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STUDENT COMMENT AND NEWS

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Week 7 Summer Term, Tuesday June 2, 2009

## Students see off bogus plumbers in attempted burglary

- Men posing as UPP maintenance staff intruded into flat
- Head of security warns students to be careful after burglaries

**Michael Holt and Lizzie Houghton**

STUDENTS HAVE BEEN warned to be "more discerning" of visitors after a rash of incidents on campus.

A recent spike in burglaries and vandalism on campus has given the head of security, Mark Salisbury, reason to warn students to be "slightly more discerning and careful when they invite visitors onto campus" and to have the safety of their accommodation in mind to prevent any more thefts or break-ins.

Two men attempted to gain unauthorised access to a block in Furness college last month, but were seen off by a female student. The two men, acting under the pretence of being UPP plumbers, gained access to the Furness accommodation block, Colton on May 15. The two men entered the building at 22.15pm but left after being challenged.

Residents Sarah Knowles and Justin Choo found the men in their flat. "People were being knobheads with the buttons; my flatmate let [the men] in assuming that they were friends," said Knowles.

The men were clearly not who they claimed to be. Knowles said: "they pushed past my housemate... and start-

ed saying that they were from UPP and that somebody had reported a leak, which they clearly weren't. You tend to recognise the UPP guys; they weren't in uniform and were without identification."

Upon being challenged, the men got initially "standoffish", claiming that security knew that they were there. But when Choo went to call the security lodge, the men fled the flat to avoid being apprehended. "The men just kept saying 'you're out of order' over and over," said Choo. Knowles added: "it took them about five minutes or so to work out that [Choo had gone to phone security]; at which point they left. Two minutes later security arrived."

Fortunately, the two students had the campus security phone number at the front of their minds at the time. "Me and Sarah had been in my room moments before discussing why security's number was printed on the phone but not the porters'," Choo said. "Little did we realise that we would have to phone the number mere minutes after the discussion."

The men were described as being white and both around 5'9". One was said to be wearing a green top. The other was in army combats and had a beanie hat on. UPP has since confirmed that it did not send out any workers to that block on Friday, May 15.

Salisbury said that he was "absolutely delighted" with the quick thinking of the students. However, the following day an Xbox, DVDs and a laptop were stolen from a kitchen in County Main. A female student in Bowland also reported that the door to her flat was tried on the same day. Salisbury said it was possible that all three incidents are linked.

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## Izz'ard life: Eddie talks politics



Story on page 5 &gt;

**Second calling:** Eddie Izzard spoke at the Nuffield Theatre on campus last Tuesday in an event organised by the Labour Club. (Photo: Dan Hogan)

## Student complaints on the rise according to adjudicator

**Number of complaints filed increases 23% on previous year**

**Rob Maidstone**

STUDENTS IN HIGHER education are complaining more than ever according to latest figures released by Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The amount of complaints received last year rose sharply compared with the previous year. The number of complaints in 2008 was 900 which was a 23% increase compared with the complaints received in 2007. However of these complaints only 7% were found to be justified.

The OIA for higher education operates an independent students complaint scheme, which deals with complaints that cannot be resolved internally by universities.

The main area in which complaints were made was in degree passes. This included students complaining that a lecturers' strike in their final year affected their mark and students complaining about standards of teaching. Another key topic that arouse in complaints, according to the report was issues around services provided by the university. This included problems regarding accommodation leases and plagiarism. Many students felt that their respective universities were not allowing them to argue fully against claims that they were cheating. In these cases, where the student felt they were unfairly treated, they took it to the OIA.

The report also commented on the distribution of the complaints over different subjects. The largest body of complaints came from business and administration courses, closely followed by courses in medicine (in particular nursing) and law. But a large amount of these trends are just reflections in the distribution of intake

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# UPP imposters foiled

This follows an incident earlier in the term when students from Grizedale held a flat party which a number of non-students were invited to. That ended in a number of thefts. Again an Xbox was stolen from the kitchen, along with alcoholic drinks and a large amount of groceries. The Grizedale students had only met the other group in Lancaster that day. There was also a disturbance in County, with non-students making a great deal of noise, annoying students who were trying to revise.

Dean of Furness College, Chris Grocott, said in an email to Furness residents that to help prevent against future such incidents students should: "always ask workman/officials entering your flat/room for identification; Do not assume that someone in your flat whom you do not know is there at the invitation of one of your flat-mates; Always keep flat doors locked – do not wedge them open and lastly. If you see someone acting suspiciously call security on 94541."

Security are also concerned by the increasing number of incidents involving damage to break glass by students trying to gain easier access to their residences. Salisbury added: "The short term benefits of these actions could lead to allowing others to gain entry into accommodation and thefts taking place."



# Student complaints increase by 23%

levels in these subject areas.

Another interesting trend showed by the figures is the disproportionately high number of international students who complained. The university adjudicator for England and Wales, Rob Behrens, said that this was possibly due to increased expectations from those students paying greater tuition fees.

He suggested that the same reason might be behind the overall increase in complaints as well. He said that there was a "cultural change" in that students now want more value for their money. This comes after the introduction of tuition fees up to £3000 in 2006. Academics and University Administrators predict even greater rise in complaints in the future as graduate employment options grow scarcer.

In response to the report Aaron Porter, NUS Vice President for Higher Education, said: "It is positive that the time the OIA takes to deal with students' complaints is decreasing. However, we are concerned that between 2006 and 2008, there was a 54% in-

crease in the number of complaints to the OIA.

"As the independent adjudicator has noted, there are still some concerns about the length of time taken by institutions themselves to deal with complaints. NUS' own review of complaints, published in February, found that half of all advisers in students' unions had dealt with complaints that took over a year to be resolved. Many universities need to work much harder to make their complaints procedures more efficient and transparent."

The 900 complaints made, although a significant increase from previous years, is a very small figure compared with the 1.9 million students studying in the UK. Behrens commented on how students should be reassured by this but warned: "There is no room for complacency. During the year I came across unacceptable instances of serious delay in handling formal complaints, examples of insensitive handling and universities failing to abide by their own regulations." As well as this warning he also offered some areas for general improvement; the handling of plagiarism, effective supervision of postgraduate students in the run-up to thesis submission, disability practice and fitness to practice issues.

It remains to be seen how universities will respond to this report. Most universities handle complaints internally, however the report shows that even small failures in the system can have serious detrimental effects on students.

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"I loved studying here; I didn't want to leave. If further study is what you want to do, then I wholeheartedly recommend staying at Lancaster. All the skills I had learnt at undergraduate level became much more refined. The course was perfect, allowing me to choose from a huge range of modules."

Laura McAllister  
MRes in Science of the Environment

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# Examinations safe as lecturers' union retreats on strike ballot

- Uni's threaten legal action over ballots
- Future lecturer strike still possible

**Chris Davis**  
News Editor

THE THREAT OF strikes by lecturers and academic staff across the country has subsided following a decision to postpone a ballot for industrial action by the University and College Union (UCU).

Industrial action in universities during the summer term could have caused widespread disruption to students' examination timetables.

UCU announced in April that it planned to ballot its members for industrial action following a disagreement with the Universities and Colleges Employers Association (Ucea) over the threat of redundancies across the higher education sector. Ballot papers were distributed earlier this month, but complaints and threats of legal action from a number of universities forced UCU to withdraw the papers.

The universities' complaints were based on inaccuracies in the membership information the ballot papers were based on. Had the ballot gone ahead as planned, UCU would have been in breach of trade union laws.

UCU General Secretary Sally Hunt, in a letter to members, blamed "a software problem" with the union's membership records for the various mistakes made on the ballot papers. Some of the campus addresses used on the papers were inaccurate, whilst other universities expressed concerns that UCU had incorrectly estimated the number of members that their unions contained.

However, Hunt's message accused Ucea of using these laws "to deny members the right to vote". She told the association that it was "a great shame that your employers have threatened to use the UK's anti-trade-union laws to try and thwart the right of UCU members to make a decision".

The chair of Ucea, Bill Wakeham, responded that "employers have been asking UCU to reconsider this ill-judged and inappropriate ballot from



**Test of will:** Examinations could have been cancelled if UCU had followed through on their threats of strike action.

the outset but instead they ignored repeated and extensive requests over several weeks to correct the information and restart a valid process. We now urge UCU to turn their attention to the national negotiation table and to seek resolution through meaningful dialogue and the formal disputes procedure".

Although any prospect of strike action over the summer period has been negated, UCU have maintained that if they can not reach an agreement with Ucea they will attempt to reissue a ballot in Michaelmas term. Earlier this year, UCU rejected a pay rise of 0.4% from Ucea, labelling it 'derisory' and pressing for an increase of 8%, which Ucea in turn called 'inappropriate'. Many universities across the country have reduced pay and have begun planning for widespread redundancies, in light of falling investment and public funding cuts.

Wakeham has urged UCU to reconsider the possibility of balloting members again in the future, maintaining that industrial action should "always be a last resort option".

With both sides in the dispute holding their ground, the possibility of industrial action at a later date still looms large.

## Cuts will harm universities' teaching standards, says UCU

CUTS IN GOVERNMENT funding to universities could result in widespread redundancies and dramatically reduce the quality of higher education, UCU general secretary, Sally Hunt, has warned.

In a developing subplot to the ongoing dispute between UCU and university employers over pay and redundancy threats, Hunt claimed that recent budgetary cuts would "degrade academic standards" and cause unrest amongst students and staff.

Hunt made the announcement last Tuesday, at the opening of UCU's annual conference in Bournemouth. The issue of redundancies at universities across the country, as well as the ever increasing likelihood of departmental closures, look set to dominate the agenda of the conference.

In the formal opening of the conference, UCU president, Sasha Callaghan, said: "We must not condemn people to a life of unemployment, and it is wrong that lecturers and staff find themselves

on the job queue. They are the ones who will make the difference in these difficult times and they have a vital role to play."

For students, the cuts in funding to higher education could potentially mean that they face increased class sizes and less contact time with their tutors, issues that have already been highlighted by the growing number of student complaints. The efficiency savings requested of universities by the government have, at many institutions, already begun to come into effect as university directors attempt to cope with their loss of revenue. As well as the £180m reduction in funding announced in the recent budget, the cap on student numbers called for by the government will also curtail the money universities receive from tuition fee payments.

At Lancaster, University Council recently approved a motion to establish a redundancy committee, and the process of electing members of staff to serve

on the committee is underway. However, the university still maintains that it has no direct and immediate plans to make any academic staff redundant. National UCU policy is to not engage with procedures such as Lancaster's, a policy that the local branch of UCU is expressly committed to following. A statement by UCU last month claimed that the committee "will cause more harm to morale and external reputation than it will bring benefit to the university."

Hunt's expectation is that students as well as staff will take an active stand against the actions of their universities. Indeed, some cases have already seen formal complaints from students' unions. Hunt said: "As soon as you introduce fees and the market into higher education, you turn students into customers. As soon as you do that, they become more questioning of what they are receiving and it puts lecturers, who are doing their best in tight financial situations, in a very difficult position."

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# CCTV images of Wetherspoons murder released

DETECTIVES INVESTIGATING THE murder of Dave Bolton, 45, (previously reported in SCAN on May 5) have released CCTV stills of a group of people they need to trace in connection to the St. George's Day brawl which led to his death.

The group are thought to be vital witnesses, having been in the Sir Richard Owen Wetherspoon pub the afternoon Bolton was murdered. The incident took place at about 4.15pm on Thursday, April 23. A large group of men had been fighting. Detective Sergeant Simon Dent, from Lancaster CID, said: "We would urge the people shown in these CCTV images to come forward."

Some of the people who were in the pub that afternoon have not yet come forward to the police. They could be vital witnesses, and detectives are asking the public to help them identify the seven remaining unidentified witnesses. Police have interviewed more than 100 witnesses as part of the investigation into Bolton's death. 17 people have been arrested.

The victim, from Preston, was the uncle of a student at Lancaster University, who made a personal appeal for witnesses through SCAN.

The photos can be seen on the Lancashire Constabulary website ([www.lancashire.police.uk](http://www.lancashire.police.uk)). Search for 'Wetherspoon'. Anyone with information can contact Lancaster CID on 01524 63333 or Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.



**Potential witnesses:** Police wish to speak to this group, who were in the Richard Owen pub around the time that Dave Bolton was murdered.

## Byelections in LUSU and JCRs offer chance for fresh leadership

BYELECTIONS for non-sabbatical and JCR officer roles will be held on June 11 to replace those leaving at the end of this year. Nominations for non-sabb roles are currently open and will close on June 4. The nominees board is in the LUSU building foyer. College chairs or general secretaries should be contacted about JCR positions.

The non-sabbatical roles up for election are to represent students with disabilities; race relations; part-time students; mature students; and the Athletic Union, as well as the posts of LUSU's University Council representative, academic affairs non-sabb and four of the 'Block of Six' officers, positions without a portfolio. There are also openings for Management School Faculty and Science & Technology Faculty representatives.

The students with disabilities post can only be contested by candidates who self-define as having a disability. They sit on a number of committees including the Students With Disabilities Forum, the Anti-Racist Anti-Fascist Committee and the Disability Network. There are no such restrictions on the part-time or mature students officers. The two roles regularly work together.

The race relations officer's remit is to promote the union's awareness of inter-racial issues. They sit on the Equal Opportunities; Welfare; and Women's Campaign committees.

The academic affairs officer's responsibility is to develop campaigns on academic issues, and represent the

views of the union to the university's academic bodies. 'Block of Six' officers are officers without a defined portfolio, intended to assist other officers and campaigns, or to lead on issues that do not fit neatly into other remits.

All non-sabbatical officers sit on and have a vote in the Union Council, the highest political body of Lancaster's student union. Council sit three times a term.

Students interested in standing for a position should collect a nomination form from the LUSU building (located under Spar). They will need to be nominated and seconded by two other students. Hustings for non-sabbatical officers, which is a chance for voters to question candidates, will be held on June 8 at 7pm in Furness LT2.

In each of the colleges (except Graduate and Cartmel) there are two posts for JCR sports secretaries open for election, as well as the following roles:

- Bowland's general secretary
- One of County's media officers, the male education & welfare, and a social secretary.
- Cartmel's female education & welfare officer and a publicity officer.
- Fylde's LGBT officer and the female education and welfare officer.
- Grizedale's international officer and the female education and welfare officer.
- Pendle's international officer.

For more information visit [democracy.lusu.co.uk](http://democracy.lusu.co.uk) or speak to your college JCR.

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## Review of languages courses after cuts

THE TEACHING OF modern foreign languages in universities is to be reviewed, as recent funding cuts leave many languages departments in significant financial trouble.

The Higher Education Funding Council for England (Hefce) review follows changes in funding made after the recent Research Assessment Exercise (RAE), which left many arts and humanities subjects suffering at the expense of science and technology.

An estimated £1.5bn is allocated to universities' departments annually according to their results in the RAE. However, changes in the way the 2008 RAE was conducted has meant that funding is now allocated more equally, leading to a loss in revenue for some of the UK's elite research-led institutions.

This year's budget also moved funding for universities towards areas with greater 'predicted economic potential', largely engineering, technology, and the sciences. The result has been that language departments at highly ranked universities such as Oxford, Edinburgh, and King's College have suffered a significant loss of funds.

The Hefce review is set to look at the impact of the funding cuts on foreign language courses across the country and will look to consider ways of making the teaching of languages more sustainable and viable.



# Izzard urges students to use Euro votes on pre-election tour of uni campuses



**Looking to the future:**  
Eddie Izzard spoke about his own political aspirations. (Photo: Dan Hogan)

## Lizzie Houghton News Editor

WORLD-FAMOUS COMEDIAN Eddie Izzard spoke of his love for Labour and Europe in front of a packed Nuffield Theatre last Tuesday, ahead of the local and European elections on June 4. Izzard was joined on stage by the minister for Europe, Caroline Flint, and Clare Reynolds, one of Labour's European parliamentary candidates for the north-west and a Lancaster alumna.

The event, which sold out within 20 minutes of tickets going on sale, was part of the comedian's 'Talking Politics' tour. He has already visited several universities across the country. Speaking before the show, Izzard said he was

working with Labour to target "certain areas where in the European elections parties like the BNP are targeting".

Following his introduction on stage Izzard spoke about the importance of the European elections. He also spoke about the positions of some fringe parties, particularly the BNP, and to a lesser extent UKIP, accusing one of being "racist" while the other "xenophobic".

The affair was strictly politics with Izzard and his guests taking questions from the audience. Questions varied from the value of fixed-term parliaments to who would win in a physical fight being Gordon Brown and David Cameron. Flint, who the Daily Telegraph alleged to have claimed £14,000 in expenses for solicitors' fees and stamp duty on the sale of her second home, was inevitably

asked how she could justify this. She argued that she was acting well within the rules and that the sum was only £7,000. Half way through Izzard stopped to ask the audience if they thought politicians in general do a good job. Only one person out of the audience of 200 disagreed.

A cry of "cake or death" from the back of the audience left the politicians slightly confused, but once it had been explained they went for the obvious answer. All also agreed that increased tuition-fees should not be introduced.

Kate Fry, chair of the university's Labour Club, which part organised the event, said: "Having Eddie Izzard come speak was not just about helping Labour's reputation around campus, it was far more important that he spoke about the anti-racist issues. Getting people out

to vote, whichever political party they vote for, is going to be far more beneficial in preventing a fascist candidate getting elected to the European Parliament than just encouraging people to vote Labour."

Other campus parties have been slightly more sceptical. Former president of university's Liberal Democrat society, Andy Syddall commented: "If the appearance was designed to whip up last minute support for the ailing Labour party before the coming general election then I would guess it's too little, too late."

But he added: "I love Eddie Izzard, and would have loved to have seen him last night at our university. Regardless of Mr. Izzard's political persuasions, it's genuinely exciting to see a man of such talent make an appearance here."

**Lizzie Houghton** speaks to Eddie Izzard about comedy and politics

**MORE FAMOUS FOR** challenging people to choose between cake or death, Eddie Izzard is now challenging voters to make a different choice. The 47-year-old comedian has been on the campaign trail this past month, swapping gags for party politics.

Izzard, a long time supporter of the Labour party, announced last year that he intends to go into European politics, but not for another ten years or so. For now he's happy just talking about his politics to audiences up and down the country.

"I want to go out there because I've said I want to stand for something politically in ten or fifteen years' time," he says. "So I want to come out and develop my own political manifesto."

With the European and local elections at hand, Izzard is urging people to get out and vote on June 4. He made the point that this is especially relevant in the North West, where the British National Party need just 8.5% of the vote to gain their first European seat.

**"The politics of hatred are an un-British thing. It should be hope, not hate."**

"I don't want the BNP to get in. It's 65 years since D-Day; we shouldn't be fighting fascists again. And we shouldn't be electing fascists. That seems crazy."

"The politics of hatred are an un-British thing. We [should believe in] the politics of hope. It should be hope, not hate."

Party politics is something Izzard keeps off the routine in his stand-up acts. Well known for his transvestitism though, he's not afraid of challenging perceptions. "If you can bring an idea forward in a certain light hearted way it can open people's minds to thinking about the ideas as opposed to already having blocks up there," he says.

With the amount anger and scepticism surrounding politics at the moment, opening people's minds could seem like a long shot. But Izzard retains his faith that politics, especially European politics, is the way forward.

"In the end I just want that we can have 6.5 billion people around the world having a fair deal," he says. "That's what the idea of Europe is in the first place. Getting it so we can work together in some shape or form so that everyone has a fair chance."

"I hope that we will be gradually progressing towards that place. And other continents will be looking at our continent and saying 'oh their doing that. We need to try and do something in our continent too'."

And just in case anyone was concerned as to how Labour can afford to have a world famous comedian campaigning for them, Izzard offered these words of comfort: "At this time of expenses and everyone worrying where the money's coming from, I pay my expenses by singing for my supper."

## Cabinet minister reveals doubts over Johnson's PR plan

### Dan Hogan Editor

THE EUROPE MINISTER, Caroline Flint, in an interview with SCAN last Tuesday was the first member of the cabinet to come out against health secretary, Alan Johnson's call for an overhaul of the way we elect MPs.

"I'd have to be honest; I'm not a big fan of proportional representation," she said. "I think there's different ways it can work, but we know that proportional representation can help smaller and extremist parties."

She added: "There's not some magic wand here to wave that's going to cure the amount of apathy there is and also the amount of anger we have at the moment because of the expenses row."

The previous day, the health secretary, Alan Johnson, widely regarded to be positioning himself to succeed Gordon

Brown as the next Labour leader, wrote in a column in the Times that electoral reform was necessary to restore faith in the political system. He proposed that the system of Alternative Vote Plus, a form of proportional representation that retains the link between MPs and their constituencies, should be offered to voters in a referendum.

He wrote: "The adoption of AV+ would shift the political focus currently concentrated almost exclusively on a few swing voters in a handful of marginal seats."

On the same day as SCAN's interview with Flint, the universities secretary, John Denham, joined Johnson's calls for a referendum on electoral reform. Denham told the Guardian: "For somebody like me who has been a lifelong believer in electoral reform, the case has always been a strong one and the events of the last few weeks have made it even more so."



**Spotlight:**  
Europe minister, Caroline Flint, being interviewed by Ryan Sullivan on LUTube. tv last Tuesday, before she spoke to SCAN. (Photo: Dan Hogan)

On Friday, former cabinet members David Blunkett and Peter Hain joined the growing band of MPs calling for a change of electoral system by writing in the Guardian. However, they oppose any form of PR, with Blunkett describing it as a means to "disempower voters". He also rejected the kind of top-up system Johnson advocates.

But Flint's comments to SCAN are the first from inside the cabinet in opposition to PR since Johnson's column in the Times.

Were the electoral system to change in either the way Johnson or Blunkett suggests, it would be the biggest shake-up of British democracy since the granting of universal suffrage in 1928.



# European elections 2009

# Crunch time for Europe

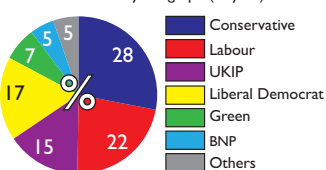
- **Record low turnout expected in protest at MPs expenses**
- **Extremist BNP within reach of first seat in Europe**

**Dan Hogan**  
Editor

AS THE JUNE 4 European elections approach, many commentators are expecting the elections to be like none other. The poll will be taking place against the backdrop of a worldwide global recession, and in the UK, amidst a backlash against the mainstream parties over the excesses of MP's expenses. Widespread public disaffection is expected to manifest itself either as a record low turnout, or as an unprecedented vote share for minor parties, such as the Greens, the UK Independence Party, or the extremist British National party.

Because of the system of electing MEPs – proportional representation – BNP chairman, Nick Griffin, needs only 8.5% of votes here in the north-west to win their first seat in the European Parliament (EP) on Thursday. In the last set of Euro elections, in 2004, his party received 6.4% in the region. The winning threshold will be far easier to reach now, with an expected combination of low turnout, and high numbers of votes cast for minor parties in protest at the conduct of MP's in Westminster. In a YouGov poll for the Daily Telegraph released last week, the BNP polled at 5%. Taking into account the margin of error, this puts them within reach of a win.

**Voting intentions in Euro elections**  
Source: YouGov/Daily Telegraph (May 18)



The YouGov poll put the Conservatives ahead, with 28%, followed by Labour on 22%. Both parties poll ratings have suffered as a result of the expenses revelations, dropping 6 and 4 points respectively in answers about voting intentions. The Liberal Democrats are polling at 17%, narrowly ahead of Ukip, on 15%. In 2004, a large Eurosceptic vote allowed Ukip to push the Lib

Dems into fourth place. The Greens are narrowly ahead of the BNP, with 7%.

Turnout for European elections isn't helped by the common perception of the EU as being distant and out of touch. Only 41% of those polled by YouGov said they are certain to vote.

European elections work differently to most other elections in the UK. Instead of voting for a candidate, who represents a political party, voters cast their vote for a list of candidates from one of the political parties. The seats available in each region are then split proportionally, according to the share of the vote received by each party. This allows smaller parties, that rarely get enough concentrated votes to win seats on councils and in Westminster, to win more representation in Europe.

Recent decisions in the EP have tightened regulation on mobile phone operators, forcing them to charge more reasonable tariffs for calls from overseas. Last month, legislation was passed by the parliament to ban the import of dog, cat and seal fur into the EU. Other initiatives include funding for carbon capture technology to reduce the carbon footprint of power stations.

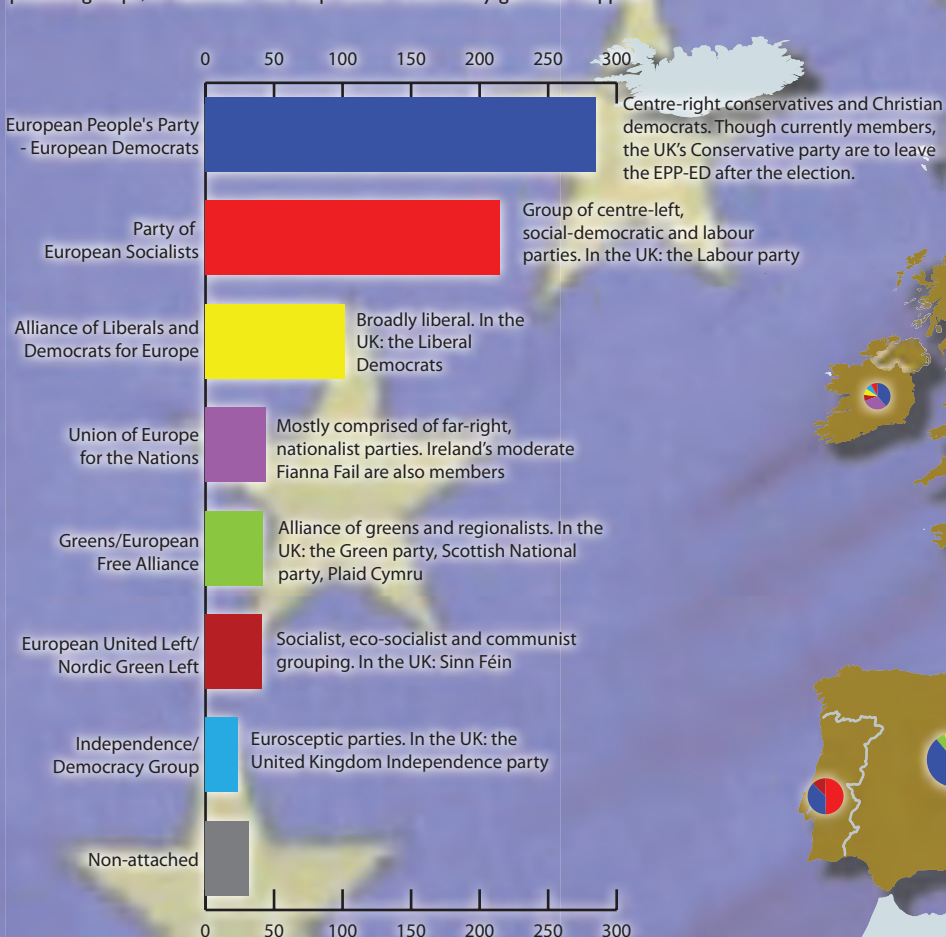
Arlene McCarthy, a Labour MEP for north-west England, is the chair of the EP's Internal Market and Consumer Protection committee. She recently led the passage of animal welfare legislation through the parliament that will undermine the practice of seal clubbing in Canada, by denying the clubbers a market for seal furs in the EU. Last year, McCarthy's committee scored a victory for mobile phone users across the EU by regulating roaming tariffs.

Chris Davies MEP, also representing the north-west as a Liberal Democrat, and the environment spokesman for the party in the EP, cites as his greatest achievement the creation of a €9bn fund for investment in carbon capture technology. He contrasts this achievement with his two years in the UK parliament, where he said he "didn't achieve anything" because of the way the parliament operates. Davies was forced to resign as leader of the Lib Dem group in the EP in 2006, after comments made in a testy email exchange with an angry pro-Israeli constituent resulted in him being accused of anti-semitism and getting the sack.

Tory MEP Robert Atkins campaigned against a blanket ban on old-fashioned 100-Watt lightbulbs, in light of the health risks posed by the flickering of eco-friendly alternatives to people with epilepsy and autism.

## Political groups in the European Parliament

In Europe, political parties band together with other likeminded parties to form larger political groups, or alliances. This map shows where they get their support.



## The European Parliament: What's it all about?



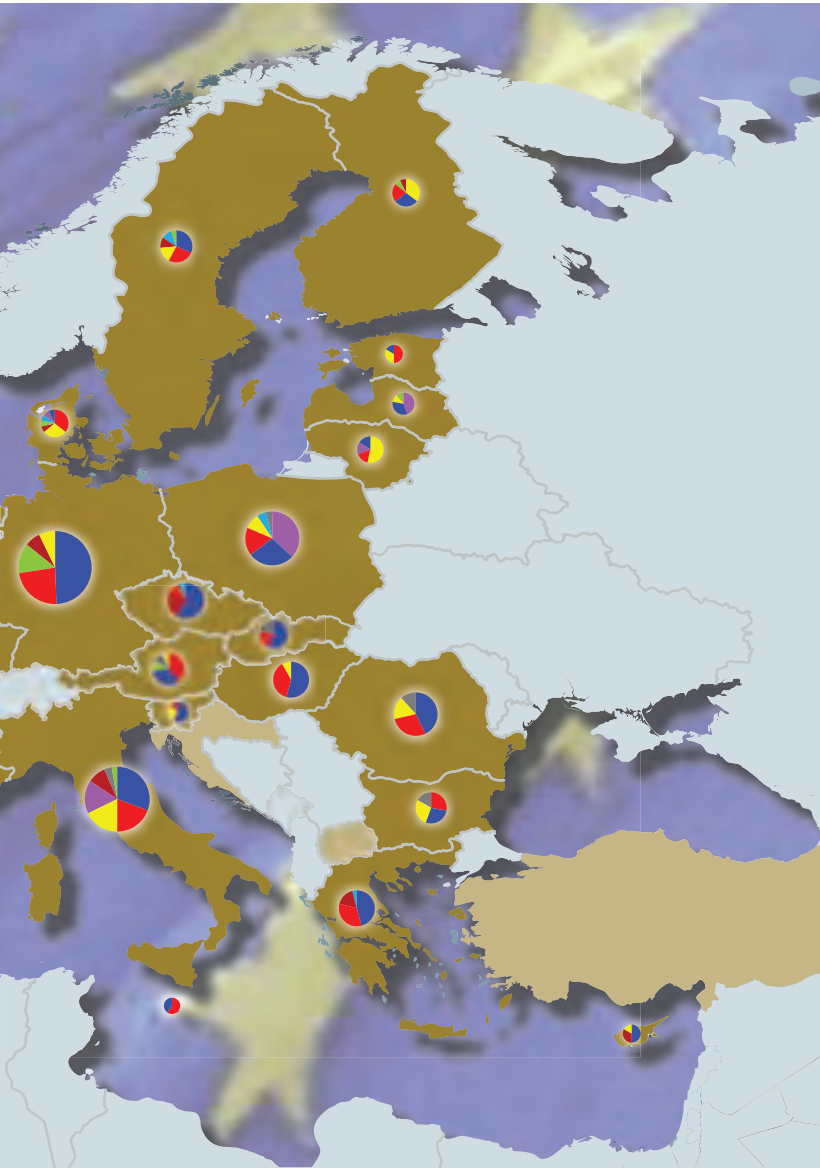
**Chris Davis and Dan Hogan**

OF THE EUROPEAN Union's governing bodies, the European Parliament is the only one which is directly elected by EU citizens. Its main role within the EU is to approve or reject proposals from the European Commission, which sets the direction of EU legislation and manages the budget. The parliament also debates and amends proposals, and if required, can sack members of the commission. The parliament thus exists to ensure that European laws represent the interests of European citizens.

The official seat of the parliament is in Strasbourg in France, but the majority of MEP's time is spent in committees and supplementary plenaries, more than 200 miles away in Brussels. The logistical cost of moving and housing the 736 MEPs and their staff to Strasbourg each month for the 4-day plenary sessions, is about €120m a year.

In the 2009 elections, 736 members of the parliament (MEPs) will be elected from across the EU, with voters in the UK electing 72 of these MEPs from a selection of candidates who stand for election in their re-





gion. The UK is divided into 12 electoral regions, each represented by between three and ten MEPs. This year's European elections will be the largest international democratic elections in history. They have been held every five years since 1979. The 2004 elections in the UK suffered a comparatively low turnout, with only 38.5% of the British public using their vote.

In the North West, candidates from a number of political parties are standing. As well as Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrats candidates, many other smaller political parties are standing as well. Among these include the fiercely anti-European UK Independence party (Ukip), but also the Christian party, the Green party, and Jury Team, who select independent candidates on a ticket of 'politics without parties'.

Because political parties are different in one country to the next, MEPs from similarly-minded national parties form larger European parties. These in turn, often band together to form coalitions or alliances within the parliament in order to push forward shared agendas. The largest of these alliances is the partnership between the European Peoples' Party and the European Democrats (EPP-ED), of which 288

of all MEPs are members. The group is comprised of conservatives and Christian Democrats, supporting economic liberalism and a strong relationship with the US. However, there are tensions between the pro-European EPP and the Eurosceptic ED. David Cameron has pledged to take the UK's Conservative party out of the ED, to form a new group with other more Eurosceptic parties in Europe.

The next largest group is the Party of European Socialists (PES), with 217 MEPs. Politically centre-left, their programme concentrates on tightening economic regulation, improving European gender equality, and increasing the minimum wage. They have also strongly supported the controversial Lisbon treaty, criticised by some as an EU constitution by the back door.

Alongside these major European parties are a number of smaller ones, including liberals, greens, nationalists, and Eurosceptics.

Among the laws passed by the last parliament, elected in 2004, was the setting of a 'eurotariff' price cap on mobile phone roaming charges, the standardisation of food product labels, and a recent package of EU laws on climate change, which called for a 20% reduction in CO2 emissions.

## What the candidates say

### Sir Robert Atkins MEP

Conservative



"Students are no different to anyone else, the EU Parliament's responsibility for passing legislation affects all, regardless of their age or background. However, there are some issues which

may be important to students, including travel abroad, looking for jobs and interchangeability."

"I'm the president of Lancaster University Conservative Future so I know the university very well and have strong links with it. There's a very active group of young people on campus working for the elections and doing a lot to ensure votes. I would urge students to vote in the elections, it's crucial."

"I've been on the road ten days now and only one person has mentioned

expenses to me, and that was because she thought I was a Labour MP! However, I do think it may well reduce turnout."

"We have a substantial nuclear industry in the North West with Sellafield, as well as more trivial things like ensuring the Cumberland Sausage gets full recognition! However, my main aims are to build on the need for a single market in business and industry and to cut down on a lot of the unnecessary bureaucracy that we have."

**Sam Newsham**

### Arlene McCarthy MEP

Labour



"[Labour's policies] for students are really about making sure they're able to live, work, study and reside wholly in any other EU country, and that they are protected by the laws that we put through... protecting temporary and part-time

workers, which students often are."

"We also took on the mobile phone industry, who were charging people 10 times as much as it actually costs to make a [roaming] call... we forced them to bring down the cost."

"People say that the EU doesn't work for people, but people power is very obvious... many of my constituents lobbied me about the seal culls in Canada... now we've stopped the mass commercial import of products from the 350,000 seals that are culled there every year."

"One thing I like about [the Lisbon Treaty], which is vastly overlooked, is

that future EU legislation will first have to go under consultation with national parliaments. That is handing back a lot of the power."

"We just want to make sure that the laws that we get are the right ones to protect and support people. Inevitably many students will take the opportunity to study abroad. Labour's view... is that you should have the right to be protected, you have the right to remedies and redress if something goes wrong, and you have the right, wherever you are, to take the benefits of being in the European Union."

**Dan Hogan**

### Chris Davies MEP

Lib Dem



"I'm so sick of this question of whether Britain should be in or out. Why aren't we looking at the realities?... Countries are having to work ever closer together; there's no question of separating."

"We should be looking at the real is-

suues, of how we improve the economy, create jobs, how we tackle the huge environmental issues facing our planet and our continent, how we try and manage the problems of immigration in a world that is growing at 200,000 people extra every single day."

"The EU is like cavity wall insulation. You put it in, you forget about it, but every single day of the week its saving you money. The reality is that most of what the European Union does is boring."

"The ultimate argument for the Liberal Democrats is that we should be in the EU because we're stronger together."

"[We] believe strongly in private enterprise, in the market economy and achieving a balance between making sure we have a vibrant, free and flexible market economy and our environmental aspirations."

"If you look at any cigarette pack, you'll see some horrible pictures on the side... they're there because I introduced the legislation... But by far the most important thing I've done is to introduce a financial mechanism to promote carbon capture and storage technology. It's potentially worth up to €9bn."

**Dan Hogan**

### Peter Cranie

Green



"I'll be an advocate on behalf of students... We need to decide what our priorities are. We would take the money out of nuclear defence and invest it in jobs and education, in the future of the country."

"We've raised £7,000 through [the internet], which has enabled us to advertise in major newspapers throughout the north-west. Compared to other parties we've taken on far more new methods of campaigning targeted at young people."

"It's difficult to engage students because leaflets aren't delivered into their halls of residence so if they don't buy a newspaper they don't see what's happening."

"The last three national opinion polls put it at 9%, 11% and 9%, so it's looking to the Greens getting a seat. We're

expecting to win between 4 and 8 seats nationally but we could do a lot better, opinion polls usually underestimate."

"Despite the expenses row we're putting forwards a positive message. We're concentrating on jobs and job creation. This is the worst job market in history for graduates – and not just graduates, for everyone in the economy. We think we can create 100,000 jobs in sustainable industry in the north-west and that's what we've put on our manifesto."

**Sam Newsham**

### Paul Nuttall

Ukip



"They're talking about something at the moment called the Bologna Process and what that will do is try and harmonise degrees right across Europe. What it will do is ensure that degrees in this county are moved from three years to

five. What we'd like to do is take away the money which we give the European Union and one of the things that we'd do with that is we'd do away with the loan system and go back to student grants."

"Just because we pull out of the European Union doesn't necessarily mean that students wouldn't be able to go aboard and study."

"75% of our laws are made by a European Commission that meet in secret, isn't elected by anybody and has 3,000 working groups who advise the commission on the laws that dictate

Europe. And it's so secretive that they won't even tell us who sits on these 3,000 working groups or what business/lobbyist they represent. It's all cloak and dagger."

"If you believe in freedom and you believe in democracy and you don't like the fact that 75% of the laws in this country are made by a commission that meets in secret then please go out there and register a protest vote. Look what the MPs are up to down in London: it's absolutely criminal."

**Lizzie Houghton**



# Student to tackle Mount Snowdon for Uganda

**Lauren Hirst**

DAVID KELSALL, A first year student from Cartmel, is currently in training to climb Mount Snowdon, the highest mountain in England and Wales, all in the aid of charity.

Not one to do something by half, Kelsall plans to not just run the 3,560 feet mountain but also to cycle and swim his way to the summit of Mount Snowdon. The mechatronic engineering student is joining seven friends from his Church group in his home town in Colwyn Bay, north Wales, to tackle the challenge. The group is hoping to raise £1,000 each to fund their mission trip to Uganda this summer to build orphanages.

Kelsall, 19, who plans to use his degree in the future to help developing countries around the world, is no stranger to testing himself, having already swam 10km continuously. But despite his talent for long distance swimming, the running and cycling aspect of the triathlon is a challenge in itself. Not to be deterred, Kelsall has been training continuously, swimming up to 2km each week as well as running until he "can't run anymore".

Once David has reached his £1,000 goal he will fly the 4,000 miles to Uganda at the end of June with the charity Open Door, where he will help some of the world's most vulnerable children.



## Shawn for a cause:

David Kelsall has shaved his head to raise money for a trip to Uganda to help vulnerable children. His next fundraising bid is to climb Mount Snowdon. (Photo: Lizzie Houghton)

Like many countries in Africa, Uganda has been ravaged for many decades by war, famine and AIDS. Throughout the year Open Door sends willing volunteers to the capital Kampala where they build and repair shelters, as well leading Sunday School classes with Ugandan

children, taking school assemblies and helping plan holiday programmes for the children.

"I became aware of the Open Door organisation when they came to visit my church," Kelsall said. He has already raised £440 by shaving off his hair and

another £160 earned through doing "odd jobs". His current total stands at £600, with still has a way to go to reach his target of £1,000.

Those wishing to make a donation should email Kelsall at david.kelsall@hotmail.com.

## Politics must be relevant to young people Brown vows

GORDON BROWN HAS vowed to make politics more relevant to young people, ahead of a report by the Youth Citizenship Commission to be published next month. The report is on promoting participation by young people in local communities and politics. Ideas being considered include lowering the voting age to 16 and introducing citizenship ceremonies to mark a young person's coming of age into adult society.

Speaking to young visitors in Number 10 last week, the prime minister said: "We are trying to clean up politics at the moment - that's the first thing - so there are no abuses and people understand that all the problems that have existed in politics have been sorted out.

"We are going to have to be very tough in making sure that happens. But there is another issue about engagement in politics, about how few people - and how few young people - feel that politics is relevant to them. Cleaning up the system is one thing, but making sure that everybody has a chance to make their voice felt in decisions that affect their lives is going to be a big thing for the future."

The Youth Citizenship Council was one of Brown's first initiatives when he took over leadership of the country in 2007. It focuses on increasing young people's participation in politics.



# ELECTIONS

**NOMINATIONS** - NOW OPEN - CLOSING THURSDAY  
WEEK 7 AT 6PM

**HUSTINGS** - MONDAY WEEK 8 AT 7PM IN  
FURNESS LT2

**VOTE** - THURSDAY WEEK 8



democracy.lusu.co.uk



# A new face for Alexandra Square?

**Sam Newsham**  
Deputy News Editor

STUDENTS ARE BEING given the chance to have their say on the new look of Alexandra Square.

A consultation, held in the square itself last month, provided an opportunity for students to meet the three landscape architects chosen to draw up plans for the square as well as a chance to explain how they use the square and what it means to them.

As part of the ongoing landscape redevelopments around campus, Alexandra Square is to be given a facelift in the next 12 months. The university has taken a consultative approach to the redevelopment and held the public consultation on Thursday of week four. Well over 200 staff and students attended and gave feedback.

Mark Swindlehurst, director of facilities, was keen on getting students to come forward with their views on the square. He said: "It's hugely important. The more people who can put something into the design process the more people we'll be able to satisfy when the final design comes to fruition."

He also spoke about the importance of the project as a whole. "The square is the most important space that the university has. This is the heart of the university. It's got to welcome people,

it's got to be vibrant."

When asked what he himself would like to see from the designs, he told SCAN that "the solution has got to be sympathetic. I don't think it should be a gimmicky space, but it should be a space for gathering, socialising and enjoyment."

LUSU president, Michael Payne, echoed the sentiments. He said: "The square has 40 years of history and 40 years of memories. Any solution must be sympathetic to the architecture that exists, which is why I very much welcome the consultative approach."

The three landscape architects, Whitelaw Turkington, Ian White Associates and Gillespies, were short-listed after six firms were interviewed in March.

Each firm brought a variety of methods of obtaining student and staff opinion to the consultation. All had questionnaires asking for thoughts on the square's positive and negative attributes and space to write or draw things students would like to see.

Whitelaw Turkington built a three-dimensional model of the square on which students were asked to map their most frequent routes.

Ian White Associates asked for opinions on specific issues including the underpass, the seating areas and the canopies. They had a sheet of images and asked students to put stick-



**Concept:** Landscape architects Whitelaw Turkington set up a model of Alexandra Square to map the routes that users of the space take across it.

ers by the ones they liked most to discover what they would like to see in the square.

Gillespies had a similar activity. To find out how students viewed the square they asked questions such as "If Alexandra Square was a famous person who would they be?"

Following the consultation the three firms will draw up designs. These will be displayed on the hoardings around the Learning Zone site in Alexandra Square for public view. Staff and stu-

dents will then be able to vote for their favourite design.

The public vote will contribute 50% of the score. The remaining 50% will come from a judging panel of university staff including the vice chancellor, Paul Wellings, the chair of the Estates committee, Gary Middlebrook, Swindlehurst and Payne.

The proposed budget for the project is not yet known. "This really depends on the winning scheme and cost advisors will look at this before the final

selection," said Swindlehurst. "We understand the importance of Alexandra Square and the need to get it right."

It is estimated that work on the square will be complete by the summer of 2010.

The redesign of Alexandra Square is part of the university's ongoing masterplan to renovate the whole of the university campus. The plan, which altogether will run from 2007 to 2017, aims to open out the campus and lessen its feeling of containment.

## Working women in no win situation says LUMS director

**Lizzie Houghton**  
News Editor

CHILDLESS WOMEN ARE often "vilified at work and face enormously unjust treatment" according to Dr Caroline Gatrell, director of the Management School's Research Training Programme.

Gatrell, who specialises in gender and relationships research, spent six years interviewing women about the workplace for her new book: *Embodying Women's Work*. She found that women without children are seen by some employers as lacking an "essential humanity". They can be turned down for jobs, denied promotions or vilified by bosses.

"Women who explicitly choose career over kids are often vilified at work and face enormously unjust treatment,"



Gatrell said. She added that employers saw them as "cold, odd and somehow emotionally deficient in an almost dangerous way that leads to them being excluded from promotions that would

**Glass ceiling:**  
According to research, discrimination against women in the workplace happens regardless of the choices they make.

place them in charge of others".

Employers are also dubious of promoting women of childbearing age, as there is no guarantee they won't choose to have children. The situa-

tion is no better for those women with children. "Women with children are blamed for combining motherhood with paid work - and women with no children are sidelined and discounted because they are not mothers," Gatrell said.

Sara Dunn, the student union's women's officer, agrees that women are often in a no win situation in the workplace. Most women, she said, suffer from indirect discrimination. "Discrimination isn't always overt, it can be quite covert."

Dunn added: "You now have something written into policies now called indirect discrimination. This recognises that people can discriminate without actively meaning to do so because we have norms which are ingrained. It is a way of protecting people from discrimination, but it also gives employers some level of protection, which is

quite a grey area."

LUSU and the JCRs are currently working in conjunction with CEEC, the campus careers service, to provide students with more information about their rights at work and what constitutes as discrimination.

"Some students may be very unprepared about their working rights and the policies in place that aim to protect them from harassment and discrimination, whether this be overt or explicit. University is the perfect place to gain free and valuable information and I hope that the uptake for this information will be high in demand," said Dunn.

The campaign should begin in Week 9, but students can order information packs before then from LUSU, or visit CEEC, located in University House in Alex Square, for more information.



# Grad Ball two thousand & nine

## Alesha Dixon

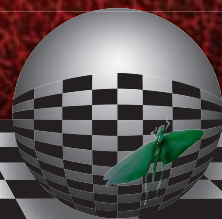
Gorgeous, self-assured and stylish Ms Dixon headlines this year's Grad Ball bringing unabashed and perfect pop music with her! Ladies and Gentlemen, please take your seats: the curtains are coming up on The Alesha Show! [www.aleshadixon.co.uk](http://www.aleshadixon.co.uk)



## The Puppini Sisters

Accomplished, eccentric and original, The Puppini Sisters specialise in 1940's glamour and three-part, close harmony music.

[gradball.lusu.co.uk](http://gradball.lusu.co.uk)





# Graduates advised to 'leave the UK'

**Chris Davis**  
News Editor

A GOVERNMENT BROCHURE unveiled this month for graduates, advises them to think more flexibly about their options following university, encouraging them to consider options such as working abroad, volunteering, and setting up their own business.

The brochure, entitled *Life After Graduation*, has been produced by the Department for Innovation, Universities, and Skills (Dius), and will be sent directly to every student after they graduate. This years graduating students face a ferociously competitive job market. In the same week that the brochure was published, an independent study of 500 UK companies reported that over half of the firms polled would not be looking to hire graduates over the following months.

The government brochure is largely aimed at encouraging university leavers to look beyond conventional routes –

such as graduate employment schemes – many of which have been scaled down due to the recession. One of the suggestions provided by the brochure is to try working abroad, which it calls an “exciting experience and a way to increase your range of skills”. However, it does warn that graduates should research their international employment rights and check that their qualifications will be accepted abroad before moving. Advice is also provided for graduates about finding volunteering placements at home and abroad. The brochure promises that an estimated 700 full time and 29,000 part time volunteering opportunities will be available this year through the national volunteering charity, v.

The publication also gives more information about the government’s new graduate internship scheme, unveiled earlier this year. The ‘graduate talent pool’ is set to support over 5,000 internships, with businesses across the UK including Network Rail, Microsoft, and Marks & Spencer. A website matching graduates to potential internships is to



**Upward struggle:** Reaching the first rung on a career is often the hardest step for recent graduates. (Photo: SXC/Costi)

be set up in July. 10-14 week placements with small to medium sized businesses, known as Short Knowledge Transfer Partnerships (KTPs) are also set to rise, with the brochure claiming that over 250 KTPs will be created in the next year.

A statement from universities secretary, John Denham, said: “We want to provide as much information as possible about the opportunities available to students, including work, internships, further study or volunteering.”

When asked why the leaflet was not being sent to all students rather than just to final years upon their graduation, a spokesperson for DiUS explained that the brochure would be “available to everyone online, and within universities’ careers departments.” *Life After Graduation* can be viewed on the DiUS website, at [www.dius.gov.uk](http://www.dius.gov.uk).

Alongside the various government initiatives, and the works of charities such as v and TeachFirst, some universities have taken steps towards increasing their graduates’ employability, Lancaster included. September 2009 will see the launch of the Lancaster Award, a scheme that aims to give recognition of students’ extra-curricular achievements. Participation in the award will help graduates identify how their activities have given them valuable skills, and will also offer opportunities to practice interview techniques and application forms. The award is a further indication of the pressure on universities to directly intervene in the job search process and ensure that graduates are actively thinking about their future careers.

## Fire crew scales Cityblock walls to tackle students’ kitchen blaze

**Alexandra Lainsbury**

ON SUNDAY 24TH May, a fire broke out in Cityblock One, student housing located in the centre of Lancaster. The source of the fire, contained within the fourth floor kitchen, is not yet known.

The alarm started at around 4pm, but due to false alarms in the past, some residents did not evacuate the building immediately. Instead they remained inside while thick black smoke began to pour from the open windows of the top floor. One second floor resident re-entered the building and informed the others of the danger.

The fire caused the keypad lock on the outer door to fail. While four fire engines soon arrived and roped off the area, they were unable to enter the building through the door. The firemen had to scale the building and break into the kitchen through the fourth floor window.

Worried residents of the building gathered in the street outside Mognies takeaway, watching events unfold.

Fire safety precautions within the flat prevented the spread of the fire to the corridors and bedrooms and the first, second and third floors were all unharmed. After a period of around an hour and a half, the fire crew departed and the inhabitants of the three lower floors were able to re-enter.

Fourth floor residents have been left without kitchen facilities or electricity, but the structure of the building is undamaged. Students living in the fourth floor flat are said to have temporarily moved into friends’ houses. While it is not yet known when the renovations will be completed or how much this is likely to cost the company, Cityblock officials guarantee that the flat will definitely be finished in time for next year’s residents to move in during September. In the mean time, several students are left without homes.

## TK Maxx to open in Lancaster

THE EMPTY SHELL of the former Lancaster branch of Woolworths is to be put back into use as a new TK Maxx store.

The fashion and homeware chain, which is the world’s largest budget retailer, is looking to take over the store which Woolworths vacated at the start of January. TK Maxx hope to open its new store on Market Square by the end of the summer. The new store could create 50 new jobs and provide a welcome boost to the city’s economy.



Church St, Lancaster

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## Vibrant city centre Salon

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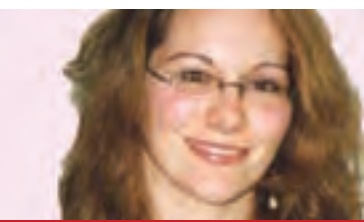
Angels & Demons reviewed

page 23

LET US PERFECT YOUR STYLE FOR GRAD BALL



## scan:COMMENT



Sam Newsham

# Painful wounds are left open in the name of secrecy and security

## The glacial shift toward greater openness and transparency in MI5 can only come too late for the families of the July 7 victims

**M**Ps' expenses have dominated the headlines this week. Indeed, the public has been so caught up in the saga of Douglas Hogg's moat and Oliver Letwin's tennis court that other events have slipped by almost unnoticed. Most notable of these was a report by the Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) into the London terrorist attacks of July 7 2005.

The report found that though MI5 had been alerted to the ringleader, Mohammad Sidique Khan, numerous times prior to the attack, they didn't feel he posed a serious enough threat to warrant attention. What this shows is that at the time the Service was so overstretched that it lacked the necessary resources to follow all leads, including ones leading to dangerous terrorists.

Although the report concluded that the MI5 could not be held responsible, those who read about it could be forgiven for believing that, under different circumstances, the attacks would have been prevented.

The fact is, however, that around 2,000 people are under suspicion of terrorist activities in Britain at any one time. The security service simply cannot fully investigate every person who crosses their path. They lack the manpower, they lack the resources

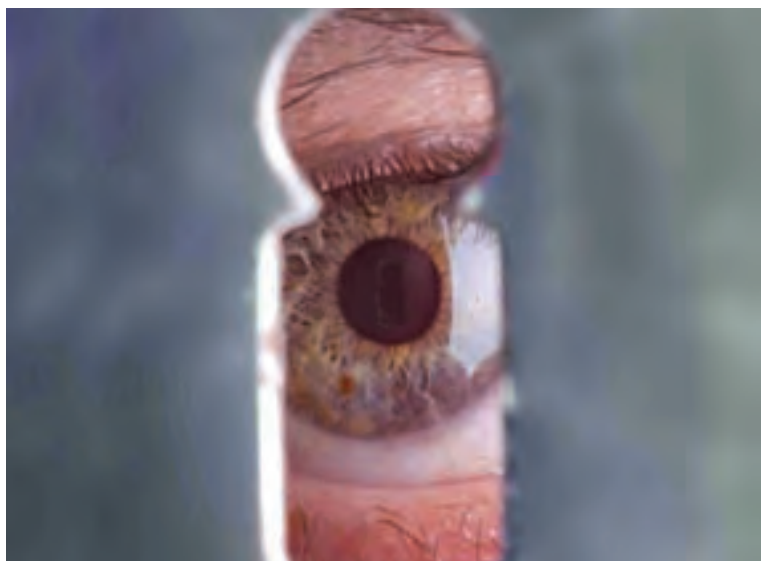
and they run the risk of being seen to hound people on grounds of race or religion. Try as they might they cannot completely rule out the possibility that terrorist attacks such as those in 2005 will happen again.

Following 7/7, MI5 took steps to reduce this possibility. Then-director general, Eliza Manningham-Buller, announced her aim to increase the number of employees to 3,000 as soon as possible, and to 4,000 by 2009, immediately following the attacks. In recent years regional centres have been opened in several cities across the UK.

But employee vetting procedures are stringent and costly. In 2005 Manningham-Buller requested £50m from the home secretary to ensure that each new recruit was the person they said they were.

However, these measures will make no difference to the families of the 52 people who died on July 7. The ISC's report was heavily censored and already the families are calling for an open and independent inquiry. They want to be sure that nothing is hidden from them – and when newspapers cannot even agree on the number of pages the report had or the number of times it stated MI5 came across Khan, is it any wonder?

No other organisation is quite so



surrounded in secrecy as MI5. It is impossible for them to reveal the full details of the report even to the victims' families. We are all aware that in the interests of national security some things cannot be made public.

The problem is, of course, that the general public, whose knowledge of the service comes mostly from Spooks, James Bond and the novels of Stella Rimington, find it so difficult not to believe the worst.

Since Rimington became the first Director General to be named on appointment in 1992 – and subsequently publish her autobiography in 2001 – there has been a slight move towards greater openness. As a celebration of its forthcoming centenary the current director general, Jonathan Evans, invited journalists into MI5's Thames House headquarters, and gave an interview in January of this year. Whilst anything worth looking at will have been locked

away long before their arrival, this concession to the press seems to suggest Evans' acceptance that his organisation must shed its image of hiding behind a cloud of official secrecy.

Despite this, the questions still remain. Not only from the families of the July 7 victims but also over the recent allegations by British resident Binyam Mohamed that MI5 was complicit in his torture at Guantanamo Bay. The allegations have of course been denied, but still the press and public wonder.

To use the expenses headlines as an allegory, Lancaster MP, Ben Wallace, recently spoke out against the "unacceptable" activities of those who claimed more than they were entitled to. A rather hypocritical attitude, given that his own expense claims for 2007-8 were £175,523 and the fourth highest in the country. Pleasingly though, Wallace's website gives the public a breakdown of how every penny of their £175,523 was spent, the message being that he has nothing to hide.

Wallace's action demonstrates the advantages of government transparency. In the wake of the expenses row there may be more frankness to come. It is unfortunate that, by the very nature of its work, this is one trend MI5 will not be able to follow.

Liam Richardson  
Editor-elect

# Wipe your own nose, and live your own life

## Students seem to have forgotten what it means to be independent

**I**t was a rather innocuous comment by a seminar tutor that led me to write this latest piece. The tutor in question was commenting on observations she had made during her time as a lecturer over the last decade. The point that struck a chord with me was the remark that ten years ago, students came to open days to look around the university with other friends or on their own. Now, it is parents who are invariably in tow.

So what has prompted this change? Does it signify a wider malaise in which current students are more dependent on their parents than ever before? University is supposed to be the best time of your life, to use a cliché, a time when you can truly grow into your own person. Of course, it is impossible to make such a statement without bringing top-up fees into the equation. Introduced in time for the academic year 2006-2007, and so covering practically the whole spectrum of undergraduate students currently studying at this university, the payment of £3,175 per year has probably given parents a greater urge to involve

themselves in their children's time at university.

There was a time when going to university meant fending for yourself, making your own decisions and becoming a responsible adult capable of surviving in the real world. But now, developing trends are turning students into a mollicoddled generation still dependent on the support of their parents, stunted in their emotional growth and lacking in maturity.

The rising cost of studying at university has meant students are applying to universities closer to home and so remaining under the watchful eyes of their parents. Instead of washing their own clothes and cleaning their own rooms, some students are travelling home almost every weekend or having their parents turn up to sort their lives out. You can't help but notice the ghost town that is campus at weekends. A phenomenon explained by the weekly exodus of students from Lancaster to the care and attention of parents who are too afraid to cut the apron strings.

Perhaps, parents are getting more

involved because they are making a more significant investment than before in their children's education; understandably, they want to see the fruits of their financial undertaking at a closer proximity. Of course, this increased need for financial support is also becoming a bigger burden during the global economic downturn. As the cost of living rises, and supermarket prices rocket on basic amenities, parents are forced more often to give cash handouts to their children.

But this increased involvement has manifested itself in other ways. Students who get into trouble with their college deans or departments for plagiarism now expect their parents to defend them. Surely, once you get to university, as an 18-year-old and an adult, you can stick up for yourself and deal with such issues, but apparently not. The university has struck back with a tit for tat approach in which some departments now send letters home to parents for poor seminar attendance; an immature response only exacerbates the problem.

This situation continues after stu-

dents have completed their degrees. More than ever, students are returning to their home towns to find employment and make the most of a cushy but claustrophobic existence back at the family residence, instead of flying the nest. A third of men and a fifth of women aged between 20 and 34 still live with their parents, a figure that will only rise as the recession kicks in and job opportunities become scarcer.

Are graduates really no longer capable of functioning independently from their parents? If so, then the repercussions could be catastrophic. Perhaps, a generation of employees will not have the basic common sense and maturity to handle high-pressure jobs or have the social skills and emotional capabilities to successfully raise a family and bring up children.

Parents need to back off and let their children develop and make their own way whilst at university; students need to learn to follow their own path and resist the urge to go running to mummy and daddy when things aren't going their way.





## Who failed baby Peter?

Social workers are not at fault for child abuse, they just get left picking up the peices, writes **Donna Neill**

**T**he last 20 years has seen a surge in the reported cases in the media of child abuse. It is easy to assume that this is a recent phenomenon. But in fact, there has always been a problem in identifying what exactly should be done to protect vulnerable children such as Baby P.

The issue of child protection spans not only the 21st century but every century before it. It was only in 2001 that a full-scale report was conducted in response to the death of Victoria Climbié, 8, who was stabbed, beaten and starved for days on end.

The report into Victoria's death found that everyone – from church ministers to doctors – failed to notice the abuse, despite lacerations to Victoria's skin, cigarette burns on her back and how she could not walk upright due to being kept in a bath each night tied up in a bag. Victoria was not registered to attend school and was assigned a newly qualified 22-year-old social worker. In a somewhat ironic twist, Haringey Council, the same council that Baby Peter was also being 'protected' by, was monitoring Victoria.

This pattern raises the inevitable question: what is going wrong with our social services?

Perhaps we can point to the fact that, on average, a social worker will never earn more than £30,000 a year despite having to endure some of the most intimidating and dangerous circumstances that any other ordinary employee would, quite rightly, completely refuse to do. There is a huge shortage of social care workers, particularly in the more dangerous and crime-stricken areas. This means that, for those left, workloads are much too heavy and resources are too scarce.

Five qualified staff were sacked recently over the failure to protect Baby P. Victoria Climbié's social worker was similarly sacked, perhaps only to placate the media furore. But rarely is the blame placed at the foot of parents. Yet all the while, social workers find themselves stuck in a perpetual no-win situation, be vilified for bureaucratic delay or condemned for over-zealous intrusion.

What is clear is that something needs to be done to aid, rather than hinder, social care workers to do their jobs more effectively. The government needs to take a serious look at the resources allocated to local councils for this purpose.

Just because child abuse exists should not mean that it is to be expected. Unfairly, though, it is the gridlocked social workers that act as society's scapegoat when tragic events do occur. It is about time we developed preventative measures and stopped relying on the obvious failures of knee-jerk response mechanisms that have been used to date. And so, perhaps most importantly, the focus of blame needs to be placed more at the doorstep of the abusers themselves.



**Alex Harris**  
Comment Editor

## European politicians need to explain what they are for

Flimsy focus group platitudes about the EU have created a vacuum filled only by extremists

**L**ooking at the website for the UK Independence party, the self-proclaimed "libertarian, non-racist party seeking Britain's withdrawal from the European Union," the most striking image, aside from the terrible colour choices of pink and yellow, is that of Winston Churchill and his famous 'V for victory' sign.

It would seem that the irony is lost on the UKIP public relations team. After all, it was Churchill himself who first used the term "United States of Europe" and was strongly in favour of its creation, though mostly as a response to the economic mess that the entire region was in after World War II, as opposed to any fanciful idealism relating to liberty and democracy.

Nevertheless, fanciful idealism eventually came about. Human rights treaties were agreed upon, judicial activism became endemic to a degree that not even the USA would dare approach. Reading through case law often seems like a heartwarming and boring story about institutions sticking up for the 'common man' over the dominance of the evil and conniving state institution. Economic dependence made war

between France, Germany and Britain once and for all damn-near impossible. Things were beginning to look good. But for some reason, everybody hated it.

Referenda results are almost uniformly anti-EU, public opinion often ranges between hostile and rabid hatred, pub chats are often drowned out by the virulent cries of 'bloody EU! I'm voting Ukip!'

To sift through the various opinions of self-appointed Eurosceptics can sometimes be a real challenge to one's own preconceptions about the EU. On a lot of issues, they sceptics are correct – we really are losing national sovereignty. There really is a danger of losing some of our traditions to an international organisation that has no care for or understanding of them. There are worrying tendencies to limit freedom of speech that should be opposed at all costs.

These are genuine concerns that should be addressed, yet for many they seem to only be addressed by the far right. It's no secret anymore that there is a worrying trend to elect extremists to the European Parliament as a protest vote. The hilariously un-self-aware Ukip already has MEPs and the BNP

could realistically soon follow suit. It should be the swansong for proportional representation when a party comprised of holocaust deniers and rapist sympathisers should be accorded an international voice.

There are two ways we can react to this: the general tendency is to retreat to a sort of 'Ohdearism' and just declare that it's bad for extremists and demagogues to represent Britain in the EU. Alternatively, we can ask ourselves why extremists and demagogues are being voted for in the first place and what can be done about it.

It's no big news that there is a deficiency of inspiration in British politics at the moment. David Cameron is considered to be the height of eloquence and public speaking ability, yet the best I can really say about him is he resembles a confident CEO. Always going through the motions – a real student and practitioner of Hilary Clinton's insincerity.

If you think we've got it bad, you should try watching some of the debates in the European Parliament. Flat and uninspiring, its Greatest Hit of recent times is the Etonian rambling of one Daniel Hannan, a nauseatingly conserv-

ative Tory MEP virulently opposed to the NHS and pretty much anything that involves government. His short tirade against Gordon Brown has become a YouTube sensation, attracting hundreds of thousands of views in a short amount of time. For all its supposed brilliance, it's just about the standard fare in rhetoric that you can see every Wednesday if you're willing to subject yourself to prime minister's questions.

It's not that the institutional structure of the EU is inherently evil or potentially destructive economically, it's that most of the time even the main party MEPs don't seem to be able to tell anybody what it does. Too often we're treated to platitudes about 'united community' and 'stability' that talk a lot, but say nothing whatsoever.

It's easy, then, to see why extremists get their way in. Their positions, though abhorrently racist and destructive in their stupidity, are clear and unflinching, rather than a vapid cliché cooked up in focus groups and PR campaigns. It's a sorry state of affairs, but if the major parties are ever to expect the British population to take Europe seriously – they should probably start doing that themselves.





**Michael Payne**  
LUSU President

# Students need their own manifesto in these elections

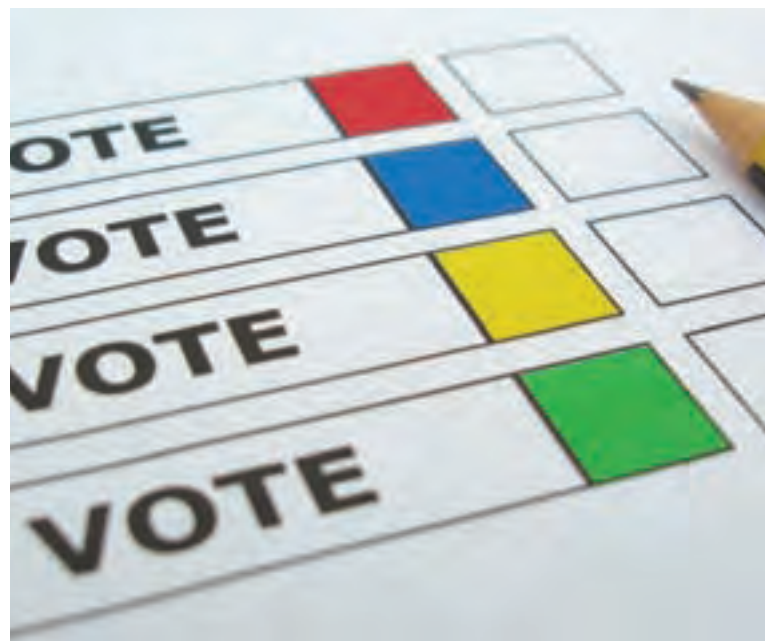
This low ebb of public feeling toward politics gives students a unique chance to shape the agenda

**F**irst cash for questions, then cash for honours and now cash for Kit Kats and duck islands. The widespread disaffection in our political leaders means there hasn't been an opportunity as great as this for students to grasp the political initiative at local, national and international level in the last 50 years.

That having been said, I am more than aware that a proportion of you will be tired of the repetitive droning on about elections. You will no doubt be bored of hearing people talk about using your vote, having your say and standing up for students, but there is too much at stake in these elections to simply sit in your room and ignore the democratic process on June 4.

On June 4 there will be a range of unsavory representatives standing for election to our European Parliament, some of whom have flaunted their disdain of students many a time prior to this coming ballot. At a local level we need representatives who are conscious of this small though dense population on the Bailrigg and who will have students at the forefront of their mind when making decisions.

And with a morass of expenses scandals at a national government level, an economic recession, which is badly affecting graduate prospects and a pending review of higher education funding, we must use the chips we have on the table or risk losing our



seats at the negotiating table on these issues. Voting will, of course, not solve all of our problems, nor will simply exercising our democratic rights seal the deal for students nationally.

We need to go further; we should all create a list of our needs and wants from our local, national and international representatives - a student manifesto if you will. I realise we will all have different wishes and demands but my suggestion is not one joint manifesto but a collection of clearly

and coherently voiced opinions and views of the electorate. We should challenge and question our politicians and hold them to task over their promises. But we shouldn't just stop at this.

We should hammer on the door of our politicians until we are given our answers, we should make them work for the respect, which they rightly deserve. By sitting at home on June 4 we are letting them off the hook once more.

June 4 also presents an opportunity for us to send a clear statement to all political parties that we are proud of the diversity on our campuses, we are proud of the differing backgrounds we come from and we are proud of our ability to stand together as one group when the going gets tough.

Voting on June 4th will take no more than five minutes of your time but can mean preventing lasting damage to student populations across the North West and the rest of the UK for at least the next four years.

Here are a few of my thoughts for a student manifesto: First, a proper role for student representatives in the review of higher education taking place later this year. Second, a short-term boost to internship and volunteering opportunities (with expenses paid) in major national and multi-national organisations for students across the EU. Third, further increases in university places to allow more students to enhance their education in the recession. Fourth, a freeze on interest rates on student overdraft facilities or their complete removal until graduate employment prospects are in the UK

start to improve. Fifth, free NHS prescriptions for all HE students across the UK.

This list is by no means exhaustive or finished, but intended to provoke wider thought about what it is students should be demanding and flexing their electoral muscle to secure.



**Liam Kay**

## National service needs a national debate

**C**havs. Hoodies. Yobs. Vandals. Teens gone wild. Broken Britain. We are frequently bombarded with pessimistic headlines describing Britain as a society under siege; gripped by fear as crime wreaks havoc on our communities and the teenage generation gradually lose all respect for the rest of the populace, and all control over their actions.

Putting scepticism aside, let us assume for the moment that this alarmist view is true, it would then be worthwhile to discuss how the crisis of attitude in the UK can be dealt with. One reactionary proposition put forth is the re-introduction of national service.

National service has typically been a favourite subject of the tabloid newspapers and the right wing of the political spectrum, the arguments being that life in the armed forces can bring discipline to the unruly mob that today's youths are incorrectly or otherwise portrayed as. This is also the traditional view of what many see as national service; doing a stint of duty in the armed forces to serve your country and learn a few life skills along the way.

Nevertheless, this idea presents us with some problems. Pacifists would

refuse entry into the army, uncommitted youths would lower the standard of our forces and, most disturbingly, teaching a young criminal to use a gun may well cause more problems than it solves. These issues are all crucial in questioning how, and if at all, we can make national service a valid concept in the modern age of iPods, HD televisions and, a general lack of faith in the soundness of government policy, especially in the wake of the Iraq war.

The best form is a kind of national service similar to that undertaken in Germany. In Germany, anyone over the age of 18 is expected to complete a year of national service. This can be in the armed forces but also allows for work in nursing homes, hospitals and a whole host of other professions that aid and benefit the country as a whole. This could be the very means to reinvigorate British community spirit, allowing today's youth to help work for the benefit of the nation and help foster a greater pride in their community and in the country they live in, resuscitating a social and community spirit that was obliterated under the dark years of the individualistic Thatcher government. Work in our NHS, as youth workers, in charities and in nursing

homes, as community support officers and, if the individual wishes so, in our army and our naval services, could bring a greater sense of pride in our country to the youth of today. National service would give us all a stake in Britain's development.

Too many people today are prepared to spend their time aiming barbed - and frankly ignorant - comments in the faces of those who work so hard to allow us to live the lives of relative ease we enjoy. Too much of this criticism is unproductive; everybody knows there are problems in our NHS and that we are understaffed across the public sector, but too few are prepared to offer constructive help. If we are to escape the nadir we find ourselves in currently, we must be open to new options. We cannot expect to have world class public services by poo-pooing any solution aimed at getting us there.

Building a nation we can be proud of can't be achieved by sitting on the sidelines, cynically rejecting any notion of a national social and political community. If we want to live in a society that we can be proud of we have to be prepared to work for it. For without it, we have nothing.

# scan

Tuesday, June 2, 2009

## This relief is short-lived

IT IS A relief to see that the University and College Union have aborted their ballot of members for industrial action. Had UCU received a mandate for such action, students' examinations and the marking of other forms of assessment could have been seriously affected.

The means by which universities achieved this victory over their own staff though, is less pleasing. It would have been preferable for Ucea, the employers' association, to have resolved this matter through negotiation. However, had talks still been going on, UCU would not have felt duty bound to seek a mandate for a strike from its membership.

And yet, Ucea have done themselves no favours by tackling UCU in such a heavy-handed fashion. Had they tried a subtler, more collegial approach to halting UCU's ballot than threatening legal action, they might have faced a better chance of either winning the second ballot in the autumn, potentially preventing a strike, or even avoiding another ballot entirely.

Also less pleasing is that Ucea's combined offering of pay freezes, redundancies, course closures and now legal threats may mean that UCU's willingness to follow through on threats of industrial action will be far stronger by autumn. The legal challenge to the ballot is already being painted as an attempt to deny union members their democratic rights.

Even if this most recent of UCU's ballots was a bluff designed - poorly - to force Ucea's hand, as many believe it to be, there is no reason to be sure that they will still pull their punches when they ballot again. All those redundancies currently being planned up and down the country will have started to move from mere plans into real job losses, which will only serve to anger UCU further.

All this means that universities are storing up trouble for themselves in the autumn, when the lecturers' union will be feeling more resolute and stronger in its position. If students arrive at their universities after the lengthy holiday expecting to begin lectures and seminars, only to find none, universities will be compelled to act to break the negotiating deadlock. In summer term, the results of exams never taken or coursework never marked can simply be made up from existing marks with the right contingencies. But at the beginning of the year, no such marks exist, and lectures cannot be conjured up by university administrators in the same way that marks can.

In short, the weak position UCU finds itself in to Ucea currently could well be reversed by Michaelmas. Unfortunately for students, until one side in this dispute blinks, those who have an education at stake are going to get caught up in it either way.



# Letters to the Editor



Send your letters to [scan@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:scan@lancaster.ac.uk) together with you name and college (even if you would like your letter printed anonymously). Letters longer than 150 words (not including signature) will be shortened. SCAN reserves the right to edit your letters for publication.

I was disgusted to read about an attack on the LUSU president, Michael Payne, in the last issue of SCAN ("LUSU's anti-fascist campaign of incompetence", News, May 19) [Editor's note: the attack in question is unclear from the letter, but is most likely the criticism of Payne by LUSU block of six officer, Fraser Welsh, who is quoted in the story].

Instead of consistently blaming the union president for every single thing that happens in this union, look to the officers who, in the Equality, Welfare & Diversity Council bylaw, should have started the committee up at the beginning of last term.

All officers involved in the Anti-Racist, Anti-Fascist Committee sit on Union Council, where the EWD bylaw was passed, so they must have read it, and should have asked who should be convening the group. Furthermore, the officers should have contacted the union president or the general secretary months ago if they were unsure of how to convene the meeting.

The European elections have been on the table for absolutely ages, so there was nothing to stop the non-sabbatical race relations officer [Kate Fry], and others, from getting the ball rolling last term – well in advance. Instead they've left it to the last minute and shifted the blame on to the union president – a cheap shot.

It is not up to the president to spoon feed every officer on this campus. If officers put themselves up for this responsibility, they should damn well take it, and start using some common sense.

**Anonymous**

I was very unhappy to see Alex Lacy, the York AU President, lifting the Carter-James Trophy on the front page of the last issue of SCAN. I believe it is somewhat of a discredit to our own AU President and his Roses team who helped put this event together.

It would have been nice for us to be the ones on the front page holding up the trophy but this year we unfortunately came second. However Alex Lacy hardly turned up to any of the events, nor did he make any compromises with Lancaster or make this years Roses preparation easy for anyone involved, so to see him there is a bit of a slap in the face to our guys & gals.

Win or lose, it would have been nice to see Gaz on the cover, and SCAN showing some support for the work and effort Lancaster put in for the event, and to give some appreciation to our teams for the fight they put up against York.

**Janie Coleman**

## Roses is still a thorny subject

I've heard of the term all publicity being good publicity, but the last issue's coverage of the Roses events was an absolute joke. Yes, I know that the majority of our sports teams were embarrassingly poor compared to York, and that our students need to read about what went on (or wrong) at Roses. But filling 4 pages with stories about our teams' inferior performance and totally ignoring the fact the climbing team won 6 points (which is 7.5% of our total score) makes me wonder why we even competed.

The climbing competition was held on Sunday, after Lancaster had already been crushed. Considering we were only competing for Lancaster's pride, to not even be acknowledged disheartens me to the point of not wanting to compete next year.

I realise that you can't put everything in an issue, but why publicise our horrific losses when we could be celebrating the few victories that we had?

**Doug Maddock**  
**Pendle College**

I would like to express my absolute disgust at the recent Roses edition of Scan; I could not believe my eyes on reading some of the write-ups. Firstly, the women's football. We were proud to win our match 5-0, not 3-0 as announced in Scan. Furthermore the article is completely inaccurate, neither reflecting what happened in the match nor even accurately describing the goals which were scored. The women's rugby report was similarly full of inaccuracies, getting our try-scorer's name wrong, as well as the score at half time. Additionally, the article wrongly states that our captain was sin binned for "unsporting

aggression". Now yes, Lancaster may have lost Roses, but this is no excuse for shoddy reporting

and it is disappointing to think that our hard work was rewarded only with reports that in no way represent either the matches themselves or the event as a whole.

**Claire Vincent**  
**Bowland College**

As the outgoing and new swimming captains of the Swimming and Waterpolo Club, we feel that our club was unfairly represented in the Roses reports.

Our swimming successes were not mentioned in SCAN, despite a 3-1 victory, and consequently half of our club has been completely disregarded. We were one of the few winning clubs, contributing 13.9% of the total points scored for Lancaster, yet we found just the waterpolo reported in a small article, nine pages from the back, surrounded by reports about teams who lost.

Considering we demonstrated one of the notable performances of the weekend, we would have thought that this warranted significantly more column space. We were disappointed that many teams had such full coverage despite losing to York, yet ours was minimal leaving out the swimming altogether.

We hope you understand our frustration, that half of our club's efforts, i.e. the entire swimming team, have gone unnoticed, and we hope that in the future, more recognition goes out to the smaller, yet just as hard-working and successful teams of the Athletic Union.

**Emma Whittingham**  
**and Emma Gage**

*First of all, I apologise for any factual inaccuracies or errors in the reporting. However, such errors are to a certain extent inevitable when covering an event on the size and scale of Roses.*

*It should be noted that none of SCAN's usual sports reporters were available to cover Roses, due to exam commitments (a scenario I imagine the sports clubs know all too well themselves). Most of our reporters at Roses had little or no experience of covering sports. Despite this, I think they all coped very well under the circumstances.*

*In response to Doug: Your event was off-campus, and so unfortunately we simply didn't have enough reporters available to go and cover it.*

*To Claire: we made some mistakes, and we'll happily correct them. The majority of SCAN's reporting was of good quality, and we certainly didn't let our standards slip just because Lancaster lost. Mistakes are inevitable in covering an event of the scale of Roses with only five reporters, some of whom were doubling as additional photographers.*

*Emma and Emma: Believe me, I do understand your frustration. However, when trying to balance Lancaster's success in an event, chronology and reader interest, it becomes impossible to give everything the space it deserves.*

**Dan Hogan**  
**Editor**

A good newspaper story needs a great headline, and I think we all agree that "Apathetic lacrosse team are Lancaster's embarrassment" really draws the reader's attention.

Whilst I am sure that this article was meant to simply report what was witnessed at the event, I feel that lacrosse has been unfairly represented. Roses saw Lancaster field a men's Lacrosse team made up almost entirely of freshers both to the university and the sport, with only three players who had been in the Lacrosse team last year present for the competition. Considering the opposing team held players who compete at international standard, I feel the result is nothing to be embarrassed about.

It would have been nice for us to have caused an upset, to have scored a few goals and shown them that they weren't indestructible. We all hoped that the game would play out like a Hollywood underdog story, but that was not the case. The fact of the matter is they dominated the game in what, looking back at our season and our developing team, was a highly expected result.

However, for SCAN to label us as 'apathetic' and 'embarrassing' is something I didn't expect coming back from Roses. Our performances over the academic year may not have yielded great results but they have shown our potential. We are a team predominantly made up of people who have played the sport for less than a year, but who have shown the commitment and perseverance needed to pick up a sport in that amount of time.

We were playing in a game with the odds stacked firmly against us, but we held onto what little chance we had right up to the final whistle. The York TV highlights on the Roses website asked viewers whether the score in the men's game would have been any different had our Lacrosse team never turned up, I guess I didn't expect the same from our student newspaper.

**Peter Ward**

*The headline for the lacrosse report was an unfortunate choice of words, as it was unclear who we were calling an embarrassment.*

*The criticism was meant for the mixed team, most of whom turned up to their match – worth four Roses points – drunk from the previous night out, and played as you would expect for a drunken team. The other Lancaster lacrosse teams were not intended to be the object of headline, and we apologise for the mistake.*

**Dan Hogan**  
**Editor**

## Corrections

We said Michael Payne shut down a meeting of the Anti-Racist Anti-Fascist committee because it was convened unconstitutionally. Although he did point this out, he did not close the meeting.

*All following corrections refer to reports from Roses in SCAN Sports, May 19.*

We omitted the name of the rugby union men's 1st captain, Mark Davies.

In 'Tables turn on women's 1sts' we named Laura Grunby as Lancaster's try scorer. Her surname is in fact Grundy. The Lancaster captain, Jin Zhou was sin-binned for infringements, not 'unsporting aggression'.

The headline 'Home defence melts as Lancaster waltz to 3-0' should have reported the score as 5-0. The score in the body of the story was correct.

The headline for the lacrosse story should have read 'Apathetic mixed lacrosse team are Lancaster's embarrassment.' We apologise to the men's and women's teams for the mistake. The women's lacrosse friendly was won by York, not Lancaster.

**If you notice any factual mistakes in SCAN, please let us know by emailing [scan@lancaster.ac.uk](mailto:scan@lancaster.ac.uk), including the issue's date, page number and story headline.**



# How to survive in the post-graduation world

The transition from small-town student to big wide world is an undeniably daunting one. **Daniel Ash** examines the options and opportunities available to him and his fellow finalists

At this stage in the third term, a giant metaphorical clock starts ticking over the collective heads of all the final year students. The much-loved lifestyle of the student seems to be rollercoasting to an end, and for many, all there is at the end of this ride is a free-fall drop of uncertainty. The years of relative freedom have been numbered, and unfortunately that number is quickly running out.

If you are not a final year student then breathe a heavy sigh of relief, but you'll soon be in this boat too. In my first and second years I felt immune from the worries of debt and unemployment, the future held loans and the endless delights of university. Worries that metaphorical clock seemed to tick faster the further through university I went, and right now its spinning fast and sounding some unpleasant alarms.

No one can ignore the horrible twin realities of increased student debt and the recession, which together seem perfectly designed to trip up the next batch of fresh faced graduates. It is the bleakness of this landscape that has led to this article, born as it was out of my own desire to get a grasp on the options available to tackle the issues facing finishing students. Are common sense and a reliance on my hard-won degree enough to get by on? What steps can I take now to ensure that in 6 months time I'm not living out of the bins behind Pizzetta Republic?

In my own personal quest for employment I have come to the conclusion that writing several thousand words about Marx or Freud at 3 o'clock in the morning is a hell of a lot easier than writing a CV, but this seemed to be a good starting point. Last term I attended a seminar held by Lancaster's Bright Futures society, a group intended to help students get the graduate job they want. The seminar was really useful in straightening out what today's employers are actually looking for and how to convince them of why I'd make the perfect employee. This involved some important CV advice, such as putting more emphasis on extra-curricular

activities, avoiding clichés (whether or not you are a 'self-motivated go-getter') and keeping to the 2-page-max rule. The society also helped with information on how to impress in an interview – confidence but not arrogance seemed to be an overarching theme to a successful interview.

## don't be afraid of taking advantage of the contacts available right here in the university

What the seminar didn't tell me was how to find the ideal job vacancy for my freshly re-worked CV in the first place. Websites such as milkround.com and jobs.guardian.co.uk were mentioned, but they're hardly news. Students will have already heard of these, if not made one of them their internet home page. Despite my ongoing search, I have yet to stumble upon the perfect answer to this dilemma. I will say this though, aside from the obvious: internet, newspapers, job shop, employment guides and carpet bombing industrial sectors with CV's, don't be afraid of taking advantage of the contacts available right here in the university, while you still have easy access to them. Tutors, departments and academic advisors all know plenty of people attached to the university in some capacity who might just have some valuable advice for you on how to get the job that you want.

There are many other avenues for help after graduation, most notably the university's Centre for Employability, Enterprise and Careers (CEEC). This service offers employment advice as well as ways to actively improve your chances of getting a job. By going to CEEC you can gain employability qualifications, research careers, improve CV's, and attend job workshops.

University officials have at last no-

ticed that graduating students are getting nervous about their futures. This collective nervousness is manifesting itself quite obviously: in previous years, departments would run talks on graduate employability which would bring in only a handful of eager listeners; now the lecturers are facing packed lecture theatres. Fortunately, the university have decided to listen to the plaintive pleas of the finalists and have decided to help these poor creatures. Insight into Work and Employability workshops are designed to help graduates get a job. Based around the degree course subjects of the graduates themselves, they teach people the relevant skills they need to get a job.

Of course, you could avoid employment completely. Taking a year to ride out the waves of the recession, escape debts and a fickle job market by taking a gap year is a worthy alternative to employability hell. Of course, this isn't feasible to everyone, but if it tickles your fancy then there are a multitude of organisations offering volunteering opportunities to check out, such as CCUSA, Lattitude and loads more. If you need any more convincing, bear in mind that many employers look favourably on applicants with a gap year full of life affirming and confidence building experiences behind them. Equally though, some may just deride you as being insufficiently career driven and the sort who's likely to drop everything to spend a month traipsing around the Himalayas.

One valuable piece of advice for a stress free graduate lifestyle is that you need not worry about that annoying student debt straightaway. It may seem like you've entered the real world with a giant millstone round your neck, but being interest free, it need not impact your life that much. You might even be able to defer repayments until you're better able to afford them. Do however worry about credit card debt and any money owed to loan sharks or Mafia bosses, they can be more temperamental than the loan companies.

Now all I have to worry about is not falling flat on my face at the graduation ceremony.

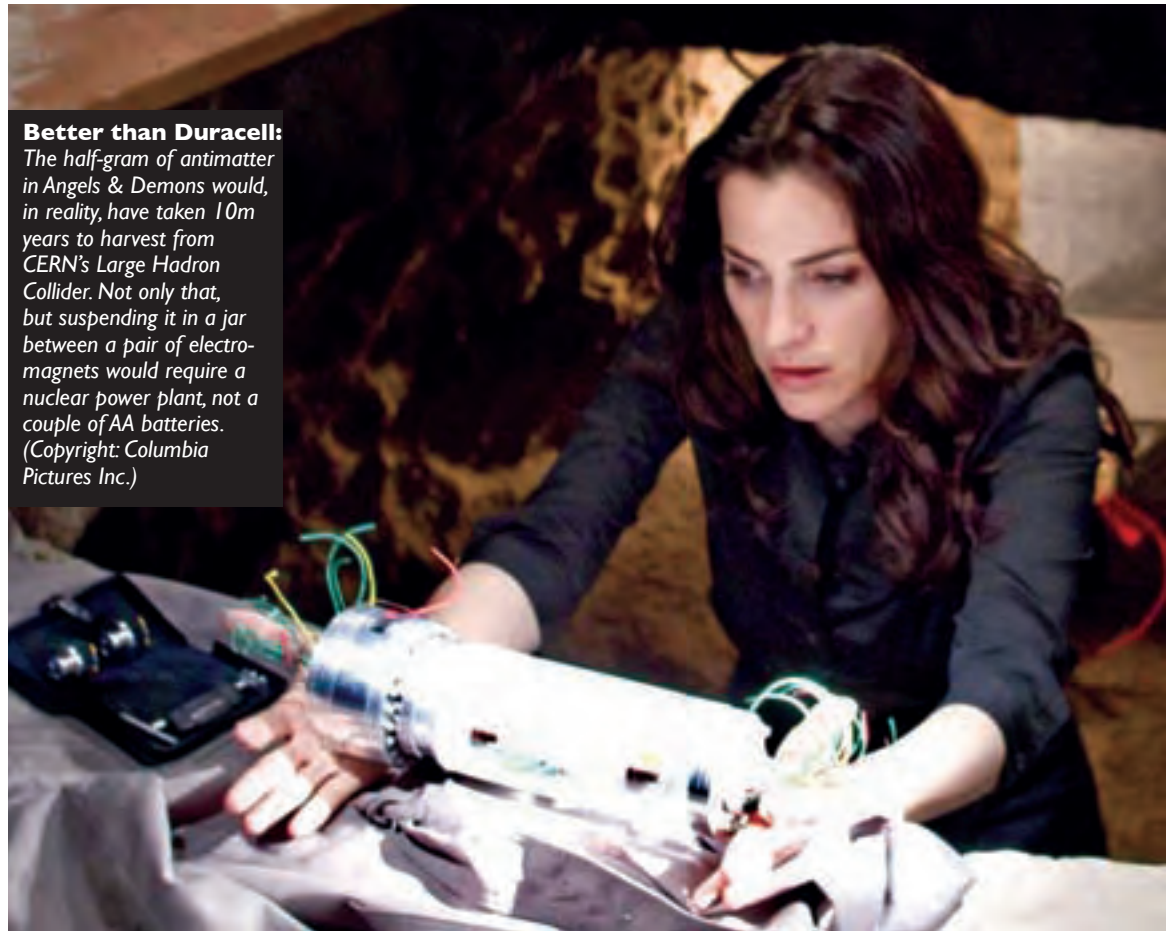




# Bad science

## Better than Duracell:

The half-gram of antimatter in *Angels & Demons* would, in reality, have taken 10m years to harvest from CERN's Large Hadron Collider. Not only that, but suspending it in a jar between a pair of electromagnets would require a nuclear power plant, not a couple of AA batteries. (Copyright: Columbia Pictures Inc.)



The relationship between science fiction and science fact is often rather shaky, but *Angels & Demons* takes this pliable relationship with reality to a new level, writes **Lizzie Houghton**

**MOST PEOPLE ARE smart enough to watch most Hollywood blockbusters with a sceptical eye, and Tom Hank's new film, *Angels & Demons*, is no exception. The dodgy mythology is a given, especially in light of the ruckus created by the movie's prequel, *The Da Vinci Code*. The flawed science turns out to be necessary, otherwise the film would have had to cover a 10 million year time span.**

This in reality is how long it would take to accumulate the half a gram of the antimatter that threatens to destroy Vatican City in the film. Brown can perhaps be forgiven for not wanting to wait that long to get the plot moving.

Fortunately at Lancaster we have Professor Roger Jones, head of the Particle Physics Research Division, to explain all these minor plot holes to us. Last Thursday he gave a talk, 'The Science Behind *Angels & Demons*: What's the matter with antimatter?', explaining the real science behind antimatter and the research being conducted into it at the CERN laboratories and outlining just where exactly these plot holes lie. The 10 million years is perhaps the biggest – although apparently scientists at CERN do not wear white lab coats. In fact scientists on the whole don't wear white lab coats. But there are plenty more to go around.

In the film, based on the Dan Brown novel, the half a gram of antimatter is stolen from the ATLAS experiment at CERN. It is then placed somewhere under Vatican City by a vengeful – and rather historically inaccurate – member of the secretive Illuminati. If the antimatter comes in contact with mat-

ter, which it will when the battery in its container runs out, it will create an annihilitic explosion.

Given the level of panic last September when CERN's Large Hadron Collider was first switched on – remember the black hole that wasn't? – it would seem reasonable for people to be somewhat concerned by this idea.

There's little reason to fear though. First, there has not yet been a portable antimatter container invented. While it is possible to use electromagnets to trap electrically charged antimatter particles, they can only be done so in small quantities. Which brings us to point number two: were such a container to exist, and safely contain half a gram of antimatter, it would need a nuclear power station to run it, not a rechargeable battery.

But none of this explains what antimatter actually is. At first glance it's exactly what its name suggests: the opposite of matter. The British physicist Paul Dirac first theorised its existence in 1928. He took Einstein's theory of relativity (the faster something travels, the slower time is), and combined it with quantum mechanics. What he found was that for every particle of matter created, there was an identical particle with an opposite electric charge – an antiparticle. When particles and antiparticles meet they annihilate each other, releasing all their pent up energy, creating gamma rays and sometimes new particles and antiparticles.

For scientists this proposes a mystery far more interesting than a Dan Brown novel. If matter and antimatter is created in equal amounts, and if it annihilates itself when it comes into contact with the other, how are

we here? In theory, matter and antimatter should have cancelled each other out within nanoseconds of the Big Bang. Instead the theory is that a minute amount of matter survived, allowing the universe to form.

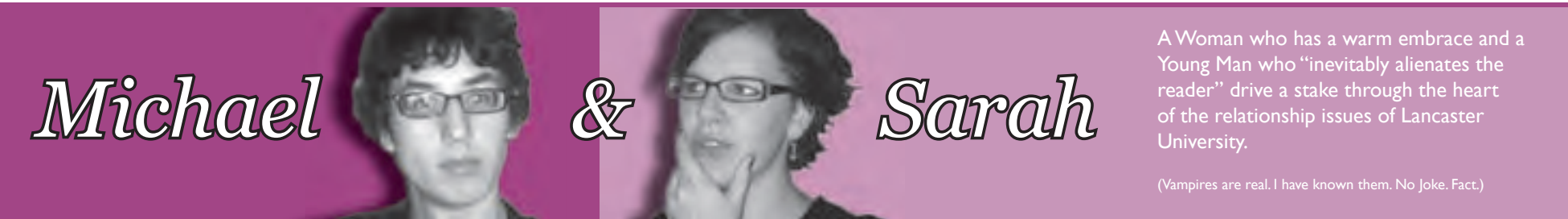
But there's another issue. According to some physicists, most notably Peter Higgs, particles had no mass after the Big Bang, without which, the particles could not form anything. Higgs proposed that an invisible force field spread across the universe. Alongside this field, a particle that gives other particles mass, called the Higgs boson was formed, otherwise known as 'the God particle'. The same God particle brought to greater (though poorly explained) prominence in the first 20 minutes of *Angels & Demons*.

The problem is no one has proven yet that the Higgs boson really exists. Physicists hope that experiments done at CERN will answer the question once and for all. If it turns out it does not exist then its back to the chalkboard.

Interesting though this is, some will be eager to ask 'what's the practical application?' According to Brown's flawed understanding of particle physics, antimatter could be used as an energy source. Yes, it is true that when matter and antimatter collide they create pure energy. But making them collide needs a lot of energy to begin with. In fact, for all the energy invested in it storing and colliding antimatter, you only get a tenth of a billionth of it back.

If you were to assemble all the antimatter ever created at CERN and collide it with matter, you'd only get enough energy to power a single light bulb for a few minutes. That's the problem with real science: it's not fiction.





A Woman who has a warm embrace and a Young Man who “inevitably alienates the reader” drive a stake through the heart of the relationship issues of Lancaster University.

(Vampires are real. I have known them. No Joke. Fact.)

**I’ve been with my boyfriend for 3 weeks now and whilst the sex isn’t bad it isn’t really fulfilling me as much as I have been making out. The first couple of times I faked my orgasm to improve his confidence but now he thinks I’m really enjoying our love making when actually it still leaves a lot to be desired. What can I do?**

**Recently I’ve been finding it difficult to leave my flat and even room. I’m starting to wonder if I’m actually afraid of going outside. I’ve even found myself making excuses not to go to the college bar with my friends, but I don’t know why. It’s been two and a half weeks since I left my house and I’m beginning to worry about how this will affect my performance in my exams. Please help!**

**My girlfriend has split up with me because I bite my nails. I’m torn between heartbreak and anger as it is such a stupid reason to break up our relationship. I always thought our relationship was strong but she says she can’t get past my disgusting habit. I don’t think I can give up nail biting but I don’t want to lose her. How can a win her back?**

## Make love, not lies

**MICHAEL:** It’s nice that you felt polite enough to fake an orgasm. I can’t help but feel it would be more amusing if you kept a stony facial indifference for the duration of any future lovemaking sessions. In order to not knock his confidence I suggest that you introduce a scoring system, with a grade being meted out in respect of coital quality. Filling out progress reports and S.M.A.R.T. targets at the end of each week will give you the provocative air of a sexy teacher and will no doubt improve satisfaction exponentially. Invest in a red pen to either tick or cross his naked body when you feel he is performing well or if he ‘could do better’. Invite his parents round for a (sexy) parents evening where his mother and fa-

ther can discuss where he might be going wrong and what they can do in future to encourage his future improvement. Cover your duvet in times tables, invest in loads of rulers which have the lineage of the kings of England carved into them. Hopefully you will both be able to maintain eye-contact, let alone a relationship, after this ordeal. Was this advice? I’m not even sure anymore.

**SARAH:** The bedroom is not the place to tell lies. So you have two options, fortunately neither of which will see you having to put up with sub standard bedroom activity. Ideally you need to teach your lover how best to satisfy you so be prepared to ask for what you want

in the bedroom and be encouraging when he is getting it right. Alternatively you can be honest, but his pride will be dented, you will feel dreadful and it could end the whole relationship. Be clear that you need more from your lovemaking but try not to disparage all the work he believes he has achieved. As a lesson for future, this is one of those times when it is best not to fake it. Lying about enjoying a particularly dire film you watched with your partner are good times to fake it. Sex really isn’t, on the basis that really you are the only one suffering – and if he’s a keeper, imagine the years of unfulfilled sex ahead of you. Act now and enjoy the rest of your time together in that post-coital glow.

## Housebound

**MICHAEL:** The term-structure is psychologically wrong at Lancaster; why is it that during the cold, encroachingly dark nights of Michaelmas and Lent terms, revision pressure is minimal, while in the Summer when the weather is wonderful it becomes increasingly oppressive to stay inside. Unfortunately, the necessity of exam success means the natural urge of lying around doing nothing in the sun has to be repressed. Being cooped up inside with no outlet can do strange antisocial things to the mind, as you seem to be currently experiencing. After a hard day’s staring at dead words on a page or a static computer screen it can be difficult to remember just how it is that you interact with another

person. Lancaster is so insular as a campus that you can feel completely ostracised from the real world if you confine yourself to your cupboard of a room for too long. The best thing to do is to try to break up revision with walks or joint meals with others that are also suffering from exam-enforced social hibernation. Either that or drop-out; either way is good.

**SARAH:** Try to find the root of the problem: is it that you are extremely comfortable burrowed away in your bedroom so alternatives seem unappealing? What precisely alarms you about the outside world? If you can pinpoint the concern then you should be able to tackle it and move on. Think about what your

favourite activities are and try to integrate them back into your life – so if its wandering to get a burger or watching sports in a college bar then try to venture out for that one activity. Next time your friends ask, agree to go but say you can only pop along for half an hour as you have to check on a sick housemate. Outdoor exercise can assist your exam performance as the endorphins released by exercise boost brain activity, so a short jog or a longer walk could encourage you in studying. Overall, I wouldn’t worry about your performance in exams though, presumably whilst holed up you have done some revision, so hopefully your absence from the outside world won’t have put you at an academic disadvantage.

## Tooth and nail

**MICHAEL:** Why is it that people find the portable biological playground that is the human body to be so repulsive? Almost everyone has an enjoyable filthy tick that they like to lapse into. Some enjoy fiddling with their crotches; some belch loudly and obnoxiously. I am personally fond of a cheeky nose rake now and then. The fact that she split up with you for such a petty reason is probably for the best in the long run; that her obsessive compulsion trumps you as a person means that things probably wouldn’t have worked out. However, in order to teach the anal cow a lesson, I suggest you make a feigned effort to show that you are a changed man. Send her a picture of you in superdrug buying a pro-

fessional set of finger and toenail clippers as well as investing in a cuticle stick to really show your commitment. Store up all your freshly snipped nails over a sequence of weeks and slowly but surely try to win yourself back into her trust. Then, when she’s finally caved in and accepted you back as a changed man – as she sleeps soundly in a loving spooning embrace – fill her earlugs full of the used nails and then set about chewing at her fingers and toes till you get the desired response. You will definitely have the moral high ground.

**SARAH:** Aesthetics are important. Perhaps your stubby, chewed fingernails were too much for her to take, but I would imagine there

must be deeper flaws to your relationship than your inability to stop biting your finger nails. Personally I can agree with her though, nail biting is a disgusting habit, not least because of all of the bacteria that festers under your nails which you then consume. Which is more important – the girl or your habit? If nail biting was the real cause of the break-up then you need to stop, there are plenty of treatments available that can help you, so if you really want to get her back then show her what an effort you are making. I suppose I ought to add that any girl who dumps you for physical reasons is shallow, but quite honestly this is something you can change, and if she is important to you I suggest you stop.

## Relationships in focus #4

## Dancing

**Michael Holt**  
**Randy honeybee**

**THE LATE COMEDIAN Bill Hicks said of dancing: “some women have this weird myth that you can tell the way a guy is in bed by how he is on the dance floor. That is so ridiculous. I mean, first of all, what does it matter?... If a guy is on the dance floor and really getting into it and enjoying himself and expressing himself, what does it matter how he is in bed? He’s gay.”**

There is much truth in this observation; for instance my dancing style can be reasonably described as clumsy, insecure, ludicrous, spasmodic movement, which is a pretty reliable indicator of my quality in bed. However, I think it is a misconception that dancing is solely the preserve of gay men. We must remember that we are living in a post-Usher world that Hicks, for all of his foresight, could not have anticipated. The most basic level of dance-floor competence is now a prerequisite of all human interaction. Most entry-level relationships now require at least a functional familiarity with ‘the-shifting-of-weight-from-one-foot-to-the-other’ (or to give its official dance-specialist term, The Humbug.)

A modern phenomenon that never fails to delight me is the ‘Dance-Off’. They are incredibly rare, but can most reliably be forecast to occur on Saturday nights at the Sugarhouse, more often than not RUN DMC’s It’s Like That (And That’s The Way It Is) will be the catalyst. In my experience men with hats, chains and tank-tops will inexplicably materialise, seemingly from nowhere, and start pulling carefully choreographed antagonistic shapes at each other on the dance-floor.

Aside from the fleeting majesty of the Dance-Off, the more mundane issue of dancing in general can be one many find troubling. The Furness JCR president, who for reasons of privacy shall remain anonymous, has no trouble dancing in most given situations (such as in the library or supermarkets), but finds himself irrationally uncomfortable at the prospect of dancing in front of his girlfriend. He has since resolved to join her local ballroom dancing society to confront the issue, but the road to recovery will be a long one.

The important thing to remember is that no-one looks anything other than ridiculous doing any form of dancing and, unless you look a little bit too keen, most people aren’t judgmental about your level of disco-aptitude; the quicker that you realise this is the quicker the truth sets you free.



# The great British fast food fetish

Alexandra Lainsbury

## WE BRITISH SEEM to have something of an obsession with food.

Our supermarkets are constantly competing to have the most ethical and tasty produce, and in recent years farmers markets have been popping up all over the country again. Even television, once mainly associated with food through the TV dinner, has more than got in on the act. Cooking shows such as Come Dine With Me, Ready Steady Cook and Masterchef mean the reheated chilli you eat in front of them never seems to measure up.

But do these programmes actually inspire the public to cook? The rise of convenience food lines in supermarkets has also risen sharply in the past few years, and now 'Finest', 'Taste the Difference' and let's not forget, 'not just food but Marks and Spencers food' have taken the hard work out of cooking. Students are not known for their abundance of money, however,

and most of these options tend to be on the expensive side. So what do we do? Where do we go to get quick, tasty food that is (depending on your cooking ability) better than that which we could have made at home?

I'm talking about takeaways. Unhealthy perhaps, but nevertheless often a big part of student life. After all, who hasn't stopped for a quick kebab after a night out? It is possible that we are eating too much however. Lancaster town centre alone somehow manages to support more than 20 takeaways, without even including sandwich shops or the overabundant Greggs. This is a trend repeated throughout the country, and despite government legislation, obesity levels are on the rise. Coincidence? It is possible, but unlikely.

Perhaps if it was more difficult to get hold of takeaway food, we would be a healthier nation. After all, if it took an hour to make and deliver a pizza, people might be more willing to boil some pasta and throw a sauce over it. Students are often right in the middle of the action, however, and this means



**Elephant leg:** The average doner kebab contains 1,000 calories and almost the entire recommended daily allowance of salt and fat.

being close to takeaways. No matter where you live on campus, you cannot be more than a ten minute walk from some sort of food outlet.

Where I live in town, I'm within about thirty metres of five different takeaways, which (while I like the convenience, of course) I admit is rather excessive. On particularly lazy days I have even considered some sort of pulley system from my window to Mognies. If it wasn't for the double-decker

buses using the road, I think it would work. This proximity does mean that my intake of junk food has increased, however, especially with the slightly reduced willpower I have after a night out.

It could be worse, however. We have all heard the stories about people who live on nothing but takeaway, and we can be glad (and smug!) that we are not them. Now, I have a date with the sofa and a frozen pizza.

## Fast food facts

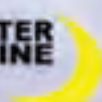
- A normal McDonalds' burger contains only 250 calories – a steak bake from Greggs has 458.
- 60% of students surveyed eat takeaway at least 3 times per month. No one who answered the survey claimed to never eat takeaway.
- The fat and carbohydrates in most takeaways are believed to help to soak up alcohol – possibly preventing a hangover.
- Generally, students eat takeaway the most after a night out, rather than for special occasions or as a treat.
- Takeaways are mainly chosen due to taste – but price and calorie content also get a look in.
- The most popular takeaways in Lancaster are McDonalds and Dominos, but Nice And Spicy is the most popular non-chain store.

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# Artistic overload

**Lizzie O'Brien** takes a sneak preview at the upcoming Arts Degree Show

**T**he end-of-year show is the culmination of three years of hard slog for most of Lancaster's third year Art students. Having had to raise a large proportion of the necessary funds themselves (did anyone else buy a scrummy Valentine's Day biscuit from the stall in Alexandra Square?) the end is nigh, and soon their work will be unveiled to the public – and the examiners.

I didn't know what we were expecting to find as we muddled our way along the maze of box-like art studios, peering at people's projects and asking annoying questions like 'so what does it all mean, then?' I had imagined walls of paintings, all nicely done in varying styles, easels, a few berets dotted around the place, nothing untoward.

One thing struck me beyond everything else: the sheer industriousness of the students in finding their materials and the variety of them that were about. I had expected paintings to be the bulk of what was being produced, but there was cord, wire, paper, fabric, sewing patterns, photographs, glass, projectors, interactive surfaces, televisions, wax, fake eyeballs (bought on eBay), animal fat, rabbit glue, film reels, clothing, and an exercise bike scattered about.

To many students, the materials used were an important focus of their work as a whole, but none more so than Magda Strzelczak, whose entire piece circles around the craft of those materials (she also happens to be the owner of the exercise bike). Using lines of shredded paper, garden wire, or cord, Magda spends weeks crocheting her material into garments of clothing, and has quite literally suffered for her art, nearly giving herself a repetitive strain injury through the intense physical labour involved in manipulating her materials. Each piece takes between one

and two weeks to complete, based on her spending at least seven hours every day in the studio, and one garment alone used nearly a kilometre of cord.

When I asked her what made her go to such painstaking lengths for her work, she replied that she wanted to investigate the relationship with time. Behind all of it is there is the idea that there is one person (namely Magda), the instrument (crochet hooks), the material (paper, cord, or wire), and time. It is an exploration of the uses of time, how time can change something rudimentary into a solid idea or an object with a structure and a meaning beyond the capability of its cruder form.

The strongest pieces were those with some kind of clear purpose or direction. Perhaps because the third year students were reaching the end of an era, so to speak, with their degrees coming to a close, a lot of the pieces were nostalgic meditations on childhood. Jo Gillot had created a reflection on the comforting nature of childhood objects (particularly ragdolls and textiles such as duvet covers). She had hand-stitched a phenomenal amount of rag dolls, all made out of the fabric of pre-owned duvet covers and other textiles.

The dolls embodied a split meaning – one half of the idea representing friends and loved ones who have been lost; the second, something more disturbing underpinning the safe notion of childhood memory. The dolls were often warped, sometimes with dispro-

it wasn't simply an exploration of the artist's own feelings, but a genuine and relevant critique of the ways in which certain aspects of our society operate, unchecked



## I like short shorts

**Richie Garton** finds everything from painted eggs to metaphysical masturbation among the short films screened by LU Cinema

**I**N ADDITION TO its excellent line-up of both mainstream and indie films this term, the LU Cinema has also treated its audiences to a selection of short films made by Lancaster students. These 20 films were shown back-to-back on the evening of Monday week five, with the audience allowed to vote on their three favourite films.

The overall winner of this contest was Kriss Foster with his stop-motion anima-

tion *Moon-Landing*. This was a charming and sad little silent film about a man with a dream of reaching the moon, and his inevitable disappointment when he gets there. The characters were created using painted eggs, and speech captions took the form of bits of paper scribbled on with crayon and shoved in front of the camera. This deliberately (I hope) crappy style of animation added a lot of humour, and it was cleverly, albeit not exactly professionally. The soundtrack for this one was also brilliantly chosen.

Strangely, this was the only film shown that had anything resembling a conventional narrative. Most of the entries were surreal, artsy spectacles rather than story-based films. For exam-

ple, Lauren Miller's *A Lesson In Greed*, while very thoughtfully composed using stop-motion puppets and memorable images, was baffling to watch. A chap called David Ogle also entered an untitled film which recreated live-action moving images as 3D rendered models (hard to describe, but very visually impressive). This seemed to be more of a 'look-what-I-can-do' exercise than anything else; if it had actually had some ideas or a story behind it, it could have been truly fantastic.

Some filmmakers had evidently been bitten by the pretention bug. *Production* by Stephanie Green was merely a seemingly-incomplete series of post-modern images which meant nothing to the casual viewer. However, this pales in







**Magnus opus?** Lucy Frost's painting (left) of a Palestinian man holding a dead child will form part of a larger work featuring other images of war. Jo Gillot's work includes a duvet cover (below) which flows into an array of disfigured fabric dolls. (Photos: Lizzie O'Brien)

portioned limbs or lacking a head. All the fabric had been previously owned, imbuing the objects with a history that is completely their own, unknown to us. As Jo pointed out, someone could even have died on those sheets and we wouldn't know about it. The exhibition will see the dolls preserved in jam jars, crammed onto shelves and into spice racks, and a duvet cover which gradually turns into disordered rows of soft dolls dangling off the end.

One of the most thought-provoking pieces on offer was a collection of paintings on glass by Lucy Frost, depicting images of war. They are at once realistic, though still maintaining their painted quality – they are not merely photographic reproductions of the originals. There are three paintings depicting different harrowing media images of war, which will overlap, with lighting and other minor effects confusing the images further.

The thought behind it wasn't simply an exploration of the artist's own feelings, but a genuine and relevant critique of the ways in which certain aspects of our society operate, unchecked. The idea is that we are constantly bombarded with images of war, but they are so frequent that they have stopped having an impact, and have become meshed

into one internal image of conflict made up of all the images we have seen. If we were to see a war photograph, we probably could not identify the war, the location, or the people, and often the people and their suffering tend to sink into the backdrop, and become part of the landscape.

Lucy uses photographs she has found in the media, and depicts images of the people affected by war without the backdrop. This absence of the generic war landscape hones in on the true human cost of war, and marks a definite focalisation on the individual, on the human victim. The paintings are both poignant and disturbing, but there is a sort of hope that we can relearn to see media images of war in such a way that we can fully take in the reality and the gravity of them, instead of them just fading into one generic war landscape where we cannot distinguish one war from another, and what is worse, where we do not care to.

The Arts Degree Show is going to be full of the disturbing, the odd and the beautiful. It opens each evening between 6 and 8.30pm from Tuesday June 16 in the Peter Scott Gallery and Art department studios. The pieces will remain on display and available for purchase until June 24.



## Love, murder and Denmark



**Palpable tension:** The chemistry between *The Compliant Lover's* Sarah Pearce and Jamie Ward is tangible.

## LUTG's Summer Term shows

**Richie Garton**  
Arts Editor

THIS TERM IT'S business as usual for LUTG (Lancaster University Theatre Group), who will be performing another three shows in coming weeks. I took the chance to snoop along to rehearsals one evening to see how these shows were shaping up, and discovered that the three plays in store for this term couldn't possibly be any more eclectic.

First up I sat in on part of the rehearsal for the Graham Greene 'tragi-comedy' *The Compliant Lover*, (Dukes Youth Theatre, 5th-7th June), where I saw a chunk of the play's first scene. This was a party scene where the tension was palpable; it soon became apparent that the wife of tedious dentist Victor Rhodes (Richard Moxon) was having an affair with the young bookseller Clive Root (Jamie Ward). This scene was packed with witty humour, made all the more twisted by the fact that everyone was painfully aware of the affair except for a cheery, upbeat Victor. The first thing that struck me in observing this rehearsal was the chemistry between lead actors Sarah Pearce, who plays the adulterous wife Mary with sensitive sensuality, and the wonderfully Scottish Jamie Ward, playing her lover Clive. This talented pair really conveyed the passion of the affair, and I even sympathized with their

situation.

Following this I moved on to *A Spot of Murder* (12th-13th June, venue to be confirmed), a tongue-in-cheek Whodunnit spoof set in a large country house. Featuring archetypal characters such as a camp thespian and an eccentric gypsy woman, this clearly isn't a play that takes itself too seriously, and what I saw being performed had more than its fair share of laughs. The wordplay and occasional silliness of the dialogue reminded me very much of *Blackadder*, even more so considering the two main characters: a sarcastic detective and his keen-but-bumbling sidekick. LUTG's performance of this comedy is in fact its European premiere, with it only having been performed in the States until now.

It's hard to imagine a bigger change of pace as I then transferred to rehearsals for *Hamlet*, where a small handful of actors and the director (Paul Sellwood, the man behind *Julius Caesar* and *Macbeth* last year), were practicing the 'closet scene', where Hamlet terrorizes his mother and murders Polonius. This was both intense and intensive; every single line was being honed to perfection, in order to maximize the effect of this crucial scene. Hamlet is perhaps LUTG's most ambitious project in recent years; it is probably the best-known Shakespeare play and comes with a lot of cultural expectations. However, Sellwood clearly has very strong opinions about the tragedy and his Kubrick-esque perfectionist tendencies should lead to him getting the most out of his talented cast. With a 1950s feel, *Hamlet* begins its four-night run in the Nuffield Theatre on Thursday Week 7.

**Puppet love:** Maudlin from Phil Martins' *Leonard and Maudlin* shorts, punctuated the screening as a whole.

comparison to the heap of metaphysical masturbation that was Chris Mathews' ?. This presented a conversation between two unidentified speakers as several sentences appearing on screen, then disappearing in PowerPoint-esque swirls (I might also point out that because all the sentences were the same colour, the viewer could have no idea who was talking at any given time). These sections were interspersed by brief bits of seemingly unrelated film, and the whole thing went on like this for what seemed like hours, and its relevance was never explained. I can only assume that Mathews had several friends in the audience, because this film managed to get into the top three.

A special mention goes to Phil Martins, whose numerous films provided the cement that held the whole collection together. These ranged from serious, disturbing efforts such as *The Spider* to hilariously bizarre stop-motion shorts

which seem to have been made using whatever Martins had on his desk at the time. *Gooson Deloose* was a beyond-surreal piece about the events of a French, genie-worshipping goose (I think) and the whole whirling nonsense of it all tickled me immensely. Almost as incoherent but equally funny was *Binoculation* and the *Leonard and Maudlin* shorts; while not exactly Cannes material they were some of the more entertaining on display.

Overall, I was impressed that students at this university possess such creative energy and technical ingenuity. I did find myself craving a bit of conventional filmmaking (only a couple used traditional live-action) and it was sometimes difficult to know when one film ended and another began, but otherwise the organizers should be proud to have successfully brought together such a diverse range of amateur films.







# The path of illumination is a dull one

## Film Review: *Angels & Demons*

Tom Hanks,  
Ewan McGregor,  
Ayelet Zurer  
Dir: Ron Howard

Hannah Fearon

AFTER THE SUCCESS of *The Da Vinci Code*, *Angels & Demons* has been one of the most highly anticipated releases of the year. Ron Howard returns to direct another adequate adaptation of one of Dan Brown's bestselling novels.

Tom Hanks plays symbolologist Robert Langdon, the man who cracked the controversial *Da Vinci Code* in the previous film. Langdon is approached by the Vatican after the kidnap of four cardinals and a deadly threat to destroy Rome in an explosion. With the help of Italian scientist Vittoria Vetra (Zurer) Langdon discovers evidence that an ancient secret brotherhood known as the Illuminati could be behind the threat. The science worshipping Illuminati pose a deadly threat to their greatest enemy: the Catholic Church. The Illuminati threaten to kill one Cardinal every hour until midnight, when the explosive device will detonate. Langdon and Vetra embark on a nonstop journey across Rome to follow the clues on the path of Illumination, created by the Illuminati. What ensues is a two and a half hour race against time to find the explosive device and destroy any hope of a decent adaptation of the novel.

*Angels & Demons* is a fast paced thriller, but rather than keeping you on the edge of your seat, it makes you want to leave it. The plot is simple and rather dull at times. Apart from a few corpses and some dramatic church choir style music whenever someone jumps in a car, nothing particularly interesting happens. In fact, most of what we see



### Lifeless:

Tom Hanks reprises his role as Frank Langdon in this ill-advised sequel. (Copyright Columbia Pictures Inc.)

on screen seems to take place in the interior of a car. Hanks' character acts as an annoying commentary throughout the film, and there's far too much meaningless conversation which slows down the action.

In a film that bases its plot on the war between science and religion, the scientific elements of the film could

have been made much more interesting. Scientists create an anti-matter device which is later used to create an explosion in Vatican City. This device is referred to as the discovery of the "God particle" which would perhaps make for a more engaging plot focus. Instead, Howard gives us a lengthy tour of the churches in Rome, or Hollywood's in-

terpretation of them anyway.

*Angels & Demons* is a little absurd, and often ridiculous. Whilst the acting isn't too bad, the characters are lifeless and rather one dimensional. There are a few interesting plot twists but they aren't enough to rescue Ron Howard's disappointing adaptation. Decent translations from novels to the

big screen are a rare thing, especially glossy Hollywood creations such as this. My advice to anyone planning on seeing *Angels & Demons* is to read the novel instead, or just not bother at all.



## Enduring enjoyment: Classic Bennett resurrected

Emma Newman

CHRISTOPHER LUSCOMBE'S revival of this Alan Bennett play has, so far, been a clear and resounding success. Typical of Bennett, it is highly charged, farcical and frankly pretty bleak. However, it is still a witty comedy full of caricatures, savage one-liners and a certain macabre yet highly entertaining humour.

The cast is headed up by legend of stage and television Alison Steadman, as well as RSC veteran David Troughton, who has, let's be honest, appeared in almost everything. The rest of the cast (around 15, including the very very minor roles) can also more than hold their own against such

experienced professionals.

Cautious comedy this is not as, true to form, Bennett's dialogue touches on child abuse, pornography, death, sex, and a few lines of classic toilet humour thrown in for good measure. This play shies away from nothing and the resulting comedic tragedy has the audience laughing out loud, squirming with embarrassment and then recoiling in shock within mere seconds.

Don't expect scenes of reunion, family gatherings and happy endings, as this is definitely not what this play is about. The ending is bleak and harrowing but true to life which, if anything, makes it worse. These final dark revelations show the play to be no longer about farce and illusion, but real human tragedy on its most intimate and individual level. I won't reveal what



**Museum peices:** Alison Steadman and David Troughton play the elderly couple approached to become enduring symbols of working class hardship.

happens exactly, but the record breaking ticket sales, consistently packed theatre and thunderous applause show Luscombe's revival to be an undoubted success and formidable contender for the Oliviers next year.

'Enjoy' may not be an appropriate title; Bennett himself claimed 'endure' was better suited. But, with extensive cutting down of the dialogue, a wonderfully authentic set (complete with flying ducks on the wall and shiny wallpaper!), and perfectly suited leading actors, this prophetic comedy exposes real-life tragedy in the way only Bennett can with plenty of laughs and poignancy along the way.





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# Relapsing into mediocrity

## Eminem *We Made You* (Interscope)

Meer Shah

YOU KNOW WHEN you're waiting for something and you hope it's amazing; and the longer you wait, the more you build up those hopes, only to be horribly disappointed? Guess what happened now that guess who's back.

consistent rhymes, mocking celebrity culture, and a handful of misogyny and homophobia

*We Made You*, the first single from the new Eminem album, *Relapse* (set for release about the time you read this) is classic Slim Shady – consistent rhymes, mocking celebrity culture, and a handful of misogyny and homophobia – but lacking his razor-sharp wit and, more, crucially, relevance (who even cares about Sarah Palin anymore?). This single won't stand alongside Eminem's undisputed classics because it is tired, pointless and just not that funny.

It also doesn't help that comparisons to similar Eminem songs from the past are unfavourable. Eminem is one of my favourite MCs, but this is a poor set-up for the accompanying LP. Perhaps it might be time for Eminem to call it a day; before he self-destructs completely.

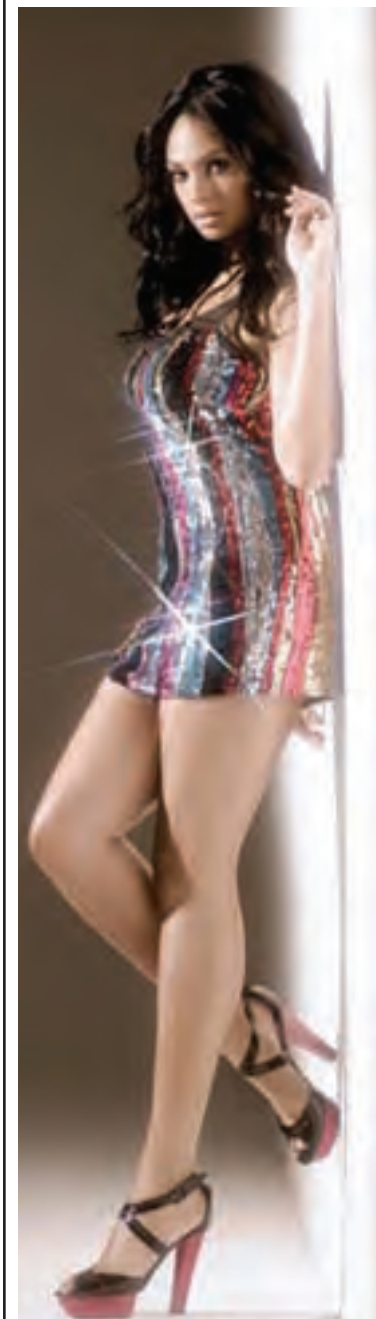


### Yesterday's news:

Eminem's latest offering has all the usual elements, except, crucially, his trademark wit and relevance.



## Nothing to get excited about



## Alesha Dixon *Let's Get Excited* (Asylum)

Meer Shah

OUR UPCOMING GRAD Ball headliner's new single, *Let's Get Excited* won't set pop music on fire and will probably be forgotten by the end of summer. It's also a further step away from the half-decent R&B she used to be known for (this song is pure bubblegum pop). But you know what, it's not a bad piece of fluff – catchy, sassy and danceable; in other words, enough to entice some of the current 'maybes' for Grad Ball to turn up. And irrespective of how her music career develops, I'm still a fan of Ms Dixon, who has a classy, and yet down-to-earth charm. Bump it now and look forward to June 22.



## Cosmic indirection



## Cosmo Jarvis *Chapter Two* (Wall Of Sound)

Clay Garland

I DON'T KNOW where to start with this CD, but that's okay, neither did Cosmo Jarvis.

There's three tracks and a short film (which totally misses the Tarantino mark it was aiming for, but that's not what I'm here to talk about) none of which have anything to do with each other. Apparently Mr Jarvis has 250 songs under his belt, which makes me wonder why he picked these three as complementary to each other.

Track one is a depressingly accurate Jamie T rip-off with dismal lyrics, trying and failing to be common and honest in an Arctic Monkeys vein. The song itself is naff too – predictably and I guess successfully catchy where it's supposed to be, but nothing at all new and entirely irritating from start to finish. Track three is pretty much the same deal, although with more instruments and slightly less terrible lyrics.

But sandwiched between this mediocrity, track two deserves a little more attention. This is bizarre. The vernacular rapping is still here, but the lyrics are much darker and the music has turned into a clunky Tom Waits imitation. And not bourbon-and-cigars Tom Waits from the 70's either – this is full on creepy Tom Waits that sounds like the soundtrack from the haunted house level in a kids' video game. I actually quite like this track. The rest of this CD tries so hard to be "charmingly shocking" like so much modern pop, and only manages to be annoying, but this is great. Weird as can be though.

Cosmo needs to decide where he's going before he releases any more music.



## Son of Dave *Ain't Going To Nike Town* (Kartel)

Meer Shah

AN ECLECTIC MUSICIAN who is still only on the rise to fame, but is terrifically talented, Son of Dave's new single is quite simply one of the most satisfying – and relevant – songs I've heard in years.

Hitting out at commercialisation, Benjamin Darvill's voice perfectly complements a gorgeous bluesy melody. The message, especially the wailing protest "you won't make me" is particularly poignant in the current economic state. Though some might call him a preacher with a harmonica, he speaks the truth and does it beautifully, and that's convinced me. Get in line.





## SPORTS

# Lancaster Basketball flying high

## Narrow win despite Lancaster's court dominance

Julian Surface

IN A WEEK lacking in sport due to the season having already reached its climax, a pulsating friendly for Lancaster University's basketball team against Morecambe Bay Warriors saw Lancaster maintain their fantastic form with a superb victory. Despite a slow start, Lancaster demonstrated their resilience and stamina by coming back in the second and third quarter with quick counterattacks and controlled tactics that Morecambe could not deal with.

In the first quarter, Lancaster won the tip-off but it was a jaded start. Morecambe took the lead and Lancaster squandered a few easy chances. There were a few evident nerves amongst the team, as a few simple baskets were squandered. If Morecambe had converted their penalties, the score-line might have been worse. However, the home side managed to keep the deficit down to three points and it was a low scoring start for both teams, and Lancaster trailed 11-8 at the first buzzer.

Lancaster reorganised after the first break. They managed to score a succession of baskets and reclaim possession with energetic defending. Yet again, there was a lapse in concentration as the quarter came to an end, and Morecambe managed to build up points and sink their free-

throws. The second quarter ended with Lancaster having a narrow 25-21 lead.

The third quarter was well fought on both sides, but Lancaster was starting to show their superiority as each player took turns to finish a move. The real difference was seemingly that every member of the Lancaster team was capable of breaking through the defence, whilst only a few individual Morecambe players were performing at that standard. The Morecambe number 6 was the dangerman, causing all sorts of problems with counterattacks and managing to sink all his free-throws. However, the home team showed tactical flexibility and the lead was increased to 47-38 at the end of the third quarter.

The final quarter began with a dominant performance by Lancaster. The lead was extended and Morecambe were incapable of converting their chances into points. After a time out, the visitors began to recover some of the gap, but again Lancaster showed composure and style to convert a three pointer and four free throws. Another time out with a minute and a half to go was called and Lancaster managed to see out the result and added another victory to add to their successful season.

In the end, 64-59 did not do justice to the basketball squad that are top of the league. It was a friendly but treated with enthusiasm and the team was encouraged on by a crowd of cheerleaders. With Lancaster showing such form in a friendly game, they will hope to carry on their momentum into next season.



**Outclassed:** Morecambe Bay Warriors couldn't compete with Lancaster's man-for-man superiority. (Photo: Ben Robins)

## They think it's all over!



### Gareth Coleman

#### AU President

**SOMEONE ASKED ME** the other day, "So now, Roses has finished, I've bet you've got nothing else left to do then eh Gaz? You putting your feet up?" Admittedly this was said with a cheeky grin, but it was met with a "You having a laugh?" from myself. The AU Office is still in full-swing, and there are still plenty of sports taking place on campus over the next few weeks, the perfect post-exam stress release.

We've got the closing stages of the Carter Shield competition, with Grizedale currently edging the competition, looking to claim their first Carter Shield title, so expect a close-battle on Finals Day.

Founders will soon be upon us in week eight, so all you golden oldies from Bowland and Lonsdale need to be ready to earn some bragging rights for a year. Founders is essentially a mini Roses, with both colleges battling it out over the weekend in everything from football to bar sports. Better yet, Lancaster can't lose!

The Football League Cup will also be drawing to a close, which has already had its fair share of upsets. If you're part of the few remaining colleges (depending on when this is printed, I don't know who is through to the final yet!) good luck, and I'll see you at the final.

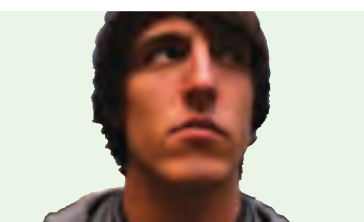
Staying with football, there will be a plethora of one-day tournaments taking place in these final weeks, including B-Active. Again, these offer the perfect opportunity to spend some time in the sunshine (we hope) supporting your college in their pursuit of trophies.

If you're a hockey fan, there will also be a chance to support Lancaster's hockey teams in a weekend tournament being held here over the weekend of week nine on the Astroturf. This will probably be the last chance to see one of our university teams in action before the end of the term.

So in answer to the aforementioned question, we've still got our hands full in the AU Office. On top of this, we've also got the AU Awards taking place in week eight, so if you've had an invite, make sure you buy your ticket as soon as possible. It will be a fantastic opportunity to celebrate our sporting achievements and generally round off the AU's year, so hopefully I'll see as many there as possible.

Besides this I'm putting the finishing touches to my year in office, collecting my thoughts for the last few meetings and presentations I have lined up. Best of luck to everyone still competing over the next few weeks, do your colleges and your teams proud.

## The second coming of the Dream Team



### Robert Payling

IN 1988 THE return of Johan Cruyff as manager of FC Barcelona, the team where his ability as a player was truly brought to the world stage, saw the beginning of an eight year reign where he would go on to form one of football's greatest ever teams. Fast forward twenty years in to the future and the return of one of Cruyff's most important players, Josep Guardiola as

manager has had fans and onlookers worldwide claiming that the dream team is back.

During Cruyff's fourth season in charge at Camp Nou his side achieved the accolade that they needed to be truly regarded as a great side. The 1992 European Cup Final, the 112th minute and Ronald Koeman, another of Cruyff's greats, is wearing the number four shirt that he wore with such pride. The full capacity Wembley crowd hope and pray that something magic will happen and it does. Koeman snatches at the chance to win the club's first European cup with a free kick and failure never seemed so distant.

Back in the present Guardiola in his first season in charge has led his own Dream Team to greatness. The setting was Rome's Stadio Olimpico and Barcelona had the chance of creating even more history with a domestic treble, a feat never achieved before in Spain. The task looked bleak, their opponents

were Manchester United, the current holders of the title as well as newly crowned World Club Champions who were never going to roll over and let the trophy be taken home to Catalonia without a fight. Barcelona would have to live up to their slogan 'més que un club' (More than a club).

This time Guardiola didn't have the likes of Romario, Stoichkov and Laudrup to support him as he did in his playing days though, he would have to rely on the players he had placed so much faith in since being deployed as first team manager. He would depend on the nucleus of Xavi and Iniesta to support the strike force of Eto'o, Henry and the treasure that is Lionel Messi. Between the three attackers they had scored ninety-seven goals in all competitions leading up to the game so Guardiola couldn't be blamed for having some hope.

Of course, we all know how things ended in Rome, familiar English fail-

ure overshadowed by the majestic foreign flare exhibited by Guardiola's men. Both goals in their 2-0 victory were worthy of any match, let alone Europe's biggest stage and the winners deserve every piece of recognition they receive.

Guardiola joked before the game that should Barcelona win the treble he would quit, go home and finish his career, his job would be done. The underlying sincerity of that statement cannot be ignored though, Barcelona have undoubtedly had their greatest ever season so where can they go now. Of course, there is the task of retaining their trophy; something never achieved since the Champions League was born out of the European Club's Cup in 1992 and something Manchester United could not achieve. Barcelona are different though, they are something special that everyone can appreciate and you don't need a slogan to tell you that.





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## Carter Shield provides the perfect summer setting

- Bowland, Grizedale and Fylde all reach frisbee and touch rugby finals
- Pendle and Cartmel also see success

Robert Payling

FORGET RECESSION, THE 'R' word that students have feared the most lately is Revision. But whilst the fat cats of the financial world suffer, students of Lancaster have the opportunity to find solace away from their books. They can take part in a tournament that always promises enjoyment and escape in abundance like nothing else. That tournament is the Carter Shield.

Summer term has brought two more events to this year's tournament with colleges competing in both Ultimate frisbee and touch rugby. Grizedale, Fylde and Bowland have been dominant so far so this would be a great chance for those below them in the league tables to make a late push for glory.

The frisbee competition was structured with Pendle, Cartmel and Bowland contesting one group whilst Fylde, Grizedale and Lonsdale battled out the second. The top two from each group would then go on to compete at finals day.

Pendle started with a dominating display that saw Cartmel disposed of 4-0 in the first match who also went on to struggle in their second contest falling 5-2 to a clinical Bowland side. The final group match was then contested by the two heavyweights of the group with Pendle coming away 3-1 victors against Bowland.

The second group began with a well contested 2-2 draw between Fylde and Grizedale. This was followed by Lonsdale looking to take advantage of Fylde who had had to play two consecutive matches, but they still lost 3-1. Grizedale then dominated the final match of the day by beating Lonsdale 3-0 to confirm their status in the finals along with Fylde.

Changes were made for the rugby event with every team now contesting against one another in a league struc-

ture. Bowland were most impressive on the day, winning all four of their matches including an opening six try victory without reply against Cartmel. Grizedale also displayed their intent early on in a hard worked 5-1 victory over Fylde. The third match of the day saw the introduction of Lonsdale against the earlier impressive Bowland who picked up where they left off in their initial dominance by running in five tries, again without conceding.

The intensity and effort afforded to the game was encapsulated by the war cries that sounded as Cartmel grounded a late try to win the match

The next round saw Fylde battle to victory against Cartmel and Grizedale beat Lonsdale 3-0. Bowland then took on Fylde who proved to be a much tougher test than their previous endeavours but still managed a stylish 3-1 victory. The two undefeated teams of the tournament met afterwards with Bowland beating Grizedale in a fierce 4-3 victory that brought out the best in both teams.

The final match of the day would decide the fourth team to make it through to finals day. Lonsdale stood above Cartmel in the league table due to their earlier draw so this would be a winner takes all contest. The intensity and effort afforded to the game was encapsulated by the war cries that sounded as Cartmel grounded a late try to win the match and join Bowland, Grizedale and Fylde in the finals.

The finals will take place tomorrow, June 3, including the tug of war. The colleges competed in Rounders on Sunday (though after SCAN went to print). For those seeking to support their college, soak up the summer sun or just get away from revision for an afternoon, finals day will be the perfect setting.

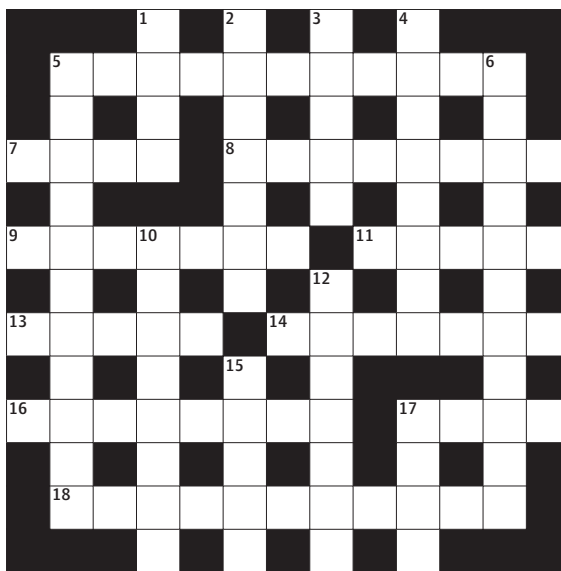
## Shooter's bounce



**Friendly rivalry:** Lancaster's basketball team play the Morecambe Bay Warriors. (Photo: Ben Robins)

Story on page 26 >

## Quick crossword no. 11,843



### Across

- Manually launched explosive device (4,7)
- Obscene stuff (4)
- Amorous experiences (4,4)
- Quick, sharp reply (7)
- Gathering of witches (5)
- Match (5)
- Burn (corpse) (7)
- Melt (8)
- Soup dish – roll a ball (4)
- Holmes's headgear (11)

### Down

- Hard irregularity in timber – interlacing of cord (4)
- Nimbleness (7)
- Wait on (5)
- Hall for dancing (8)
- Small avian with ability to fly backwards (11)
- Parisian landmark (6,5)
- Superintendent (8)
- Weapon store (7)
- Near – shut (5)
- Cook in oven (4)

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### Solution No 11,842

A	T	W	I	L	L	S	C	A	R	A	B
R	A	E				A	I	A			
T	H	Y	M	E		H	A	L	O	G	E
E	W	C	I			Y	I				
R	O	A	D	H	O	G		P	E	D	A
Y	R					H	S				E
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P		U				H		A			G
S	C	R	A	P			A	E	R	O	S
Y	U	T	I			O	H				U
C	O	N	Q	U	E	R		T	E	M	P
H	N		R			O	A				E
O	X					B	R	O	K	E	N