match:
Laura Longworth.

Passed the ball well and dictated the flow of play throughout the game

York thrash Leeds to top the table

York Men's 1sts 5
Leeds Men's 2nds 0

By Simon Lickley
SPORTS EDITOR

A MARVELLOUS first-half display by the University of York ensured a comfortable victory against Leeds, one of the highest-rated teams in the BUSA league. The result also meant that they topped the league at the end of an excellent season. The outcome of the result was never in doubt, in a match where York repeatedly pressurised their opponents from the start; they produced a superb attacking display, aided both by Leeds' lack of organised defence and failure to create any sort of attacking threat.

The game had only been underway for two minutes when good work from the York midfielders culminated in a perfect pass on the left for Daniel Brown. Unchallenged by any of the Leeds defenders, he scored with a cool right-footed finish in the bottom corner. A minute later, following more combative displays from the York midfield, the ball went to Dominic O'Shea who produced a great assist on the left to Henry Smith. Smith's sublime technique ensured he found the space to put the ball past the hapless Leeds goalkeeper and gift York with a dream start.

The next few minutes saw York looking to extend their lead further with pas-



A brilliant all-round performance saw York Men's 1sts confidently top the table. Photo by Georgi Mabee

sion and aggression epitomised by Henry Smith, who was never shy of putting in a tackle when necessary. York's constant pressure saw them awarded with a free kick on the right, resulting in a penalty box skirmish and the ball falling to Brown's feet; he narrowly missed the goal from 10 yards.

Leeds' only attempt in the first ten minutes was well dealt with by Simon Oatridge - his clearance

resulted in an unintended cross for Henry Smith, who was harshly tackled immediately after by a Leeds midfielder and resulted in a three-minute delay.

Leeds failed to mount any serious challenge to the York defence, mainly thanks to quick and effective defensive work from Henry Smith and Shaun Evans. The Leeds defender's poor positioning and his failure to clear the ball effectively saw a great

chance fall to Pardeep Singh on the left side of the penalty area - only for him to narrowly miss the goal. Minutes later, Ian McKellen's free-kick saw the ball fire into the top corner to make the score 3-0.

Leeds' frustration was epitomised by their strikers, whose unrewarded speed and alertness were spoilt by persistent abuse of the referee. In the 38th minute, a swinging corner from the left

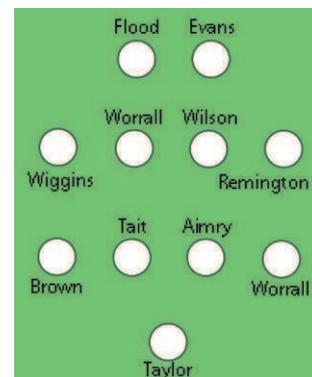
was headed into the top-left corner by John Searle to make it a well-deserved 4-0. Leeds were then further humiliated when York made it 5-0 just before half-time, courtesy of a free-kick from outside the area from which Singh completed the rout.

The second half saw a dejected away side desperately trying to cut the deficit by adopting a more attack-minded system, with the midfield and strikers pushed

deeper. York, on the other hand, adopted a more defensive style and did not suffer any real threat, despite Leeds having the majority of possession.

The only noticeable moment was Singh's fantastic surge from the halfway line to Leeds' area, only for his shot to be blocked by the keeper. "I am absolutely delighted," said captain Daniel Brown. "Two very quick goals killed the game early in the first half. We kept the ball well and the understanding within the team was excellent. We made a very good team like Leeds look very average."

The captain also paid tribute to goalkeeper Sean Henderson, who kept a clean sheet. He added that that he was pleased with the discipline of all his team-mates, whom he labelled "unsung heroes".



Player of the Match:
Sean Henderson
Kept a clean sheet and pulled off several impressive saves

Exciting finale sees 2nds snatch win

York Men's 2nds 3
Northumbria Men's 3rds 2

By Mike Flood
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

A CHAOTIC last fifteen minutes - which saw both teams score twice - ended this racy relegation standoff and ensured York men's football 2nd XI place in BUSA league 5B for next season. Opponents Northumbria 3rds needed nothing less than a win, and their dogged determination throughout the game meant York would never feel comfortable.

York, donning bibs due to a colour clash, took the lead after ten minutes when captain Mark Worrall smashed in his fourth goal of the campaign. Tom Wilson's free kick from the corner of the penalty area was a lofty inswinging goal attempt which the goalkeeper, blinded by the sun, could only



York grabbed a dramatic victory. Photo Georgi Mabee

parry onto the crossbar. The ball spilt to Wilson in waiting, whose calmness in front of goal put the fluorescent yellows deservedly in the lead.

York could have done

more to trouble their opponents in what should probably have been an easier match. Chances followed chances, but uncertainty in the final third meant that the goalkeeper was not troubled

again before half-time. Holding striker John Evans narrowly failed to latch onto a well-weighted cross from Mike Flood, who quickly found himself weighing up a long range effort which should have been passed to a well-positioned Graeme Wiggins.

Kicking into the wind has been a problem for Worrall's men of late. Opponents have been quick to realise that weak goal-kicks are met with less vigour, which often leave York unable to retain periods of possession.

By the second half, the pitch had thawed into a muddy mess and surely contributed to the ensuing mayhem. Tempers were aggravated by an incompetent referee who blew on demand, and a handful of Northumbria players who had no qualms in claiming all that was not theirs. The

match seemed to turn when Mike Flood clashed with the goalkeeper, striving to meet a ball that should have been left. Both players were carried off and left to watch baffling performances both on and off the pitch.

Northumbria then somehow managed to scramble an equaliser, but John Evans responded immediately with a sublime half-volley just inside the area. Kept low and fast, it gave the goalkeeper absolutely no chance whatsoever. It all happened very quickly, and then the ambulance pulled up to rescue the injured players. Except that it turned up onto the pitch. Then it got stuck, again and again, ripping up the pitch, before finally being pushed in several circles towards safety.

This somewhat bizarre and unprecedented distraction made time for another Northumbrian equaliser, but

York dug deep once again and responded. This time, Kit Edwards latched onto a stray ball to score a heroic winner, grabbing York a well-received victory and no small amount of relief. It was certainly a nerve-jangling ride for everyone involved, but for York, the final result gave cause for jubilation.



Player of the Match:
Martin Brown
A tireless defensive performance in wintery conditions



AU
Edge

With AU President
Tom Moore

FOR SUCH a small institution, York usually does relatively well in the BUSA tables and this year is no exception. Last Wednesday saw the end of the season and I'd just like to say well done to the mens first-teams in the tennis, badminton, fencing and hockey.

This list is could also include mens volleyball 1sts and mens football 1sts if mathematics and the weather are on our side.

All these teams have reached the knockout stages of the BUSA tournaments, with the hockey and tennis teams coming top of their respective leagues.

Tomorrow sees the Varsity competition hit our campus for the third year. Varsity sees us take on our local rivals York St. John in almost 30 fixtures and cumulates in an award presentation in Toffs.

For an up to date timetable of the Varsity fixtures, please see our website at www.yusu.org/au. Highlights have got to include the football fixtures, with both the mens and womens fixtures taking place from 1.00pm on the 22 acres. The netball fixtures also start at 1:00 in the tent and hockey will be going on all afternoon on the Astroturf. Varsity comes into its third year with its stature continuing to grow. Certain people may try and demean the event; rightly, perhaps, arguing that it sits in the shadow of Roses, but the fact remains that it brings a day full of fixtures that our teams take tremendously seriously. It is an important and large event in its own right. It is only because Roses is such a huge event (the largest in the country) that Varsity seems small. It is in fact comparable to a large number of other varsity competitions around the north. I hope to see you all down around the sports facilities on Wednesday, and I certainly hope to see you in Toffs – the ceremony starts at 8pm and will easily be finished by 10pm.

Other things that might take your interest... The Patches O'Houlihan trophy will once again be up for grabs as the AU dodgeball competition returns in week 9. To enter a team come to the AU office to sign up. The karting club is also organising a charity race in week 9. Entry is just £20 per person. More information can be found on the website.

Good luck to all the teams competing tomorrow.

For the latest Varsity results and reports visit: www.nouse.co.uk

Promotion chances damaged

York 2nd XV 8
 Sheffield 3rd XV 22

By Sam Dudley
 SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

THE MEN'S Rugby 2nds Team's push for promotion took a hit on Wednesday as they went down 8-22 in a plucky display at home to Sheffield University 3rds.

Before the game York found themselves sitting fourth in the table after having only played three matches in the BUSA League due to a host of frustrating cancellations and postponements, knowing that a win against Sheffield would have lifted them right into promotion contention.

The conditions on Wednesday were perfect for the free-flowing open rugby that York's team have been attempting to play this season, and hopes were high thanks to the full-strength line up.

However, things did not start brightly as Sheffield were the first to race out of the blocks and flew into a 0-10 lead after just 20 minutes.

York's first try was scored following a brilliantly executed move. It was finished off in the right corner thanks to the full back offloading well out of a last ditch tackle by York winger Sebastian Hurst.

York continued to defend well but the pressure told as Sheffield scored their second try following sustained close quarter forward work. The well drilled

Sheffield forward pack maintained possession for a prolonged period until their number 8 eventually scored despite protestations that the ball was being held up on the line.

This was a major impetus for York as, for the next fifteen minutes, they dominated and pulled themselves back to within two points. Nick Mason's score within three minutes of the second Sheffield try lifted spirits as York managed to slice open the opposition's defence for the first time in the match. York were back in the game and expectation were high from the supporters and from the team.

However they were soon brought back to earth as a momentary lapse in concentration from York in the crucial period before half time ensured that Sheffield would go into the break with a seven point advantage. A rolling maul from the Sheffield forwards pushed York back deep into their 22 and quick rucking led to the visitors' prop scoring to make it 8-15.

After the break, both sides sought the crucial first score in the second half. York's defence prevented long periods of possession territorial advantage turning into Sheffield points but eventually the winning try came. The visiting forwards rumbled the maul under the posts after a series of patient tight phases to make the score 8-22.

The last ten minutes saw the home side fight back



Despite some excellent defending York 2nds lost out. Photo Georgi Mabee

but York were unable to break through the resolute Sheffield defence, which withstood the sustained pressure. This meant that the final score ended up as an 8-22 defeat.

Chris Carrington, the captain, was proud of his team's performance despite

the defeat, saying "We played well considering the amount of games we have played together".

Player of the Match:
Seb Hurst.

Excellent tackling throughout the game meant York were always in the hunt.

Team Lineup: Alex Tominey, Mike Hornby, Satnam Surae, Toby Roberts, James Smallwood, Mike Callis, Chris Carrington, Hugh Wigzell, Sam Dudley, Tim Maitland, Nick Mason, Alex Neoh, Keeley Taylor, Seb Hurst, Sam Taylor

Latest College/University Sport Results/Standings:

BUSA Results:

Badminton:		
York Men's 1sts vs Newcastle Men's 2nds		8-0
York St John Men's 1sts vs York Men's 1sts		4-4
Basketball:		
York Men's 1sts vs Leeds Met Men's 1sts		60-87
Football:		
York St John Men's 2nds vs York Men's 1sts		3-2
York Men's 2nds vs Northumbria Men's 3rds		3-2
(see match report p.18)		
Hockey:		
York Men's 1sts vs Newcastle Men's 2nds		5-2
York Women's 1sts vs Newcastle Women's 2nds		2-2
Netball:		
York 1sts vs Teeside 2nds		50-12
York 2nds vs York St John 2nds		34-33
York St John 5ths vs York 3rds		9-46
Rugby Union:		
York Men's 2ndsvs Sheffield Men's 3rds		8-22
York Men's 1sts vs York St John1sts		47-5
(Varsity match)		

BUSA Standings:

Football Men's 1sts - Division 3B:			
	pld	pts	
1. Leeds Met 2nds	10	26	
2. Leeds Met 3rds	10	24	
3. Trinity & All Saints 1sts	10	19	
4. Durham 2nds	10	0	
5. York 1sts	10	4	
6. Huddersfield 1sts	10	4	
Hockey Men's 1sts- Division 3B:			
	pld	pts	
3. Durham 3rds	9	18	
4. Huddersfield 1sts	8	15	
5. York 1sts	8	9	
6. Teeside 1sts	9	9	
7. York St John 1sts	9	6	
8. Sunderland 1sts	9	0	
Netball 3rds- Division 5B			
	pld	pts	
1. Sheffield Hallam 3rds	6	18	
2. York 3rds	6	18	
3. Trinity & All Saints 2nds	6	12	
4. Hull 3rds	6	12	

Varsity Fixtures - Feb 14:

Badminton:	Venue	Time
Men's 1sts	Main Hall	12-2
Women's 1sts	Main Hall	12-2
Basketball:		
Men's 1sts	Tent	3.30-5
Women's 1sts	Tent	2-3.30
Indoor Cricket:		
Men's 1sts	Main Hall	2-3.30
Hockey:		
Men's 1sts	JLD Astroturf	12-1.30
Women's 1sts	JLD Astroturf	3-4.30
Men's 2nds	JLD Astroturf	1.30-3
Football:		
Men's 1sts	22 Acres	1-2.30
Women's 1sts	22 Acres	2.30-4
Men's 2nds	22 Acres	2.30-4
Women's 2nds	22 Acres	1-2.30
Netball:		
Women's 1sts	Tent	4-5.30
Women's 2nds	Tent	2.30-4



York begin defence of Varsity title with comfortable victory

York Men's 1sts 47
St John Men's 1sts 5

By Simon Lickley
SPORTS EDITOR

YORK'S RUGBY Union team made a fantastic start to the University's Varsity defence against York St. John with a decisive victory over their city rivals in their rescheduled game.

The game was played earlier than the rest of the tournament owing to fixture congestion, but on the plus side this crushing victory lays down a marker for the rest of the University sport clubs to follow when Varsity takes place this week.

The University of York made an encouraging start. It was clear from the beginning who the better team were. Paul Goodall opened the scoring nine minutes in, with his try easily being converted.

The York team then began to impose their dominance. The St. John defence were unable to cope with the penetrating runs made by the York University's backs and their cause was not helped by desperately poor kicking in their attempt to repel York.

However, the University of York failed to convert their attacks into tries; they frequently came close, but failed to break through. It was not until the twenty-sixth minute that York finally registered their next score as James Wilson touched down to make it 12-0 which was

then converted to make it 14-0.

There was barely time to digest that scoreline before The University of York pushed even further ahead.

Lionel Owusu had put pressure on the St. John backs all afternoon and it was no surprise when he scored after 31 minutes and again just before half time. With both tries converted, The University of York entered the second half 28-0 in front, and utterly dominant.

The York team started the second half in a similar fashion to the first by piling more pressure on a hapless St. John side. It came as no surprise when Alex Corp bundled over after 47 minutes to make it 33-0.

After this, St. John began to counter-attack. For a while it was them putting the University of York under pressure, as they sought to save themselves from further embarrassment. However, York's lead was by this time unassailable.

St. John found themselves unable to penetrate the resolute York defence, who on the whole held firm. Eventually they did manage to score a try to make it 33-5 but were still left with a mountain to climb.

Indeed it took just two minutes after conceding their first points of the game that the York team hit back with another converted try. This meant that with twenty minutes to go it was 40-5 and very much game over.

The University of York clearly noted this, and despite having the upper hand, began to lack defensive energy for the last twenty minutes. In a game more evenly matched this may have seen the wide gap in scores narrow slightly but this was never going to be the case.

Every St. John attack was still easily repelled by the University of York defence. York only needed to put a small amount of pressure on towards the end to widen the gap even further. A converted try in the last few minutes of the match saw the final score reach 47-5.

The University of York players were jubilant as the final whistle blew - rightly so after an utterly dominant performance. A well-earned victory.

If any members of the University's other sports clubs taking part in Varsity this week saw the game, they will no doubt draw inspiration from the courage and talent on display here.

Team Lineup:

1. Chris McKain, 2. Alex Corp, 3. Jason Gabb, 4. Joe Peach, 5. Jon KumeDavy, 6. Paul Goodall, 7. Jack Wakeling, 8. Hugh Wigzell, 9. Chris Fox (c), 10. Rob Milnes, 11. Lionel Owusu, 12. Tom Benbow, 13. Danny Stacey, 14. Alex Thornton, 15. James Wilson

Player of the Match:

Chris Fox
The captain put in a masterful performance to see York to their first victory in Varsity



The Varsity tournament gets off to a promising start for York. Photo: Georgi Mabee

York Netball 1sts demolish Teeside

In a massively one-sided affair, York Netball 1sts beat Teeside 2nds 52-12 for an impressive victory. The win proves even more valuable as a warm up for the Varsity fixtures, and the side is reaching a peak in form.

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Hockey team finish season unbeaten

The Men's Hockey 1st XI finish their BUSA season unbeaten with a fine victory over Newcastle 2nd XI, despite the freezing conditions. The result means that they finish top of the BUSA Northern Conference 3B.

>> MATCH REPORT Page 17



BUSA success leaves York in high spirits

Excellent performances by the Men's badminton, fencing, hockey and tennis teams in the BUSA divisions see them all competing in the final knockout stages this year. Tom Moore, AU President, reflects on the build up to Varsity.

>> AU EDGE Page 19

Football teams enjoy continued success

The York Men's 1sts cruised to a brilliant victory over Leeds Metropolitan University, whilst the Men's 2nds stave off relegation after grabbing a narrow victory over Northumbria Men's 3rds at 22 Acres.

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