



'I expected to trawl through holiday snaps and the same old sunset. I was wrong'

**Photo competition M10 - 11**

## YUSU silences media following threat of lawsuit

**Raf Sanchez**  
EDITOR

A MEMBER of University staff is threatening legal action against YUSU for alleged defamation and harassment by the student media dating back over the past several years. YUSU has invoked the most serious articles of its Media Charter to prevent *Nouse* from reporting on the situation, for fear of provoking the individual further.

The staff member contacted YUSU Service and Finance Officer Matt Burton in mid-October to inform the union that he was considering legal action. Burton said the staff member claimed the University, obligated by a duty of care to him as his employee, had agreed to support his case if he did decide to sue.

The call to the Union came days after *Nouse* contacted the University with regards to allegations made against the individual by other members of staff.

In a formal letter to *Nouse* explaining the decision to pull the story YUSU

Societies and Communications Officer Sam Bayley said: "YUSU has decided that until the end of this term, when the situation will be reviewed, it is too much of a risk to the Union to print stories regarding the staff member."

"With legal action being considered, and a well documented case already in existence, we feel it would be unwise to inflame the situation by identifying the individual concerned."

The staff member refused to comment on the situation, saying that he would only speak through the University Press Office. He is rumoured to have built up a dossier documenting the student media's coverage of his actions for the past several years.

The University confirmed that the staff member had contacted YUSU but would neither confirm nor deny the claim that the University would support him in a potential legal action against the student union.

A University spokesperson said: "[The staff member] has indicated to YUSU

that he would take legal action should defamatory statements about him appear in the student media. The University recognises the right of any individual to seek legal redress in those circumstances."

On October 26 Bayley emailed all student media organisations declaring "an indefinite media embargo" on any stories relating to the staff member. In the email Bayley said: "We are getting rather concerned here that [the staff member] is preparing a legal case for continuing harassment due to the number of mentions about him in the newspapers over the past few years." In *York Vision's* November 6 edition no mention was made of the situation.

Concerns have been raised that if the situation does escalate into a court case in which YUSU is facing a lawsuit from a member of University staff it could have a damaging effect on the University's public image. Garner said he would not comment on "a purely hypothetical situation".

**COMMENT >> Page 11**



GEORGE LOWTHER

**Victory for NUS >> Pages 4-5**

### BNP hit back against YUSU condemnation

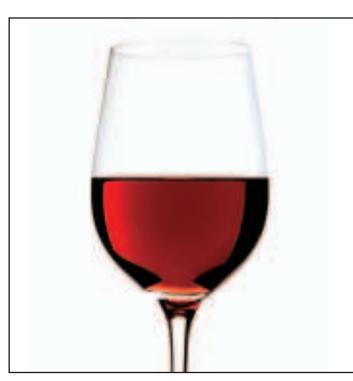
The BNP has described the decision to condemn the Oxford Union Debating Society "farical". YUSU Racial Equality Officers have criticised Oxford Union's decision to invite BNP leader Nick Griffin and David Irving to a debate.

**NEWS >> Page 2**  
**COMMENT >> Page 10**

### York enters world's top 100 universities

The University of York has been ranked the 74th best university in the world according to a new table compiled by the Times Higher Education Supplement. York has climbed over 50 places from its previous position of 124.

**NEWS >> Page 9**  
**COMMENT >> Page 11**



### Which wine?

*Nouse's* resident wine expert finds out if it's possible to drink good wine on a budget, and discovers that expensive bottles don't always hold the best tipple.

**MUSE >> M6 - 7**

### Rowers begin season campaign with victory

York University Boat Club began new Head racing season with coxed fours win in their division at the annual York Small Boats contest. Novice women achieved 'senior level' time in their first race together in a coxed four, but novice men were unable to compete.

**SPORTS >> Page 17**

# Debate condemnation sparks a hostile reaction from BNP

**Henry James Foy**  
NEWS EDITOR

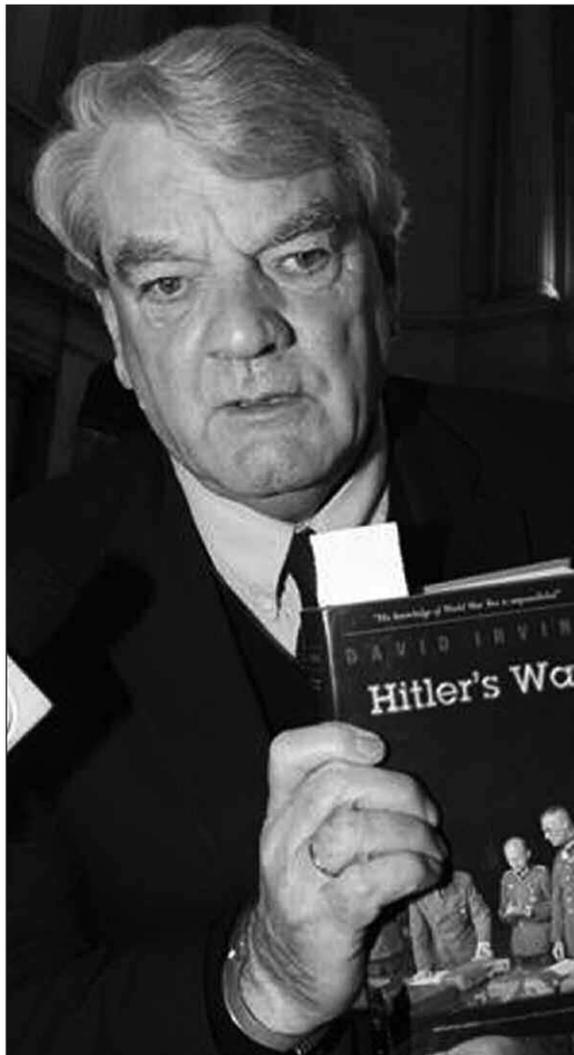
YUSU HAS CHOSEN to support the NUS in its condemnation of the Oxford Union Debating Society's invitations to British National Party leader Nick Griffin and discredited historian David Irving. The decision was met with strong criticism from the BNP, who described the affair as "farcical".

The Oxford Union Debating Society, famed for its controversial speakers such as disgraced former US President Richard Nixon and political activist Malcolm X, has invited Griffin and Irving to its 'Freedom of Speech' debate on November 26. The NUS swiftly condemned the announcement and encouraged affiliated unions to follow suit.

BNP Press Officer Simon Darby said: "Who do these small unrepresentative student unions think they are to tell other students who they can and cannot listen to? It's ridiculous. To accuse us of being fascist and then prevent a political party from speaking is pretty ironic. In a free country you can't stop somebody's opinion."

YUSU Racial Equality Officer Michael Batula defended the decision to write to Oxford Union denouncing its choice of speakers. He said: "I have nothing against freedom of speech". Their letter describes the BNP as "a scourge on the contemporary, progressive, multicultural British society", and claims that they "openly voice anachronistic and racist ideology." It also calls Irving, who was recently imprisoned in Austria for Holocaust denial, and Griffin "obsolescent, bigoted, racist fascists."

Batula and co-officer Ishmael Norris were initially asked by the NUS to sign a petition against the invitations. The letter, says Batula, "was purely



**Nick Griffin (right) and David Irving are set to speak in Oxford on 26 November**

our idea. Then we sought backing from YUSU Senate to get the support of the whole University. It is signed by the two of us, and was sent on behalf of YUSU, but we would have written it on our own behalf anyway. It was good to have the backing of the Union; it's strength in numbers."

The NUS also issued their own statement: "Freedom of speech is often cited as a reason to afford a platform to racists and fascists." It also states that: "Our primary concern is the safety of our members"

and claims "whenever the BNP is active in an area the number of racist attacks increases."

Darby dismissed the accusation, and said that the NUS has an inherent problem with the party. "It's like a Pavlovian response from the NUS - as soon as they hear BNP, they react. It's a psychological illness," he said.

According to Batula, around 25 students' unions have written to criticise the Oxford Union. The society's President, Luke Tryl, issued a letter in response to press

coverage of the controversy. He reiterates that the debate is to "challenge and attack their views in a head to head manner."

The coverage and criticism has, as yet, had no impact on Oxford Union's decision to invite the speakers. Darby said Griffin still plans to attend the debate. He said: "We're still unaware of whether the invitation is still open. If it is, then Nick will certainly go."

**COMMENT >> P10**

## Student attacked outside nightclub

A University of York student required hospital treatment following a violent assault outside Toffs nightclub last month. Matt Thomas, a first-year Politics and Economics student, was returning to James College when he was confronted by a man in his 20s who punched him and, when he fell to the ground, kicked him repeatedly in the head. The attack appears to have been unprovoked and follows a series of violent incidents that have occurred recently in the vicinity of the club. The police were contacted but, despite CCTV footage, were doubtful they would catch the perpetrator.

## Fake event posters leave NGS perplexed

The New Generation Society (NGS) has said it has "no knowledge" of the posters put up on campus bearing its logo and advertising an event with controversial Oxford eugenicist Chris Brand. The event, entitled 'Engineering the New Generation: Eugenics and the Society of the Future', is billed for P/X001 on Wednesday, November 21. NGS Chair Amy Cummings said: "The NGS does not endorse any event held on the 21st of November" but would not speculate on who put the posters up. No events are booked for P/X001 at the time given.

## James College alert after intruder scare

An email was sent to James College residents warning of an intruder who tried to enter a college office but fled after being challenged by a member of staff. The police were contacted and have said that a man fitting the description was wanted for questioning. The wanted man, known as "Junior Bradshaw", is a con artist and petty thief. Bradshaw is described as a 5 feet 7 inches tall, 18-20 year old black male. Police suspect he has friends at James College and may be living on campus. Neil Lunt, James College Provost, urged students to report any suspicious behaviour.

**Reporting by Peter Saul and Jonathan Fransman**

## In this edition

November 20 2007  
www.NOUSE.co.uk

News	1-9
Comment	10-12
Letters	13
Politics	14-16
Sport	17-20

Dealing with stress	M4-5
Which wine?	M7
Photo competition	M8-9
Travels in India	M14
Listings	M24



*Nouse* speaks to artist and architect Usman Haque about his installation *Evoke* at York Minster and how it feels for an artist to witness public response to their work first-hand.

**MUSE >> 12-13**

## Who's NOUSE

Grimston House (V/X/010)  
Vanbrugh College  
University of York  
Heslington  
York  
YO10 5DD  
Email: [contact@nouse.co.uk](mailto:contact@nouse.co.uk)

**EDITOR**  
Raf Sanchez

**DEPUTY EDITOR**  
Anjli Raval

**MUSE EDITOR**  
Nicky Woolf

**CONSULTANT EDITOR**  
Heidi Blake

**CREATIVE DIRECTOR**  
Ellen Carpenter

**MANAGING DIRECTOR**  
Chris Cowan

**CHIEF SUBEDITOR**  
Sarah Foster

**NEWS EDITOR**  
Henry James Foy

**NEWS DEPUTY**  
Jonathan Fransman

**POLITICS EDITOR**  
Alberto Furlan

**POLITICS DEPUTIES**  
Polly Ingham  
Peter Campbell

**COMMENT EDITOR**  
Steph Dyson

**COMMENT DEPUTY**  
Lily Eastwood

**FEATURES EDITOR**  
Venetia Rainey

**FEATURES DEPUTY**  
Liam O'Brien

**ARTS EDITOR**  
Helen Citron

**ARTS DEPUTY**  
Sarah-Jane Silvester

**MUSIC EDITORS**  
Olivia Haughton  
James Cousins

**MUSIC DEPUTIES**  
Oliver Elliot  
Steven Williams

**FILM EDITOR**  
Dave Coates

**FILM DEPUTIES**  
Dan Rodwell  
Jonathan Wilkes

**F & D EDITOR**  
Will Heaven

**F & D DEPUTY**  
James MacDougald

**LISTINGS EDITOR**  
Daniel Ball

**SPORTS EDITORS**  
Criss Noice  
Matthew Jaynes

**SPORTS DEPUTY**  
Jack Organ

**WEB EDITOR**  
Daniel Whitehead

**WEB DEPUTY**  
Jennifer O'Mahony

**PHOTO EDITOR**  
Ally Carmichael

**ADVERTISING TEAM**  
Frances Oke  
Chloe Dean  
Fabiola Clemente  
Esme Anderson

**ADMINISTRATOR**  
Arthur Reeves

*The opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily those of the editors, writers, or advertisers*

# Defiant YUSU reject Carnage legal threat as 'amateurish intimidation'

**Henry James Foy**  
 NEWS EDITOR

YUSU OFFICERS ARE unmoved by threats of libel from barcrawl company Carnage. The event's organisers have warned the Students' Union that they are considering a lawsuit over comments quoted in a recent *Nouse* article.

The YUSU Executive committee, who were contacted by Carnage last week demanding the retraction of the article from the *Nouse* website, are confident that any lawsuit against them would fail.

YUSU Societies and Communications Officer, Sam Bayley, said: "I think that YUSU would win to be honest. Our understanding of the legal issues is that expressing opinion can't be libellous, and we know that *Nouse* reporters have acted properly. There is nothing to correct. That is the position we are going to stick with."

Carnage, which ran its first York event on Sunday October 28, felt that two quotations from the article were inaccurate and defamatory. The first, a quotation from Bayley during a YUSU Exec meeting, claimed that Carnage are "a rip-off" and "aren't ethical". Bayley compared the 20-30p cost price of a Carnage t-shirt with its retail price of £8. "They said the figures were inaccurate, but they were taken from a Carnage representative," he said.

Carnage also took issue with a comment made by one of

their representatives to a *Nouse* reporter, which stated: "Do you think I care about third-world kids? You should see my over-draft." According to Carnage, the interview from which the quotation was obtained amounted to "harassment".

The company first made contact with YUSU in a phone call three weeks ago. YUSU Entertainment Officer Rory Shanks was told that a lawsuit would be filed should stories relating to the company be printed in campus media. Shanks described the threat as "amateurish tactics to intimidate us that were insulting to my intelligence."

After the article was published, a second phone call was made stating that legal proceedings would begin should it not be withdrawn. This threat has not been actioned. Bayley said: "Part of legal action and getting lawyers is sometimes to intimidate. On this occasion it hasn't worked - if that is what they were trying to do. Generally, we are not a Union that does what it is told and listens to that kind of thing. We do what is best for our students, societies and media outlets".

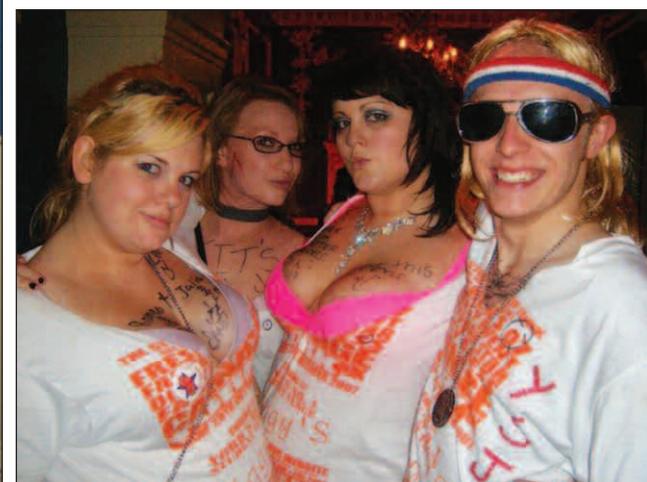
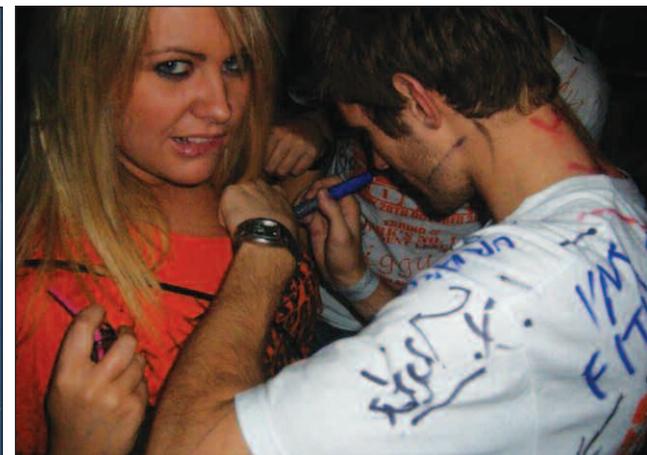
While YUSU believe legal action is unlikely to materialise, they have contacted the NUS legal support team. "We have spoken with Paul England, our NUS regional co-ordinator, and he has been looking into it. The NUS are more experienced with this kind of issue, and they have the legal team to back it up as well," said Bayley.

The NUS also refuted a



**The event, themed 'Dirty Porn Star', took place last month**

claim from Carnage that it had previously sued a union over a similar issue, forcing an out-of-court settlement for around £11,000. Bayley commented: "They could not confirm this. Unless the union in question is one of the five not affiliated with the NUS, it is strange that the NUS members who deal with these issues have not heard anything about it."



These events come in the aftermath of the death of Gethin Bevan, a University of Bath student who was found hanged in the early hours of Friday, October 26, after participating in the Carnage event in the area. Police are not treating the death as suspicious.

Carnage has also stated its intention to run more events in York. Andrew Elliot, owner of

Ziggy's Nightclub, which went into partnership with the company for the York event, described the barcrawl as a "debacle and a farce". He said: "It was a fiasco in our view, and I have told them that it will not happen again. I think the general feeling in York is that this is not a Carnage place."

**COMMENT >> P11**

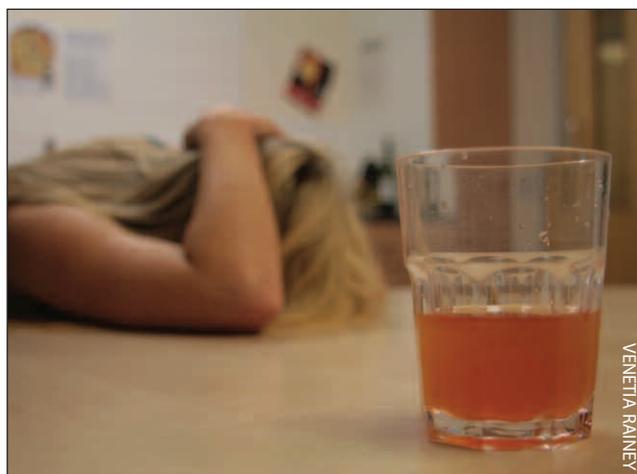
# Suspected drink spiking incident at James party

**Jonathan Fransman**  
 DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

A UNIVERSITY OF York student is believed to have had her drink spiked at a James College Halloween Party.

The student, who wishes to remain anonymous for privacy reasons, was told by doctors that she displayed the symptoms associated with the consumption of Rohypnol or a similar substance. The incident comes at a time when there have been growing numbers of suspected drink spikings, both on campus and in the city centre.

YUSU Academic and Welfare Officer Grace Fletcher-Hall said: "I have never known so many



**Reports of campus drink spiking are on the increase**

reports of drink spiking on campus before." She added, "I don't know how many of the recent incidents are actual spikings, but any incident in which students feel

something has happened is certainly a cause for concern as far as I'm concerned."

Speaking to *Nouse* the victim said: "My drink was definitely spiked. I have real

concerns for other potential victims." She has since returned to full health, but is still disturbed by the event.

The party was hosted by a James College residential block and was widely attended by students from across campus. One attendee claimed that there were roughly a hundred people at the party, most of whom were congregating outside. The student believes her drink was spiked while outside, as she never actually entered the block herself that night.

After leaving the party, the student declined invitations from friends to continue to a nightclub. She was walking to meet her boyfriend when she suddenly felt that she "was losing control of herself. I hadn't even

drunk that much". She cannot remember any details of the night past this point.

Despite her delirious state, the victim managed to call her boyfriend and ask him to meet her. "If it hadn't been for my amazing boyfriend and flatmates then it could have turned out very, very differently," she said.

"When I got her call she seemed ok, but by the time I got to her she looked terrible," said her boyfriend. When he eventually managed to locate her he found that she was "slipping in and out of consciousness" and was acting "like she had had an obscene amount to drink". He expressed anger at the probability that a University of York student was responsible: "It really worries me, if they did it

once it seems likely that they may do it again and with more serious consequences."

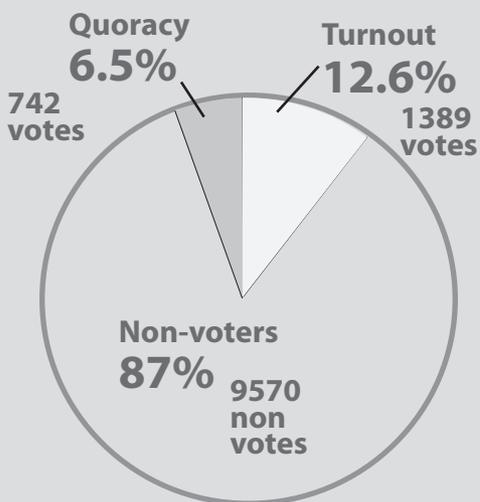
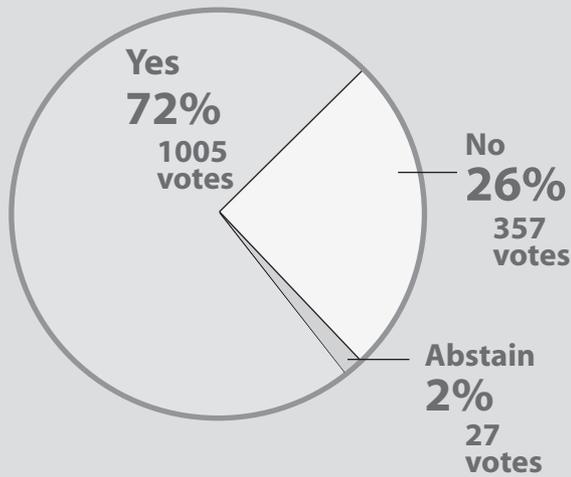
Concerns were also raised about the effectiveness of the Health Centre in dealing with drink spiking. The student said that visiting the health centre the day after, the staff could not help and advised students to "not bother going".

Fletcher-Hall stressed the importance of developing a new approach to the issue. She called for a "new coordinated procedure" between the different parties involved in the running of campus events and the emphasised the necessity of creating new "guidelines for how to treat the student and also how to report the incident."

**COMMENT >> P12**

# York to retain NUS affiliation as

## REFERENDUM RESULTS



648 size of 'Yes' majority

688 number of votes beyond quoracy

Source: YUSU Referndum Figures  
[www.yusu.org/news/?id=20](http://www.yusu.org/news/?id=20)

**Jonathan Fransman**  
DEPUTY NEWS EDITOR

YUSU IS SET to continue its affiliation to the NUS, as an unexpectedly high number of students vote to retain membership.

The results of the NUS referendum were announced on Friday with 72% voting 'Yes' to continue YUSU's affiliation with the NUS.

Voter turnout was surprisingly high, with 1,389 votes cast, comfortably exceeding the 742 required to reach quoracy. The 'No to NUS' campaign received 26% of the total number of votes cast, an unexpectedly high percentage of the vote.

YUSU Training Officer Tom Langrish and Academic and Welfare Officer Grace Fletcher-Hall, led the 'Yes' campaign and were delighted with the result. Langrish said: "I'm overjoyed. We had two aims for this campaign, to stay affiliated with the NUS and to educate people about the NUS. We've achieved both. Hopefully now we can build on this and make the NUS as important as YUSU because they do make a difference - York students have realised that."

Despite their defeat, the 'No' campaign claimed to be content with the result. Alan Yonge, the campaign leader, said: "We've got people talking about whether the NUS is good or not, and whether it is actually accountable. Obviously, we would have liked to have won, but when you compare our results to other universities, we have actually got a



MICHAEL BRUNSDEN

NUS President Gemma Tumelty argued passionately that YUSU should retain its affiliation

reasonable result."

Anne-Marie Canning, YUSU President and referendum coordinator, praised York students for the high turnout at the polls: "I'm

happy that we had a fantastic turnout." She continued, "We've defeated all the critics who thought that we wouldn't make quoracy. Clearly York students have

made their voice heard."

NUS President Gemma Tumelty was also delighted by the result. "I am really over the moon," she said, "every single time that

# Extraordinary conference called for December

**Anjli Raval**  
DEPUTY EDITOR

AN NUS Extraordinary Conference will be held on December 4, 2007 to debate proposed core constitutional reforms which would dramatically re-structure the union's current form.

The Governance Review briefing, written by the NUS, states that it aims to increase democracy and highlight new priorities for the organisation. It intends to create a system which is "easier to understand, easier to take part in, and focuses on issues and outcomes instead of processes."

NUS President Gemma Tumelty said: "Good governance is about getting



The proposed reforms could radically alter the NUS' form

things done. We want NUS to help make students' unions as successful as they can be, so that we can make a real, positive difference to

the lives of students".

YUSU will be sending eight delegates, who will be elected by the Union Senate Committee, to the

Conference in December.

YUSU President Anne-Marie Canning said: "I think the changes to NUS will result in greater participation through the zones. Essentially, students should see a more responsive NUS if the core constitution passes."

If the proposed core constitution is passed, NUS will develop a set of new by-laws and schedules to be brought to their Annual Congress in Blackpool in April 2008.

Anyone who is interested in participating in the Extraordinary Conference is invited to take part in hustings at the Union Senate Committee on Wednesday November 28 at 4pm.

## PROPOSED RESTRUCTURE

### Zones

Policy-making will be divided into five zones: Higher Education, Further Education, Welfare, Society and Citizenship and Union Development.

### Nations

A body to unite regional committees and improve local representation

### Liberation

Will work on Liberation, Equality and Diversity campaigns at NUS

### Social Policy

Aims to do more for international, part-time and mature students.

### Annual Congress

Will bring delegates from all affiliated Unions together to discuss and ratify decisions made by the Zones.

### The Senate

Will act as the political leadership of the NUS and will actively carry out the decisions made at Congress

### The Board

Will be student led, but with outside expertise to make NUS run more efficiently, by supervising finances, scrutinising the performance of executive members and dealing with legal issues.

# 'Yes' campaign takes 72% of vote

students vote to stay in the NUS, it strengthens our democratic voice as the largest student organisation in the world. The students of York have certainly made the right decision."

The wider political affiliations of the 'Yes' and 'No' campaigns added another dimension to the debate. Fletcher-Hall from the 'Yes' campaign has played an active role in Labour Soc and last year ran for council on a Labour ticket. Yonge is Honorary Vice-President of York Conservatives.

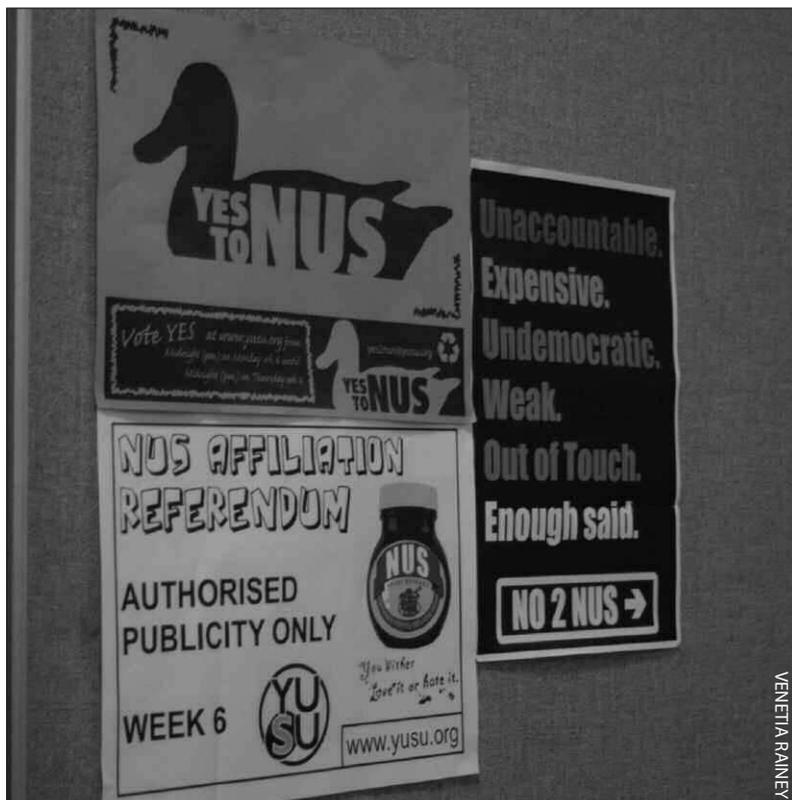
Prominent figures from NUS past and present were scheduled to speak throughout the week to represent both sides of the campaign.

A key issue during the debate was whether or not the annual £36,000 affiliation fee represented value for money and whether the University would allow YUSU to keep the money in the event of disaffiliation. The 'Yes' campaign argued that the University would simply withdraw the money from YUSU's block grant, a view Yonge described as "overly pessimistic". He argued that by producing a "robust budget" the union stood a chance of being able to reclaim some or all of the £36,000 allocated for NUS membership.

Speaking to *Nouse* the University's Finance Officer Graham Gilbert said the University had no fixed position on the issue and would wait to take any related decision during budget negotiations.



GEORGE LOWTHER



VENETIA RAINY

Above: NUS President Gemma Tumelty speaks with students on campus  
 Below: Campaign posters played an important role in both campaigns

COMMENT >> P11

## Despite failing to swing referendum 'No' vote success exceeds expectations

**Henry James Foy**  
 NEWS EDITOR

DESPITE FAILING TO secure the majority vote, the 'No to NUS' campaigners surpassed results achieved by most disaffiliation movements at various universities across the country.

Garnering more than a quarter of the vote, Alan Yonge and his team exceeded the achievements of 'No' campaigners in the 2006 referendums held in the universities of Aberdeen, Bristol, Keele and Portsmouth. An other referendum in Glasgow resulted in disaffiliation from the NUS.

Yonge, who is also honorary Vice-President of the University of York Tories, believes a sizeable conservative-leaning group of students may have contributed to

their result. "York is has always been a good university for the Conservatives. We're small, we like to be independent, and we're pretty local in terms of numbers. Perhaps a tendency to not like large unrepresentative groups could have helped our cause," he said.

Dan Taylor, a key 'No' campaigner also said painting the NUS as unrepresentative was an important factor in the vote.

"We talked about the issues that mattered to York students. The NUS people who came here have no knowledge of York," he said.

The 'No' campaign also spent a large amount of campaign time highlighting the financial implications of affiliation.

"There were a lot of people that were taken in by the financial

aspects. The *York Vision* article and its slight inaccuracies didn't help our cause. They focused on some of the right issues," said Tom Langrish, leader of the 'Yes' campaign.

However, the 'No' campaign stressed the campaign was not run on party lines. "I steered it away from a Tory - Labour battle," said Yonge.

"The debate transcended political divides. In fact, our campaign wasn't backed by York Tories as much as we had hoped," said Taylor.

Langrish emphasised the campaign's non-party political aspect. "I wouldn't want to make any stereotypes. The University is quite diverse, there are lots of reasons why students would or wouldn't want to be a part of the NUS," he said.

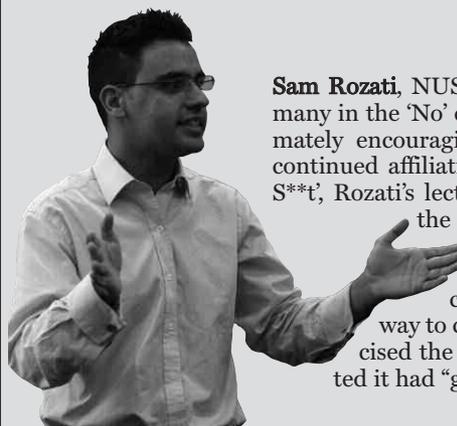
### REFERENDUM WEEK

#### Monday



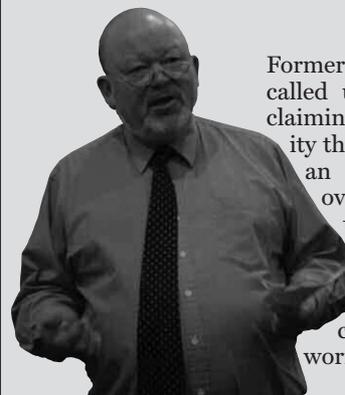
NUS President Gemma Tumelty defended the Union during Monday's debate against claims of financial incompetence and an ineffective democratic structure. She argued that when it came to fighting for students' rights the NUS was "the only show in town." At the centre of the debate was the £36,000 annual affiliation fee paid to the NUS, which Alan Yonge, 'No' campaign coordinator, called a "waste of money" paid by YUSU in exchange for "minimal representation" at conference.

#### Tuesday



Sam Rozati, NUS Executive member, surprised many in the 'No' camp on Tuesday night by ultimately encouraging York students to vote for continued affiliation. Entitled 'Why the NUS is S\*\*t', Rozati's lecture was expected to highlight the organisation's major failings. While describing large parts of the NUS as "terrible," he claimed affiliation was the only way to change it. Having heavily publicised the talk, the 'No' campaign admitted it had "got the wrong end of the stick."

#### Wednesday



Former YUSU and NUS President John Randall called upon York to join the "student voice", claiming the NUS had the influence and credibility that individual unions could never have. In an informative lecture, Randall's objective overview of the NUS assessed the organisation's strengths and weaknesses. With decades of experience in student politics and the politicised world of higher education, he quipped: "Students should be critical of authority structures; it's almost worrying if they are not."

#### Thursday



The NUSSL and NUS Extra Card Q&A scheduled for Thursday was cut from the schedule, thus preventing the 'No' campaign from launching an attack on its favourite £10 piece of plastic. Reasons for the cancellation were not released. Later that evening, *Nouse* was informed by a YUSU insider that the referendum had successfully exceeded quoracy. While Tom Langrish and Grace Fletcher-Hall toured student residences, Alan Yonge and Dan Taylor spent the last day of voting distributing literature on Vanbrugh paradise.

#### Friday



The campaigning came to an end on Friday, with both camps assembling at midday to hear the official release of the results. Anne-Marie Canning, Referendum Co-ordinator, had little use for her megaphone when informing the small crowd of York's continued affiliation with the NUS. "Yes!" exclaimed an obviously jubilant Grace Fletcher-Hall, who remarked "I knew York students weren't stupid." Alan Yonge was naturally a little more subdued, though claimed not to be disheartened by the 26% of the campus vote garnered by the 'No' campaign, claiming that it was a "good result".

# University of York plays host to the first laptop orchestra event in the UK

Dan Hyde  
Elly Veness

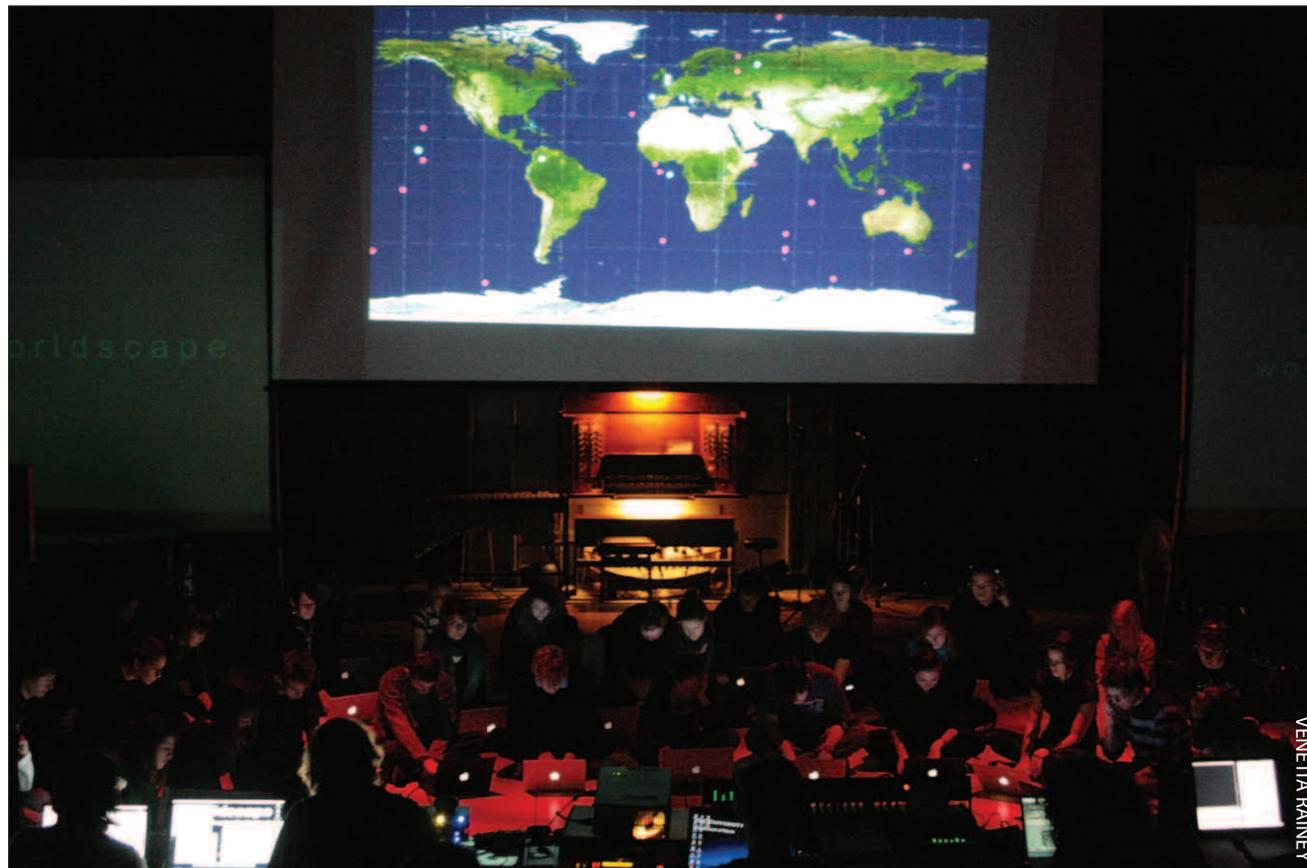
THE UNIVERSITY OF York played host to the UK's largest laptop orchestra last week, in a production entitled 'Worldscape', sponsored by computer giant Apple.

The performances were held on November 14 and 15 and consisted of 50 music students using laptops to produce orchestrated music complemented by song, dance, film and traditional instruments.

Organised and inspired by Lecturer of Music and three-time *Prix Ars Electronica* award winner Ambrose Field, the event was sponsored by computer company Apple and attracted attention from the national media.

"Worldscape is a unique approach to orchestral music: unlike traditional pieces in which classical instruments are involved, all that is needed is a laptop," said Ruth Keggin, a music undergraduate who participated in the event.

Students were spread across the floor with their laptops and interacted with what they saw in front of them, manipulating the sound using keycards. The computer responds by changing the volume or pitch of the note, and the product can be heard through headphones. In



Participating students could control the pitch and volume of notes by waving a card in front of their laptops

Field's words, "each person can hear their own part and how it relates to those around them and play the piece together".

The laptops used tailor-made software which was designed by Field and a group of postgraduate music students. In one piece, entitled 'Hide and Seek', software was designed to pro-

vide a musical parameter in which the performers explored a digital world map.

A large segment of the performance was improvised. "The beauty of the performance was that the results were subtly different," said Olivia Haughton, a first-year music student who also took part. "We were given complete freedom to develop

creative interpretations of current world issues through the medium of music," she added.

Second years Sally Desmond and Hannah Wells, directors of several of the project's prominent pieces, described Worldscape as "more about musicality than anything else, which makes it very accessi-

ble". The appeal of the project was "the emphasis on how you interpret the sound". They also praised the involvement of the first years who had little under five weeks to prepare for this unusual performance. "It's a completely different sort of music," said first year Virginia Rousiamani. "It's very communicative and so

different from anything at A-Level. It's those things that make music what it is. It doesn't matter how it is made," she added.

Field said that he was enthused about the magnitude of the musical project. He said: "there are no universities that are doing anything remotely like this. It is the creativity of the students that has achieved something amazing." He also described the sound produced as "something incredible that's created by humans", stressing, "that's the real achievement, not the technology."

Field was responsible for Apple's involvement, saying, "I wanted everybody who was on my course to take part in it without having to pay for laptops or insurance or any of that junk."

The event was met with mixed reactions. Observer Ben Colvin commented, "Although it was interesting I found it really intense. It was so different than anything I've heard before." Another audience member, Catrin Bourke disagreed by saying "It was strange, but I found it really enjoyable."

Field was keen to stress that technology is not a replacement for traditional instruments, stating that "They'll say this is the end of the traditional orchestra, but it doesn't mean that - it's just a different thing."

MUSE >> M20

## LGBT Officer attacks bar over homophobia claims

Anjali Raval  
DEPUTY EDITOR

LGBT OFFICER Mathew Pallas accused the Nag's Head bar on Micklegate of possible homophobia for not allowing some members on the LGBT social entry on account of their dress code.

At last week's Exec Committee, Pallas spoke out against the bar, saying that some of those on the LGBT Social on Sunday, November 4 were turned away by a bouncer as they were "wearing shoes that had some white on them or their top had stripes on it. Basically, using dress code to exclude gay people. Maybe they are trying to not have a gay night by turning gay people away."

Michael Rutherford, LGBT Social Treasurer said: "With no dress code provided, we think it's completely unacceptable that some of our members were turned away. They were not drunk, they were

not threatening and the bar was not full. We're not going to the Nag's Head again."

The manager of Nag's Head, who did not want to be named, said that entry was permitted as long as customers met "a minimum dress code" and added that they "did have policy on certain types of trainers, for example if they look messy."

Pallas added: "We are treating this very seriously and are looking into what action YUSU can take against the Nag's Head". YUSU have worked with the bar for numerous events such as Viking Raid, and also advertise the bar's 'trebles for singles' promotion on their website. "If the reports are true, then this relationship is likely to be damaged, and YUSU may decide not to work with them in the future," Pallas said. Discrimination in the provision of goods and services on the grounds of sexual orientation has been illegal since October 2006.

## YUSU closes down Your:Books

Liam O'Brien  
Lida Mirzaii

AFTER 20 YEARS of business, Your:Books is set to close at the end of spring term 2008 due to a decline in turnover and growing competition from online retailers.

Following a review of financial targets, it was found that the campus bookshop, despite a turnover last year of £54,000, would be unable to compete with online retailers like Amazon.com. "There's a history of the turnover decreasing by £9,000 a year. If the turnover dropped further it wouldn't cover its costs," said Matt Burton, YUSU Services and Finance Officer.

"It's the demise of our little empire. I'm very sad actually, I've spent almost seven happy years here and it's the loss of a very valuable service," commented Manager Jennie Winn on the closure. The announcement that Winn is to retire this Christmas was also a fac-



Your:Books is no longer viable

tor in the decision. Recruiting a new employee would have incurred further costs. "Perhaps it's the way that things have coincided, that I was finishing and the downturn in trade," said Winn. Overhead costs have already been reduced to

£20,000, yet Burton maintains "it's important to exercise financial responsibility, there's no point running the bookshop if it's taking money away from other student services and clubs."

The University's shift from core texts to electronic materials, and the release of reading lists before the start of the academic year, have both impacted upon business. "We have a lot of stock on the shelves because reading lists change every year. Yesterday we had 17 customers. People just aren't coming in," said Winn. As Blackwells, its main campus competitor, is buying and selling second-hand stock at similar prices to Your:Books, trade is only likely to fall further. YUSU's Small Ads marketplace is the shop's probable replacement, though only 27 books have been advertised since November 4. No decision has been made on what to do with the Your:Books space after closure.

COMMENT >> P12

# CU take stand against 'cult' on campus

**Peter Campbell**  
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

THE UNIVERSITY of York Christian Union (UYCU) have said they are taking "active measures" to counter the influence of the 'cult' reportedly operating on campus. They believe the group, known as 'The Church with No Name' or 'The Wandering Church', has converted at least one student already.

A third year electronics student and former member of UYCU allegedly joined the group after being approached over the summer at the Christian festival Soul Survivor. Mike Salmon, a member of the York church, Calvary Chapel, who knows the individual, said that "he was persuaded to go along with their activities, and just drifted in." The process of recruiting new members into the group is known as 'heavy shepherding'.

Since joining the group, the student has severed all connections with UYCU. "He says he doesn't want to speak to us again. It's as if he has lost his joy. It's heartbreaking," said a friend.

When contacted by *Nouse*, the member refused to comment and ignored all attempts to establish a dialogue. "The group will not allow him to make contact with anyone," said Salmon.

UYCU President Maria Leach described the group as having "worrying teachings" and stated that the UYCU

had commissioned a member of Calvary Chapel to "explain to the members what was going on".

The group has been involved in a number of incidents involving UYCU members. Phil Walker, a post-graduate student, met a member of the group and described him as "out to cause difficulties for the church. He was a recruiting agent." One student who was approached at St. Michael le Belfry church said they found the experience "intimidating" and that "it felt like they were recruiting".

Leach suggested that it might be possible for people to believe that they represent a Christian viewpoint. "Their most worrying teaching is that they believe that their group are the only true Christians, and that all other denominations are false. I can understand how this could be very confusing, and what I would really encourage is just to look into the beliefs of mainstream Christianity for yourself."

Lizzy Moorhouse, a first year student, was approached by members of the group following a church service. "They said [Christians] shouldn't be going to the pub, we shouldn't be going clubbing, we shouldn't be going to the cinema or even hanging out with non-Christians in their environment," remarked Moorhouse. Another student, who was approached twice, was told that "Christians should not have

any hobbies."

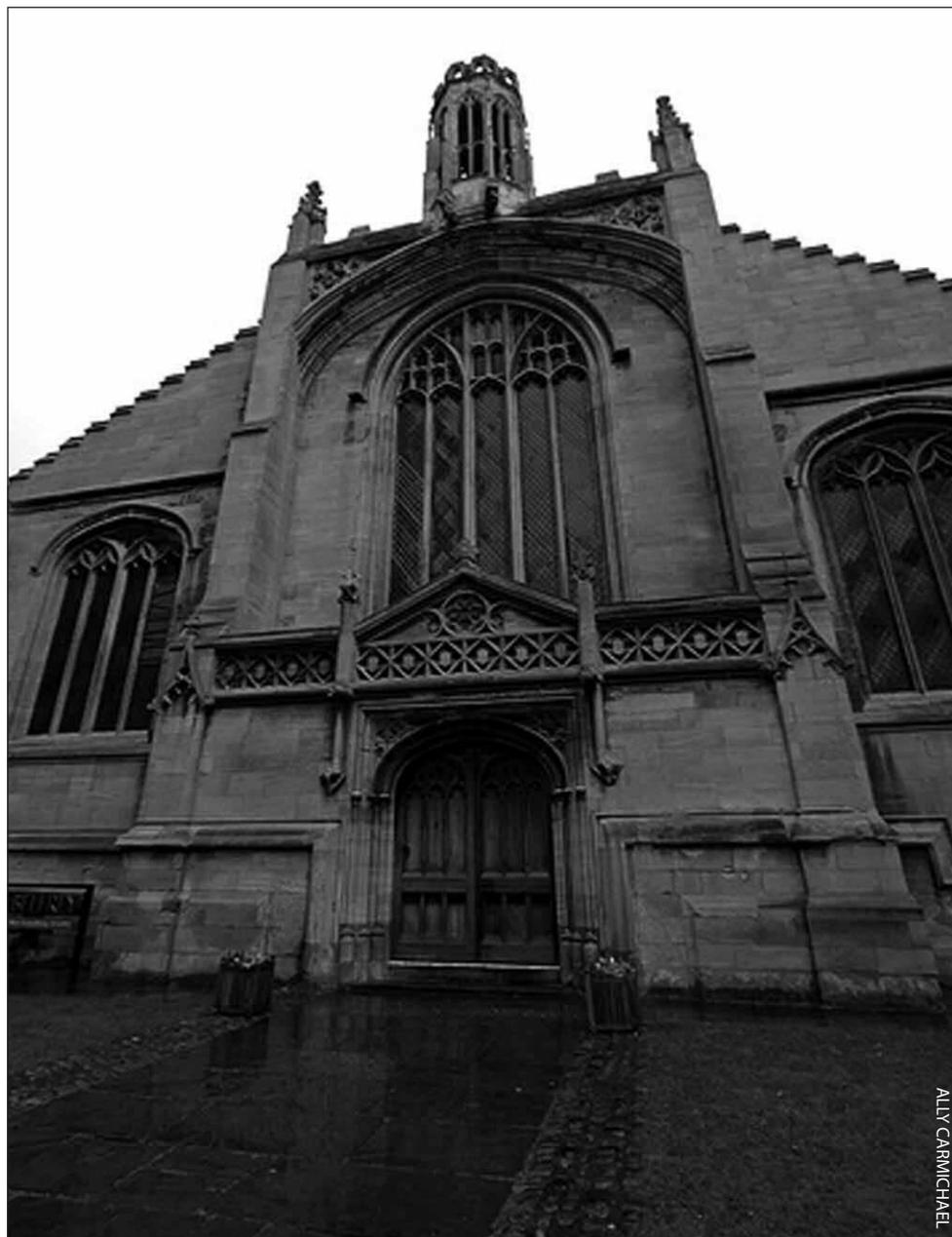
The group is believed to have a permanent member based in the North East of England who has made a number of visits to campus to meet with the recently converted York student. The permanent member is believed to be a woman in her mid-50s and the two have approached people following services.

The University Chaplaincy has warned that the group is a "dangerous fundamentalist group that take over a person's life in a cloak of authoritarian teachings, and encourage separation from all who do not agree, family included."

The group have been known to infiltrate church group meetings. Robin Constance, a member of Metropolitan Tabernacle Church in London, said: "We have had a lot of problems with this group. Their tactics are dishonest and alarming; they aim to pick off members on the periphery and refuse to engage with the leadership."

According to Constance, the group were once part of the International Church of Christ, but broke away. George Critchley, a third year student who has previously preached at Elim Pentecostal church, said that they were "so extreme that the International Church of Christ would regard them as a fundamentalist splinter."

The group is known to have large followings in Slovakia and Germany.



Students from the University of York Christian Union were approached by members of the 'cult' as they left St. Michael's le Belfry church after a Sunday service.

ALLY CARMICHAEL

## Student wins MySpace movie role

**Jennifer O'Mahoney**  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A STUDENT AT the University of York has won a role in a film after attending a virtual audition on the social networking site MySpace.

Phil Lester, a third year Language and Linguistics student, won the part in the film *Faintheart* after uploading an amateur video of himself at a mock job interview as the character of 'Tim', the role he later won.

He said: "I have always been interested in all aspects of the film industry, so I was hoping for a unique opportunity to see things from an insiders perspective. I had an hour to spare so I made a quick audition video and uploaded it onto the site. To be honest I didn't think I had a chance but I wanted to give it a go anyway."



A screenshot from Phil Lester's online MySpace diary

Lester received the part a month after posting the video, having attended further auditions with the Casting Director, Gary Davy, in London. At this point in the selection process, the shortlist for the role had

been reduced to just five hopefuls. Groundbreaking in its recruitment procedure, *Faintheart* is described by producer Peter Carlton as "a fairly standard rom-com with a lovely Viking twist."

The video diary that

Lester has regularly updated on his MySpace profile, tracking his progress through the initial meeting with Davy through to the most recent posting after two days on set, has attracted something of a cult following.

*Faintheart* is being hailed as one of the first user-generated major motion pictures, with actors and crew all recruited over the internet. The film, by award-winning British director Vito Rocco, has a budget of £1m and has already begun shooting. Rocco was selected from 500,000 MySpace users.

*Faintheart*, starring British comedy actor Simon Pegg, tells the story of Richard, a sales assistant who takes part in medieval battle re-enactment on the weekends. After being thrown out by his wife he embarks on an epic quest to win her back.

## Derwent residents face damage fine

**Sian Turner**  
**Peter Campbell**

RESIDENTS OF Derwent C and D blocks face a hefty fine after a break glass fire alarm point was "maliciously" broken on November 1, constituting a criminal offence.

Setting off an alarm without reason is illegal under the Fire and Services Act 2004. Derwent College Administrator Chris Unwin explained this to C and D block residents, and called for the culprit to come forward. "The Fire Service may impose a fine to cover costs. Regulations say that if no one admits responsibility, all residents are liable," she said. Provost Dr Ron Weir stated that "University regulations make it quite clear that this is a criminal offence."

Steve Miller, of C block, heard "girls giggling and

screaming. Then the alarm went off and I heard them run back into D block."

The Fire Service was called, and the angry firefighters explained the seriousness of the event. "It could be your mother or father burning to death whilst we're here dealing with a bunch of vandals," said one, describing the alarm as "smashed maliciously."

Moira Nicolson, of C-block, said the event was the result of growing tension between blocks: "There is supposedly some rivalry going on involving the stealing of toasters, kettles, chairs and other household items."

D-block resident Ciara Masterson defended her housemates actions, saying "There is talk of conflict, but there's nothing malevolent in it. No one is that stupid or selfish to have done something so disruptive."

# York in world's top 100 universities

**Jennifer O'Mahony**  
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF York is ranked among the world's top 100 universities, according to a new set of rankings.

The University is ranked 74th in the QS - Times Higher Education Supplement (THES) rankings, a climb of 50 places from 124 since last year. The league ranks the leading 500 of the world's 40,000 universities.

The University's Vice-Chancellor Professor Brian Cantor said: "This independent evaluation is a reflection of the consistently high standard of our teaching and the quality of our research. York is one of the youngest universities in the top 100. To achieve this standing in just 44 years is remarkable."

Speaking to *Nouse*, John O'Leary, founder of the World University Rankings and former editor of the THES, said: "York's scores are strong across the board and their rise this year reflects a growing international reputation. York has done better than it has done recently in a number of years, especially the in the peer review indicator, meaning it has been reviewed well internationally."

York shares its spot at 74 with Emory University in the United States. It is placed one position above St. Andrews University.

Harvard University maintained its position at the top of the league with an overall score of 100. The Universities of Cambridge and Oxford were tied for second place with a score of 97.6.

British universities were well represented in the table with 32 institutions featuring in the top 200. The top of the table continued to be dominated by American uni-

versities with 13 of the top 20 institutions in the United States.

The table was compiled using scores from six different indicators. York scored especially highly in the Employer Review category and the International Students category, scoring 91 and 83, respectively. The Employer Review is compiled by asking employers which universities' graduates they seek out to employ, while the International Students category

The table relies heavily on the results of a peer review survey carried out by the THES in partnership with Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), an education services company. 5,101 academics from around the globe are invited to take part in the survey and asked to list what they considered to be the world's top 30 universities. New measures have been brought in this year in order to prevent academics voting for their own institutions, which often leads to skewed results.

O'Leary said that British universities in general have been helped from a change in methodology which meant no one score in a single category could overly impact a university's total score. He said: "We apply z-scores to ensure that a really good score in one particular indicator does not carry too much weight, because a lot of the British universities, including York, tend to be strong across all indicators. They have benefitted from a method which means that everything is equally influential."

The table's top 200 universities are in 28 countries, with only four from the developing world - two from Brazil, one from Mexico and South Africa's University of Cape Town, which entered the top 200 for the first time.

**COMMENT >> P11**



York graduates have been highly rated by employers in the study

## WORLD'S TOP 20

1. Harvard University
- 2= University of Cambridge
- 2=University of Oxford
- 2=Yale University
5. Imperial College London
6. Princeton University
- 7= California Institute of Technology
- 7= University of Chicago
9. University College London
10. Massachusetts Institute Technology
11. Columbia University
12. McGill University
13. Duke University
14. University of Pennsylvania
15. John Hopkins University
16. Australian National University
17. University of Tokyo
18. University of Hong Kong
19. Stanford University
20. Carnegie Mellon University

Source: THES World Rankings  
[www.thes.co.uk/worldrankings/](http://www.thes.co.uk/worldrankings/)

## Lecturer in charity single project Student-run lottery gets YUSU society ratification

**Sian Turner**  
STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A LECTURER OF Philosophy at the University of York has joined a nationwide community of students attempting to create a charity Christmas number one single.

Nick Jones is a member of The Anarchy Xmas Project, which aims to bring together students from different UK universities, combining their musical talents to create a single for a Christmas release.

The brainchild of Sheffield students Iz El-Bahnasy and Tom Langhorn, the project began in January 2007 with a Facebook group inviting people to join the effort. A group of 12 musicians came together in September to record 'Smells Like Christmas Time,' which is due to be released on December 10. The money raised from iTunes downloads will be divided between Cancer Research UK, NSPCC, Oxfam, Shelter and Friends of the Earth.



Nick Jones has joined students in producing a charity single

Jones, who plays saxophone on the single, discovered the project by accident: "I stumbled across the group on Facebook, as you do, and thought it was a wonderful, audacious idea." With a back-

ground in jazz, he joined what he describes as "a wonderful, eclectic mix of musicians" including a heavy metal drummer from Portsmouth, a harpist from Sussex and a trumpeter from Durham.

To reach their goal, 100,000 copies must be downloaded. "We'd like people to download the record. In doing this, they'll be exercising people power and will be a part of history," Jones said.

Behind the musical collaborators is a Facebook community almost 2000 strong. The project places a strong emphasis on the inclusion of all group members in decisions; it was through the group that the song itself and the five beneficiary organisations were chosen. "Everyone who supports the project is involved in it," added Jones.

Anarchy Xmas has a MySpace profile, and a website at [www.anarchyxmas.com](http://www.anarchyxmas.com), where fans can sign up to a mailing list. The making of the single has been documented in a video which can be seen on the group's Facebook page.

## Student-run lottery gets YUSU society ratification

**Emily Hirst**  
NEWS CORRESPONDENT

AFTER A YEAR of planning, the launch of the York Student Lottery (YSL) is now imminent. The scheme recently achieved YUSU ratification and the six committee members hope that first draw will take place at the end of this term.

Tickets for the termly prize-draw will cost one pound, of which 49% will go into the prize-fund. The remainder will be distributed to good causes across the University by the committee in collaboration with YUSU.

The prize money is dependent on the number of tickets sold, but the committee estimates that 1,500 tickets would allow for three £250 prizes. Each ticket would carry a 1 in 500 chance of winning.

The scheme has been criticised for encouraging students to spend their money on gambling. As a

result, Commercial Services have banned the sale of tickets at campus events. But its founders point out that students have un-regulated access to gambling via the internet, and cite a ten-ticket cap per student per term.

The charitable side of YSL has won approval from senior figures in the University. Professor John Toms, Head of the School of Management expressed his support of the scheme because it is "not for profit and 51% of the profits will be distributed to a 'good cause' that benefits the student community."

The brainchild of James Jones, a third year management student, the scheme began as a compulsory modular project. A similar project launched at Lancaster University failed, but the committee is confident theirs will not follow suit. Jones emphasises that, in contrast to the community-minded aims of YSL, the Lancastrian scheme was "associated with money making."

# Meningitis scare on campus as first year student hospitalised

**Beth Gandy**  
 NEWS CORRESPONDENT

A FIRST YEAR Alcuin College student was rushed to York District Hospital in the early hours of Tuesday, November 6, after contracting meningitis.

Management Studies student Michael Wynd called himself an ambulance after developing a full-body rash, a splitting headache and an intolerance to bright light.

It is still unclear how Wynd contracted the disease, however recovering in hospital he said: "It's a messy disease. I felt awful, but I was so lucky". He was discharged after spending just over a week in hospital.

To stop the virus spreading, all those that had been in close contact with Wynd have been put on antibiotics and some were vaccinated. His flatmates were warned to stay vigilant and advised to look closely for any of the same symptoms. Wynd's case appears to be the only one on campus.

Wynd's symptoms started two days before he was admitted into hospital, when he developed a severe fever. It was then that a rash, which didn't disappear after pressure was applied, appeared all over his body.

"The scary thing is that he spent early Monday evening sitting on my bed saying he felt better, joking he'd be fine by Thursday," said one flatmate.

YUSU Academic and Welfare Officer, Grace Fletcher-Hall said: "This is the first case we've had in two or three years. It's very rare anything like this happens so I don't want people



MICHAEL BRUNSDEN

**25%**  
 of students carry the bacteria that causes the disease

**60%**  
 of cases are caused by the bacterial form meningitis B

**50%**  
 with meningococcal septicaemia develop a bad rash

**Students are advised to seek medical attention if they experience meningitis symptoms**

getting scared about it. They should just be so careful. Meningitis is a very scary illness. If you have any symptoms please, please get checked out".

Alcuin Vice-Chair Roshni Mehta, who deals with Welfare and Support, said "As soon as

the college was aware of the situation, we acted very quickly to ensure it was just that one case." Tony Ward, the Provost, was brilliant throughout it all and has been in contact with the student from the start."

Meningitis involves an

inflammation of the membranes that surround and give protection to the brain and spinal cord, with the most common causes of meningitis being viruses and bacteria.

The meningococcal septicaemia bacteria that causes

meningitis B, creates flu-like symptoms that can often be mistaken for a bad hangover or a nasty cold.

Symptoms include severe headache, fever, muscle pains, intense vomiting, cold hands and feet, a rash that doesn't disappear if you press it and an aversion to light

Students are the second highest risk group for meningitis, with up to 25% of students carrying the bacteria that causes the disease. Living together in halls of residence with increased levels of promiscuity especially during Freshers' Week heightens the risk of contracting the disease.

There are several different types of meningitis and although most students have already been vaccinated against meningitis C, there is no way of preventing infection by meningitis B the most common bacterial form.

The majority of people with meningococcal septicaemia develop a rash of tiny 'pin prick' spots which can quickly develop into purple bruising.

To identify the rash, press a tumbler up against it and if it does not disappear you may have developed the illness. The spots or rash are more difficult to see on darker skin, thus it is advised to look on paler areas of the skin and under the eyelids.

The University of York's Health Centre warns "In the early stages signs and symptoms can be similar to many other more common illnesses. Trust your instincts - if you suspect meningitis or septicaemia, get some medical help immediately."

## WEB-CANNING

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



Grace Fletcher-Hall fresh from NUS referendum victory, displays a

celebratory message on a cardboard box. It reads "WE WON

HA HA! The No campaign's reaction is not known or cared about.

## Sexual health awareness at York

**Anjali Raval**  
 DEPUTY EDITOR

YUSU ACADEMIC and Welfare Officer Grace Fletcher-Hall, outlined plans for a 'Sexual Health And Guidance' (SHAG) week in week 8.

The week aims to educate students of the dangers of unsafe sex and motivate students to get tested for sexually transmitted diseases. 90% of STD's are treatable and YUSU are keen to emphasise the importance of getting tested.

Chlamydia is one of the most common STD's with statistics showing that as many as 1 in 10 students are carrying the infection. There are no symptoms, but if left untreated it can result in infertility. YUSU urge students to take a test even if they believe they are unlikely to have it.

Women's Officer Laura Payne said: "It is so easy to be tested, the bag contains everything you need and you can drop it off at a bin at the medical centre which is completely anonymous. The peace of mind of knowing that you're clear or able to be treated surely makes the effort of the test worthwhile."

According to the Family Planning Association, chlamydia, gonorrhoea, genital warts and herpes are the most prevalent STIs among men and women aged 16-24.

YUSU is also actively supporting an NUS sexual health petition aimed at improving waiting times for sexual health tests in the York and Selby area.

The government have pledged that by 2008 anyone who asks for an appointment at a sexual health clinic will get one within 48 hours.

### STD SYMPTOMS

- Unusual discharge of liquid from the vagina or penis
- Pain or burning when you pass urine
- Itching, rashes, lumps, sores or blisters around the genitals
- Low abdominal pain in women
- Pain or bleeding during or after sex
- Heavier periods
- Pain in the testicles

For more information visit [www.yusu.org/welfare](http://www.yusu.org/welfare)



**NOUSE**  
Est. 1964

## Where to take the 'Yes' vote

The week of frenzied campaigning is over. The results are in. York is set to retain its affiliation to the NUS. The referendum was a healthy and well-organised exercise in democracy and was rewarded with a turnout of nearly double that needed for quoracy, a rare event in almost any student plebiscite. The result is also a good one. This paper endorses the NUS as an organisation and its principles of collectivism and strength through unity. We backed the 'Yes to NUS' campaign and commend the lengths they went to make the case to students.

But friends need to be frank with each other. The campaign is over. President Tumelty and her retinue of have left campus and, having worked hard to keep York in the fold, are unlikely to return for a while. They have taken with them whatever glamour this sort of politicking affords. The 'Yes' campaigners should pat themselves on the back for a well won victory but also remind themselves that they are York representatives not NUS apparatchiks.

To the 'No' camp's credit they forced a vigorous debate on the merits and failings of the NUS. It is time for the 'Yes' camp to look to the future, especially the Extraordinary Conference called for December, and remind themselves that the NUS is far from perfect, and to get on with the job of making sure that it works for the students of York.

This process should start within weeks. One of the most biting criticisms of the NUS is its gaping democratic deficit and the almost laughably small mandates many of its decision-makers enjoy. York is worse than most – less than 50 people, almost all YUSU insiders, voted in the last round of delegate elections.

YUSU should capitalise on the interest the referendum has sparked and use its momentum to encourage as wide a field of candidates for the Extraordinary Conference as possible. They should throw also throw down the gauntlet to the 'No' camp. If they are truly interested in student governance and were not just acting out of a reactionary anti-union instinct, then they should be amongst the most vigorous candidates for the upcoming delegate election, and must work to change the NUS from within.

## The darkening storm

The sky outside the Nouse office seems to be black with stormclouds of litigation. The week started with almost-incoherent threats of libel from the bar crawl company Carnage for a story which quoted one of their sellers as saying "Do you think I care about third world kids? You should see my overdraft." It isn't surprising that Carnage is falling all over itself to try and disown the comment. Interestingly, they have made no effort to instead prove that their t-shirts are made in anything resembling ethical conditions. Their case is as laughable as their attempts to organise a bar crawl.

But if the first instance was good for a chuckle the second is enough to wipe away smiles both in the media and the Union. A member of University staff threatening to sue YUSU is a serious matter for all involved. If the case is as strong as the individual makes out then it could potentially cost students in terms of funding for societies and services. YUSU moved quickly to block further stories in the hope of calming the situation. Their actions are, in some ways, understandable. But in moving so fast and bluntly they have damaged the credibility of the media, weakened its ability to demand accountability and set a dangerous precedent for the future.

YUSU would be well advised to remember that just because a potential lawsuit isn't reported on the front page doesn't mean it's gone away, nor that the individual wielding it will give it up as a tool of leverage after a single, hugely successful, usage.

## Meanwhile in the real world

The recent events at the Nag's Head serve as yet another reminder that campus life isn't quite as close to 'real' life as we'd perhaps like. We spend so much time engineering our peaceful co-existence. Political correctness and tolerance abound. Not an edition of this paper passes by where a University faction isn't up in arms against some injustice, however small. Isn't that how we want it to be? Constantly assessing and re-assessing our social balances?

That may well be, but outside of our campus bubble it's just not the case. We so often forget the continued prevalence of many social prejudices, in particular homophobia. The fact that we question everything is a true asset to our student community, but it's important that we don't appear too startled in the harsh light of day. It's so easy for us to get stuck over-intellectualising social situations and forget the reality.

Matt Pallas should be commended for attempting to bridge that gap between university life and the big wide world. If he follows through on his promise to see what actions YUSU can take then he is avoiding the head in the sand attitude that the Union are guilty of taking on other issues.

However this ends up, the Nag's Head are treading on thin ice. The allegations of homophobia may remain unsubstantiated but if one person feels victimised, chances are others do too. We need to address these problems head-on, forcing people to be accountable for the consequences of their actions and their attitudes.

# Comment & Analysis

## Oxford's actions highlight the issues of free speech

### We should not take this liberty for granted



**Jonathan Fransman**  
Contributing Writer

Freedom of speech debates have a tendency to infuriate me. People have a knack of logically deducing, from a series of overused, emotive clichés, that freedom of speech is intrinsically invaluable. When one mentions Martin Luther King or quotes Voltaire it is impossible not to be stirred; raw emotive force or eloquence act as a cop-out for having the debate in the only way it should be conducted; coldly and objectively.

Before I take a stand on the metaphorical soap box, it's important to clarify exactly what I mean when I use the term 'freedom of speech'. It's a common misconception that it stands for the right to say anything you want, to whoever you want, whenever you want. Swearing at someone in the street because you dislike their attire or the way that they look, for example, is not you exercising your right to freedom of expression, it's assault. Shouting racist abuse at a passer by is not someone's right, it is impinging upon another's personal freedom and is, like the last example, assault. The difficult question is where exactly we draw the line.

Another dilemma is provided by our friends from the school of utilitarianism. Should freedom of speech only be accepted when it results in an overall benefit for society? Perhaps a trickier question is whether or not freedom of speech is always entirely beneficial for all those concerned, whatever the situation might be at the actual point of speech.

To apply this to the Oxford Union, I wholeheartedly support the decision of the Union to invite their two controversial speakers. Nick Griffin, Chairman of the BNP, has the right to take a stand and let his political views be known to the world. I would like to think that I have the nous to consider his argument objectively and without bias before coming to my own personal conclusions. The only way to truly re-affirm one's own beliefs is by allowing others to attack them. I am a self-confessed lefty, and a devoted Guardian reader, but I nonetheless find that by far the most interesting conversations that I have are with those on the polar opposite side of the political spectrum.

There is also an inherent danger with the Government introducing legislation to try and silence these people. "Incitement to racial hatred" is just a weak cover for trying to shut up unsavoury views. A healthy society challenges these views head on and contests them in a public forum rather than letting them reach boiling point under the surface.

To stray briefly away from the point,

I think that the rise of the BNP signifies a major underlying problem with our modern, centrist British politics. From Thatcher to the present day, British politics has been focused on middle-class England and the standard everyday voter. Politicians have, sadly, neglected the inner-city working class whites who as a result are dangerously disillusioned with the current political landscape that is not just unaccommodating, but doesn't even seek to represent them at all.

The BNP has recognised this gap in the market and is all too happy to fill it. Immigration conveniently provides the explanation as to why the disillusioned, white working class are trapped in a low-income cycle. This is a failure of British politics; the BNP may be opportunist racists but the problem was there in the first place and it is no wonder they have

### 'The only way to truly re-affirm one's own beliefs is by allowing others to attack them'

sought to profit from it. It is now up to the government and society as a whole to tackle the problem at its core. Silencing the movement will be detrimental and merely serve to lay even greater foundations for their cause, making it harder to find a solution when facing the issue finally becomes inevitable and entirely unavoidable.

All of this, however, is just a fragment of the picture as a whole. I didn't write this to prove conclusively the intrinsic value of free speech. What I want is to re-start the debate. We should take nothing for granted - everything is up for discussion. Challenge the beliefs that you have, up until this point, accepted unquestioningly. Cut through the rhetoric and hyperbole and argue every minor detail to the death; the survival of our society depends on it. I believe freedom of speech is essential for society; please, prove me wrong.

## The NUS lives: what does affiliation mean for the future of York?



**Francis Borman**  
Contributing Writer

Well, the votes are in and the students have spoken. The NUS is here to stay. With an overwhelming 72% of the 1389 votes cast in favour of continued affiliation, it's time for those of us who disagreed originally to now look for posi-

# Cowardice is getting us nowhere

### Preventing the media from reporting on a legal threat to the Union won't make it disappear



**Steph Dyson**  
Comment Editor

The threat of a defamation lawsuit is a useful tool if you are trying to scare a newspaper out of printing something unpleasant about you. In an inversion of almost every other element of the British justice system, the onus is on the defendant to prove their innocence. If a newspaper is unable to disprove the charges of inaccuracy levelled at it then it will be found guilty, and the stacked odds are often enough to convince cautious proprietors to pull major stories.

The bar crawl company Carnage tried it in the crudest and most amateur terms. They spent the first part of this week hurling erratic accusations designed to prevent this paper from quoting their reps' embarrassing indifference to the conditions in which their merchandise is produced. The whole affair was a pathetic scramble to try and disown a flippant comment made by one of their staff. They would have done better to have put out an official statement saying that a student illegally selling t-shirts in James College doesn't speak for the company. Or better still, they shouldn't have bought their t-shirts from sweatshops in Egypt in the first place.

To YUSU's credit they laughed off Carnage's threatened libel suit for the joke that it was. In a buoyant Exec session, Union officers, who have already had their own run-in with Carnage, had a brief giggle about the barcrawl organisers' hysterical protests before moving on to issues more worthy of their time, like squabbling over Toff's gold cards.

The second legal threat, reported on this edition's front page, is a more serious matter altogether. Whereas Carnage were flapping and amateur, the University staff member threatening YUSU with legal action has compiled his case with exacting precision. He has built



ADAM HAINLEY

up a dossier extensively documenting the student media's coverage of his actions over the past few years and is now claiming to have built up a legal case based on accusations of both defamation and harassment.

Whether his case would stand up in court or not, I don't know. I haven't seen his files, nor do I have the legal expertise to assess their content if I had. It's entirely possible that at some point over the last few years someone in either of the two campus papers has defamed him.

And as the University said, if this is the case, then he does and should have the right to seek legal redress.

What is not acceptable is to use the threat of a lawsuit based on past stories to try and prevent the publication of future ones, irrespective of their accuracy. That isn't using the law to defend your reputation, it is using alleged previous injustices to hold the Student Union hostage. The story that should have been on today's front page was in no way defamatory. On its own it could never

outcome: the process is just as important.

There is little point in merely criticising from the sidelines. For those who think that the NUS needs to improve before it can meet the needs of students at the University of York, a more active approach is required. The campaign against affiliation may still be a partial success even if it did not achieve its original aim, because we can take from it positive things the NUS can do about problems such as the parlous state of its finances and the ineffectiveness of some of its campaigns.

It has been decided that we are to

have been the basis of a lawsuit. Nor could it have served as supporting evidence for other, actually defamatory stories. YUSU killed it off before it was even written, for fear that it would anger the individual concerned, that it would be "the straw that broke the camels back."

If the staff member does have a legal case (and it's worth remembering that he may not; he may be bluffing to strengthen his hand) then YUSU's current policy of 'don't say anything about him and maybe he'll leave us alone' solves absolutely nothing. The dossier won't disappear, and nor will his rancour for the student media which has been festering for several years.

Its only impact is to negate the student media's ability to call for accountability from University officials whose decisions directly impact students but are made almost entirely without their consultation. The decision by the sabbatical team to refuse to enforce a blanket media ban hands the individual in question a 'get out of jail free card', leaving him safe in the knowledge that as long as the embargo stands students are unlikely to know anything about the decisions being made on their behalf.

So what is to be gained from a front page that fans the fire without being able to give students the vital facts and details? The answer is that this paper will simply not swallow unquestioningly the bizarre concept of a blanket ban and pretend that all is well. Our Union faces a serious threat from a determined individual. To pretend otherwise would be to bury our heads in the sand. The complete absence of any mention of either the lawsuit or the almost unprecedented media embargo in *York Vision* is a sign of how effective these threats can be.

YUSU have said they made this decision with students' best interests at heart, and I believe that they genuinely think this to be the case. They acted to try and stave off a potential legal action and to protect the assets of the Union of which they are trustees. But in declaring this "media embargo" they have achieved nothing except to show those who would try to dodge accountability that a little intimidation can go a long way.

## Swimming with the big fish now



**Emily Kozien-Colyer**  
Contributing Writer

York is now in the top 100 of the World's universities, having been rated 74th. Strangely enough, this statistic didn't have me leaping for joy. I know the league compares 40,000 universities worldwide, making 74th fairly impressive, but universities that had been ranked lower than us in the UK league, were ranked higher in the world-wide rankings.

Initially this discovery had me laughing wryly at the inconsistency and unreliability of statistics. It was only then that I noticed the different criteria that made up the rankings. The top criteria in my mind had been included in the UK league table, in which we rank 8th, whereas the world review did not individually rank teaching excellence, 1st and 2.1 degrees awarded, dropout rates or A level grades demanded, statistics which had had a huge influence on my decision to come to York.

The assessments of the world rankings have pulled York into a much bigger arena, compiling all the above into the dauntingly blunt assessment of "peer review", and also including the rankings of "international staff" and "international student".

Therefore as we approach those hideous months where the grey winter skies and concrete of campus ally against us, I start to wonder, 74th? How did we manage that?! Most of campus can currently be described as a building site, with other areas begging for attention; the search results "1 book...4 requests" and "no records found" in the J.B Morrell Library are a frequent occurrence, and on Monday week 2 half the printers on campus buckled under the pressure of numerous assessed essay deadlines. Can our University truly compare to the big fish of international universities?

The development of Heslington East, it seems, can be the only basis for the massive leap of 50 places (124th to 74th), from last year. I can hardly imagine York improved, developed and expanded to the standard promised by the University News Press, but the words "new academic complexes", "new departments", and the almost unimaginable speculation of a "25 metre swimming pool", are seductive promises indeed. Plans to complete Heslington East however are estimated to take between 10-15 years, and so it'll be too late for most of us to appreciate and I, like many others, will leave University with the memory of infamously bad accommodation facilities in my first year. However, let us comfort ourselves with the reassuringly high mark of 91, in the worldwide rankings of "Employer review". For, as I'm sure is becoming more and more uncomfortably apparent to final year students, there is another world outside this semi-comfortable bubble. Let's hope we can content with it.

>> TRAVEL M14

Unearthing the contradictions of Mumbai

>> CARYL PHILLIPS M10-11

The relevance of literature for toleration

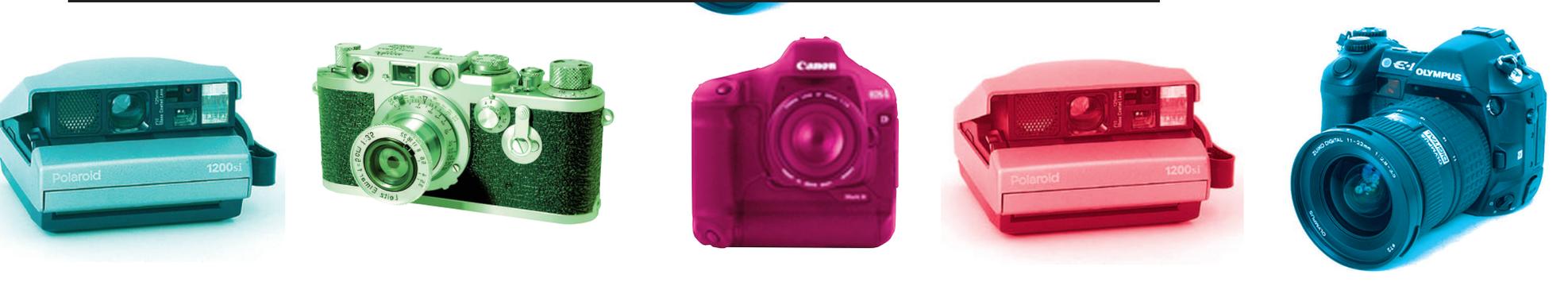
AUTUMN WEEK SEVEN

Tuesday November 20 2007

# MUSE



Photography special: pictures of York  
and by York students M8-9 and M12-13





# HeidiBlake

## Why must people be so loathsome?

People don't realise it, but misanthropy is actually a terrible affliction. Since the world is packed to the rafters full of people, it's a bit of a bind if you're predisposed to hate them all. The worst thing is that the very few people I can tolerate can't tolerate me, or at least not for long. There are only so many times you can get away with descending into hysterical rage and tearing out large chunks of your own hair because someone misplaced an apostrophe, before people conclude they'd rather be as far away from you as time and space permit.

I've tried to love my fellow human, really I have. But I can't get past the fact that, by and large, people are really, really, toe-curlingly awful. Our cities are rammed with men and women who make snorting noises when they laugh, carry out buttock-clenchingly inane conversations loudly on buses, show a wilful disregard for the proper use of the English language, and unashamedly pick their noses. It's revolting.

Given all this, it's probably rather a good thing that I spend most of my time sheltered from the putrid mass of seething humanity by confinement to the campus bubble, and that wider society, in turn, is spared exposure to me. Unfortunately, this comes with the downside of a pathological abhorrence of those foibles particular to students. For example, there are times - most of the time, in fact - when I fear that if I hear the words "I was unbelievably battered" once

more, I might go feral and eat my own fists. (For the record, there is absolutely nothing unbelievable about your having been being "battered". We are all battered, all the time. It's the only way of mitigating the ceaseless tedium of each-other's company).

The thing which raises my misanthropic hackles more than anything, though, is the sort of flabby faux-activism which leads our students to join 'campaigning' Facebook groups, or sit about loudly and drunkenly proclaiming the evils of capitalism, without ever really lifting a political finger. Don't mistake my meaning: I'm not staking any claim to political virtue, but at least I'm prepared to admit that I've never so much as thrown a sausage to a worthy cause. False worthiness is the most singularly maddening trait common among students.

My last run in with such worthiness came at an unfortunate time. Though few and far between, there are moments in the life of even the bitterest curmudgeon when it just so happens that no-one in the vicinity is saying or doing anything to betray the worthlessness of humankind. Naturally, such moments of contentment are sacred, and this was one of them.

After a seemingly interminable stretch in the joyless wilderness which is the J.B. Morrell library, I was finally ensconced in the pub. The fire crackled merrily in the grate; the pint of bitter between my hands

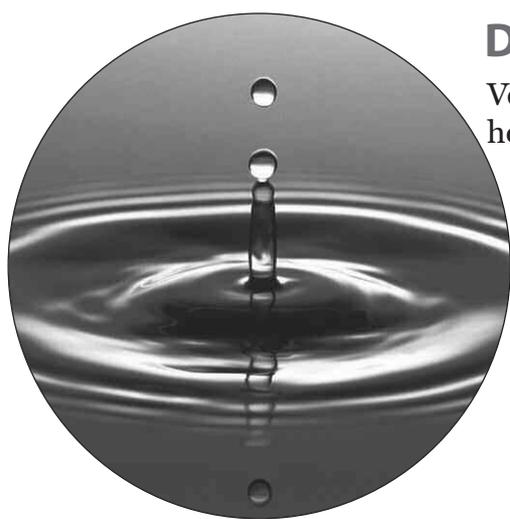
was almost full; no-one was snorting or belching or sabotaging the English language, and I was just settling down to lose a pleasant evening in ale-soaked oblivion. It was at this moment that one of my companions - a woman I'd never met before - turned to me, fixed me intently with a soulful gaze, and asked me pleadingly "Have you worked out what to do about Burma yet?"

I blinked. Had I heard her correctly? Was it possible that someone was asking me - me, who still can't actually tie my own shoelaces - if I had found "something to do" about the crisis of bloody oppression playing itself out some 5,000 miles away to the unanimous horror of the watching world? "I beg your pardon?" I stuttered. Her pleading gaze widened. "What shall we dooo?" she wailed. "I mean, it's so awful. We must do something!"

Seriously, what does one say to such a person? My instinct, of course, was to reply "Do you know, it's funny you should ask, because I did actually work out exactly what needs to be done to remedy the whole pesky mess just this afternoon. No of course I haven't 'worked it out', you blithering twat!"

This strange belief that it might - just might - be possible to heal the great ills of the world through slurred debate over a pub table is curiously prevalent among students. Why is this? Perhaps we are so comfortably reconciled with the fact that nothing we think, say or do ever

# Muse 20.11.07



### Don't stress it

Venetia Rainey finds out how to calm down >> M4

### Which wine?

Resident wine expert Jonathan Fransman looks at the best wines for under £5 >> M6

## SPECIAL: Photo competition

Expert photographer Paul Shields looks at the entries and picks out the best of the bunch >> M8

### Caryl Phillips

Sam Thomas finds out what this award-winning author has to say on terror and integration >> M10

### Lights on the Minster

We chat to Lonely Planet founder Tony Wheeler about the best places to go, how to get there and what to do and the burdens of being a travel guru >>M12

**Arts:** York's new open mic night, plus what's on before term's end >> M18

**Music:** We review project Worldscape and Montreal rockers Arcade Fire >> M20

**Film:** Elizabeth: The Golden age in detail >> M22

**B&R:** We tell you where not to go on a date >> M23

**Listings:** All the events to warm your winter >> M24



## SaraSayeed

### Procrastinating for England

A brief saunter through Vanbrugh circa lunchtime would suggest that here, at the ever-scintillating hub of excitement that is York University, we are a diverse lot. You have the drama-kids emphatically gesticulating in one corner, random smatterings of media-hacks scribbling away in tattered notebooks in the throes of critical 'meetings', those lone-individuals tucked away in a corner by the bar, who read for pleasure and chew their hair - granted, not the most un-stereotyped bunch but different from each other nonetheless.

But if you really look past the miscellany there is so much that we all share. Primarily, we're all sat in Vanbrugh, have been sat in

Vanbrugh and probably will continue to sit in Vanbrugh for the majority of the afternoon. Despite our ranging interests, University students possess that common, binding skill of procrastination.

For some, it is an aptitude that takes time and commitment to polish; but somehow for students it seems something more of an innate talent. We do it without even thinking. So characteristic is procrastination of student-kind that the ever-informative and erudite Wikipedia has even dedicated a whole chunk of its article on the subject to what it ominously terms, "The Student Syndrome". Unfortunately, in what perhaps was an attempt to comfort Wikipedia's expla-

nation of this "phenomenon" as a by-product of the "academic setting, where students are required to meet deadlines in an environment full of events and activities which compete for students' time and attention", instead caused some mental anguish by bringing in the whole nature vs. nurture debate.

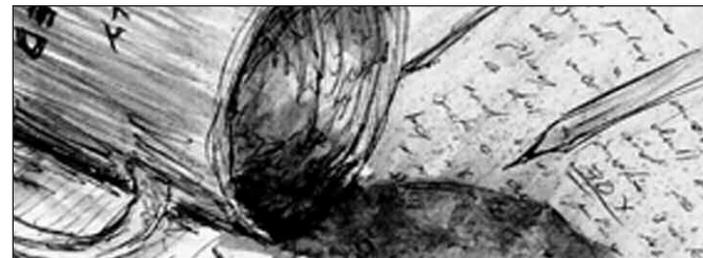
As if students don't have enough existential crises to deal with as it is, we now must consider, are we just Procrastinators? Is that all we are, or, like lab-rats with human ears on their backs, what we have been conditioned to become? After some anguished hours spent in pensive deliberation, I decided it would only really do to look further into the matter.

As in most moments of personal doubt, I turned first to Google. The first hit brought up by the magic machine was an intriguing book, "Procrastination and You". Unfortunately, the great and mighty Google

had presented me with an enormous red herring. In his attempt to delve further into this bewildering "phenomenon", the author of this article realised after "several weeks" spent tracking down the book, *Procrastination Through the Ages: A Definitive History* and even "enlisting the help of professional librarians" - like the A-team, but quieter - that it was, alas, an elaborate joke.

A book on procrastination that was never completed. Oh, those crazy academics with their ironies. Luckily that minor setback only inspired me to research more intensely and pass the procrastination on to you.

I resolved to get right back to it as soon as I'd eaten another bowl of bran flakes and watched some X-Factor. Anything to stop me having to do any real work, anyway. I?am another link in a procrastination chain. I?am a student. This is what we do.



## Social Pariah

Lily Eastwood is a warning to us all

"How come your grandma hasn't sent any cake in ages?" "She's got cancer." Inappropriate comments are the easy triumphs of social comedy and I am extraordinarily gifted, particularly with families. Walking into our kitchen half way through a conversation I heard "...she was eating about three kilograms of chocolate a day." I burst out laughing. "What kind of fatty does that?" "My Mum does." Pause. "Haha, no actually, who?" "No really. It's my Mum." Tumbleweed. Insulting mothers trumps everything. Awkward silence is my applause.

For some ridiculous reason, I'm with a friend at a club frequented by C-list celebrities and investment bankers. I am out of my league in terms of both location and dance partner when I suddenly realise my nose is running. Subtly, I incorporate a nose rub into my dance moves. Mr Smooth doesn't bat an eyelid; he just smiles and pulls me closer. He's gorgeous. I'm ecstatic. The mucus is relentless. I smile and mutter "hang on", turning to my friend behind me. "Got a tissue?" "What the fuck is wrong with your face?" Argh. It's a nose bleed. I run. I like to think I was the enigmatic beauty who got away; realistically, I am the bleeding weirdo.

"You're swaying." "I'm not swaying, you're swaying." "No. You... are swaying." You never mean it, do you? It was somewhere inbetween the second bottle of Blossom Hill and the fully-clothed return to consciousness in the wardrobe that things got messy. The first drink was generous, but it wasn't your fault because you had a shit day. You stage whisper that the girl in the red dress is a slut, and on your way home forget that "thank you for having me" sounds a bit odd when you paid six pounds to get in and you're not seven years old anymore.

Aside from a cider fuelled snog when I was fifteen we had no history. I always thought he saw me as his little sister. I used to talk him through his plentiful girlfriend problems, and he used to threaten to beat up my wayward boyfriends. Brotherly, no? I even went to stay with him for a few days this summer after he moved away. It always amazed me how well we got on. He was so attentive. As we ate ice-cream and watched '80s films he might as well have been gay. I felt perfectly at ease dozing off on his bed next to him. And then I woke up as he ran his hand through my hair.

I hate the beginnings of parties. I know I'm not a grownup yet because I don't do good small-talk. I do bad small-talk or inappropriately big talk. "Are you having a good time?" smacks of desperation and there's a time and a place for "So...Jesus must've been well pissed off." Looking for something to break the ice I sent a friend downstairs to get my camera (top drawer of my desk, not my chest of drawers - ok?) Ten minutes passed. I found him standing sheepishly in the middle of my room, "I didn't mean to look through your bras." Back to square one, except now I don't want to talk about Jesus, I want to talk about bras.

## The Lion, the Witch and the Minge

Obviously, the best thing to do when you find yourself in tedious company, is to get as drunk as possible, as fast as possible. The inevitable dreariness of human conversation is the main reason people drink. This is why people don't often get drunk alone.

Unfortunately, however, becoming insensible through alcohol abuse takes time. Therefore, there will be at least a couple of hours in an evening spent with 'friends' during which one finds oneself in the uncomfortable position of having to make the effort to speak to other people, show an interest in them and find out about their lives.

I have found a cunning way around this. Believe it or not, there is a way of filling the awkward interlude between the start of the evening and alcoholic oblivion with sparkling and witty repartee, without expending any

effort. It is called the Minge Game.

The rules of the Minge Game are deceptively simple. You simply take the title of a well known film, book or song - or a popular saying of some kind - and substitute one of the crucial nouns with the incomparable word "minge".

You end up with classic films such as *Gone with the Minge*, *Four Minges and a Funeral* and *Mingefinger*. In popular sayings, there's "a minge in time saves nine", "an eye for an eye and a minge for a minge" and, best of all, "one man's minge is another man's poison".

My favourites are the children's books (there's nothing so amusing as perverting the acoutrements of youth) - there's *George's Marvellous Minge*, *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Minge*, and *James and the Giant Minge*. Bloody marvellous.

to her knees in relief. Our newbie was without adequate protection for the heart numbing, nose running, freezing ecstasy of York, and so, through garbled squawking and stabs with her biro, our innocent first year made her request - winter accessories.

Hats: vessels to keep our brain cells alive, or our greasy, unwashed sex dreads covered. Flat caps, skull caps, Russian furs, berets, industrial plastic helmets (although he may actually have been a workman, who knows). The

opportunities are limitless, yet one fashion faux pas ravages campus in a fashion similar to nits in a nursery: the beanie. A favourite of the discerning 'rah' when cleverly combined with a pair of sloppy Jack Wills track-suit bottoms, or as part of the carefully posed 'I'm just keeping warm' look of the Topshop kids. Either way, tea cosies are meant for teapots. Secondly the baker-boy cap. Are you a baker? Do you keep croissants in your socks? Head ornaments are not meant to make one look like a dough salesman.

Next, the useful companion to the hat: Scarves. Generally worn either deceptively messily or tied with the precision of an O.C.D. sufferer. Firstly, 'the pash', normally fuchsia pink or royal blue, these little monstrosities have pranced around

campus for years, but what troubles us is the size of the bloody things, and their apparent permanent attachment to a string of pearls. Meanwhile, on the subject of skinny stripy scarves, no one suddenly thinks you went to public school, so give it up.

If time would allow it, a tirade on fingerless gloves would follow, but sadly our column space is drawing to a close (they don't make you look artistic, and frost bite starts at the tips of your fingers - apologies, couldn't help ourselves).

However, what is left for us to say is this: When it comes to York, the rule of less is more must be cast aside like last years Gucci clutch. When it's this cold, you may as well just wear a thermal ski suit and be done with it...

amounts to anything more significant than a typed figure on a bit of paper tacked to a crummy departmental notice board, that there seems nothing strange about expending such fervour without effect. Many would argue that this woman's futile compassion is infinitely preferable to my churlish ennuï, and they'd probably be right. Like I said, I'm afflicted: I'm the first to admit my mind is addled with blind ill humour.

Whichever way you look at it, my fragile equilibrium was shattered. Had she not caught me at a moment of antecedent calm, the evening's hair-tearing would have started there. But empathy got the better of me, just about. She was hopelessly earnest; I couldn't be cruel. "Um, can't say I have, actually," I mumbled. She looked downcast. "No, me neither" she admitted, lip wobbling. "Perhaps we should set up a Facebook group?"

## Venetia Rainey & Charlotte Kirkbride

Wintry weather, new hat

Sashaying across campus with the understated elegance of those who have just enjoyed lunch at the luxurious destination of Vanbrugh, Miss C and Miss V felt both rejuvenated and in desperate need of a quick menthol Marlboro.

Sadly, almost instantaneously we were accosted by a screaming baby freshlette. Book bag in tow, our poor disarming protagonist fell





# Stress, worth stressing about?

Have you ever felt the pressures of student life? **Venetia Rainey** takes a journey into the realms of relaxation to find out what best to do when everything gets too much

**T**his week has not been a good week. Between trying to have a social life, getting my next essay done, working on *Nouse* and writing this article, I think I could fairly say that right now I am feeling a little stressed. The irony, as I'm sure you will have spotted, is that this article is, in fact, about stress; that little word that covers all manner of causes and effects, and can reduce sane people to gibbering wrecks in the matter of a few days. It is everywhere and can affect anyone. In fact, everyone has probably felt it at some point in their lives.

Money, relationships, friends, family, a job, degree work, your health, self-image - the list of worries that seep daily into our lives is an exhaustingly long one, and, despite most people's perceptions of students as lazy, apathetic bums rolling around in the government's money and sleeping in until four in the afternoon, we get it pretty hard as far as a stressful life goes. Most people I know feel like there aren't enough hours in the day to please everyone and also have time for themselves. We are expected to have heaving diaries full of parties and coffee dates, participate in at least a handful of soci-

eties and extra-curricular activities, build up our CV with relevant work experience, not come out of university steeped in debt, not forget about family and friends back home whom we have deserted, be as sexually active as we dare, and also, of course, graduate

---

'Where, as my sleeping hours decreased and my irritability increased, could I turn for help? The World-Wide Web, of course'

---

from with at least a 2:1. Being a student today is by no means an easy option.

Luckily, stress is now a recognised condition, and, if you feel so inclined, a great way to start you on the road to salvation is to diagnose yourself. [Stressbusting.co.uk](http://Stressbusting.co.uk) and [lessons4living.com/stress](http://lessons4living.com/stress) are two great websites for telling you how stressed you are. Currently I'm only scoring 11 out of a possible 20, which means I have "pretty good control", but last night I was scoring a worrying 17, just on the

threshold between "Danger zone, watch out!" and "Stressed out. You may need help." Most stress tests are based on a combination of psychological, behavioural, emotional and physical symptoms. For example, tightness in the chest, muscle twitches, indigestion, headaches and unusual bowel movements can all signify stress, as well as a loss of concentration, lower sex-drive and mood swings. One of the most common feelings associated with stress is that nagging thought of 'I should be able to cope with this, why do I feel like such a failure?' or even an irrepressible urge to run away from everything and everyone.

Stress is biologically defined as the disruption of homeostasis by the release of hormones in response to an outside stimulus, which can be anything from a rollercoaster ride to anxiety about a loved one. In the short term, such stresses are healthy and normal, and often enhance bodily functions. This is termed "eustress", i.e. a surge of adrenaline which enables the flight or fight instinct to be effectively activated. Distress, the counterpart to eustress, describes a more persistent state of pressure, which remains unre-

solved and results in damaging effects. The problem with stress as a medical disorder is that it is such a wide umbrella term encompassing a huge range of triggers and consequences, leaving it with no set definition and no set cure. As a result, the idea that someone is 'suffering from stress' is seen as something too commonplace and vague to deserve any kind of special treatment. It is definitely not considered as detrimental to one's health as many other mental disorders, and most feel that it is something to just get on and cope with alone rather than a sign that it's time to reach out for help.

With this in mind, I set to seeking out a solution. Where, as my sleeping hours decreased and my irritability increased, could I turn for help? The World-Wide Web, of course.

Cast your mind back for a second to November 7. Where were you going, what were you doing? More likely than not you were blissfully unaware that it was National Stress Awareness Day, an event proudly championed by the International Stress Management Association. Having been on a stress awareness bender, however, I was alert to this fact. So when the day finally

came round, I excitedly checked the internet to see what mind-boggling things were planned to open up people's eyes all over the country to the problem of stress. Television programmes, I speculated, free goodie bags, perhaps even those fun stress-busting games you can play on the internet. You can imagine my disappointment, therefore, when I logged on to the dedicated website (national-stressawarenessday.co.uk) only to be greeted by Stephen Fry's face looking pained and confused (should he be my stress busting role model?) and the rather tacky and worryingly ambivalent slogan 'Let's give stress a holiday'.

There were two further links on the page. The first was to a list of the top ten ways to bust stress, each tip punctuated by one of a set of extremely irritating emoticons, beside which were a few lines telling me to exercise, make time for myself, and hug people more often. The other link allowed me to send a virtual postcard complete with an smiley face and custom message which, I am reliably informed, did little more than clog up my friend's inbox and take a frustratingly long time to load. There was also, as the final icing on the cake, a number to call to talk about stress, open only on November 7 from 8am to 8pm.

So I turned instead to the University's pages to see what help they could afford me. Three main services seemed to offer themselves to my cause. Nightline, a 'confidential listening and information service...run by students, for students'; It's a Duck's Life, a 'self-help website where students can share their mental health problems'; and the University's Counselling Service.

Nightline operates around three levels of communication - face to face, telephone, and email - and is only open from 8pm to 8am. I sent them an email detailing how stressed I was, and got a very sweet email back one night later which was concerned, but not all that helpful. Their reply consisted mainly of empathetic statements like "That must be really hard for you" and questions like "What do you think you could do to change this?" It was a response, but not a particularly useful one, and certainly not one that made me feel much better. If anything it made me more aware of the plethora of problems I had, but then what was I expecting? A solution to all my problems from a stranger who knows nothing about me apart from the fact that I'm 'stressed'? I concluded that the service probably works a lot better as a continuous dialogue, but this was something which I decided not to indulge in past the first email. It is an excellent idea, though, and not a service offered at many other universities.

My next port of call was It's a Duck's Life, a site for people to write about things troubling them in order to get them off their chest. Featuring a forum and a place for posting whole articles, there were quite a few interesting pieces, especially concerning social anxieties. Some of the material was poetry, and some of that was depressing verging on the suicidal. I did feel like there were other people going through similar crises to me, but was slightly put off after discovering a page littered with spam links for soft porn and pharmaceutical deals.

The counselling service was far more receptive to my needs. They replied to my rather brief 'I'm stressed' email within 24 hours, offering me an appointment in the next few days and

**From left to right: stress is a major issue for students today; sometimes the best thing to do is take a break and do something childish like colouring; and stress balls are a great outlet for physical tension and anger**

encouraging me to go to one of the specially created relaxation courses they run.

The counselling session was, to understate the case, very awkward at first. I felt shy and a little embarrassed, whilst the silent, probing looks from my counsellor left me wondering what I was supposed to be talking about. Once I got into the flow, however, I soon found myself talking freely about whatever came into my mind, and the conversation began to wander into more specifically stressful areas of my life. I left clearer in my mind and lighter in my heart than I had felt for a long time. And all I had done was explain my situation to someone who knew nothing about me. And all she had done was listen and repeat back to me the main points. Simple, but incredibly effective.

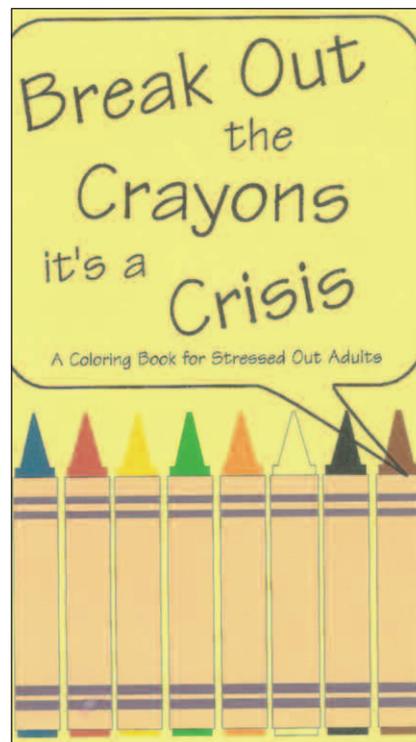
I had also picked up a relaxation CD. For only 50p, I could enjoy my very own 20 minute de-stress session at home. Of course, in the race of activity and work over the next few days I completely forgot about it, until one night, trying to finish an essay, the abandoned thing caught my eye. Sitting comfortably, I found myself closing my eyes

**'My housemate was a little confused upon hearing the line 'Now reach out and touch any part of your special place''**

and wallowing in the world created by Lorraine van Donk's soothing voice, as she told me to tense and then relax every muscle in my body step by step, concentrate on the difference, and enjoy the weight of a relaxed limb. Fairly standard breathing exercises left me feeling sleepy and calm, and were followed by the best bit of it all, the path to my "special place."

Although my housemate was a little confused upon hearing the line 'Now touch your special place', this was the most relaxing part of the CD. Spoken in a manner so controlled and soothing the experience was more akin to hypnotism than anything else, I was told to imagine my special place, visualise the views and colours and finally, reach out and imagine touching a part of my created world. I found myself peaceful and focussed afterwards, and more than a little wistful for the realisation of my 'special place'.

However, these are all quite specific services, and of course, will help treat stress if you have the courage to reach out to ask for the help. Much like going to the doctor or dentist, treatment is out there, but only if you choose to seek it. But of course treatment of the symptoms is only one side of dealing with a



problem; the other side is preventing the issue from arising in the first place. With this idea in mind, I approached the Student Support Office to see what the University as an institution was doing to address stress.

"Well, one of the areas for students we can have the most influence on is money. There is a lot of evidence that money is one of the things that students are most concerned about. Consequentially, a series of articles go out on York Extra every couple of weeks about budgeting and use of money, all of which end with the message that if you are in difficulty there are people you can talk to about it. So we try to help manage this particular one of those areas that can lead students into stress." Steve Page, Student Support Services Manager, looks very calm himself as he talks me through the various ways in which the University tries to tackle stress. "I mean, we can't do much about students' academic studies, but we do have a support structure that hopefully will pick up people who are in difficulty. There is obviously an element that students need to declare their problem. Most students are over 18 and therefore adult, and need to be able to run their own lives, but if we see someone that is clearly in difficulty I think there are a number of people who will pick that up. Hopefully academic departments will pick it up if someone's work nosedives. Plus, I think the supervisor system is quite good on the whole, they might not see problems immediately, but they will see trends over time."

Page, however, is not blind to the problem that I seem to keep on coming up against, the prospect of creating an

environment in which stress is no longer such an accepted and inseparable part of student life. "We are starting to think: 'Can we think a bit more holistically about well-being and what we as a University can do to approach that?' And to what extent are we able to support the notion of student well-being as a whole? At the moment I would say we've got some good services, but it would be an additional level if we thought about it all more holistically. The sports centre, for example, is keen to take a much more inclusive approach to sport. In the past it has tended to focus solely on the interests of people who are quite serious about sport, but of course from a stress point of view some basic level of exercise is a really good idea. So I think they are now thinking quite actively about a sport-for-all approach."

It is this kind of attitude which is really needed both by those who are supposed to provide a support framework for people under stress, and also by the people suffering from stress themselves. There is no easy cure, although a chat with someone, anyone, and a space to clear one's head goes a very long way indeed. The important thing to do is to change the way we live our lives. So next time the pressure starts building up, think about what you can alter to make your life a bit easier.

No-one can have it all, so stop demanding the impossible from yourself. In the immortal words of Sex and the City - in a very real way, my TV special place - "Stop expecting it to look how you expected." With a few visits to your own special place, you might well find you sleep a bit better at night.

## WHERE TO GO FOR HELP

- **Yusu Welfare** offers a wide range of support services, details of which can be found at [yusu.org/welfare](http://yusu.org/welfare)
- **Nightline** is a confidential listening service, you can email [nightline@york.ac.uk](mailto:nightline@york.ac.uk), call 01904 433735 or visit them in Goodrick D/038
- **It's a Duck's Life** allows students to share experiences at [www.duckslife.org](http://www.duckslife.org)
- The **University Counselling Service** offers group and individual sessions. Call 01904 432140 or email [counselling@york.ac.uk](mailto:counselling@york.ac.uk)



# Gay Media: escorts and body fascism

Analysing the gay magazines on campus, **Liam O'Brien** is riled by their representation of gay culture

Cleansed of any real political fire other than mild left-centrist observation, the gay media of 2007 has lost the ability to shock or push barriers. It is heavily and senselessly aimed at a target market, giving the reader, listener or watcher barely any opportunity for stimulation other than that of the base sexual kind. Take for example the masturbation-fodder pages of toned men – hairless, brainless and smiling like a well-fed and exercised zoo-animal, yet all the same inexorably and eternally caged.

In the context of gay media, a dearth of intellectual content is a problem. Whenever the media represents a group of people that suffers from problems of social perception, it surely has the responsibility to give that group a varied and realistic portrayal, whether on television, paper, the internet, or the radio. Gay magazines in particular, however, seem to have decided that gay people want only to read a vacuous blanket of campery.

This is deeply shameful, especially considering that in comparison, the sexually neutral, super-mainstream media is exceptionally diverse. Matthew Parris, *The Times's* columnist, is verbally, intellectually and politically astute to the point where he could hardly be described as their token gay. The same could be said of *The Independent's* Johann Hari, a regular on *Newsnight Review*, who, despite a lambasting from *Private Eye* for bitchiness and scheming, has achieved a great deal in the journalistic field at a remarkably young age. Alan Hollinghurst, Booker prizewinner and former deputy editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*, displays in his work a sensual rendering of homosexual intercourse that transcends its crude, abjectly slutty depiction in those magazines stacked on groaning shelves across the country.

Sometimes the gay media means well but nevertheless collapses spectacularly. A case in point is the centrepiece of Channel 4's recent, well-publicised 'gay season'. *Clapham Junction*, a film written by Kevin Elyot, had the opportunity to represent gay people in a light which, even if not relentlessly positivistic, could at least be broad and realistic. It started well enough: intelligent dinner party conversation, gays in high-profile, competitive careers, a demonstration of the fear and self-loathing that many young gay people suffer from, and society's labelling of certain things as innately 'gay' (in this case musical instru-

ments), all things which probably had queer theorists clapping like a Seaworld creature. Inevitably, though, drama needs ratings and ratings need drama, so a host of horrible pre-established stereotypes and a bilious horde of new ones were unforgivably unleashed. Anyone who believed everything the film told them could not have come away with a broader, more enlightened view of gay people. Innocuous teenage lust culminated in a scene in which a convicted paedophile had sex with a 14 year old, the dramatic angle of which was such that we were encouraged to sympathise with said horrors, on the grounds that sexual desire cannot be controlled (an absolute contravention of contemporary and perhaps even historical morality).

**'In Clapham Junction, the sad victimisation of young people became fetishistic'**

Unnecessarily creepy older men cheated on their wives in the toilets of the tube station, showing each other their penises before fucking as if this somehow allowed release from their sybaritic, socio-economically conformist, white male lives. The sad victimisation of young gay people became fetishistic, with all the blood, ass, piss and semen of a Gilbert & George exhibition. The need for drama can be appreciated, but until gay people are normalised in television, rather than hired to present tacky shows about dancing or interviewing listless celebrities, the value of shows such as *Clapham Junction* is minimal. Gay magazines are not as overtly sexually debased as this particular TV film, but they do share more similarities with it than the list of people mentioned above, at least in creating a savage, one-dimensional portrait of gay life.

On campus, though the occasional copy of *Attitude* appears, the gay magazines are the *Gay Times* and *AXM*, and the sole lesbian rag is *Diva*. All of these are published by the Millivres Prowler Group, and as such they have different target markets. Nick Scargill, Press and Publicity

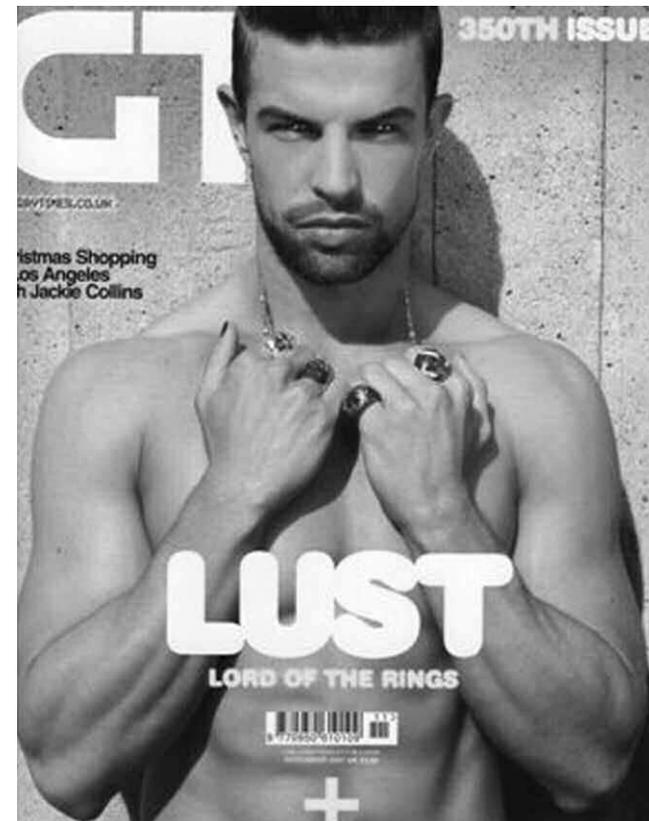
officer for LGBT society at York University, observed that "When I started reading them four or five years ago, they all seemed to be generically the same, but in recent years, they seem to have gone down different routes." *Gay Times*, which Nick admitted to have stopped buying due to its endless advertisements and unappealing content, is seen as the flagship gay magazine, and more serious in tone. *AXM*, containing features this month on Daniel Radcliffe and Richard Fleeshman, is more youth-orientated. *Diva* is basically the lesbian equivalent of the *Gay Times*.

The *Gay Times*, though culturally and politically conscious, balances its intelligent articles with adverts for working-class porn, and, most disturbingly, ten pages of escort/masseur/rent-boy adverts at the back. As Chris Bowman (co-chair of York University LGBT society) observed, "It's a bit excessive". This gives rise to the representation of a gay culture in which a promiscuous lifestyle is the only option for homosexual men. It is a long-held, if erroneous stereotype, that Bowman explains by saying, "the reason that these stereotypes exist is that back in the day [a promiscuous, camp lifestyle] used to get you noticed, and quite a lot of people still act that way. The media just reflects what is already there".

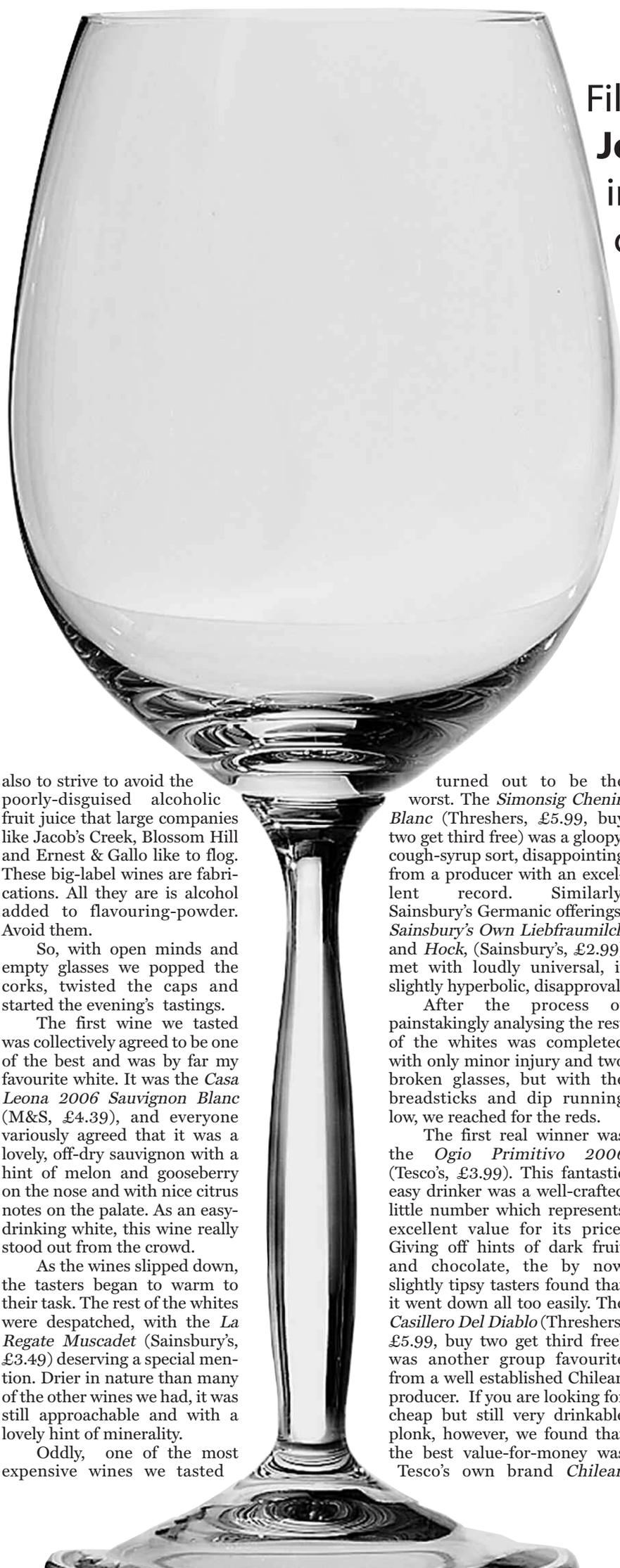
*AXM* also causes possible moral objections to arise. For a magazine that aims squarely at young homosexuals, the porn reviews and photoshoots are a bit tenacious, and unlike *GT* and *Diva* there are no wider cultural aspirations; it's about gay people, for gay people. Nick Scargill remarked that, "with gay magazines it's like our gay little world where we're going to talk about gay things". The magazine's message can be somewhat contradictory. In an article about getting "sex-confident", one would expect advice like "learn to accept yourself". However, instead there is body-fascistic diatribe about getting toned and, comically, "beefing up your dick". Sociologists, including Germaine Greer, have noted that a potential reason for becoming gay is a refusal to fit into gender stereotypes, but in *AXM*, you are presented with a new stereotype: for God's sake, don't be gay if you're fat and ugly. If a young gay person showed their parents a copy of this magazine as an interpretation of his culture after just coming out, the parents could justifiably be terrified: this is a child that likes porn and Kylie.

*Diva* is less blatantly sexualised than the other two, yet is a little self-contradictory. In the current issue, a cross section of lesbian women pose nude in a Whitman-like cross-cultural celebration. However, a few pages later, noticeably thinner, eroticised women pose in a more soft-pornish shoot. Beyond the top-selling magazines, however, there are signs that gay medevac is not yet required. Not available on campus, *Refresh* is more art-orientated, promoting lifestyle choices rather than conformity.

Yet, whilst the gay media does still need to develop, its continued existence should also be applauded. The main issue which needs to be addressed now is the problem of relevance. The intelligent columnists choose to write elsewhere; *GQ* does the same thing as them but with a hetero-façade, and gay culture is becoming more widely accepted even though it still faces stereotyping and generalisation. There is a resounding image of a 'normal' homosexual, despite the fact that you can't even pin down what constitutes a 'normal' person. Gay media needs to find a new issue. Barriers have been broken in the area of entertainment media: the word 'come' no longer shocks people, and gay sex has been shown on TV. The only option left in order for the gay media to remain relevant is for it to intellectually diversify.



# Pour yourself another one



Fill your glass?  
**Jonathan Fransman**  
 investigates the  
 options for student  
 wine connoisseurs

Some people seem to find polite chitter-chatter, a faint hum of Vivaldi and the refined manner of the guests essential foundations for a successful wine tasting. My fellow tasters and I, however, felt at perfect liberty to break out of these unnecessary bonds of formality.

"This smells like day-old semen," remarked an especially forthright taster, to anyone out of those assembled who actually cared to discuss the wine before glugging it down their throats like 15-year-olds at a bus stop. It is probably best to refrain from divulging the name of this particular wine, as I don't think a defamation suit would help anyone.

So what was the aim of the evening? To have a raucous get-together with some good friends? In a sense, yes. But the evening had a far worthier subtext. This evening was nothing less than a quest to find the best, most delicious and most readily available wines we could, whilst keeping a student's budget in mind.

We were therefore looking for easy-drinking wines, pleasant on the palate and flexible. We wanted nothing too pretentious or expensive, but wanted

also to strive to avoid the poorly-disguised alcoholic fruit juice that large companies like Jacob's Creek, Blossom Hill and Ernest & Gallo like to flog. These big-label wines are fabrications. All they are is alcohol added to flavouring-powder. Avoid them.

So, with open minds and empty glasses we popped the corks, twisted the caps and started the evening's tastings.

The first wine we tasted was collectively agreed to be one of the best and was by far my favourite white. It was the *Casa Leona 2006 Sauvignon Blanc* (M&S, £4.39), and everyone variously agreed that it was a lovely, off-dry sauvignon with a hint of melon and gooseberry on the nose and with nice citrus notes on the palate. As an easy-drinking white, this wine really stood out from the crowd.

As the wines slipped down, the tasters began to warm to their task. The rest of the whites were despatched, with the *La Regate Muscadet* (Sainsbury's, £3.49) deserving a special mention. Drier in nature than many of the other wines we had, it was still approachable and with a lovely hint of minerality.

Oddly, one of the most expensive wines we tasted

turned out to be the worst. The *Simonsig Chenin Blanc* (Threshers, £5.99, buy two get third free) was a gloopy, cough-syrup sort, disappointing from a producer with an excellent record. Similarly, Sainsbury's Germanic offerings, *Sainsbury's Own Liebfraumilch* and *Hock*, (Sainsbury's, £2.99) met with loudly universal, if slightly hyperbolic, disapproval.

After the process of painstakingly analysing the rest of the whites was completed with only minor injury and two broken glasses, but with the breadsticks and dip running low, we reached for the reds.

The first real winner was the *Ogio Primitivo 2006* (Tesco's, £3.99). This fantastic easy drinker was a well-crafted little number which represents excellent value for its price. Giving off hints of dark fruit and chocolate, the by now slightly tipsy tasters found that it went down all too easily. The *Casillero Del Diablo* (Threshers, £5.99, buy two get third free) was another group favourite from a well established Chilean producer. If you are looking for cheap but still very drinkable plonk, however, we found that the best value-for-money was Tesco's own brand *Chilean*

*Merlot* (Tesco's, £2.99). It's over-oaked, sure, which isn't that approachable, but at that price,



**'It is absolutely possible to find good, accessible wine on a basic student budget'**

we were not about to argue.

The first prize, however, with unanimous approval from all of the tasters, goes to the *Berberana Rioja Reserva 2003* (Tesco's, £4.49, reduced from £8.99, pictured) which was

truly a cut above the rest. Everyone agreed that this wine displayed a superior elegance which is usually unavailable anywhere close to this price bracket. Try it, and I promise you won't be disappointed.

Afterwards, over empty dip-packets and forlorn plates covered in the sad crumbs of a thousand snacks, ourselves slightly the worse for wear, we discussed our findings.

Most apparent was that our experiment was successful. It is absolutely possible to find good, accessible wine on a student budget. In fact, one of most expensive wines we had, intended as a benchmark, was the worst one there. This is representative of a very important thing to remember when choosing a wine: the label means nothing. Nothing at all.

Therefore, educate yourself. Every wine buyer would do well to have a little look on the World Wide Web before buying anything. Every newspaper has numerous recommendations available free online, so just log on and have a look at them.

Finally, just kick back and enjoy. Any wine will taste good with the right company and a few nibbles. Some will just taste better than others.

# A picture speaks more

Last edition, photoSoc\* and Nouse launched their first ever joint photo competition. The results were judged independently and are printed here to showcase the power of the image. A further PhotoSoc exhibition will occur in Goodricke on December 9



Terry Li

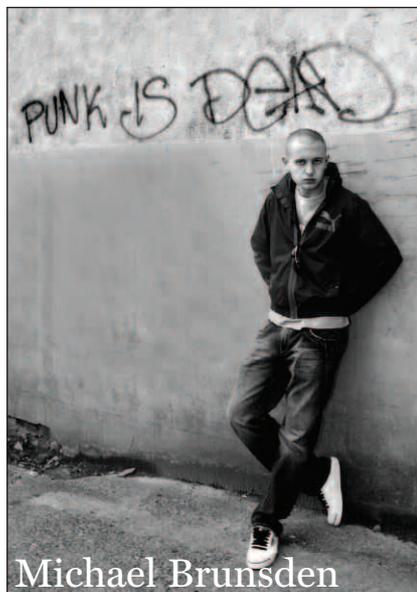
“I have been a photographer for a long time, and during this time I have been asked several times to look at other people’s work. So this time, I expected to trawl through holiday style snaps and ten images of the same cliché sunset, find a few good ones and a lot of dull ones. Fortunately, I was wrong. Not only were the images excellent, but it was also surprisingly hard to choose the top five. I changed my mind countless times, and the wide range of subject matter made it even harder. As a result, I have tried to preserve a variety in my final choice. Well done to everyone who entered for actually getting work into the competition (I always wait way too late) and remember the results are just my personal opinion on a Wednesday night, and if I had to do it again with the same images next week, I would probably choose a different top five.”

1. Simon Musgrave’s ‘Lindisfarne Castle’, was taken on location in Northumbria. “This traditional style black and white landscape is well executed, and the excellent composition leads the eye from the foreground to the heart of the picture.” Musgrave used a Ilford Delta 400 and a Canon AV1 with a 50mm lense, and developed it himself.

2. Toby Roberts’s shot is of a school boy in Zomba, Malawi. “This is top quality reportage style with wonderful composition and evocative subject matter.” Roberts used a 3.2megapixel Nikon compact digital camera.

3. Terry Li’s picture was taken at night during Hong

If you would like to be involved email Nouse at socs12 or PhotoSoc



Michael Brunsdon

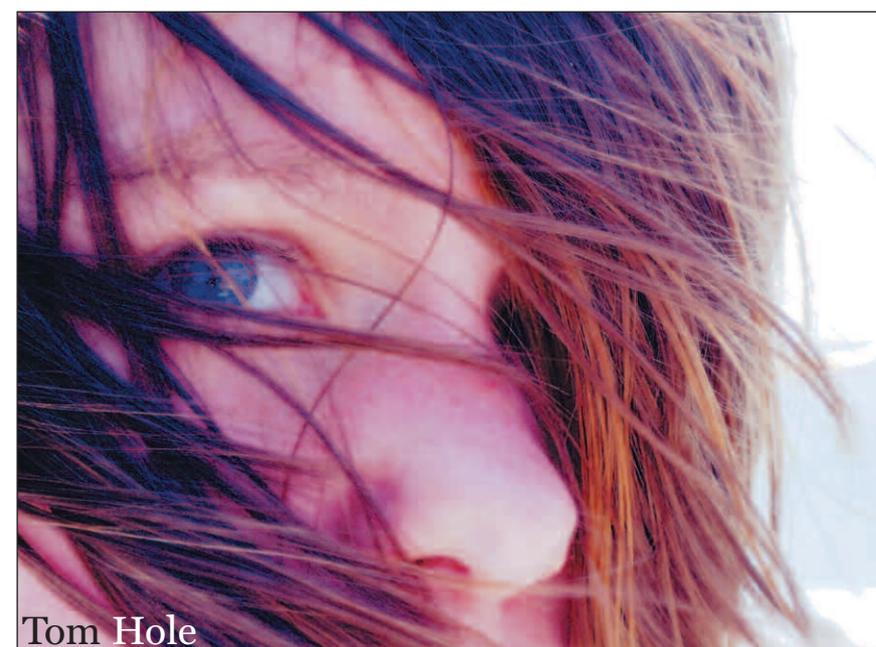
Kong’s mid-autumn festival, and captures a child staring at the candle in a Chinese lantern. “This is a very eye-catching image, and shows a beautiful use of colour.”

4. Matthew Grum’s self-portrait was taken in his back garden with a Canon 30D, a Vivitar 285HV flash behind the subject at half power and one camera left at quarter power. “This is a stunning image with very impressive lighting and exposure.” A bonfire provided the smoke.

5. This night photo was shot with an aperture of f/8 and a shutter speed of 15 seconds at ISO 100. It was taken with a tripod, and then converted into HDR. It is a photo of the building where Pizza Express is located, next to the bridge. “Wonderful time exposure with subtle colours and a wide range of points of interest.” - Judged by Paul Shields



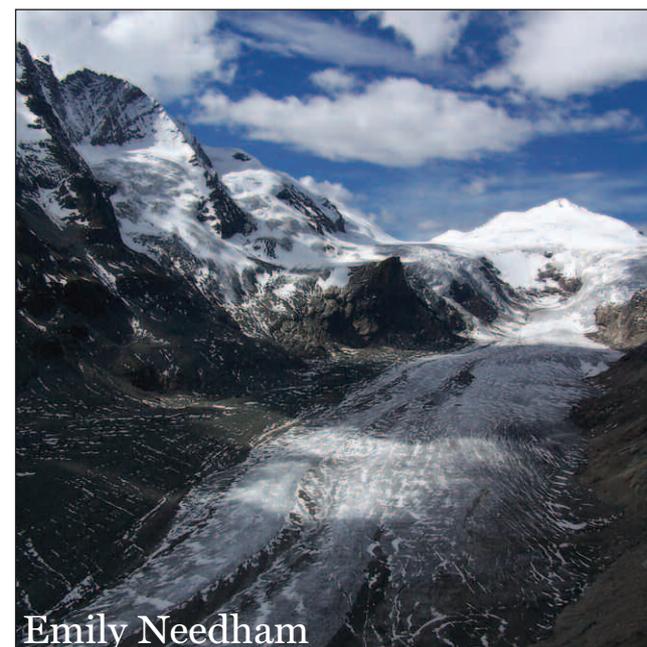
Alex Papushoy



Tom Hole

“This shot is of a school boy in Zomba, Malawi, and was taken during my GAP year.” Toby Roberts

“Great reporting style with wonderful composition and an evocative subject.” Paul Shields



Emily Needham

# than a thousand words

4

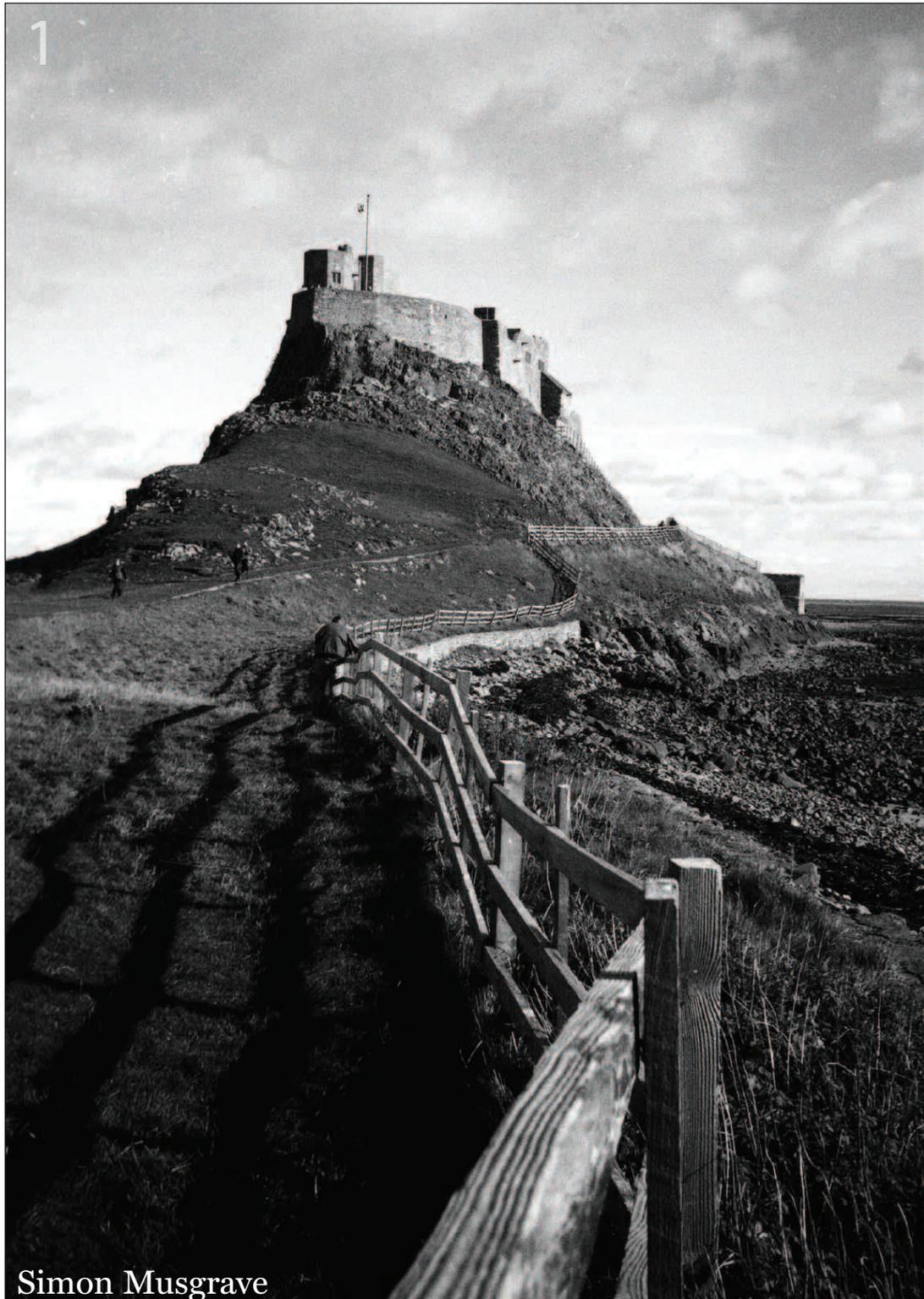


Matthew Grum

"This self-portrait was taken in my back garden using a bonfire for smoke and with sharpening applied afterwards in Photoshop." **Matthew Grum**

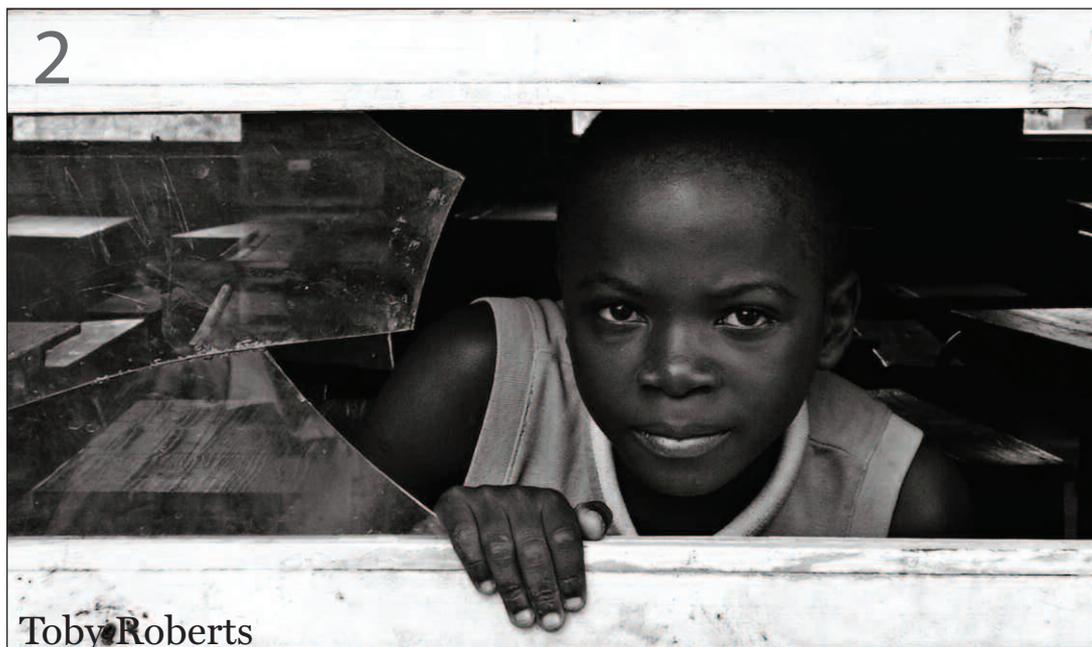
"This is a stunning image with impressive lighting and exposure." **Paul Shields**

1



Simon Musgrave

2



Toby Roberts



Marcus Fischer

# Terrorism, tolerance and the freedom of fiction

Following Caryl Phillips's speech on toleration, **Sam Thomas** reflects on the things literature can say about exclusion and avoiding the trap of British fundamentalism

It is the end of the 1960s at a Leeds high school, and Caryl Phillips has a peculiar status among his classmates: he is the sole black student on the rolls. As a new school term begins, his two brothers arrive, tripling at a stroke the school's racial diversity, and at the same time ending his sense of uniqueness. "I remember feeling that my freedom was about to be reduced," he recalls.

This was a Britain still adapting to the arrival of immigrants from the former colonies of the West Indies. Phillips's parents had left the island of St. Kitts in 1958, bringing their young son to what they had every reason to hope would be a country promising new opportunities. The reality that he and his brothers were facing a decade later was somewhat more complicated. Nonetheless, they had to a great extent assumed their rightful place in a country accustoming itself to the idea that being British no longer meant being white.

Delivering the Morrell Address on Toleration, an annual lecture organised by York's Politics department held this year on November 1, Phillips begins exactly as you might expect a world-renowned writer of fiction to begin: with a story.

"All three of us knew how to cope. We knew when to fight, and when to run," he tells his audience. "I spent most of my childhood fighting and running." These skirmishes aside, the impression he gives of his experience is that of an insider; different, certainly, but by no means peripheral. As he continues, it becomes clear that not all of his contemporaries were as fortunate.

One morning, there is a new name, "like an afterthought, tagged on the end of the register." Ali is Pakistani, a "moon-faced" boy, shy, friendless, and outcast in a way that Phillips has difficulty imagining even in retrospect. In afternoon exercises, he is inevitably last around the track, "seen through the late afternoon gloom, his spindly legs always appearing on the point of collapsing." His effort goes unheeded, however, by his schoolmates lined up on the finishing line, who racistly chant - with that unrivalled schoolchild capacity for cruelty: "Pack it in, Ali!"

The story culminates with the young Phillips finding himself one afternoon on the upper deck of the bus home, his schoolmates taunting Ali as usual. This time though they go that step further, seizing the unfortunate boy's bag and tossing its contents from



VENETIA RAINY

**'A well-meaning teacher at school once told him that he had "just been left in the oven a bit longer, that's all love"'**

the windows, "their stupid faces flushed with success."

In an act of outsider solidarity, Phillips takes Ali to the school secretary, and explains to her what has happened. Her reply is as blunt as it is dismissive. "Poor Ali", Phillips reflects bleakly, "could neither run nor fight."

It is abundantly clear that his

**Above: Oxford graduate and Booker-prize nominated author Caryl Phillips**

telling of this story carries with it no small measure of guilt; partially at his failure at the time to do more to help, but also at the recognition of a yawning cultural divide between the two boys' experiences.

"There was a clear cultural difference," Phillips explains. As someone well-adapted to British society, he was able to compete on equal terms with his peers. Ali, who lacked "the good manners not to flaunt a foreign language," could have no such hopes.

Caryl Phillips comes to York with a reputation that has taken him far beyond his nearby hometown. He now lives in the United States, and is the author of seven critically acclaimed novels, several collections of non-fiction, and a number of widely-performed plays. He has been described by the New York Times as "one of the literary giants of our time."

His work, which also includes frequent articles in *The Guardian* and other publications, is characterised by a thoughtful, perceptive treatment of his experiences of migration and questions of identity. He was therefore a natural choice to deliver a lecture on toleration. It might seem odd, however, that a well-travelled, urbane writer who has already covered such themes extensively in his work would return, as a first point of reference, to an event that happened over three decades ago in the town where he grew up.

Phillips explains that the story came to mind in the aftermath of the London bombings of July 7 2005, and particularly after hearing the news that the terrorists were born and raised in Leeds. "My heart sank," he said, when he discovered that it was not infiltrators from abroad but British citizens from his home town, who had turned their anger inwards and directed it at the very culture in which they grew up.

The Leeds four, he says with gravity, "were as British as I am, and functioned reasonably well in British society." Yet Phillips's reaction is not one of complete incomprehension. He sees their actions as being rooted in a deep and worrying disaffection amongst minority groups - particularly Muslims - in both Britain and Europe at large.

During his youth, "the real divisive factor in British and European life was race." In a comic falsetto, Phillips imitates a well-meaning teacher at school telling him once that the difference between him and his classmates was that he had "just been left in the oven a

bit longer, that's all love."

But Phillips feels that the alienation felt by minority groups in Britain is very different now than from before. He attributes this change to the "cultural othering" of non-white British people. The racism that appalls us in his story about Ali persists, he argues, in contemporary British society; it is simply expressed in different terms, ones that have been adapted to a climate of skin-deep racial toleration.

So it is, he says, that yesterday's "Paki-bashing discourse" has become today's "anti-Muslim rhetoric, delivered with a wink and a nudge." Such rhetoric, explains Phillips, though not necessarily to blame for the actions of terrorists, is nonetheless an expression of something still deeply implicit in the way Britain treats its minority populations.

If one of Phillips's reasons for returning to the 1970s is that he believes we have not entirely buried its prejudices, perhaps a stronger motivation is his belief in the importance and power of stories. "Back then," he explains, "Britain was narrating a harsh narrative to me." In his essay 'Extravagant Strangers' Phillips remarks, "A large part of my British education has involved learning to recognise when fellow citizens are viewing me as little more than the 'other.'" The theme discussed in the essay - the position of the writer as an outsider - is a recurrent motif in Phillips' work.

In his latest book, *Foreigners*, he uses such insights to describe the lives of three black men who, at different points in recent history, attempt (and ultimately fail) to find a place in British society. The book bridges fiction and non-fiction in a way that encourages the reader to see a familiar world from an unfamiliar perspective. Indeed, from both the lecture and his writing, it is clear that a significant part of Phillips' intention is to question and reshape the "harsh narrative" that he experienced growing up. Central to this project is his faith in "the moral capacity of fiction to wrench us out of our ideological burrows."

It is clear that he believes that decades of political wrangling have failed to properly resolve the problem of how a single country such as Britain - let alone continental Europe - can fully accommodate people of different races and religions who often hold radically different cultural assumptions and values. If real toleration is to be a



VENETIA RAINERY

possibility then a different approach is required, and Phillips thinks it must involve writers, particularly writers of narrative fiction, and their ability to help bridge gaps of understanding between cultures.

However, when we seek justification for why we ought to behave in a certain way, or why a government ought to enact a certain policy, we turn as a matter of habit toward philosophical arguments, or cite facts about the world that support our case. We are less inclined to look for answers in lit-

**Above: Caryl Phillips talks to York students. Right: the Holbeck area of Leeds where two of the 7/7 bombers spent their teenage years**

He criticises the adversarial nature of much of our politics and reality TV culture today, drawing an appreciable murmur of approval from the audience. "We don't have empathy, we have judgment."

The point that he made throughout his lecture is that our established ways of debating and practising the politics of culture are desperately inadequate for the scale of the task at hand, and that if we are to solve the problems we face, a different kind of engagement is required.

The adaptation from a postcolonial to a multicultural world, which Phillips dubs "the colouring of Europe", is, he says, "not something that might happen: it has already happened." In his essay "The Pioneers", he lampoons the old-fashioned definition of England as a nation of stamp-collectors and pigeon-fanciers: "Most Britons," he wrote, "are no longer interested in the aimless navel-gazing of a George Orwell." However true this might be, though, there remains a great deal of work to be done in order to understand what causes the cracks and fissures that characterise modern racial and cultural politics.

Phillips' writing is an attempt to express human life as part of a community. He writes to extend our understanding of what it means to be an outsider; to be surrounded by a culture to which you can never fully belong.

If there is a case for literature's indispensability, and its ability to transcend the shortcomings of our adversarial and often narrow-mindedly intellectual culture, there can surely be few people better placed to make it than Caryl Phillips.



## WHO IS CARYL PHILLIPS?

Caryl Phillips was educated at Leeds Central High School and Queens College, Oxford, and is professor of English at Yale University. He has written nine works of fiction, most recently *Foreigners*, published in the UK by Harvill Secker.

His novel *Crossing the River* was shortlisted for the Booker Prize in 1993, and *Dancing in the Dark* won the 2006 PEN/Beyond the Margins award. Phillips' collection of essays, *A New World Order* (Secker & Warburg, 2001) contains several of the pieces referred to in

this article.

The Morrell Address on Toleration is an annual lecture organised by the Department of Politics at York. It is part of the wider Morrell Studies in Toleration programme, funded by the C & J. B. Morrell trust, which includes the teaching of an MA course in Political Philosophy and the Idea of Toleration. The programme's purpose is to "increase the philosophical and historical understanding and appreciation of toleration as an idea and as a practice."

---

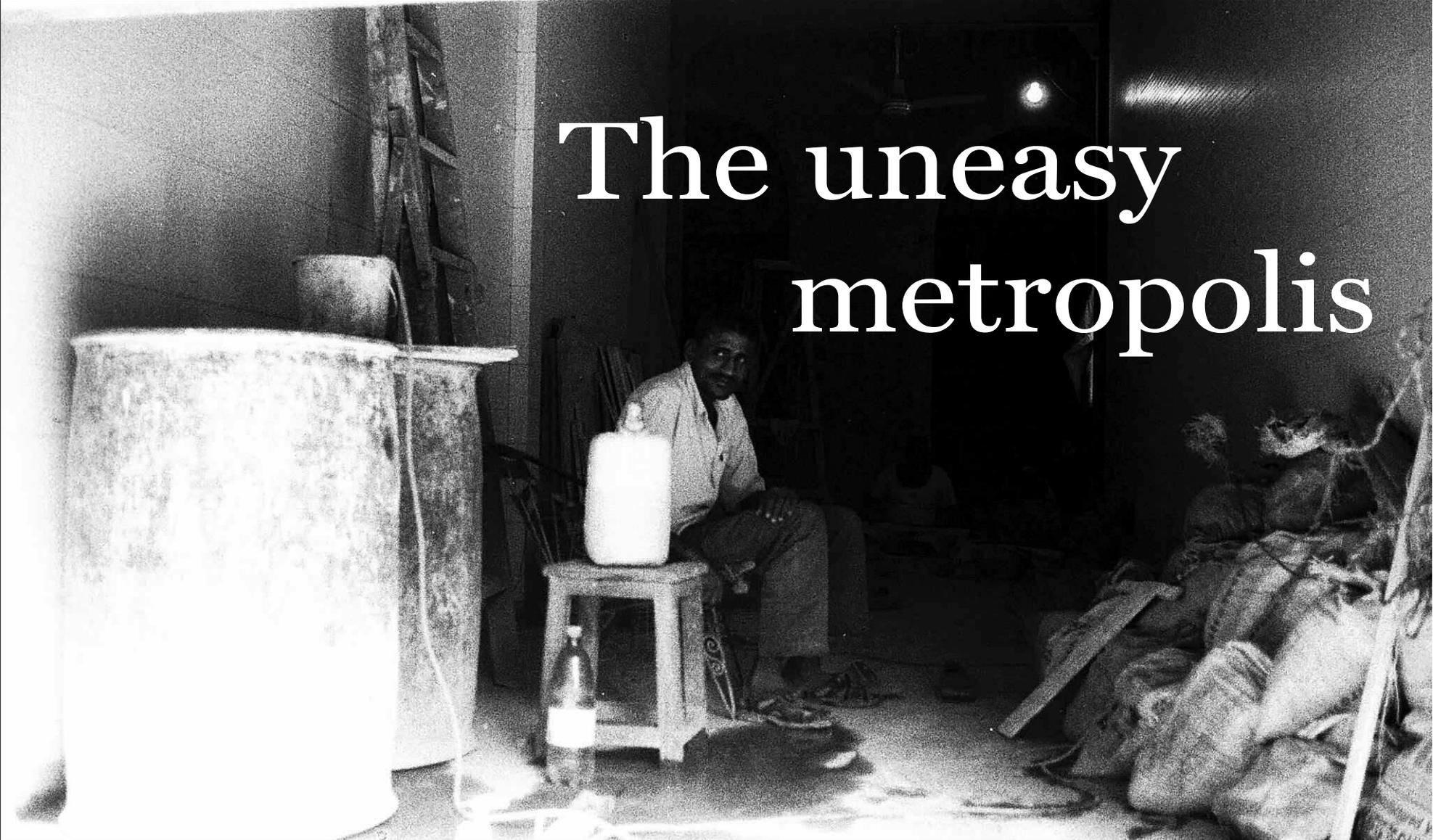
**'So it is, he says, that yesterday's "Paki-bashing discourse" has now become today's "anti-Muslim rhetoric, delivered with a wink and a nudge"'**

---

erature – reading is seen as a leisure activity, and a passive one at that.

But if we see reading a book as entering into a kind of friendship, the act of reading gains significance. Just as keeping the company of people who enrich our understanding of the world is important to us, so too it is with the books we choose to read.

In his lecture, Phillips seeks to assert the importance of fictional writing along similar lines. "The process of daring to imagine yourself into the life of someone who is not you," he says, "is an act of moral courage." However, this is accompanied by an anxiety that these capacities are in danger elsewhere in society.



# The uneasy metropolis

## Scratching Mumbai's surface, Ben Martin finds its decaying slums bustling and alive

It was with no little sense of irony that I bought an Indian tricolour and pinned it to my shirt on my way to work on the 15th of August. As a 'Britisher' in Mumbai, sporting saffron, white and green, I attracted interested stares whilst picking my way through the crowded concourse of Chhatrapati Shivaji train station. Today, non-colonial India was 60, and I stuck out like a sore thumb.

I had managed, through some hopeful emails and a bit of CV-sharpening, to wangle a summer placement at the Indian Express in Mumbai. I had been assigned to cover the state-government sponsored celebration of India's 60th year as a free nation. "We thought it would be good to send you along," my editor had said with a knowing gleam in her eye. I caught a cab to Mani Bhavan, where, 65 years previously, Mahatma Gandhi launched the Quit India Movement with his famous call to "do or die". Today Mani Bhavan would be host to the chief Minister of Maharashtra, veterans from India's struggle against the British Raj, and a 2000-strong troupe of dancing school children.

There is surely no better way to comprehend a culture or to taste its zeitgeist than from behind a reporter's notebook, and Mumbai, the gargantuan megalopolis, the Koh-I-Noor of lesser diamonds and the poster boy for all that is 'New India', certainly provided a flavour worth savouring.

I was put up on the southern tip of the Island City, in Colaba. Here, you can buy rip-off Diesel handbags for 50p; hostels proudly display their

Lonely Planet recommendations, and this is where you'll find all of the *frangi* (foreign) watering holes. The ever-expanding built up area sprawls 40 miles north up the coast of Maharashtra, and contains an estimated 19 million people, making it the fifth most populous tranche of urban settlement in the world. Nobody could ever hope to know Bombay in its entirety, and the vastness of the place becomes immediately apparent every time you try to cross the road or board a rush hour train.

Anybody who has been to India will know that in no other country is such grinding, absolute poverty juxtaposed as frequently and as emphatically against such fabulous wealth. Here in the financial capital, a highly educated, professional middle class watches Big Brother and drinks lattes. High-rise apartment blocks, selling for more than those in Manhattan, look out over Chowpatty beach, whilst 4X4's cruise roads lined with gleaming shopping malls. Bollywood stars flaunt iPods and drink Cristal. I even had the pleasure of attending the unveiling of Air India's new Boeing 777, set to fly non-stop to New York's JFK, giving Mumbai an arterial link to the financial heart of the world. Mumbai is going places.

At the same time, however, it is also thoroughly backwards. Built mostly on reclaimed mangrove swamp, the city's drainage system has, due to both a lack of funds and endemic corruption, been largely neglected, resulting in flooding every year during monsoon season. Similarly, hasty development unchecked by a lacklustre civil admin-

istration has led to corners being cut during construction; while I was there an entire apartment block collapsed due to structural weakness and 30 residents died. Sixty percent of Bombay's 19 million citizens live in illegal slums - basically a shanty town big enough to house the entire population of London. For a city trying to sell itself as the next Shanghai, such a figure is embarrassing. People on the 'going places' side of the fence prefer to overlook those in the city's slums, and poverty is side-

---

**'In no other country is such absolute poverty juxtaposed as frequently and emphatically against such fabulous wealth'**

---

lined in the face of 'progress'.

One of my more stimulating jobs required me to report on a tour company that had been running guided tours of Dharavi, Asia's largest favela, which sits plumb in the middle of Bombay on 250 acres of prime real-estate. The area is about to enter a massive regeneration programme, so I was very keen to see it before I left. The tour company, Reality Tours, is run by a British expat Chris Way and his Indian business partner Krishna Poojari. The two have received heavy criticism from the press following accusations of encouraging 'poverty tourism'. Such a reaction is a classic illustration of the division between rich and poor in Mumbai; the subtext of the outcries from those most vociferously critical of Reality Tours was appall that Mumbai's poverty ridden carbuncle was being shown to impressionable foreigners. I was to be one of them.

The dwellings there house an incredible one million residents, and are linked by narrow, labyrinthine alleys that twist and turn chaotically. The slum, and the so called 13th Compound in particular, is also the hub of Bombay's recycling industry. Plastic, rubber, oil drums, broken computers and reams of old newspaper are re-processed here, generating \$665m per year. Everywhere bustles with an incredible level of activity. Behind every door somebody was doing something; sewing, baking, sorting, cutting, carving. The foul smelling disarray, the rank open sewers, the exposed electric wires and the terrible living conditions, were contrasted against an unbelievable level of productivity. I spoke at length to Krishna who was my guide on the tour, and he said that the aim of Reality Tours was, rather than to make a spectacle out of Dharavi's poverty, to show visitors how much the residents of Dharavi had achieved despite their hardship and socially peripheral position. I was thoroughly convinced and wrote them a gleaming endorsement in the next day's edition.

The duality of Bombay left me utterly confounded. I would devote hours at work to pieces on cholera outbreaks, travel home past railway track slums, and then head off either to the Bombay Gymkhana (one of oldest British sporting clubs in India) or to a club in Bandra (one of Mumbai's trendier suburbs) for some Soho-priced revelry. The vibrant contrasts that I found myself dealing with at every second of every day made life tiring and confusing. But, as one expat said to me, despite the stress, the poverty and the frustration, "Bombay gets under your skin".

Charity shops are a tricky one. A lot of young people have preconceived ideas about buying second hand clothes. However, the resurgence of vintage clothing a few years ago through the wardrobes of Kate Moss and Sienna Miller has served to endear such garments to the trendier crowd. There is a big difference, of course, between the contents of the Knightsbridge Oxfam and York's PDSA, and the ubiquitous 'vintage' was soon replaced by 'archive' (the collection of designer garments from previous seasons' collections). The notion that charity shopping is a pursuit reserved for the elderly and badly attired was thus rejuvenated.

The perennial high street favourites of the fashion crowd can be deceptively expensive unless you're an experienced sale-rack raider, and so it's necessary to find a cheaper alternative. In amongst the plethora of nylon skirts and Dynasty shoulderpads, there are gems to be found in nearly every charity shop. Put aside your misgivings: clothes from charity shops are not dirty. They are washed, and steamed, and sorted meticulously. In fact, if the shop staff open a bag of donated clothes and find that the items smell badly or are damaged, they are usually immediately disposed of. The fact that the clothes are cheap does not mean that they are bad, the profit margins and overhead costs have simply been largely eliminated.

The *Nouse* team trawled York's charity shop row, Goodramgate, to find the diamonds in the rough. Chunky knits, a Sonia Rykiel inspired look for this season, can be found in abundance in charity shops (pictured). If you're looking for jewellery, scarves, shoes, bags, etc. York's charity shops are particularly good. At the PDSA shop we found a gorgeous blue and green plaid skirt that simply screamed Lily Allen. The fit wasn't bad, and it was light enough to be worn comfortably during the day, but warm enough to stop you



# A hidden treasure trove

Charity shop fashion is cheap, chic and charitable as **Liam O'Brien** and **Li Peng Cheok** discover with relish

from freezing in the now-colder weather. And the best part about it? It only cost £3.29. A versatile taupe shoulder tote found at the same shop was only £3. A red chunky knit dress from Scope (which supports people with cerebral palsy) cost only £4.50, and was found on the same rack as a £6 fitted leather above-the-knee skirt (pictured). Services for Autism had a dazzling range of gold and pearl jewellery as well as shoes (pictured).

Oxfam was our last destination. As the most well-recognised charity shop and by far the most expensive, a visit there is more about achieving an upmarket vintage look rather than saving money. To complete the look, Oxfam offer retro leather suitcases, colourful, sweeping dresses, and a good range of accessories.

Some people, like Aimi Syarizad, a first year undergraduate, will always be prejudiced against charity shop clothes. "Of course I wouldn't buy clothes from a charity shop," says Syarizad in surprise, "You don't know where these clothes have been, or who has worn them before. Besides, clothes from a charity shop are out of season and out of date. I would rather just pay a bit more." On the other hand, most people, like Sharon Chiu, see nothing wrong in the idea, with the defence that "As long as they're in good condition, I don't see why not. You can find a lot of label stuff in there, and a few brand new pieces too."

Charity shopping can be an arduous process, but if you go with a group of people it can also be a lot of fun. In between trying to pick up a bargain and emulate effortless Kate Moss chic, laugh at the shoulder-padded rack of dresses with patterned turquoise and mauve sequins (quietly, of course, because charity shop workers are uniformly adorable). Even if you have a severe dislike of everything that isn't brand new, remember that charity shops sell books, vinyls and all kinds of other things, and that every penny spent helps good causes.





# UncleMatthew

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

'Rather than taking a head-on approach, take matters into your own hands and slip some cyanide into his Stella. The provision of a painless exit from the world is a truly humanitarian act.'

Dear Uncle Matthew,

I have recently been elected as the head of a campus society. It is very exciting and I am enjoying the cut and thrust world of university politics. Unfortunately, I am finding the society's third year old guard a little bit resistant to my modernising tendencies. They often snicker at my use of buzz words, my drafting in of special advisers and my tendency to wear tailored suits to socials. How can I find my Clause Four moment?

Public-private-partnershipy,  
Derwent

Dear Public-private-partnershipy,

One of the hard truths about any form of responsibility is that it's almost impossible to please everybody all of the time. Seeking to strike a workable balance between old and new (a 'third way', if you will) seems vital if you are to maintain unity within your society. Taking the old curmudgeons on may provide you the platform you desire to mould the society in your image. Tactful reminders to them of the future they face (attaching council tax and benefit claim forms to their newsletters, repeated reference to "age before beauty", and heading each of the society minutes "memento mori") may communicate your modernising intentions.

Yours progressively,

Uncle Matthew

Dear Uncle Matthew,

Having taken my IB at an international school in sunny Kuala Lumpur, I am faced with these sub-Arctic temperatures for the first time in my life. Everything liquid in my life has frozen solid, including my stash of vodka and the fluid in my inner ear. In fact, the only thing seemingly able to remain unfrozen is the contents of the lake. Should I bathe in it? How do I stay alive in these inhuman conditions?

Frosty,  
Goodricke

Dear Frosty,

Wear layers.

Yours thermodynamically,

Uncle Matthew



Dear Uncle Matthew,

I hold a position of responsibility in a campus political group; I am well-respected amongst my peers and am doing well at my degree. My only real problem is my best friend; he is an unpleasant, loud, bigoted, firebrand. At first he was good fun, but recently I've become worried that he will ruin any political and social aspirations I have. I am dragged about haplessly in his crypto-fascist wake, an apology in one hand and a gin and tonic in the other. What can I do?

Disillusioned,  
Vanbrugh

Dear Disillusioned,

You appear to be running the risk of being relegated to becoming a somewhat resentful babysitter. Your friend clearly needs saving from himself, and you are the person best placed to provide the help he so obviously needs. This help need not be overt; indeed, the less he knows of it the better. Rather than taking a head-on approach to changing him, take matters in to your own hands and slip a teaspoonful of cyanide into his Stella. Not only will this enable you to emerge from his shadow, but the provision of a painless exit from a world to which he is unsuited is truly humanitarian act.

Yours euthanasially,

Uncle Matthew

# www.NOUSE.co.uk

## Check out the Nouse website for:

- Regular news updates
- Exclusive web content
- Editors' blogs
- Sports results
- Opinion polls
- Bar and restaurant archive



# Cartoon competition

Nouse are looking for cartoonists for our comment and column pages, and for the website.

If you think you've got what it takes, send your best cartoon to [contact@nouse.co.uk](mailto:contact@nouse.co.uk). The best entries will be published by Nouse, and the best cartoonists may find themselves with a regular slot in the paper.





# Nicky Woolf

## Total Carnage!!?? Moment of Zen

Gingerly dipping a finger into the mysterious, unlabelled jar of current affairs and licking it

“CARNAGE FOREVER!!!!” said ‘John Thomas’ underneath the Carnage article on nouse.co.uk, garbling “i hear Carnage offered the SU £3 per t-shirt sold.....twice what they declare they earn from Viking Raid!!! that doesn’t sound very fare to the students of York!!” Yes, that’s right. That’s nine exclamation marks. A clear sign of a deranged mind.

Almost immediately afterwards, and – somehow – from the same IP address, the equally fake-named ‘Sarah Collins’ pipes up in support. “i agree with the other comments - the SU is a Dictatorship - who are they to tell where to go and what to do????????? x” she babbles. Nine question marks. Nine. And an x. An x?

These, remember, are two supposedly unrelated posts made from the same computer, agreeing with each other. What cunning. Nine exclamation marks and nine question marks so far. And an x. An x? Anyway.

Exactly three minutes after ‘Sarah Collins’ makes her remark,

three minutes, while their comments filter through the system, john thomas – uncapitalised this time – makes another hysterical contribution. “i was right!!! - my comment has been deleted!! is this the SU censoring free speach?????”

Quite apart from speculating on the Orwellian nightmare this guy – for we can dispense with the charade that this might be anything other than one or more sneaky plotters in Carnage’s press office – must live in, our tally now stands at 14 exclamation marks and 14 question marks. At this point, another person – read persona – blunders into the debate. Apparently !s and ?s lack impact, as ‘Adrian Bolton’ feels the need to shout.

“CARNAGE ROCKS.....! I’VE NEVER BEEN ON AN EVENT SO WELL ORGANISED, I’VE BEEN TO LEEDS, LIVERPOOL, SHEFFIELD AND YORK. YORK SU MUST BE FULL OF GEEKS.....! NEVER MIND THERES ALWAYS SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO RUIN EVERY-

ONE’S FUN.....!” Quite. Good grief.

I can’t help picturing the Carnage team somewhere crowded around a computer, gibbering in glee at their inspired scheme. ‘Adrian Bolton’ is not finished. “LET ME GET THIS RIGHT, THEY CAN GENERATE MORE MONEY FOR R SU, AND CARNAGE DO HAVE ETHICALLY SOURCED T-SHIRTS (I’VE LOOKED INTO IT) THEY US STAR WOLD! WHY DON’T WE JUST HAVE CARNAGE INSTEAD OF VIKING RAID.....!” he bellows. “They us star wold”. Right. Incidentally, the exclamation marks are now winning 19-14.

Then, to general mirth, ‘Ryan K’ accuses Nouse of “Miss Quotation”, using (to avoid having to quote what is a spectacularly tedious few lines) three question marks. 19-17. Unfortunately, this is the last of their correspondence to date. Carnage seem to have lost interest. They may have run out of peanuts, or perhaps the keyboard has become clogged with drool. In conclusion: !!!!!????????!!!!!!?????



I would like to take this opportunity to apologise to MP-in-waiting Claire Hazelgrove for accidentally punching her in the face as I waved to a friend on my way out of Vanbrugh. Really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really, really sorry about that, Claire.

Ex-YUSU President Rich Croker to Academic and Welfare officer Grace Fletcher-Hall: “Toffs is like the toilet. When you gotta go, you gotta go.” How very right he is.



Moment of Zen is informed that a first-year became the first person ever to be barred from the York Tories when he stood up in the first meeting of the year and asked President Julia Heaton who she slept with to obtain her lofty position. What a nob.



Interesting fact: A McDonalds employee is contractually obliged to say “I’m loving it” if you sing them the jingle from the TV adverts. Moment of Zen is advised by its lawyers to advise you to exercise care when trying this out. We don’t need another law suit on our hands.



If you have any juicy tidbits or gossip to share, send them to: socs12@york.ac.uk




You could go to work,  
or you could come to life

The NHS isn’t just another organisation. What we do isn’t just work, it’s life itself. So our graduate management scheme – with threads in Finance, Human Resources and General Management – will help you become the very best. We change the lives of millions. Join us and we’ll change yours.

Apply online at  
[www.come2life.nhs.uk/graduate](http://www.come2life.nhs.uk/graduate)

FINANCE | GENERAL | HR | NHS GRADUATE SCHEME  
it’s not work, it’s life

# Arts Reviews

BOOK: SALMON FISHING IN THE YEMEN

AUTHOR: PAUL TORDAY  
REVIEW: NICK STAINES

☆☆☆☆☆



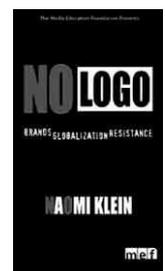
Behind this rather bizarre title is both a readable and warming tale about new-found love and determination, and a clever political satire on the nature of spin. A middle-aged scientist's staid life is rejuvenated when an eccentric Islamic businessman employs him to explore introducing salmon fly-fishing to his homeland. His project is then picked up by a British government desperate to find positive ties with the Middle East after the Iraq debacle. Taking the postmodernist form of a government enquiry, incorporating diary entries, transcriptions of interviews and court hearings, it is an attack on the 'quick fix' attitude of today's politics.

While there is much to recommend about this novel, not least its wit, what is most striking about it is the humanity of its characters. Even the Prime Minister's chief spin-doctor, an excellent and biting caricature, is given moments where the reader feels pity for him instead of amused contempt. It is a satisfying read, as well as an excellent case for what I always thought was one of the world's most boring sports.

BOOK: NO LOGO

AUTHOR: NAOMI KLEIN  
REVIEW: SARAH FOSTER

☆☆☆☆☆



This novel is no light read. Klein takes a stark look at the onset of globalisation; taking into account not only the way in which multi-billion-dollar companies market products, but also the effect that such companies have on the developing world. Klein looks at everything from the world of hyper-advertising to corporate unethical practices, and goes on to address what can be done by consumers to reject capitalist society.

After over a hundred of pages of polemic, most will be glad to reach the final section, a call-to-arms to those newly 'educated' about the atrocities committed by global corporations. Klein's proposed responses, including the reclamation of public space and subvertising, may not be entirely to everyone's taste. Klein's book is supposed to educate, but its likely fate is to preach to the converted, and those who have already embraced capitalism as beneficial will be less than impressed. Criticised for selecting figures that support her case, and ignoring any which act against it, Canadian Klein also relies heavily on North American examples, making the book less relevant to a British reader. Overall, though, it remains an eye-opening read.

## Sarah-Jane Silvester attends York's brand new open-mic night

Week 4 saw the launch of a brand new open-mic event in the Basement Bar in City Screen, Coney Street. Take the Stage, the brainchild of Maz Mufti, is a fresh fortnightly event which aims to showcase local talent, both new and established, across the genres of music, monologue, poetry and stand-up. Descending down the steep stairs into the low-lit basement room, I was sceptical. Whilst this certainly had the potential to be brilliant, it could yet turn out to be an experience akin to a school talent show.

Maybe I should start by saying that such an event can't really be judged by the calibre of per-

**'Torturously unoriginal poetry was followed by quality stand-up from The Shambles'**

formance on any given night. Obviously the organisers have to use some degree of discretion, but ultimately the concept of 'open mic' involves providing a platform where performers of all, and I mean all, abilities can gain exposure and experience in an un-snobbish atmosphere of support.

This certainly seemed to be the ethos behind Take the Stage. Novices rubbed shoulders with established acts from York's open-



Take the Stage featured acts from the hilarious... to the dire

mic scene (and yes, there really is one).

Having said this, it's worth mentioning some of the acts that provided us with the highs and lows of an entertaining evening. Often, acts were terribly clichéd; James Blunt-esque guitar music was followed by torturously unoriginal poetry about unrequited love. In both halves, though, there

were some real quality acts, particularly some of the stand-up comedy which eased the mood in the crowded room.

Home-grown impromptu comedy group 'The Shambles' delighted all with their hilarious spontaneous skits, capitalising well on the intimate setting by getting the audience to shout ideas in Whose Line is it Anyway

fashion. How 'Dale Winton' and 'sandwich' came up so frequently as suggestions for themes continues to baffle me. Look out for them regularly performing in Goodricke College as they are well worth a watch.

Similarly great was Jay Foreman, with his fantastic set of acoustic comedy songs. His ditties, about food theft and a monkey that wants nothing more than to go skiing received a standing ovation, and uplifted us all after the sombre poetry of the first half.

The only problem that the evening suffered was a distinct lack of self-awareness. The cosy clusters of tables and carelessly strewn fairy lights worked well to create the impression of a spontaneous bohemian gathering, but our hostess' announcement: "You're allowed to talk, but not too loudly" served to add to an inappropriate and unfortunate formal feel that the event seemed unable to escape from. The result, especially during the sober poetry, was a sombre, respectful hush from the audience, as opposed to a relaxed but appreciative buzz.

Nothing beats a bit of live entertainment however, and the organisers have done well in spotting the market gap for live performance in York. Even if a handful of the acts are painful, there is something in me which enjoyed watching them sweat it out in the spotlight. If you want to experience Take the Stage for yourself, and I recommend you do, then head to City Screen on Monday of weeks 8 and 10.

ARTIST: TERRY HAMMILL  
INSTALLATION: SEMAPHORE SAINTS  
VENUE: YORK MINSTER  
REVIEW: SARAH-JANE SILVESTER

☆☆☆☆☆

Installing modern artworks in an ancient setting poses real difficulties for an artist. Crucially, the piece must keep its relevance to a modern audience without encroaching jarringly on surrounding originals. This challenge is particularly huge in an environment so charged with history as the York Minster.

Terry Hammill, then, has achieved something pretty amazing. Only originally intended for a temporary exhibition in 2005, Hammill's twelve simple sculptures, the 'Semaphore Saints', have now been adopted into the Minster as a semi-permanent features.

On first approach to the West Window, many visitors don't even realise that the twelve headless figures are in fact relatively recent additions. Their wooden bodies have been painted so that from a distance they give the impression

that they have been carved from the ancient stone that surrounds them. Each figure stands on the original octagonal pedestals, and they fit so harmoniously into the arches that one presumes they have been standing there for centuries.

But wait a minute, are those gold ping-pong bats they are holding? They are in fact semaphore signals - and if you know your semaphore (or can find the laminated code sheets lying around) you can read their hidden message. In a day and age when many people feel they cannot relate to modern art, it is really refreshing to have a piece that so readily engages both young and old, student and businessmen.

Get down to the Minster with your University card, crack the code, discover the message and see what you make of these twenty-first century saints.



Terry Hammill's installation at the Minster's West Window

### WHAT'S ON: ARTS

**Drama Barn**

Week 7:  
*Arsenic and Old Lace*

Week 8:  
*The Trial*

Week 9:  
*The Ash Grove*



**York Theatre Royal**  
November 3-24:  
*Enjoy by Alan Bennett*

November 27 - December 1:  
*Agamemnon*

**Friargate Theatre**  
November 21-23:  
*Prophetess Libuse and other Czech Fairy Tales*

**York City Art Gallery**  
Now - January 27 2008  
Tracy Emin

# TheatreReviews

## Helen Citron talks to student director Lisa Blair about her play at the Theatre Royal

Lisa Blair is no stranger to York's Theatre Royal. Her production of the experimental and often harrowing *4.48 Psychosis* was staged in this theatre, described by her as 'one of the North East's finest dramatic establishments' in March 2006. Now she's back, again in the role of director, with a production of Steven Berkoff's modern translation of Aeschylus' *Agamemnon*. Meeting with her exactly a month before the first night, I was given a taste of what promises to be an intriguing piece of theatre.

Blair's relationship with Drama Soc has often been fraught with difficulties. Just last year she received widespread criticism for negative comments she made in an interview on the theatrical potential of the Drama Barn, Drama Soc's campus venue.

Blair has often controversially stressed the fact that the budget and professional status of the Theatre Royal present her with greater opportunity to fully execute her creative ideas than a student production in the Drama Barn would. With this new production Blair consolidates her relationship with the Theatre Royal. In terms of *Agamemnon*, Blair tells me that one

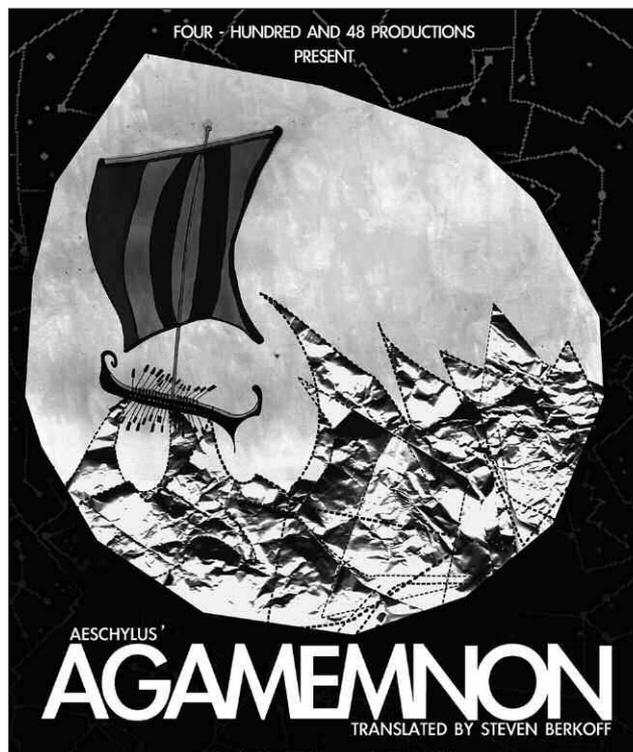
of the central benefits has been the licence to create her own complex set. She talks proudly of scaffolding and ropes and other devices which she plans to use to interesting effect.

A successful warrior, fresh from the bloodshed of Troy, who has sacrificed one of his own daughters to persuade the Gods to summon winds to carry him to battle, Agamemnon returns home with his concubine Cassandra to find his wife having an affair. Hardened by war but deeply hurt by his wife's infidelity, he is betrayed and finally murdered.

I ask Blair whether finding the right actor for this formidable central role proved to be the challenge it appears. She laughs and tells me that it was a difficult task; and explains her reasoning behind her final choice of Will Poskett, a PPE post-grad and former student of London's Drama Centre.

"The most important thing to consider when casting Agamemnon was to find someone with an awesome presence," she says. "This doesn't have to mean someone stunningly good looking - Will is an incredibly powerful actor and he handles the role perfectly."

Blair's cast is drawn from an



Lisa Blair's *Agamemnon* features a broad cast drawn from both the University of York and York St. John's

unusually broad spectrum. Rather than stick with actors already established on the York drama scene, Blair decided to open the auditions up to students at York St John's University as well. The cast ranges widely in age as well; both first years and post-graduates are represented; a courageous move for a first-term production. "York University is a really concentrated, tightly knit place," Blair explains, "and that's why having such a diverse cast has proved a real challenge. The rehearsal process has certainly involved a lot of a give and take, but overall this has benefited the dynamic of the production as a whole."

Blair's choice of the play, she explains, lies partly in its wide ranging socio-political resonances. She tells me: "Berkoff was working on this shortly after the Vietnam war and his adaptation reflects that in some really interesting ways. It's also strikingly contemporary, and will hopefully provoke thought about the situations we see now." She laughs, then goes on, "I guess themes of love, lust and revenge will never get old."

*Agamemnon* is being performed in the Theatre Royal Studio between November 27 and December 1.



PRODUCTION: WAKE-UP CALL  
VENUE: DRAMA BARN  
REVIEW: SHERINE EL SAYED

★☆☆☆☆

Fast moving images of London, plagued by graffiti and uninspired-looking youths were projected on the wall, powerfully setting the scene for *Wake Up Call*.

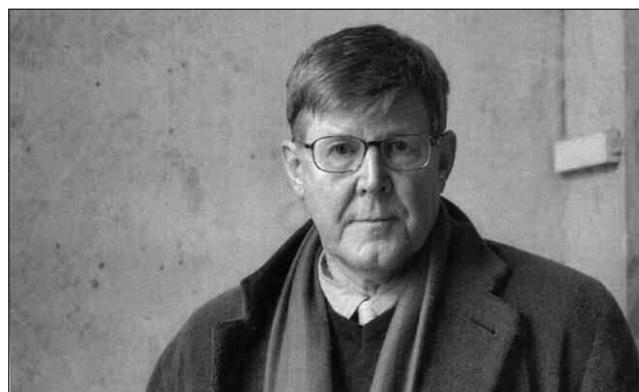
Unfortunately, this promising start set no precedent whatsoever. The play unfolded into a flop, a failed attempt to encapsulate the complexity of what it means to be both British and Muslim.

The play opens in 1989, amidst the furor over Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, which made many Muslims feel that the integrity of their religion was being undermined. The protagonist, Zeinab, is an adolescent both immersed in the Rushdie debate and set apart from it, her slipping headscarf symbolising her waning

belief system. Unfortunately, Zeinab, as well as all the characters in this play, lacked any kind of serious dimensionality, and was instead constructed entirely of overworked 'outsider' clichés.

Mathew Springett's portrayal of a bigoted reporter offered some comic relief, but ironically, the contempt I was supposed to feel at his flippant prejudices was actually directed more severely toward the play itself and its inadvertent reinforcement of the very stereotypes it attempts to deconstruct.

*Wake Up Call* was like an alarm that failed to go off. The issues explored could have been explosive; however, with no new or meaningful insight, it barely mustered the stamina to fizzle.



PRODUCTION: ENJOY  
VENUE: YORK THEATRE ROYAL  
REVIEW: JAMES MACDOUGALD

★★★★☆

"They're a bloody awful family," said Harold Pinter about the characters in *The Homecoming*, "but at least they're a family." The Cravens - Wilf, Connie, Linda and Kim (formerly Terry) - of Bennett's *Enjoy* should be regarded with similar tolerance. They are, respectively, an abusive elderly man, his naïve wife, their prostitute daughter and transvestite son. In the play, Wilf hits his wife, Kim ships his parents to the London suburbs to become museum-pieces and it emerges that Linda was 'interfered with' as a child by her father.

Nevertheless, Pinter was right to suggest that if we condemn this sort of dysfunctionality, we condemn thousands of families at a stroke. The play asks us to

forgive the Cravens, and the comedy in the play, mainly backchat and bawdy gaffs, facilitates this forgiveness.

*Enjoy* is played out literally as well as figuratively, against the backdrop of the dilapidated infrastructure of the industrial North. Set in a peeling town house in Leeds, Bennett invokes the comic stereotypes of the northern working class, but despises the sociologists who would treat the Cravens as scientific subjects.

The Bennett aficionado will find *Enjoy* familiar: intelligent humour tinged with farce, bleak domestic tragedy, trivial musings on words and phrases. Bennett even indulges his own nostalgia with a few traditional pop musical numbers. Another Bennett success.



PRODUCTION: TWO  
VENUE: DRAMA BARN  
REVIEW: EMILY BOYD

★★★★☆

Jim Cartwright's *Two* saw the Drama Barn atmospherically transformed into a seedy but homely pub. Couples of all sorts - happy, violent and illicit - drift in and out of the narrative, and as the night continues the tension of an unspoken issue between the landlord (Jamie Wilkes) and landlady (Rachel Finnegan) swells. Their unspoken torment is unveiled in a tempestuous closing scene, the stony Landlord played with particular brilliance by Wilkes.

The performance was suffused with humour at every opportunity. The sleazy Moth (Chris Samiullah)'s lengthy declaration of love for his chosen member of the front row yielded many laughs. Similarly well received was

Mrs. Iger (Cat Smith)'s near-orgasmically passionate monologue on her love of 'big, quiet, strong men', followed by the appearance of her incongruously weedy husband (Alex Lawless), and his comical battle through a crowd of invisible people to the bar.

The cast proved equally capable at the serious stuff. The audience were left in shock when the jealous boyfriend Roy (Chris Samiullah) smacked his girlfriend Lesley (Cat Smith) across the cheek.

Despite occasional slips on lines, the cast gelled perfectly and many cast members flawlessly juggled three different roles. The long applause that the cast received was well deserved.

# MusicReviews

## JAMES COUSINS



Have you deserted us, Yorkshire muse?

The Beatles. U2. The Doors. The Pixies. Many of the world's greatest and most influential bands had their humble beginnings in the inauspicious surroundings of secondary school or college. Those tumultuous teenage years, ripe with melodrama, self-loathing and chemical experimentation, provide invaluable sources of inspiration for burgeoning poets and aspiring songwriters alike.

According to friends in other universities, the story is similar; bands flourish like mould in a student kitchen and the latest 'next big thing' is hiding around every corner, acoustic guitar and broken heart in hand. So, as an innocent (read naïve) fresher, I arrived at York burdened with as much of a drum kit as I could fit in a 3' X 3' box, eagerly anticipating hoards of guitarists vying to enlist my services. Besides, the timetable of an arts student leaves lots of time that I would have to fill in one way or another (I still haven't been able to bring myself to tell my parents that I only have seven hours of contact time a week...), so why not write some songs?

Or so I reasoned. The reality has been somewhat different. Band practice rooms seem to possess a mythic quality, similar to leprechauns or the Loch Ness monster. People swear to have seen them, one night, when drunk and wearing a balaclava backwards, but there appears to be no tangible evidence to support their claims. Finding a drum kit in playable condition appears to be a task of comparable magnitude to climbing K2 without using your hands. Unfortunately, without a place to play, a place for young musicians to test ideas, to get to know each other's styles and to develop that all-important musical chemistry before stepping onto a stage for the first time, without all of this, there can be no bands.

But is there a solution? And, perhaps more importantly, why should we care? While I accept that opening up the Music Department's already overstretched practice facilities to anyone who can bang out a shaky rendition of 'Chopsticks' on piano isn't a viable option, surely the University doesn't think that four practice rooms (one of which contains a broken piano) hidden away at the back of Langwith are sufficient facilities for those of a musical inclination who have decided to read a degree other than music? Rumour has it that the Music Society are considering purchasing a drum kit, but this brings with it further logistical difficulties – primarily, where to house the aforementioned percussion instrument, because drums tend to produce a huge, cacophonous racket when played in anger. I know: I have both the statistics and the tinnitus to prove it. However, there are many reasons why a thriving campus music scene is desirable for both students and the University alike. With campus bars struggling to remain financially viable, new incentives are desperately needed to encourage students to bring their custom to the university bars rather than the considerably livelier alternatives in town. And what better incentive than truly brilliant live music?

As Neil Young so memorably sang, "Rock and roll can never die". I really hope that he's right.

ALBUM: CONTROL (MOTION PICTURE SOUNDTRACK)

REVIEW: STEPHEN MITCHELL

DATE: OUT NOW



The soundtrack accompanying Anton Corbijn's effortlessly stylish Ian Curtis biopic 'Control' clearly has one vital thing in its favour from the outset – the subject of the film itself. A sceptical listener could have expected this to be used merely as a showcase for the music of Joy Division, in a standardised, money-grabbing, 'Greatest Hits' or 'Best Of' exercise.

Luckily, there is no evidence of such cynical scheming here. The compilers instead provide a thought-provoking retrospective of the music that inspired the post-punk pioneers, and a few snapshots of the genius they produced – only six of their creations make the final cut, including an intriguing version of their groundbreaking television performance of 'Transmission', with Tony Wilson's introduction and the song itself restaged by the cast of the film.

This seeming defiance towards the mere compilation of the band's most cherished hits is not without its faults: The Killers provide a bland and disinteresting interpretation of 'Shadowplay' that sounds oddly out of place amongst the carefully selected pieces of period music. Equally, it seems wrong to completely criticise the album for including selections from Joy Division's acclaimed but short past when songs such as 'Atmosphere' still convey the intense melancholy that renders many of their songs gripping and beautiful in



equal parts. Interspersed with melodramatic pieces of dialogue from the movie, this is inevitably a disjointed listen, not aided by the random track listing, which rather aptly defies the chronological conventions of the film completely.

Nevertheless, with tracks from subversive, generation-defining icons such as the Velvet Underground, the Sex Pistols, David Bowie and Joy Division themselves, for many contemporaries of the period this will be magically nostalgic. For everyone else, it is simply a collection of interesting, inspiring music.

### ON THE UP

ARTIST: OPERATOR PLEASE

PREVIEW: MATT CRAWFORD AND JAMES COUSINS



Formed in 2005, Operator Please are already well on their way to success with their energetic, violin-wielding. Hailing from Australia, the quintet, aged between 16 and 19, have already picked up the Breakthrough Artist award back home for 'Just A Song About Ping Pong', which reached number 10 in the UK Indie Chart. Despite offering little to distinguish them from the ubiquitous ranks of bands embracing the now commonplace indie label, and setting aside the fact that their contract with Virgin/EMI means that they are anything but independent, 'Just A Song About Ping Pong' was an undeniably catchy pop song. And if their latest single 'Leave It Alone' is anything to go by, Operator Please haven't lost their ability to craft a memorable hook and with their forthcoming album *Yes, Yes! Vindictive!*, the band promises that their latest batch of songs will have a somewhat greater depth of meaning.

Nevertheless, this young band's rapid progress is highlighted by the calibre of the bands they have supported, with Arctic Monkeys and Kaiser Chiefs foremost on the list. Impressive performances at Leeds and Reading festival only enhanced their reputation in the UK, and a stint as the opening band for the recent MTV2 Gonzo tour shows how far the band have progressed in a very brief period. *Yes, Yes! Vindictive!* is due for release in the UK on the 24th December.

### IN-DEPTH: WORLDSCAPE

Entering the Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall, I was greeted by an ethereal, otherworldly droning; an atonal hum, mixing with the whisper of the assembled crowd. It put me in mind of the static between radio stations, and created an appropriately technological feeling of expectancy before this highly anticipated event.

The music itself began with long, high notes on the strings which hung in the air, hovering between harmony and dissonance. Next, the addition of xylophone, percussion and playful woodwind created a swift, mischievous sense of movement. The music was accompanied by a visual presentation that challenges the audience to think about the links between

our world and the world of the past by examining the similarities between the design of the space shuttle and the horse and cart. This is what was unique about *Worldscape*. Ambitious, bold and conceptually daring, it represented a fusion of the old and the new; the centuries-old craft of instrument building and the latest in audio-visual technology, and brought the two together in a rigorous synthesis that set out to examine the underlying concepts and assumptions that govern how we live our lives. Musically, *Worldscape* utilised everything from traditional orchestral instruments through unfamiliar Eastern arrangements such as the fas-

cinating Gamelan Orchestra, to objects that we would typically reject as rubbish. There were musical interpretations of weather reports, time and environmentalism, as well as a piece that examined war through heavy percussion and chanted propaganda slogans. Sometimes beautiful, sometimes unashamedly aggressive and unsettling, *Worldscape* was simultaneously affecting and enthralling, but it was never less than thought-provoking. The centrepiece of the evening was undoubtedly the laptop orchestra; fifty students interacting with Apple MacBooks via specially designed programmes that translated their hand movements into sound.

This sometimes resulted in a musi-

### James Cousins

cal experience I would have expected to hear when sitting in the sonar room of a nuclear submarine, as the musicians chased dots across a visual representation of the Earth. It culminated in an experimental piece in which trumpeter Matthew Postle played wildly over the dense, rhythmic soundscape created by the movements of the laptop musicians. Physically deconstructing his trumpet as the piece progressed, *Worldscape* ended with simple, deeply animalistic, ragged sounds emanating from the bare skeleton of his instrument. All in all, a courageous, intelligent, beautifully executed event and something which York's musicians can be extremely proud of.



# MusicReviews

## TRACK REVIEWS

ARTIST: REUBEN TESKEY  
TRACK: EVEN HITGIRLS GET THE BLUES

★★★★☆

This issue's Nouse-recommended artist takes the form of Irish singer-songwriter Reuben Teskey. His latest release finds him without the cello accompaniment of Patrick Dexter or the female harmonies of his earlier recordings and instead demonstrates a more stripped-down approach. The sparse arrangement and lo-fi home recording, featuring only Teskey's vocals and his warm, double-tracked guitars, recall both Fionn Regan and early Bright Eyes. But Teskey's evocative, intensely personal lyrics ensure that the song never comes across as derivative and his impassioned vocal delivery means that each listen provides a cathartic and intriguing aural treat.

www.myspace.com/reubenteskey

ARTIST: BRAND NEW  
TRACK: (FORK AND KNIFE)

★★★★☆

The latest single from Long Island group Brand New might sound familiar to obsessive fans, but casual listeners will scan the tracklisting of album *The Devil And God Are Raging Inside Me* in confusion. But they can keep looking - '(Fork and Knife)' isn't there. A reworking of 'Untitled 7', one of the demos from the 'Fight Off Your Demons' sessions that Brand New scrapped after the tracks leaked online, this MP3-only release's more restrained feel might have sat uneasily amidst the intensity of the album but makes for a worthwhile standalone track. This achingly melancholic piano ballad lopes along with shimmering guitar and unobtrusive yet memorable work from the rhythm section, all the while offering noticeably improved production over the demo. '(Fork and Knife)' also adds an effective bridge to the three minute song 'Untitled 7', providing a fantastic showcase for Jesse Lacey's uniquely poetic lyrics and delicate harmonies. Well worth 79p.

ARTIST: KYLIE MINOGUE  
TRACK: 2 HEARTS

★★☆☆☆

First she survived cancer, now she's dumped her cheating boyfriend. It seems that the diminutive Miss Minogue has survived everything this world can throw at her and is destined to ascend the heights of chart success on the strength of public good-will alone. But a catchy song would definitely help. '2 Hearts' is the first single from *X*, Minogue's forthcoming album, her first in four years, and the initial listen comes as something of a surprise. Handclaps? Piano? What happened to the pop princess famous for her up-tempo, synth-heavy hits like 'Can't Get You Out Of My Head'? '2 Hearts' has a more organic feel, centred around a mid-tempo piano and a real rhythm section. But, as with much of today's crop of pop, it all feels a little contrived. 'I'm in love', Minogue repeats, but, unfortunately, as her latest crop of interviews reveal, it's not true. "Is this forever?" Nope. It's just another vapid pop song.

Tracks this week were reviewed by James Cousins

ARTIST: ARCADE FIRE  
VENUE: NEWCASTLE METRO FM ARENA  
REVIEW: ALEX RUSHFORTH  
DATE: 29/10/07

★★★★★

Much has been said over the past couple of years about Montreal's Arcade Fire, scarcely any of it bad. This bandwagon has been more or less constant since the release of their debut album *Funeral* in 2005. Response to this year's follow-up, *Neon Bible*, has found the press and fans alike positively falling over themselves to douse the band in praise. There is no real sign of the backlash that one might have expected when any act becomes so lauded. This appears to be down to the simple fact that Arcade Fire are actually that good.

The only question was whether their brand of anthemic yet intimate rock-pop would translate well into a large arena setting. One might struggle to call the Newcastle Arena intimate and the poor sound so often synonymous with these sorts of American-style sporting complexes might have hindered a lesser group. However, any



ARTIST: BEIRUT  
VENUE: LEEDS IRISH CENTRE  
REVIEW: OLIVER ELLIOTT AND STEPHEN MITCHELL  
DATE: 08/11/07

★★★★★

The first thought upon entering the Irish Centre is that a mistake must have been made. This doesn't seem the place for indie scene hipsters; rather, the faded facade makes it a more suitable venue for bingo calls or ballroom dancing.

However, Beirut are far more at home than one would expect within these dignified yet staid surroundings. From set opener 'Nantes' it is clear that, despite his youthful appearance, lead singer Zach Condon has a strangely archaic vocal style that perfectly conveys the ambience of a faded past. Favourite 'Elephant Gun' quickly develops into a rousing sing-along.

Their multi-ethnic European influences set them apart from the indie norm, and the waltzing accordion perfectly complements their swooning brass section to create a carnivalesque atmosphere. The evening comes to an end as Condon places himself at the mercy of the crowd for a memorable encore featuring 'Gulag Orkestar' and a suitably Gallic rendition of Jaques Brel's 'Le Moribund'. As the band left the stage, silhouetted against a mesmerising wall of fairy lights, we realised that this was, in fact, the perfect setting to bear witness to the spectacle that is Beirut.



prior doubts were soon forgotten. Opener '(Antichrist Television Blues)' and 'Black Mirror' set the tone and the rest followed effortlessly.

It became apparent that as well as an abundance of musical talent in their onstage arsenal, the band have a pair of sex symbol-sin the form of married couple Win Butler and Regine Chassagne. They make a genuinely charismatic front pairing. Chassagne's

voice shone through on the wondrous 'In the Backseat' and she also provided extra percussion on 'Neighbour-hood #1'.

The Geordie crowd provided a rapturous reception to closers 'Rebellion (Lies)' and 'Wake Up', and as if all of this weren't enough there was a cover of The Smiths' 'Still Ill' thrown in for good measure. As a band playing a gig, it was virtually impossible to fault them, even in a stadium setting.



ARTIST: MOISHE'S BAGEL  
VENUE: NATIONAL CENTRE FOR EARLY MUSIC, YORK  
REVIEW: OLIVIA HAUGHTON  
DATE: 02/11/07

★★★★☆

Arriving late and flustered at a concert is never a good move, especially when it means that you end up with a seat behind a pillar. Luckily, this was a gig where the music spoke for itself. Who needs to see the stage when a "rip-roaring, foot-stomping, jazz-inflected" band are strutting their stuff? The wired atmosphere was enough.

With a name like Moïshe's Bagel, how far wrong can you go? I wondered. So I booked my ticket for the concert at York's National Centre for Early Music with high expectations. I was not disappointed. Piano, violin, double-bass, accordion and percussion make up this Scottish quintet, who draw on "klezmer, folk dance, jazz, and eastern percussion traditions", alongside improvisation. This unlikely yet energetic fusion works surprisingly well, helped not least by the skill and charisma of the musicians.

Their witty performance incorporated a well balanced mix of lilting ballads and lively tunes that got the crowd dancing. Having found myself a better vantage point I could see the curly-haired troupe moving to the music with cheeky smiles; this was an informal but distinctly passionate performance. The diversity of style made for a fantastic evening - I left buzzing on a natural high.



ARTIST: EIGHTIES MATCHBOX B-LINE DISASTER  
VENUE: FIBBERS, YORK  
REVIEW: STEVEN WILLIAMS  
DATE: 04/11/07

★★★★★

Forget the occasional kleptomaniacal grab to your housemates' food; just for now put your finger over the DR on the end of your bank statement. What's really deserving of the precious time you've allocated to feeling guilty this week is that this gig wasn't sold out. If your absence was due to ignorance of the delights on offer, then let's take as a contemporary reference point The Horrors, a band who have raided the Eighties Matchbox's musical boutique to considerably more success, yet forgot to write any good songs between bouts of backcombing.

Luckily, Eighties Matchbox combine great hair with great music. Their current tour marks the band's proud return after a two year absence, and proves they've lost none of their Cramps-meets-The Stooges-in-cabaret-fancy-dress charm. Looking like how Salvador Dali might re-imagine Noel Fielding and spitting lyrics like a rabid dead Elvis, singer Guy McKnight is everything a frontman should be. Their high-energy set list showcased a lot of new material, evoking the throbbing basslines, tribal drumming and screaming of their debut 'Horse of the Dog'. If performances of this calibre continue then surely wider recognition can't be far away.

# Film Reviews

## DAVIDCOATES

In the CGI of the beholder



This weekend saw the release of *Beowulf*, directed by special-effects guru Robert Zemeckis of *Back to the Future/Forrest Gump* fame using a revolutionary method of motion capture using bluescreen, body-suits and a lot of computers. This is not a problem, necessarily; major achievements in 21st century cinema, like the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, for example, would have been completely inconceivable without access to such technology. Digital artwork can add realism to a fantastic backdrop, or bring to life what would be impossible to recreate using conventional props. Where it becomes a problem is when the artifice upstages the art, when the (admittedly impressive) digital work becomes more of a talking point than the ideas espoused within the narrative.

I had a conversation recently about the aforementioned adaptation that revolved solely around Ray Winstone's gut in a blue jumpsuit, and understandably so. The movie's ad campaign focuses largely on the superficialities of the plot: the old school violence; dragons, which seem to be the 11th century equivalent of blowing stuff up; and Angelina Jolie, the logical choice to play Grendel's Mother, getting up close and personal with Winstone's new six-pack.

At no point does the trailer give any indication of the story's noteworthy origins, or even the quality of the script, co-written by fantasy all-rounder Neil Gaiman. Considering its verbal chops, and an excitingly diverse cast (Winstone, Jolie, Anthony Hopkins, John Malkovich, Brendan Gleeson, et al), the guys in production have still decided to put their money on the *300/Die Hard* demographic, banking on the flash visuals being enough to reel in an audience on their own.

But why does *Beowulf* feel the need to pander to these kinds of fans? It's not like it's dealing with an untested story, and the recent influx of swords-and-evil movies sorely needs a lead role with the depth and complexity of *Beowulf*. Still, all this is speculation upon a two-minute sequence of hook-heavy fanbait. As with every film, it'll take a night of extortionate ticket prices, comfy seats and a bucket of snack food to reach a conclusion. But how refreshing it would be to find a movie that actually surpasses its technical credentials with a half-decent story?

FILM: ELIZABETH: THE GOLDEN AGE  
 DIRECTOR: SHEKHAR KAPUR  
 STARRING: CATE BLANCHETT CLIVE OWEN  
 REVIEW: AMY-CLAIRE SCOTT  
 RUNTIME: 114 MINS



*Elizabeth: The Golden Age* marks Shekhar Kapur's second foray into the life of Elizabeth I, and Cate Blanchett's second shot at portraying the monarch. The glut of historical inaccuracy in the film is enough to fill an entire review, but to go into this in detail seems to miss the point. Somewhere in cinema, as we watched Jon Bon Jovi cracking the enigma code in *U571* and Ben Affleck sticking it to the Japanese in *Pearl Harbour*, historical accuracy bit the dust.

Sure, there's no evidence to suggest an affair between Elizabeth and Walter Raleigh. No, Raleigh didn't single handedly defeat the Spanish Armada. But we know that, and this isn't the classroom, it's the cinema. History has always been a rich and richly plagiarised source for the arts. Richard III, for example, is a hunchbacked, child murdering sociopath, and no amount of historical evidence otherwise will change one iota of



Shakespeare's vision, or my mind. Historical productions comment on the time they're performed in, not the time they're set in.

So, to *Elizabeth: The Golden Age*, where we find Europe on the brink of holy war, with only brave little England standing firm. The Spanish are destroying forests for their own selfish means, prisoners are tortured for their religious beliefs, and successful women get angsty about wrinkles and

romance. And if that doesn't seem heavy-handed, wait until you hear the script. As attractive as Clive Owen (Raleigh) is, it is almost impossible to recover from his clichéd and faintly embarrassing dialogue about the New World, the promised land of Virginia, a consolation to the American audiences less interested in England's heritage than the formation and expansion of their own 'empire'.

Blanchett's performance is,

FILM: EASTERN PROMISES  
 DIRECTOR: DAVID CRONENBERG  
 STARRING: VIGGO MORTENSEN NAOMI WATTS  
 REVIEW: PETER MASSEY  
 RUNTIME: 100 MINS



From the exciting duo of cult director David Cronenberg and Oscar-nominated writer Steve Knight comes *Eastern Promises*; a violent glimpse into the world of the Russian Mafia in London. Naomi Watts plays Anna, a midwife whose life changes after a 14-year-old Eastern European prostitute dies giving birth. With the help of her Russian uncle, she reads the girl's diary, which leads her to the mysterious Nikolai (Viggo Mortensen). Working as a driver for one of London's most feared and respected crime families, he is a cold and ruthless figure. However, there's more to him than meets the eye, as is the way with much of this tumultuous film.

I expected to be reeling off comparisons with Cronenberg and Mortensen's previous collaboration, *A History of Violence*, but this film has more in common with Knight's excellent *Dirty Pretty Things*. Weighty themes such as sex trafficking, organised crime, male sexuality and even racism are thrown into the mix, set against a sinister London backdrop.

In the typical style of



Cronenberg, there are moments of extremely realistic ultra-violence which help to inject some life into this slow-burning, serious film. Nikolai seems comically over-the-top at times, stubbing cigarettes on his tongue and chopping off fingers like there's no tomorrow. Similarly, Vincent Cassel as his partner is a Russian caricature, spitting and drinking "wodka" at every opportunity. Watts gives a typically understated performance as the voice of reason amidst all the brutality, and whilst Mortensen deserves credit for graphically exposing himself, it's his fantastically ambiguous portrayal that catches the eye.

Already tipped for Oscar nominations next year, this multi-layered film will please fans of intelligent, thought-provoking thrillers, although inconsistencies prevent it from fully living up to its promise.

CLASSIC FILM: 12 ANGRY MEN  
 DIRECTOR: SIDNEY LUMET  
 STARRING: HENRY FONDA LEE J. COBB ED BEGLEY  
 REVIEW: JO BECKETT-KING  
 RUNTIME: 92 MINS



It is only in the closing lines of *Twelve Angry Men* that the name of the lead protagonist is disclosed. As a proponent of justice and reason, Mr Davis (an outstanding Henry Fonda), is more an allegorical figure than an individual; in this brief exchange, as two men part ways to resume their everyday lives, Mr Davis, or Juror #8, is as enigmatic as ever.

The premise of the film is simple. A jury retires to consider the verdict of a seemingly open-and-shut case in which a young Puerto Rican faces the death penalty for the murder of his father. A unanimous decision is required and with eleven to one in favour of a guilty verdict, one juror challenges this overwhelming majority, and urges his fellows to reconsider.

*Twelve Angry Men* may focus on the inadequacies of the legal system, but ultimately it is a celebration of logic, reason and democracy. This is a film which does not depend upon the usual plot devices to keep the audience entertained, instead relying on strong performances and a powerful script.

unsurprisingly, brilliant and serves to extend her cachet as possibly the greatest actress of her generation; name anyone else who could play both Elizabeth I and Bob Dylan. Samantha Morton is impressive as Mary Queen of Scots and her execution is one of the most engaging and effective set-pieces of the film. Geoffrey Rush is strong as Elizabeth's close advisor and friend Francis Walsingham, though once the Armada comes charging across the channel it's hard not to wish he'd don his pirate gear and let Captain Barbossa show them a thing or two.

Elizabeth herself presents us with modern woman's obsession, the 'choice' between career success and romantic fulfillment. Kapur's film comes up with a surprising conclusion in modern Hollywood's climate - that Elizabeth is actually happier sacrificing her love for Raleigh for her duty to her people, that her responsibilities to the country and relationships in court are enough to satisfy her. This is a positive decision on the filmmaker's part; as Elizabeth has no choice in the matter, the ending would come closer to the tragic than the triumphant otherwise. Overall, however, there is all this and more in the first film, and this sequel does little to extend or improve what has already been achieved in the portrayal of this most intriguing of monarchs.



Based on a play by Reginald Rose, its theatrical roots are evident in the modest sets, small cast, and focus on dialogue over action. For all of the simplicity however, this claustrophobic environment provides a subtle examination of the personal dynamics between the jurors in this predicament.

Following the heated debate and tumult of the preceding ninety minutes, the polite nature of the final exchange between Davis and McCordle highlights the manufactured, clinical aspect of jury service. These men serve as a skewed cross-section of society, granted the power to determine the fate of a young boy. This is a pared down, engrossing piece of progressive cinema, and its continued importance in popular culture attests to the accomplished and innovative nature of its production.

# Food&Drink



## THE RECIPE

James MacDougald and Will Heaven

### NICK ASHBY'S MUM'S PASTA SAUCE:

- 1 bag of spinach
- 1 tin of chopped tomatoes
- 2 medium onions
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 3 rashers of bacon
- 1/2 courgette

When we decided to try out this recipe, Will and I were still a bit the worse for wear from our restaurant review the previous night.

This pasta sauce with spinach and bacon, therefore, is commendably straightforward. It suits the inclinations of those who disdain the ready-meal, but whose culinary aptitude extends little further than being able to nudge a hot pan with a wooden spoon until the contents are vaguely discoloured.

"What do I do with these?" Will asked hysterically, waving a vague fist at the heap of wretchedly-chopped vegetables.

"God's sake!" I gasped, "Just add them to the pan in the order that you would expect, and heat them until they're cooked!"

So to clarify: Sweat the onions and garlic first, with a splash of vegetable oil; then bacon; next the courgettes, preferably diced; then come the tomatoes; finally, the spinach leaves, which will boil in the tomato sauce.

Back in the kitchen, relations between the two chefs had not improved.

"When do we start the pasta?" Will asked pathetically.

"Stop asking questions. Just shut up and listen. Do it when the other thing's done with the thing," I barked, cradling my forehead in my hand and frantically chewing a double aspirin.

Cooking is all about timing. Start boiling the pasta towards the end of the process and drain it as soon as it's done - al dente, or otherwise - your choice.

"What about the sauce?"

"What about the sauce! Do I have to exhaust every little detail with tedious explanation? The sauce basically cooks itself."

In a sense, I was right. If left for long enough in each others' company, the bacon and vegetables will all mulch together to form a kind of cohesive stuff. Then season, and add mixed herbs if you have them.

The beauty of this recipe is its simplicity. Don't do anything stupid. Follow these instructions closely and be attentive to common sense. Make as much mess as possible, and on no account do any washing up. A bottle of decent claret is an excellent complement. Chin-chin.

Recipe provided by Nick Ashby (send us your recipes - [foodanddrink@nouse.co.uk](mailto:foodanddrink@nouse.co.uk))

### RESTAURANT: CAFE CONCERTO

ADDRESS: PETERGATE

AVERAGE FOOD PRICE: £12

REVIEW: WILL HEAVEN, DUNCAN PIPER & AMY BROWNE



In retrospect, the evening had gone wrong; mistakes had been made and lessons learnt. Before reviewing Café Concerto my fellow reviewer James and I had been sampling the fine Yorkshire ales at The Maltings pub (see review below). We had planned a 'quick afternoon drink', but it had turned into a long, drawn-out session of the kind that makes women more attractive to men but not vice versa. Not only that, but on entering the café in our combined state of less-than-sobriety, we discovered a pair of campus celebrities - witnesses! One of them looked amused to see us, the other baffled. But more of that in a bit.

The good news is, as I found out the morning after, Café Concerto has a great website which is worth a look if you're thinking of going ([www.cafeconcerto.biz](http://www.cafeconcerto.biz)). The pictures of the interior helped to clear the alcoholic fog obscuring my memory and, studying the detailed menu, I was able to work out how much we'd spent (the receipt has still not turned up).

To start, I had some sort of Mediterranean platter. There were different meats, houmous, olives and probably a bit of salad - all good and clearly no challenge to the kitchen. James had

the pigeon breast which, he told me about ten times, was delicious. Well presented, too. We had the cheapest white on the list (about £12) because it's never cool to get the second cheapest wine.

As we ate our main courses (seafood stew, salmon fillet) I began stealing James's prawns and, to be perfectly honest, was in no state to make notes or carry on reviewing. So at this point I'll pass the baton onto the campus celebrities, who have kindly provided us with an account of their evening:

"We had no idea that we would be reviewing our meal. We were just innocent diners on a Thursday evening, windswept and freezing, wandering around York longing for warmth, good wine and a much-needed break from the grimy student lifestyle. Serenaded by the tolling of the Minster bells, we stumbled upon the homely Café Concerto, the walls inside plastered in weathered music manuscripts and rustic-looking cellos.

"We were seated in a quiet corner, far away from the bitter winds of the North and were quickly furnished with olives and wine. But one sip of crisp Sauvignon Blanc later, and our sophisticated illusion was shat-

### PUB: THE MALTINGS

ADDRESS: LENDAL BRIDGE

AVERAGE FOOD PRICE: £5

REVIEW: JAMES THOMPSON



You wouldn't want to mess with the staff at The Maltings. As I walk in I hold the door. "Thank you", calls the barman to the person leaving. No response. "Thank you!" a little louder. Still nothing. "TOSSER", the now irate barman hollers, to the amusement of the rest of his custom.

With the advent of gastropubs and gourmet beers it seems you have to set aside a whole afternoon and £50 if you want a pint and a gammon steak. If you don't have that sort of time and money, your only other option is to go to a superpub and eat some poorly-microwaved plastic lasagne. But no longer. If you are searching for a warm, hearty and above all large portion of deliciously cooked food to be washed down with a crisp ale, for less than a tenner, then your prayers have been answered.

The Maltings sits under the shadow of the west end of the Lendal Bridge. As soon as you enter, the sagging beams, sooty fireplace and stone-age tobacco



advertises on the walls give away the age of this place - 150 years. Choose from a wide range of beers and ciders, then enjoy browsing the hilarious menu: "If you want fast food McDonald's is round the corner." I can testify to the excellence of the burger, and my friends assure me that the roast chicken and steak and ale pie were superb. Service was quick, brash and witty.



**Café Concerto provided a warm, pleasant setting for a very good meal, though errant reviewers make it a dangerous place for a date**

tered: a couple of drunk and disorderly ragamuffins rolled up and settled themselves at the table behind us.

"Despite their tomfoolery, we had a delightful meal. To start, we had a warm mushroom and Brie filo tart. To follow, a generous plate of lemon sole with fresh salad, and a chicken and apricot risotto with garlic bread. Both were unashamedly wonderful, but were still to compete with what was to come.

We finally settled for a tantalising lemon cheesecake and a warm mango and apple crumble, all served with indulgent cream, and all homemade. Excellent."

Thank you. Essentially then, as my celebs have hopefully illustrated, Café Concerto is welcoming, cosy and the food is great. The staff, if they were musically themed like the café, would probably be a Mozart string quartet. We returned home on a bicycle.

### BAR: THE PARISH

ADDRESS: MICKLEGATE

AVERAGE DRINK PRICE: £3

REVIEW: JO LYSONS

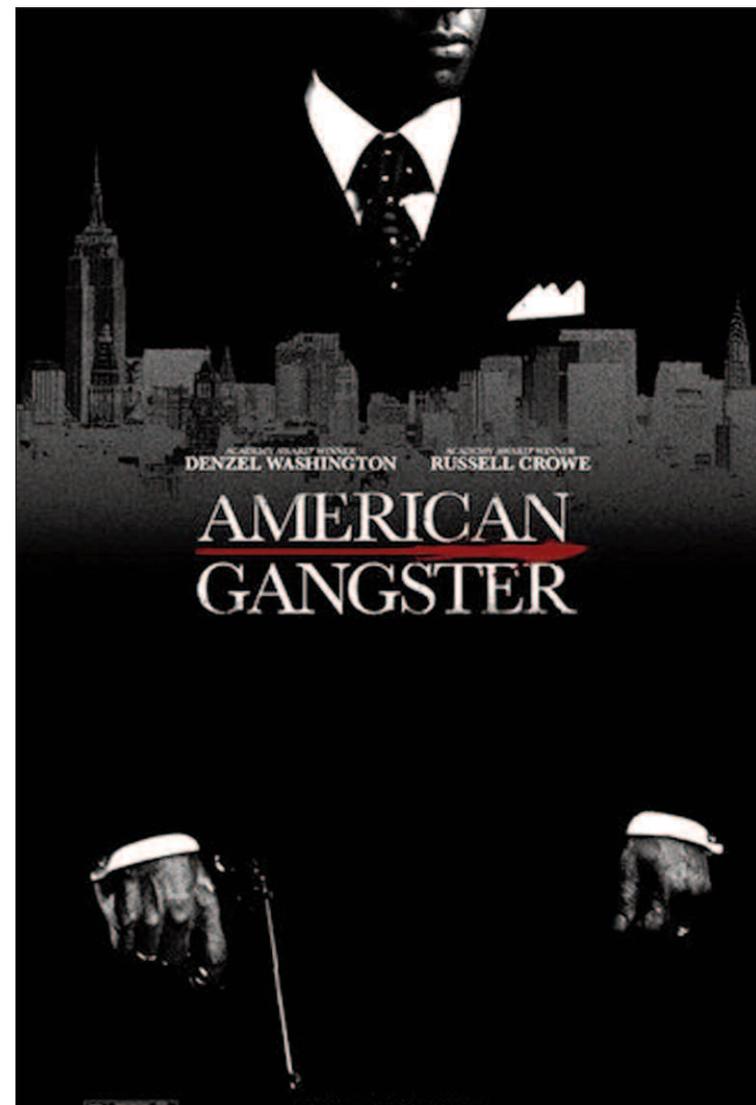
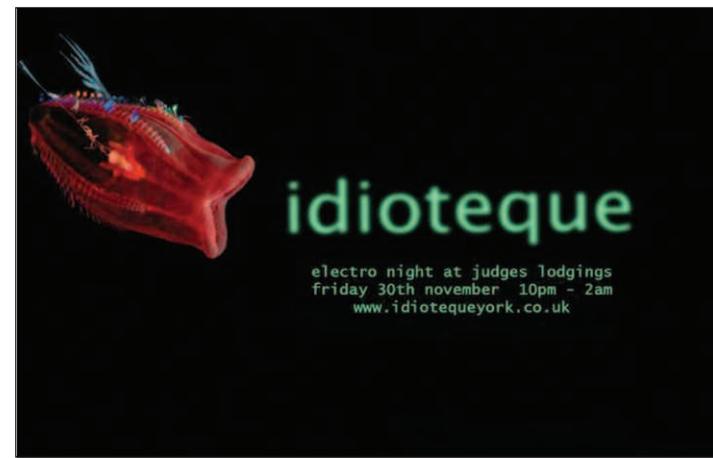


I was, I think, desperate to be impressed by The Parish's converted 14th century church. Imagine my disappointment then when, having been waved through by the supercilious bouncer, I was assaulted by thumping dance music so loud that I barely caught my boyfriend's suggestion to get a drink. Moving in to the nave, I could not help admiring the building, its high arches swooping gracefully to the exposed rafters above. But the effect is spoiled by tacky primary-coloured spot lighting, which leaves the peripheries of the room in near-darkness. Unable to hear a thing, we moved over to a table, where we sat sipping our two-for-£6 cocktails, feeling, all the while, faintly sacrilegious for drinking in a church.

The Parish is a confused bar/club hybrid. The main dancefloor was populated by non-students, drinking and shouting in each other's ears. But opposite me, on the far side of the room, was an array of sofas



on which people were attempting quiet conversation. I felt let down: after all, the idea has so much potential. Exchange the dance music for chillout, the fussy plastic chandeliers for cool, modern lighting, and you could be on to something good. As it is, The Parish is an unfortunate example of misapplied ingenuity, missing its niche and pandering instead to the mainstream.



Clockwise from top left: Electric fish and electric music at Idioteque; Grumpy old women; this month's most promising release - American Gangster; Indie band Electric Eel Shock at Fibbers on November 24

## LIVEMUSIC

**YORK FIBBERS**  
 Friday November 23  
 Warlocks + The Falling Spikes  
 £8 OTD. Genre: Grunge/Psych-rock

**Saturday November 24 (afternoon show)**  
 Saosin/ HiFi Handgrenades  
 £8 OTD. Genre: Screamo

**Saturday November 24 (evening)**  
 Electric Eel Shock  
 £12 OTD. Genre: Indie

**Friday November 30**  
 The Draytones + Holy Ghost Revival  
 £10 OTD. Genre: Indie.

**LEEDS COCKPIT**  
 Thursday November 22  
 The Heavy  
 £6 online. Genre: Indie

**Saturday November 24**  
 The Weakerthans  
 £10 online. Genre: Indie-rock

York Fibbers is York's primary music venue with gigs almost every night. It's located on Stonebow, just behind the bus stops in the East of the city centre. Information on upcoming gigs and booking details can be found at [www.fibbers.com](http://www.fibbers.com) or on 01904 651250. ID is essential and strictly enforced.

## ART&PERFORMANCE

**Saturday November 17**  
**The Shaolin Masters**  
 20 Shaolin Monks have travelled all the way from the Shaolin Temple in China to demonstrate their martial arts expertise. Lifting themselves aloft on spears and splintering blocks with their bare hands, they literally fly through the air. Tickets £10-20, Grand Opera House, York.

**Monday November 26**  
**Grumpy Old Women Live**  
 Returning for a third round of huffing, puffing and fist shaking and featuring Denise Osborne, Denise Black, Britt Eckland and Dillie Keane. Tickets £23, Grand Opera House, York

**November 27 - December 1**  
**Agamemnon**  
 Aeschylus's play follows Agamemnon's return from the infamous battle of Troy, along with the implications of the violent actions that surrounded the war. A portrayal of conflict and lust and a commentary on our time. Tickets £10, Theatre Royal, York.

**November 20 - 22**  
**Dirty Kissing**  
 A mix of poetic theatre and intense physical action, Dirty Kissing takes a close look at people tangled up in the underworld of drug-running and immigration scams, all lurking beneath a postcard coastal town. Tickets £5-10, Theatre Royal, York.

## CAMPUSEVENTS

**Friday December 7 - 9**  
**The Ash Grove**  
 In an isolated farmhouse a group of young men and women fall under the charms of Callum, a charismatic and shrewd demagogue. Jenkin, alienated from his former friends, obsesses over his sister in a lyrical rural dystopia. Drama Barn, £3.50/£4.50.

**Thursday November 22**  
**RAG Hitch to Dublin**  
 Fifty brave men and women will try and make their way from York University to Holyhead in North Wales in time to catch the night ferry over to Dublin. The catch is that they can't spend a penny!

**Wednesday November 21**  
**The Business**  
 The York Entrepreneurs' Club presents The Business. Teams of students from Leeds, Sheffield and York will compete against each other in marketing, negotiation and selling tasks to win the grand prize of £1000.

**Friday November 30**  
**Idioteque**  
 An electro night at Judges' Lodgings organised by students. Happy hour from 9-10pm. Event ends at 2am. Join the Facebook group for more information. Tickets £3 from Your:Shop, £5 OTD.

## CINEMA

**Friday November 16**  
**American Gangster**  
 Directed by Ridley Scott, the film tells the story of a detective who works to bring down the drug empire of Frank Lucas, a heroin kingpin from Manhattan who is smuggling drugs into the country hidden in the coffins of soldiers from the Vietnam War.

**Friday November 16**  
**Beowulf**  
 Unfortunately, the film isn't quite true to the book and is thus an ineffective way of getting out of any English reading you may have. Beowulf still has to fight and defeat 'Grendel' who is terrorising towns, but it is updated with CGI and Angelina Jolie.

**Friday November 23**  
**Shrooms**  
 A horror film about a group of American backpackers and their Irish guide. Whilst out in the woods looking for psychedelic mushrooms, they are stalked by a serial killer.

**Friday November 30**  
**Hitman**  
 Following *Final Fantasy*, and *Resident Evil*; *Hitman* is another gun-toting computer game breaking into the movie world. The protagonist began life as a murderous clone and quickly becomes ensnared in a political conspiracy, which finds him pursued by both Interpol and the Russian military.

# Demanding more contact

Art students: lazy or subject to a raw deal at the hands of the Uni?



**Elly Veness**  
Contributing  
Writer

From day one of Freshers' Week, I was the laughing stock of engineers and computer scientists for the comparative lack of contact hours on my course. For some, more lecture hours somehow equates to working harder, yet every student at York is expected to put the same number of hours – lecture, seminar and personal study – into their course.

Nevertheless, there are valid

reasons for the variation in lecture hours. It is given that an English Literature student needs more essay and reading time than a Physician. However, I know many arts students would gladly swap a third of the turgid photocopy packs doled out at the beginning of term for another three hours of contact time involving the same content.

York is no exception to this rule. Students at Durham, Nottingham and Warwick have all complained of wild variations in course hours. At Bristol last year, History students campaigned for more contact hours. Their claim was that arts subjects were being financially constrained in order to fund the sciences. I can't help but sympathise with their protest. Reading is all very well, but I won-

der why my subject isn't receiving funding for more lectures and seminar discussion time. We should be paying for an education from leading academics, not for a library membership.

As my tutor pointed out in a seminar, "You get out what you put in." The focus for arts degrees seems to be emphasis on personal study. I did not arrive at University hoping to doss around, and I speak on behalf of every BA student when I say that our lack of contact hours is not our fault, or choice. Although five hours of contact with academics may be fairly ridiculous, we are justly given a lot to do in-between. As long as we don't feel as if we are wasting our time here, then there should be no overt reason to rock the boat. Or at least not too hard.

# Rethinking drink

Is it time to face up to how much we drink?



**Sarah Foster**  
Contributing  
Writer

Another day, another reported incident of drink spiking. Of course, it's highly likely that the number of times drink spiking actually takes place is far greater than reported. Not only because far too often accusations of drink spiking are simply put down to people forgetting how much they've actually drunk, but because drink spiking doesn't have to involve a combination of rohypnol and a sinister motive. If you buy your mate a pint and slip a shot of vodka in it, that's drink spiking. You're not going to be locked up for this little misdemeanour, but that doesn't make it okay. In fact, a majority of the drink spiking that does occur, including those with malicious intent behind them, are done simply through adding more alcohol to drinks.

If I were to come out and chastise all drinkers for their habits, I would be quite the hypocrite, but I still do believe that students as a group really do need to re-evaluate the relationship they have with alcohol. You may have read on the beer mats placed around campus bars that the facts and figures concerning University of York students and alcohol are not that shocking. At least they don't appear to be. '4 in 5 students never let their drinking get in the way of the academic work' is emblazoned on one. An acceptable figure, until you turn those numbers around. If four in five are tucked up in bed the night before their 9:15 seminar, that means that there are one in five, or a rather large 20% who are downing shots in Rumours, even though they've got a half finished essay waiting at home for them. And it's

due in tomorrow. Sure, everyone turns their back on their responsibilities once in a while, but even if you're lucky enough to be an arts student with few contact hours and a first year that doesn't count towards your overall marks, you still need to pass the year, or you might find yourself politely asked to leave your degree.

There is no denying that alcohol plays an integral part in student life. It probably shouldn't, but for most of us, this is the first time in our lives when we've been in a position to go out every night and drink our body weight in vodka, and really, who wants to waste an opportunity like that? But not everyone wants to drink, nor does everyone want to spend tomorrow morning (and probably tomorrow afternoon) regretting the night before. If, when it's your round, your friend asks for an orange juice, it's probably for the best if you respect that decision. Yes, it's no fun drinking on your own, but hilarious alcohol based games never really turn out as planned. Plus, if you're going to add a little extra to the drink of a friend whose decided that they're already drunk enough, you might be the one cleaning up after his body decides to reject all that alcohol. And they tend not to let people into Toffs if they've got vomit on their shoes.

Drinking in moderation is fine. Drinking a little too much can also be the start of a very good evening, and I'm in no position to pass judgement on excessive drinking by any individual. But what needs to change is the way people respond to other people's drinking habits. Some people can drink more than others. Some people might be able to drink just as much as you, but might just choose not to. And do you know what? That ought to be perfectly fine. Let other people make their own decisions when it comes to their own alcohol consumption. No good can come of anything else.

# Five words just aren't enough

Defining ourselves as British is irrelevant and exclusionary



**Lily Eastwood**  
Deputy Comment  
Editor

Five words are all it takes, apparently. Or so says a particular Mr Brown, whose recent campaign aims to hold the mystical unifying power of Britishness over us. Five words he decrees: five words by Brits for Brits that will hold us all together.

I have two main problems with his plan. Firstly, what does Britishness even mean in our increasingly multicultural society? Secondly, isn't the whole exercise

just another political gimmick? Akin perhaps to a nineteen year old MP or hugging a hoody?

It seems to me that Britishness is increasingly un-British. National pride is a little too brash and, frankly, a little too American to stand up against your average self-deprecating Briton. The stiff upper lip lives on; flashing a flag about is considered uncouth, even racist, and this is as true on campus as it is on a national level.

York University is in its most international year ever. When we have students of nearly a hundred different nationalities studying on one campus, a pre-occupation with Britishness doesn't really come off as the happy group hug it was meant to be. Quite the opposite, in fact; it leaves international students feeling somewhat left out.

In addition to the exclusionary nature of this concept, it somehow

seems irrelevant. We come away from home looking to expand our horizons. Students all over York are sitting in kitchens, drinking cheap wine, denying their middle-class upbringings and refuting their British identity. When we are increasingly concerned with reconciling our disparate backgrounds, why is Brown now dragging us back down?

And even if we do define Britishness in its increasingly multicultural sense – five words? I had trouble constraining my rambles to this paltry three hundred. I'm sure Brown didn't mean this exercise to be an end to the situation, but I'm so bored of the government over-simplifying complicated situations for us proles. People should be asked to address the issues in their entirety. Don't just give me five words: that's not even a useful starting point.

What do you think? Go to [nouse.co.uk/comment](http://nouse.co.uk/comment) for exclusive web content and to have your say.

# YUSU don't give books the time or money that we do

By bringing Your:Books into the twenty-first century our Union could have prevented its demise



**Katie Williams**  
Contributing  
Writer

They cost virtually every student hours of their time, not to mention copious amounts of cash and, ultimately, end up gathering dust on a shelf somewhere. Books: not perhaps the most exciting element of university life but, let's be honest, not really something from which any of us can escape. And, while we can't spend all of our time in the pub, there's no harm in counting the pennies when it comes to reading lists so you can enjoy a nice quiet round – or six – in The Charles with your mates.

The planned closure of Your:Books has the potential not only to severely damage bank bal-

ances across campus, as the paltry second hand selection in Blackwells doesn't really compare, but undermine the integrity of campus services. The little profit Your:Books made was pumped straight back into YUSU and therefore was for our benefit. The way to turn it around now is surely to pursue with running it as the valuable service it is. By better supporting Your:Books YUSU have the chance to make it as widely used as it deserves to be, so that in the long run it can become a profitable company.

So how is it that Your:Books ended up in this situation? To start with, it's shockingly advertised, fail-

ing to take advantage of the hordes of Freshers this year who neglected to acquire their personal libraries before the start of term. The shop was given barely a mention in the welcoming talks. Had they capitalised on this captive market, Your:Books might have avoided its impending doom.

Another prudent option might have been for YUSU to recognise the dawn of the digital age. With a little time and effort, Your:Books could have plumbed the hitherto barely resources of the internet and reaped the rewards. Our cyber-savvy but apathetic generation would surely have assuaged their

guilt and supported the student organisation over global retailers like Amazon had there been an online facility.

Then, of course, there's the loss of revenue for every penniless student at the end of the year when all are lumbered with piles of books that even Oxfam won't touch with a ten-foot bargepole. Gone will be the days of forty percent re-purchases; even if Blackwells does offer this service, it's highly unlikely that student interest will be at heart. Clearly we will all have to submit ourselves to medical testing over the summer in order to fund next year's book habit.



**Alex Russell**  
Contributing  
Writer

## Matthew Jaynes Goes way back

Regular visitors to this trip down York's Memory Lane will be familiar with the surreal musings and requests which frequented that much under-rated section of the old editions - the Personals.

Fortunately, the Wednesday June 12 edition in 1968 didn't disappoint. From sage advice to an unidentified individual to "buy some glasses!" to adverts for a "Tubby, Cuddly teddy bear - slightly used", they never cease to entertain. I find myself wondering whether the "well-stocked harem" ever found a "qualified eunuch", or why Ian Jack is a "bourgeoisie revisionist" for buying a new pair of pumps. Unfortunately, the remembrance that they were all mere fiction saddened me slightly.

Managing to drag myself away from the small ads, my eye was caught by the letters section, and one in particular entitled "Proletarian Soul". The article, full of elaborate and often misspelt words, is an attack on the "bogeois" (not sure who they are) and the artistic statues around campus. The recipient of particular venom is the "Martian monstrosity" in "Langworth courtyard".

The origins of the title are revealed when praise is loaded on the men who repair the statues and, according to the author, "beautify" them. The "functional excellence of the working man" and statues that have been "beautified by the hands of toil" are examples of the author's lavish exultation. Emotional as the letter is, I sincerely hope the author never revisits campus; the current appearance of the structure found between Langwith and Central Hall may well just give him a heart attack.

A quick trip to the back page makes it apparent that very little seems to have changed in the world of sport. Such as the report on a very talented cricket team that still didn't quite manage to win all their matches, and one on College Athletics Day in which only two Langwith students turned up. Although, the two students, Hytch and Gretton, did proceed to win every running event, so really any other people would have just gotten in the way.



# Letters

Nouse welcomes your letters. Please indicate if they are not intended for publication. Email [letters@nouse.co.uk](mailto:letters@nouse.co.uk) or write to:

Nouse, Grimston House, Vanbrugh College

## Star Letter

### The University of York's very own Magic Bus

Dear Nouse,

As one of the many car-less, bike-less students at York, I'd like to spread the word about the 'Number Free' minibus service. Thanks to the availability of this bus, living off-campus has been made infinitely easier this term.

It is a sad fact, but with recent accounts of assaults near campus, such as the knife point muggings in Tang Hall, I don't feel safe walking home alone after dark, a concern most likely shared by many other students, irrespective of their gender. The minibus service has meant that I can stay on campus as long as necessary, without worrying about negotiating the wild woods of Osbaldwick after

nightfall. The fact that it runs regularly, takes you straight to your door and is absolutely free, makes it an indispensable service for all students living in private accommodation.

The minibus's running times are available on the YUSU website. It's good to know that (thanks to the always lovely Grace Fletcher-Hall) there are services like the free minibus in place. Not only that, but that these services are reliable, they really look out for student welfare and most importantly, they just work.

**Niamh Walsh**  
Second year English Literature student

By email

### Bags of female exploitation: No laughing matter

Dear Nouse,

I am writing to express my discontent with your publication. The comment piece on the YUSU Welcome Bags in the last edition ("Cream for cellulite? Satisfy my appetite" October 23 2007) was ridiculous.

The writer needs to get some self respect. How can she joke about the flagrant exploitation of women in FHM? This is a publication which, might I add, recently changed hands because it published a picture of a fourteen year old girl.

The emancipation of women may as well be written off entirely if pseudo-intellectual wannabe journalists are going to belittle the feminist cause. The culture of image-obses-

sive females, cellulite cream included, is just another shackle that we continue to allow to hold us, despite our extensive progress for the female cause in the past one hundred years. If we're ever going to achieve true equality women need to understand the gravity of their vanity.

Thank you Nouse for making the sexism of YUSU the front page story it deserved to be.

**Emily Jones**  
Post-graduate Women's Studies student

By mail

## Tell someone who cares

Dear Nouse,

Is it terrible that I don't care about NUS? I just don't give a shit. I get this overwhelming sense of nothingness. It is not a big elephant in the proverbial corner of my metaphorical room of student thought. I have spent the last couple of weeks thinking about my impending essay, my shrinking overdraft and a new pair of shoes.

It's like party politics. If I vote red, blue or green I really don't think my life is going to change that dramatically. Equally, yay or nay to NUS; York is still a concrete haven of mediocrity.

Yawn to voting. Wake me up when you're going to change something and stop trying to impress me with always having the welfare of students at the heart of your plans. Fuck off you do. You're lulling me into a false sense of security so that you can do what you like when you're in power.

When the greater powers start being honest, or even vaguely interesting, maybe I'll start to vote. Meanwhile I'm still a silly little drop in an overblown ocean of student politics.

**Graham Banks**  
Third year Music Technology student

## Corrections

Nouse would like to apologise for the inaccuracy in last edition's drink spiking news story. The drink spikings at three consecutive Club Ds were only alleged drink spikings. Nouse would also like to clarify that by "last year" we meant last calendar year, 2006, two academic years ago. We apologise for any confusion caused.

## Little campus's Big Mouth...

Rivalry and banter: the two words at the heart of college life here at York. In light of Vanbrugh's stolen students, Derwent's outrage at *Bad Taste*, we asked you how far is too far when it comes to college allegiance.

**Name:** Lida Mirzaii  
**College:** James  
**Year:** First  
**Subject:** English Literature



“ You get very close with the people that you live with, but ultimately it's a place to sleep and eat because James doesn't have the same sense of community that the other colleges do. You get the Derwent chants and stuff and we don't really have that, because we don't have a bar, but it just means we network more. The whole point of uni is that you meet as many people as possible so if you just stick to one college it's pointless. College spirit is taken too seriously sometimes - chillax! [laughs] Don't quote that! ”

**Name:** Lesley Carter  
**College:** Derwent  
**Year:** Second  
**Subject:** Maths



“ Being in a college meant that I was immediately welcome. I wasn't some lonely little fresher; I was a Derwenter - not to be messed with, lest my entire DCUK fleet reign fiery fury upon you. I felt at home. Now in my second year it's about smiling when I see a DCUK hoody and booing at my Langwith friends. A bit of college rivalry is healthy but I didn't sign up to Derwent in blood and sell my soul to Ron Weir. College spirit is what you make it. It's good friends, amazing club nights and lovely porters. ”

**Name:** Tom Lynch  
**College:** Langwith  
**Year:** First  
**Subject:** Economics



“ I love Langwith! We have the best bar quiz on campus, we have the best college spirit and we have the best pre-Ziggy's social with Football punch. Our events are also way better than most people think. We're not even jealous of other colleges. Why should we be? Except for an extra pool table and a bar that's open a bit more often, what do they have that we don't? It's not like college spirit gets silly, but it is pretty important. We all learnt the songs in Freshers' Week; we all hate Derwent - there's nothing wrong with that! ”

**Name:** Katie Holland  
**College:** Halifax  
**Year:** Second  
**Subject:** Politics and Economics



“ I'm kind of quite fond of Halifax I guess, though it's not like I'm not walking around wearing a Halifax hoodie. There's certainly a fair amount of community, and there's definitely solidarity in the face of everyone else, because they don't even know where Halifax is...we've got to stick together! But it's not really Derwent-like. I mean, people don't all go to JJ's, so there's not really any centralised social interaction. I wouldn't say anyone in Halifax is jealous of other colleges though, just quite disparaging! ”

# Across the dispatch box: education

Jennifer O'Mahony and Polly Ingham discuss the future of education from both sides of the Commons

David Willetts  
Shadow Education Secretary

David Willetts asks me if I'm going to interrogate him. I laugh to avoid the question, and hope this puts him at ease. Willetts is one of the few controversial figures still left in the Shadow Cabinet. He infamously broke ranks over grammar schools this year, suggesting that there should not be a freeze on building new selective state schools. It cost him his position but not his career; he is now the Secretary of State for Innovation, Higher Education and Skills.

We meet the day after the Queen's Speech; "What is the point of that man?" Willetts says acidly of Gordon Brown, "What is he for?" He holds Brown's proposals for education in equal contempt. Our first topic is the proposed compulsory leaving age of 18. This is described as "forcing" pupils to stay on when they don't have the will or the ability to do so. Willetts' alternative would be more auto-

my in education: "We need more and better apprenticeships. We need an emphasis on the fundamentals of performance up to age 16, so that basic performance in literacy and numeracy allows them to get the qualifications needed."

To Willetts, Blair's legacy

'To Willetts, Blair's legacy is a set of half-baked reforms that didn't go far enough in terms of providing choice'

is a set of half-baked reforms that didn't go far enough in terms of providing choice. Willetts also wants more autonomy for City Academies. He believes

they are "delivering a dramatic turnaround", but one wonders whether they fit more into the economic model for education he prefers, even if their actual progress is limited.

Willetts is himself the product of a Birmingham grammar school, but his children go to fee-paying independents like

Godolphin and Latymer in West London. Would he not have preferred to send his children into the state system which, partly at least, helped him to be where he is today? "It's a reasonable decision... There is no inconsistency between what I say and what I've done as a parent. I do believe in a high-quality state education system, but it's up to the individual parent to make that decision." But for all his protestations about the democracy of widening choice, he does not deny that a turn to consumerism in education will make parents and pupils into "customers", with all the implications for market inequality that this will inevitably bring.

As for university students, Willetts believes that top-up fees have made us "more savvy". That is a massively euphemistic phrase to describe the result of the average £18,000 debt shackled to our ankles when we graduate. "Students are now consumers, and a good thing too," he says. Standards of quality in education are important, and on this point Willetts is admittedly right: "Students are entitled to information like employment statistics. The contact hours and graduate-level job prospects are things students are entitled to know as part of the contractual agreement."

Market forces in the state education system is Willetts's openly acknowledged aim. What the country will have to decide is whether it wants an education system where choice of schools is dictated by wealth.

Bill Rammell  
Minister for Higher Education

The Labour government has often been criticised for exercising unimaginative, target-driven leadership, and no other policy area reflects this notion as strongly as education. Statistics, both international and of their own invention, appear to be at the core of Labour's motivation.

The most recent of these initiatives is to raise the compulsory schooling age to 17 in 2013, and again to 18 in 2015. During a recent visit to the University, Bill Rammell, Minister for Higher Education, refuted the simplicity of this notion, stating: "We've got to stop seeing this described as raising the school leaving age".

"Look at the evidence and most advanced countries have got higher education participation rates than we've got"

This policy would be enforced by fines of up to £200 for any child caught truanting. There would be financial incentives in the form of an Educational Maintenance Allowance, which provides students with up to £30 a week for good attendance. However, so far this has only seen a 4% increase in the number of boys staying on in further education.

Labour are also implementing diplomas to serve as a viable alternative to A-levels. The impression is of an inward focus for our education system, but international prestige is actually more

important. As Bill Rammell neatly asserted, "you look at the international evidence and those universities that are at the forefront of globalization of higher education, most advanced countries have got higher education participation rates than we've got".

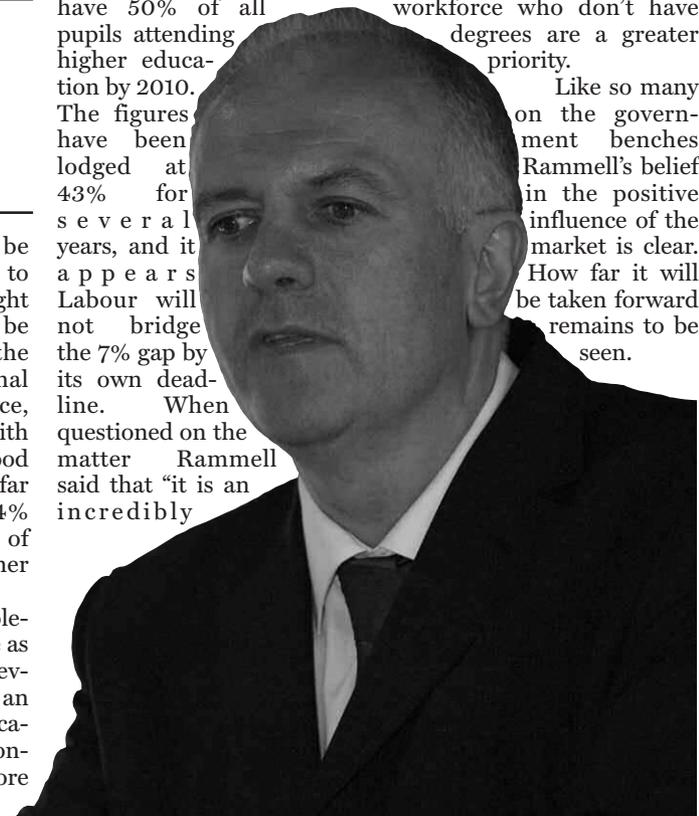
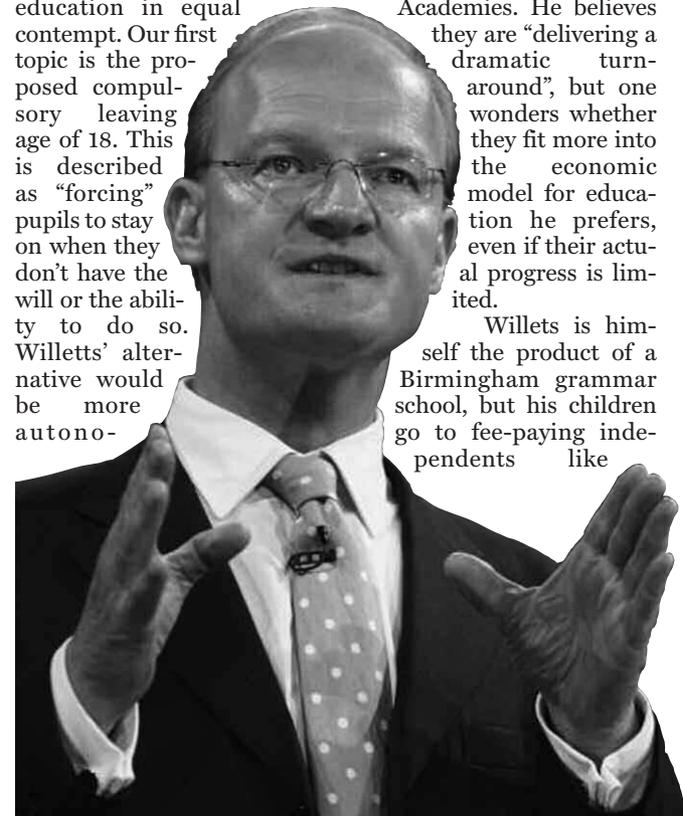
But a report this month outlined the "unrealistic" deadline for the creation of the diplomas, as well as its lack of authority, with A-levels and GCSEs remaining the choice qualifications. Two days prior, authorities had suggested that the academic standard of these traditional qualifications was decreasing.

Labour's most publicised educational aim is to have 50% of all pupils attending higher education by 2010. The figures have been lodged at 43% for several years, and it appears Labour will not bridge the 7% gap by its own deadline. When questioned on the matter Rammell said that "it is an incredibly

competitive global environment. We've got to get many more people from different backgrounds going to university." Many believe that a more important goal is to improve the education we already have access to.

Further discussion with Rammell shows Labour's incentive to inflate education participation numbers, rather than improve the education itself. In September the government withdrew funding for second degree students, shutting the door to those who want to pursue a new career but have little personal funding. Rammell refused to apologise for the policy, claiming it was the "right one", and that the 70% of people already in the workforce who don't have degrees are a greater priority.

Like so many on the government benches Rammell's belief in the positive influence of the market is clear. How far it will be taken forward remains to be seen.



## Brown's failed attempt at defining Britishness

Martin Eastwood

What's in a name? More specifically, what's in a slogan? Modern politics has been blighted by these media-friendly sound-bites for years; "24 hours to save the NHS" or "vote Blair, get Brown", the latter proving ironically successful for the Tories. But this week Gordon Brown asked the public to think of five words that convey the true meaning of Britishness.

This topic certainly seems to have consumed our Prime Minister recently. As



A motto for Britain: Dipso, Fatso, Bingo, Asbo, Tesco?

Chancellor, he declared his support for a day to celebrate national identity; "The French have it with Bastille day, the Americans have it...it's probably time that we do too". Again, in this year's Labour Party conference, Brown's speech seemed almost to contain echoes of Nick Griffin; the words "British" and "Britishness" reverberated in the ears of his audience no less than 71 times. However, instead of using British patriotism as a symbol of racial division, Brown likes to stress the importance of Britishness as "a symbol of unity, tolerance

and inclusion".

Unity is indeed one of Mr Brown's key ideals. After all, he more than most has a vested interest in keeping Britain united. The resolution of Tam Dalyell's West Lothian question would ensure Brown himself, as MP for Kirkcaldy & Cowdenbeath, would be unable to vote on English matters in Westminster, an untenable position for anyone claiming to be a British Prime Minister. In addition, the SNP's increased influence in the Scottish Parliament is encouraging division within the UK. 35%

of Scots now believe their country should gain full independence - admittedly a low percentage, but it still has Brown unnerved; his party won the last election with that kind of percentage.

The Prime Minister was hoping five magic words, created by the British, for the British, about the British would help silence Scottish nationalists. Alas, the cunning plan has backfired. Many suggestions reinforce disunity and only serve to strengthen Cameron's argument of a "broken society", examples including: "land of jobs and morons" and

"dipso, fatso, bingo, asbo, Tesco".

But is this disenchantment and lack of pride present at a local level? What five words would show an affinity with the University of York for instance? As a fresher, I've been told the university is a community, comprising both buildings and people. So how would you encompass this community in just five words?

For exclusive content and to comment on all our articles, visit our website: [nouse.co.uk/politics](http://nouse.co.uk/politics)



Your career is  
no laughing  
matter.



Ranked 8th in the Sunday Times 'Best Small Companies to Work For', we know what makes a truly great workplace. On average we spend 1652 hours at work each year. So, why not enjoy the time you spend at work?

Contact us at [www.red-gate.com](http://www.red-gate.com) or  
call careers on 0870 160 0037 ext.8556

Red Gate Software Ltd.  
St John's Innovation Centre,  
Cowley Road, Cambridge  
CB4 0WS United Kingdom

t: +44 (0)870 160 0037 ext.8556  
f: +44 (0)870 063 5117  
e: [careers@red-gate.com](mailto:careers@red-gate.com)  
[www.red-gate.com](http://www.red-gate.com)

**redgate**<sup>®</sup>  
ingeniously simple tools

# Western perception of India's burgeoning success story masks reality of social divide

Will Heaven

"WHEN I FIRST went to India, 25 years ago", writes Charles Moore of the *Spectator*, "I was embarrassed by cycle rickshaws. I felt uneasy being transported by thin people much poorer than myself." Now though, Moore finds himself impressed by the modern India: "Such is India's economic success that I suspect many of the boys who struggled to pedal me up a hill are now garage proprietors grown fat."

In some ways Moore is right; India has had enormous economic success recently and is currently enjoying huge amounts of foreign investment as its stock market continues an upward climb.

Think Mumbai and Bangalore, think IT and textiles, think call-centres and Goan beach resorts, and India becomes a "success story", the "next superpower" or "a booming economy". But the reality could not be more different.

The financial capital of the sub-continent, Mumbai, is a case in point. It is the centre of the Bollywood film industry; a glitzy, commercialised hub of the new India.

But flying in to Mumbai, the vast slums on the city's outskirts, where an estimated eight million live in desperate poverty, are impossible to ignore. Despite the obvi-

ous wealth and prosperity of Mumbai's centre, the slums remain unaffected and are, in fact, still growing.

The problem of social division or, in other words, the vast gulf between India's rich and poor, is one that India does not seem to be confronting. That 800m Indians live on less than 20 rupees (25p) a day is an indisputable fact.

The World Bank has recently spoken of the "silent emergency" of child malnutrition in India and maintains that 29% of Indians live below the poverty line.

In Madyha Pradesh, a central Indian state, 60% of infants are thought to be malnourished. And, as this goes on, the Bombay Sensex (India's stock index) has gone from 5,000 to nearly 18,000 points in just under 10 years, creating a high-caste generation of millionaires. Meanwhile, Mumbai's slums receive around 300 migrant families every day, most of them moving in from impoverished rural areas.

Health, education and infrastructure are still massively underdeveloped in the country, and the figures in the government's budget are not particularly promising: the annual defence budget is 960bn rupees (£12bn) while health and education receive 150.2bn rupees (£1.9bn) and 330bn rupees (£4bn).

But it is sometimes easy to forget this in the city itself. One Indian fam-



Poverty is still widespread in India

ily interviewed in South Delhi, made rich by the Indian IT industry, gives an insight into the wealth barrier that exists there.

They shop, eat, exercise and work in luxury, but rarely come into contact with anyone outside their social class unless they talk to a waiter in one of Delhi's five star hotels. They fly to Goa for their holidays and rarely venture into rural areas, apart from a short sum-

mer break in the hills. Capitalism, it seems, has done it for them. But, like Nehru's socialism, it has failed so many Indians.

The reality of India, then, as opposed to the hyped-up version seen in much of the Western media, is one of shocking contrast. If India is to stand a chance in the race with China to be the next global superpower then this is one divide it must address.

It is a popular theory that, in India, a rising tide will eventually lift all the boats - that the wealth being accumulated by the country's middle classes will eventually trickle its way down to the poorest of the poor. But there seems to be little evidence that is happening at all.

In a moment of surprising frankness one of India's ministers for social reform, Mani Shankar Aiyar, commented that

"while the rich are getting obscenely richer, the poor are getting only mildly less poor."

Until this changes, Charles Moore's poor rickshaw drivers will still be in the same job. By the looks of things, it's possible that their children and grandchildren could very easily end up there too.

A portrait of Mumbai  
MUSE >> P14

## Student appeals for help in general election

Polly Ingham

Second year Politics student Claire Hazelgrove has asked students at the University of York to aid her in her campaign as Labour candidate for Skipton and Ripon.

Hazelgrove said: "It would be great to get as many people from York as possible helping out on my campaign. I'd love to see more young people out on the campaign trail and hopefully encourage more people to stand as well. It's important in terms of making sure issues that affect students get addressed, and hopefully we can change the



Claire Hazelgrove

face of politics."

Hazelgrove strongly objects to the fact that

although 30% of the UK's population is under 30 years old, only two active members of parliament are, and she intends to turn this around. For Hazelgrove, "you do have to be a woman and a young person to be truly representative of their opinions", and she has called for active participation from her peers. At the moment "there is no-one to fight our corner," she believes.

Hazelgrove is wasting no time trying to change this imbalance. In her own constituency of Skipton and Ripon there is currently a house pricing crisis causing difficulties for first time buyers. She explains that "there

is a massive age gap in the housing market of 20 to 40 year olds who cannot get on the housing ladder" and she feels she is "the right person to deal with this situation, not some old politician who has been in the business longer than I have been alive".

During a recent interview on the BBC Sunday Politics Show Hazelgrove felt under-appreciated as a real Labour candidate, saying the interviewer "continually asked me about age and experience".

Hazelgrove is further pursuing her cause on a national level by establishing a relationship with

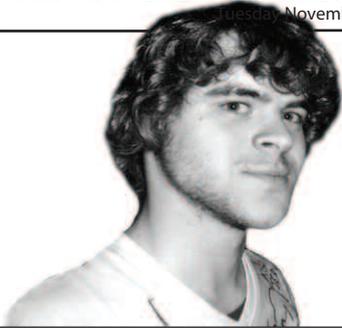
Emily Benn, who beat her to the title of youngest ever parliamentary candidate. At just 18, Benn is taking A-levels and running for Labour in East Worthing and Shoreham. Together they are planning to promote young Labour, to both "raise awareness" and "strengthen" their individual campaigns.

Hazelgrove attests to the idea that fighting for her beliefs is not always an easy task. She said: "You do have to think about what you say, you realise that you can't just say your opinions as you may have done. You have to go with the party", and, like all those pursuing a political career, her priorities are

constantly under scrutiny from the media and her constituents. But this does not lessen her passion about the opportunity of her position: "It gives me the chance to stand up for people, and that is what I want to do."

Following a meeting with the Head of the Politics Department, Dr. Matravers, Hazelgrove has permission to take half a year out in order to fight the general election.

Hazelgrove says: "If anyone wants to get involved in my campaign, any help would be much appreciated." Hazelgrove can be reached by email at ch552@york.ac.uk.



# Matthew Jeynes

## What is the University sporting hierarchy and how could you actually calculate it effectively?

**T**HERE WAS A BIT of worry in the *Nouse* office last Wednesday. A certain sports reporter (who may have resembled me in pretty much every way) got slightly lost trying to find an away fixture and nearly ended up missing the match.

What made this worse was that the game in question was the Men's Rugby 1sts against York St John and, even though it was an away match, it still took place in York. This almost left us scrambling to plan a revised lay-up and get a totally different report about another sport. When deliberating on how best to fill the hypothetical gap, barely relevant discussion amongst the editorial team ensued. It was at this point that the issue of sports being given different levels of priority occurred to me.

A full examination on this subject would take far more effort than this writer really cares to expend, but a fair estimation can be made. For a start, one would assume that the University hierarchy would in some sense resemble a microcosm of the national one. If this holds true, Men's Football would be by far the most popular, and sports like water-polo would find themselves in the lower end of the spectrum.

The question is how sporting hierarchy is determined on our inter-campus scale. We don't have access to the media of television and widespread radio coverage, not to mention the levels of publicity that national sport experiences. University sport unfortunately doesn't have television viewing fig-



**York Fencing Club in action: On BUSA rankings alone, Fencing is the most successful sports at York**

ures and if any club could honestly claim that they regularly receive more than 10 to 20 supporters in matches aside from the grand events of Varsity and Roses, I would love to meet them.

Is the sport with the most students involved the sport that most people in the University care about?

By looking at the two news publications operating at York, the question can be raised of whether what appears in the paper is representative of what the students actu-

ally want to read or whether it's just what the editorial team think people want to see.

A brilliant example is the last edition of *Vision*, with its almost entirely Alcuin-centric sports section. A quick glance at the editorial team reveals...you guessed it - one of the editors is from Alcuin.

Here at *Nouse*, we try to present what the majority of people want to read, hence the prevalence of supposedly popular sports such as Men's Football and Men's Rugby and Women's Netball and Hockey.

However, we are open to change. If the masses want a particular sport given wider coverage, we will give it wider coverage. Also, if smaller clubs have a fantastic season they will inevitably gain more attention from the newspaper. Unfortunately, the feedback we get generally ranges from very little to absolutely nothing. This brings me to my next point, the shameless plugging of the *Nouse* website. New, revamped and begging for comments, you will find its URL plastered all over this edition. With

weekly rolling sports reports to let you, our readership, dictate what is covered. Anyway, back to the original question and furthermore the point of this article.

The concept of ordering the hierarchy in terms of success would be a controversial one, not least because the fortunes of clubs fluctuate so regularly. If we were to utilise this particular method the first and second place would be reserved for fencing and men's volleyball respectively with men's football, despite an excellent start to the season, bringing up the rear with women's netball. However, this method has a fatal flaw; it doesn't account for the disparity in numbers involved in these sports at other universities. For instance, every University has Football teams, but I imagine not every one has such a large Polo club.

I therefore apologise for suggesting those clubs might be ranked near the bottom of the hierarchy, and admit that the subject requires more rigorous investigation than I have endeavoured to conduct. If enough people disagree with/are offended by my article, I might well do it. Although, to be honest, there will inevitably have to be a club at the bottom.

In the end, the intrepid reporter managed to get a match report on the Rugby written up and stuck on the back page of the paper and it all ended happily ever after. Which, coincidentally, leaves me just enough time to plug the website again. In case you missed it, its [www.nouse.co.uk](http://www.nouse.co.uk).

## Senior rowers win division at York Small Boats

### ROWING

**Cris Noice**  
SPORTS EDITOR

**I**N THE FIRST HEAD race of the season, York University's rowers performed above expectations in both the senior and novice categories of York Small Boats to launch their campaign for the coming season.

Going into the time trials, the weather was less than ideal with bitter cold and rain hampering the squads. Despite this, many teams had strong races with few collisions considering the volume of boats on the water. All York squads managed to complete their races without any time penalties added, a feat in itself considering the hazards associated with the conditions.

The senior men's 3rd coxed four were the pick of the York teams, completing the three kilometre course in 11 minutes and eight seconds. This was enough to win them the sweep oar division and see them placed fourth overall, the only teams ahead of them both rowing in quads without a Cox.

Senior men's captain Finbarr Bevan commented on the team's performance after the race: 'We're really pleased with the way the squad has progressed so far this season and especially happy with today's result considering the conditions.'

The novice women's coxed four also made a strong start to their season's campaign with a performance that was considered by novice captain Rebecca Jayne Dobinson to be "on par with senior level time".



**Seniors perform in time trials**

The captain added: "The girls had a really strong first three quarters of the race; we've got a good squad."

Their time was 15 minutes and 22 seconds, placing them 34 spots above the bottom of the rankings.

A notable absence from the trials were the novice men's squad who were unable to compete due to difficulties in attaining a boat. The novice men's captain told *Nouse*: "We are disappointed to not have been racing but the guys have been training hard and we are progressing well".

Of 270 entries in various categories ranging from sculls to fours, the senior women's 3rd coxed four recorded a time of 13 minutes and seven seconds - putting them in the top half of the overall table. Also, the senior men's 4th coxed four managed 11 minutes and 46 seconds - placing them 26th - comfortably in the top 30.

### YORK'S RANKINGS

01.	York City R.C.	10m22s
02.	York City R.C.	10m33s
03.	St. Peter's	10m38s
04.	U.Y.B.C. (M)	11m08s
24.	U.Y.B.C. (M)	11m46s
120.	U.Y.B.C. (W)	13m07s
195.	U.Y.B.C. (W)	14m08s
236.	U.Y.B.C. (W)	15m22s
260.	U.Y.B.C. (W)	16m52s
271.	U.Y.B.C. (M)	n/a

## Ed Smith appointed as Chair of UKUS

FORMER CHIEF Operations Manager for Price Waterhouse Cooper, Ed Smith has been given the position of Chair for the newly created United Kingdom University Sport association. UKUS will replace both the body for University and College Sport and BUSA in the summer. The new Chair's business acumen is likely to be used to gain investment and funding for university sport across the UK. Smith will take on the position formally in January.

## Alcuin beat Vanbrugh to reach top of table

LAST WEEKEND SAW Alcuin at the top of the college football table for the first time in years, beating Vanbrugh 6-1. It was the standout game of a wet and windy Sunday afternoon, as most teams struggled with the elements. With Goodricke and James joint top at the start of the day, a drab 0-0 draw left both teams ruing a missed opportunity to build a lead in the table. Langwith played out another draw, 1-1, with Derwent, as both teams continue to struggle with the lack of striking options this season, holding up the table with two points apiece. Halifax beat Wentworth 3-1 in the day's only other game to divide the table in two, with Vanbrugh, Wentworth, Langwith and Derwent trailing off the pace.

## York Ultimate Frisbee to host BUSA event

THE UNIVERSITY of York's Ultimate Frisbee Club will be hosting the National Outdoor Ultimate Frisbee Competition next May. The competition sees the top 32 clubs in the country come together to compete in one of only two annual tournaments where BUSA points are at stake. The coup follows York's success in hosting the University Northern Indoor Regionals two years in a row. The club celebrated being chosen to host the tournament by finishing fourth at the University Mixed Indoor Regionals in Bradford, thereby qualifying for the University Mixed Indoor Nationals which will take place in Manchester in Spring 2008.

## Get in on the action!

Be a part of the fastest growing sport in Britain for a fun way to get fit and make friends

No experience required and there's a role for anyone - regardless of fitness and strength

Come along and have a go!

Training times:  
Tuesday 6-8pm  
Friday 4.15-5.30pm  
Sunday 12-2pm

Contact:  
kms501@york.ac.uk  
www.yusu.org/womensrugby

# Defensive lapses cost York in fourth straight league defeat

## WOMEN'S FOOTBALL

York 1sts	1
Sheffield 2nds	3

Adam Shergold  
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

YORK WOMEN'S first football team were again consigned to the disappointment of defeat as visitors Sheffield snatched a 3-1 victory on Wednesday afternoon. Goals early and late in the first half, and a third five minutes from time were enough to earn an injury-depleted Sheffield their second win of the season.

The defeat leaves York still searching for their first three points of the campaign, now four matches old, but many positives can be taken from their showing. Attractive long-ball play down the flanks exerted considerable pressure on the Sheffield defensive line but the finishing touch was frustratingly absent. York captain Maz Brewster urged an attack-minded approach from the outset and the team responded with the lively left-wing runs of Louise Kedge intimidating an exposed Sheffield defense and delivering accurate crosses across the face of goal.

However, York's early spirit was soon dampened as defensive uncertainties allowed Sheffield midfielder Chloe Sprenger to latch on to an ambitious long-ball and round goalkeeper Annalie Schutz to score.

The home team



York were unable to break down an extremely solid Sheffield defensive unit

matched their opponents throughout the opening half, but it was a Sheffield set-piece that proved decisive just before the break, doubling their advantage. A neatly-executed overhead kick from Nat Troggatt looped over the York goalkeeper after a left-wing corner had only

been partially cleared.

In a lapse of concentration after the second goal, Sheffield allowed their opponents an immediate route back into contention. In first-half injury time, a perfectly weighted through-ball from the York midfield caught their opponents off guard and

striker Ruth Morris slipped in unnoticed to narrow the deficit with a composed low finish.

Zoë Raffray was introduced at the interval to quicken the pace and seek an equalising goal for the hosts. The second half was, however, rather low key with chances rare at both

ends. Sheffield were content to defend their advantage and their rearguard remained resolute. The home team were adept at switching the focus of attack, but could not find the telling pass.

Although lacking their first-half potency, Sheffield remained a fleeting threat with Tolu Osinubi dropping back from the forward line to orchestrate play. Having survived one goalmouth scramble, York finally saw the match slip from their grasp in the 85th minute. Having repelled a late York forward burst, the away side forced a right-wing corner with a swift break and, when York once again failed to clear the danger, Osinubi tapped in to cement the three points for Sheffield.

Speaking after the match, Brewster said, "it was a good performance overall and I thought the third goal flattered them somewhat." The team will certainly have to focus on the emerging positives in preparing for next week's home encounter with high-flying Durham.

## YORK LINE-UP

1. Annalie Schutz, 17.  
Carey Kalym, 6. Claire Richards, 16. Charlotte O'Shea, 9. Nikki Giles, 4.  
Becky Segal, 8. Maz Brewster (capt), 5.  
Charlotte Taylor, 14.  
Louise Kedge (10. Zoë Raffray - H-T), 3. Ruth Morris, 15. Fiona Wallis

# York beaten in bottom of table clash

## MEN'S SQUASH

York 1sts	2
Durham 2nds	3

Dan Hyde  
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

YORK'S 1ST team lost a hard fought tie 3-2 against Durham 2nd team in BUSA League 2B on Wednesday.

York started well with first year Paul Atkinson picking up a swift win against Julian Le Witt. Atkinson's speed and fluency around the court saw him dominate the match.

The fixture was tied when Durham's Patrick McConvey defeated York's Kamren Minal in the sec-



Men's first team left without reward after a close match

ond pairing, despite Minal returning from a two game deficit to take the match to a fifth and final game, which he narrowly conceded

with a score of 9-7. In the first of the two simultaneous pairings, York number two James Burkhead was beaten con-

vincingly by Sam Williams while York captain Tom Davenhill forced his tie against Tim Baker to a deciding game. This contest reflected the match as a whole, with Davenhill losing the fifth game 9-2 despite a hard fought performance.

This left York 3-1 down with the match between the two team's top players inconsequential, although Matt Twaddle salvaged some pride with a convincing victory.

After the match, York captain Tom Davenhill described the great difficulties his team have faced this season. "We've had to deal with the loss of the

top six players from last year and gained Paul as the only fresher, so yes it has been tough."

Davenhill was unassuming in explaining the loss. "I think my tie turned the game," he said humbly. "At the end it was a question of fitness, and Durham had more". The loss leaves York still without a win this year and languishing in the league.

## YORK LINE-UP

Paul Atkinson  
Patrick McConvey  
James Burkhead  
Tom Davenhill (capt)  
Matt Twaddle



Jo Carter

AU President

SPORT IS FULL OF stereotypes, but these barriers are slowly being broken down. Whether it's Sir Steven Redgrave proving that diabetes is not a hindrance, Lewis Hamilton as the first black F1 driver or Brian Ashton as one of the first Rugby Union coaches from a working class background; discrimination in sport is at an all-time low. But do gender stereotypes discourage women from getting involved in sport here at York?

The standard of sport at York may not be on par with the likes of Loughborough, but women's sport here is an emerging force. Women's Cricket reached the BUSA Indoor Cricket Championships Finals last season, while just a few weeks ago Women's Rugby thrashed Newcastle University 111-0.

Both Women's Football and Women's Rugby reported that record numbers signed up at the AU Mart, and more women are attending training than ever before. UYWRFC President Karen Barber believes that stereotypes are not the main barrier to participation, but the lack of opportunities: "the problem is not a lack of interest or fear of being considered manly. We find girls aren't getting into rugby simply because it isn't offered to them at a young age. This lack of opportunity for girls is our main concern, not what people think of us."

In addition to the performance of the English Women's Football team at the World Cup this summer, England's women won bronze at the European Hockey Championships, securing 2008 Olympic qualification. Despite being light years away financially, female sport in this country is in the ascendance.

Being the first female AU President in 13 years, I am well aware of the male dominance in sport. However, the fact that 22 presidents of the 54 sports clubs are female speaks volumes about the flourishing status of female sport on this campus.

Nightmarish visions of a cold and wet games afternoon are far from the reality of university sport. Sport at York encompasses everything from surfing to parachuting, via canoe polo and martial arts. And we have more sports clubs than Loughborough.

Your time here is the best opportunity to try something new, and whether it's rugby or chess; it's all about getting involved. Everyone comes to University to get a degree, what else are you going to get out of three years at York?

# York dominate Sheffield to stay favourites for BUSA promotion

## HOCKEY

York 1sts	4
Sheffield 2nds	0

Jack Organ  
DEPUTY SPORTS EDITOR

YORK WOMEN'S 1st team put on a convincing display on Wednesday to stay top of the league against a determined Sheffield 2nds side. Sheffield were coming into the game on the back of two straight wins but couldn't stop York from recording their fourth victory in a row to go three points clear at the top of the table.

York started strongly and 10 minutes in were rewarded with an early goal after fluent move through the centre was converted by Katie Walker. Sheffield were spurred on by this however and had five minutes of pressure before York caught them on the break with Karen Wallace finishing well to double their advantage after only 15 minutes. York pressed forward following the second goal and sought to establish an even firmer lead, but Sheffield held their defensive lines well.

Leading up to half time, both teams focused their efforts on defence. Play was restricted to the middle third of the pitch as both side's back lines limited attacking play. At the stroke of half time, the game had withdrawn into a defensive stalemate.

York started the second half much as they did the first, dominating play from the outset. The York midfield were passing well, finding gaps in the Sheffield defence on several occasions. When Sheffield gained the possession to attack, centre half Andrea Pisesky was robust in front of goal and was instrumental in launching York attacks.

In keeping with the flow of the match, Anne Coleman celebrated York's third on 43 minutes after a

sweeping passage of play. After a tenacious first half from Sheffield, in which they were unlucky not to score from their chances, the task of chasing down York's quick and-fluent passing began to take it's toll. York moved the ball about with ease and pace, turning defense into attack in a matter of seconds. With attacks becoming more incisive, another goal quickly followed on 55 minutes, with Katie Walker scoring her second to give York a four goal lead.

After scoring their fourth goal, York slowed the pace of play, limiting the remainder of the match to the middle third while the clock ran down to the full time whistle. Sheffield posed a considerable threat in the first half but as the game progressed, they failed to capitalize on their chances. The York Captain said after the match: "It was an awesome game, I am very happy with the way the team worked together."

### YORK LINE-UP

Cossie Barker(GK), Jaimie Unsworth, Diana Lowland, Marieke Hampshire, Sam Simms, Jess Selfe, Andrea Pisesky, Anna Smith, Karen Wallace, Laura Carter, Katie Walker, Jo Carter, Anne Coleman.

### SHEFFIELD LINE-UP

Jo Szejter(GK), Lucy Bailey, Charlotte Durrington, Claire Trask, Katie Orr, Amy Hill, Nicki Hilton, Gwen Nicol, Helen Quirk, Katherine Francis, Fay Meakin, Leonie Cross.

### WOMAN OF THE MATCH

Andrea Pisesky - Strong in defence, controlled the game from the back and was incisive with her passing.



Another strong performance and convincing win kept York on top

## First win for men's tennis

### MEN'S TENNIS

Tom Fitz-Hugh  
SPORTS CORRESPONDENT

YORK MEN'S Tennis 1sts achieved their first win of the season against Durham 2nds on Wednesday, lifting themselves from the bottom of the table.

In the two doubles games, both teams were fairly matched against each other. York's first and third seeds, David Leff-Hallstein and Peter Thompson-Glover never clicked, their play suffering as a result. The visitors looked



York beat Durham 7-3

stronger from the start and eventually won eight games to six.

However, problems with the slippery surface

were becoming evident.

In the first of the singles contests, Cameron Downey easily overcame Ross Adams 6-2 6-3. Similarly, the very able Mark Gregory of Durham beat York's Chris Willis in straight sets, 6-3 6-4. In the top seeded game, Leff-Hallstein came back from deficits in both the first and second sets to eventually win the third.

Meanwhile, Thompson-Glover was powered off the court, losing 6-2 in the first but came back to take the next two sets 6-0, 6-2 and seal the 7-3 overall victory for York.

## York to host charity mile for Sport Relief

Matthew Jaynes  
SPORTS EDITOR

ON SUNDAY March 16th, the University will be holding a Sport Relief Mile as part of the nationwide BBC Sport Relief campaign, which raised 16 million pounds last year.

AU President Jo Carter, who is organising the fund-raising event, is hopeful that it can "raise the profile of sport at the university, increase participation and improve town and gown relations, as well as raising lots of money for

charity."

The Sport Relief Mile, devised by the BBC's Sport Relief producers Martyn Smith and Jon Rowlands, was created in 2004 to give the national campaign a focus with an event that was open to anyone to run, walk, jog, wheel, bounce or crawl, regardless of ability or age.

The 423,000 participants in the 2006 Mile made it one of the biggest mass-participation events in history, and next year's event has the potential to be even bigger.

**Women's Football defeat:**  
The University of York defeated by Sheffield due to defensive frailties and an inability to break down an organised Sheffield side >> P18



# York continue great start to BUSA season with win over Varsity rivals

## RUGBY UNION

**York 1sts** 28  
**York St John 1sts** 8

**Matthew Jeynes**  
SPORTS EDITOR

IN A PREVIEW of this year's Varsity confrontation, York managed a comfortable victory away from home on Wednesday at the Railway Institute against York St John.

York seemed slow getting into the game after their win over Leeds the week before, and were initially stifled by the York St John tactics of keeping the ball tight and trying to restrict York's exciting back division.

York's early error-ridden and scrappy performance was exacerbated by the sin-binning of Alex Redshaw-Wood, a decision which didn't endear the referee to the York players who considered it highly controversial.

York were unable to play their usual free-flowing game, with York St John's restrictive gameplan working to perfection and penalty goals being exchanged as the game drifted towards half-time.

The half-time whistle came with York only narrowly ahead and struggling to break free of the shackles imposed by the larger York St John pack. York were keeping their rivals in the game by letting them off the hook with mistakes and a lack of discipline.

The second half began much as the first had ended, but York's continuing dominance meant that the breakthrough was inevitable.

The next points were



York struggled to break down their rivals, with their free-flowing backs only cutting loose in the second half to secure the comfortable win

scored by Mike Callis, who rounded off a brilliant phase of play, with forwards and backs linking up after a great break by Nick Brown, who has been in outstanding form this season.

The try finally opened the floodgates that had been straining all afternoon and, seconds later, substitute Peter Nathan managed to outpace several York St John players to set up fly-half

Thomas Benbow for the second try.

This was quickly followed by a further score from Mike Callis and one for Danny Stacey as York eased into a strong position over their rivals. The pace of the game slowed down further as yellow cards were shown to both York and York St John players. From this point, York seemed happy to sit back and hold on to their

lead.

York St John did manage a consolation try, with their forward pack managing to drive over the line from short range.

However, York closed out the game to put the seal on a messy, if eventually comfortable victory. The performance was not up to the superb standard shown against Leeds, but the win puts York 1sts third in the

BUSA conference, with four wins out of five and gives them a great chance of promotion.

One supporter on the sidelines commented that "the boys produced a decent display today, and it is always great to get another victory over our rivals in a derby game. However, they will know that they can play far more disciplined and dominant rugby than this and will

look to build on this display as they push for promotion and victory in Roses."

The season is shaping up to be a promising one for the Rugby Club, as the Men's 2nds are also sitting on top of their table with three wins out of three and the Women's 1sts have enjoyed a confident start, the highlight so far being a 111-0 thrashing of Newcastle 2nds at home last month.

## Women's Hockey 1sts in great form

York Women's Hockey 1sts thrash Sheffield 2nds to stay top of their BUSA league and remain favourites for promotion. Two goals from Katie Walker allow them to secure another comfortable home win

HOCKEY >> P19

## What is the sporting hierarchy at York?

A debate in the Nouse office over match reports leads to a debate over sporting hierarchy at York. Matt Jeynes explores the ways in which the hierarchy can be measured, and debates the usefulness of even trying to make such a study.

MATTHEW JEYNES >> P16



## Time trial success at York Small Boats

In biting cold and driving rain, York's rowers began the season with York Small Boats Head. The standout performance came from the senior men's third coxed four, who managed to win their division.

ROWING >> P16

## Sport Relief Mile to take place in York

In May 2008, York University will play host to a Sport Relief Mile as part of the national BBC charity campaign. The Miles take place all over the country, allowing anyone to take part and run, walk or crawl to raise money for charity.

SPORTS NEWS >> P20

