

## The Nouseletter

09/09/2024

Award-winning journalism  
for students

N°07

In this week's Nouseletter, read about efforts to save universities from their financial crisis, discover changes to the way the UK exports arms, and gain some clarity on recent rumours of York club closures.

Then, grab a coffee, watch a film, read a book, find a new album, visit someplace new... broaden your horizons with *Muse Recommends*.

Also, our Editor-in-Chief Ellen Morris met with York's University Executive Board earlier today to find out more about redundancies and on-campus cuts. Read her report [here](#).

---

## Universities beg for state help

Dame Sally Mapstone, president of Universities UK (UUK), which represents 141 higher education institutions including York, has warned that universities will “slide into decline” without financial aid.

Mapstone declared that funding pressures have left higher education at “a fork in the road”.

At a UUK conference on Thursday 8 September her speeches were focussed on the economic benefits of higher education.

This was likely intended to nudge ministers into doing more to help Universities, which are in the midst of a financial crisis. You can read our report on how this is affecting York [here](#).

**Appeal to reason?**

Prior to the conference, she announced that “a leading group of experts within and outside higher education” had begun “exploring how universities can address the UK’s greatest priorities and challenges, especially around growth, opportunity and supporting delivery of the Government’s missions.”

She also highlighted new research by London Economics which found that every £1 of public money invested into universities generates roughly £14 of economic benefit.

### **A united front**

Jo Grady, president of University and College Union (UCU) has echoed Mapstone’s remarks, arguing that “ultimately, increased public funding will be necessary to sustain the sector.”

### **The party line**

At a recent UUK conference on 4 September, Skills Minister Jacqui Smith made a speech that touched on the financial crisis in higher education: “I hadn’t been in the job an hour before people were outlining for me the real financial peril that the sector faces.”

“Higher education providers are rightly independent from government and have a responsibility to plan prudently to ensure their long-term sustainability. However, I am well aware that providers are under financial strain”

She stated the the Office for Students’ planned to “priorities” higher education’s financial robustness and stability, but did not hint at any kind of financial aid package.

---

## **Local News**

### **York climbs university rankings**

York has risen two places in the Guardian’s “best UK universities” 2024 ranking.

York has moved from 21st to 19th, moving closer to its 2022 ranking of 18th. However, York’s overall score has fallen from 75% to 68.4%. Most other universities in the ranking have also faced similar drops.

Most other statistics for York have stayed similar to their 2023 levels, whilst student to staff ratio and average entry tariff have fallen slightly.

Spend per student has risen significantly from 5.1 to 7.2/10.

The Guardian's ranking is unique because its data focuses primarily on student experience, rather than providing a broad institutional view. According to the Guardian, its ranking seeks to find out "how likely each department is to deliver a positive all-round experience to future students [...] in order to assess this, we refer to how past students in the department have fared".

### **Taxing tourists?**

Councillor Claire Douglas, the leader of York City council, has said she is asking the government for powers to create a tourist tax for York.

This would be a similar scheme to that introduced in Manchester in April 2023, which charges £1-per-room per-night and has raised £2.8m so far.

Douglas first discussed the tax in a meeting of mayors across the North in York on 4 September. Another significant product of the meeting was a Manifesto for the North, which looks to boost economic growth across the region.

The manifesto aims to boost the North's economy by £118 billion by 2050. The meeting was the first of its kind, and was inspired by the new Labour government's commitment to devolve more powers for local authorities.

The full manifesto can be accessed [here](#).

### **The rumour cycle**

Our reporters can confirm that popular club Revolution has no plans to shut down.

Rumours spread on the ImJustYork Instagram page (@imjustyork\_) alleged first that Revs was going up for sale and due to close, then that rumours of closure were part of a PR stunt by YorkSU and Revs in order to boost sales for upcoming freshers' events.

ImJustYork regularly posts various memes and gossip summaries to its audience of 15,500 followers, and recent posts about Revs garnered over 2,000 likes overall. Gossip is collected via an anonymous google form and Instagram DM - no evidence is provided to back up claims apart from anonymous messages, which are not necessarily submitted by separate individuals or even students.

*Nouse* investigated the rumours, and gained access via an anonymous source to emails from Revs' sales team, which denied the rumours and declared that Revs had no plans to close.

YorkSU refused to comment on the allegations, but told *Nouse* they were still investigating and were unsure themselves if Revs would close. We found no evidence of a YorkSU marketing scheme behind the rumours.

Read our full report [here](#).

---

Fancy writing for us?

**Join our Slack**

---

## Politics

### Labour trims arms sales

A government review of export licences for UK arms has found that there was a "clear risk" that arms shipped to Israel were being used to violate international humanitarian law.

30 of 350 licences have been suspended, including licences to export components for drones, helicopters and targeting systems.

Arms export licences are required for companies wishing to export military or dual-use (potential military use) goods abroad. They are integral to the global arms trade, which generates billions of dollars a year and involves massive British companies like BAE Systems and Boeing.

The arms trade is notorious for its lack of regulation - human rights groups have flagged the issue of UK-exported arms being used in human rights abuses for decades.

Our recent investigation found that it is highly probable that University of York research contributes to the development of these arms. You can read it [here](#).

The suspension of licences met instant criticism for not going far enough. Opposition MPs and advocacy groups took issue with the fact that components of the F-35 fighter jet were not banned. The F-35 aircraft is used by Israel to conduct airstrikes in Gaza which have been criticised as illegal by Amnesty International.

F-35s are produced internationally, and their main developer and manufacturer is Lockheed Martin, based in the US. The US also sells F-35s directly to Israel in arms deals worth billions of dollars.

Unlike the US, the UK does not directly sell arms to Israel.



### **Labour winter fuel allowance ‘u-turn’ could cost 4000 lives**

Sir Keir Starmer is facing pressure from the head of the largest UK union to make a u-turn from “picking the pockets of pensioners” by cutting the winter fuel allowance for roughly 10 million people.

This follows the embarrassing discovery that the same cut Labour warned against in Theresa May’s 2017 manifesto pledge, which could have caused upwards of 3,850 deaths, is now being considered by Starmer’s government.

Starmer is proving unpopular amid backlash today as 5 more Labour MPs sign the early day motion which stands in opposition of this proposed winter fuel cut now brings the total against the motion to 17.

Most notably, MP for York Central Rachael Maskell has signed the motion in opposition of the cuts alongside Dianne Abbott and former Shadow Ministers, Jon Trickett, Clive Lewis and Ian Lavery.

Further opposition has been raised by Director of Age UK Caroline Abraham, stating the winter fuel cuts take “money away from people who really need it most”.

A pensioner will no longer receive the allowance if their annual salary is above £11,500. Likely heavily impacting many across the country. Downing Street revealed that there is also no plan to soften the impact of the proposed fuel cut either. It is likely to be a very difficult winter for many.

### **Current leader in the Tory leadership race revokes Palestinian students' visas**

Court documents have revealed that the then-Minister for Immigration Robert Jenrick, inquired into revoking student Dana Abu Qamar’s Palestinian Student visa.

After attending a university demonstration on Gaza’s historical resistance to Israel’s “oppressive regime” on the 7th October, the 20 year old Law student at the University of Manchester, became a victim of disclosed emails in which a member of Jenrick’s team reached out to the Home Office inquiring into whether it would be “possible to revoke her student visa”.

By 1 December her visa was revoked by the government on the grounds that the statements she made at the university demonstration were “not conducive to the public good”.

Following the attacks on the 7 October, Jenrick suggested that visitors to the country that incite antisemitism would be removed. Controversy however, lies in having a government minister personally pursuing the removal of a Palestinian student from the country whilst her family is being killed in Gaza, a spokesperson for the European Legal Support Center has said.

This comes after Qamar having lost 22 relatives in Israel’s war on Gaza, as well as her grandparents having been displaced during the 1948 Nakba.

---

# Want to access old Nouseletters?

View our archive [here](#)

---

## *Muse Recommends...*

The leaves are starting to fall and the nights are getting colder which means that autumn is upon us, and of course with that, the start of a new academic year! So, the Muse team is back again to give you some great recommendations for returning to York.

Alexandra Pullen suggests local independent bar Dusk, a must-stop on any pub crawl or night out but if you're looking for a trip a little further afield, Heather Gosling has listed her top five places to go to when visiting our neighbours in Leeds. We have a musical recommendation of The Cribs from Alfie Samson while Matty Ennis and Maia Wensley give their opinions for the music and film and tv choices.

If you have any recommendations of your own, email [alexandra.pullen@nouse.co.uk](mailto:alexandra.pullen@nouse.co.uk) or [heather.gosling@nouse.co.uk](mailto:heather.gosling@nouse.co.uk).

---

### **Food and drink**

A stop which has to be included on any pub/bar crawl or night out in York is **Dusk** located on New Street! By day, they serve huge slices of pizza for just £4 each, or an entire New York style 16 inch pizza for £16. They offer five

By night, **Dusk** turns into "Glastonbury without the wellies", with their two for one cocktail deal being a common occurrence on nights out. This runs Sunday-Thursday until 2am and on Fridays and Saturdays until 10pm. They're all named after famous figures ranging from Milky Bar Kid to Britney Spears, and a favourite of mine is the Barack Obama (rum, amaretto, triple sec, orange juice and grenadine)!

---

## Film and TV

***Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret.*** is a wonderfully funny yet intensely emotional coming-of-age film based on the 1970s novel by Judy Blume. It follows eleven-year-old Margaret Simon as her family settles into the suburbs after moving from the city and she begins to enter her tumultuous pre-pubescent years. In the desperation and confusion arising from leaving her previous life behind and stepping into the big, bad world of training bras and sanitary towels, Margaret turns to communicating with a God she isn't even sure she believes in, pleading with him to make everything okay.

The film does an excellent job of capturing how intense everything feels at that age. Despite constant reassurance that puberty is normal, there is always that nagging feeling that you have it wrong, that your body is the weirdest and most alien. Everyone is always watching everyone else, gauging whether they are more 'behind' or 'ahead' than them in the race to adulthood.

When Margaret moves into the new house she is immediately greeted by the girl next door, who insists that she come over to swim in the pool. When she gets changed into her bathing suit, the girl exclaims "you're still flat!", and later convinces Margaret that she can grow her chest by exclaiming "I must, I must, I must increase my bust!"

There are funny moments such as that one, but also joltingly emotional ones as well, particularly when it comes to its exploration of religion. Crucially, the film shows how the entire fabric of your life can feel like it's tearing apart when the threads of puberty, identity, friendship and family are being pulled in every direction, yet simultaneously how quickly it can be patched together with a little love and understanding.

---

## Travel

### Top 5 places to visit in Leeds

#### 1- Blue Rinse

**Blue Rinse** is an iconic vintage shop in Leeds, and it was first established in 1997. They have two shops in Leeds - one on Call Lane that has five floors, and one in the Merrion Centre. **Blue Rinse** supplies vintage lovers with clothing from the 70s, 80s, 90s and 00s. The shop also offers reworked pieces from recycled silk and denim.



## 2 - Leeds Art Gallery

**Leeds Art Gallery** is a must see! It is free to visit and offers art from older to more contemporary periods. It is perfect to wander around during the day. The gallery also hosts a range of interactive workshops.

## 3. Leeds Corn Exchange

**Leeds corn exchange** is a historic building that is now home to several independent shops. It is a great place to visit to support independent artists and small businesses.

## 4. Rudys pizza

**Rudys Pizza** is a great place for lunch or dinner in Leeds! They have now opened a restaurant in York! Delicious pizzas and great service.

## 5. The Wardrobe

**The Wardrobe** is a music venue in Leeds and it is a great place to discover new artists. The venue also has a restaurant and a bar that makes great cocktails.

---

## Literature

***How Westminster Works and Why It Doesn't*** by Ian Dunt takes a methodical and analytical look at the main structures that comprise the political system of the UK in a logical and coherent manner that neither condescends nor alienates the average reader. When I'm at university, I find myself having much more political conversations than I do when I'm at home and often wish to voice opinions I'm passionate about without the more general knowledge of political structures as a whole to do so with confidence and assertion.

This book is great for anyone who'd just like to know a little bit more about the 'powers that be' that affect all of our daily lives in preparation for being able to talk from an informed perspective in the upcoming month. Told with an emotive and narrative approach, this book feels easy to read amongst all the heavy and elongated academic writing that I'm sure you'll all be encountering during the rest of the day once university starts up again.

---

## Music

There is something to be said for the phrase 'less is more'. The punks knew it, hammering power chords with repeated lyrical sentiments. James

Murphy knows it, turning one piano riff into an eight-minute emotional eruption with 'All My Friends'. Taylor Swift apparently doesn't, with her last release feeling more verbose than the unabridged *Ulysses*. But popular music, at its very core, knows that less is more: simple chords, repeated chorus, three-minute songs and done.

Thankfully, **The Cribs** know this too. Their self-titled debut is the mid-2000s indie embodiment of this sentiment. Three band members, three instruments, and they even belong to the same family. The Jarman brothers lock in to create some of the catchiest songs from this period, filled with enough personality to avoid the triteness of landfill indie while remaining familiar enough for the casual listener.

Every song is concise, every verse catchy, every moment building a momentum to thrust you readily into the next. Highlights such as 'Another Number' and 'Things You Should Be Knowing' strike a balance between somewhat angular and chaotic guitar riffs and a playful and buoyant rhythm section. It is an underrated offering from an underrated band, perfect for lifting the mood and carrying you through any day.

---

#### Did you know?

The Shambles has previously been referred to as Haymongergate (1240), Nedlergate (1394) and The Great Flesh Shambles (1426)!

---

---

## Longer Reads:

Englishness in an age of far-right populism

**[Progressive Patriotism: an antidote to entropy?](#)** →

Written by Antonia Shipley

*Muse* takes Leeds

**[Artists you don't want to miss:](#)**

**[Interviews from Leeds Festival's](#)**

**[BBC Introducing stage](#)**→

Written by Alexandra Pullen and Grace Clift



## Editor's Note

Ellen Morris speaks

---

York climbs the Guardian's University rankings, to a tourist tax for the masses in York, there is plenty of news this week! In Politics we see breaking news of the winter fuel allowance and York Central MP Rachael Maskell's views on it, as well as a heartbreaking update on Palestinian student, Dana Abu Qamar.

Muse informs us that Dusk is not only the classic 2-for-1 cocktail bar, but also a place for a fairly priced pizza - I will be checking that out. Also see Travel to escape from the historical streets of York to see our more urban neighbour, Leeds.

Whilst the Freshers' print edition is in the works, the *Nouse* team does not falter with consistent articles for you, the reader.

Thanks for reading!

Best,

Ellen

---

Introduced by Tom Layton

Contributors: Tom Layton, Josh Haining, Alex Pullen, Maia Wensley, Heather Gosling, Alfie Sansom, Matty Ennis

Tech'd by Roy Bright Asiku

Edited and designed by Ellen Morris and Tom Layton

Image: Kaszynski, Lockheed Martin

For queries and pitches, please email [nouseletter.editors@nouse.co.uk](mailto:nouseletter.editors@nouse.co.uk)

Home Farm, Heslington, York

YO10 5DD

