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Week 3, Lent Term, Tuesday January 27, 2008

Call for catering boycott as bars dispute escalates

- JCRs organise student boycott of Peeks-run University Catering outlets
- Splits between Uni chiefs following first demonstrations

by **Lizzie Houghton**
News Editor

STUDENTS ARE BEING urged to boycott University catering outlets this week as the memento behind the campaign to save the college bars gains evermore speed.

Following on from the events of the last fortnight, many JCRs are now urging ordinary college members to make their displeasure at the University's actions known by boycotting University Catering.

Members from Cartmel and Furness JCR were out leafleting students last week, detailing which catering outlets were to be boycotted. The list included The Venue, the Management School Hub, Fylde Coffee Shop, Baker House Farm, Bowland Café, the Environment Centre Café and all vending machines. As University Catering outlets all these venues fall under the jurisdiction of David Peeks, the University's Director of Commercial Services.

University Catering is also currently in charge of three of the college bars: Pendle, County and Cartmel. According to a number of posters which have been placed around campus in the past two weeks, the University plans to eventually take control of all the college bars.

Further to this is the worry that the University could potentially "rent out" the college bars for private, non-student functions. There is already concern over the cutting back of college space, and of course, the increased prices in Catering run bars.

"What we are seeing here is a disrespect by University Management for the college space and the college life," one high ranking member of the Cartmel JCR said. "By taking over the bars and running them how they [the University] want them, they're not representing the students and they're not taking into account what we want."

For some students, the college system was the basis of their choosing to study at Lancaster. For them the thought that this system may soon be null is worrying.

One student told SCAN: "I've made friends outside of my course through the college bar. That's why it's important."

Further support for the bars campaign was seen with the return of Friday Fury, when students were urged to wear tops and carry banners with messages of support for the college bars written on, although at the time of print it is not known how successful this drive was.

There is also talk of a rift inside University Management, with some members of staff coming out in support of the students' movement. SUBTEXT, the unofficial University newsletter, for example praises the students' "activism".

So far LUSU have been relatively quite on the issue. Union President, Michael Payne said: "Whilst I do not condone the personal harassment on any member of University staff, I fully understand why the students are upset on this issue, as well as understanding their reasons to be angry."

These sentiments were echoed by LUSU General Secretary, Janie Coleman. She said: "The students obviously care very deeply about their bars and college space. I'm proud to see that they are acting upon this and letting their voices be heard." "The bars are a focal point to all the colleges," Ms. Coleman added. "The controversy surrounding this issue pays testament to how passionately the students feel."

At the other end of the bar, a small minority of students are taking the position that the bars are better off under University Management. Although this view is not widely held, those who do hold it are becoming increasingly adamant about their stance.

Labour Club leads bars demo



Banging the drum: The Labour Club lead the demonstration. (Photo: Mitch Vidler)

AS SENTIMENT AMONGST the student body hardens over the University's treatment of the college bars, students are resorting to organise demonstrations to draw attention to the issue.

In the first week of term, a group of approximately 50 protestors, led by Lancaster University Labour Club, congregated outside the Venue to call for greater college control over the

college bars, and a boycott of University Catering.

The protestors pledged their opposition to the agenda of homogenisation of college spaces, external functions taking priority over students in college bars, lay-offs of student bar staff, increasingly stringent profit targets, and constantly rising bar prices.

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Uni finance chief foiled in plot to oust LUSU from Sports Centre consultation

- Uni to go to banks to finance £80m Phase 5 bill
- Andrew Neal tried to cut LUSU Pres from signatories

by **Chris Davis**
and **Dan Hogan**

THE NEW SPORTS centre and the rest of the £80m Phase 5 residences project could have been approved without any student consultation, if University finance chiefs had had their way.

But the attempt to change the membership of the Authorised Signatories Group, removing the LUSU president and blocking any input by students into the decision, was stopped.

The president, Michael Payne, succeeded in keeping his place on the group, but had he not been, it would have been the first time since 1995 that the LUSU president had been omitted from an Authorised Signatory Group responsible for a major project directly affecting students. The attempt to change the group's membership coincided with an admission of how the Phase 5 project has run into serious trouble.

The University Council has drawn up an ASG for every significant financial decision made by the University. Every member of the group is entitled to full consultation on the issue, and the agreement of each member is required

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University challenged



Challenged: Lancaster's University Challenge team, the last time the University made it into the televised rounds in 2004

by **Lizzie Houghton**
 News Editor

The Lancaster University Students Union is looking for student to take part in the next series of University Challenge.

The Union have said they are looking for "all avid quizzers and clever people" to put themselves forward for the team. LUSU President, Michael Payne, will be leading the decision process for team selection. The screening process for the University team is set to be on Wednesday of Week 6, in County South lecture theatre between 2-5pm. More information will be available in the Union's e-letter, Squeak.

Since the programme first aired in 1963, Lancaster has consistently under performed. Never having won the Challenge, the University's last real triumph came in 2004, when we beat York by 250 to 120.

"University Challenge should not simply be an arena for Redbrick institutions like Oxford and Cambridge," said Mr. Payne. "We should give Lancaster

the best possible chance of success by taking the competition as seriously as our competitors."

Mr. Payne added: "A concerted effort to find the best team will give Lancaster a fighting chance, but we need students to step up to the challenge and get involved."

Historically Lancaster has had a very weak support mechanism put in place for the Challenge team. It is hoped that with a better support system, Lancaster will break its unlucky streak and turn up a good performance on the show. University academics have already said they will give time to train up the team in their specialist area. Amanda Chetwynd, the Pro-Vice Chancellor (College and Student Experience), Dr. Gavin Brown, Director of Undergraduate Studies and Professor Chris Park, Director of the Graduate School have also expressed enthusiasm over the project.

University Challenge first appeared on the nations' screens in 1962, and was originally broadcast by ITV. After being taken off the air in 1987, it was revived by the BBC in 1994.

Director of Finance tries to cut LUSU President from Phase 5 signatories group



Artistic License: An artist's impression of how the University wants the new sports centre to look, if it can find the money to build it.

before the University may proceed with the project.

Following the proposal to change the membership of the Authorised Signatories Group for the Phase 5 project, the LUSU President challenged his omission at a meeting of the Finance Committee. Committee members, including Pro-Chancellor, Bryan Gray, supported Payne being kept on the group, and after debate, the president was reinstated. Following the emergence of the matter in underground email newsletter, Subtext, SCAN spoke to Mr Payne, who said it was "hard to believe" his omission was a simple oversight, and quoted Andrew Neal, Director of Finance and Resources, as justifying his exclusion as part of an effort to make the list "as responsive as possible".

"All major financial investment decisions since 1995 which affect students have involved the LUSU President in a representative capacity," said Mr Payne. "Decisions such as these have implications for thousands of students across campus, and, as such, it would

be ludicrous to exclude the president from representing the student body throughout the consultation process."

Mr Neal refused to comment on the matter while the papers discussed at the Finance Committee were still confidential. However, the problems facing Phase 5, which may have provoked the attempted removal of Payne, were also discussed at UMAG (University Management Advisory Group).

According to the UMAG minutes, which are publicly available, the original criteria set for the financing of Phase 5 – which involved the leasing of the University's remaining residencies to UPP – would not be possible in light of the current economic situation. For Phase 5 to still go ahead as planned, and for the sports centre project to be completed in time for Roses in 2010, the University has to raise a massive £80m, according to Subtext.

The University are now looking to resort to borrow the £80m from banks – not a desirable situation, particularly not when banks are so reluctant to lend money.

University gaffes

Bamber Gascoigne: what was Gandhi's first name?
Contestant: Goosey?

Jeremy Paxman: What is another name for 'cherry-pickers' and 'cheesemongers'?
Contestant: Homosexuals.
Paxman: No. They're regiments in the British Army who will be very upset with you.

In 1975, the team from the University of Manchester, (which included Times columnist David Aaronovitch), answered every question either with "Che Guevara", "Marx", "Trotsky" and "Lenin". They didn't progress far.

in this scan

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Government pledges paid internships to aid graduates in jobs market

- Government to provide paid internships for graduates as new job intake slumps
- Recruitment places down 70% on last year

by Chris Davis
News Editor

A NEW 'NATIONAL Internship Scheme' has been announced by the government in a bid to offer training and experience to graduates who have seen their employment prospects diminish in the economic downturn.

John Denham, the current 'Innovation, Universities, and Skills' secretary, announced the creation of the scheme in an interview with the Daily Telegraph. The internships look set to provide graduates with up to three months work experience, for which it is expected they will be paid a figure somewhere around what they would receive as a student from their maintenance loan. Although concrete deals are yet to be finalised, large international companies such as Barclays and Microsoft are said to have expressed an interest in the scheme.

Following the emergence of the nationwide recession, a number of studies have indicated that students graduating in the next couple of years, especially those with non-vocational degrees, are set to face difficulties finding employment upon leaving University. Of the 3 million people predicted by the Monetary Policy Committee to be out of work by the end of 2009, a third of these are expected to be aged 25 or under. As struggling companies have been forced to make redundancies, it appears that younger graduates, short on practical skills and vocational experience, have often been the first to suffer. Figures from the latest labour market survey show that 40% of the total 137,000 made unemployed in the final quarter of 2008 were aged between 18 and 24. A recent exercise conducted by 'High Fliers Research' increased fears by reporting that, on average, firms had cut their recruitment targets by 17% for the coming year.

Indeed, traditional graduate em-



ployers are already considering limiting their recruitment activities to a smaller group of 'elite' Universities such as Oxford, Cambridge, and Imperial College London. For universities like Lancaster, celebrated for its academic research but ranking less highly in terms of graduate employability, the prospect is a daunting one.

However, staff at Lancaster's Career Service maintain that they are still getting plenty of attention from potential recruiters. "We are still getting a lot of employers ringing us up" said Chris Little, Careers Co-ordinator at CEEC. "We have not been affected yet, although we will be better placed to know in June and July, when we start planning the careers fair". Little admitted

that, since the media attention given to the economic downturn, the Careers Service had seen an increase in activity. "Duty Sessions are certainly up" he stated, "and we are running plenty of events aimed at preparing students, and helping them get the appropriate employment skills."

Of all graduates, it is Arts and Social Sciences students who are predicted to face the most problems securing future employment. Undergraduate degrees in subjects like English, History, and Sociology are traditionally seen as non-vocational, as they do not lead directly into any specific industry or field. However, Professor Tony McEnery, Dean of Arts & Social Sciences at Lancaster, remained upbeat about the future pros-

pects for graduates of the faculty. "We take very seriously the employability of our students" said Professor McEnery, "and as such the faculty has just appointed its first Employability Officer, Frank Dawes". Currently, he stated, Mr Dawes and others are "working on a series of proposals", set to help students in the faculty have "every advantage possible" in the graduate job market.

Announcements regarding the details of the government's Internship scheme are expected throughout the coming month. Denham has stated that he will be talking to major graduate recruiters, but smaller businesses and voluntary organisations will also be invited to take part.

Janie Coleman, who is partnered with LUBDS Vice President Matt Dailley, will be dancing the Viennese Waltz, often considered the hardest dance of all. Despite this her training is said to be going extremely well, and early previews suggest a very promising performance. "I'm very excited," Ms. Coleman told SCAN. "I'm going to feel like a princess."

At the other end of the scale, the Fiona Phillips of the night looks set to be LUSU President Michael Payne. It has been suggested that Payne's partner, Rachel Seal, LUBDS Social Secretary, may just choreograph their Jive

Grad jobs grow harder to find as credit crunch bites

by Rob Maidstone

2009 IS EXPECTED to be on the worst years for graduate employment of the last two decades as companies all over the UK are freezing or dramatically reducing recruitment.

A survey across 100 firms by High Flyers Research found out that recruitment targets have been cut by an average of 17%. Hardest hit is the financial sector where 47% of graduate entry level jobs have been lost.

These statistics may cause panic in 2009 leavers, however a spokesman for the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills downplayed fears, saying many firms were "keen to avoid the mistakes of the last recession and will continue to recruit graduates". He also explained what the Government hoped to do to help graduates get into work. "We are developing real help and support, talking to major employers about ensuring graduates get experience of work and a chance to show what they can do," the spokesman said.

As well as affecting 2009's graduates, the economic crisis has also affected last years graduates. Martin Birchall, managing director of High Flyers Research, told the BBC: "Not only have vacancies been reduced substantially for those finishing university in 2009, but it is now clear that many of last year's entry-level jobs did not materialise either, leaving many graduates from the class of 2008 out of work too."

In response to this survey, the president of the National Union of Students, Wes Streeting, said: "We're all very acutely aware that the picture facing this year's graduates is very bleak." He went on to say that the NUS advises graduates to "start looking for jobs much earlier, to do their research and to recognise that it's going to be quite hard".

Students worrying about their future have been advised to widen their horizons. "There are hundreds of different professions," says Mike Hill, the Chief Executive of the Higher Education Careers Services. "People need to cast their nets wider."

It's strictly ballroom for campus celebs

by Lizzie Houghton
News Editor

STRICTLY COME DANCING will be making its way to Lancaster University next week as the Lancaster University Ballroom Dancing Society (LUBDS) holds its annual Charity Showcase,

complete with glitter, fake tans and more left feet than a centipede.

Eight University 'celebrities' will be paired up with members of the LUBDS exec, and have just one chance to dance their way into the audience's hearts. Famous faces include the President of the Music Society, Amelia Phillips, Tennis President Cai Halliday and World Karate Champion Becky Clark. Representing the Students Union will be LUSU President Michael Payne, General Secretary Janie Coleman and President of the AU, Gaz Coleman.

The celebrities are being allowed just 25 hours to train before taking to

the stage on Friday 6 February, at 7pm in the Great Hall. Dances on offer will include prime time favourites such as the Salsa, Cha Cha Cha and Quickstep.

Already speculation is rife as to who is going to emerge as the Strictly champ. The favourite so far Clark, who is said to be even better than the professionals. The dark horses of the night however could come in the form of two Colemans. Gaz Coleman is set to be dancing the Waltz with Steph Kendall, the LUBDS President. It would be foolish to think that the combined competitiveness of the two sportspeople won't push them to be the best there.

with Payne – dressed in ever flattering lime green – sat in the middle while she dances round to (actual Strictly champion) Alisha Dixon's song, The Boy Does Nothing.

The evening, which is in aid of Cancer Research UK, will be hosted by the LUBDS's dance instructor, Bill Reader, with last year's President, Danielle Moorehouse, as his lovely sidekick.

Tickets for the night will be on sale from Furness Foyer on Wednesday and Friday of Week 4 between 12pm and 2pm, costing £4 for students and £5 for non-students.

Labour Club bars demo rattles University House chieftains

- Labour Club-led demonstration calls for sacking of David Peeks
- Extra security posted on doors Uni House in fear of occupation
- Senior University Officers divided over response

by Sam Newsham

A GROUP OF over 50 students took to the streets on Thursday 15th January in a passionate protest against the University's plans to gain centralised control of all nine college bars.

Organised and led by Lancaster University Labour Club, the group included JCR officers and some LUSU non-sabbatical officers, as well as a large number of students demonstrating their support for the cause.

Beginning outside The Venue, the route taken by the protest took in Fylde Coffee Shop, Alexandra Square, University House and the Conference Centre, where Commercial Services Director, David Peeks, has his offices. Tony Evans, the University's Head of Security, asked them to move on as they were disturbing a seminar. Despite fears by the University however, this was the only serious disruption caused by the protest.

Extra security were put on guard at the doors of University House, which Mr Evans confirmed had been laid on in anticipation that the demonstrators would attempt to occupy the building. The guards were instructed to ensure that only students with "legitimate reasons" gained access to the building.

The protest march was the first event in the Labour Club's rejuvenated 'Save Our College Bars' campaign, which began last year in response to talk of a change in management of the college bars. Since then, David Peeks has been handed control of Cartmel, County and Pendle bars. The campaign was recently resurrected when plans for all nine bars to come under his control were confirmed.

"If we don't act now they won't listen and will just go full steam ahead," said Richard Bennett, Campaigns Officer for the Labour Club and one of the driving forces behind the campaign. "David Peeks doesn't listen to students and he doesn't listen to lecturers. We want to engage with students, persuade them of our argument, look for improvements and listen to students."

Mr Bennett went on to itemise the Labour Club's complaints against David Peeks. "College space has been cut to 600 square metres, a significant reduction for some colleges; events are now booked centrally, making it hard for us to organise socials, and whilst there may have been price cuts he's failed to cut prices of the most popular drinks."

The protest march was organised as a way to draw as much attention as possible to the re-emergence of the campaign. "I think it made a point. It certainly caught people's attention,"

said Sarah Strachan, a first-year student who came out to support the protest. Non-sabbatical officer Joss Hickson was similarly satisfied, calling it "a great start to the campaign".

However, not everyone agreed that the demonstration had been the best way to begin. "It was hard to get a message across without disrupting people and get people involved whilst maintaining the shock factor," said Sam Johnson. Others commented that the march had been "too hastily organised".

Despite the difficulties, the protest appears to have caught the attention of staff in University House. Pro Vice-Chancellor for Colleges and Student Experience, Amanda Chetwynd, met with LUSU president, Michael Payne several times in the immediate wake of the protest. According to sources in LUSU, she has repeatedly asked for restraint from David Peeks, in order to avoid the sort of student campaign that the University now faces. Director of Finance and Resources, Andrew Neal, who is David Peeks immediate superior, apparently dismissed Prof. Chetwynd's calls for moderation.

However, the University, in an official statement, expressed dissatisfaction with what they viewed as a personal attack against Mr Peeks by the Labour Club. The statement claimed that the University is "very concerned that a campaign against an individual member of staff, contracted to carry out a specific job, is taking place". It called the Labour Club's conduct "unacceptable".

"The University has an obligation to take action to support employees against unfair harassment of this kind," the statement said. "Accordingly a full investigation has been initiated into the provenance of this campaign."

The University also attempted to implicate LUSU as being complicit in the bars takeover, despite consistent opposition to the plans by the union. The statement said: "The University established a review of the bars two years ago, which included LUSU representation, that concluded that further steps should be taken to preserve the future of the bars. Since then the University has been trying to address those issues."

Mr Payne—previously outspoken on the issue—kept the matter of the protest at arms length. "The wide range of students who turned out on a rainy day clearly demonstrates that college bars are at the heart of student lives," he told SCAN. "I will be watching the campaign closely and will endeavour to represent student views to the best of my ability."



Opinion: Are our bars about people or profit?



Jonathan Starr

A LOT HAS been made over the past few years regarding the campus bars. Questions have been raised regarding the price of a pint of beer, the imposition of unrealistic targets and the centralisation of bar management which we are currently seeing; one has to ask, what is the point of the bars? What is it that they set out

to achieve?

It is this question that is the basis for all the bar debates over the past few years as there seems to be a clear difference between how the bars are seen by the student population when compared to how they are seen by the university management. It would seem fair to say that the average student sees the campus bars as the living room of the campus accommodation where they can hang out with their mates over a nice drink while they discuss the ups and downs of the day. The University, however, appears to see the bars as a money making institute, another way for them to reach into the pockets of students following the high rent prices already seen for on-campus accommodation.

Yet, which viewpoint is correct? Should the students be given

en a place where they can afford to socialise in close proximity to the campus accommodation, or should the university continue to charge high prices in attempts to reach their desired targets?

It is clear to see that the current pricing plan is not keeping people in the campus bars, with the lower prices offered by bars in the town centre representing a better deal. Though, is high prices' the best way to meet profit margins? Would it not be fair to say that a reduction in prices may result to a greater amount of unit sales, thus resulting in an increase in the profit made by the bars as well? Such a move would appear to fit both the desires of the students and demands of the University management and may make the currently empty bars once again the focus of college social life.



What do we want? Above: Lancaster students make their voices heard in Alexandra Square as part of the 'Save Our College Bars' campaign (Photo: Mitch Vidler.) Left: Student protesters gather outside University Catering outlets and University offices. (Photo: Dan Hogan)

What places are the campaigners boycotting?

- The Venue
- Barkers House Farm
- Fylde Coffee Shop
- Bowland Deli Bar
- Hub Cafe (LUMS)
- Cafe 21 (InfoLab)
- LEC Atrium Cafe (LEC)
- Food For Thought (IAS)

What places are independent and boycott-free?

- Pizzetta/Cafe Republic
- County Diner
- Greggs
- Diggles
- LUSU Shop
- Souped Up
- Central Stores
- Spar
- Sultans
- Wibbly Wobbly's
- Wongs Kitchen
- Spicy Hut
- Uni Chippy
- George's Restaurant

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Grime Time

Beats from the British streets

Music, p25

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tequila 90p

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Anti-war protesters turn out for Gaza

Rob Miller
Assistant Editor

RESIDENTS OF LANCASTER and students from the University turned out in force on Saturday January 17 for a protest against Israeli military action in Gaza.

The protest, organised by Lancaster and District Coalition Against the War, took place in Market Square and featured speeches, chants, and an attempt by two protesters to draw awareness to Palestinian casualties by lying motionless, covered in shrouds daubed with fake blood.

“We’re here to stand against the aggression that’s happening in Gaza,” said Faye Al-mari, president of the university’s Islamic society and of the university’s Friends of Palestine society. “We’re here to let the people of Lancaster know that humanity hasn’t died.

“The news has shown everyone what Israel is doing: Israel are not taking into account civilian casualties, and if there are civilian casualties, in the end that doesn’t matter [to them] because they will meet their targets.”

Although a tentative ceasefire is in effect in Gaza as SCAN goes to print, the protest came on a day when intense fighting still consumed Gaza as part of the offensive launched by Israel on December 27. Just two days before, Israel had earned the ire of many in the international community by launching an attack against the UN headquarters in Gaza, destroying large supplies of food and fuel that were to be used as aid for residents of Gaza.

“This is the third vigil for Palestine that has been held by the people of Lancaster,” said one protester, who spoke on condition of anonymity due to his



Marching orders: Protestors gather in Market Square. (Photo: Rob Miller)

employment. “We’ve been here every Saturday for the past three weeks, since the Israeli offensive on Gaza started.

“We’re here because we’re outraged by the killing and the bombing of the people of Gaza, which has killed over a thousand people. Israel has committed war crimes by bombing UN schools, compounds, and hospitals.”

“ Hamas are the democratically-elected government of Palestine, and although I don’t agree with them they

should be negotiated with. We ended the troubles in Northern Ireland through negotiations with the IRA: more people were killed by the IRA than by Hamas, and yet the British government didn’t go and use heavy artillery and F16 bombers on the people of Belfast or Derry.”

Although Gaza has dominated the television and print media for the last three weeks, many of the protesters felt that at least some of the reporting had

been unfair.

“I think the BBC and Sky have been reporting it in a biased way,” said Al-mari. “Incidents reported in other media, such as Channel 4, show that the BBC have turned a blind eye to things that are obvious to anyone who watches more than one outlet.”

In the evening following the protest, Israel announced a unilateral cessation of hostilities, its continuation conditional upon rocket attacks from Gaza

ceasing. The following afternoon Hamas and Islamic Jihad expressed their agreement with the proposal, agreeing to stop rocket attacks for one week provided IDF forces withdrew from Gaza in that time. It remains, however, a fragile peace, with reports already of the agreement being broken in southern Gaza.

NUS votes for change despite ‘intimidating’ protest

- **Two year reform process finally passes last hurdle at Wolverhampton conference**
- **Pro-Palestine protestors seize stage and force early finish**

by Dan Hogan
Editor

ON THE SAME day that Barack Obama was sworn in as President of the United States, students at a conference in Wolverhampton passed a set of constitutional reforms for the National Union of Students, supporting president Wes Streeting’s own mission of change.

The special conference, called in response to requests from 25 student unions, voted overwhelmingly to ratify a new constitution for the NUS, in the face of opposition from far-left political factions and pro-Palestinian protesters.

The conference was cut short by a group of protesters in the conference who charged the platform to stage a demonstration against the union’s alleged refusal to recognise the crisis in the Gaza strip.

Delegates spent almost four hours

debating whether or not to adopt the new constitution, which creates five policy ‘Zones’, each with their own conference, which feed into the union’s Annual Conference, known for its esoteric debates and impenetrable political arguments. The reforms are designed to streamline the policy making process and make it more accessible to ordinary students.

Opponents to the reform were passionate in their objections, but were scatter-gun in their arguments. Speakers from far-left political factions attacked the extraordinary conference itself as undemocratic, designed to force reform through the back door, and lamented at how the changes would disconnect the union from its members, turning it into a “professional lobby group”. One delegate, from Staffordshire University Students Union, who was wearing a Palestinian flag as he spoke, said of the NUS National Executive Committee: “They have failed stu-

dents, they don’t represent students. They represent the bureaucrats. They are only interested in securing their jobs in government.”

Rob Owen, the leader of the Student wing of the far-left Respect party, said: “The NUS NEC has spent the last two years navel gazing, looking to scrap our democratic structures.”

But the president of Bristol University Students Union, told the opponents: “We have been discussing this issue for two years, and in that time we are yet to see you propose an alternative.”

Leaders of the NUS Black Students Campaign felt marginalised by the absence of a guaranteed black students place on the new Trustee Board, which will oversee the operational management of the NUS, which has been in financial deficit for most of the last decade.

It was as debate on the constitution drew to a close that the stage was stormed by protestors carrying megaphones and Palestinian flags. As baffled delegates booed at the protestors for disrupting proceedings, the chair struggled to regain control, calling for an early break and postponing the final vote on the constitution.

The protestors chanted condemnation upon the NUS NEC for voting down a motion opposing Israel’s bombardment of Gaza. “Shame on you NEC, Palestinians will be free,” they shouted, as curious students filmed and took photographs of the protest.

The stunt came as the culmination of a day of arguments between pro and anti-reform delegates about the crisis in Gaza and its relevance to NUS. Vocal supporters of the reforms complained that a debate on the NUS constitution was not the right time to argue about the union’s stance on the Israel/Palestine conundrum. But Rob Owen, again took to the stage, arguing that arguments over the NUS constitution and its policy priorities could not be separated. “If we don’t stand up for justice and fairness around the world, then we shouldn’t be here. We can’t debate our future without talking about what we stand for,” he said.

But when asked what they intended to achieve, other participants of the protest were less certain of their purpose. One told SCAN: “NUS is the only union in the country not to have policy against [Israel’s actions].”

Another protester, when asked how his actions would benefit the people of

Gaza, said: “We’re going to stand up here, take a stand, and stop this conference from continuing, and make sure that the whole country knows that we support the people of Gaza.”

After a lengthy disruption, the protestors were allowed five minutes to make a statement to the delegates on the floor, in exchange for the conference being allowed to continue. Many delegates booed at the concession, unhappy that the conference had been hijacked. Approximately 50 students, mostly Jewish, walked out of the hall in protest, and about 100 more stood up to turn their backs as Mr Owen read out his statement.

In his summation of the debate, Mr Streeting pointed to the protest as a metaphor for all that is wrong with the NUS currently. “At many points today we have seen NUS at its very worst... with a culture of self-preservation and hackery,” he said. “This is time to make a break with the tactics of the 1960s and build a union that deals with real student issues.

“The worst thing I’ve seen today is the harassment and intimidation of students... I’m absolutely ashamed that Jewish delegates had to walk off conference floor.”

GreenLancaster gets cash boost for hub



The current GreenLancaster garden. (Photo: GreenLancaster)

by Fiona Hutchinson

GRANTS AND PROJECTS totalling £120,000 have been awarded to GreenLancaster to broaden student involvement in its environmental campaigns around campus and in the wider Lancaster district.

Of the £119,400 awarded to the initiative, £59,700 will come from the youth charity 'V', which offers volunteering opportunities to 16-25 year olds. The Estates Management office at the University is matching this contribution through a combination of cash and in-kind contributions to make up the total project value.

The grant will be used to fund a 24-month project to increase student participation in environmental initiatives. Beginning in April 2009, GreenLancaster will look to take on more than 100 student volunteer opportunities per year, as well as a full-time project manager and part-time student employees, to bring about further reductions in the University's environmental impact.

Tom Roberts a founder of GreenLancaster said: "I'm delighted that GreenLancaster has been given this chance to grow. Our hope is that we can raise the profile of social and environmental issues by working closely with and offering our support to local charities and community groups whilst at the same time enabling students to gain invaluable work experience."

Ben Matthews, Director of the Lancaster University Volunteering Unit, told SCAN: "The main point of the project is to get students involved in things they might not otherwise have done and to get them interested in the things they are doing."

There is also a hope to establish a

'Hub' for green activities in a campus retail unit, in a similar way to LUVU and Create. It will sell items that directly support GreenLancaster, such as bike rental, sale and repair, energy efficient products and GreenLancaster clothing. In addition to this, volunteers will work in partnership with the community, including visits from primary school children to learn about environmental issues from our students.

An assessment model will be developed by the project management group to measure the environmental impact of these activities. Key criteria will include the promotion of energy and carbon dioxide reduction measures, facilitating resource saving measures, recycling and the promotion of sustainable forms of transport. In brief, the initiative hopes to make Lancaster a better place for everyone to live.

It is intended that the project is developed in such a way that it can be sustained from grant income in the long-term in a similar way to LUVU and Create. The Director of the Lancaster University Volunteering Unit said that "sustaining the project past the initial two year investment will be a challenge that is tackled from the outset. The identification of future funders will be a priority although there is a distinct possibility that 'V' will provide additional rounds of funding."

GreenLancaster is a partnership between the Student's Union, University Estates and accommodation manager UPP, and was set-up in 2006 to work on environmental initiatives. Notable projects so far include their 'Do it for the Penguins!' campaign, aimed at reducing student energy consumption, and college recycling competitions, where one college reduced the amount of waste going to landfill by 40%.

Vaginas court controversy

by Rachael Abrahams

TICKETS FOR THE Lancaster University production of the edgy play, the Vagina Monologues go on sale this week.

The event is run annually, around valentines day to raise awareness of domestic violence and raise money for battered women's shelters. But Student Union's Women's Officer, Sara Dunn, has drawn criticism for organising the production of the event - despite it not being a part of her remit.

Sara Dunn, LUSU'S Women's Officer, defended her decision to take part in this year's production, saying it is her responsibility to, "campaign, raise awareness, and co-ordinate events and facilitate student interest."

Ms Dunn added that her main pri-

ority is to work behind the scenes on administration and production coordination, and that her target is to ensure that those involved have all the support they require.

She said that this complements the Vagina Monologues, confirming that they are, "an educational and entertaining way of engaging people with the issues surrounding domestic violence."

But a former Women's Officer, Cat Smith, hit out at Ms. Dunn's involvement in the production, saying: "It is always dangerous when a clique forms and sees an event as 'their' event, and it has been known for women - not only students - to see such an event as being predominantly 'theirs'."

However, many of this year's cast have never actually performed in the production before - in contrast with

Ms. Smith's claims.

The Vagina Monologues have been featured in the University calendar since 2004. Over 30 women students of the University are involved in this year's production of the Monologues.

Since the initial performance five years ago, the women at Lancaster University have raised thousands of pounds for local women's charities, as well as directly contributing to the local community, and raising money for organisations devoted to helping women involved in violent and abusive relationships.

Tickets for The Vagina Monologues go on sale in Week 3 for £5 each. The performances take place in the University's Chaplaincy Centre on the 11th, 12th and 14th February 2009.



Dark clouds looming: Students face increased campus rent next year, despite low inflation. (Photo: Rob Miller)

Campus rent set to rise above rate of inflation

by Sam Newsham

RENT FOR ON-CAMPUS accommodation is set to rise by around 5% for the academic year 2009-10, compared to an increase in inflation of just 0.9%.

The projected rent rise is actually lower than was initially planned. In previous years rent has been increased by around 8% and a similar increase was originally suggested for 2009-10. However, it was lowered following discussions with LUSU and a reassessment of the impact the state of the economy would have. Over the past five years the

cost of an en suite room have risen from around £70 a week to almost £100. With 2008-9 prices varying from £66.50 - £75.95 a week for a standard room with washbasin and £88.20 to £97.30 for an en suite room, it will still represent a significant increase.

According to the College and Residences website, the University's reasons for the increase are the credit crunch and high utility bills from the current year. There is a concern that students are often wasteful of resources and do not attempt to conserve electricity. In the current economic climate this makes energy bills very high. 'I think that the University rent increases should be as little

as possible, and in my opinion the rents have risen far too much while I've been at Lancaster,' said Rachel Faulkner, President of the Graduate Students' Association. However, Ms Faulkner agreed that energy waste was a factor in rent rise and called for the university to make this clear. 'Students can be wasteful of energy, [I] have seen lights in rooms left on when students go home for the vacations! It might be worth informing students that blatant wasting of energy is part of the rise.' As an alternative to on-campus accommodation falling house prices mean that living in town should remain a fairly cheap option.

scan:COMMENT



Sam Newsham

LUMS's CV meddling is symptomatic of our dependent one-size-fits-all culture

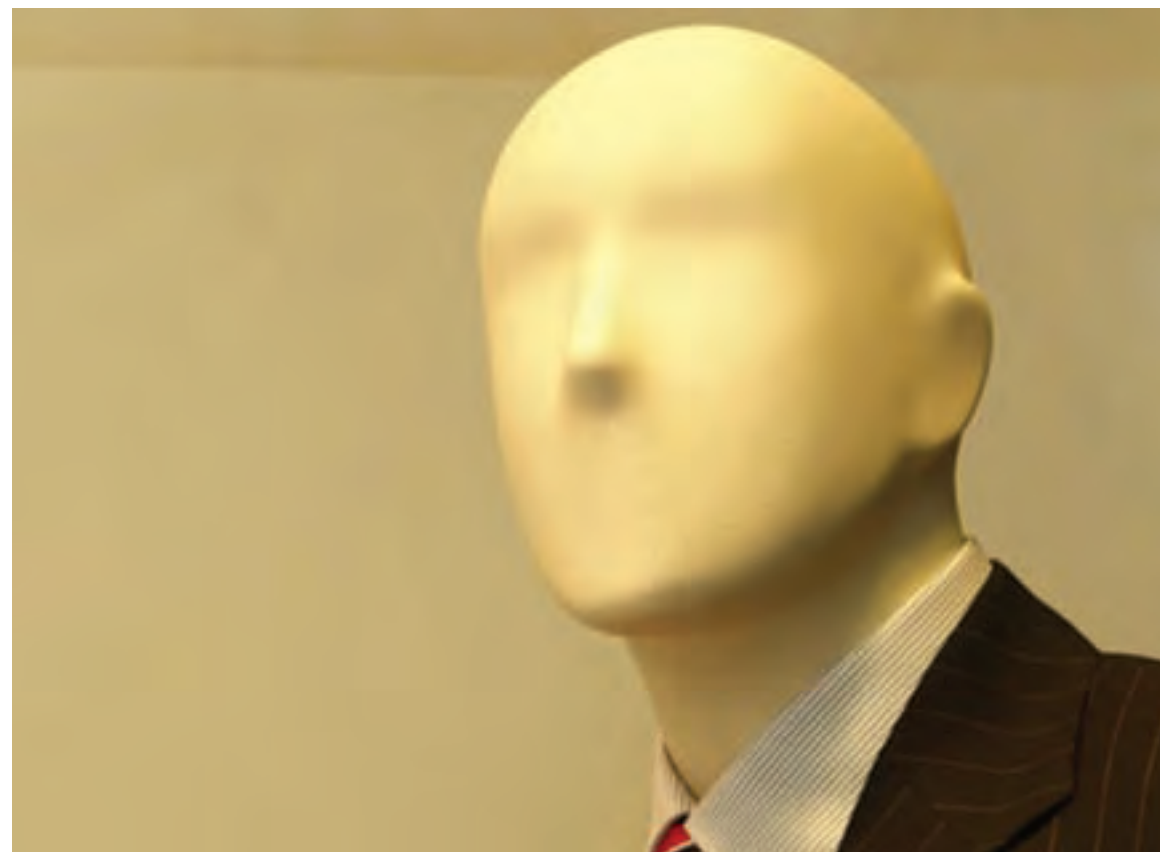
When thinking for ourselves becomes discouraged, we begin to lose everything that defines us as individual human beings

According to Prospects.ac.uk, the UK's official graduate careers website, "The CV really is a unique selling document. It's an opportunity to make yourself stand out." But this mantra is ignored by Lancaster University's Management School. Instead of using the application for a third-year placements as an opportunity for students' to shine as individuals, those in charge of placements choose to standardise CVs to a template of their own design.

The CV is the first impression of a candidate that a potential employer has. With the average recruiter spending just 20-30 seconds glancing at a CV, what chance does a LUMS student have to impress if they've never been encouraged to express themselves? How will they ever be able to think independently; indeed, how will they ever be able to develop independent thinking in the teams they will one day manage? The answer is simple: the chances are they won't.

Might we be inclined, then, to ask why the Management School chooses to deny its students the chance to sell their own achievements in their own words? Perhaps it's borne out of a concern for its glittering international reputation – it describes itself as the 'leading full-spectrum business or management school in the UK' and is consistently ranked in Britain's top four. Perhaps it's secretly afraid that, unless it dishes out some fairly heavy 'advice', its students will show themselves, and most importantly, the faculty, up.

The Management School's removal of its students' autonomy is merely a symptom of a wider disease. This ban on original thinking found in LUMS is endemic throughout our society. If the



Management School is trying to think for its students it is only following the example passed down from the government.

From warning labels on unhealthy foods to leaflets describing how to recycle waste into different coloured bins, New Labour has spent the past eleven years trying to ensure that the British public never has to think about anything at all.

The levels of government meddling

and interference are now so high that they impact on every corner of our lives. Wherever we turn we are confronted by a form to complete, a licence to obtain, a Health and Safety regulation to implement or, most tedious of all, a government-set target to meet.

Every organisation sets itself targets. Used wisely and in moderation they are the best possible method of keeping track of achievements. It's when they're over-used that the prob-

lems begin. Since 1997 the government seems to have taken it upon itself to create as many targets as all previous governments put together. The motto seems to be 'If it can be quantified it can be given a target – or two, or three, or ten.' Education, health, crime rates – all are measured by and compared to the same sets of facts and figures.

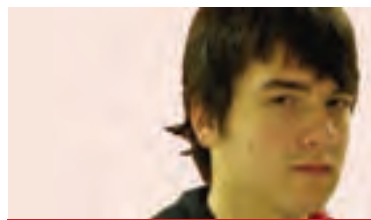
Consider our education system. Between the ages of seven and eighteen children are herded like a flock of

sheep through SATs, SATs, more SATs, GCSEs and A-levels. One system, one set of measurements: the grades on the sheet on Results Day. From these measurements are drawn that other invention so beloved by our Government, the league tables. It is from these our schools are adjudged to have succeeded or failed. But these are children, not robots. All are individuals with individual ways of learning and developing. How are we to choose just one method of measuring success?

The government's love of targets has led to the birth of another unpleasant breed: the pushy parent. These are the parents who will organise their child's life so that every activity is geared towards success and cushion them from a reality that must inevitably involve failure. So it is perhaps unsurprising that the University feels it has the right to pick up where the parents leave off. It sees its role not as advisor, but instead as the pushiest parent of them all.

It goes without saying that what the Management School has done is unacceptable. Providing guidance and advice is one thing; removing achievements and rewriting personal statements is quite another. Because what happens when we aren't encouraged to think for ourselves and develop our own potential? We begin to lose everything that defines us as individual human beings.

The Management School's actions are symptomatic of our one-size-fits-all culture. In seeking to standardise their students' CVs they were undoubtedly chasing the fulfilment of a government-imposed target. We can only hope there is still chance for the second-year LUMS students to retain their individuality.



Chris Blackburn

Where does racism sit among the royal responsibilities?

Anyone keeping an eye on the national media recently could not have failed to notice the recent uproar over Prince Harry referring to a fellow soldier as his "little paki friend." This has triggered a varied debate over press intrusion, political correctness, and the role of the royal family within society. I for one am firmly on the side of the media on their objection to the use of this term and their right to go to print over the Prince's latest gaffe.

A frequently heard argument has been put forward regarding political correctness. If the person in question doesn't mind, why should we? This logic is baffling: We can't take the feel-

ings of one person as representative of an entire populace. As the soldier's father pointed out, 'paki' is a "hate word". It may not have been in its original use, but its use through years of abuse means it now is, much in the same way 'spack' was once acceptable but no longer is due to its implied malice. Just because he is not offended by the use of this term it does not mean other people of his creed won't be, and they should not have to watch this incidence of mild racism go unnoticed simply because one man has decided its okay.

To blame the media for the current row is ridiculous. The simple fact of the matter is that if Harry hadn't used a term he surely knows is offensive, there

would have been no story. Secondly, I for one would like to know whether or not someone representing our country is fit to do so. The media acts as a check on the behaviour of figures of authority and their intrusion into private spheres is an unpleasant but necessary evil. Jeffery Archer, and perhaps more notably those involved in the Watergate scandal both have the press to thank for their exposure. The taxpaying population have a right to know if those in positions of importance within the state misbehave.

Prince Harry's role in society make his actions indefensible. Whilst more tolerant than most nations, Britain has definite issues with racism. As a mem-

ber of the royal family and thus a representative of Great Britain, Harry has a responsibility to behave in a manner which does not give cause for antagonism but instead, tolerance.

If we are to appear more welcoming to people of different ethnic origins then the third in line to the throne needs to behave properly, both in public and in private, in order to set a better example to his people. There is no benefit to be had in arguing that he is simply unlucky enough to be scrutinised: he enjoys the benefits of his position, so he must deal with the responsibilities that come with it.



Rob Miller
Assistant Editor

No justice, no compassion: just another day at the MOD

60 years on, the Ministry of Defence still refuses to pay victims of cold war atomic testing their due

Although the Ministry of Defence has a rather chequered history, one full of mistakes, corruption and callous insensitivity, its decision this week to deny compensation to soldiers it deliberately exposed to nuclear blasts must surely be up there with some of its worst moments. The department's bribery scandals in the 1980s, its singular inability to properly supply British troops with helicopters, its utter disregard for Gurkha veterans, its recent data loss scandals; this latest scandal challenges them all for sheer arrogance and maliciousness.

In the 1950s, in its rush to bolster its nuclear arsenal at the outset of the Cold War, Britain performed several nuclear tests in the South Pacific. In some of these tests, members of the British, Australian and New Zealand armed forces, along with some Fijians, were exposed to nuclear bomb blasts.

They were given no protection; in some cases they were told simply to tuck their trousers into their socks and to cover their eyes. One group of soldiers was so badly irradiated that over the following days their urine was found to be highly radioactive; all have since developed cancers, skin problems or infertility in the years following the blast. They were never informed of what was going on: some were simply told that they were about to witness "the greatest fireworks display that the world had ever seen." Government records show that scientists conducting the tests had no idea what they

were doing.

The victims brought their case to the High Court last week, claiming that they were owed compensation as a result of the MOD's actions. Their claims potentially reach into the millions of pounds. The Ministry of Defence, however, has no sympathy for their plight. It claims that their case was launched outside the legal time limit, and has so far invested millions of pounds into fighting the victims' case tooth and nail—forcing the victims to find a law firm willing to take on the huge risk of paying the millions of pounds in fees should the MOD succeed in their ef-

forts to crush the victim's appeal.

And yet their protestations are in complete contrast to the line that they have adopted previously. When other attempts have been made to claim compensation, the MOD have decreed that such claims must wait, until science could establish a definite link between exposure to absurdly high levels of radiation and the development of health problems—as if such a link was not obvious. Now that science, and the government's own records, have demonstrated such a link, the MOD has taken the opposite tack; now it claims that the victims have waited too long.

It is flexing its considerable legal muscle, spending millions of pounds on lawyers, and for what? To deny 998 victims of government abuse the compensation that they are owed. This is beyond Kafkaesque; it's absolutely preposterous.

Not only were the MOD reckless and cavalier in the extreme to have exposed these people to such destruction; that they refuse point-blank to accept responsibility, to apologise, and to compensate their victims demonstrates a callousness that is almost beyond comprehension.



Carys Hepworth

What now for the empty shells on our high streets?

At the age of four, I declared that my life's ambition was to work in Woolworths. A few years on, it became a trusted location for me to gain independence: "I'll meet you by the picnic 'n' mix in twenty minutes, but don't leave the store, OK?" I remember wandering, transfixed, gazing up at the vast aisles of exciting wooden toys and games, which made the plastic pink dolls and anonymous green trucks of the contemporary store look superficial and dull by comparison. In my early teens and pre-mobile phone days, it became a meeting point for a Saturday afternoon's meander round town. We would buy Spice Girls tapes and Friends videos and, if on listening decided we didn't like them, would be offered an immediate refund despite holding no receipt or proof of purchase.

So, it was the closure of that high street stalwart that brought the abstract 'credit crunch' alive for me. The news that Woolworths was in over £300 million of debt and was to permanently close its familiar doors brought home the severity of the situation.

Originally an American store founded by Franklin Winfield Woolworth, the first British Woolworths opened in Liverpool in 1909 and became a permanent fixture in almost every town. Woolworths has always been an unquestioned presence on the high street. While other shops have morphed into building societies, hairdressers and ubiquitous clothes shops, Woolworths became a landmark. In its heyday, it was a unique emporium of unpackaged loose items that met shoppers' everyday needs, but Woolworths seemed to lose its way over recent years. Did it even know what kind of store it was? A confused jumble of sweets, toys, books, children's clothes and CDs, Woolworths became a flimsy, unnecessary store and, unsurprisingly, the first big name to go in these troubled times.

The problem these shops face is not with the stock—as was proved when Woolworths took £27 million in one single day during their closing down sale—but with necessity. For lack of specialising in any one thing, Woolworths fails to spring to shoppers' minds as HMV might for CDs or DVDs or Water-

stones does for books. In larger towns and cities where high street shops are ten a penny; bright neon signs competing with one another to boast grotesquely large music, DVD and game stores, familiar old Woolworths faded quietly into high street redundancy.

Having sold all of its stock, and even its shelves and fixtures, those 807 Woolworths stores is now an empty shell. Jobs and livelihoods have been lost, the implications of the situation have hit home and everyone feels very vulnerable. The saddest thought is wondering what will become of the different Woolworths stores. Will they be taken over by multinational firms, invading small towns with the uniform presence of impersonal Marks and Spencers, Primark or the students' beloved pound stores? Or will local businesses prosper, even co-operatives resulting in more ethical values perhaps, and an economy more geared to small, local, need-based enterprises rather than huge money-based ones? And what would good old Franklin Winfield say about it all?

Grads are scraping for jobs despite holding degrees

Kath Embling

On average, a graduate student earns £20,000 a year and 25% more over a lifetime than a non-graduate. The companies paying particularly high salaries are, as expected, law firms offering from £31,000 to £39,000 per annum, closely followed by the Royal Navy, which boasts an above average £28,000 per year. But surprisingly, the company offering the biggest salary this year isn't a law firm or consultancy, but one of the cheapest nationwide supermarkets: Aldi. The money saving chain offers its employees an Audi A4 as a company car, as well as a starting salary of £40,000, almost double that of its upmarket rival, Marks & Spencer's, who offer a less exciting remuneration of £25,000 per annum.

Surely this is good news for students expecting to graduate? The seemingly generous superstore shows a 50% increase in job opportunities this year, rather than the layoffs and reductions in recruitment most companies have been compelled to undertake. However, at a time when Britain has 1.86million of its 61 million population unemployed and claiming benefits, it is expected stores like Aldi will have plenty of applicants for its potentially prosperous career path. In fact, 2,000 people are applying for every available position. It seems several years of hard work and commitment to studying fails to pay off in our current financial crisis.

With 400,000 students expected to graduate this year into a shrinking economy, the government are co-operating with major employers including Microsoft and Barclays to create paid internships. Graduates will have paid training for 3 months, giving them experience ready for when opportunities arise. This is supported by the NUS, who believe the government should be responsible for finding ways to incorporate Britain's new graduates into the job market.

A survey carried out in November 2008 by graduate-jobs.com, showed that for the first time students have put 'good basic pay' as a main priority, above previous important job attributes such as 'personal challenges' and 'a happy working environment'. This illustrates a change in attitude towards jobs - financial stability has become a principle concern for job seekers. The figures also show that occupations in education seem more desirable than jobs in banking and finance, the former being far more stable a career.

Unfortunately it appears there is little optimism for the recruitment of graduates in the near future and despite the the latest 'ways to beat the credit crunch' in newspapers desperate to sell copies, it may be too little too late. Struggling graduates will learn more than ever in the 'school of life' as they fight the recession along with the rest of the working population.

Woolworths demise leaves the way open for more clone-town chain stores, or more friendly businesses



The bars need us to band together, and say 'no more'

Richard Bennett
Campaigns Officer,
LU Labour Club

Lancaster University is a place of constant change. I sometimes wonder if I live on a building site rather than a University campus. But amidst the distractions of University life and the shiny new buildings that spring up seemingly every term, one thing remains constant: the college system.

It defines Lancaster's identity and is a unique selling point in the ever competitive battle for freshers. The colleges provide us with an identity (and the encompassing rivalry) and vital support. They also organise socials and perhaps most importantly, each college has its own bar.

The bars are fundamentally important to the college system. They are more than just watering holes. They are the heart of the colleges. Each bar is different and represents the different college identities.

Yet the colleges—and in particular the bars—are under assault. Despite a high profile campaign last year to protect them, led by the Labour Club, where over 1,000 students signed our petition, the University did not listen. Over the summer it took over four college bars (Cartmel, County, Pendle and Grizedale), despite the bars making a profit. Seven months of tortuous attempts at diplomacy later, the University and the University continue to turn deaf ear to student representatives.

The Commercial Director, who now runs the four college bars taken into University control, has attempted to stifle criticism all along. Lawsuits against SCAN, University press releases attacking the Labour Club, and his replacement of student bar staff with University Catering are all examples of his desire for iron control of the bars. Price hikes on popular drinks like Strongbow and Carlsberg, cuts to college space and threats to students' jobs demonstrate how out of touch he is.

At New Officer Training, your student representatives put the fight to save our college bars at the top of their agenda. Events have already taken place, with demonstrations outside University Catering outlets and leafletting calling for boycotts, and there is more to follow.

It is important that students, who want to defend the unique identity of their college bars, get active and join the campaign. Any time given or support shown, whether it is joining one of the Facebook groups, signing the petition, attending Friday Fury or simply drinking in your college bar is vitally important. But most of all, students need to act.

If we act together, we are stronger. Together we can send a message to the Commercial Director and the University. The price hikes must stop, the college space must be restored and threat to student bar staff must end. We want nine colleges, nine college run bars and nine college licenses.



Liam Richardson
Comment Editor

Out of touch, out of his depth: A portrait of David Peeks

Eliminate the dull uniformity Peeks is so fond of, and close down his grey shirted empire for good

Is David Peeks really the big, bad wolf? That is certainly how he has been regularly portrayed by student officers, in particular as part of a memorable pantomime staged by Cartmel JCR during the New Officer Training week.

This exaggerated caricature of a human being is surely unjustified and completely over the top, you are probably thinking? However, in this instance it is not. Peeks, the director of Commercial Services lost his right to fair representation in this newspaper the day he decided to threaten it with legal action. This turn of events followed a lengthy period of silence by Peeks, who continuously displays an outright refusal to answer to students, the people who pay his wages, through LUSU. Peeks' failure to act as a canny political operator and inability to deal with the media is completely at odds with the position of responsibility and authority he occupies.

It is not new, however, for a high-ranking University official to engage in hostilities with the student fraternity. But can we blame Peeks for his actions, when his boss, the Vice-Chancellor,

Paul Wellings, infamously had a group of students prosecuted several years ago? With that calibre of individual setting the example, it is no wonder Peeks has descended to the levels he has. I, for one, am completely against the University employing an individual who has despicably tried to extricate money from bully-boy legal tactics from LUSU (money incidentally that we have contributed to become members of the student union). Such behaviour in a person surely makes them ill-suited to be working in an environment full of the students which he appears to harbour such antipathy for.

This antipathy is perhaps best characterised by the anaemic brand of sterile, characterless eating establishments dotted around the campus which he is responsible for. What do The Venue, Bowland Delhi Bar, Barker House Farm, Fyde Coffee Shop, the HUB café, The Atrium, Café 21 and the Food for Thought Café all have in common? The answer: I can count the number of times I've been to any of them on both hands over a period of four-years. Although my tastes are personal, how many times have you passed The Ven-

ue on a busy weekday to find it virtually empty; or how many of the eating establishments listed above have you actually ever heard of, let alone been to? Who are these catering outlets aimed at? It surely cannot be the student majority on campus who certainly do not want to pay exorbitant prices for bland and thoroughly unoriginal food. These establishments are perfect for the middle-aged, middle-class employees of the University that Peeks is pandering to and seeking to impress; probably in order to clamber ever further up the greasy pole towards inevitable promotion and increased pay.

These outlets that fall under the auspices of University Catering contrast strikingly with Pizzetta, Wibbly-Wobbly Burger Bar, County Diner, The Sultan Experience, Spicy Hut, Wong's Kitchen, Uni Chippy, Diggles, Souped Up, Greggs and Spar which are all run by outside companies. These establishments are run by individual and creative entrepreneurs who understand the type and variety of food that a bustling campus should be providing its customers, evidenced by the fact that most of them are patently more popular than

anything Peeks can offer. The three prevailing factors that contribute to the success of these independent catering establishments are: the quality and variety of food being provided, originality and vision in how they market themselves and differentiate from each other and most importantly, how they all price their food to a reasonable level which the humble student can afford. The best thing that the University could do is get rid of University Catering altogether and open the campus up to new, unique and exciting ideas from people outside. This would at least eliminate the uniformity and banal functionality that David Peeks champions; personified by the dull, grey outfits his band of worker drones have to wear.

This university thrives on differences in all manner of things best exemplified by the collegiate system and its accompanying bars. Why let somebody who demonstrably has no creative spark or business flair centralise the bars and run them into the ground in the same way he has with his insipid and worthless eating establishments?



Alex Harris

Bizarre, absurd, depressing: 8 long years of non-governance

Fixing the myriad failures of the last 8 years will be tough. Looking better than Bush won't be

For many, the elation felt on Tuesday was like no other. We are consistently trained to expect the worst and grimest possible scenario from politics, and not without good reason. Barack Obama's election marked the historic accomplishment of decades of civil rights struggles and grassroots organising, proving that Martin Luther King's vision was not just a pipe dream, and that left-wing radicals can, and indeed should, continue to shape the face of history.

However, whatever positivity could be felt on that day and the months preceding it certainly has to be taken with a degree of scepticism and a healthy appreciation of the reality of the situation. It is widely becoming acknowledged that the administration of George W. Bush was one of the worst, if not the very worst, in US history. There has been very little that Bush and his cronies didn't manage to screw up.

Foreign policy was exceptionally bad, even by usual US standards, with Iraq becoming the ultimate model of large-scale public deception and market incompetence. Never before has a war been sold with such blatant dishonesty and lack of transparency and weighed with such reckless free-market idealism and public disregard. Whatever your opinion on Bush's much overrated troop surge; possibly over 1m civilian Iraqis are now dead and over twice that amount displaced because of the incompetence of the Bush administration.

Domestic affairs were basically outsourced to private industry conserva-



tive loyalists looking to make a quick buck out of something like Hurricane Katrina (whilst not actually doing the jobs they were hired to do). The entire U.S. public became potential 'enemy combatants' able to be shipped off to Guantanamo Bay at the President's discretion. Inside that facility; mistreatment of prisoners was rife. There was no right to a fair trial. Many inmates were tortured—perhaps over one hundred tortured to death. Real terrorists could potentially be let free if it turns out that they were victims of Bush and Cheney's thuggery.

The first job of Obama's administration has been to suspend the tribunals of Guantanamo detainees. Good start, provided he sticks to his promise to close the camp. But he must also bring

to justice all those responsible for the despicable acts carried out by the Bush administration. If that means prison for Bush and Cheney, then so be it. Obama says he wants to "move forward" as opposed to looking back at the past, but that's such a weak reason to forgo a criminal prosecution that it's barely even worth explaining its ridiculousness. Suffice to say; you would be laughed out of court if your entire defence rested on the judge 'living in the past'.

Bush administration apologists defend the former President by pointing to the lack of any more 9/11-style attacks on U.S. soil. But this misses the point entirely. Bin Laden himself stated that the real goal in bringing down the US would not be wanton des-

ecration of civilian targets; these were merely symbolic, rather than strategic acts. Rather, al-Qaida's goal would be to force the US to act out of fear, rather than rationality, and in doing so force them into long, expensive and intractable conflicts, resulting in the economic destruction of the western world. And on that goal, al-Qaida can safely say 'Mission Accomplished'.

Bush's arrogance or failure to acknowledge any real mistakes or crimes of his administration in its closing hours have been unparalleled by any US president in history. Nixon at least admitted to some form of wrongdoing, however self-pitying his semi-confession ended up being. Bush, on the other hand, considers his biggest mistakes to have been a rather unfortunate banner on an aircraft carrier that "sent the wrong message" and the "disappointment" of the Abu Ghraib prison atrocities. As for Katrina; it's pretty clear he thinks that federal catastrophe was a success.

Obama's administration shows all signs of moving away from the bizarre, absurd and depressing style of non-governance exhibited by George W. Bush. The task ahead of him is no small one, but after the past eight years, Obama would only have to avoid dropping a nuke on a major US city to seem successful by comparison. There is significant damage that has been done, however, and perhaps the best way to repair that damage is to hold responsible those who created the mess in the first place. Can we do that? Yes, we can.

Flawed though our society may be, an economic collapse will do no good at all

Liam Kay

Think back to 2008. The year the banking sector suffered one of the worst financial years in living memory and the world was left fearing the worst after a string of high profile corporations collapsed, from Lehman Brothers to Woolworths. Even the very system of capitalism was questioned.

Emotive this may be but it does help signify the extent of the situation we are now facing up to. Inevitably this has led to the search for a scapegoat, the people who are responsible for this predicament. And predictably the finger of blame has landed upon the current Prime Minister and his Chancellor of the Exchequer. Gordon Brown has been repeatedly attacked by David Cameron both on his record whilst Chancellor and the current rescue packages he has implemented in order to revive a failing economy.

Despite Cameron's criticisms, this is a situation that cannot be blamed on Brown. Rather it is a problem imported from the other side of the Atlantic; where, after years of poor economic management by the Bush administration and his reversal of a budget surplus to a budget deficit, we are left with a problem that affects the entire planet's financial systems. To claim that Brown is to blame for this crisis represents a gross misunderstanding both of Brown's economic record and of the current global economic system. After all, Brown, as Chancellor, steered Britain to the longest period of uninterrupted economic growth in Britain's history. His economic record is unmatched by any of his contemporary peers, and proven his government's current economic strategy has again proven his economic expertise.

Brown's bailout of the banks, the reduction of VAT to 15% and the nationalisation of both Bradford and Bingley and Northern Rock secured the survival of the banking system and made a move toward restoring confidence in the economy. To suggest that these reforms only encourage consumerism, as Charlotte Parker did in the previous issue of SCAN, misses the crucial point: without these measures our entire economic system would collapse.

Whilst many have argued against taxpayer's money being spent on the bailout, would they rather allow a complete economic collapse, threatening millions of people's livelihoods? I think not somehow.

We need to keep the system alive, and for that, people and businesses need to keep buying and selling. Whilst reform is needed to stem the growing consumerist, and often frankly ugly nature of modern society, this is not the time to risk everything to rip it up and start again. This is the time to ensure that the people of Britain can still have a good standard of living and are not subject to financial tidal waves that have ruined nations throughout history, from Germany to modern day Zimbabwe. After all, isn't security what the people truly need at this time?

In response: Palestine has a right to its freedom

Fayez Almari

Prime Minister's spokesperson, none of these were fired by Hamas.

Mr Gauteng claims that Israel is the only nation wherein one can worship without the level of persecution that can be found Middle Eastern nations, such as Iran." Had Mr Gauteng correctly carried out his research, he would have found that according to the CIA's World Factbook, 2% of the Iranian population is non-Muslim, including Jewish, who can practice their religion freely. Under the democratically elected Hamas government in Gaza, the Orthodox Christian community celebrated Christmas during the offensive. Mr Gauteng also failed to mention the decision of the Israeli Knesset to ban Israeli-Arab parties from running in the 'democratic' elections, depriving 2m citizens of their democratic rights.

In response to the claim that Hamas hides in the midst of civilians, I ask Mr Gauteng if he would like to explain how it is possible not to be near civilians in an area smaller in size than the Isle of Wight, with a population 105 times greater. Also, in a report by

the BBC published on their website on 12/10/2005 at 15:34:50 GMT, the IDF announce that they will appeal against a Supreme Court ruling banning the use of Palestinian human shields in raids.

As for the comparison of Hamas to al-Qaida, Perhaps Mr Gauteng should do some research. Hamas is a political party, albeit with a military wing, set up to represent the Palestinian people. At the request of the international community, it took part in the in the democratic process and won the elections in 2006. Edward McMillan-Scott, the British Conservative head of the European Parliament's monitoring team described the polls as "extremely professional, in line with international standards, free, transparent and without violence". al-Qaida, on the other hand, is an umbrella organisation for a number of different groups in different countries who may or may not pledge their allegiance to it and has never entered the democratic process.

The current situation in Gaza has brought the criticism from world lead-

ers. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon says he is appalled by Israeli attacks on a UN compound in Gaza after seeing the destruction for himself. Mr Ban said that those responsible should be held accountable and demanded a "full investigation" through proper judiciary systems.

Desmond Tutu called Israel's blockade of the Gaza Strip an "abomination". He strongly condemned what he called international "silence and complicity" on the blockade.

Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg said: "the double standards are nauseating. The EU makes demands of Palestinians and backs them up by refusing to recognise their elected representatives and by cutting off financial support. We make requests to the Israelis ... and when they are ignored we reward them by strengthening our partnership. Tzipi Livni says that Israel can not accept terrorism. Well just exactly who is doing the terrorising now?"

Letters to the Editor



Send your letters to scan@lancaster.ac.uk together with your 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.

Gaza outrage

I wish to express both my disappointment and outrage that there was an article in the last SCAN (Swap Hamas for al-Qauida, and we would do the same, Jan 13) which showed a disregard for the casualties and supported the systematic slaughter being conducted by Israel. I find it staggering that the Israeli response, causing the murder of over 1,000 Palestinians, can be justified as Israel's right to defend itself.

It is also incorrect and misleading to equate Hamas with al-Qaeda, the latter being a transnational terrorist organization, while Hamas are a democratically elected organisation, whom, contrary to widespread belief, have spoken of achieving a two-party solution through political means, and are vital to any peace process.

When Britain faced a similar situation with the IRA in Northern Ireland they never caused total devastation to the area by declaring a full-scale war.

Neither the actions of Hamas nor Israel in the conflict should be condoned. But the unnecessary bombings of schools, hospitals, UN compounds and aid convoys by Israel should be considered war crimes, and I feel failure to condemn these actions is complicit in accepting the carnage being unleashed in Gaza and the Israeli massacre of Palestinians.

Richard Postin

Bars campaign

Whilst it is laudable that the students involved in the 'Peek-A-Boo' campaign are planning direct action to save the college bars, their tactics show a significant lack of understanding of the plans of University House. The University has made it clear that they do not support nine college bars on campus. There is a fear that the University could use the boycott as a catalyst for closing those with the lowest profits. This can only be detrimental to the save the college bars campaign. With the greatest respect for their positive attitude towards the campaign, we feel that it would be of greater use if they became members of the 'Save The College Bars' campaign and instead concentrated their efforts on boycotting the catering services and other outlets of Commercial Services which seem to be swarming the University.

Paul Lynch
(Grizedale Vice-President)
Liam Kay
(LUSU Block of Six Officer)
Pete Wharton
(LUSU LGBT Officer)

Everywhere I go at the moment I seem to see people protesting against something. I know students like to protest, but I'd really like to know

what they're protesting about.

Me and my friends have seen loads of these bar posters around, and we would like to do something, but we don't really know what. For one thing, no one ever seems to say when a protest is going to be on. I guess all the people on it have some sort of Facebook group or that, but how are people who don't know those people meant to find out? I guess the best thing to do is go over and join, but going up to 50 mad, chanting people is a bit scary. Perhaps if there was somewhere ordinary students could get to know them without all the mad chanting it would be better. Also, as first years, we don't really know a lot about what is going on. Obviously a lot of people are very worked up about it, but it would be great if someone could give like a 'bars history lesson', so that people who weren't here last year can know exactly what is going on. We've picked up bits from SCAN, but we're still very confused! Please can someone help us, because we want to help too!

One very confused Bowlander

I think it's very good that people are taking action over the takeover of our college bars and the possible changes to the college system. However, I don't think enough students really

understand the consequences of what is happening.

Last week I attended the "Save our College Bars" protest; it was fun, but the turnout was small, the crowd was unorganised and the chants were verging on hilarious. In my view, this isn't down to a lack of caring on the part of the students involved but the rushed way in which it was organized. If it was to be explained loudly and clearly to ALL the students, (not just in random facebook groups), I think a lot more visible support would be seen. From what I have heard, students care but nobody is explaining what needs to be done, why, and how it is going to help.

LUSU seems either unable or unwilling to make any real noise about it, and without them I don't think the message will get through to the students. Everyone enjoys the college system and loves the bars, but so far word-of-mouth and a few on the fence articles haven't encouraged enough people to speak up. However, I don't wish to be entirely pessimistic. The protest was obviously noticed and if widened awareness of the issues even a little then it was worth it. The college spirit is a strong as ever, but a lack of information is holding everyone back.

Bar aficionado

Dear members of the Christian Union,

I do not want a leaflet. I do not want to fill in a questionnaire. I do not want cake.

Roughly every four feet along the spine, a small group of Christian Union representatives are stationed, ready to pounce with the above items. While leafleting on the spine is by no means limited to the CU, they are often the worst culprits. Other groups may stop you once, but the CU went for an impressively excessive six times last week! When I am already running late, I don't want to have to politely explain to each member why I won't be taking a leaflet, a questionnaire or a cake. So I thought I would do it here.

Cake may be a controversial thing to turn down - leaflets are a nuisance, questionnaires are annoying, but cake? I have my reasons. I will only accept cake when it is free from theistic undertones, when it comes without a lecture and when there is no good old fashioned strings of religious guilt attached.

Please. Do not sully cake in this way. I have no problem with the CU itself, despite disagreeing with everything they say, do and stand for (yes I have been to a meeting to find this out for myself) I appreciate there is a market for the society. All I want is to go to lectures, hassle free.

Love and Hugs,
cake loving atheist.

After recently forming a band with friends from my college, writing material and practising in our halls, we felt it was time to take it further by getting a drummer on board and practising in a room fit for the purpose.

I was under the impression that as long as music practice rooms were not needed by students studying a music degree, they would be able to be used by local bands for free or a small fee. When politely enquiring as to whether this was possible, I was snappily asked whether I was a student on an

arts based degree, after replying that I studied science I was met with a hasty 'NO!'

Is this to say that if a student studies Drama etc, they have the right to use rooms, but science students cannot? This is a poor attitude of the University, surely they want to nurture the campus based Arts scene? We have now had to rent rooms in town, which is a financial and Logisiteal nightmare.

Rory O'Brien,
Pendle College

Whilst I was flattered to recently discover that Spineless had been resurrected, I was somewhat dismayed to find the reincarnation something of an ugly duckling as opposed to a triumphant phoenix.

To think that certain former non-sabbatical officers and sabbatical candidates would ever take a vehemently progressive newspaper and distort its founding principles is frankly insulting to the original contributors.

Whilst belying our principles was insulting, the general quality of the

'new' Spineless was generally upsetting, from terrible publishing to pitiful writing which, considering it came from University students I only hope their academics think the same. What was more shameful was the laissez faire attitude to the truth and the overambitious blurring of opinion and fact. Journalism is about crafting a message, but somewhere you've got to be straight with the reader.

I thank SCAN for clearly stating that the new Spineless is in no way associated with its former self or con-

tributors. I would have only hoped that in the face of adversity, as they would have perceived themselves to be, that passionate campaigners could have been a little more imaginative.

The Editor
Spineless (the "Original")

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The trials of travel

Or, how to cure rambler's itch on the cheap

The hitchhikers' guide to student travel, as written by Daniel Ash

THE STUDENT LIFESTYLE is conducive to any with that itching wanderlust which isn't satiated by leaving the confines of campus for a day or two. Sure we're pretty free and independent when compared with those stuck in jobs or compulsory education, but this independence seems to come with a price (about £18,000 last time I checked).

The price tag of being today's student stifles and constricts our beloved freedom to bugger off to far-flung places. Whether it is to find spiritual enlightenment, or merely to escape the constant drizzle of Lancaster, the act of bugging off is getting decidedly more difficult.

I have therefore written this article so as to give the average, penny less, student a comparative guide to the main ways of mobilising yourself on a local and national level.

The most obvious form of transportation is the car fast, reliable and infuriatingly expensive. I happen to be in the not unknown position of having a second hand jalopy courtesy of my parents. My beloved Fiat Punto allows me no end of freedom to travel. Should I want to leave the confines of Lancaster I simply have to fill her up with petrol and point her in the right direction (usually ASDA). Whilst freeing myself from the restrictions of public transportation, the car option does open up a few other annoying difficulties. The price of petrol, tax and insurance is enough to deter most people, but alongside this if I feel the temptation to drive to campus for a lecture or two, I suddenly run the risk of the dreaded campus security van and its stash of ever-ready wheel-clamps. After two years of living on campus they've never got their hands on my wheels and now that I'm living off campus I don't intend to let that fact change.

So beware car users if you decide to run the gauntlet of bringing your car to uni with you, without constant vigilance, and perhaps some form of early warning system, the luxury of car ownership could come back to haunt you.

Without a car to transport yourself in air conditioned comfort, you can always fall back on the bus service. I have no particular bone of contention with public transportation; however with bus passes costing around £180 for the year, I decided to forego delving even further into my overdraft, in favour of using leg power to transport me to uni every day. Unfortunately, as I sit in a pool of water caused by the drenching I received during the hour's walk from



Now where is that bus: Even without the cost of a car, getting around can be an expensive undertaking for students

Bowerham to campus, I am forced to wonder whether I made the right choice. I attempt to convince myself that the walk was not only the cheap option, but also the healthy one, this line of thinking takes a blow as I step into Diggles to get something oozing with fat and grease to assuage the hunger pains caused by my healthy walk.

On a national scale, the lack of a car leaves you with one of three main options: trains, planes or, the less popular, hitchhiking. When getting on a train I can't help thinking that I really did not want to give Richard Branson that £21 for going 30 minutes down the road. If you've got a fair distance to cover and you're willing to make the extra effort it can be cheaper to fly across the country. This option comes with the added bonus of getting to play tag with the airline staff, give it a go, the trip just flies past. If hitching a lift rings your bell, it is cheap, adventurous, sociable, and environmentally friendly, however will take you much longer and has the obvious, unavoidable risks.

This has been a rather simplistic overview of the options available for personal transportation, however I hope that next time you prepare to embark on a trip across the town/country, you take a moment to reflect on the other ways it is possible to get around. You never know you might save money, get some exercise or make a new and interesting friend.

Ringling in the Changes

Has time run out for the New Year's resolution, asks Alexandra Lainsbury

NEW YEAR, NEW start?

No more missing nine o'clock lectures? Getting all the reading done on time? Right. Well, good luck. You'll need it. While most people will admit to having made a resolution at least once in their life, a staggering 83% will fail, according to a recent American study. So what's the point?

It could be down to a simple matter of ritual. Once a year, every year, we have a reason to aim for the skies. We can say we want to change because on January 1st, everyone else wants to change with us. It's a group activity to better ourselves. Maybe it's the only time we won't feel embarrassed to admit that we're not happy as we are.

On the other hand, it could be a matter of history. The idea of resolutions at the new year dates back to Babylonian times, when it is said that a common resolution was to return borrowed farm equipment. It was with the construction of the Julian calendar by the Romans, and then its reform into

the Gregorian calendar, however, that changed the idea more into what happens today.

January 1 is the start of the solar-based Gregorian calendar. It is the most common type of calendar around today, and therefore could be seen as the perfect starting point for a new life. Other cultures, however, start the new year at different points. For example, the Chinese New Year (when translated to Gregorian dates) takes place some time between January 21 and February 20. Considering the fact that many modern New Year resolutions relate to diet and fitness, this date (being closer to spring and warm weather) could be seen as a more sensible start to a healthy lifestyle. After all, when it's cold and wet outside who wants to

do anything but stay in with a film and some stodgy food?

Why start now? Why wait until January 1st to make a promise to yourself that in all likelihood, you will fail to keep? Most people don't expect to keep their resolutions any longer than the end of January—this is seen as an achievement in itself. The 7th of January is actually known as National Give Up Your New Year Resolutions Day. So why fix a date like January 1st, when you could have started right after Christmas, or even earlier? Even with the 'support' of the government running post-Christmas 'eat better, move more, live longer' adverts and commercial shopping chains such as Boots pointing the way with their 'Change One Thing' campaign, at the end of the day it's an individual struggle. If you want to change, only you can affect the outcome.

Don't let the date stop you changing either—so you missed January 1st, spending the day in a hung-over haze? Make a January 23rd resolution instead. This year I haven't made any New Year resolutions. But if I want to change, I will—whether it's March, June or even December.

January 7 is actually National Give Up Your New Year Resolutions Day.

Michael & Sarah



A woman who has little time for tomfoolery and a Young Man who lists it as one his favourite past-times, bray the relationship issues of Lancaster University into quivering submission...

(Note: We are not afraid of you and we will take you down)

Dear Michael and Sarah,

I am a non-white discreet non-closeted straight-looking guy in Lancaster University. I really wish to meet discreet white people who have feelings for other ethnic guys in Lancaster University. I feel that white gay/bi people are not attracted towards other races. **How can I approach a guy without fear of racial non-liking?**

X

SARAH: I think your question falls into two parts, firstly your sexuality and secondly the concerns you have regarding race. A key point in your question seems to be that you need to build up your self esteem and confidence when it comes to meeting new people. Try not to focus so much on finding a relationship, instead build friendships and allow these to develop naturally. LGBT can help you in terms of feeling more confident and meeting more friends, but besides from your sexuality, the race issue seems to be a large concern for you. Its troubling that you fear 'racial non-liking' and this is perhaps something you should examine more. Try to join groups and societies that encourage you to explore these feelings as this can help you to overcome your fears. A final point to consider is that regardless of race, gender, age or sexuality everyone has similar concerns about approaching and establishing relationships so don't feel alone in your worries.

MICHAEL: It can be a very tough world out there for non-white discreet non-closeted straight-looking guys. I think that the best solution is to be more pro-actively gay, but not in a way that would compromise who you are; for instance under no circumstances do I prescribe mincing. A lot of the problem is that people tend to have a default assumption that people aren't gay unless their farting around wearing salmon-pink on a trike; I didn't realise that one of my good university friends was gay till about a month after having met him, partly because I am utterly dense, but partly because in general people just don't make the link. I would recommend joining student groups where being a member is a de facto indicator of being gay for instance the LGBT or the Theatre Group. I also feel certain when I say that white gay/bi people would on the whole have no issue when it comes to race as in my experience they are all very fond of tolerance... not to mention the fact that they go ape-shit for Rainbows.

Dear Michael & Sarah

Upon leaving my flat on Sunday I came back 6 hours later to find that my flatmates had completely covered my entire room, and everything in it, in copies of SCAN. I would have cried, but the tissues and bog roll were wrapped too. **Obviously I want revenge.** Any suggestions?

X

SARAH: Are your housemates failing their degrees? Or permanently drunk? How the Dickens did they find time to wrap individual cosmetics? Well, obvious hilarity aside, lets move onto the thrilling topic of revenge. I have heard stories of rooms being wrapped in tin foil, cling film and the best account in which the entire contents of a room were moved into Pendle quad. I think the best suggestion I heard was covering a room and all of its contents in post-it notes. If you can assemble a highly efficient team of students to help

(approach third years pre exams, many of them adorn their books in colourful scraps of paper as a 'study aid') the effect would be incredibly frustrating for the inhabitant. Imagine opening your door to a mirage of brightly coloured squares of paper, traipsing in and realising all of your possessions are hidden beneath endless sticky scraps. Not only will it take them forever to clean but chances are they'll end up with dozens stuck to them and potentially a massive headache from the blur of colours. It may even lead to tears of irritation.

Dear Michael & Sarah

This week I found out that a really boring girl that I never talked to at school, but was aware of, had died in a car crash. **I am worried about the transience of existence.**

X

SARAH: The transience of existence is not something to be worried about but something to contemplate. Life is beautiful and the fleeting time you spend here is worth examining for all of the good points. Whilst the death of this girl is distressing it is unlikely she would want her loved ones, or those like you who merely remember her existence, to dwell upon the sadness. Try to divert your attention by revelling in as many enjoyable pursuits as possible to retain your vitality. Perhaps running from South West campus to Spar in a frenzied excitement to buy a Capri Sun will help you to remember the joyful exuberance of youth. In this movement you may be reminded of the fond memories you already have and this nostalgia may combat your concerns over the transience of existence. This simplistic method should remind you of the many happy times you have already had, and will prove an invaluable resource when battling bigger problems of the universe, and the fleeting transience of existence. However, if joyful celebrations of your own existence fail to ease your philosophical mind, might I suggest watching foreign art house films. Artistic misery which depicts the transience

of existence is just a DVD away.

MICHAEL: Being a human being with our frail and fleshy body's means that any minute we could find ourselves snuffed out in some incredibly mundane way... you could break your neck falling down the staircase on the 2A; you could choke to death on a pasty or you could suffer a fatal paper cut on a copy of SCAN. Life is incredibly precious and at any minute you could be plucked from the face of existence in the cosmic game of Russian roulette; leaving behind only a rotting carcass and a bitterly ironic Facebook status ('just going out for a drive lol'). Essentially there is no workable advice I can offer to avoid death; however I do recommend planning your funeral in advance as it can be cathartic and fun. I have planned that I will get the priest at my Funeral to tell everyone that 'this was Michael's favourite song and the one he wished to have played' and then proceed to play two hours of industrial machinery noise blasted at piercing volume. The idea of my family & friends somberly and straight-facedly listening to that racket makes me eagerly think I can't die soon enough.

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.

MICHAEL: I can imagine the terror that such an experience must have instilled in you... if someone had seltaped the 'letters to the editor' page to your pillow that would mean that Dan Hogan would be able to stealthily hide in your bed and you'd be none the wiser *shudder*. I dearly hope that this column was not the one used to wrap up the bog-roll as the thought of you wiping either your tears or your arse with my face is filling me with conflicted feelings that I feel unable to properly convey in words. What I would say is

that the fact that your friends went to such bizarre lengths to perform such a jape on you is probably sign of some sort of misguided mongrel affection towards you so I wouldn't take it too much to heart however that doesn't mean that you shouldn't prank those bastards right back! I recommend the age old tactic of collecting a load of dog turds and placing them inside all of their shoes. That way when they put on their shoes they'll find that they have pressed their feet into dog turds.

For **official LUSU Advice**, go to the LUSU Advice mini-site at advice.lusu.co.uk or pop into the Advice Centre (open 9am-5pm, Monday to Friday in the LUSU Building, underneath SPAR)

Why our MPs' expenses are important



by **Rob Miller**
Assistant Editor

GORDON BROWN REVEALED last week that the government will not be going ahead with plans allowing MPs to conceal their expenses. It is a significant U-turn for the Prime Minister, but what happened and what does it mean? More importantly, why should we care?

Under parliamentary regulations, our MPs earn a basic salary of approximately £60,000; ministers, whips and others receive larger salaries. On top of this, they can claim an array of expenses: up to £22,110 each year for the cost of staying away from home while on parliamentary business; up to £20,440 for office supplies; up to £87,276 for office staff; yet more on car and train travel, stationary, postage costs and computers.

MPs need money in order to run their offices, of course, but what has some people concerned is the apparent lack of transparency under the current system. While the total amount of money that MPs spend in each category is currently revealed, members of the public cannot find out exactly what their MPs are spending it on. In May 2008, however, this changed: the High Court ruled that MPs were in fact obliged to reveal their expenses under the Freedom of Information Act, a decision which sparked the current debate.

MPs bristled at the idea of exposing their receipts to the taxpaying public, and Labour and Conservative MPs uniting in an effort to vote through an amendment to the Freedom of Information Act that exempts them from having to reveal exactly what they spend their money on. It was support for this amendment which collapsed last week.

You might wonder what all the fuss is about, but the amounts involved are not to be sniffed at; in all, MPs cost the

taxpayer £87.6m in 2006-7, the last year that full figures were available. The sheer amount of money involved has groups such as mySociety, who run the acclaimed website TheyWorkForYou.com, concerned about transparency and accountability.

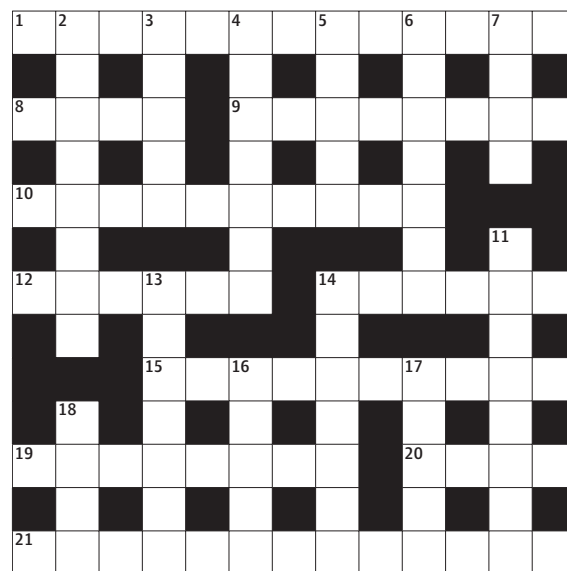
Shahid Malik, Labour MP for Dewsbury in West Yorkshire, has been touted as Britain's most expensive MP, claiming £185,421 in expenses; however, it is currently almost impossible to ascertain whether or not this presents good value, since we have no idea just what that money was spent on. Under the new regulations, however, we'll be able to find out—and see just whether Malik and other MPs are giving their constituents value for money.

Pressure group mySociety spearheaded the campaign against the proposed amendment; 8,000 people joined their Facebook group, and celebrities such as Stephen Fry weighed in on the need for transparency. Reacting to the upsurge in public opinion, Conservative whips announced that they would be requiring all their MPs to vote against the measure, destroying the deal between Labour and Conservative backbenchers and ensuring that the measure would not pass.

It might seem like some stuffy political issue, about which the average Joe could not care less, but it's a vital part of our society and of our democracy. We pay for our MPs to represent us, and our interests, in parliament: without knowing what they spend our money on, how can we possibly evaluate whether or not they are performing adequately? Without evaluating whether or not they are performing adequately, how can we possibly make an informed decision at the ballot box? Unless the average Joe takes an interest in what their MPs do at Westminster and how they spend public money, we can never have true accountability: do democracy a favour, and use your new rights to find out just how your MP is really spending your money.

Due to a production error in our last issue that affected the crossword, it is printed again, correctly, here. This issue's crossword appears on the back page, as normal.

Quick crossword no. 11,835



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Across

- 1 Person with abnormal anxiety about their own health (13)
- 8 Restrain (4)
- 9 Showing no mercy (8)
- 10 Pentecost (4,6)
- 12 Ingenious problem (6)
- 14 Totally saturated (6)
- 15 Done at the final moment (4-6)
- 19 Novice (8)
- 20 Immense (4)
- 21 Arousing terror (5-8)

Down

- 2 Fresh and vigorous (8)
- 3 Path of heavenly body (5)
- 4 Shaggy (7)
- 5 Famous (5)
- 6 Passed on from hand to hand, station to station etc (7)
- 7 As well (4)
- 11 Deliberately dump overboard (8)
- 13 Very large but unspecified number (7)

- 14 Member of Japanese warrior caste (7)
- 16 Relating to sound (5)
- 17 Bellybutton (5)
- 18 Jump (4)

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Solution No 11,834



SCAN Quiz

1. Who has recently been named as the Conservative Shadow Business Secretary?
2. Which British film, directed by Danny Boyle, has received an Oscar nomination for Best Picture?
3. What is the capital of Canada?
4. Katy Perry wrongly picked up the trophy for best international song at France's NRJ Awards. Who was the prize

- meant to go to?
- 5. Which country celebrated 'Its' Day on Monday 26 January?
- 6. Who did Jonathan Ross have as his special guest star on his returning Friday night show?

ANSWERS below.

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Quiz Answers:

1. Ken Clark
2. Slumdog Millionaire
3. Ottawa
4. Rihanna
5. Australia
6. Tom Cruise

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Who wants to be an Oscar winner?



Film Review: *Slumdog Millionaire*

Director: Danny Boyle and Loveleen Tandan

Starring: Dev Patel, Freida Pinto, Anil Kapoor, Irrfan Khan



by Christine Wilde

Engrossing from start to finish, this film richly deserves all the accolades and awards it is currently receiving. Based on the novel *Q&A* by Vikas Swarup, this picture tells the story of Jamal Malik, a young boy from the slums of Mumbai, who gains national recognition overnight when he enters the Indian version of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*. Unable to believe that a poorly educated street urchin 'Slumdog' has managed to succeed where some of the most brilliant profession-

als in India have failed, he is accused by the police of cheating. The explanation of his remarkable progress provides an interesting plot device to explore both his past and Mumbai's turbulent and absorbing history.

Shot on location in Mumbai, the cinematography is fantastic, a visually captivating mix of the brightness and exuberance that is associated with Indian culture, combined with the darker more earthly colours that emphasise life in the slums. Although there are lighter, 'feel-good' moments in the film, it deals with a lot of very difficult, thought-provoking issues. Danny Boyle does not shy away from depicting

the harsh realities some children from the slums must face on a regular basis. With scenes that include torture, and situations that can only be described as child abuse, this can be a difficult film to watch. However, it is the gritty determination to tell the whole story that adds weight to the narrative, making it more than merely a story of one boy's fight to overcome the limitations of his circumstances. The dichotomy between Jamal and his older brother Salim, to whom he owes his survival in the slums, is an intense examination of what is needed to survive the circumstances they encounter.

Although some have rejected the

film for having a narrative that they deem as unbelievable, others have more accurately summed it up as a modern fable; the film earns your willing suspension of disbelief. Despite the emotive content and interesting structure, it is the superb performances which ultimately succeed in cementing this feature as a cinematic centre-piece. Although Dev Patel, recognisable for his role as Anwar in *Skins*, is superb as the older Jamal to whom all the action and flashbacks relate, he is supported by an incredibly strong cast, particularly Azharuddin Mohammed Ismail and Ayush Mahesh Khedekar, the two little boys who played the younger Jamal and

his brother Salim. Despite their limited roles in the film, they do an excellent job of establishing the personalities of the central characters, engrossing the audience in their lives and introducing some of the film's powerful subject matter. Though bound to be overlooked in the melee of publicity surrounding awards rumours and nominations, their brilliant performances provide a credible and empathetic base on which the rest of the film relies.

In short, this is a truly remarkable story, beautifully told.

Book adaptation blind to Hollywood's gung-ho humour

Film Review: *Blindness*

Dir: Fernando Mereilles

Starring: Julianne Moore, Mark Ruffalo, Gael Garcia Bernal, Danny Glover

by Daniel Jarvis

WHEN I FIRST heard that a film adaptation of Jose Saramago's fantastic novel *Blindness* was in the pipeline, I felt two consecutive reactions. My first - utter delight, my second - great trepidation.

The basic premise of the film is of an unnamed city which suffers an epidemic of blindness, then follows the challenges that faces that civilisation. It is a world thrown into chaos, and I could easily see Hollywood swooping in on this idea and creating another mind-numbing testament to gung-ho Americans overcoming another obstacle.

However, my prayers were answered when Brazilian Fernando Mereilles of *City Of God* fame took up the role of

director once again. Mereilles' *Blindness* is fairly faithful to the novel - both the city and characters are nameless, instead referred to by their profession or appearance, allowing the audience to focus on the characters' current situations rather than their personal histories. The film offers a very bleak view of humanity with the quarantined blind community descending into primitive gangs. This descent into darker territory is visualised by Mereilles' fantastic use of lighting which gets darker as the film progresses so that by the time it gets to a particularly disturbing scene where the women are harvested, the audience can barely see... Ironically, *Blindness* is a very visual film which uses distortion of light and shadow to create a confusing series of images which could have easily become irritating, but instead allows the audience to share the characters' experience.

The cast are also on top form; Mark Ruffalo gives a powerful performance as the doctor who finds himself suddenly weak and dependant, and Gael Garcia Bernal delivers another strong role as a citizen who tries to take advantage of the situation. However, the film is really stolen by Julianne Moore's tour-de-force as the sole person who can see, as she struggles with her newfound responsibility as both people's eyes and the voice of reason.

The film has been criticised for its negative portrayal of humanity in crisis, and for its confusing visuals, but I feel it made the film much more realistic and honest. Fernando Mereilles has delivered again!



Blindness is thought provoking, and brilliantly shot.

Going underground The V&A: Home of Art and Design, it turns out...



Like a glove: Lancaster student Hannah Tapp throws down the gauntlet in the interactive room.

by Lizzie O'Brien
Arts Editor

I HAVE LIVED in London all my life, and, I am afraid to say that until a couple of weekends ago, I had never visited the Victoria and Albert Museum in South Kensington. Why branch out into new museums when my visitors are always so happy to be dragged around the dinosaur exhibition at the Natural History Museum for the fifteenth time? Mummies and dinosaurs wearing a little thin, I thought I might pop in with some friends and have a look around for a bit of a change. The entrance from the tube turned out to be in a dingy, underground subway that quite frankly smelt a little bit of wee. Not the most inviting of signs...

One foot through the door, and you know you are in a London museum. Oh how seriously do they take themselves. The first thing we saw was some sort of... pretentious, wooden sculpture... well, 'thing'. The website describes it as 'a multi-sensory and tactile intervention which explores the spatial possibilities of a subterranean garden'. We missed that.

Once inside, there are actually a lot of worthwhile things to see. The fashion rooms are a definite must-see, if only to

marvel at how somewhere there exist people silly enough to fork out money for such awful garb. Sculptures, statues and busts filled the vast entrance hall on the ground floor, which was so immense that it took twenty minutes to walk from end to end. The best bit of the day had to be the interactive room, where you could write and submit mini-sagas, try on ruffs and gauntlets, build an old-fashioned chair, or watch little movies on how miniatures were drawn... Even with an average age of about 21, we couldn't resist joining in the fun and games!

With more time we could have seen free exhibitions on Beatrix Potter, or the Art of Drinking (at least that won't be a mystery to most students, in fact, we could probably contribute a thing or two towards the discussion). In short, we had a lovely, and most importantly, fairly *cheap day*. As long as you bring a packed lunch you are guaranteed to spend no more than a tenner, and that is absolute peanuts for a day out in London. Next time you're down (and you should definitely make the effort to spend a weekend there if you haven't already), get yourself down to the V&A and have a nosy round. You might be surprised at how much of it you find interesting!



Smouldering in Chicago

Classic Film: *Some Like It Hot*

Year: 1959

Dir: Billy Wilder

Starring: Marilyn Monroe, Jack Lemmon, Tony Curtis

by Janie Coleman

SLICK-WITTED, SHARP, SEXY and completely silly - clichéd perhaps, but *Some Like It Hot* is one of the greatest comedies of all time.

In this rare and somewhat daring portrayal of the mob in the late 1920's, Wilder creates a world of music, mobsters and mayhem. Combining sexual ambiguity with slapstick humour; the original screwball comedy.

Some Like It Hot tells the story of two struggling musicians (Curtis and Lemmon) who inadvertently witness the 1929 St. Valentines Day Massacre in Chicago. In order to escape death at the hands of the mob, Joe (Curtis) and Jerry (Lemmon) find themselves having to convincingly dress up as women and flee Chicago by train with an all girl orchestra to a resort in Miami. It is on board with the female band where we are introduced to the glamorous

and captivating Sugar Kane Kowalczyk (Monroe), who steals the heart of Joe (now 'Josephine'). In fear of revealing his true identity, Joe decides the only way he will ever be the man of Sugar's dreams is to further mask himself as an enchanting millionaire, using a yacht belonging to Osgood Fielding III (Joe E. Brown) to entice her. He can only use the yacht however if Jerry (now 'Daphne') can keep Osgood distracted, in turn allowing Osgood to fall in love with Daphne. The tale takes a greater twist when the mob turn up at the same resort for a conference, and discover Joe and Jerry are there. Madness ensues, and just when you think the plot couldn't get any more humorous or downright mad, it does with a cracking twist at the end.

Although the plot sounds rather complex, the quick witted script, impeccable comic timing from both the lead roles, and a well selected supporting cast successfully hold the film together and allows it to flow incredibly well.

Lemmon and Curtis in the lead roles knit the plot together, but it is most definitely Monroe who steals the show; a true icon. She oozes confidence and sexuality, and the 'blonde bombshell' smoulders in front of the camera captivating both the male and female audience. If there's anything you should listen out for, however, it's Curtis' fantastic satirical portrayal of Cary Grant's persona, and nothing beats the final line of this motion picture – but I'll leave that one for you to watch from the talent that is Mr Jo E. Brown himself. If you haven't seen this treasure of a movie, it is a must. No matter how many years young you are, the comedy is timeless and it will forever remain a classic, leaving me with one thing to say: I can confirm, that some definitely do like it hot.



It's hideous!

Book Review: *Monsters*

Gerald Scarfe

by Richie Garton
Arts Editor

THERE'S A FAIRLY large chance you've never heard of the British cartoonist and illustrator Gerald Scarfe. He has a very distinctive, instantly recognisable drawing style and you've probably seen something drawn or designed by him at some point in your life. He is perhaps most famous for the artwork for Pink Floyd's album 'The Wall', and the animation in the film version. He also designed the characters and art for the Disney film *Hercules*, bringing his unique imagination to the movie.

He has worked as a political cartoonist for many publications such as *Punch*, *Private Eye* and the *Daily Mail*, and *Monsters* is a recently released book featuring a collection of his many political caricatures and sketches. His controversial drawings usually portray a well-known figure such as Richard Nixon or Margaret Thatcher, exaggerating their prominent features and twisting them into something misshapen yet appropriate. Thatcher, for

example, is drawn with a severe, hooked nose and pictured as a pterodactyl or a shark, while Nixon's sagging jowls are transformed into testicles, his nose becoming a flaccid penis. What amazes me the most is that no matter how mutated and bizarre Scarfe's creations become, they are somehow always instantly recognisable.

His drawings are often grotesque, and sometimes almost obscene; one shows a naked, wrinkled Thatcher shitting out a huge model of the British Isles. Drawings like these can be quite difficult to look at first, but as you get used to it you start to appreciate the sheer boldness and invention of Scarfe's style. He is also unnaturally perceptive from a political standpoint and contrasting drawings of Tony Blair at the beginning and end of his office demonstrate this. I was fascinated by this superb gallery of grotesques, and I certainly appreciated them more than I would a book of Monet's watercolours. We can't show samples of Scarfe's artwork here, but you can find some of it at www.geraldscarfe.com.

“a naked, wrinkled Thatcher shitting out a huge model of the British Isles.”

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Exceedingly Goo-d

Game Review:
World of Goo
Wii, Macintosh,
Windows Vista/
XP

by Paul Sellwood



grunting man beast on the box sweating over a Freudian nightmare. Despite featuring no exploding innards, no throbbing muscle cars, and no enormous barely contained norks, *World of Goo* is a delight, a crisp, minty triumph.

The fundamentals of the game are extremely simple. You have Goo. With your mouse (or, if you strut proudly on the experimental forefront of gaming, your Wiimote) you haul the Goo across various landscapes, connecting them into increasingly precarious towers/bridges/huge bouncing wotsits, until the Goo reaches its goal (a pipe) at the end of the level. It's like Lemmings, I suppose, but with the clueless little blue haired bastards replaced with runny, squeaking blobs of cuteness.

It's surprisingly hard to nail down just how *World of Goo* manages to

be such an extraordinary game. Certainly, simple individuality is part of its charm. As games become increasingly bigger business, and the sales charts become more and more dominated by the Christmas blockbusters, it is incredibly cheering to be reminded that successful games can be about a single gameplay element honed to perfection and presented beautifully. *World of Goo* has a style, a rhythm which is entirely its own, a deliciously skewed art style just this side of macabre, and a soundscape that is just breathtaking. The sugar rush of gleeful satisfaction from a Gooball's delighted squeal at being placed in a tower, or bridge, or anything, is reason enough to squander fifteen quid on *World of Goo* by itself, and when you throw the soundtrack into the mix it just gets silly.

I really should offload an armful of criticism at this point in the review, but I've got nothing. It's so wonderfully tactile, so elegantly designed that it's transformed an edgy, cynical bohemian like myself into a gushingly naïve praise monster. I feel slightly embarrassed, actually. I'd better finish up quickly, and pretend this never happened. But please, if you care about games, art, or hilarious physics based jollity, go and get *World of Goo*. As soon as possible. Your life will be immeasurably enriched ever after.

Don't say no

Film Review: Yes Man

Dir: Peyton Reed

Starring: Jim Carrey, Zoey Deschanel, Rhys Darby

by Hannah Mason

I have to admit, I was a little sceptical about seeing Jim Carrey's latest offering *Yes Man*, loosely based on Danny Wallace's 2005 best seller. I wondered whether the book would get lost in translation from subtle British humour to out-and-out American gross out comedy. But I must say I was pleasantly surprised with the result, which even includes a cameo of Wallace himself.

Yes Man is about Carl Allen (Carrey), a self confessed 'no man' who does not live his life to the full. After attending a seminar by guru Terrence (Terrence Stamp), Carl decides it's time to change and determines to say 'yes' to anything and everything, leading to a positive lifestyle change complete with a new girlfriend (Zoey Deschanel). Of course, life can't always be so easy, and Carl finds that continually saying 'yes'

with no thought to the consequences isn't necessarily the best answer.

While the premise of the film is intriguing enough it is let down by the second half, involving an improbable plot twist and a wobbly ending which could have happened at least half an hour before. And I wasn't particularly keen on the unavoidable gross out gag concerning an elderly neighbour with a soft spot for Carl.

I did enjoy *Yes Man* despite this, with superb support from the eternally kooky but cute Deschanel and especially from the hilarious Flight of the Conchords actor Rhys Darby, who steals just about every scene he's in. As for Carrey it may just be the return to comic form we've all been waiting for, as he makes the often unsympathetic Carl into a loveable flawed hero. All the same, I couldn't help but notice how old he looked in a film presumably about the dilemmas of a 30-something man...

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singles

**The Game ft.
Ne-Yo
Camera Phone**
(Polydor)

by Meer Shah

MOST OF US got bored with this kind of thing years ago, but it still sells for some reason: Rap/R&B crossover consisting of a pair of arrogant boys bragging about their money (clichés aplenty) over recycled urban beats, which apparently makes them swish and sexy. My guess is that this will be a big hit, banging in the clubs for a couple of months and then forgotten. On the bright side, it'll give us single guys a new way to perv on the ladies: "Take my picture with your cameraphone."



**Guns n' Roses
Better**
(Geffen)

by Clay Garland

IT'S BEEN SAID already; 17 years wait and it doesn't even sound like Guns n' Roses. But at least "Better" is one of the... uh... better cuts from the sub-par album, at least if you've got a thing for Nine Inch Nails and washed up crackheads. Not worth the wait, obviously, but a decent hard rocker I guess.



**Morrissey
... Arms
Around Paris**
(Decca)

by Andrew Almond

IT'S REASSURING THAT in such turbulent times some things remain constant; Morrissey's return yields a new collaboration with Boz Boorer and yet another melancholic melodic pop gem. Never a man for reticence and thus with a chorus as baroque and excessively melodramatic as 'I'm throwing my arms around Paris/because only stone and steel accept my love' it is clear that Morrissey is back, and has lost none of his modesty. The anthemic chorus and impeccable production are sure to make this latest wonderfully crafted mid-tempo single a live stable and firm fans' favourite. Welcome back.



albums

The best party ever!

**INNERPARTYSYSTEM
Don't Stop EP**
(Island Records)

by Sam Fresco

FOR THOSE WHO don't know, Innerpartysystem are a throbbing electronic beat band, branding a unique mesh of dirty driven riffs, a grimy fuelled grit bass together with a full on frenzy of explosive energy; sporting a category of punk meeting dance/electro rock. Suffice to say, it's arguable that their popularity wouldn't have been anywhere as near as successful if they weren't riding the tidal wave that Pendulum created before them.

Their latest EP sees the diamond amongst the coal (Don't Stop) being remixed by legendary DJ's like Cagedbaby and Richard Vission, with 5 new versions of the track it simply amplifies the well-produced, crisp-sounding ultra-smooth quality of the original. Did it really need remixing? No.

Despite this the band seems intent on its remixes, already having reproduced tracks from the likes of Radiohead, The Killers, LadyHawke and even Katy Perry's Hot 'N Cold. Take the advice of Audioslave and stick to being yourselves. Whatever they're doing, the Pennsylvania quartet is undoubtedly one of THE bands of 2009. Already creating a huge buzz amongst UK audiences they have been onstage alongside monstrously big names such as Nine Inch Nails.

The killers, The Klaxons, Kate Nash, The Kooks, Panic! At The Disco, and dozens of others were tipped as being big names for this year. I am tipping you that IPS will be a flat-hold name and a club anthem by the end of this year. A must-hear.



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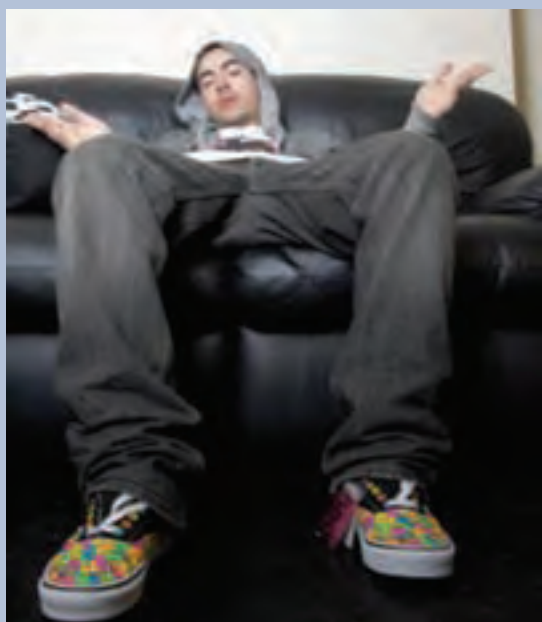
Grime Time!

Beats from the British streets

Meer Shah looks at the latest offerings from the British urban music scene



Hip Hop artists Virus Syndicate (above), XS.iF (below) and Jelluzz (bottom).



Virus Syndicate

Sick Pay

2008 WAS THE year of Grime. So it was the perfect opportunity for Virus Syndicate, a group from Manchester – but confusingly sounding more like Londoners than me – to put together a follow-up to their acclaimed 2005 debut *The Work Related Illness*.

Sick Pay is lighter than its predecessor in the sense that the sound is less eerie and scary. However, this takes nothing away from the listener's attention.

MC's Goldfinger, JSD and Nika-D are in the top echelon of UK rappers; all of them have incredible flow – my fellow Linguistics people would appreciate their ability to maintain 'vowel harmony' – and although they talk about much-covered subjects such as money, sex and the fakers in Hip Hop, they say it in clever, innovative ways and remain refreshingly honest. It also helps that they are unmistakably a trio; transition between their turn on the

(Planet Mu)

mic is smooth and nobody tries to take the limelight. Kane N Abel showcases this perfectly, a story about two brothers that took different choices in life, but have similar problems.

The production, by MRK1, is a perfect blend of gritty and melodic. The music varies from Taxman Returns, which incorporates Indian string and percussion, to *Live At The Apollo* that reminds me of the Run-DMC classic *Tricky*.

Overall, *Sick Pay* is a terrific example of what British urban music can offer. If everyone else in the game follows this example, 2009 could be the year the UK finally overtakes our trans-Atlantic neighbours.

Similar Artists: More Fire Crew, Roll Deep, Tinchy Stryder



XS.iF

The Hip Hop Disciple

AN ALBUM DECLARING Hip Hop a religion, with couldn't-be-more-obvious cover art and title, which begins with about 90 seconds of ethereal noise: on the surface, pure crap. Yet somehow, *The Hip Hop Disciple* turns out to be one of the most refreshing debuts in recent British rap.

Yemi, a.k.a. XS.iF, focuses on describing not only what he sees around him (*Streets Crazy*) and when things – particularly Hip Hop – were better (*Those Were The Days*), but explains how to make things better, whether by utilising what you have (*Book of Rhymes*) or educating oneself (*School of Life*); "experience life and have some fun" sums it up best. It isn't preachy, but instead playful, imaginative and helpfully British (minus some French verse), allowing listeners to enjoy while they learn.

Yemi's rapping style is slow and methodical, more intent on delivering his message of positivity rather than showing off skills; in other words, substance

(WithMe Media)

over style. He also manages to make himself distinctive with his occasionally ragga, breathy air of tranquillity. And that suits the tone of this album fine.

Disciple is musically ambitious too, with some sweeping instrumental melodies layering percussion beats, giving a flavour of – at times outstanding – mixing. However, sometimes there is a bit too much going on, undermining the undoubted potential; *Streets Crazy*, for example, is probably all the better for its relatively sparing production. Furthermore, the attempt at diversity actually disrupts the momentum.

Still, *The Hip Hop Disciple* is a creative record that shows XS.iF is truly positive and talented, showing real promise for the future.

Similar artists: The Streets, Roots Manuva, De La Soul



Jelluzz

Hold On

AN ATTEMPT AT a positive message rapped over a slick, urban-pop beat sounds over-ambitious, but it sort of works on the new single from 'that guy that did the Ride It remix'. Jelluzz isn't a great MC, but a sing-song delivery and decent ideas – the inane "sticks and stones can break bones" precedes a witty "the only words that could scar me/come with black ink on a tattoo" are clever enough to get around that.

(Big Deal)

The smooth and sexy production guarantees that *Hold On* will be banging in the clubs into the New Year. The problem is that nobody's going to listen to lyrics, which makes his message almost redundant. Worth a listen though.



We're doomed, doomed...

White Lies

To Lose My Life...

(Polydor)

by James Barker

IF THERE IS one thing you can say about us British it is we love a bit of doom, gloom and despondency.

Our musical history is littered with brilliantly dark acts, starting with Bauhaus, Joy Division and The Cure and in more recent times Editors and Glasvegas. Now, three young lads from Ealing (I really do dread to think what Ealing is like) are set to be the next in the lineage.

White Lies have mastered the difficult task of getting the balance between being depressing as The Carleton and as uplifting as discovering a 9am lecture has been cancelled. They have the scope of Joy Division, the self-loathing of Bauhaus and the modern edge of Editors. With an album titled *To Lose My Life* and its first three tracks being *Death*, *To Lose A Life* and *A Place To Hide*, you wouldn't be blamed for thinking this is just going to be sad and painful, and it is. Harry McVeigh sounds like a cross between Ian Curtis and Robert Smith as he moans "You talked me to sleep last night/I haven't felt that sad in years" on *Nothing To Give*. And that's White Lies in a moderate mood, "Just give me a second darling/to clear my head/just put down those scissors baby" on *Unfinished Business* is another example of the band's lyrical prowess.

Dark as the lyrics are, the music in parts is hopeful and even danceable. *Unfinished Business* will certainly get played in indie clubs with its sing along chorus. *Farewell To The Fairground* is another more cheerful example as the band teeter on Franz Ferdinand territory. The band, however, despite the odd dips into typical staccato riffs, keep their epic sound throughout the album. *From The Stars* is a prime example with soaring chorus and string section. Ending track *The Price Of Love* shows the band in their element, slow Bauhaus-style guitars building into more strings and then an Editors style release of a wall of sound with utterly depressing lyrics scattered on top. For some of us however, we've pretty much heard this all before, White Lies, good as they are, sound more like a regurgitation than a fresh sound. But saying that this is a great debut, it does exactly what it says on the tin, takes you to the edge and then brings you back again. A very promising act and this is bound to keep us melancholy until the new Editors album.



City fans may lament, but the Kaka bid failure is for the good of the game



Charlotte Parker
Sports Editor

Manchester City would have meant almost definitely a second consecutive year without Champions League football. By rejecting Man City Kaka has shown the Arab billionaires that money cannot buy you everything.

Arsene Wenger criticised the bid, stating that it is not in touch with the real world, and whilst Man City fans may accuse him of being bitter, he certainly has a fair point. Fans are already disillusioned with the amount of money in football, the obscene wages and the sky high prices of tickets, and with the current economic crisis, fans will see City's bid as obscene. It is up to the owners how they wish to spend their money, but one player will not turn City into an overnight success.

Even if the owners were to go out and purchase 11 Robinhos or Kakas, they would not win the hearts of the footballing world. For many fans, football is a treat, something they have worked hard for, and we therefore appreciate the players that put their heart into every 90 minutes, and teams that win the league or cup against all odds. Man City may be able to buy the league, all though it will not be for several years yet, but they will never be able to buy the sort of prestige and respect that teams such as Manchester United will always have, regardless of wealth.

The owners of Manchester City will not be too disappointed, they will simply find more players to throw their millions at. No doubt they will succeed in luring some, the £ signs are no doubt more tempting to a lot of players than the option of staying loyal to an already respected and successful team. But for now, football fans all over can breathe a sigh of relief and hold a glimmer of hope that money has not yet totally ruined the beautiful game.

SO MANCHESTER CITY failed in their £100+ million bid for AC Milan's playmaker Kaka. Despite the lure of a weekly wage topping £500,000, Kaka decided to stay put at AC Milan. Manchester City fans may be disappointed, but is there a football fan in the rest of Britain that is not very relieved? Almost everybody, regardless of choice of football team, was strongly against the proposed bid, Kaka's rejection has saved football what little grace it has left.

Maybe this is a slight exaggeration, but City's bid for Kaka, if successful, would have all but destroyed football. Already we see over-paid prima donnas cheat and dive week-in week-out, declaring their loyalty to their club, kissing the badge, before moving promptly onto wherever offers more money in the next transfer window. No-one is begrudging football players their wealth and want of money, but when one is already earning tens of thousands a week, does a couple more really make that much difference?

Kaka is already a wealthy man, £500,000 a week would have been easily more than even the most extravagant of WAGs could spend. He has no need for the money, and going to Man-



Chattel: Kaka currently plays for AC Milan.

Lacrosse triumph over MMU to end bad streak

burst from Jonathan Stich, who ran end to end beating the goalie a second time. Another offensive break from the defence saw Pete Ward set up Joe Clement on a field long pass. The first half of the game ended 5-2 to Lancaster.

Entering the latter half of the game saw the return of Si Vaughan, another Lancaster veteran. Team captain Josh Wood warned the young team that it would be necessary to push hard in this quarter and avoid complacency. This directive was answered 10 seconds from the face-off by fresher Joe Clement. He managed to win the face-off cleanly and take the ball straight to goal, splitting the defence and beating the goalkeeper. The words of the captain were not only heeded by the freshers, within minutes of coming onto the field Si Vaughan had pulled a similar move fighting off three defenders to force his way to goal. A stunned MMU who had previously thrashed a young Lancaster team 20-4 never gave up and fought hard clawing back another goal, but it was not enough to contain Lancaster's efforts who added another 10 to the score before the quarter would end 15-4.

within minutes of coming onto the field Si Vaughan had fought off three defenders to force his way to goal

The fourth quarter was no change for Lancaster, freshers Tom Ritchings and Sam Wright added three more to Lancaster's tally before MMU would muster up another outburst. It wasn't only the freshers who contributed in the final frame, vice captain Bjoern Hanneke tallied three goals and six assists throughout the game whilst the weathered Greg Orrock would add three aesthetically pleasing goals to the score. The final whistle blew with the score at 21-6, with Lancaster succeeded in winning their first of the season. During a handshake between captains, MMU's Chris Ridge commented "...you deserve it", a feeling echoed by team captain Josh Wood.

Fresher Joe Clement received Man of the Match for his efforts, amassing five goals in total this game.

Roses snooker trials

TRIALS FOR LANCASTER'S Roses snooker team are taking place this Sunday.

The trials will take place in Rileys bar, on Church Street in Lancaster, with groups being drawn and matches starting at 2pm on February 1. Those wishing to participate are asked to arrive before 2pm and email b.gill@lancs.ac.uk with queries.

Lancaster lost two matches to three when they played York at Roses last year, also in Rileys bar.

My college vs the rest of the world XI



Gareth Coleman
AU President

IT IS OFTEN said that our campus is not 'real', and when I say that, I mean it's a very different way of living your life in comparison to your average 9-5 or even radically different from the way everyone have spent their time over Christmas (ok, bar Christmas itself). It's very easy to let hours disappear, days merge and start working off and running your life in accordance with university 'weeks' or coursework deadlines.

However, one thing which keeps stability on this campus is sport. Sport gives many people on campus something to look forward to every week, whether that would be once, twice or several times a week. For several hours a week, the sportsmen and women on campus will move their degrees to one side and take part in the massive sporting programme on campus. We're very lucky at Lancaster, in that not only do we have University clubs - we also have the college system, which is for me, the backbone of life in any of the colleges.

Sport gives our colleges identity, with some claiming to be more arguably more 'sporty' than others - a point

"sport gives our colleges identity"

which is often resolved when said colleges meet or at when the leagues are decided at the end of the year. College players are often thought of as 'big' characters in their respective colleges, with some even achieving the status of 'legend' status within certain circles. I'm sure if you went round each college there would definitely be several names of various sportsmen and women who everyone remembers, even if they left several years ago.

But it's not just these characters who define sport in their colleges, it's everyone involved and the very nature of having competitive sport at the heart of each college - rivalries will come to the fore, grudge matches be marked out in the diary and players will pick themselves up after a last-minute defeat. I'd describe this place as being like a separate 'sporting world' tucked up next to the M6, in which college names are

made and broken by inter-college results on a weekly basis. Outside of campus, you might be just a student, but on campus and in your college, you're the guy who's just scored that screamer in the last few minutes for the A's, or you're the one hit that 100+ checkout for the ladies darts team on Tuesday evening. You see my point?

I genuinely hope that the inter-college leagues continue to flourish over the coming years. You may find that most of your current crop of players may be graduating this year, or that your college has spent the year blooding first years in preparation for next year's season - either way, sport always seems to find of way of being played and creating that magic 'College Spirit' which is so often talked about - and I think those of who represent your college will agree.

I hope I've managed to underline how important inter-college sport at Lancaster is, and surely (and dare I say, running the risk of sounding 'political') nobody would ever want to see that 'College Spirit' disappear, would they...?

The Sun Hotel and Bar

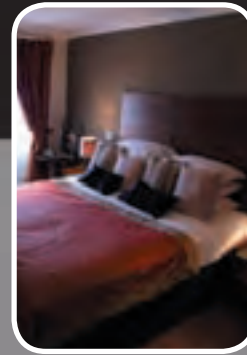
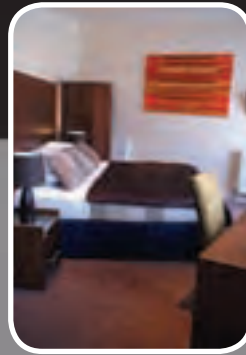
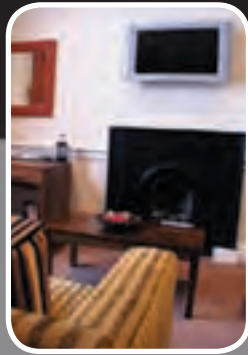
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LUWFC keep league title dream alive

• Lancaster win 5-3 against Edge Hill

by Sue Wynes

AFTER THE GROUNDSMAN at Edge Hill deemed their pitch unfit to play for yet another fixture, the decision was made to play on the Astroturf pitch. Although not ideal for either team, it was a necessary move to get all the fixtures played.

It was Edge Hill's first home game of the season, since they had called off all their previous home fixtures so Lancaster were hoping to take advantage of their lack of team games. The match got off to a fast start, with the surface making the ball fly all over the place. Lancaster got their first opportunity after four minutes. Sue Wynes had a shot from outside the box, which went straight at the keeper, but was fumbled and trickled into the net. Another opportunity came a few minutes later with Emma Leahey through on goal, but was pulled up for offside. The chances came thick and fast for Lancaster from then on and eventually they capitalised

rest of the half came with more chances for both sides, but with some great skills from the keepers at the either end the score remained 2-1 to Lancaster at half time. The second half began with just as much pace as the first half, with both teams looking to get the upper hand. A corner for Edge Hill led to an excellent header which managed to escape the keepers outstretched hands and put the teams at two a piece. However, not long after some great individual skill by Jen Murphy leaves her to slot in another goal for Lancaster and put them ahead again. Five minutes later Sue Wynes curls a shot in from outside the area and allows Lancaster some breathing space. Edge Hill, determined to prove the games not over, get a goal in the 69th minute and Lancaster knew they had to keep it tight to prevent losing their well deserved lead. Only seconds later, a perfect lay off allows Jen Murphy to get her hat-trick and put Lancaster two ahead with 15 minutes left to play. Some great saves by the Lancaster goalkeeper, Jess (check name), saves Lancaster from conced-



Photo: Janessa Zucchetto

on it after 15 minutes, with Jen Murphy smashing the ball home after the ball had rebounded off the keeper and the post. The Lancaster goalkeeper was untested for the first 20 minutes, but a quick shot from Edge Hill outside the area a few minutes later was carried by the wind into the back of the net. The

ing anymore goals and the final whistle blows with the score 5-3 Lancaster. Despite the difficulty of playing on such a fast surface, Lancaster proved they had the skill and determination to beat a solid Edge Hill side. Lancaster's goal of winning the league this season is still alive and kicking!



Photo: Rob Miller

New Year proves prosperous for Men's Lacrosse

by Josh Wood

NEW YEAR - out with the old, in with the new; to the Lancaster University men's Lacrosse team this is no big change. At the beginning of the academic year there were only four men left from the previous season with experience, the rest that make up the sixteen man squad are all fresh. With no wins, four losses and only six goals amassed coming into the new year, the lack of experience was evident. Eager to forget the poor form of the previous term, and excited at the prospects a new term could bring, the fresh faced team came to the forefront to dominate Manchester Metropolitan University at home in Lancaster.

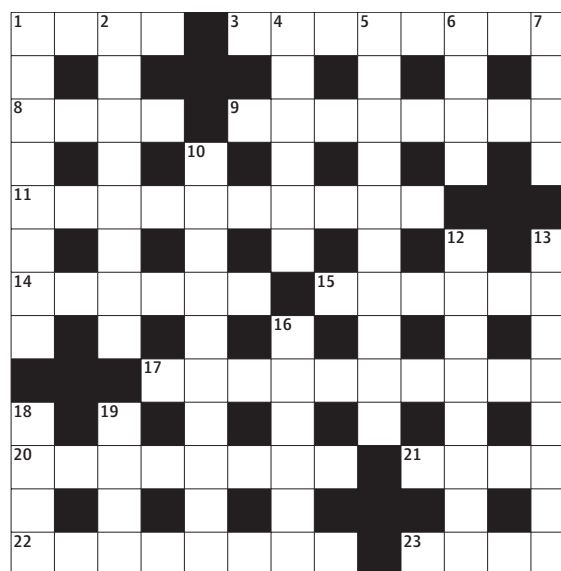
The game started like any other so far this season, Lancaster conceding first. However Lancaster jaunted to a 2-1 lead before the first quarter finished, the two goals coming from vice captain Bjoern Hanneke and defence-man Jonathan Stich. The second quarter started unnervingly for Lancaster with MMU putting big pressure on defenders Pete Ward and Jonathan Stich.

A string of big saves from their goalie Josh Wood spurred on an offensive

26 >

Due to a production error in our last issue that affected the crossword, it is printed again, correctly, on page 15. This issue's crossword is below.

Quick crossword no. 11,836



Across

- 1 Angle (4)
- 3 Test sample (8)
- 8 Region (4)
- 9 Queen's castle (8)
- 11 Start prematurely (4,3,3)
- 14 Shrink in fear, embarrassment, or servility (6)
- 15 Relating to bloomers (6)
- 17 Suited to the high seas (5-5)
- 20 Trust - in cereal (anag) (8)
- 21 Long story (4)
- 22 Keep back (8)
- 23 Animal flesh as food (4)

Down

- 1 Chewy oat biscuit (8)
- 2 Lubricant obtained from particular whale (5,3)
- 4 Large satellite of star (6)
- 5 Means of disguise (10)
- 6 Deep mud (4)
- 7 Useless - nothing (4)
- 10 Old horse-drawn passenger vehicle (10)
- 12 Vex (8)

- 13 Openly outrageous (8)
- 16 Scamp (6)
- 18 Large black bird (4)
- 19 Surfeit (4)

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Solution No 11,835

