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STUDENT COMMENT AND NEWS

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Week 2, Michaelmas Term, Tuesday 14th October, 2008

Replacement Sports Centre plans shelved

Credit crunch squeezes finances Phase 5 project

Dan Hogan

Editor

PLANS to build a replacement for the University's ageing Sports Centre have been delayed. The international financial crisis has been blamed for the shelving of the proposals.

At a meeting of the University Council, which is the highest decision making body in the University, the Director of Finance and Resources told the Council that it would not be possible to advance with plans for the Sports Centre because of the University's inability to find a financier for the project.

Banks are currently unwilling to lend money to each other, for fear that they may collapse, leaving bad debts. This means that it is incredibly difficult for businesses to find finance for large projects while the banks are troubled by such uncertainty.

However, referring to the rest of the Phase 5 development, he reported that with the exception of the new Sports Centre "there is sufficient money... to carry out all the projects to which Council is committed."

Phase 5 of campus redevelopment will involve leasing off the majority of the remaining University owned residences on campus to UPP (University Partnerships Programme) in return for a £37.5m lump sum, and £0.7m each year in ground rent. The intention is to raise funds for non-residential building projects. UPP already owns most of the residences on

Delayed replacement:

The University's ageing Sports Centre looks well overdue for replacement.



campus, and they will be tasked with refurbishing the older residences.

Funds raised from the leasing of the residences will be put towards a number of projects. According to the Lancaster University Masterplan, these developments will include such projects as the Learning Grid (the area for which has already been closed off) next to Alexandra Square, and the eventual demolition of the existing Conference Centre to create a new 'entrance' to the University campus.

The University had originally intended to use Bradford and Bingley as the other main source of finance for Phase 5, but after the bank's share price collapsed recently, putting savers' money at risk, it was brought into public ownership by the Government. The University are now planning to finance the Phase 5 project with a broad consortium of banks, to minimise risk, although at a higher cost to the University in the long run.

Sir Chris visits campus to open new Fylde bar



Virgin pint: Licensee Dave Orr looks on as the Chancellor pulls the first pint after the bar is reopened. (Photo: Dan Hogan)

Fylde bar officially reopened but controversy continues, pg 2 >

Union Council votes to ban smoking in all residences

Lizzie Houghton

A controversial motion to lobby for a smoking ban in residences across the whole campus was narrowly passed by LUSU's Union Council on Thursday.

The motion, proposed by LUSU President Michael Payne, provoked a lengthy debate in the Council chamber. Ten councillors voted in favour of the ban, with eight against. With both smokers and non-smokers on the Council, the motion was sure to be contentious.

The two vote majority was reached after the original motion was amended to aid smokers who would be forced to smoke outside.

To some Council members the whole thing stank of a "Nanny University". Questions were raised as to how such a scheme could be enforced, what it would do to the University's popularity and if it violated basic human rights.

In support of the motion were those who felt that injury through passive smoking in residences is unacceptable. As was pointed out, non-smokers often find themselves in flats of smokers, which is unfair when everyone pays the same rent.

The inventory system is already used to enforce compliance.

Michael Payne said: "If there's any smell left [in a non-smoking room] people are fined. [Students] know they're going to get a massive fine: I'd say this is a deterrent."

Under the policy, smoking would still be allowed outside as is the already the case. The proposal does not come into effect until approved by the University.

LUSU calls for NUS reform
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As Fylde Bar officially re-opens, Uni chiefs still bicker over process, not policy

Dan Hogan

Editor

FYLDE Bar was officially re-opened by the University's Chancellor, in a special ceremony last Friday evening.

The bar was closed for most of Summer term last year for extensive refurbishment, only opening just in time for Fylde College's end-of-year Extrav.

Although the bar has been in use throughout the summer vacation, it had not received its official blessing. Sir Christian Bonington CBE, who has been Chancellor of the University since 2005, cut a ribbon, signalling the bar as open, before pulling the first pint of Doris - a beer from a co-operative micro-brewery local to Sir Christian's home, of which he is a trustee. Bonington, a renowned mountaineer and explorer, led the first successful ascent of Everest's South West face in 1975.

Fylde Principal, Frank Wareing, paid tribute to the input into the remodelling of the bar by Tim Roca, who was Fylde JCR President before he was President of LUSU last year.

Despite celebrating its opening, the task of furnishing the bar is still not finished. The addition of more soft chairs was planned after University Estates received poor feedback regarding the bistro-esque appearance of the existing high chairs and tables. But this new furniture has yet to arrive.

Hanging over the celebration however, was the ongoing controversy over the management of the college bars. In talks with LUSU Sabbatical Officers earlier in the day, the Chancellor had been informed of the situation and the disapproval of the student body with the University's decision. As a trustee of what was the first co-operative pub in the country, Sir Chris is a friend of the concept of community run bars, but it is not yet clear if the Chancellor will seek to intervene in the dispute.

Discussion of the situation surrounding the bars was brief, but terse.

At the recent meeting of University Council, which is the



Bar of contention: University Chancellor and renowned mountaineer, Sir Christian Bonington CBE (left) speaking to Vice-Chancellor Paul Wellings (right) at the opening of Fylde Bar last Friday. (Photo: Dan Hogan)

University's chief governing body, discussion of the situation surrounding the bars was brief, but terse. Pro-Chancellor Bryan Gray attacked LUSU President Michael Payne, for complaining that "no official communication was received from the University until after the Principals had been informed."

Poor communication became a recurring theme at the Council meeting

Mr Payne allowed himself to be pinned to the tangential question of whether LUSU officers should have been informed directly of the University's decision on bars management, instead of the central question of bars management itself when he conceded, "the only point I was making was the one about communication."

Poor communication became a recurring theme at the Council meeting, when "clear communication of plans, goals, policies, performance and values" was listed as one of nine "Areas for Development" after a recent survey of staff perceptions of the University. Other areas that showed distinct room for improvement were "speed, communication and coordination of decision making," "perception of ethical performance," and "confidence in leadership."

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Do you want to write for scan?

Email scan@lancaster.ac.uk or come along to any weekly section meeting. Meetings are open to anyone.

You can find the meeting times for each section in the left-hand column of page 2.

Lancaster students satisfied, but graduates left grieving

- LU top in NW for student satisfaction
- Graduates struggle to find employment

Chris Davis
News Editor

LANCASTER University students are among the most satisfied in the country, but Lancaster graduates find it hard to find work, surveys reveal.

Results of the 2008 National student satisfaction survey, released last month, show that Lancaster students are the most satisfied in the North West and, alongside students from Sheffield and Durham, the whole North of the country.

The survey, completed by over 220,000 students across the country, placed Lancaster joint top in the North and 13th overall in the UK, with 89% of students, compared to a national average of 82%, stating they were 'satisfied with their course'. Topping the survey was the private Buckingham University, which boasts one of the UK's best student to staff ratios.

The results of the survey placed Lancaster way above big city

academic rivals such as Manchester and Edinburgh, suggesting that the University's collegiate system and small, intimate, campus community continue to provide a more enjoyable student experience.

The survey was carried out over last year, before the University's effective takeover of four of the college bars. It remains to be seen how these recent developments will impact upon student satisfaction.

Lancaster scored particularly low when compared to similarly ranked Universities for graduate employability

However, the status of student satisfaction surveys as a measure of the quality of a University has been repeatedly called into question. Indeed, for Lancaster students, figures from more mainstream sources are less encouraging. Despite Lancaster's excellent student satisfaction ratings, it seems that graduates of the University are still not seen as being as desirable to employers as graduates from rival institutions.

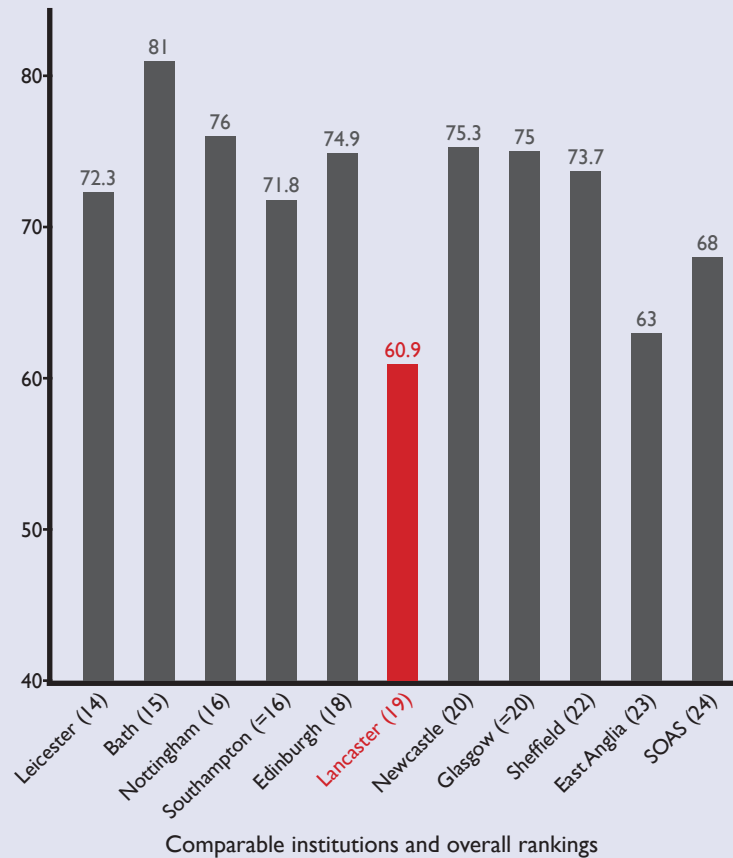
In recent rankings tables, Lancaster scored particularly low when compared to similarly ranked Universities for graduate employability. Lancaster, placed 19th overall in this year's Times University Guide, only achieved a score of 60.9% in the 'graduate prospects' category of the same table. Newcastle, by comparison, which is just behind Lancaster in 20th, scored 75.3%, and Edinburgh, placed 18th, scored 74.9%.

It is unclear whether the letter in the Freshers' Week issue of SCAN complaining of employer 'prejudice' against Lancaster graduates is borne out by the statistics, or if the Lancaster's low graduate employment rates are more to do with the need to better prepare students for the harsh world of the graduate jobs market. Lancaster students may be 'satisfied' whilst they are here, but if such imbalances in graduate prospects continue to exist, will they feel the same a few years down the line?

Improved careers fair
pg 5 >

Graduate employment

Percentage of UK graduates in "graduate level" employment or further study six months after graduation in 2006.
Source: The Times Good University Guide 2008



Tailor degrees to business demands, say industry chiefs

Lizzie Houghton

THE key to getting the best graduate job is knowing how to get out of bed on time, business leaders have said.

The Confederation of British Industry (CBI) is hoping that universities will soon put as much emphasis on work related training, such as communication skills and team management, as they do undergraduate courses.

CBI – the self-proclaimed “voice of business” – has put together a Higher Education Task Force, working with some of the world's best known companies, along with three English universities. The aim of this task force is to help students

develop the employability skills needed in the business world.

Richard Lambert, Director General of CBI, put it simply. Speaking at the launch of the task force last month he stated: “Most people need to be able to get up in the morning.”

Speaking at the same launch Susan Anderson, the CBI's head of education, pointed out that for most employers, being able to get to work on time counts far more than what subject a graduate studied, or what mark they finished with.

“There is dissatisfaction with soft skills, communication skills and self-management” she said. “These are generic skills we expect every graduate to have.”

This statement is backed up by CBI's own findings. In a recent survey 86% of firms ranked

employability skills as the most important factor when recruiting graduates.

More worryingly perhaps, 20% of employers said they were currently dissatisfied with graduates’ basic skills, while 63% believe universities should make helping students improve their leadership and management skills a priority.

Another of CBI's complaints is the matter of funding. According to them businesses spent £39 billion in 2007 on workforce training while in the same year university income from workforce training was just £480 million.

“Most people need to be able to get up in the morning.”

“Clearly, the role of universities is broader than just business,” Mr. Lambert said. “But as a significant funder, user and customer of higher education, it is only right that business sets out what it needs.”

The businesses in question range from smoothie giants Innocent, to global giants McDonalds

and Microsoft – proving, if nothing else, that globalisation is alive and well in the corridors of education.

Johnny Cameron, Chairman of Global Markets at RBS, one of the companies represented, said of the task force: “I see first-hand that British graduates are themselves competing in a global market for the best jobs.”

“In the UK we need to ensure that our graduates continue to be amongst the best in the world, developing the business awareness, personal skills and technical knowledge they will need to be successful in today's world.”

Perhaps not wisely given the current state of the world economy, the CBI are also pointing to America to show Britain how private investment can transform Higher Education. In America private sources account for 62% of Higher Education funding, compared to just 31% in the UK. They also point to countries like Japan and France, who both spend a higher percentage of their Gross Domestic Product on Higher Education than we do in the UK, as examples to be followed.

Call extra conference now, say LUSU to NUS

LUSU has called upon the National Union of Students to convene an ‘extraordinary conference’ on the subject of governance reform.

NUS have undergone a second round of their ongoing governance review and as are planning to bring in a new constitution, a new set of committees and new representative structures. LUSU have called for the conference to speed up the process of reform.

An Extraordinary Conference may be called when 25 member unions call for one. With support from other unions an Extraordinary Conference could be called this term.

“Lots of things are changing for the NUS,” LUSU President Michael Payne said at the meeting. “[The reforms make it] far better than the way it was in the sixties.”

Apprentice Alex draws crowds to entrepreneur event

Chris Davis
News Editor

Over 170 students attended an event to hear the former star of hit BBC show *The Apprentice* share his views, at the introductory event of the Young Entrepreneurs Society last week.

Alex Wotherspoon shared his views on business, education, and life in the media spotlight. The event was well attended, with over 170 students packed into an intimate Management School lecture theatre. The audience were eager for the opportunity to hear, question, and even share a complimentary glass of wine with the Bolton-born celebrity businessman.

The event was the latest of its type held by the Young Entrepreneurs, a group that offers students the chance to network with companies and hone their business skills.

Alex, who now works in business consultancy, was full of praise for the 'lively society', and encouraged students to use their membership as an opportunity to "implement a social network which you can later draw from."

The 25 year old Mr Wotherspoon---whose youth was a constant topic during his time on *The Apprentice*---told the crowd how his childhood was spent in a 'business focused' family, repeatedly stressing how both his family and his time with the Young Entrepreneurs at Aston Business School helped him achieve his professional success.

He was less complementary about his experiences in reality TV, complaining that the editing of the show "made a character" out of him and claiming that he was "thrown to the mercy of the BBC". The audience was told of the "horrific pressure" involved throughout making the show, which was the



Focus of attention: Alex Wotherspoon, finalist of television show *'The Apprentice'*, poses for a photograph with audience members following a talk given for Lancaster University Young Entrepreneurs Society at Lancaster University's Management School.. (Photo: Rob Miller)

"most intense experience" of his life. "I only slept two hours a day" he claimed, and told how he had lived on "a diet of Alpen Bars. It was terrible. It definitely got to me". Yet when inevitably questioned on the

nature of the show's most famous figure, Sir Alan Sugar, he was more restrained, commenting merely that the business legend was "very small".

Conversation later turned to

Alex's status as a celebrity. He insists that he has deliberately shunned the limelight and chose not to "sell himself" to the media---unlike fellow *Apprentice* contestants.

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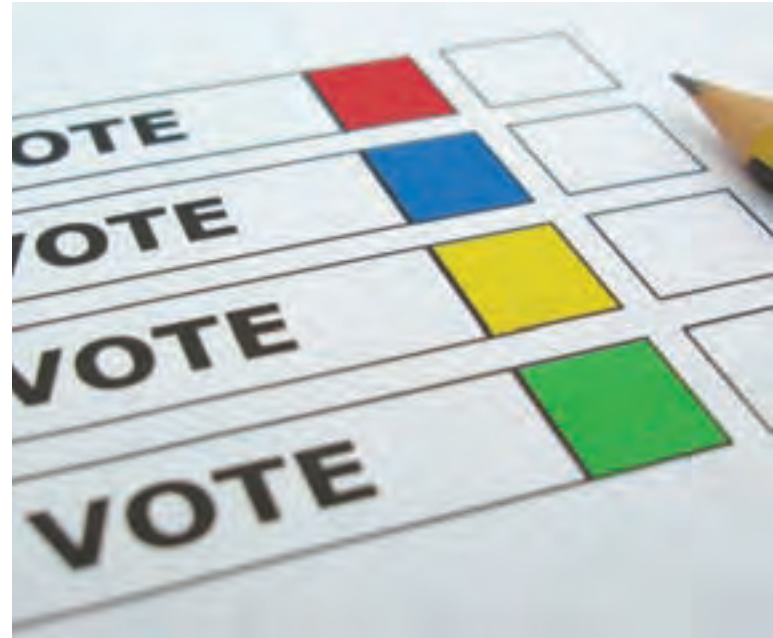
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Nominations open for Ed & Welfare byelection



Fiona Hutchinson

NOMINATIONS have opened for the byelection to elect a new Education & Welfare Officer.

The byelection will hopefully fill the vacancy left after Dan Ratcliffe, elected to the position last year, failed his degree leaving him unable to take up the role. LUSU has been without an Education & Welfare Officer since the end of June.

The position of Education & Welfare Officer is a paid sabbatical position, which normally lasts for one year. The work is focused around maintaining communication in colleges and departments on any issues regarding welfare and academia. Issues may include rent prices, tuition fees and the course rep system. Chris Cottam, the previous holder of the post, successfully campaigned to increase contact time between staff and students. Janie Coleman, the LUSU General Secretary said that

Chris had “poured his heart and soul into the job” and believes whoever follows him will fill a very important role.

As of Friday lunchtime, no names had been put forward as candidates for the position.

Simultaneous elections will also be held for two non-sabbatical vacancies: Race Relations Officer and Faculty of Health and Medicine Rep; and seven delegates to NUS Conference.

Students interested in standing for these positions are urged to submit nomination forms to the LUSU General Secretary before 6pm on October 23rd. Hustings will be on the same evening, to offer a chance for candidates to present their ideas and credentials to students, which will be immediately followed by a shortened seven-day campaign.

Polling day itself is Oct 30th, with polling stations open between 10am and 6pm in the college porters lodges and in the library for postgraduates. Results will be announced that evening.

Students in ‘Nazi’ initiation ceremony

NUS launches initiation crackdown

Jonathan Starr

THE National Union of Students has announced a crackdown on sports team initiation ceremonies. The move has come after footage of a ceremony at the University of Gloucestershire was leaked to the BBC.

The footage showed students with plastic bags over their heads, drinking and vomiting, egged on by a student dressed in Nazi-style uniform, complete with swastika armband. The students are seen vomiting onto the ground before being paraded through the streets. The shocking footage, viewable on the BBC website, has triggered a

reaction from the NUS in which it calls for all such ceremonies to be banned.

NUS president, Wes Streeting released a statement on behalf of the NUS stating: “We are totally opposed to student initiations. They put students at serious risk and exclude students who don’t want to take part in that binge-drinking culture.”

While most initiation ceremonies result in nothing more than humiliation and a hangover, it is believed that many take a similar form to that caught in the video, with one in five involving some form physical abuse. Initiation ceremonies have caused three deaths in recent years, including the death of first-year Exeter student, Gavin Britton in 2006 which involved the downing of a pint of spirits after an

already dangerous concoction of other drinks.

Whilst no groups at this University have admitted to the practice, one first-year had to be taken to Lancaster Royal Infirmary on the Monday of Freshers’ Week after being force-fed alcohol by members of an AU sports team. Although freshers’ weeks inevitably involve a vast amount of alcohol, there is a fine line between a bit of fun and bullying.

It is not clear how long the practice has left, or if the NUS crackdown is going to have any effect. But the card is marked and it may be wise for any sports team considering performing any form of initiation ceremony to seek a different way to greet the newcomers to the club.

Missing LU student Noraina Andrada, found in London

A girl who went missing in Lancaster on August 25th has been found, safe and well in London.

Posters bearing the face of Noraina Andrada, 26, were put up around the campus and the city, with a widespread response.

Originally from the Phillipines, the Lancaster student walked into her country’s embassy on Suffolk Street in London late last week.

Her disappearance was regarded as “out of character”, according to an announcement by Lancaster Police.

Word of the disappearance was put out around campus during Fresher’s Week, more than a month after the girl originally went missing.



Out of character: Noraina Andrada was missing for 38 days before word was put out around campus of the disappearance. 7 days later, she appeared in London.

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T-shirt Tyrants need knocking from their pedestals



Liam Richardson
Comment Editor

Fresher's week 2008 has alerted me to an outbreak of egomania across campus.

I'm not one to criticize JCR officers; many of whom are committed to serving their colleges to the best of their ability and I congratulate these people for their hard work. However, every JCR on campus contains a few CV hunters and power hungry ego merchants who don't know their arses from their elbows.

It is little wonder that Lancaster University has developed a silent majority of students who feel disconnected and alienated from campus politics because of JCR cliques orchestrated by preening poseurs who devote their time to self promotion instead of fulfilling the role they were elected into in the first place. Typically, these officers are the ones who speak the most whilst conversely saying very little of actual relevance.

Bedding freshers, getting them drunk, setting a bad example and being generally egotistical and insufferable seem to be the only prerequisites

I dub these contemptible clowns 'T-shirt tyrants'. They wear their JCR t-shirts not as a badge of honour but as an excuse to claim superiority over those who have elected them. Every year less people sign up for JCR positions and less people turn out to vote. This may be viewed as part of a greater national trend of voting apathy amongst students, or it could be that a majority have lost faith in their college JCRs. This problem is doing the collegiate system no favours as JCRs become



more exclusive and less accessible to the wider student population.

We need greater transparency and accountability of college JCRs by virtue of public forums or reports demonstrating exactly what they have achieved during their time in office. This will give the wider student population greater faith in those who represent them and possibly weed out the rude, ignorant and arrogant JCR members who are allowed to abuse their power.

It is unfortunate that T-shirt Tyranny is not exclusive to JCR Execs. Corridor Reps fall foul to these monomaniacal tendencies as well, although again, I am referring to a minority. No doubt following the example of their elected representatives; it seems a Corridor Rep T-shirt gives the wearer *carte blanche*

to abuse their position as part of what should be a support network for new students. Bedding freshers, getting them drunk, setting a bad example and being generally egotistical and insufferable seem to be the only prerequisites these days for doing a job that surely should be monitored more closely by senior college officers if some of the antics this year have anything to go by.

An interview process, as used in County College, should surely be adopted across campus to prevent those who are irresponsible and unsuitable attaining these positions of responsibility. These people may have the T-shirts, but they have a long way to go before earning my respect and the respect of many other disillusioned students.

A new HE funding model is needed to fill the vacuum

Michael Payne
President, LUSU

Danny Gray
Education & Welfare
Officer, County JCR

There was great frustration and disappointment from both the NUS and Student Unions nationwide when the 2004 Higher Education Bill passed into law by just five votes in the House of Commons.

Disappointment and frustration amongst students is clearly not a feeling that champions of the student cause would like to revisit when the proposed review of HE funding is taken by the government in 2009.

Students' Unions, through the NUS, have now decided to drop the rhetoric and step up to the plate with real critique of the current system. They have begun the process of developing a reasonable alternative policy suggestion for the future. There is a clear will amongst students to support the agenda to widen participation in Higher Education but the current system continues to penalise the most vulnerable students.

A lack of leadership and direction by both Labour and the Tories on the future for HE funding has now, more than ever left this political hot potato lying in the hands of Students' Unions and like minded lobbyists. It is clear that the power exists to make Higher Education fairer, more equal and inclusive but this is currently hindered by lack of political will on all sides.

NUS' latest critique of the current funding model for students in Higher Education, 'Broke & Broken' aims to unify support for a full and thorough review of the current system. There is a real concern that political parties have struck a backroom deal not to touch this issue with a bargepole before the next general election.

Since the introduction of the Higher Education Act 2004 the current system has opened the floodgates of marketisation within HE. Everyone has the right to go to University but there is evidence that the current funding system

deters those who could benefit from it most. In some circumstances it prevents the realisation of this opportunity amongst students from lower socio-economic backgrounds. The system also fails to ensure that those who enjoy the greatest financial benefit from Higher Education will contribute more to its costs.

Bearing in mind that with the existing system of capped variable fees students are now paying £3,000 per annum, plus inflation rises; the Higher Education Policy Institute predicts that if the cap was raised to £7,000, the fee being paid by the average student would be £4,300. They also estimate that 20% of all students would pay the full £7,000 and a further 20% would have to pay £5,000 a year if the cap were raised.

The power exists to make Higher Education fairer, more equal and inclusive but it is hindered by lack of political will on all sides.

The increasing pressure from students upon Vice-Chancellors, local councils and MPs as well as Prospective Parliamentary Candidates is improving understanding of the damaging effects of the current system. An overly bureaucratic and complex bursary system and a funding model which leaves students carrying the weight of debt after their studies has led to the national mobilisation of Students' Unions for a day of action (*Students In The Red*) on November 5th.

It remains to be seen whether this time around the grand puppeteers of the Higher Education agenda in the UK will choose to ignore seven million plus voices, those voices are now unified in calling for a full and thorough review of this cumbersome and damaging system and they must be listened to.

Letters to the Editor



Send your letters to 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 would like to respond to the coverage of Dan Ratcliffe's failure to take up office, as discussed in the last issue of SCAN.

When students voted for Dan, they were almost certainly unaware that their vote only counted should he pass his degree. They recognised him as the best candidate and expected, not unreasonably, that the fact he won an election would result in him taking up office. The idea that this 'small print' is in any way democratic is therefore laughable.

I'm disappointed that the other Sabbs did not fight Dan's corner more, even if it was just as a display of solidarity. The Education and Welfare Officer has, perhaps, the broadest portfolio and biggest workload on the sabbatical team, which is why Dan's inability to take up office is a tragedy not just for him, but for the student body at large.

Fraser Welsh,
Faculty of Arts and
Social Sciences Rep

Last issue An Angry Graduate wrote a letter into SCAN regarding the difficulties faced by Lancaster University graduates finding employment and I felt it important to reiterate said point due to its importance to all students of this university.

In the Times Good University Guide this year Lancaster University came in at 20th in the UK, due mainly to ranking eighth for research quality and high student satisfaction. But Lancaster was all the way down at 104th for employability of graduates. If graduates can't get employed are they getting their money's worth from their degree? Time will tell if the new minimum contact hours will improve teaching, but why employers rate Lancaster so poorly needs to be investigated. The need for an Education and Welfare Sabbatical in this Union is possibly greater than ever.

Edwin Burrows
Furness College

Suicide story 'disrespectful'

I would just like to state my feelings towards your use of the 'Jenny Grant' story ('Student Page-3 girl commits suicide', 30th Sept 2008) in this paper.

I am discusted(sic) to see this article as I feel it is disrespectful treating her life as idol(sic) gossip for a magazine. Jenny's death is a private matter to be dealt with by her family and her friends - it is not something to be brought to the attantion(sic) of the whole Uni in an effort to popularise your paper.

I feel its use has been extremely disrespectful and would hope in any unfortunate future incidents, your paper will not attempt to interfere.

Milly Pearson

Response:

Though an undoubtedly sensitive issue, the death of a member of the University is an event that SCAN has a duty to report.

Ms. Grant had a significant impact on a great many people at this University while she was alive. It is right that SCAN reports her tragic death, no matter how unpleasant the circumstances.

It is also right that SCAN reports the successes of her modelling career - a career to which she had aspired for much of her life. Reporting her modelling achievements is not disrespectful to her, but a credit.

Dan Hogan
Editor, SCAN

Is it just me or have the University Estates become more lax on health and safety of late? Wandering campus at night I found myself stumbling over temporary fencing, builders' rubble and debris, left on main University thoroughfares. Several planks of wood and other rubbish were left on the spine near Pizzetta; surely it would only take one slightly intoxicated and curious student to cause some serious damage with these.

I know health and safety can be a pain, but surely Estates should know better after the number of buildings they have flattened lately. Isn't this the same department that oversaw the "accidental" damage to a block of perfectly suitable residences whilst knocking down Grizedale? They also put up those new college flags, which were so well erected that they are already torn, battered and hanging on by a thread.

Come on guys, Bob the Builder could do a better job!

Anon.

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Is Gordon Brown back from the brink?

Liam Richardson

Comment Editor

I feel compelled to whisper it softly, but maybe, just maybe, Gordon Brown has the fortitude and reserve of character to extricate himself from his current woes and lead the Labour party to election glory in 2010. It is a small miracle, and testament to a fundamentally decent man, pilloried in the press, that he has survived recent backbench rumblings, financial chaos and the renewed threat of a resurgent Conservative Party (thus far) with his dignity intact, though with significantly greyer hair.

His conference speech, with the cutting attack that “this is no time for a novice”, was the sort of statement of determined intent the party needed from its leader to quell the threat of the slick and well-oiled spin machine that is Dave Cameron, and the problem closer to home regarding the upstart David Miliband. I admit that the Tories are still way ahead in the polls but their confidence in their belief they are the “governing in waiting” could come back to haunt them as it did for Neil Kinnock and the Labour party in 1992. Back then, mirroring what Brown hopes to achieve in 2010, John Major managed to emerge from the shadow of his towering predecessor, Margaret Thatcher, and claim an impressive election victory from the jaws of a resurgent

opposition that had distanced itself from the spectre of its less palatable elements.

It is this sort of turn-around that may appear unlikely, perhaps even impossible at the moment, but if Gordon Brown can continue to weather the storm and do as much as possible to ease the coming recession then he may have a lifeline to take into the next general election.

Many people unfairly blame him for the current credit crunch. Although he was unwise to claim he had dismissed the notion of a boom and bust back in his early days as Chancellor, the current problems stem from a world-wide downturn coupled with the greed of unscrupulous city bankers. The banking sector may have been left under-regulated by the Labour government, but it would have faced far less scrutiny had the Conservatives been in power.

The internal rumblings amongst Labour’s parliamentary ranks also appear to have been snuffed out, with the outbursts of assorted minor Labour figures such as Siobhain McDonagh and Barry Gardiner going mercifully unsupported. Just a month ago, Brown’s political epitaph was already written with Blairites ultras snapping at his heels like angry serpents; attempting to elevate David Miliband to contend for the premiership. But Brown has forced his way through the barrage of criticism fired at him by his detractors, and with a good conference and a measured cabinet reshuffle behind him, he is now back on the road having navigated his way through a rocky summer and lacklustre attempt at an early



Brownisms:

“I didn’t come into politics to be a celebrity or thinking I’d always be popular. Perhaps that’s just as well”

“If people say I’m too serious, quite honestly there’s a lot to be serious about”

“What has become clear is that Britain cannot trust the Conservatives to run the economy. I’m all in favour of apprenticeships, but let me tell you this is no time for a novice.”

autumn re-launch. That he referred to his autumn policies (involving house insulation and freezes on stamp duty) as a re-launch at all is demonstration that he acknowledges the fact there were problems before.

Gordon Brown is, and has always been, a complex figure. He is a decent and honest (perhaps too much so) man who excelled as Chancellor and still retains the faith of many in handling economic difficulties, despite Alistair Darling’s downbeat and overly dramatic predictions that the country is heading into its worst financial crisis for sixty years. And yet, he still lacks the gravitas and leadership of Tony Blair, who was recognised as a major player in world politics during his time in office, and still is now. On the world stage, Brown is very much in the shadow of his French and German heads of state, Nicholas Sarkozy and Angela Merkel respectively. However, perhaps in the current climate, Brown’s rather dour persona is what is needed to steer the country right now, and if he can avert another byelection embarrassment in Glenrothes on November 6th (conveniently scheduled to be buried under the media coverage of the US Presidential election aftermath), the next eighteen months could prove to be an opportunity to rebuild the damaged reputation of New Labour and prove to the nation once and for all, that substance over style is what Britain needs most.

The fear factor

Edwin Burrows

THE end of the world! The planet is going to be consumed by a mini black hole! Planes are falling from the sky! Bomb threats! Death! Destruction! Anarchy!

Stories like these sell papers and dominate news stations. But has the media’s overzealous story selling crossed the line into socially accepted psychological terrorism?

Recently the headlines of the major papers were dominated by the turning on of the Large Hadron Collider. Prophecies of mini black holes swallowing boosted news-

paper sales just as the threatened mass chaos of the Y2K bug did nine years ago.

But is such tripe really that much of an issue? Surely most of us can identify whether an article is complete garbage or not. A recent opinion poll, ranking professions by perceived trustworthiness found journalists coming last, after politicians. Yet people apparently can’t help falling for scare stories and media perpetuated moral panic.

One of Dan Hogan’s first jobs on assuming the title of SCAN Editor this year was to reassure two professors of physics at this University that Lancaster wasn’t getting a tube network, as hoaxed in the last SCAN of Summer term.

But the dangers of media scare

stories extend beyond practical jokes or even giving a significant proportion of the population unneeded anxiety. Media scares can threaten the very safety and rights of every individual. When people are scared, they are malleable, and when provoked by onslaughts of media invoked terror, they typically end up surrendering their rights for the promise of security and safety. Just look at how quick Americans were to accept the Orwellian titled, USA PATRIOT Act of 2001.

But it wasn’t George W Bush who said, “An evil exists that threatens every man, woman and child of this great nation. We must take steps to ensure our domestic security and protect our homeland,” but Adolf Hitler, while

introducing the Gestapo. Draw whichever parallels you wish, but those who fail to learn from history are forced to repeat it.

The role of the media in the incitement of fear and anxiety in the general population can’t be downplayed. The global fear and panic produced in the wake of 9/11 was only cranked up by the media’s repeated slow motion replays of the towers collapsing. Since when did we in both America and Britain become so comfortable with the repeated image of a massacre being played out in front of us when we are still so up tight about sex on our screens? Given the choice of watching sex or hundreds of people dying I know which I’d choose.

Sigmund Freud once said some-

thing to the effect of, “If you want to control a population, it is best to depress them with a continuous barrage of negative ideas. You can not control a happy person.” The bad news and scare stories that the media continually pump out goes beyond merely informing audiences. It has become a method of social control, made worse by the growing number of people brought up almost entirely by television. The late, great American comedian and social commentator Bill Hicks once said that the most important choice in life is between fear and love. So, the next time the Daily Mail urges you to live in fear of the world, wipe your arse with it and get on with your life. We can all do better than that.



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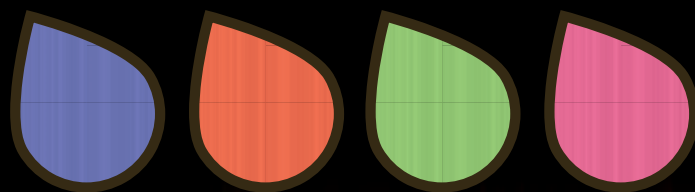
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The need for Ethical investment



Nat Walker
Block of Six Officer,
LUSU

In the last few years interest in social responsibility and codes of corporate practice has increased. A new awareness of issues such as fair trade or the environmental impact of multi-national production has begun to alter the ways in which people act and the ways companies and organisations behave.

Currently Lancaster University does not hold or abide by an ethical investment policy. As social ethics

has been a growing area of interest and debate, this lack of investment policy has become a point of contention between some groups of students and the university. Activity amongst students has involved petitions, debates and die-ins, most of which have focussed on shares the university holds in arms company BAE.

There are many reasons why any university, including Lancaster should consider ethical investment. One which is very important is the democratising of the University's

financial processes. Without an open policy students are unable to have any say over the actions the University takes or the companies they invest in. Though there will undoubtedly be a variety of different opinions or choices, the creation of a forum in which students could express this would surely be a step in the right direction, creating greater student involvement and integration.

The creation of a forum in which students could express their views on the companies the University invests in, would surely be a step in the right direction

As well as this positive impact on the Lancaster University community, the effect on the global community cannot be dismissed.

Education is a valuable asset, and we should try to promote it in other ways by ensuring the organisations we endorse do not, for example, use children in their workforce.

As a result of continuous work and campaigning, LUSU, the Students' Union, has now been granted a Fair-trade status. This provides not only support for many farmers and producers across the world, but also demonstrates that ethical activity is possible on such a scale. It would be great to see the University endorse the actions of the Students' Union by considering social responsibility in its investment choices.

The benefits an ethical investment policy would bring to the university as an institution are also important. An ethical investment policy would allow Lancaster

University to compete with other universities who are taking such issues seriously. Universities such as Edinburgh, Oxford, Cambridge, St. Andrews and Warwick are attempting to solve the problems that investment can create, either by finding positive ways to invest or by divesting from organisations considered unethical. As this occurs amongst Universities it is also becoming an ever-more important factor in assessing institutions, both by prospective students, and by society at large.

Whether you feel that ethical investment is a burning issue for yourself personally or not, it is definitely a concern worthy of debate and discussion, as it has the potential to shape so much of your own and the wider world.

Stubb out smoking in residences once and for all

Phil Miles

Block of Six Officer,
LUSU

ALTHOUGH I note that there must be some level of demand for smoking rooms on campus, I think it is about time they be phased out. Campus smokers nowadays are far outnumbered by non-smokers and the Uni's policy on accomodation should reflect this.

Contrary to the protestations of over-dramatic smokers who insist that smoking bans are unfair and segregates them from society, their complaints are unfounded. I like to play my music loud, but do I get soundproofed walls? Of course not. So why do we still have smoking bedrooms on campus, in indifference to the plight of those who have to put up with the habits of that filthy-habit minority.

There are a number of instances where students have been put in flats with smoking bedrooms when they have expressedly asked not to be. This is unfair. The smoking might be confined to the bedroom

of their neighbour, but the odour will not be so limited. Smoke still escapes and impacts upon non-smoking flat members. This is nothing less than passive smoking, but without any opportunity for the person on the receiving end to escape it.

Upholstery and fabrics in smoking rooms never lose the smell, and retain it no matter how many times they are doused in Febreeze. Nobody, except the smokers themselves, would want to live in a room that has the potent stench of smoke in, and non-smoking residents frequently get put in rooms that have immediately prior accommodated smokers.

Those smokers who live in non-smoking flats get into the habit of going outside to satisfy their habit, and it's about time that smokers across campus are made to obey the same rules. Smokers should be thankful for the opportunity to mingle with others of their ilk: they and their new-found friends can huddle in doorways grumbling about the injustice of the anti-smoking Nanny State that won't let them annoy people whenever and wherever they like.

Upholstery and fabrics in smoking rooms never lose the smell, and retain it no matter how many times they are doused in Febreeze.

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Ambulance to Mongolia aids people ‘not in the spotlight’

SCAN speaks to project pioneer, Charlie Hogg



Rob Miller
Assistant Editor

After 32 days, 7,438 miles and 1,306 litres of fuel, Charlie Hogg and Matt Burgum’s adventure is finally over; thanks to them, however, a fully-fledged ambulance service in Ulan Bator is just beginning. Their project, ‘Ambulance to Mongolia’, successfully delivered a fully kitted-out, NHS-quality ambulance to country’s impoverished capital, where it

will be used as an emergency transport and mobile clinic.

Mongolia’s GDP per capita is in one of the lowest of any country outside Africa. Access to healthcare is poor in urban areas and virtually non-existent in the country’s vast expanses of desert, mountains and steppe. Despite facing these problems, Matt says Mongolia “actually doesn’t benefit from direct aid products, and it’s not really in the spotlight—which is why we chose it.”

The project required months of planning and, at a total cost of over £30,000, considerable fund-raising talent. “We initially scored a few thousand pounds worth of funding from Cable Street just to buy the empty ambulance,” Matt said. After that came the courting of more corporate sponsors, which raised £22,000 for the ambulance’s equipment and £8,000 for other costs. “Unfortunately ambulances aren’t cheap, so it cost a lot, but then there’s all the equipment which really did rack up,” Matt explained.

Matt feels that the unique nature of the project helped win over potential sponsors. “It really was an adventure. All these companies wanted to get involved because it’s something a bit different, something that gets people motivated.”

Donations didn’t just come

from companies, though. “We did a sponsored skydive,” said Matt, “which worked really well. It brought a much-needed £1,200 into the project, which helped us get a lot of the final preparations for the ambulance ready.”

“At every single police checkpoint, every single border they wanted to know every single nitty-gritty detail about the ambulance”

Preparations took months, but the three weeks before the trip left were most intense. “They were solid preparation,” Matt said. “We had to put a roof rack on, fit underplating, fit a new winch point, fit the roof tent, fit all the spare tyres, fit all the jerry cans.” The planning

paid off, though: not only did they arrive safe and sound, the journey’s only problems were a single puncture and a broken cupboard door handle.

Travelling in such an expensive vehicle—as you might expect—attracted the attention of over-zealous and corrupt officials at seemingly every turn. “At every single police checkpoint, every single border they wanted to know every single nitty-gritty detail about the ambulance,” Matt said.

“They’d also say things like: ‘you’re in jail for heroin smuggling’, just to make you a bit scared. The first time, I was scared as anything, but it really didn’t intimidate us towards the end—it just became part of the journey, part of the colour of a country. You can’t really get offended at it—I mean, policeman are only paid \$200, which is



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Arrival:

Matt Burgum (left) and Charlie Hogg by the ambulance after arriving in Mongolia.



less than what a good office job is there, so that's how they supplement their wage."

Everything paid off, though, when the ambulance finally arrived at its destination. "The welcoming ceremony was incredible," Matt said. "We had a member of parliament come greet us, and we met the charity who are the trustees of

the ambulance so it's sustainable out there. We looked around a few other projects out there too---we saw a kid's school, looked 'round an orphanage (which made me cry), that sort of stuff."

The ambulance now serves as an emergency transport vehicle in Ulan Bator. "It goes on about two or three callouts a day," Matt said,

"but only for serious, serious stuff where people have to be in a flat position; otherwise they're going in cars."

In a country where emergency vehicles are as scarce as they are in Mongolia, the sight of an ambulance can be unusual. "We were mucking around with the siren," Matt said, "and people out there

didn't really know what it meant; they thought 'ah, it's another car alarm again' because they've never really seen emergency vehicles out on the road."

The project was so successful that a repeat journey in 2009 was inevitable, and planning has already started. "We've already secured funding from the compa-

nies that gave us money but did so sceptically---now they've seen it's a success," Matt said. "2009 is a real opportunity for people... we could've taken five people in this ambulance just for the journey, for the chance to experience nearly every culture from here to China."

Those interested should go to www.ambulancetomongolia.com.

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US Presidential politics has captured the world's imagination

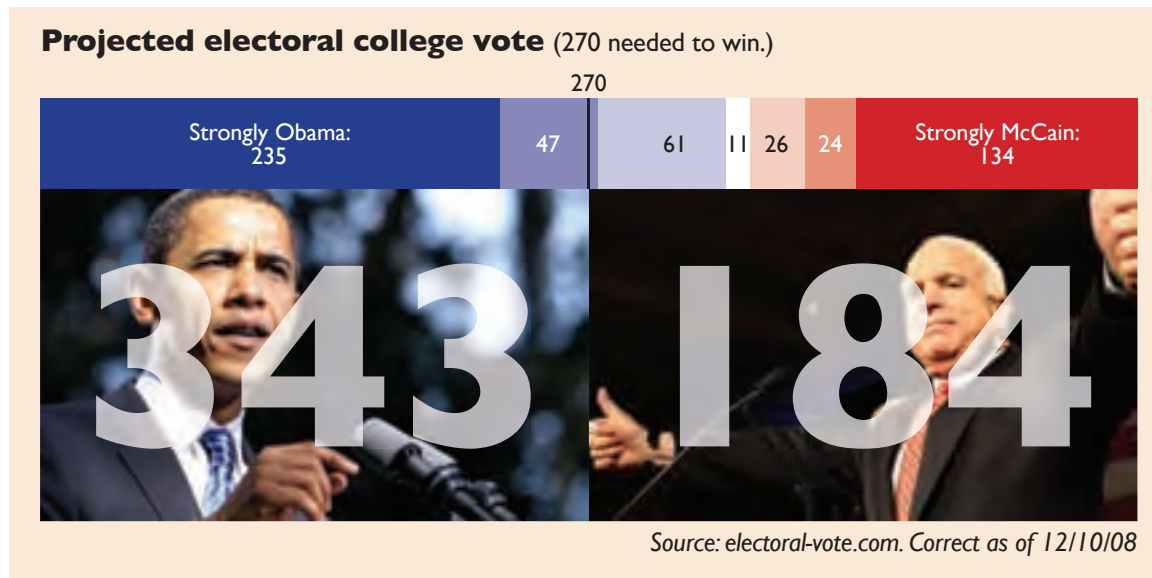
Alex Aidy

During the summer I was lucky enough to spend three great weeks in America. I have a genuine love and appreciation for all things State-side and I fully immersed myself in American culture, not only by going to watch baseball and eat hot dogs: I also became completely engrossed in the Presidential election.

I will confess: I have never had any kind of interest in politics. But recently, I have become near-obsessed with all things Obama and McCain. Although I can't provide any fresh or incisive political analysis on the election, I have found the way that it has infiltrated the worldwide public consciousness fascinating.

It wouldn't have taken a lovely little sojourn to America to experience global media saturation regarding the election: it's hard to open a British newspaper without reading some sort of comment on the goings-on in America. It's doubtful that the American public would be so interested in our elections, so why have we become so involved in theirs?

When George Bush and his



administration decided to invade Iraq, Tony Blair lined us up as a willing ally to fight the War on Terror, citing the "special relationship" that the US and Britain have long shared. It is completely fair to say that yes, Britain and America do have something of an inexorable bond. Obviously it didn't start off like that, and there was a War of Independence and someone throwing our tea into Boston harbour which soured things somewhat, but relations have obviously been repaired since then. Considering this bond, it seems obvious that we as a nation would be watching with interest over the pond to see who will continue the political link.

What has been particularly

striking about the entire electoral process is how inherently exciting, and even at times glamorous, it has been. Even during the seemingly endless primaries and caucuses to find the presidential nominees, the Democratic race was at times controversial and ultimately hugely surprising. This time last year, no one could have foreseen that a junior senator from Illinois would have defeated Hillary Clinton (a woman who has been at the forefront of American politics for nigh on 20 years) to the Democratic presidential nomination.

When the vice presidential nominees were named, it was thought that Hillary might make an appearance on the ticket in another way,

and a woman was indeed named as a vice presidential candidate. But it was the Republicans, not the Democrats who provided a female at the forefront of the election and Sarah Palin was introduced. In a campaign which has seemed to favour style and spin over substance and solutions, the introduction of Palin was seen by some as a fantastic ploy to steal Democratic voters who were intending to back Hillary until Barack Obama was named nominee.

It was perhaps not the most shrewd choice in other respects, with Palin's proclamation that being able to "see Russia" from her home state of Alaska, of which she is governor, automatically provided

her with foreign policy experience received wide-spread ridicule. To be fair to Palin and McCain, it seems that their Democratic counterparts are also guilty of presenting a facade of freshness with nothing much beneath – Barack Obama's promise of "change that all Americans can believe in" is refreshing but some critics question whether it hides a lack of substance.

The campaigns from both sides have been compelling, with McCain using his war hero past and Obama using his novelty as possibly the first African-American American president. Both candidates have delivered an enthralling campaign: it is hard to imagine Gordon Brown, David Cameron and Nick Clegg providing us with such a riveting race in the next UK General Election.

In the final few weeks of the election, set for November 4th, it appears that the Democrats are edging ahead. While many question whether America itself is ready for its first African-American president, the rapturous reception that Obama received when he toured Europe this summer shows we on this side of the Atlantic are ready. With Britain's interest in the politics across the pond being so insatiable during this campaign, let's hope that the outcome is one that can inspire us to continue this wave of enthusiasm for the democratic process.

Partying is hard

Mia Bleach

When I first started university I was told by various well meaning and nostalgic distant relatives that I was about to experience the best three years of my life. "Your future husband could be standing right next to you in the queue for hot pot!" No pressure, then. As Freshers' Week drew to a close and I still hadn't met these life-long friends I'd been promised, I started to

grow a little apprehensive.

A whole week of partying and meeting new people doesn't sound too shabby to most - but an entire week spent on your best behaviour, feeling like you have to be constantly sociable and ready for anything for fear of being labelled 'boring' is another way of putting it. There's a lot of pressure to keep up with people, especially if you enjoy a night in. Partying is hard - and coupled with new and incredibly intense living situations, Freshers' Week can be both physically and emotionally draining.

But there is so much more to Uni life than the week you arrive. Yes, many see it as the essential period for setting foundations

but in all honesty, I don't really remember my Fresher's Week, just all the great stuff that came later.

When I was a Fresher (try to stay awake) I thought everything over in my head a million times before I said it to make sure it sounded either funny, charming or clever, but nothing ever made the grade. The result was that I simply said nothing. Being yourself is easier said than done but once I relaxed, the people around me felt more relaxed being around me.

Now, as a perhaps slightly cocky third-year living with freshers, maybe I ought to take a leaf out of the book of my former self and think more about what comes out of my mouth so as not to send them

running for the hills.

Anyway, back to the well meaning and nostalgic advice. Whether you're reserved or confident, you can't help but get to know your flatmates. And even if you end up getting along with none of them (which is highly unlikely) there's so much time and so many people to meet you can't lose! The wide range of societies available enables students with shared interests to socialise, and if you missed out on signing up for a society this time, there's always the Refresher's Fair which usually takes place in early Spring Term. And on top of that, there are countless opportunities to get chatting to people on your course, as well as your corridor

reps and a highly supportive JCR in each college if you ever need anything.

Getting settled into a routine can help if you're a bit shell-shocked after Freshers' Week, and after a week of planning only what drinking game you're going to play next, more people than would care to admit welcome the intellectual stimulation that lectures bring. Doing things on your own terms and at your own pace chills everyone out a bit.

So, don't worry. University may well be three of the best years of your life - but never in the ways you expect.

Freshers' Week a blast for all...



Lizzie Houghton

For some it's been the best week of their lives. For others, one of the top ten. Then there are those for whom the whole thing has simply been a bit "blurry".

Yes, Fresher's Week has been and gone. The humdrum of everyday university life is about to take precedence and now all that is left to do is assess the damage.

How did the Freshers find their week then? The general consensus

is "a lot of fun".

"I think everyone I've met has had a fantastic time," Furness Fresher Luke Anderson told SCAN. "It's been really informative also. The whole thing's been done really well."

New County girl Heather Thornton is in agreement. "It's been very good," she said. "Everyone's been really friendly. There's been a lot to do, too much at times!"

In fact walking around Campus it's hard to find a Fresher who hasn't had a great week. But like all things opinions vary over what made those seven days quite so good.

For Collette from Yorkshire, the fancy dress aspect of the week was "awesome". She very sensibly made the point that "it's much easier to bond with people when you all look like fools in rave, rock star and



Students wander amongst the stalls at Freshers' Fair:

Across the two days, over 7,000 people attended the fair, as well as 600 commercial, sports club and society exhibitors. On the first day, the queue for the door stretched right from the Great Hall to Alexandra Square until the event ended.

...as long as you enjoy drinking

army gear!"

"I really enjoyed all of the events actually," Collette said. "And felt very well looked after by them [the JCR] in this strange new town. I loved every JCR event. They were good people to have a laugh with, but also had that little bit of responsibility about them. You weren't really stressing that you were going to be lost in town at three in the morning."

The local watering holes played a massive part in Freshers' Week, and quite rightly so. For those who can't or prefer not to drink however, was all this emphasis on going out off putting?

Michael Reffold from Kent didn't find it a major problem. He said: "I'm not a club person, and maybe less 'you should drink' would have been better. For the most part though people are okay

with teetotalers."

Fergus Ellington, who made the long trip down from Kendal, noticed a similar problem. "I think there hasn't been that much for Freshers who don't drink to do. I suppose you could go out but it's never really that much fun being out sober around a load of drunken people."

Quite a few Freshers would have liked to have seen more cross-

college activities taking place too. Bowland's Kate McDonald felt that some college events would have been better if they'd have been "open to all Freshers".

As Luke said: "I've not spoken to as many outside of college as I would have liked. We're all in the same boat, just in different eggs."

The colleges will have plenty of time to scramble together over the coming weeks. This week

though has been more about first impressions, and we would like to think that all Freshers agree with Michael's: "It has lived up to and surpassed my expectations. I was so worried before starting, and now I'm loving it. Everyone I meet is awesome. I'll definitely be recommending Lancaster University to any younger people who want to go to uni. I can't imagine anywhere else is better!"





A Woman with Carrie Bradshaw delusions and an emotionally and sexually illiterate young man take on the burning relationship and personal issues of Lancaster University.

Note: if your issue is burning in the non-metaphorical sense, see a doctor.

Dear Michael and Sarah,

I've just started at uni and am living on campus. All of my flatmates are second and third years and **I feel lonely and isolated** in the flat. They have already made friends and know their way around whereas I am finding it hard to make friends. How can I settle in?

X

SARAH: The first time living away from home can be stressful and upsetting if your finding it hard to settle in. Try asking your housemates what their plans are and see if you can join them.

Outside of your lectures people will often be stood awkwardly feeling as shy as you are, approach them and break the ice with a question. People usually have pretty forthright opinions on pets, or ghosts. Hopefully you will find a goldmine of conversational wealth.

Lastly, it's a great idea to join clubs and societies as this will give you a chance to meet new people and you will feel like part of a group. Adapting to uni life is a gradual process so don't lose hope if you feel uncomfortable, just keep trying.

MICHAEL: Friends are overrated in my opinion. The true worth of an individual can only truly be measured by their enemies. Make an effort to be as much of a bastard as possible: Never flush the chain in any of the communal toilets; plunder milk and chocolate that doesn't belong to you from the fridge.

Take pride in the knowledge that someone virulently hates you - there is a certain warmth to be found knowing that someone cares about you so passionately. Acts of everyday kindness go unnoticed, whereas being a bastard is the quickest and most fun route to cementing your name in history.

Dear Michael and Sarah,

I'm not a big drinker but all of my housemates are. **I feel uncomfortable on nights out** as I don't want to get drunk.

X

SARAH: Uni does have a heavy drinking culture, and admittedly this is not for everyone. Try suggesting nights out and activities with your friends that do not have to involve alcohol, such as bowling, lazertag or Ultimate Frisbee.

Still spend time socialising with your friends but don't ever feel under pressure to drink if you feel uneasy about it.

MICHAEL: One of the major downsides of a night out on the town is that you cannot properly hold a conversation underneath the thudding din of 'Mr. Brightside'. I find it useful to carry around an

old-fashioned chalkboard whenever I go out, which has the dual benefit of being able to precisely word your emotions and opinions clearly and concisely as well as showing any prospective friends or partners how resourceful and retro you are.

It is perfectly easy to while away the hours in Lancaster without having to resort to alcohol. Try hiding in bushes at night to jump out at passers-by and dog-walkers, their reactions will no doubt be priceless, you will also likely be covered in mini-beasts when you emerge from hiding. Mini-beasts are both fascinating and amusing.

Dear Michael and Sarah,

Since coming to Uni I have felt homesick constantly. I don't want to feel so sad but **I just don't feel as happy here as I did at home.**

X

SARAH: As hard as it sounds try not to go home for the first month as this is an important time for making friends and feeling settled. Going for a weekend at home can exacerbate your homesickness, so whilst it seems tough, you must try to stick it out.

Become more involved in any societies or clubs you have an interest in and organize nights in, and out with friends who you know you can confide in. Also, keep in contact with friends and family at home with emails and phone calls, ask them for their news and gossip and hopefully this will make you feel involved, not alienated.

Don't forget to share your feelings with those back home, but try to avoid overwrought, emotional emails as this can cause concern. Finally, don't feel alone, homesickness is incredibly common amongst students.

MICHAEL: Homesickness is a natural human response to unfamiliar surroundings.

Try to harness your burning sadness by writing letters to your

friends and relatives. Writing letters is a lost art; delicately wording your problems and sharing them in charming calligraphy can be incredibly cathartic, much better than letting your problems gnaw away at your mind without an outlet. Also when you eventually get over the difficult times having a physical artifact of a certain period or mindset can make even the most titanic of problems seem trivial in the long run.

Another tactic I recommend is making masks with photos of your family members on and then asking your housemates to wear them, this will make the transition much easier to handle. If this is too strange (or arousing), try to create some semblance of a homely environment through some other method, for example make a height chart in the centre of your accommodation so you can monitor each others height as the ravages of the university diet play havoc with your growth patterns, if you forge a homely environment over the small things the big picture begins to emerge eventually.

If you have an issue you'd like to ask Michael & Sarah about, write to them at michael_unt_sarah@hotmail.co.uk.

Anonymity guaranteed.



The official LUSU Advice mini-site can be found at advice.lusu.co.uk.

The Advice Centre is open 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday in the LUSU Building, underneath SPAR.



Feeling drained? Eat more healthily

THE excesses of freshers' week may be over, but all those late nights, with all their attendant kebabs, pizza and beer can become the norm very quickly. There comes a point when you feel like you have to drag yourself out of bed in the morning, and you wish you had a bit more bounce about you.

It's now time to face reality: The days are getting shorter; the nights darker and chillier every day. As winter approaches, it's easy to get into the habit of filling up on hot ready meals and snacking on sugary foods while wrapped up indoors. As soon as the weather gets cold everyone seems to match their food to the way their winter dress: dull, bulky and boring.

Hard though it can be to get variety into your diet, the more colour you have, the more nutritious goodness you're getting (blue

WKD or Smarties do not count). Next time you're in Sainsbury's or Central Stores, throw some colourful fruit in your basket – the spring will return to your step in no time.

The people who make ready meals don't make them to be healthy; they make them to taste good. But you can have the best of both worlds. You can easily keep an eye on what you're really eating by making meals yourself. If you buy ingredients rather than ready meals, you will be surprised how much you can save as well. Less spent on food means more to spend on CDs, clothes, your stamp collection, or whatever else you waste your money on.

But even if you are about as confident in the kitchen as the Queen in a rap battle, you can still get your friends together to have a laugh testing some cutting edge culinary experiments. Even if you burn all the food, at least there

will be other people to blame, and practise always makes perfect.

The people who make ready meals don't make them to be healthy; they make them to taste good.

To help you get your bounce back, a team of professional chefs will be in Pendle bar at noon on Thursday Week 2 to help show you how to cook ambrosial yet healthy food, packed full of deliciousness that's sure to give you back that bit of oomph. They'll only be using discounted price ingredients sold in Central Stores and all their recipes will be available to sample. The chefs will also be demonstrating how to make perfect smoothies – so you can squeeze more of your 5-a-day into a glass without pesky nuisance of having to eating umpteen bits of fruit a day.

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Accidental Death of an Anarchist: Dukes Theatre, Lancaster



Written by Dario Fo
Directed by Conrad Nelson

Richie Garton
Arts Editor

THIS 'riotous political farce' may have been one of the most bizarre and inexplicable plays I have ever seen. Set in a police station in Northern England, the play follows the case of an anarchist who mysteriously fell from a fourth-floor window in said station. The lead character, simply called 'The Maniac' is an eccentric, attention-seeking disguise enthusiast who infiltrates the station using a number of different personas in order to examine the case further.

A strange plot, made all the stranger by the surreal events that occur throughout; these range from nervous breakdowns to spontaneous song-and-dance numbers. The complexity of the story is lost beneath an avalanche of wacky behaviour from the characters (note that nothing described as 'wacky'

has ever been good, with the obvious exception of Wacky Races), and I'll admit to being more than a little bit confused throughout most of the show.

Accidental Death of an Anarchist is a comedy, and indeed, the jokes come thick and fast. A few of them raised a chuckle, but the vast majority are painfully predictable; you know what the actor is going to say the moment he opens his mouth. There are also tons of references to pop culture and current politics crammed in, a lot of which fell flat.

The cast smugly make jokes about Ian Blair's resignation and the Credit Crunch, which struck me as obvious, cheap gags

The play seems to pride itself on being up-to-date, regardless of the fact that all the writers had to do was skim through a paper the morning before the performance. The cast smugly make jokes about Ian Blair's resignation and the



Wacky Rozzers: *The antics of the police officers in Accidental Death left me bemused and bewildered.*

Credit Crunch, which struck me as obvious, cheap gags. The worst by far, though, was a joke which likened jumping from a fourth-floor window to 'an average Friday night out in Lancaster'. Cringe? You bet I did.

I found the characters irritating and unconvincing. 'The Maniac' could have been intriguing, but the actor portraying him desperately wanted to be Jim Carrey, and he's difficult enough to watch as it is. By the end of the first scene I was entirely sick of him. The lone female character is a ball-busting, red-dressed 'femme fatale', the likes of whom have been seen in a zillion other plays and movies,

and three of the male characters could easily be lumped together as 'brash, macho police bosses' (These characters are the Superintendent, Inspector Bertozzo and Inspector Pissani). Which brings me to my next criticism. Why did all the characters have Italian names? Fair enough, the play was translated from the original Italian setting and language, but if you can make references to Gordon Brown then why can't you change a few names? I'm glad that they were able to wring a self-referential joke out of this, but it just spoils the realism of it all.

Not that there is much realism in the first place. The events of the

play seem like an episode of Animagics, totally and unjustifiably ludicrous. I still don't understand why, but at one point the cast suddenly burst into song and began an admittedly elaborate and well-choreographed Latin dance routine, costumes and all. And yet at the end, it got all intense and serious, which was incongruous and uncomfortable. So, to sum up, I found this a very poor play overall. It wasn't satirical, it wasn't especially funny (although it seemed to think it was) and it went on for far too long. If you missed this, count yourself lucky.

Roll on, Theatre Group auditions

Lizzy O'Brien
Arts Editor

Why bother doing a review of the audition process one might ask? Isn't it the performance the bit that actually counts? I mean, who ever heard of someone reviewing an audition? More...My answer is this: I was mooching around the Scan stand at Freshers Fair, chatting to passing freshers and asking them what activities and clubs they had signed up for, and there were an absolute shed load of them who hadn't done things because they were too scared to try them out. Top of the list seemed to be the Lancaster University Theatre Group (LUTG), because no one wanted to undergo the audition process. Needless to say, I decided to

pop along to the auditions to find out what all the fuss was about.

I had almost expected the first-years I was auditioning with to take one glance at the archaic language and faint with anxiety, but everyone, bolstered by the mildly embarrassing warm-up exercise we had just performed, bit the bullet and got on with it

A room full of nervous-looking hopefuls, many of whom were first years, peppered with a few familiar Theatre Group faces greeted my eyes. We were all told to stand in a circle and tell everyone our name, college, favourite colour, and an interesting fact about ourselves... Hardly the terrifying x-factor type audition people seemed to be

worried about at Freshers Fair. Except of course when it's your turn and you realise you haven't dreamed up nearly enough interesting facts about yourself because you have been too busy listening to everyone else's.

We were shuffled around to the various plays in smaller groups, which this term are 1984, Othello and Black Comedy. My group auditioned firstly for Othello, a bit daunting because we were being thrown in at the deep-end with Shakespeare, but surprisingly welcoming in spite of this. The obligatory Theatre Group warm-up ensued, this time involving some rather ridiculous looking mouth exercises and a bit of shouting. It is always the case that once everyone has seen each other looking equally as idiotic as the next person, the ice is always well and truly broken. We were then sub-divided into

smaller groups again, and sent away to rehearse some scripts which they had given us. If the nerves were going to kick in anywhere, it would have been here. I had almost expected the first-years I was auditioning with to take one glance at the archaic language and faint with anxiety, but everyone, bolstered by the mildly embarrassing warm-up exercise we had just performed, bit the bullet and got on with it. Within minutes, there was someone from the Othello production team wondering around, making sure everyone was OK, explaining the play in more detail where necessary, and generally making sure we were all having a good time at the try-outs. This was pretty much the same for all of the other plays we moved on to audition for, and when we were really lucky, we got given sweeties too. All in all, the day was actu-

ally quite enjoyable, and I got the chance to meet a lot of new people. I even managed to get recalled to the second round of auditions for 1984, but after a shockingly bad performance on my part, I was (rather unsurprisingly) not offered the role of loudspeaker. The recalls were quite a bit tenser than the first round of auditions, but there were plenty of LUTG veterans there to calm down any angst-ridden novices like myself. All in all, it was a good day out, and the £5 membership means I get to join in on all the socials and meet loads of new people, even if I don't get to begin my career as the next west-end theatre star! Conclusion: If the only thing stopping you from going is your nerves, then I seriously recommend dragging yourselves down to the auditions next term for a fun, if a little chaotic day out.

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PENNY STREET - LANCASTER

ARTS

Major Hirst works in the auction room

Robert Spragg

IF Hirst's recent auction at Sotheby's is anything to go by, contemporary art is a long way from being affected by the financial turmoil of the world market. In fact, it is demonstrably on a continuous upward climb into obscenity, where million pound price tags are the norm.

The exhibition and subsequent auction of Damien Hirst's vast collection of work spanning the last two years marks a significant moment in contemporary art, and the resulting empowerment of the artist rather than the collector. Hirst himself is an omnipresent figure in the field; the original tigershark tank being as much a culturally necessary object as it is a piece of art.

The reason why this auction acquires such a status is its very nature. Whereas conventionally a

significant percentage of the final price goes straight into the dealer's pocket, by acting individually and directly through the auction house, Hirst receives all of the capital raised from the sales. The question arises as to whether this is a sign of some form of rebellious uprising on behalf of the artist, or simply an act of greed?

His ability to express the morbid simplicity of life is second to none. His perennial obsession with death could be deemed cliché in terms of the current artistic climate, and yet his work is so relevant because of his brash, naïve sensitivity towards the subject matter. Hirst is unintentionally a genius. The depth to his work is much more profound than his bravado and ideologies. *The Kingdom* is arguably Hirst's most publicly notorious piece from the auction, a tiger shark preserved in formaldehyde. It has been speculated that the shark stands as an allegory of death in terms of human mortality, and his personal awareness of his inevitable demise. The formaldehyde in which the

animal is held in is working against the said inevitability. Furthermore, all his essential features are present, including the spot and also the butterfly paintings, as well as the pharmaceutical pieces.

Venturing around the display, one cannot not help but think, that to see a 'Hirst' is not really to see a 'Hirst' anymore. By this, of course, I mean it is most likely that the work never once even bared his touch. You are constantly aware that it has been replicated from his blue prints by a member of the Hirst team, and not actually been produced by the artist himself. The loss of the artist's primordial first hand engagement with the work is sorely felt, and somehow you get a sense of the conveyor belt approach by which Hirst functions. He is by no means alone in this approach, however. Jeff Koons could equally be deemed a visionary who equates the artist's role as the idea driven dictator, who can transgress the difficulties of expression which the soloist experiences, with a multitude of staff beneath him. Paradoxically, for Hirst this 'manufactured' method, once added to the package as a whole, acts as the strongest appeal for his work. He is an example of art which is embracing the money-driven market, and merely pointing out the blaringly obvious: if someone is willing to cough up such silly amounts of money for a pickled shark, he is fully prepared to keep churning them out.



Iconic: Damien Hirst's famous preserved shark on display.

WRITE Stuff

Please e-mail your ideas to us at scanarts@hotmail.com. Please keep stories to no more than 600 words, and poems to no more than 30 lines.

If I was a Blackbird

If I was a Blackbird,
maybe a crow or a magpie,
and I knew I didn't have much time left
and I was coming to the end of my life,
I would soar up as high and as much as I could.
Flying up through clouds
until all my energy was going
and the muscles in my wings stabbed with pain.
Then I would give up and fall
in to a schoolyard at playtime.

Mind Out: Station House Opera

Written by Julian Maynard Smith

Lee McMillan

IF, like me, you've ever muttered your way through an awkward conversation at a cocktail party, you'll have felt it. That sense of anxiety that seems to spurt up out of nowhere as you ponder your next sentence. It sometimes seems as if we are at war with ourselves: we have, on the one hand, our body's urge to act and move forth, and on the other, our mind's propensity to hesitate and consider.

So what would happen if we really were at war with our own selves? If our minds were so far out of sync with our bodies that it almost seemed as if another person were in control, if it was up to your friend, not you, to decide what you were going to say or do? Better yet, what if we could slow this whole

process down, perhaps freeze time, and observe it in detail?

Luckily we have Station House Opera, a theatre company founded by Julian Maynard Smith in 1980, writer/performer in this year's *Mind Out*: a play which saw its first public performed last Wednesday here at Lancaster University.

Bound by only a single rule, *Mind Out* is a play whereby each character acts as the 'agent' of the other character's body. Each character takes their turn playing the role of the 'mind', offering one or two 'suggestive' commands. In turn any of the other characters, cast as the body, act out that command. Anybody not speaking or moving is required to remain motionless until called upon, and the anxiety evident in each actor's face in deciding what to say or do, is a formula for humour.

Not only does this unique concept create plenty of laughter, it forces the audience to stop and think about the motivations that

underlie even the most menial of our daily rituals.

At times it is hard to tell whether or not the cast are all playing separate characters, or indeed combined into one. In particular there is a scene where all five of them take part in making tea: after one heats the water, the other proceeds to pour it, followed by another who picks it up, and another who drinks it, and so on. At other times the social dynamic is clear, and as with all human interaction, things gets political.

Through unsettling scenes of domestic violence, and infuriating skits about the cruelties of friend-to-friend scheming, *Mind Out* asks the question, 'why do we act without thinking?' And through testing scenes of a forthcoming revenge, eventually halted, and courage-provoking skits about a love that was never chased after, *Mind Out* asks another question, 'why do we hesitate when we really shouldn't?' *Mind Out* is as deep as it is diverse, and at times moves from the political to the down-right philosophical.

It was Julian Smith's aim to literally escape the mind with this play, that is, to represent the experience of thoughtlessness. This was perhaps best captured towards the end of the play where one of the male characters, angered by a fight he had just had with a girl, proceeds to drink vodka. As the drinking goes on, the mind begins to take less and less time between its commands, and eventually is lost to pure physical instinct. Resembling more and more a secondary school house-party, all five actors end up trashing the set in an attempt to hurt one another – one of the female actors literally storms off set and into the theatre foyer. Perhaps symbolic of the passing out that typically follows a dramatic night of drinking, the now frozen-cast continue to deliver commands to the deserter through the walls. The girl ends up in the toilets (probably vomiting), where she begins to hear the faint sound of music.

At that point, and to the delight of the audience, a string quartet marched in from the foyer and took place on stage where the rest

of the actors remained frozen, and began to play. As in a dream, the actors were at once removed from both the necessity of thinking/commanding, and acting/obeying. After the quartet having gone, as is typical of any "morning after"; the girl in the bathroom proceeded to call her friend from a cell phone to apologize.

This was the high point of the play for me. Yet by sticking around for the post-show discussion I was able to learn from the theatre-studies majors and professionals themselves that indeed acting out the play was as enjoyable as watching it. All of the actors agreed that this type of performance allows one to more or less be themselves on stage.

Indeed, Julian admitted that one of the motivations for the production was to escape the rigidity of American theatre, and its concomitant sets of rules – the stuff actors fret about during a performance. Realising the parallel with the conventions we all find ourselves worrying about at cocktail parties, this brought a smile to my face.

Wario Land: The Shake Dimension

Nintendo Wii

Richie Garton

YOU have to admire the sheer guts of Nintendo just for bringing out this game. No matter how hard I try, I can't imagine Sony or Microsoft releasing a 2-D platformer with hand-drawn graphics in this day and age.

I very much doubt Wario's latest adventure will sell well; on paper, it belongs in the past, when games didn't have to have photorealistic visuals, ludicrously complex controls and storylines written by John Updike. Also, despite how much the Wii's motion-sensing abilities featured in the game's publicity you'll be surprised how little they are actually used. This game is well and truly Old-School.

Once again, I have avoided giving a star rating because Wario Land: The Shake Dimension is

very difficult to judge in modern terms. They just don't make games like this anymore; instead, the game harkens back to the mid-to-early nineties, when Nintendo was known for its 2-D platformers and very little else. A few things are brought up to date (the graphics, although they seem basic are far crisper than anything seen in the old days), but the general idea is still the same. A charismatic, cartoony character makes his way through a number of side-scrolling levels while collecting coins and flattening baddies. A quintessentially simple, fun concept, but one that is now very dated. Modern platformers tend to implement advanced physics engines, huge non-linear worlds and actual objectives other than 'get to the end of the level'. So why make this game at all, Nintendo?

The first thing that springs to mind is, quite simply, to show off. Let's face it, Nintendo are raking it in. The Wii and the DS have brought gaming to a far wider, less hardcore audience and now even

retirement homes are purchasing Wiis to keep their residents' tennis skills up to scratch. The company can afford to take risks, and creating this game gave them the chance to show the gaming world that they are still the undisputed masters of 2-D platforming and demonstrate everything they've learned about it since the late eighties. Because The Shake Dimension is, indeed, a very good platformer. The level design is clever, there are some very fun vehicle sections, and the game is actually pretty long in terms of the time it takes to complete. One of the highlights is the quality of the boss fights. Each one is extremely well thought-out and challenging, and this is a crucial element of this type of game.

However, several things about the game rattle my chain. The necessity to shake the Wii remote to accomplish certain tasks, as advertised by the game's title, strikes me as a gimmick more than anything. At times it works okay, but most of the time it is exhausting and pointless, especially when you have



Old-School: The Shake Dimension features some very pretty hand-drawn graphics.

to shake coins free from a sack and doing so makes half of them go flying off, leaving you no chance of collecting them. Infuriating. Also, the need to use your coins to buy maps and progress through the game serves no purpose other than to needlessly elongate gameplay, as it forces you to play previous levels over again in order to collect more coins.

So, if you're a gamer who longs for a nostalgic throwback to the

games of yore, give Wario Land: The Shake Dimension a try. There can be very little other reason for buying it, because the game does virtually nothing new. Wario Land doesn't quite compare to a lot of other recent Wii releases (Super Smash Bros. Brawl for instance), but if you're a Nintendo diehard you'll probably buy it anyway.

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Corrections & Clarifications

Tell ISS to check their sockets

In the article printed in the previous SCAN entitled 'Tell ISS to check their sockets', (Tuesday 30th September, 2008), the accompanying quote - apparently from ISS, was mis-attributed.

The quote was in fact an excerpt from a joint statement by Richard du Feu, of Network Support in Information Systems Services and Steve Elliott of the Computer Science Department.

Ben Green's comments in the article are endorsed by neither ISS nor the Computer Science Department.

What's on at LU Cinema

The Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian

(Action Adventure)

7:30pm, Thursday and Friday, Week 2

Ben Barnes, Gerogie Henley, William Moseley, Anna Popplewell

The Pevensie siblings return to Narnia, where they are enlisted to once again help ward off an evil king and restore the rightful heir to the land's throne, Prince Caspian.

Sex And The City

(Romantic Drama)

7:30pm, Saturday and Sunday, Week 2

Sarah Jessica Parker, Kim Cattrall, Cynthia Nixon, Kristin Davis

A New York writer on sex and love is finally getting married to her Mr. Big. But her three best girlfriends must console her after one of them inadvertently leads Mr. Big to jilt her.

A Complete History of My Sexual Failures

(Documentary)

7:30pm Monday, Week 3
Chris Waitt, Olivia Trench, Danielle McLeod

Independent filmmaker Chris Waitt attempts to interview his ex-girlfriends to find out why they dumped him. This revealing and humorous documentary sees the slacker filmmaker go on a sexual and emotional odyssey in a desperate quest to solve his innumerable problems.

Indiana Jones and the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull

(Action Adventure)

7:30pm, Thursday and Friday, Week 3

Harrison Ford, Chia LaBeouf, Cate Blanchett

It's 1957, and Indiana Jones is approached by a teenage rebel whose mother has been kidnapped. He tells Indy about a map and a crystal skull, which may lead to the lost ancient city of Eldorado.



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Tuesday - Champions League shown LIVE in the bar

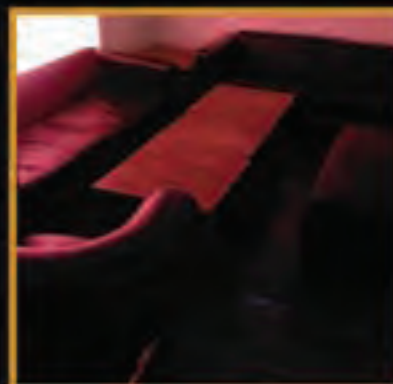
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Taxi



Jonjo Feather
(Dead Young Records)

Jonjo Feather has followed the path laid by Sonic Youth and Beck to a tee. *Taxi* is a 2:24 battle of sound, with Feather's snarling vocals, distorted bass and tin drums. He hasn't created a new

sound, instead simply complicated the sound of nineties alternative, using synth to add grit. The result is a great tune, Jonjo Feather is a man to watch.

Naked on the dancefloor



Towers of London, from 'Fizzy Pop'
(Vibrant Records)

General embarrassments 'Towers of London' are apparently back to rescue us from a 'stagnant UK music scene'. Patronising bastards. This record is as dire a pop rock record as you're going to get. Boring construction, boring hooks,

boring leads and frankly banal lyrics. Nobody missed Donny et al while they were gone, so why're they back with this shower of shit?

I find this music offensive. I mean it really does piss me off. You don't deserve the shelf space.

Eero Johannes

Eero Johannes
(Planet μ)

Mark McGlashan
Music Editor

Newly signed to the electro heavyweights Planet μ (pronounced 'mu') Eero Johannes' self-titled debut is one of the finest, most danceable and most original electronic albums I've ever had the pleasure to grace my ears with. His innovative style, combining elements of IDM, chiptune, funk and breaks all wrapped up in a lovely package of lolly-sweet pop, is downright brilliant. Each track is a little masterpiece of percussive sugary low bitrate synths a la Sabrepulse but not as solely focused on 'that' Nintendo sound.

Stand-out tracks like 'Natt I Sparvagnen' show Johannes in all

his glory. Remaining breaky, but on track, never letting the breaks get carried away so to detract from the gooey pop core. Quite literally genius. As is the more dark 'Sumuhumus' combining elements of dub with a fat arpeggiated lead and massive synths. This is perfect electro. Perfect. And it just gets better and better with the Sega-like intro to 'Mobile 363' which transforms into something that sounds like Daft Punk have bucked their ideas up and recorded something worth listening to.

This won't appeal to everyone. If you are into Dubstep, breakbeat or even breakcore it's worth checking out for some stand-alone tracks and a bit of a change. But if your electro leanings are a bit more towards the pop/dance end a la Justice (definitely check out 'Tone-wash'), or even Luke Vibert (see: 'Kitt Witt 700 Watts'), μ -Ziq, and Metamatics then this record will have you wetting your little pants.

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albums

InnerPartySystem



InnerPartySystem
(Stolen Transmission)

Sam Fresco

For a band described as “powerful and experimental” and “the new pendulum” using elements from the Killers, the legendary Daft Punk and borrowing powerful style factors from Nine Inch Nails, to say hopes were high would be an underestimation. Whilst there was nothing particularly new here, this band are unafraid to get down and dirty for a far darker side to “dance/groove-electro/rock” than we’ve ever seen before.

The name may seem to have an obvious meaning, but, as drummer Jared Piccone describes, there is more than meets the eye. Late 2007 their debut EP was released and later signed by the MCR and Killers’ early label Stolen Transmission who helped the band to release their self-titled debut album in late September 2008.

The opening track “Die Tonight, Live Forever” features the Daft Punk-esque robots pumping the catchy lyrical phrase “we’re all here ‘cos we’ve lost control” and a well constructed DJ-style solo. From the intro it builds for almost 40 seconds before climaxing and letting rip a fat distorted bass line that’s trance-like yet funky and expertly mixed. The vocals are very likeable yet nothing new, think Bloc

Party without the English accent, think Funeral For A Friend yet less ‘emo’, think about hundred other voices you have already heard yet can’t place. Despite this they apply a ray of distorted effects and harmonious choir-like build-ups with some truly awesome breakdowns.

Track 2, “Heart of Fire”, also opens with a similar heavy riff that doesn’t sound all that different from the first track, the same breakdowns occur and the whole structure of the song is alike. However, track 3 ‘Don’t Stop’ provides a much needed contrast and hope is fully restored. It was the band’s debut single and it’s easy to see why. ‘Don’t Stop’ is by far the best and my favourite track on the album, imagine Pendulum’s huge summer track ‘Propane Nightmares’ with a twist of funky fuelled chorus lines and melodic drags that are instantly like-able and irresistibly toe-tapping. If you want to listen to any InnerPartySystem then track 3 is your starting point and very recommended. From there on they unfortunately mellow out and lose their ‘filth’ to cave into sombre monotonous tracks that are more comparable to DJ Sammy and club-crap like that. Ironically the chorus line is “why did you change”, that’s exactly what we were thinking too.

It’s not until track 9 that the darkness is returned and re-built, a change of pace is very welcomed and “This town, Your grave” is apparently a track close to the bands hearts as they arose from a small village in Pennsylvania. Stick with this track though because it’s not until over two minutes in when the beat explodes out into a heavy but



beautiful blast of carefully compiled noise. I like that about these guys, it’s unexpected and at last some well-needed diversity. From there onwards the album is quite frankly boring and could easily have been one giant track merged together from tracks 4 to 8 then 10-12.

A friend walked in whilst I was listening to it and innocently said “oh, is this Pendulum’s new album right?” which proves my point. There is nothing new here, but well worth a listen and a nice alternative from the over-powering indie bands. A nice tight band, without the sugar coating and they are unafraid to experiment with their sound or arguably, haven’t fully established their sound. Despite this we’ll give the kids credit for trying. Recommended but not raved about, IPS deserves a listen and recognition but not a trophy anytime soon.

Stanton Warriors - Sessions Volume III



Stanton Warriors
(Punks)

Ben Corr

Ok, so I got my self into reviewing a Stanton Warriors mix cd. For those unfamiliar with Stanton Warriors they’re arguably the top dogs of nu-skool break beat, combining elements of electro and 2-step garage. I haven’t listened to it yet but I’m pretty sure I know what’s going to happen. I’ll enjoy it for a short bit but then just get bored when every time a song builds up and drops, it doesn’t lift that much or evolve. I should probably listen to it. So far this isn’t a very good review.

The mix starts with obvious cliché vocal samples that just say things that don’t really make that much sense mixed into a standard breaks remix of Yo Majesty. It’s not until halfway through track three “shifting gears” when a really wonky synth line wobbles about that things get going. Track four ‘Handz Up!’ is a prime example of how I think breaks often misses the mark. It has so much potential with some really good MCing. The track unfortunately just sits in the same place. Nothing else really happens until the a-track remix of ‘Oh!’ by Boys Noize drops, mashed with a breaks rhythm over the top.

This works really well showing



that breaks can be really interesting. It seems to need a better song layered with it. The rest of the album stays in the same groove making it overall quite stagnant. This could however be argued as being the point of this genre, and if you like breaks in anyway this is a pretty sick mix to get hold of. The rest of the stand out bits are: the grimey bass line on track 9, The appearance of Dizzee Rascal on track 13, ‘Zdarlight’ by Digitilism dropping in and the stand out track of the whole mix ‘Signiture [Tomas Bangalter edit]’. Once again this is a really good electro song with a break beat layered of it. The mix, as with their live shows of late ends with ‘Saturate’ by the mighty Chemical Brothers. Stunning song, ruined by the addition of breakbeat rhythm somehow making the original seem lacklustre. Overall a must have for breaks fans, fairly dull for anyone else.

Diary of an Afro Warrior

Benga
(Tempa)

Mark McGlashan
Music Editor

This is the nastiest Dubstep from Benga – huge in the scene, and rightly so.

From the kick off this album captivates you. Sticking to the

genre staples – huge delay-ridden intros, snappy melodic drums and huge n’ wonky sub bass riffs – ‘Diary...’ is an album for chilling out hard to. Tracks like ‘Night’ and

‘Crunked Up’ are already massive in notoriety and have helped him gain some October dates at Manchester’s famous Warehouse Project with the Dub elite Magnetic Man, Skream and N-Type.

One of the things I really love about this album is it’s overall aesthetic. The music has attitude. The artwork has attitude. It’s got

an attitude problem and it’s taking it out on you. Packaged in all black: black case, black disc, black insert. It’s a thing of simple elegance and really reflects what’s going on in the audio department. Benga made all the right choices when he put this out.

Tracks like ‘The Cut’ are pure filth. This track is more urban than

you can imagine. It’s nasty.

If you’re into your Dubstep at all you need this album. No questions asked. It ticks all the boxes. Brilliant.

Also check out: Boxcutter, Caspa, Distance, iTAL tEK and Vex’d.

Dig Out Your Soul



Oasis
(Warner Bros.)

James Barker

IT would be easy to lambaste this album, “another forgettable Oasis album, with one massive single and two lesser ones”, and rest you can easily do without ever hearing again. Well, to quote Noel Gallagher, “if you don’t like it, you can fuck off”! Because this is a gem of an album.

Far too often we witness the death of an album, as the likes of U2 and The Killers always look for the big single, the new Kaiser Chiefs album would be a perfect example of this single led vehicle. *Dig Out Your Soul* however is very different, down almost solely to the resurrection of Noel Gallagher. No longer happy with the mediocrity seen in *Don’t Believe The Truth* and *Heathen Chemistry*, the Chief appears to have finally

re-established himself as Britain’s best songwriter and in turn has taken control of his tribe.

The first seven tracks bar one, are all works of Gallagher senior as he looks to his influences, latter years Beatles and Paul Weller, who’s trademark blues sound is all over this album. The opener ‘Bag it Up’ is a thumping tune, signalling that the band are edging closer to a bass laden, heavy sound. ‘The Turning’ and ‘Waiting For The Rapture’ see the band in a more conservative mood. But the relaxed sound to the entire album remains.

Finally it appears that the band are happy playing as five guys rather than the huge tag of Oasis, though the trademark chemistry is not lost, just the media expectation. Single ‘The Shock Of The Lightning’ is however trademark Oasis. It doesn’t mean much at all but it sounds immense and effortless.

Although ‘Lightning’ is the best track on the album the rest cannot be ignored. ‘I’m Outta Time’ shows Liam at his song writing best; it’s a downbeat number with mature lyrics and lovely piano. It’s a great song without striving for that anthemic chorus that made Oasis what they are. There is a great deal of progression on *Dig Out Your*



Soul without going into ten minute prog epics.

Oasis have found new sounds and new ideas. ‘High Horse Lady’ is unlike any Oasis song to date, a quirky acoustic number it reaffirms Noel’s return to form. With *Dig Out Your Soul* Oasis have again failed to reinvent the wheel, but

then we never wanted them to. Instead, they’ve given us 11 tracks of progress – a collection to show where they are now instead of looking back. Finally they’ve shuck off the expectations, relaxed and done what they do best. Their best album since ‘What’s The Story?’ Definitely, maybe.

Fizzy Pop



Towers of London
(Vibrant Records)

James Barker

Originally touted as the next Sex Pistols, the new record from Towers of London will finally kill off that illusion. Let’s start with the title ‘Fizzy Pop’. That’s like a new Mötley Crüe album being called Fluffy Kittens! From the title alone The Towers need a reality check. The songs aren’t any better. They’re

big, stupid and totally unoriginal. The Towers’ peers such as Guns N’ Roses and The Sex Pistols always had an element of danger, of suspense, of pure rock n roll. The Towers simply don’t have it. They try too hard and ultimately fail. Opening track and single ‘Naked On The Dance Floor’ sums up how silly the album is and the lyrics are just abysmal: “she’s not the girl from mars/you won’t believe what I saw/I saw her naked on the dance floor”. It’s not even on the same level as Axl Rose’s self-indulgent whining on Guns N’ Roses’ later outings. The only saving grace for the towers is their new guitarist James Philips, he appears to have some great riffs in his arsenal. But with Tourette’s pointless babbling

over the top, he will never shine through. Elsewhere on the album we see the band sounding more and more modern, though not in a good way but in that Lost Prophets catchy-but-crap way. ‘When She Comes’ is a prime example. It’s a love song, a love song! Johnny Rotten never whined and Nikki Sixx wouldn’t even remember her name. It’s further evidence that The Towers are no longer a punk band, they’re not even that Rock N Roll anymore. They are pop but they don’t know it. If you want big and stupid, try Poison’s Greatest Hits or Hanoi Rocks – Twelve Shots On The Rocks, instead of wasting your time with these fake self-indulgent scenesters.



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The BIG debate:

Foreign takeovers

Foreign investors do a better job

Julian Surface

Money has started to flow into the Premiership from many sources and all it has done is bring more drama into the league. It may be that foreign investment has caused controversy but these billionaires are simply demonstrating their love for the game. To see your club buying players like Robinho or Deco is incredible. Roman Abramovich and the more recent Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan are allowing managers to bring in the sort of players that make football fantastic to watch.

Teams like Hull are still competing well in the Premiership and with big spenders like Tottenham and Newcastle at the bottom.

However, money simply cannot buy success. Teams like Hull are still competing well in the Premiership and with big spenders like Tottenham and Newcastle at the bottom. Manchester City are the richest team in England, yet they're finding it difficult to play at the

top level. Mike Ashley, owner of Newcastle, has put his club up for sale not due to lack of money but because he was simply no good at his job. He hired a director of football causing manager Kevin Keegan to resign. This he did despite the fact that the best clubs in the world like Manchester United and Real Madrid allow their managers to do their jobs without interference; suggesting that although English investors may have the money to run a football club, they are too interfering to be successful.

Although English investors may have the money to run a football club, they are too interfering to be successful.

Sepp Blatter has had his typical rant about foreign presence in the Premiership. He is even trying to stop Everton and Newcastle from being bought by foreign consortiums. This is from a man who has realised that English Steve McLaren was not the best choice for England manager. He is even trying to limit foreign players in the league. Foreign presence of players and owners is there to improve the league and the players.

For all the fans watching closely to see who might be their new owners, there is now more excitement and passion added to the game.

V

What about home-grown talent?

Charlotte Parker

Sports Editor

The big talking point of this summers transfer season was the takeover of Man City, injecting a phenomenal amount of cash to the club. It can be argued that this brings more wealth, glamour and excitement to the Premiership; but does money really have a positive effect on the game?

One of the biggest turn-offs in football is the extortionate amount of money involved. It's a well-known argument: Why should members of the public such as nurses slave away all week in return for an annual salary equivalent to less than half of the weekly wage of your average Premiership footballer? A top doctor, saving countless lives, annually earns only what Ronaldo earns weekly. The influx of foreign investors in the Premiership increases the amount of money and therefore the public's resentment of football.

Why should members of the public such as nurses slave away all week in return for an annual salary equivalent to less than half of the weekly wage of your average Premiership footballer?

Furthermore, the increase in

money in the Premiership through foreign investors, could lead to a lack of sporting play. When clubs are spending so much on a player, the player feels the pressure to perform at all costs, even if that means cheating. Similarly, players receiving such high wages won't care about being fined for bad behaviour.

It's true that foreign takeovers lead to increases in the quality of Premiership Football. One only has to look at the recent take over of Man City and their subsequent purchase of Robinho to see that money buys quality and thus more entertaining football.

Instead of tending to youth academies, big clubs are simply buying in their best players from abroad.

But is this what football and specifically the Premiership needs? For too long we have complained about the lack of success of our national team, yet how are we going to find young talent in England if, instead of tending to youth academies, big clubs are simply buying in their best players from abroad.

Although Newcastle fans might be desperate for a foreign consortium to invest billions in their club, this will not solve the underlying issues in football. For the majority of fans, football is something they will enjoy regardless of the money involved.

Inter-College Football Returns

James Waite

INTER-COLLEGE Football is once again on the horizon, a competition that all colleges are extremely passionate about. Over the coming months the battle for the mantle of college champions promises to be an eventful one, with both A and B leagues being competed for.

Current holders of both leagues are Fylde who both narrowly piped County to the championship by three points in the A league and by goal difference in the B league. With County's desire to avenge this minimal defeat and Inter-College rivalries across the board as rife as ever, the competitive nature of Inter-College football has not been diminished.

New additions to all colleges from the recent influx of fresher talent promises to mix things up a little, along with the departure of some old faces, the shape of things to come is highly unpredictable. A pundit would look to the likes of Pendle, Lonsdale and Furness as potential victors along last years top two Fylde and County. However, with new captains also entering the fray it's anyone's title.

Aside from the league, our new additions to Lancaster may not be aware of the Inter-College Cup and Summer Cup which take place later on this year and next. Current champions, holding bragging rights over the both cups, are County and they will be looking to retain these titles as well as challenging for the leagues. A strong squad with depth is an imperative requirement for any team looking to get their hands on all four pieces of silverware, an feat that is about as likely to be

accomplished as Bolton Wanderers winning the Premiership.

Inter-College football also brings a massive social aspect to the table, which undoubtedly freshers from all teams have been initiated into, one way or another! Supporting your college and getting down to the pitches to see the games can be an enjoying, if not inevitably eventful, excursion. No matter which college you're rooting for you are bound to have fun. With games being typically played on weekends and the occasional weekday evening there's always an opportunity to get involved.

With wind swept pitches, pouring rain, purple hands and waking up at 9am trudging down the hill to the fields with that hangover you promised yourself Sugarhouse wouldn't give you, as per usual, Inter-College football commences in October.



Struggle: Players from County College (left) and Fylde College (right) jostle for the ball during Lancaster University's intercollege football cup final. (Photo: Rob Miller)

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Bringing home the BUCS



Focus: Lancaster Women's Hockey player Torri Crapper prepared for a shot in a game against York last year. (Photo: Rob Miller)

Charlotte Parker
Sports Editor

WITH the start of a new term comes the start of a new season for many of the University sports teams and preparations are well under way for the year's inter-
varsity sports. New players are being recruited, old faces being welcomed back, and an air of excitement is in the air as the many Lancaster teams look to improve on last seasons results; culminating with the Roses tournament against York at the end of the year.

This year, most university sports teams are competing in a British University and Colleges Sports league; following the merge of BUSA and UCS at the end of last year. The structure of the leagues are complex, divided up by regions and also by skill level; but no matter what league the competition is fierce as rival universities battle it out.

Our fortunes in BUCS will clearly give AU President Gareth Coleman the best indication as to his chances of accomplishing his goal of winning the Roses battle in

York; last year York were ranked significantly higher than Lancaster, giving some indication of how much better we will need to rank than York to win without home support.

Almost every sporting team at Lancaster is a member of a BUCS league. Hockey, rugby, fencing, basketball and so on are all fired up and ready to embark upon a hopefully successful campaign to show the country Lancaster's sporting talent. Even the Men's Lacrosse

team is for the first time a member of a BUCS league.

Following a successful Freshers Fair which saw hoards of freshers rushing to try out new sports, there is an air of optimism around the sports pitches which can only bode well for the coming season. Even if you are not a member of a sports team, get involved by heading down to the sports pitches to cheer on the Lancaster teams throughout the year.

All of the Lancaster BUCS teams are confident that they can bring in a big haul of points to bring success and glory for their side.

Men's Football:

The Men's Football Club were left disappointed at the end of last year; both the first and second teams finished third in their respective leagues – missing out on a place in the national competition by just one place. Both teams are looking to improve this year by finishing in one of the top two spots of their leagues to qualify for the nationals. The matches against local rivals UCum will be vital and the teams are hoping for an increase in spectators at the pitches to support them through the season. They will also be looking to conquer York on away turf, after success here in Lancaster in last years Roses.

American Football:

The team have had a strong intake over the past two years. Quarter-back Luke Farrow will be vital to the team's success and if they can build a strong team around him then success looks likely. The team has a great spirit and a hardworking attitude, and will be desperate to prove themselves to be as good as their counterparts from across the Pennines.

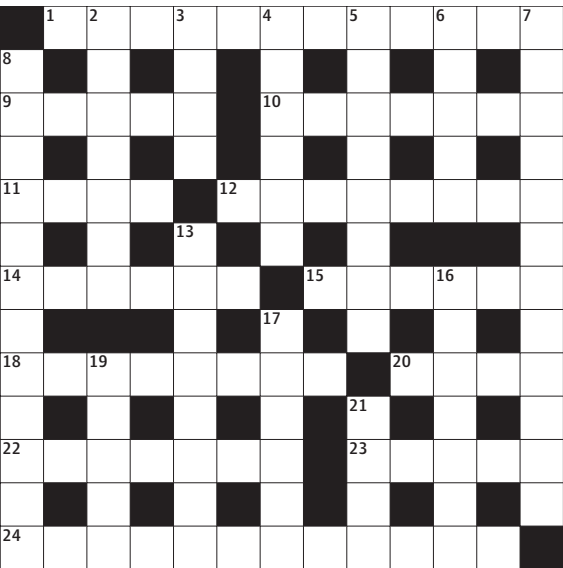
Women's Football:

The Women's Football Club are also looking to finish high in the league this season. They were disappointed to finish third last season after a fantastic start to the season but a few key losses led to a slip down the table. This year they will be looking to be more consistent and believe that they have the quality it takes to win the league, especially with the return of prolific striker Sue Wynes. They have also set their sights on conquering UCLan in the Lancashire Cup as well as beating York at Roses, in a similar fashion to the way they won last year.

Badminton:

Lancaster University Badminton Team is also on the hunt for BUCS success this year. All teams were moderately happy with last year's performances, but slightly disappointed that there were no promotions. The targets for all teams this year will probably be promotion, with Men's 2nd Captain Jonny Lee especially determined to win promotion. All of the teams will also be keen to improve on their Roses record, and if they can perform in the way that they did at last year's Lancashire Cup then they are bound to be in for a chance at victory.

Quick crossword no. 11,830



Across

- 1 Safety structure in centre of motorway (5,7)
9 Form of oxygen (5)
10 Make happy (7)
11 Bird of prey – light, wind-borne structure (4)
12 Mendacious Shakespearean knight (8)
14 Constricted (6)
15 Supporting staff (6)
18 Principal – churchman (8)
20 Serene (4)
22 (Originally) a wormwood-based liqueur (7)
23 Lower part of collar on coat (5)
24 Dedicated to one outcome (6-6)

Down

- 2 Cockerel (7)
3 Killed – a lot (4)
4 One seeking alms (6)
5 Give confidence to (8)
6 South Asian republic (5)
7 Ordinary (3-2-3-4)
8 Blue-collar (7-5)

- 13 Imaginary – in on a lot (anag) (8)
16 Walk roughly over (7)
17 Discover the meaning of – six feet (6)
19 Got up (5)
21 Tribal group with common ancestor (4)

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Solution No 11,829

R	A	F	T	E	R	T	H	E	B	E	S
E	L	N	T	I	I	M					
B	R	E	A	D	T	H	V	E	R	V	E
A	E	E	E	E	E	D	E	L			
T	O	T	E	M		R	E	S	T	F	U
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H	O	T	C	R	O	S	S	B	U	N	
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