

scan

Students not behind bars

Ronnie Rowlands
Rachel Stafford

University House is looking to reorganise the structure of the commercial services across the campus in order to rectify the lack of profit obtained from the bars.

The process is being undertaken by Jo Hardman, recently appointed Head of Commercial Services.

Hardman, formerly the Business and Development Manager of the Student's Union, worked with LUSU to look at how they could increase student satisfaction regarding the bars on campus. His new role as Head of Commercial Services has allowed him to control the progression of the bars and to "look at ways to improve the service, experience and usage of the bars."

SCAN has discovered that the proposed structure will con-

sist of one Retail Manager, who will oversee the work of three Venue Managers. Between them, the venue managers will run all campus bars and food outlets such as the Staff Lounge, The Venue, The Hub and Café 21.

It is also rumoured, although unconfirmed, that the individual, 'hands on' management of the bars will be undertaken by part time student staff, who will work under a lower pay grade than the current bar managers are.

'The resolution to poor performance was to reduce opening hours'

The proposals, if approved, may result in redundancies amongst current bar managers and catering supervisors, although Hardman stressed that at this present time "no staff have been made redundant, and alternatives will be looked at

thoroughly."

Attempted restructuring of commercial services is not a new concept, with the first developments beginning in 2008 when the University Commercial Services department took over the running of all the bars with the intention of making them more profitable.

The resolution to poor performance was to reduce opening hours, prompting Lancaster University Student's Union (LUSU) to enter into discussions with the University with the aim of taking over the bars themselves, as it was felt that these reduced opening hours were detrimental to the student experience.

For legal reasons that were never expanded upon by LUSU, the takeover bid was abandoned.

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Photo by Rachel Harvey

SCAN Investigates

Catherine Chorley
Investigations Editor

As part of SCAN's reconfiguration for the coming academic year, the SCAN Investigations section is to be revived as a staple contribution to the student media diet.

Working in close collaboration with the News team, the Investigations boffins shall be sleuthing their way across campus in a bid to unearth, dissect, and expose the issues affecting our student population.

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Bidve killer convicted

Laura Kay

21-year-old Kieran Stapleton has been convicted of murdering Lancaster University post-graduate student Anuj Bidve during the early hours of Boxing Day 2011.

During the course of the five-week trial, the jury heard how Stapleton, who had referred to himself previously as "Psycho Stapleton", approached Bidve and his group of friends as they left their

'Witnesses have stated that Stapleton was seen laughing before fleeing from the scene.'

hotel in Salford with the intention of joining the Boxing Day Sales.

Stapleton asked for the time before shooting Bidve in the temple, later claiming that he had specifically chosen Bidve because "he had the biggest head". Witnesses have stated that Stapleton was seen laughing before fleeing from the scene.

While Stapleton initially denied murder and pleaded guilty to manslaughter on the grounds of diminished responsibility, the jury took only 90 minutes to reach a verdict of guilty for murder.

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A note from the Editor

Rachel Harvey,
Editor

Hello, and welcome to
SCAN 2012-2013!

I am very excited to introduce myself, Rachel Harvey, LUSU Vice President of Media & Communications and SCAN Editor. I am even more excited to introduce this year's editorial team, each of whom proved themselves as the best of the best in previous years.

This is going to be a big year for SCAN and the Stu-

dent Media as a whole, with the build up to an away Roses, also the 50th in 2014, and a whole host of exciting new projects as we take more steps of progress than we ever have before. Getting involved could not be easier. In fact, a simple email to me, on lusu.vp.mc@lancaster.ac.uk, is all it takes.

But setting aside all this joyful optimism for a moment, we must remember that our time at university is not one big playful soiree. Wrongdoing, exploitation, scandals and coverups are never far away. This is especially true of the present, as the university attempts to push through as much as it possibly can while we students are out of the way. We have uncovered just a few of these instances in

this issue, and SCAN's aim this year is to reclaim and retain its core remit - to throw a spotlight on anything that needs presenting to the stu-

dent body.

On a final note, please remember that we can not do this alone.

'We must remember that our time at university is not one big playful soiree.'

The secret of journalism is, as Private Eye investigator Paul Foot put it; "people ring you up and tell you things, and then you write them down". If you have a story to tell, an endeavour to promote or something to say, then do not hesitate to email any member of our editorial team. Alternatively, you can approach one of my Assistant Editors, Jack

Smith and Ronnie Rowlands, neither of whom are ever more than a few feet away from the nearest bar stool...

Good luck, everyone, it's going to be one hell of a year.



INVESTIGATIONS

SCAN's very own Private Eye

Catherine Chorley
Investigations Editor

As part of SCAN's reconfiguration for the coming academic year, the SCAN Investigations section is to be revived as a staple contribution to the student media diet.

Working in close collaboration with the News team, the Investigations boffins shall be sleuthing their way across campus in a bid to unearth, dissect, and expose the issues affecting our student population.

We will delve deeper into the issues most pertinent to Lancaster's student community, as well as looking at these issues by comparison to a wider, national context. The section's objective is to provide greater analysis of contemporary events in relation to their impact on us as students at Lancaster University.

We hope that the student body, along with teaching staff and administrative personnel, will augment the core

foundation of source material - from which any concerns, information and general matters warranting investigation that may have flown under SCAN's radar can be obtained.

By working for and with students, we will focus on issues that the reader cares most deeply about, as well as harnessing the creative and intuitive talents of Lancaster's progenies. Crucially, the Investigations section's remit is such that we shall not only report what is going on in and around the University, but also analyse the factors contributing to, perpetuating or aiming to resolve these matters.

Though there are already particular topics flagged for attention - as outlined in this issue - the direction of our efforts is, in part, the reader's to direct. We shall be responsive to current events as they unfold throughout the year, and value the input of any and all who have concerns they want assuaged. By presenting a united student front, we aim to ensure that those in positions of

authority at the University are properly held accountable for the measures they effectuate which impact upon our student community.

'By working for and with students, we will focus on issues that the reader cares most deeply about'

The issues on the investigative cards so far include crime on campus (students as victims and students as perpetrators); the process of academic feedback and whether students feel it gives them adequate direction for future assessment; standards of academic achievement and the economics of achievement; the counselling service; accommodation provision both on and off campus; making the most of the university experience; students' perceptions of prejudice and stereotyping at university; and the current JCR structure of student-led management within the colleges.

SCAN Investigations welcomes the input of writers both familiar with and new to the

paper. Helping to ensure the collective student voice is heard in the midst of a changing and often bewildering Higher Education environment is a worthwhile and fulfilling way through which to contribute to university life. We are interested in hearing your experiences of the issues under investigation, so that the picture we build is one that adequately represents - and explores the factors underpinning - the true student experience at Lancaster.

'We will delve deeper into the issues most pertinent to Lancaster's student community'

Please get in touch with the SCAN Investigations editor via email at scan.investigations@lusu.co.uk to find out more.

NEWS

Commercial services structure changing



Photo by Rachel Harvey

When asked for the reasoning behind the restructuring, Hardman stated that, “over the past 10 years the decline of usage of the bars has led to a poorer experience for staff and students at the University and an increasingly difficult financial position.”

It is hoped that the new structure will be in place by intro week, though the changes are currently at the consultation stage. A university spokesperson told SCAN; “Whilst consultations are taking place with staff affected and Trades Unions (Unite, UNISON and UCU) it would not be appropriate to comment on the details.”

SCAN took to the social networks to ask students (who, as yet, remain unconsulted) for their thoughts on the poor financial performance of the bars.

The lack of student consultation has been met with frustration, and many made the well worn assertion that money should be invested in reducing drink prices and presenting the

bars as “a place to sit between lectures, rather than just a place to drink at night.”

The general consensus was that the bars have ‘lost their character’ as a result of refurbishments. In fact, many blame the look of the bars for their frequent poor attendance rates, and that the refurbishments have done nothing to improve this.

Masters student Adam Harrison-Henshall equated Pendle Bar to “a low grade seventies strip club on a bleak Tuesday night; dark, sleazy, sticky, empty and ultimately, soulless.

he added, “atmosphere and character are important in a bar’s success. Pendle bar doesn’t seem to have either.”

Pendle College President Laurence Pullan told SCAN; “The [Pendle Bar] refurb encouraged a “kitchen culture” and we’ve struggled to get the students out of their flats”, but showed optimism for its future popularity, citing ‘Pendle Live’, a weekly live music event in the

bar, as a success in increasing its appeal to students.

Grad Bar, which is amongst the most financially successful of the campus bars and has also yet to undergo any substantial redesign, was held in high favour by the students we spoke to.

Third year student Michelle Henry cited Grad Bar’s ‘pub feel’ as a reason for its popularity.

“It feels more like a pub as opposed to a bar and it’s always crowded with different kinds of students... they have more selections of ales so it just feels more like a northern pub.”

Henry pointed out the way in which Grad Bar differs from other campus bars, which she compared to “morgues.”

“[Grizedale Bar] is such a large space, and the bright green colours make it feel more like some sort of artificial waiting room, and the lack of people makes it seem even bigger so the idea of having a drink in there is not appealing.”

Unsurprisingly, much cyni-

cism has been shown towards the refurbishment of Furness Bar, which is to be reopened this academic year.

Some feel that the refurbishment has come at the right time, but remain sceptical about the outcome.

Third year student Joshua Coates spoke of his fondness for ‘Trev’, saying “I enjoyed the intimacy of the space... You could just tug away in the snug with a few mates and have a cosy night in the pub”, but pointed out that it was “starting to look a bit weathered.”

In response to SCAN’s Facebook appeal for student opinions on Furness Bar’s refurbishment, graduate Matt Freeman said, quite simply, “If they fuck Trev up, there will be hell to pay.”

The current prospect of bar licensees being made redundant has been met with similar dissatisfaction from students.

History graduate Sophie Kelly expressed fears that the removal of the regular licensees

will only serve to homogenise the bars further. “The licensees contribute to the individual character of the bars. This character is vital to continuing the success of the bars, but seems to be diminishing.”

Aside from a ‘loss of character’, Kelly questioned the managerial sense in removing individual bar managers, were such a move to be made by the university.

“[The licensees are] all really passionate about their particular bar and know what’s best for them. It seems inevitable that with this taken away, each any every bar would suffer.”

The situation regarding the future of the bars is ongoing, but SCAN will remain attentive to all developments as the saga continues...

Justice for family of Anuj Bidve

CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE

The judge concluded that Stapleton had committed a “truly wicked act” and was “highly dangerous”, commenting that the murder was “a piece of cold-blooded, controlled aggression.” He said that Stapleton had displayed callous disregard for his victim in smirking and laughing after the shooting and also in his behaviour throughout the trial, where he recurrently grinned and laughed.

The judge further expressed that Stapleton would serve a minimum term of 30 years before being eligible for parole

and would only then be released if “deemed not to be a risk to the public.”

Communicating with SCAN on behalf of Bidve’s friends at Lancaster University, postgraduate student Sarang Kulkarni has commented, “Anuj was a cheerful, fun-loving person who lived his life to the fullest.” He continued: “He always met you with a smile on his face and happiness in his voice.

“I am satisfied with the verdict and with the sentence. He will spend

a long time in prison. But I cannot ever forgive him, not in my life.”

“His friends knew him to be a kind person with a heart of gold, forever ready to help anyone.” Regarding the outcome of the trial, Kulkarni and friends stated: “No amount of punishment can bring back our good friend. However, wrong was done and the culprit has been punished [...] We sincerely hope [Stapleton] comes out a reformed and better man.”

“Our thoughts and prayers are

with the Bidve family. They have shown enormous resolve during the court proceedings.”

As Stapleton begins his sentence, Bidve’s father has stated to The Mirror, “when Anuj was killed we thought that it was the colour of his skin, but now I think it was not. I think this man was simply evil and there are evil men in every country.”

“I am satisfied with the verdict and with the sentence. He will spend a long time in prison. But I cannot ever forgive him, not in my life.”

On January 21st 2012, a me-

morial service attended by hundreds of students was held at the Lancaster University Chaplaincy Centre. An ‘Anuj Bidve Memorial Scholarship’ has also been established in Bidve’s memory.

Bus Timetables reinstated across Lancaster

Emma Nelson

Traditional bus timetables are to be reinstated in the Lancaster area following uproar over their recent removal. In April 2012, Lancashire County Council withdrew bus timetables from stops across the area in a bid to save £100,000 of tax payer’s money.

These traditional bus timetables were replaced with a text service, requiring bus users to text in a code to access the information they needed.

This angered both locals and students travelling across the area. One Lancaster student told SCAN that the text service was simply “a joke.”

“As a student living in town, I was getting the bus to and from university every day. Not being able to see the bus times was annoying to say the least, especially if I was in a rush and wanted to know how long I would be waiting for the next available bus.”

Another student told SCAN that after paying over £200 for

their bus pass, “it is unfair that we are now being made to pay for the bus times as well as the bus itself.”

As reported in the Lancaster Guardian, Sam Riches, County Councillor for Lancaster East, also stated that “the current requirement to use the internet or premium rate phone and text numbers to find bus times is unpopular, difficult for some people to use, and risks putting people off bus travel.”

However, it now seems that a new agreement between the Council and bus companies has been set in place to help reinstate the traditional, more favoured bus timetables.

“The current requirement to use the internet or premium rate phone and text numbers to find bus times is unpopular, difficult for some people to use, and risks putting people off bus travel.”

As reported in the Lancaster Guardian, Tim Ashton, cabinet member for highways and

transport, said that “initially, we approached the bus companies and said ‘isn’t it time you helped out? We never had a response, so we started withdrawing the bus timetables. Obviously that caused a reaction from the bus companies, and they came to talk to us.”

In an official statement, County Council stated that “the agreement will see the bus companies paying for the production and positioning of the majority of the timetables which have been removed.”

The statement described discussions between the Council and bus operators as being “very productive.” “They have put forward suggestions that recognise the value of bus stop information to passengers for the services they are providing commercially” it continued.

The statement concluded by outlining plans that are currently being developed. These plans would see “the county council print and supply timetables for 1,000 bus stops, with bus operators to fund additional timetables at stops which are most

vital to their business.”

“The agreement will see the bus companies paying”

Therefore it seems that after the negative reception to the text service, the Council and bus operators are now working together, and bus timetables are to be restored across Lancaster in the near future.



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LUSU

University underpass unveiled



Photo by Rachel Harvey

Catherine Chorley
Investigations Editor

Almost two years after construction work to renovate Alexandra Square and the underpass began – a project beset by structural complications that led to repeated failures in meeting projected completion dates – the Underpass finally reached completion at the close of the 2012 Summer Term.

As far back as September 2009, SCAN was reporting on the anticipated and allegedly-imminent rejuvenation of Alexandra Square and the central Underpass, both of which are integral to the campus infrastructure and identity.

'The two sites were intended to be a tandem operation scheduled for completion by the end of November 2010'

Work began on Alexandra Square and the Underpass in August 2010, following the release of the final project-outline, to which students had been able to contribute via consultation meetings with the architect, the previous February.

The two sites were intended to be a tandem oper-

ation scheduled for completion by the end of November 2010, according to a statement released by Facilities' Louisa Duff in the 2010 Lent Term. This was later re-evaluated to an estimated completion date of Easter 2011.

Though both construction-sites faced setbacks – attributed to unforeseeable obstacles such as the unusually harsh weather conditions of the 2010 winter and the structural problems revealed in the Underpass – Director of Facilities Mark Swindlehurst defended the project's adherence to its schedule and the re-opening of Alexandra Square was hailed in May 2011 following the Square's completion over the Easter vacation. However, the re-opening of the Underpass was again postponed while further construction took place, with Swindlehurst anticipating its completion in September 2011.

In October 2011, SCAN reported on the announcement by Swindlehurst that further construction work would be required on the Underpass, with work to resume on the site in November 2011. At that stage, the project's overall completion date was scheduled for Easter 2012 – a year later than originally planned – thus

prolonging the disruption to the University's transport network.

Students at the time indicated their scepticism towards this estimated schedule, and their suspicions have in fact been vindicated by the repeated delays in the conclusion of the renovations. Throughout the course of the project, the work has been labelled 'invasive' and 'disruptive' by those frustrated by the continual delays to its completion.

The alternative and occasionally-subversive staff newsletter, Subtext, recently commented on the subject of the Underpass as an eyesore and a poor advert for the University, given that the road-blockade and the stagnancy of the observable-progress came to constitute that all-important first impression for visitors to Lancaster University.

'Students at the time indicated their scepticism towards this estimated schedule, and their suspicions have in fact been vindicated by the repeated delays in the conclusion of the renovations'

Highlighting the frustration and growing incredulity felt by many towards the project, Subtext quipped, "It will not be long before there will be students graduating from Lancaster who have never actually passed through the underpass."

Normal service has now been resumed, with access to the Underpass through Alexandra Square via two staircases, and a lift for disabled access. The refurbishments represent significant progress in the implementation of the Facilities Department's £300m 2007-2017 Masterplan unveiled back in 2007.

Due to the project's shortcomings in meeting deadlines and expectations, the eventual opening – notionally a cause for celebration – was overshadowed by cynicism and exasperation towards the co-occurrence of the occasion with the departure of the majority of students for the summer vacation.

Green flag for campus

Rachel Stafford
News Editor

Recent improvements to the University's campus have resulted in Lancaster University being awarded the Green Flag, a national award for high quality green spaces.

In order to qualify for the award, green spaces are judged on a number of criteria, including whether the area is healthy, safe and secure, its sustainability and whether it is clean and maintained.

The improvements to campus include the revitalisation of Alexandra Square and the sports pitch drainage improvements. These, as well as the woodland and trim trails around campus, were just some of the features which have led to the 360 acre campus receiving the award.

Facilities for students and staff, including the dedicated electrical BBQ stations, various courtyard gardens and also the organic garden were contributing factors, helping the campus to shine within the community involvement section of judging.

Mark Swindlehurst, Lancaster University's Director of Facilities described the award as a "true testament to the fantastic team involved in maintaining the grounds." He went on to say that the award would encourage the University "to maintain and develop the campus through sustainable management of the site, making improvements, increasing its bio-diversity and wildlife potential."

As a recipient of the award, Lancaster University are permitted to fly a green flag in the area for a year.

In Carolynne...

- Exclusive interview with The Art Club

- How to enjoy the summer with rainy weather

- Six of the summer's top gigs and festivals

- Culture Clash: What two of our writers think of Fifty Shades

Lancaster ranked sixth in the UK for employment after graduation

Heidi Nagaitis

Lancaster University has surpassed hundreds of other academic institutions across the U.K, by achieving a place in the top ten universities for employment after graduation.

According to Lancaster University News, the figures from the Higher Education Statistical Agency showed that after 6 months, 94% of graduates from 2010/2011 had found employment or continued their studies. This figure is three per cent higher than the 91% target set by HESA.

Lancaster was ranked higher than many prestigious institutions, including Oxford and

Cambridge, which according to the Daily Telegraph newspaper, had 9.6% of unemployed students after six months and 8.4% respectively.

President of Lancaster University Student's Union, Ste Smith, said: "This new position for Lancaster University is fantastic news."

"In a period where the job market is highly competitive and students need that extra edge to stand out from the crowd, Lancaster really encourages its students to participate in additional activities such as volunteering, sports and societies which go beyond our academic lives."

"I believe that the experi-

ences we gain from the wide range of activities on offer here truly help us to shine in applications and interview situations, significantly helping Lancaster graduates secure great jobs" he added.

94% of graduates from 2010/2011 had found employment or continued their studies

The study was released after a number of national newspapers claimed that it is now harder than ever for graduates to find employment after completing their degree courses.

According to the Daily Telegraph, almost one in-ten gradu-

ates are unable to find work or choose not to continue with their studies.

This survey dampens fears that graduates are entering a jobless market, with universities like Lancaster equipping students with the skills and the drive to track down the jobs and careers for which they have studied so hard.

Tara McLaughlin, Acting Director of the Careers, Employability and Enterprise Centre (CEEC) at Lancaster University said: "There are many ways that we help our students forge links with employers."

"We take pride in our Unite with Business SME placement programme, the Career Mentor-

ing Programme and of course, our Lancaster Award. These schemes give students the best opportunities to achieve their professional aspirations."

Work experience is key to employment

Jonathan Kennedy

The experiences of students working in LUSU retail and the findings of a recent study suggests that work experience is still an important factor in finding employment after graduation.

Rosy Washbrook, a Management student, has worked in LUSU retail for four years and has now embarked on a career with Tesco as a result of her prior experience.

Similarly, Business student Sam Dorrington worked in LUSU retail for three years and then in LUSU as a full time supervisor whilst looking for graduate work.

Sam said that she "enjoyed having the autonomy to make my own decisions, and having influence over policy."

She added: "I'm now look-

ing forward to a new challenge, meeting new people and progressing my career."

The notion that work experience alongside a degree is important in today's job market is supported by a study commissioned by the Chartered Insurance Institute in July. The study spoke to over 2,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 25, both in and out of full-time employment. Although 66% of people due to attend university felt it would offer wider career options, over 50% felt they would need additional work experience outside of their degree. Furthermore, out of the interviewees already employed, 43% acknowledged that their degree alone was not a differentiating factor when looking for a job.

"Don't assume your work experience has to be with a Times Top 100 company", said Tara

McLaughlin, Acting Director of the Careers, Employability and Enterprise Centre (CEEC) at Lancaster.

"Placements, internships and work experience can very often lead to more permanent positions, and importantly help you understand what you enjoy doing at work"

"Ask parents, neighbours and look on LinkedIn to make best use of your networks, and be persistent and precise with your applications."

"Placements, internships and work experience can very often lead to more permanent positions, and importantly help you understand what you enjoy doing at work and where your strengths lie" she added.

CEEC offers students workshops, advice and short placements through the Unite with Business project, which works with small local firms. Students can also sign up to CEEC4Jobs (jobs.lancs.ac.uk) to search for more placements worldwide, and visit CEEC within University House for more information.

Opening ceremony goes off with a bang



Photo by houghtonbirds

Emily-Jayne Nicholls

In case you hadn't noticed, the Olympics have been on this Summer or rather they have been dominating everyone's lives this summer. Olympic fever has swept the nation and even the hardest nosed Londoner has squealed in delight when Jessica, Andy and Chris received their shiny medals and our hearts welled with pride as God Save the Queen played across the world. Love it or loathe it, national pride has swept the nation all thanks to Mr Coe and sort of Boris! Whilst the Gymnasts, Sprinters and Cyclist have inspired the nation, it was not the sport that was the most anticipated part, it was the Opening Ceremony. The run up was surprisingly vague and indeed rather average, Beijing had

2000 illuminate drummers in beating in perfect sync, apparently we were having a field. There's been many an opinion on Mr Boyle's incredible spectacle both before and after the event and when I heard the most exciting thing we had to offer six billion people were sheep I was as sceptical as the rest, then on the 27th July 2012, I witnessed one of the most spectacular, most inspiring and downright entertaining spectacles I have ever seen in my life- and I managed to do it first hand from inside the Olympic Stadium.

Walking down the stairs to be faced with a 100 square metres of luscious field complete with giant hill and live farm animals, I was initially amazed, then baffled, then a bit miffed, it was actually a field with sheep and up until 8:50 I was quite

sure my cautious optimism would be crushed. Then the Red Arrows made an appearance, soaring over the stadium in majestic unison leaving a trail of red, white and blue smoke lingering-welcome to Britain everyone!

'Walking down the stairs to be faced with a 100 square metres of luscious field complete with giant hill and live farm animals, I was initially amazed, then baffled, then a bit miffed.'

Boyle didn't try to beat Beijing, he showcased what Britain is all about, a rich history of industry, literature and music with a diverse and interesting population - throwing in a bit of quirky

British humour in the process. Double 07 and Her Majesty skydiving had me screaming with excitement especially when the Queen appeared, and in the same ensemble as in the video! Out of context, flying Mary Poppins' duelling with a 30 foot high Voldemort is a little odd, as is 500 dancers morphing from a Fame-esque mob into a conga line seemingly in tribute to Bowie. Yet on the night it worked and it worked well! The Opening Ceremony was elegant, inspiring and downright fabulous entertainment. From 200,000 people head-banging to Bohemian Rhapsody, to the inspiring lighting of the torch, you made us laugh, you made us cry, you made me proud to be in that stadium and the nation damn proud to be British, Mr Boyle, we salute you!



EST. 2010

CAROLYNNE

STUDENT CULTURE AND LIFESTYLE



SUMMER OF 2012

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Carolynne

Photography Competition

With each edition, SCAN and Carolynne will be holding a themed photography competition. The winning photograph will be used as the front cover of the next edition of Carolynne.

Keep an eye on the SCAN website for the next theme to be revealed.

In England's green, unpleasant land...



Photo by Zoetnet

Features

Joe Henthorn
Carolynne Editor

When the arch-colonialist Cecil Rhodes declared that being English was to have 'won first prize in the lottery of life', he evidently wasn't talking about the weather. Rhodes, after all, suffered the eminently dreary climate worse than most of us; doctors actually reckoned that the English air was killing him, and the whole reason he spent so much of his life in southern Africa was because he simply couldn't cope with the combination of pollution and ceaseless rain that was the British weather's hallmark. Weather affects us all, and even if it's not hurting us as directly as it did Rhodes, then it's affecting us in other ways – like deciding what food we can grow, or how wet you'll get walking up the Spine. So it comes as no surprise that we talk about it so bloody much.

Making small talk about the weather was probably considered insufferably banal by the people who built Stonehenge, but idle chit-chat about the temperature has now transcended the realms of cliché and become something else entirely. It's nothing short of an obsession, particularly in a place like Lancaster, where going a day without mentioning that massive grey blanket that's been flung over the sky is like going a day without breathing.

So, can the weather be said in any way to have had an impact on British identity? After all, collective identities are the result of shared experiences, and if there's one experience that no one from Britain has escaped it's that of being thoroughly soaked. Religion, warfare and language are some of the usual suspects when it comes to defining national identity, but as a nation we've never had an particularly homogenous religious makeup, and warfare has only really proved that 'British' does not equal 'French'

And the language only serves to highlight the divisions internal to Britain – it is the English language, after all, so where does that leave Scotland and Wales?

Is it possible to speak of 'Britishness' at all? When you think about it this way, maybe the weather is the only thing uniting us at all...

But how has weather shaped our culture? The sheer extent to which weather is ingrained in the national consciousness is clear from how often it pops up in art and literature, not to mention everyday conversation. Jonathan Swift's famous poem 'Description of a City Shower' certainly doesn't pull any punches when it comes to describing the effects of a heavy rainfall on London – 'drowned puppies, stinking sprats, all drenched in mud/dead cats, and turnip-tops, come tumbling down the flood', and since then everyone from Wordsworth to Woolf has dabbled in metaphorical explorations of the weather. And scientists have been trying to control the weather for as long as 'science' as we know it has existed, with the advances made by the British scientists of the London and Edinburgh (England and Scotland, working together!) scientific societies being immediately turned towards a project of weather 'rationalisation', a project that you could argue continues to this day. We confront the weather with every aspect of our culture, and it's this that has made it such an important overarching factor in the creation of a British identity.

Ultimately it's hard to escape the conclusion that, whilst the British weather may be grimmer than a week old sausage roll, it has left an indelible mark on our culture. Perhaps the key factor is that it is so predictably dreary, and whilst we like to talk about it and pretend it's the most extraordinary weather in the world, it's actually incredibly moderate, and it's this lack of extremity in our climate that seems to correspond to our relative moderateness as a nation. 'A cloudy day, or a little sunshine, have as great an influence on many constitutions as the most real blessings or misfortunes', said Spectator Founder and all round smart bloke Joseph Addison; surely it follows that millennia of crappy weather can leave a huge mark on the constitution of the nation.

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Make it through the rain

Lifestyle

Lizzie Morrison

So you have finished your exams, danced your way through the Extravs, and now you're back home with half the summer holiday still ahead of you. Whether you are a third year cherishing your last few months of freedom or a second year embracing your summer break before the real work begins, most of us want to spend the next few months socialising, catching up with friends, and generally having a good time. But, with all the recent news about flooding and the constant downpours of torrential rain, this summer looks set to be a truly soggy affair. So just how are we supposed to keep

'These suggestions may all seem simple, but they are guaranteed to stop you sitting inside constantly refreshing your news feed on Facebook.'

entertained during these miserable months?

One way to pass the time without getting drenched is a visit to the local cinema. There's plenty of sizzling summer blockbusters to choose from - Christian Bale's Batman returns in *The Dark Knight Rises*, the final instalment of the superhero saga; the unusual pairing of comic actor Steve Carell and screen starlet

Keira Knightley looks set to create lots of laughs in *Seeking A Friend For The End Of The World*; and *Step Up 4*, the latest in the series, is filled with even bigger and better dance moves than its predecessors. If one of your mates just happens to be on Orange, even better; there is no excuse for not taking advantage of their two-for-one offers on Wednesdays.

Even if you've come back home and realised your bank account is as empty as Sugarhouse during the exam period, you needn't be deprived of the cinema experience. Arrange a get-together with your friends and get them to bring a couple of DVDs along. Stock up on cheap popcorn and sweets and you are all set for a movie marathon.

As simple as it may sound, there's nothing quite like a catch-up with a close friend. Coffee shops are the perfect place to have a nice long natter and, who knows, chatting with your college pal who you haven't seen since Christmas may well take your mind off the woeful weather we're having. What's more, you can enjoy a hot chocolate in the shelter of Starbucks, away from the rain, wind and mud.

If you have got a bit of money to spend, why not head into town - under the protection of an umbrella of course - and treat yourself to a slap-up meal with some friends. With good food and good company, you're bound to have a great night and manage to



keep warm and dry at the same time. If the purse strings are in need of tightening, lots of places have special offers on certain nights - and there's always student discount.

These suggestions may all seem simple, but they are guaranteed to stop you sitting inside constantly refreshing your news feed on Facebook. So, despite the lack of sunshine, this summer can be an awesome one. You'll just need to invest in an umbrella.

Hyped up, or let down?

Features

Tom Ley

It often seems to me that the more hype there is surrounding something, the easier it is to be cynical about it. This can certainly be said of the massive international phenomenon that is the London 2012 Olympics. The word 'Olympics' was drilled into the collective brain of the nation so often by the media that many of the more pessimistic among us were sick of them before they even started. Does this event deserve the publicity, or is it, as one Tory MP recently said of the opening ceremony, "leftie multicultural crap"?

Nowhere was the hype level higher pre-Olympics than the Capital itself. I was lucky (?) enough to be in London for the three days before the opening ceremony, and I was not alone. As part of LUSU Involve's 'Lancaster Goes Global' project, over eighty international students from India, Malaysia, China, Pakistan and Palestine recently visited Lancaster University for a three-week cultural exchange. Part of the program was the three-day visit to London. This caused a lot of excitement among our guests, not least because of the Olympic-fuelled international spotlight on the city pre-games. Publicity levels were predictably high, with statues of the mascots lining the Thames and the five rings hanging proudly from Tower Bridge.

As hectic as it was trying to navigate the tubes with a tailback of over eighty camera-toting students, it was both interesting and encouraging to see the response of our international friends to the games. Many proved to be avid sportsmen and women, and though we left the city before the games started (we weren't brave enough for those crowds), they seemed to enjoy the experience,

and appreciate the hype.

It was not the last time sport came into play in our little program. We also held a sports day, including football, cricket, and some of the most intense tug-of-war



Photo by David Briley

I have ever seen in my life. The visiting students were split into Lancaster colleges for teams, with representa-

tives from each country in every group. It had excitement, it had intensity, it had a guy being accidentally dragged along the ground on the end of a rope. It was our own mini Olympics, with less events and considerably less expensive medals. In case you're interested, Grizedale won.

More importantly, there's something pleasing in the diversity of a football match with five different nationalities playing on one team. It's not exactly the same concept as the Olympics, but the idea of different countries and cultures coming together to run around in circles, compete and genuinely have a good time remains. I won't say that sport doesn't create tension. I could feel that much as a friend and I tentatively cheered for Chris Hoy in the cycling while surrounded by animated Malaysians cheering for a rival. But it's friendly tension, when handled properly. Sport isn't war.

Though I'm not a particularly sporty person myself, I can't deny its value, and I certainly can't deny the significance of an event as huge as the Olympics in bringing different cultures together under a single country's metaphorical roof. There are still plenty of people in Britain who cringe and shudder when they hear words like 'multicultural' or 'diversity'. They shouldn't. These are good things. Thanks to the internet and planes, this world is getting smaller. It stands to reason that we spend more time with nations different to our own, get to know our neighbours - what better way to do so than by gathering together for a gigantic sports day? It's a shame the Olympics don't have tug-of-war, but the outcome is still worthwhile, and certainly deserves a deal of hype.

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LUSU 

THANK YOU FOR MAKING IT AN AMAZING YEAR!



Photos by: Tom Wells, Kendy Burton, David Mann, Tom Skarbek-Wazynski, Louise Inman, Jay Theis

Before the new academic year starts, we wanted to look back at last year and say thank you to all of our members for helping to make it a great one. However you were involved, from volunteering in the community to taking part in Roses, being a rep or elected officer, coming along to our

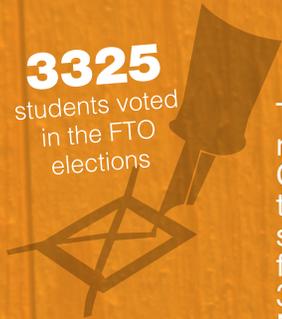
events or using our services, part of a student society - thank you. Our members' opinions and ideas are the heart of LUSU. We want to make sure your opinions are heard and help to shape the way we move forward. We already have

General Meetings and elected representatives, but to take this further we've set up yourvoice.lusu.co.uk, an online forum allowing you to put forward and discuss ideas, letting us know what's important to you. Get involved and make your voice heard.

REPRESENTING

3325

students voted
in the FTO
elections



This year saw the emergence of a new campus celebrity: the Democracy Cow, appearing across the campus to promote elections. And this year saw a record voter turnout of 3325 for the Full Time Officer elections. 370 of you also attended the General Meeting in February, the first quorate General Meeting in three years, to vote unanimously against the University's Business Process Review. Following this, the University halted the review.

261 of you are Departmental Reps, representing fellow students and acting as the voice of your course to LUSU and the University.

We're also changing the way postgraduate representation takes place; working with Graduate College, we've set up the Postgraduate Board and forums and online forums, which will give more postgraduates the chance to have their say.

SPORTS

1599
competitors
at Roses
2012



The climax of the sporting year was Roses 2012, with 120 matches in 40 different sports over the weekend. Lancaster was victorious with a final score of 156.5 to 131.5. Roses was a great weekend for our student media too, with over 67,000 visits to the RosesLive

website from people in 65 different countries viewing the blogs, photos and videos. 150 students from SCAN, LA1:TV and Bailrigg FM put out fantastic live commentary across the weekend.

The achievements of our student groups were celebrated at the LUSU

Activities awards, where the Athletics Society were LUSU Society of the Year and Ultimate Frisbee won LUSU Sports Club of the year. In terms of inter college sports, Flyde were victorious in the Carter Shield and Pendle in the George Wyatt Trophy.



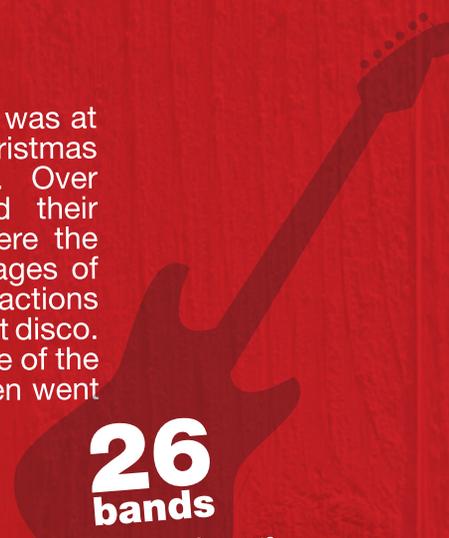
SOCIETIES

Societies has a fantastic year, following on from a packed out Freshers Fair, over 40 new societies were formed this year, meaning that there are now 200 groups for you to join. Just some of the societies' highlights this year were the Ballroom Dancing Charity Showcase, raising £1,600 for cancer research, the Music Society choir and wind band winning national trophies, and LUDans winning three trophies at Durham University's dance competition.

Where our societies really shone was at our big campus events, the Christmas Market and Campus Festival. Over 50 student groups showcased their talents at Campus Festival, where the audience was treated to two stages of entertainment, food stalls and attractions including a climbing wall and silent disco. The festival headliners were Battle of the Bands winners Soulrigg, who then went on to play at Beach Break Live.

26
bands

involved in the Campus
Fest Battle of the Bands
Competition



GETTING INVOLVED

Green Lancaster's Exodus 2011 project was recognised this year with both a Green Gown Award for Student Initiatives and Campaigns and a Highly Commended at the Red Rose Resource Awards. This campaign, facilitated by student staff, ran again in 2012 and has collected 11 tons of donated goods to date, keeping items out of landfill and helping local charities in the process. Once

again we successfully gained gold standard in the NUS Green Impact Awards

LUSU Involve's international project saw 105 of you go out volunteering in China, Malaysia and India, and 83 students from our overseas partner institutions visit the UK in return. Closer to home, 1,100 of you volunteered across 80 schools and 20 community organisations. Projects included

creating a local Olympics with small rural schools, mock trial at Lancaster Castle with A level Law pupils and working with local artist Sue Flowers, local schools and the Peter Scott Gallery to produce an art exhibition.

659 students attended our employability workshops and 22 of you started your own business last year with the help of LUSU Involve.

12079
pupils

were reached by

622

LUSU Involve schools
volunteers

NIGHTS OUT

It's been a great year for Sugarhouse; our new Wednesday night: Jinxed! was a great success, building on our already renowned Friday Old's Cool and Saturday Sweet As offerings. Over the course of the year there were an amazing 122,000 visits to Sugar, and we can't wait to see you back next year.

4,500 of you went on our Big Nights Out in Freshers Week, and we enjoyed them so much that this year we had two more, the Big Night Out in Colour and Jungle is Massive, where 1,500 you all donned amazing animal accessories to represent your

colleges round Lancaster's nightlife each time.

The year finished in style: Week 10 started with Grad Ball: Diamonds are Forever with a line up including Maximo Park, The Hoosiers, Kissy Sell Out and Kites plus campus bands Underwater Gunfight and Soulrigg. The week continued with College Extrav themes including The Big Apple, Olympics, Beach Party and Movies. Following positive feedback last year, again Extrav tickets were sold online with 7442 tickets sold on the first day.

122000

visits to the
sugarhouse in
2011/12

OUR SERVICES

You've continued to support our commercial services which, in turn, help to fund opportunities and events for all students. They also provided employment for over 200 student staff across all our outlets.

The Jobshop advertised 238 student friendly job opportunities last year

on campus and in the city.

LUSU Living continues to go from strength to strength with your support, and last year, 1051 of you rented a property through us.

10,014 of you now have a Purple card, and our offers grew this year

to include high profile discounts such as Alton Towers, O2 and Premiership football teams. We also gave away prizes and gifts all year to Purple card holders from Santa Hats to a flat screen TV and we'll continue to make Purple bigger and better next year.

1051

of you lived in
a LUSU living
property

Being part of a vibrant organisation like LUSU is fantastic as it provides students with so many opportunities that make their time at Lancaster out of this world. We want to be bigger and better, and this year we're going to focus on three main areas to ensure that we continue to provide a fantastic student experience:



LEARN

The number one reason we're all here; to get our degree. With new students now paying £9k fees, we want to make sure that everyone's getting the best academic experience possible.

Our library is due for redevelopment and we want to make sure that the new build is fit for the future, providing us with the resources we need to study and learn effectively.

We'll continue to support the Course Rep system, improving how

we promote it and ensuring that we're getting wins for our students across all departments and faculties.

However, your time here isn't just about your degree. It's also about your future. We want you to meet new people and learn to network, to meet a range of companies at employment fairs, to give you the opportunity to start up your own business, and to facilitate sessions aimed at improving and boosting your CV in the eyes of potential employers.

LIVE

We want you to enjoy your time here in all aspects of life: Social life, night life, campus life, city life, life in general!

We have over 200 activity groups, and that number is constantly increasing. We aim to make sure that this array of opportunities is ever improving and available for all of our students to try out. We want to help more people with similar interests come together to start societies and build on the success of current societies to help them grow.

Following our 2012 Roses win, we want to focus on improving sport across the board. It's time to crush York on their own campus and show them what we're made of! To do this we want to help fight the battle for space to ensure that you get the training times that you

need, when you need them.

We are lucky to have one of the best volunteering services of any Students' Union in the country; LUSU Involve offers opportunities in local schools, local community projects, environmental projects with Green Lancaster, a Language Exchange programme, as well as having absolutely fantastic opportunities for volunteering abroad. We want to encourage as many of you as possible to get involved in these programmes so that you get the skills you need and have a great time getting them.

The award winning Sugarhouse continuously grows in popularity, gaining a footfall of over 27,299 students in 2011/12. The Sugarhouse is constantly looking to improve the service they provide and we want to find out how you want to see it develop!

LEAD

We want you to lead what we do. A rewarding way to get involved is by taking an interest in what your student representatives are doing, and bringing your ideas to them. If you want to change something about your city, University or Union then don't feel you have to stand to be an officer in an election to make a difference (although of course it's something we would love to see you consider!); we have a portal called 'Your Voice' and it provides a great forum for you to express your opinions on different issues, and suggest ways we can improve.

Every undergraduate College also has a JCR Executive Committee, a team of dedicated officers who provide support for you and organise a wide range of events and campaigns. We want to see as many people as possible voting and standing to join their team in the Michaelmas elections. If you're a postgraduate student, then we now have the Postgraduate Board in place as well as a series of forums where you can get involved and effect change.

We also have a whole host of other opportunities for you to lead, whether that's getting involved in student media, setting up and leading a society or becoming one of our officers.

Freshers' Week is going to be amazing and we're looking forward to one of the best years that Lancaster has seen yet! Keep in touch and enjoy the rest of your summer break, from your FTO team; Liz, Rachel, Rosalia, Ste, Libby & Richard.

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THE ART CLUB

CULTURE EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Culture Editor Stephanie

Bell meets The Art Club

The Art Club are a wonderful set of ambassadors for Lancashire's music scene. Describing themselves as the creators of a 'sweet Post-Punk sound' and explorers of some 'hazy Romantic thoughts', the quartet are really trying to push the boundaries of their sound. It is this distinctive sweet, nostalgic feel, mixed with dulcet northern tones, that has meant the local band has been able to play prestigious BBC Introducing sets, as well as a string of big venues in London and Manchester.



Having formed only in late 2011, success has rolled in thick and fast for the four piece, who reference many of their 80s influences in their music, which has the nostalgic and handmade vibe of being lovingly created in a lonely bedroom. Hazy and hopeful, the single 'Baptism' plays out as a gorgeous bittersweet melody – it is haunting and ephemeral, yet is brought down to earth by rich, resonating vocals that leave a lasting impression on the listener.

Despite sporting that rather flimsy indie band aesthetic (they look like they may snap in a strong north easterly breeze), The Art Club have pretty sturdy tracks – their newest single 'Let's Start Again' will be released in September and is the perfect remedy for a soggy summer, set to happily see you through the autumn months.

Lead singer David Murdoch (I've seen more meat on a sparrow's kneecap) met me for coffee last week, who – despite nursing a broken arm – had managed to shoehorn himself into his uniform skinny jeans and polo shirt – top button done, of course. Casting labels of Indie boys aside, the only thing pretentious about Mr Murdoch was his taste in tea, (Earl Grey) and later his unusually un-rock-star-ish taste in cocktails (Mint Choc Chip), but you can't have everything.

How did you become a singer?

I joined the school choir and it got me out of lessons, which was my incentive. I failed my music GCSE and in turn formed my first band called 'Liar Liar.'

What inspires you? Who is your hero or idol?

I think the need to better myself and to prove people wrong has always made me more inclined to succeed – almost as a sense of rebellion. I'd sight 'Pulp' as my heroes, Jarvis Cocker is inspirational.

What is the best thing about your job?

Doing what I love – writing songs and playing them at gigs.

The worst?

Carrying heavy equipment around and hauling it from one place to another, it's especially hard with a broken arm.

Success is...?

Getting paid! It's great to get recognition financially for the music you have produced – there's nothing more rewarding.

How do you view Lancaster's music scene?

Small, chilled and friendly. It's a relaxed environment with limited talent but what talent there is, is great – better than Preston anyway.

Do you think you've changed that?

The Art Club have hopefully added to Lancaster's music scene and enabled it to be more established.

Highlight of your career so far?

A toss-up between playing with The Vaccines and taking the piss out of The Temper Trap at Underage Festival.

Who is the most fun to perform for – a festival venue or an intimate crowd?

Despite singing on a few large stages you can't beat playing to one hundred and twenty people at the Yorkshire House.

How do you stay grounded with your increasing success?

By drinking pints of Earl Grey tea and not taking yourself too seriously.

Burning ambitions?

To bring back and play on Top Of The Pops and to find Bernard's Watch.

Sizzling summer snacks

Recipes to keep you satisfied through summer

Lifestyle

Claire Kelly

Choc 'n' cherry cookies

Makes 16

Beat the butter in a bowl until soft. Add the sugar a little at a time, beating the mixture well after each addition. Once all the sugar has been added, continue mixing until the mixture appears light in colour.

Add the egg and beat it into the sugar and butter mixture.

Sift the flour into the mixture and mix well.

Stir in the chopped chocolate and cherries.

Spoon heaped desert spoonfuls of the mixture onto a baking tray (lined with baking parchment or greased with a little butter).

Bake in a 190 degree oven for 10-15 minutes until lightly browned. Cool for 5 minutes on the tray and transfer to a wire rack to cool completely.

Ingredients

125g butter (sunflower spread works just as well)

125g brown sugar

1 egg

200g self-raising flour

125g chocolate, roughly chopped into chunks (I prefer dark chocolate but milk is good too!)

75g glacé cherries



Photo by lindsaywb



Pitta Pizzas

Serves 1

Prepare your toppings. Place the pitta bread on a greased baking tray (or one lined with non-stick baking parchment). Spread the tomato puree evenly on top, followed by the cheese. Sprinkle the cherry tomatoes on top along with your desired toppings. Place in a 200 degree preheated oven for 5 minutes until lightly browned.

Alternatively, this can be cooked under the grill. Before creating your pizza, lightly toast the pitta bread on one side and then flip over onto the untoasted side to create your pizza. Once the toppings have been added place your pizza under a medium heat grill for approximately 5 minutes, keeping an eye that it does not get too crisp.

Ingredients

1 large pitta bread

1-2 tps tomato puree

Handful of cheese

3 small cherry tomatoes, chopped into small pieces

Toppings of your choice (2 sliced mushrooms, chopped ham, a few pieces of pineapple...)

Summer Pasta Bake

Serves 4

Grease a large oven-proof dish (ideally 20x30cm). Preheat the oven to 200 degrees.

Boil the pasta in water for approximately 10 minutes (or 12 if using wholemeal). While waiting, prepare the rest of the ingredients.

Fry the onion and mushrooms with a little oil (olive oil, sunflower oil or a little butter) in a large pan for 5 minutes. Add the chopped tomatoes to the pan and simmer for 2 minutes, along with some cracked pepper. Once the pasta is cooked, drain the water and add the pasta to the pan of tomatoes, onion and mushrooms. Stir the pasta through to make sure it is covered in the sauce. Add the pasta mix to the greased dish and sprinkle the cheese and chopped bread evenly over the top. Bake.

Ingredients

300g pasta

1 can chopped tomatoes (those that contain herbs work particularly well)
1 red or white onion, chopped

10 small mushrooms, peeled and chopped

1 small bowl of grated cheese

2 slices of white bread, chopped into crouton-style pieces

Life lessons from first year

Lifestyle Editor Lydia Warrender has discovered lots about life at Lancaster as a Fresher

Wake up. Yes, you. What, you've been recovering in bed for the entire summer holiday? You've still got a twitch in your eye because you got that drunk at Extrav? Get a grip; the weeks are ticking down and before you know it you'll be back for another year, ready to do it all again.

Hopefully, you are finally recovering enough to get more than a little excited for the new year. It is now the perfect time for me to look back on one slightly hazy first year of University, in which some valuable lessons have been learned.

Survival of the sweetest

Oh yes. Our dear Sugarhouse may be the home of some truly fabulous nights out, but there are some rules to stick to. And, speaking of sticking... never stand in one place for too long. You will stick to the floor. Make sure your shoes have next to no grip, or you will be immobilized by years of spilt beer, sweat and, well, best not to dwell on that one.

The Drunken Lancastrian

Here's the lowdown. You live in a city of cobbled streets. Ladies, that means your finest stilettos will break your legs. Take a responsible sober friend who can nip those great drunken ideas in the bud – spending £7 on a dodgy cocktail in The Lounge really won't be worth it in the morning. If you go upstairs in Elements/Revs/Friary, remember: what goes up must come down.



Get drunk up there, and you'll be falling back down. And make sure you take a key. If you don't come home, you do not want to be launching "Operation: Sneak Me" In with your best flatmate at ten the next morning, trust me.

Money for munchies

We all blow money on snacks, but there is one place that will eat up your weekly budget more than any other, which leads to a Lancaster Golden Rule: if broke, avoid the market at all costs. You'll be cursing that half-a-dozen coffee cupcakes when you're so poor you have to walk to town in the rain because you can't pull together £2.30 out of coppers.

Sleepyhead Student

You know the drill: you wake up to a glorious sunny day, stretch, and take a look at the clock. What? It's three minutes until your Biology seminar? This last year has taught me that it is indeed possible to get from sleep to seminar room in approximately two-and-a-half minutes. Jeans over pyjamas is the answer – and no one will notice that Pokémon t-shirt you sleep in. Promise.

...Maybe Not

When drunk, getting someone's number by serenading them with Call Me Maybe seems like a great idea. It's not.

So, are you out of bed yet? Come on, get up. Time to get back to Lancaster older, and maybe even slightly wiser. Hopefully, you'll have your own life lessons that will help you through with a few less bumps and bruises. And maybe have just one less next Extrav.

SIX OF THE BEST:



Photo by Man Alive!



Photo by raymccrae



Photo by eastscene

PLAN B

Jack Smith
Assistant Editor

Plan B's Album Launch, London

Album launch parties are typically glamorous affairs in luxurious venues, with record labels throwing money at the assembled media masses in the hope that their enjoyment of the music would be somewhat enhanced. But London rapper Plan B has never been one to take the standard route. This is perhaps one of the reasons his album launch event is held under the old railway arches of a south-east London car park.

His new album, *Ill Manors*, is by all accounts a seismic shift from his previous multi-million selling effort 'The Defamation of Strickland Banks'. Plan B, or Ben Drew, returns to his rap roots and directs his vocals at a new source of ire – the Tory-led Coalition government and the issues that led to the riots of last year.

The music is incendiary; Drew's live band is on form, hardly ever slowing the pace and even erupting into breakbeats at one stage. Highlights included 'Lost My Way', which comes to life in a live band setting compared to the more processed feel of the recorded track, and 'Falling Down', which feels like Drew surveying a wasteland after a war; "Get up off the ground, take a look around", he repeatedly chants in a hypnotic fashion.

By the final track of the main set, album title track 'Ill Manors', the crowd are enthralled by Drew – and even more so when he returns with Chase & Status for 'Pieces', which is taken to another level with a live drummer. After a few more tracks, Drew launches into a reprise of 'Ill Manors' to remind the assembled masses of his message, and then disappears into the railway arches.

Plan B is back as a man with a message – exactly what music needs today.

FRINGE

Steff Brawn
Deputy Culture Editor

Edinburgh Festival Fringe

Whilst people have gathered in their thousands down in London this August, a vibrant city at the other end of the UK made sure it was a strong contender for the top place to be this summer. On the 3rd August, the annual Edinburgh Fringe began and was ready to dazzle the crowds with the best artistic talents around.

I began my Edinburgh experience with a bunch of very talented actors from our very own university. The Lancaster Offshoots, a group branching out from LUTG, put together a performance of a modern adaptation of Euripides "Trojan Women". The next show in line, Action to the Word's performance of "A Clockwork Orange", was another highlight. You're always slightly on edge when a literary masterpiece is visually adapted, but this beat the film by a mile.

It's always good to check out some of the smaller focuses at Edinburgh too. At the renowned College of Art, a tribute to the Blues Brothers from Hartshorn-Hook Productions was the highlight, ending with the audience on their feet dancing along with the cast.

Then, of course, there is the famous comedy. Phil Jupitus's "You're Probably Wondering Why I've Asked You Here..." was a particular favourite, and turned out to be an immensely witty stand up based entirely on questions from the audience (including a hologram version of Jupitus that answered questions about the future).

The spotlight might suggest that the Olympics is the biggest event of this August, but Edinburgh is, once again, the country's real hot spot.

BLINK 182

Conor Scrivener

Blink 182, Liverpool Echo Arena

After a six year long hiatus, two years touring the US, and a one year postponement of this tour due to a delay in recording their sixth studio album, Blink-182 needed to be at the top of their game for this long awaited gig. And fortunately, they didn't let the crowd at the Echo Arena down.

With the drop of the curtain the band burst straight into 'Feeling This' which set the tone for a fantastic set from a band determined to, above everything else, have a great fun filled night. Following with 'Up All Night' off their latest album *Neighbourhoods*, Blink played hit after hit delighting fans.

The stage banter was also top class; when Tom DeLonge messed up 'I Miss You' the band could have easily let it go, but instead bassist Mark Hoppus decided to re-teach him the song. It was moments like this that managed to turn an arena gig into an intimate affair.

The single 'Wishing Well' from the band's latest album was one of the highlights of the night, showing the band can still produce quality tracks. Finishing with 'Josie' the band headed to the sound desk for an acoustic rendition of 'Reckless Abandon' and 'Waggy', the latter coming complete with a story of how it was written acoustically in Tom's room.

Blink-182 definitely showed that they still have the spark which gave them such success before they split, whilst proving they have a lot more still to offer after a truly fantastic set.

SUMMER GIGS



Photo by @giovanni



Image courtesy of Rough Trade



Photo by Jocccay

CROPREDY

Conor Scrivener

Cropredy Folk Festival

Every August folk legends Fairport Convention hold their annual festival in the village of Cropredy, Oxfordshire. It is a festival that has in some ways not changed for the past thirty two years; just one stage, one bar and a relaxed, laid back attitude from the twenty-thousand people who make the annual pilgrimage.

The festival has returned to its folk roots more than usual this year, following appearances in the past from acts like rockers Status Quo, punks The Buzzcocks and 80's sensation Nik Kershaw. It is the festival's willingness to cater for everyone, combined with the audience's unlimited respect for the artists, which truly makes this 'Britain's friendliest music festival'. And the most dreadful of festival predicaments - the unholy 'clash' - is a problem you don't have to face at Cropredy. With one stage you'll find it almost impossible to miss your favourite band!

This year's festival sees the legendary Bellowhead return, one of the best live bands out there not just within the folk scene but throughout music industry. Ex-Fairporter and folk legend Richard Thompson plays just underneath blues singer-songwriter Joan Armatrading on Friday before Fairport Convention & Friends round off the weekend on Saturday with a special set for the band's 45th anniversary.

HOWLER

Joe Henthorn
Carolynne Editor

Howler at Lancaster Library

After gracing a series of magazine covers and conquering the UK airwaves, American rockers Howler found time to take a trip to Lancaster Library on their latest tour.

The set gets off to a raucous start with 'Beach Sluts'; it's a song that is improved vastly live, thanks to a generally more reckless approach and the addition of plenty of distorted guitar. Breakout hit 'This One's Different' and the eminently catchy 'Told You Once' then get airings, both of them finding a something extra with the help of Mayes' relentless, thundering

The band took to their unfamiliar surroundings with ease too, interspersing their songs with some witty, library-focussed crowd interaction. Singer Jordan Gatesmith recalled a surreal day spent smoking weed and reading F. Scott Fitzgerald's short story collections in a Minneapolis public library, and the whole band tears into bassist Max Petrek after he suggests the crowd 'gets wild' by burning all the books, just minutes after he had jokingly proclaimed *Mein Kampf* to be his favourite book.

Sure, the set was a little messy and pretty unsophisticated, but the brash, unapologetic honesty in their music and their personalities is kind of refreshing. There is no rockstar mystique here, no carefully cultivated media persona; just four guys playing loud music and having a lot of fun whilst doing it. Howler aren't going to change your world, of course, and in fact they probably don't want to. But they managed to get Lancaster dancing, and for that they deserve praise.

GREENMAN

Joe Henthorn
Carolynne Editor

Greenman Festival

Greenman has gained a reputation as one of the most musically impressive festivals in Britain over the last ten years, but perhaps the main reason it manages to sell out every year is because it is something that most festivals stopped being long ago - a massive, wonderful, magical hippy fest. The ale is all brewed locally, it's almost impossible to find food that hasn't been grown in organic vegan pixie farms (the meat dishes, whilst rare, are stunning) and, most tellingly of all, the only paper you can buy on site is the Guardian. If you dropped a bomb on the place you'd secure a Tory majority in the Commons for a generation.

And the music? Impeccable. Metronomy, Islet, Mr. Scruff and Alt-J are some of the highlights of the line-up, but the headliners are something else entirely. The trailblazing Scots Mogwai and the effortlessly innovative Feist will open and close the festival, but for Saturday the organisers have swerved right into full-on legend territory; they've only gone and booked Van Bloody Morrison. Van the Man is renowned for his somewhat 'varied' live performances - on a good night he'll leave a crowd in a state of transcendental musical bliss, and on a bad night he'll just put them in a coma - but hopefully the Welsh mountains will bring out the best in him.

Get involved in **volunteering**



Photo by LUSU

Lifestyle

Becky Cutler

**Useful. Productive.
Uplifting. Selfless.
Purposeful.**

Affective.

All of these words can be used to describe volunteering. Putting our abilities, whether they are physical or mental, towards a past-time that is generous and necessary for communities or certain the lives of certain people is incredibly beneficial in a number of aspects, whether they affect us personally or not.

I have partaken in various volunteering projects over the past few years, but I have to say that Lancaster itself offers a great deal more than I expected, even for a city. I guarantee that there are so many personal and social benefits that are created from offering your time and energy towards volunteering endeavors which are so worthwhile. There are plenty of examples of volunteering opportunities in and around Lancaster, and even through the university itself. You can assist at the local homeless shelter in Lancaster, located almost in the centre of town; Lancashire County Council offers great volunteering opportunities such as the buddy system,

where you are partnered with a senior member of the community as a source of friendship and occasional assistance; and the University itself offers routes into volunteering in the area, such as with the Barnardo's society. Also, the volunteering department provides opportunities for helping out in local schools.

In terms of volunteering away from Lancaster itself, not only does Lancaster University offer projects abroad to help in areas such as Fiji and Africa, but it also offers links with organizations such as BUNAC which offer volunteering courses such as Camp America and other services in locations such as South Africa and China.

Volunteering, whether local or perhaps further afield, can offer you things beyond a simple CV boost. It gives you an insight into some amazing types of people: dedicated, constructive people who put so much effort into contributing to the specific area or enterprise that you have chosen to volunteer with. The people I have come across have been tireless in their efforts and I can see in the individuals and groups they have benefited just how valuable these types of voluntary contributions are, motivating people to make their lives better.

Everyone who is capable of volunteering should do it - it is something that communities cannot do without. The benefits that it brings are so rewarding it is impossible to truly criticise. As a result, with so many more opportunities beyond the ones mentioned in this article, you should definitely find your own voluntary vocation, and embrace it as much as you can.

For more information about volunteering at Lancaster, visit involve.lusu.co.uk.

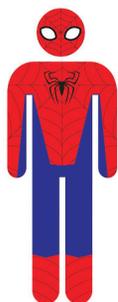
The rise of the superhero

Unmasking the superhero phenomenon

Features

Nicholas O'Dowd

The Avengers, The Amazing Spiderman, The Dark Knight Rises, the list of superhero films being produced by Hollywood grows exponentially year on year, winning both critical and audience acclaim alike. But how has something so nerdy, a genre once only consumed only by the archetypical "comic book guy" from The Simpsons, won over mainstream audiences?



Images by mondi

The contrast between the 1960s television series of Batman and Christopher Nolan's The Dark Knight is striking. One is silly and childish, providing cheap laughs on YouTube, while the other is a serious work of art. It would have been unthinkable in the 1960s to give comic book characters the same kind of gravity Nolan gives to Batman today. But something happened between the 1960s and the 2000s - the computer revolution. In the 1980s, computers were used by socially awkward young men in thick glasses and in the 1990s by children playing Super Mario and Pokémon. However, by the 2000s those child gamers had grown into adult gamers and the socially awkward men who had made the computers were now the richest men in the world. Wearing thick-rimmed glasses had become

cool, playing their video games was cool, and their whole nerdy sub-culture went mainstream.

Is that the answer? The popularity of superhero films is down to the general success of nerd culture over the past decade? Perhaps there is a little more to it; after all, not all aspects of nerd culture have broken into the mainstream. The clue is in the word itself - superhero. Superhero films might resonate with modern audiences because they reflect a desire for heroes in what we feel are dangerous times. Terrorist attacks such as 9/11, 7/7 and the Utoya attacks profoundly shook Western society. It is disturbing how much death and destruction can be caused by one individual alone. When we feel threatened, we need heroes - but the awkward fact is that those "heroes" who really stop these villains are nameless, anonymous and perhaps Jack Bauer-like MI6, CIA and special forces operatives. Could the recent popularity of superhero films reflect a subconscious desire in audiences for there to be real-life, visible and morally unambiguous heroes who stop the terrorist villains? If that is the case, it is ironic that the superheroes on the silver screen are themselves masked to hide their true identity while the "heroes" of the real world are masked by layers of government secrecy.

A final factor to consider is that perhaps superhero comics are uniquely well adapted for cinema. Comics are a visual art style and translate easily into motion pictures, perhaps more easily than books as it is easier to visually portray action and story as the original art-

ist intended. But more importantly, the world of comics is deep, complex, and flexible. Unlike books, which have been translated into film such as Lord of the Rings or Harry Potter, there is no fixed plot-line that the film director has to follow - just guidelines. This means that the script writers have the creative freedom to craft a plot which is suitable for 120 minutes at the cinema, without the problem of condensing several hours of literature into the space of two hours.



It is hard not to be surprised by the success of superhero comics in cinema. Superhero comics in their native form are perhaps one of the least accessible aspects of nerd culture, and you would not expect mainstream audiences to take over the top, costumed characters with names such as Batman or The Joker seriously. At least, in this case, it is enjoyable to be proven wrong.

Introducing: LA1:TV



Last year, LA1:TV became your award winning student TV station. This year they aim to be your multi-award winning TV station, by continuing to bring you shows such as Sugar TV and live coverage from events such as Roses and elections.

LA1:TV have a ton of exciting projects lined up in the coming year and will be out and about filming events like Freshers' Week, so make sure you don't look too rough when you get caught on camera!

You may have noticed them wondering around your Extrav with a camera; keep an eye on the LA1:TV website for the footage from all the Extrav appearing soon. It is never too late to get involved in any of the student media, but if you think TV might be your thing (whether presenting, filming or editing) sign up and give it a go!

Look out for the LA1:TV crew at at freshers fair or contact them at their website: la1tv.lusu.co.uk

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CULTURE CLASH

FIFTY SHADES OF GREY

Culture

Beth Palfrey-Smith

I knew very little of *Fifty Shades of Grey* when I picked it up as a quick holiday read (only that it will supposedly be responsible for a baby boom in 9 months time), but I was left utterly dissatisfied by the best-selling sensation.

This is mainly because EL James's writing is ignorant and immature. Every writer has to knead out the kinks in early drafts; some mistakes are easy to make but they're also easy to spot. Most writers give away too much because we fear inaccurately demonstrating our point. However, you have to give your readers some credit that they possess enough brains to work out simple character traits and plot twists. The problem is that EL James doesn't give her readers any credit that they will understand what's going on. This isn't a first person narration, it is a running commentary. We are accompanied not only by Anastasia's inane thoughts ('Holy shit, I've just agreed to be his sub') and actions, but the thoughts and actions of her personified subconscious and her 'inner sex goddess'.

'Plagiarised porn about an unrealistic abusive relationship?'

The strange sense of familiarity that plagued me was a striking similarity between *Fifty Shades of Grey* and *Twilight*. It came to my attention that the novel arose from *Twilight* fanfiction, and that is where it should have stayed. Fanfiction is a hobby, a guilty pleasure of a pastime and perhaps a leg-up to developing your own characters and stories. Whether you loathe *Twilight* or are an absolute 'Twi-hard' is beside the point; *Fifty Shades* is unacceptable plagiarism.

My disappointment only grew as I waited for Anastasia's discovery of her sexuality. This book is not only smut, but the furthest thing from sexual liberation. What EL James has achieved in the character of Anastasia is a confused, self-loathing virgin with warring inner personalities who is swept into an abusive, sexual relationship that she is not ready for and does not understand. It is also an inaccurate portrayal of a typical Dominant/Submissive relationship. The sexual scenes are unrealistic, entirely pornographic and pure fantasy. I despair of teenage girls picking up this book and encountering a world where losing your virginity involves multiple orgasms due to expert foreplay and rough sex - they might actually believe it.

What is perhaps the worst offence is the notoriety with which this book is now received. Is it to be the *Lady Chatterley's Lover* of our generation? D. H. Lawrence will be turning in his grave. In our day and age, *Fifty Shades of Grey* is unlikely to be banned due to its overt sexuality, although perhaps we can start a petition to ban it due to its atrocious writing.

Stephanie Bell

Culture Editor

This summer has been the wettest since records began, and there may be a reason why. While it has been raining outdoors it has been *Grey* inside, with women nationwide opting for nights in curled up with their nearest and dearest copy of *Fifty Shades of Grey*. The novel written by EL James has turned many women fifty shades of pink and many men a whiter shade of pale, whilst being described as that 'naughty book' by grannies nationwide.

After hearing the novel had sold more than thirty million copies around the globe, I was instantly intrigued and like many women wanted to have a sneaky peek; just to see what all the fuss was about. This must be life-changing, earth quaking stuff, I mused - the fastest selling paperback of all time in the UK must offer some sort of revelation. The meaning of life? The secret to an instant triple orgasm? Come on, how to ensnare Ryan Gosling at the very least?

'Granny porn inspiring a nation to read?'

Wishful thinking my fellow females; after a couple of chapters I was left high and dry and disappointed. Whereas many readers view the book as a guilty pleasure for its raunchiness, it became mine for how poorly it is written. It reads like a GCSE candidates work - the plot is basic, obvious and clichéd.

And yet, for some reason, I couldn't put it down.

Whilst my "inner goddess" was not "doing the meringue" I can truly appreciate why so many people's was "cartwheeling" in succession. The language, although simple, is accessible and user-friendly. The lack of complex jargon has led the content to be consumed quickly - causing readers to buy into the trilogy.

The book derived from self - confessed 'fanfiction,' has managed to provide readers with enough material to invest, not only in the trilogy, but in the author's vision. We have been sold a lifestyle, a window into another world. In a sense it has done what good literature should do - evoke a reaction and simultaneously provide a suitable platform for escapism.

For an erotic phenomenon it is suitably titillating. The intensive kink sessions are confined to 'the red room of pain' which although ominous, compartmentalises the sadistic streak, allowing the reader to also connect with the desire, emotional weighting and kinetic tension between the two main protagonists. The story evolves until a stronger bond is formed between the pair - the sort which transcends the monotony of everyday life. That's it, that's the fantasy.

Whilst I may never understand how Ana never contracts cystitis or her preference to exert her lack of gag reflex over watching re-runs of *Friends*, I can fully comprehend why 2012 will be forever hailed the summer of grey.



Photo by Sprint-Fire

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Introducing: Bailrigg FM

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87.7 Bailrigg FM is your student sound - one of the oldest student-run radio stations in the country and the first student station licensed to broadcast full-time on FM.

In the next we have lots of exciting events coming up, including a 9 day outside broadcast during fresher's week! Along with this, we will also be hosting 2 live music events at the end of fresher's week - one on Saturday 6th October in Cartmel College and the other Sunday 7th October in County College.

We will also be covering live events throughout the year including Campus Festival, LUSU Elections, Battle of the Bands, Roses 2013 and lots more!

Bailrigg FM broadcast 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, every day of the year. We offer anyone the chance to take to the airwaves by presenting their own show, but that's not all we do! There is plenty going on behind the scenes including production, music selection, engineering and much, much more. So even if presenting isn't your thing, you're sure to find something that suits you.

Want to get involved? Come and find us during fresher's week and become a member. Membership for the 12/13 academic year is available for the bargain price of £3 and also includes membership for SCAN and LA1:TV.



Twitter wars

FEATURES

Annie Gouk
Features Editor

This summer, we as internet users experienced a landmark in online freedom, and even more importantly - common sense has prevailed. In what has been referred to as the Twitter Joke Trial, Paul Chambers was arrested by anti-terrorist police, prosecuted and convicted for sending a 'menacing' tweet. He was forced to pay nearly £1,000, and subsequently lost his job. This tweet? "Crap! Robin Hood airport is closed. You've got a week and a bit to get your shit together otherwise I'm blowing the airport sky high!!" Hardly seems worth the fuss, does it? Thankfully, many people including legal commentators and celebrities rallied against his conviction, presumably for the reason that it was simply ridiculous. General consensus was, here was the beginning signs of a push towards online censorship. Chambers's conviction was quashed on the 27th July 2012 when the tweet was finally recognised to have been a joke and not a terrorist threat. For now, it seems, the interwebs is safe for comedians once again.

However, since this victory for Paul Chambers, another Twitter incident has since brought in to questions the limits to the freedom of internet speech. After Tom Daley missed out on a medal in the men's synchronised

10m platform diving event, Twitter user Rileyyy69 took to the internet to express his displeasure. The first abuse Daley suffered was the message "You let your dad down i hope you know that." - Daley's father passed away last year from brain cancer. After Daley re-tweeted this charming message and legions of fans rose to harangue his assailant, Rileyyy69 decided to apologise. However, this feeble attempt at backtracking was refuted when he continued to abuse Daley and his followers, including one tweet that threatened to drown Daley in a pool. Despicable as this is, this kind of abuse is commonplace on the internet (aimed at both celebrities and civilians), and it is presumably fuelled by the seeming anonymity of sites and the lack of serious reproach. What was unusual in this case was that the 17 year old Rileyyy69 was later arrested by police, before being given a warning and bailed.

Naturally, comparisons have been drawn between this occasion and the Twitter Joke Trial, with people claiming that the tweet was not a serious threat. However, death threats are never funny whether they are carried out or not, and it certainly carried malicious intent. What seems to confuse people is the difference between 'real life' and the internet - if Rileyyy69 had abused and threatened Daley in person it is likely he would have had to deal with the law, but on the internet it doesn't count, right? Erm, no.

Online bullying (and so it should be called, rather

than branded as jovial 'trolling') is a serious issue, and one that needs addressing. The Daley incident shows just the tip of the iceberg - many internet users face incessant, repeated abuse from multiple people. Often, not much is done about it, whether from site moderators or other users, and particularly not by the police force. Indeed, I struggled to believe that, had a similar tweet been directed to me, police would have even batted an eyelid. But then I'm not a national hero.

I do believe that arresting Rileyyy69 was a step too far. But that's not because I feel that he was exercising his freedom of speech. Those who confuse his actions with being on par with the lighthearted joke of Paul Chambers need to face the fact that just because something is said online, that doesn't mean it 'doesn't count'. In these internet-fuelled times, we have to accepted that when we're online we're just as much in the 'real-world' as anywhere else. Our actions and words have consequences, and while common sense should always dictate what these consequences are, bullies and all round horrible people should not get off scot free. No, we should not censor the internet, but nor should be allow it to descend into lawless anarchy.

COMMENT

FTO, CCO, WTF?

LUSU President Ste Smith offers his thoughts on elected officers



This year is about change. We've had change in the higher education sector, change in the University and change in the Students' Union. This year, more of us voted than ever before; our new Postgraduate Board provides a better forum for the students it represents; the voices of our Departmental Reps grow louder; LUSU's democracy as a whole is getting stronger.

However, more change needs to happen. We need to become better at representing all students, regardless of mode of study, background or interests. For this change to happen, we need to have a fundamental rethink about how we represent Lancaster students.

Lancaster students are represented by a team of Full Time Officers, your FTOs who work with the University on your behalf to make your time at Lancaster as happy as possible.

But, if you're thinking 'WTF' to FTO then you wouldn't be the first. The curse of the three letter acronym has plagued our Union for years. Many times the question has been asked: "how can we make our FTOs more accessible to students without coming across as self appointed campus celebrities (the BNOCs of Lancaster for those acronym lovers amongst you)?"

How often would you recognise one of your Full Time Officers at your College events? Meeting and greeting people in the Square? Or shouting from the sidelines to support your team? The answer: not often enough.

The sad fact of the matter is that your officers spend so much of their time sat in their offices, completing paperwork and answering e-mails. If they're lucky enough to be out of the office then they're probably just stuck in a meeting room somewhere else. Hardly accessible.

LUSU is a dynamic organisation: we constantly need to refresh what we do to stay relevant. The time has come to do that, to review how we work and change things for the better.

LUSU needs a culture shift; one where your officers spend more time being active around campus, speaking to you, supporting you and truly engaging with the student body.

We need to bust the jargon. You should know your FTOs because they've engaged with you or supported you in some way: They shouldn't be a foreign concept or simply three letters. (And let's be honest, who knows what EWD is anyway?)

'We need to become better at representing all students, regardless of mode of study, background or interests.'

As students we need to ask ourselves a few questions. What roles should our officers have? Where do we feel they're not doing enough? Where would we like to see them, and what do we want to see them doing?

These questions may seem quite basic to some, but they're important and they need to be asked. Your Full Time Officers have launched a review and they're desperate for your input. Take the time out to

comment in the open source democracy part of the LUSU website (yourvoice.lusu.co.uk), e-mail your officers, tweet them or connect with them on Facebook.

Together we can build a structure of representation that can be efficient, effective and fit for the future. FTW!

Acronyms Explained

LUSU - Lancaster University Students' Union

You may not realise it but you are part of LUSU, by becoming a part of the university you instantly become a member of LUSU.

FTO- Full Time Officer

These are six people elected by students every year to represent them in the Union full time.

CCO- Cross Campus Officer

These are part time roles that work closely with the FTOs to represent students across the campus.

BNOC- Big Name On Campus

A hugely cringy name used on some campuses to describe officers. Personally we are not a fan.

EWD- Equality Welfare and Diversity

This is one of the Full Time Officer roles. Responsible for overseeing just what it says on the tin, You can drop in for a chat with your EWD officer at any time.

Managerial Strategy and Chinese Whispers

The university's latest soiree of covert restructuring is par the course, says Chris Witter

It seems simple enough to observe that information about Lancaster University is subject to tight controls and restricted access. A managerial apparatus exists that is removed from the university body – staff and students – and, like any bureaucracy, it keeps its functioning shrouded in secrecy. In this way, it is able to avoid scrutiny of its operations and, when information does get through to the university body, it is able to keep open the door to denials. Anyone who attempts to criticise the University's ways of operating will be told: "You don't know the facts, so shut it."

Last year saw several major controversies that made this clear. The first was the setting of fee levels, which occurred without any substantial input from staff or students. The exact amount of influence Lancaster University Students' Union (LUSU) was able to exert is unclear, which implicates LUSU in this process of secrecy. Of course, since the utterly spurious argument was circulating in the Union at the time that if we didn't charge the maximum

fees we'd look second-rate, it may be an underestimation of LUSU to say it had no hand in events.

The second was the appoint-

ment of a new Vice Chancellor – made with zero input from students – which was quickly followed by the attempted appointment of a new FASS Dean from Australia, Professor Nancy Wright. This appointment was rapidly aborted when subtext (Lancaster's underground academic newsletter) reported on Professor Wright's track record: known as a "grim reaper" at her previous institution for enforcing drastic budget cuts at her previous institution, it seemed she was fleeing Australia for a reason.

However, the real controversies were the Business Processes Review (BPR) and the briefly floated and rapidly aborted Lancaster-Liverpool merger. The former was a forced cull of administrative and support staff that would have badly affected academic staff and students. Remarkably, staff as well as students were purposely kept in the dark in order to ease the way for a management de-

termined to steam-roll through destructive measures without consultation. The University administration's basic policy seemed to be: "If you've nothing good to say, say nothing at all."

Eventually, the BPR was met with determined resistance, but only because a grassroots

coalition of admin staff and students managed to get hold of information, publicise the negative effects of this process, build support amongst the university body, and pressure LUSU into backing the campaign. It is worth noting that all of this is left out of the official history. Rather than a grassroots group pressuring into action a clayfooted LUSU hesitant to openly move against management, the official history propagated by LUSU and SCAN converted this sordid episode into a LUSU victory – and, in particular, a George Gardiner success story. Here we see another way in which information is controlled.

Beyond these major controversies, a more insidious means of information control is everywhere in operation. Through

a host of media – for example websites, emails, posters, letters, signs, newsletters, and even the architecture of the University itself – the managerial bureaucracy disseminates the information, images, and narratives that are useful to it while suppressing or withholding anything controversial.

'Eventually, the BPR was met with determined resistance'

What else is all this swanky new red-cladding about, apart from projecting a certain branded image of the University: an image of the University as entrepreneurial hub that correlates to its rapid development of lucrative business and marketing courses.

But, this whole strategy of concealment only makes abundantly clear the fact that the managerial bureaucracy does not want staff and students involved in the processes of determining the form and

direction of the University. This process of information control and damage limitation is only necessary because the University is developing in ways which are antagonistic towards the needs and desires of students and staff. Our University and our education are being rationalised away by managers keen only to increase profits. This whole process is premised upon finding new avenues by which to exploit students – such as more expensive accommodation, more expensive courses, more hidden costs – whilst cutting the cost of producing education, evidenced by fewer course modules, reduced

library resources, less support, and more intensely exploited staff.

This is the kernel of truth contained within the mystical shell, the truth we increasingly confront. Thus the act of concealment becomes an act of revelation.

The UN is failing the people of Syria

The international community could do more to help the situation

Alex Littleboy
Comment Editor

Recently, the conflict between the Syrian government and the Free Syrian Army, the rebel force born in the Arab Spring, has come to a head. The International Committee of the Red Cross has classified the conflict as a “non-international armed conflict”, or civil war, former UN secretary general Kofi Annan resigned as special envoy to Syria, citing the uncompromising attitudes of both sides in the conflict as his reason, and both forces have led major offensives, the rebels in Damascus and the regime in Aleppo.

Despite these major developments, the international community has done very little to intervene in the conflict and attempt to prevent further bloodshed. Any motions proposed by the Security Council have been vetoed by Russia and China, and any sanctions that have been put in place have been largely ineffective. The ceasefire plan outlined by the Arab League and UN utterly failed, as neither side is will-

ing to cooperate with the other – the Syrian regime continues to brand the rebels as “foreign-backed terrorists”, whereas to the rebel forces the regime are a dictatorship to be overthrown at any cost. These attitudes have hindered any attempt at a ceasefire, as neither side sees an end to hostilities to be in their own interests.

However, there is a great difference in the attitudes of both sides to the involvement of foreign powers. The Syrian government has warned foreign powers away, threatening the use of chemical weapons against outside forces in the case of exterior aggression. However, they import weaponry from Russia, one of the main opponents of international intervention in the civil war.

On the other hand, the revolutionaries have received major international support, from the EU, the Arab League and the US, for example the UK giving £5 million in funding to the rebels, although none is to be used for armament. The international community have great interest in the way the Syrian war unfolds, and without international support, the rebels will surely lose the war,

being wildly outnumbered and outgunned – while the regime has armed forces numbering 325,000 regular soldiers and 100,000 irregular soldiers, the Free Syrian Army have only 70,000 soldiers, as well as very few arms, and in some cases relying on DIY weapons such as slingshots.

Although there has been great international support for the uprising, there have been many reports of human rights abuses from both sides of the conflict. The Assad regime receives the majority of the criticism for these, for example firing indiscriminately on civilian centres, murdering unarmed demonstrators and using torture. However, the Free Syrian Army is not entirely blameless, as some of its allies, which include jihadi groups from the middle east, have themselves committed war crimes. However, as the revolution has received a large amount of support in the West, these have largely been ignored or characterised as inevitable consequences of war.

There is also a religious element to the war – the Syrian regime has a large amount of support from the Alawi com-

munity, of which President Assad is a member, while the rebel forces have often been considered to have strong Islamist elements. International involvement in the crisis could have the effect of polarising the conflict further, as Syrians may not take kindly to western involvement in their war, especially the more radical Islamist elements of the conflict.

‘Although there has been great international support for the uprising, there have been many reports of human rights abuses from both sides of the conflict.’

A delicate touch must be used in order to prevent the conflict from becoming a breeding ground for anti-western sentiment, such as in the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The ordinary Syrian people, those not involved in fighting on either side of the conflict, are the real victims. However, any attempt to intervene has been blocked by Russia and China, both nations attempting to protect their investments in the region. Furthermore, incidents of self-immolation in Tibet and

Sichuan could indicate that the influence of the Arab Spring is heading towards China, and that they could be attempting to stem the flow in Syria. The Russian reaction is far more simple – their only naval base on the mediterranean is to be found in Syria.

Throughout the war, the UN has been ineffective at preventing civilian casualties and war crimes – something that I see as a vital function of the UN. Although the situation is very complicated, the UN should have done more to protect the individuals living in Syria. The way that a single nation can destroy international peace plans for their own benefit shows that the current international model has failed, and that we need to consider who the UN serves – the ordinary people, or the nations that answer to it.

The Opening Ceremony redefined national pride

Sam Smallridge

The Olympic opening ceremony did more than you might expect

It began at 9pm on the 27th of July with a 32 year-old who had won the tour de France a few days before. Looking over the 80,000 strong crowd wearing an indifferent look on his face, as excitement reached a boiling point. With one almighty ring of the bell Britain entered one of its prouder chapters in its post-

world war two history. To many the Olympic opening ceremony restored national pride, helped people see their country as great again and ensured patriotism for, at the very least, the next 18 days. Danny Boyle did not just restore national pride with his four hour spectacle – he redefined it. The British flag has for too long now been a symbol of aggressive, prejudiced nationalism and a cloak for the bigots in Britain to hide under. Hijacked by the British National Party and other nationalists the union flag has become associated with jingoistic ignorance. Not only has the ceremony helped people reconnect the flag with the public, it demonstrated a national pride with a very different narrative from the previous blinkered empire nostalgia, adoration

of monarchs and celebrations of ‘two world wars and one world cup’. Instead we showed the world just exactly what Britain has to be proud of.

We celebrated common culture, not just the pretence of high culture but everything that gives Britain its uniqueness. From the opening chords of Going Underground, David Bowie, the Happy Mondays and the Prodigy, songs which have captivated Britons and populate dance floors across the country.

‘The British flag has for too long now been a symbol of aggressive, prejudiced nationalism and a cloak for the bigots in Britain to hide under’

It finished off with a ‘live’ performance, from local boy Dizze Rascal performing Bonkers ending and defining the magical musical history tour of Great Britain. With live appearances from J.K Rowling, Mr. Bean and the Arctic Monkeys it summed up the best of British cultural populace.

Controversially, to some, multiculturalism was celebrated in a way that no politician has been prepared to in recent memory. MV Empire Windrush, accompanied by many migrants, was given great prominence as the story of post-war Britain unfolded. It was a tribute to the effect of immigration on this country and a celebration of the diversity of our country which few have had the courage to trumpet in

the face of vocal xenophobic pressure from minority groups. Perhaps the most controversial aspect of the ceremony was the NHS sequence, where a dark terrifying overlord rose above the patients and nurses, threatening them with his incommensurate power. Controversial, yes, but it was a necessary acknowledgement of a great part of Brit-

Redefining a nation's pride

ain. To ignore it on account of upsetting people would seemingly have been particularly unbritish. Instead, Danny Boyle demonstrated how Britain has strived to protect the most vulnerable in its society. Instigated at a time of crippling debt and crisis the NHS remains an emblem of a country that endeavoured to look after their sick and wounded at a time when to many it was not even feasible, making its inclusion all the more vital.

The Olympics have seemingly united a country which one year ago was ravaged by riots as social tensions came to a violent and terrifying peak. London streets have now become the settings for British triumphs,

in stark contrast to last year's scenes. In the media Jan Moir of the Daily Mail has taken the time to write a gushing piece on the BBC's outstanding performer Clare Balding, and in an editorial the Sun on Sun day declared "The far-right are wasting their time, we're a multi-ethnic country and they've lost".

'Bold and uncharacteristic claims from the country's highest selling newspapers, but beliefs inspired by the events that have unfolded in London over the last two weeks.'

For now, we have a cultivated solidarity in Great Britain under a banner defined by the opening ceremony. It made more mainstream a more modest and relaxed patriotism and helped endear Britain to people all over the world, but most importantly the British themselves, capturing national pride from right-wing margins. Thankfully there was no orchestral rendition of "Rule Britannia!", no lectures about saving the world, twice, and no glorification of the pomp of empire. Instead with an incredibly thoughtful, comprehensive approach and a dash of eccentric

'British humour, post-world war national pride was reclaimed, remodelled and proudly shown to the world.'

It showed Britain as a country that is; on the whole caring, multi-cultural, comfortable with its decline and identity in the world, and just a little bit odd, or to put it another way, much like the music itself, it's got a rather special back catalogue.

It's last orders for licensees

Ronnie Rowlands

The potential restructuring of commercial services shows a blatant disregard for the college spirit

When the cat's away, the mice will play. And boy, are these mice having one raucous do in our absence. Come October, you may well find yourself wading through a ball pool of empty shot glasses, skilfully avoiding the sick on the walls.

I am referring, of course, to our front page story. After almost three years of false starts, barely intact eggshells and a whole lot of bullshit, the licensees of the nine college bars are finally dashing for last orders and preparing for the worst.

Not content with the collegiate system now being nothing more than an anticlimactic promise of wonder to prospec-

tive students, not fulfilled by college bars now resembling the inside of an early iPod, University House hopes to finally be rid of those pesky bar managers.

Were I staring redundancy in the face, I'd be relieved to be shot of a place where every potential controller wanted me to go away. Even LUSU, who were hailed by all as the saviour of the college bars, abandoned their takeover bid because the university's HR department (to their credit) wouldn't sack off the licensees and pay the redundancy packages for them.

Sorry, I just said that out loud, didn't I? Has there ever been a stronger air of 'grown ups talking' than that which seeps from University House, as they remain infuriatingly ignorant of students who don't want to drink on the set of a fifties B-movie based in the future?

Imagine you run a successful restaurant. All of a sudden, you find a significant dip in your fortunes. The shop averages about two returning customers a week who only do so because they can't let go of the shoddy remains of the charm your establishment once had. You haemorrhage money from every orifice and, fed up of subsidising on 20 pence a month, decide to ask one of your many former

customers why they don't both- er anymore.

"Why don't you eat at my restaurant anymore?"

"Because since you switched to a different supplier, your meat started to taste like antique sewage. Go to the old supplier and I'll come back."

Having ascertained why your restaurant is gushing down the drain, you take the most obvious step towards improving your fortunes - You fire nine of your waiters, give highly paid managerial positions to three, who between them oversee the work of two part time waiters who are now on less pay. You close the restaurant for a year, spend a fortune redecorating and reopen a year later to fewer people, who eventually thin out because the food still tastes like antique sewage. What could be simpler than that?

'Were I staring redundancy in the face, I'd be relieved to be shot of a place where every potential controller wanted me to go away.'

An there ends our metaphorical journey into the minds of a sect of the University House Hierarchy, lumbered with the task of improving the profitability of

our college bars.

We've learned many, many things from the staffing changes that the university is trying to railroad before our return. First of all, 'improving performance' doesn't mean 'make more money from something that has been improved.' No, what it actually means is 'save money by having fewer wage packets to fill, because then it doesn't matter that the bars are still empty.'

Isn't the primitive makeup of a managerial mind a morbid marvel to behold? Yet they have the matching brass balls and neck to even deign to suggest that what they are doing will 'improve the student experience'.

Like hell it will.

Licensees are part of the dying collegiate breed, the sole thumb in the dike that restrains a tsunami of hegemony as it rages dangerously close to bursting point. And aside from the misty eyed yearning for 'tradition', these people know infinitely more of the craft and knowledge of publicanism than their overlords, who wouldn't be seen dead in the venues that they're sodomising into an unhappy adulthood.

Anyone who attends any pub on a regular basis will do so on the basis of two things - that the

room doesn't look like shit, and that there is a face there who knows what sells, what works and and what their 'usual' is. And as the university edges ever closer to loading the gun with which they shall shoot us and themselves in the foot, we can only hope that these proposals fall through and a climbdown ensues.

In the mean time, the best support we can offer is conveniently distant derision for the plans.

They don't know what we want. If only, oh if ONLY they could somehow ask us...

SPORT

Olympic success: Does gold breed gold?

Will Taylor
Sports Editor

As the last few days of London 2012 approach and the nation basks in the glow of a monumental medal haul, one cannot help but feel uplifted by such a fantastic, and unexpected, success. Back in 2008, GB set a benchmark with a tremendous medal haul, and one that we hoped to better in four years time at our home games in London. What has happened over the past fortnight has gone far and beyond even our wildest expectations. Despite the slow start, team GB has rocketed up the medal table, a tangible sense of momentum seems to follow in the wake of every event and "God Save the Queen" has been blaring out at medal ceremonies from Eton Daoney to Olympic Park.

Despite some monumental achievements in recent years, British sport as a whole is often regarded as being unsuccessful. Much of this is due to the fact that a vast percentage of the nation will judge our sporting prowess solely on the success of the English football team. Sadly, this sentences us to eternal mediocrity mixed in with a nice dose of occasional optimism, which we quickly realise to be misplaced and unreasonable, leaving us all feeling a little bit silly. Especially when athletes such as Chris Hoy, Ben Ainsley and Jessica Ennis continue to deliver the goods, and rise to every challenge and expectation the nation sets them.

It is often commented on, by pundits and worried mothers, that the modern sports star is a

role model. Most children, often spurred on by zealous fathers and friends, will seek to emulate the actions of their favourite athlete or player, both in their on the pitch performance, and their off the pitch attitude. In recent times, this emulation has been viewed as a negative, with Wayne Rooney's outburst into the microphone of a Sky Sports camera being a major culprit for this view.

However, with the success of the GB team this summer, one cannot wonder whether perhaps the Rooneys and Hensons of the world are becoming deposed by a more worthy class of hero. It is an unarguable fact that a nation's sporting success at the highest level will see a boom in regards to the intake of young people at grassroot level. After England's success at the Rugby World Cup in 2003, rugby clubs were flooded with young players, all seeking to become the next Wilko or Johnson. The same was seen in Wales after their 2005 Grand Slam success, a year which also saw an explosion on the cricket pitch, as Australia went down to the bowling and batting of Michael Vaughn and his men.

Great Britain's surpassed all expectations at their last Olympic games, and the success of Beijing was reflected back home at athletics tracks, rowing clubs, and velodromes up and down the country, with young athletes all striving to be the next to mount the podium in the name of a nation. The results of such a boom can be seen not in some national statistic, but in the medal table of the London 2012 games. Success breeds success,



Photo by mzacha

winners breed winners, and gold, it seems, breeds more gold.

'Despite some monumental achievements in recent years, British sport as a whole is often regarded as being unsuccessful. Much of this is due to the fact that a vast percentage of the nation will judge our sporting prowess solely on the success of the English football team.'

The success at the top will undoubtedly ripple down through all levels of the sport, and University level is bound to feel the waves of momentum such results bring. Lancaster University prides itself on sporting success and tradition. Roses 2012 was a testimony to that.

The Carter Shield is contested

throughout the year, with each little success amounting to a much bigger picture as the results table form at the end of the year, and teams are drawn up for the mouth watering clashes of Patriots, Legends, and Founders. It is these seemingly insignificant sporting events that build up to give us the bigger picture. A college football team is small, but many together make a league. A single league is small, but many together gives us a university sporting calendar. There are many universities and sports clubs across the country. It is people from such universities and clubs who are winning the small fortune of gold, silver, and bronze at London 2012. So if this is your final year, second year, or (if you are lucky enough) your freshman year at Lancaster University, I encourage you to get involved. Whether you are an aspiring striker, rower, archer or tennis player, and want to get in to

the thick of it, or whether you simply show up at the sidelines with a few mates and a crate, do it.

Because it is the little things like that which make up the bigger picture. And it's always cool to say you went to University with an Olympian.

"Societies and sports teams are a great way to find like-minded people"

Liz Ashworth
LUSU Vice President

(Activities)

I'm really excited about working with most of you over the coming year! Those of you who haven't already joined a club, it isn't too late. Societies and sports teams are a great way to find like-minded people, develop a hobby and create an epic social life. If you fancy getting fit and don't think sport is for you, you can save 5% on a gym membership if you buy online before the end of week two.

There really is so much on offer at Lancaster, you don't have an excuse not to get involved. Last year, the activities exec approved the

affiliation of 33 new societies and association and one sports team. To find out more, look out for the Freshers' Fair and Activities Showcase in Michaelmas Term, or come in to LUSU and ask.

It is brilliant to find that 21 teams came third or higher in their leagues, with men's basketball, cricket 1st and 2nd, netball 2nd, rugby league, rugby union 2nd and squash men's 2nd winning their respective BUCS leagues.

The coming year will also see karate, athletics, and American football becoming BUCS sports. Whilst these are amazing achievements, there is even more to be proud of outside of than league tables - tournaments were held by a number of

teams, including ultimate Frisbee, squash, cricket, swimming, athletics, and dance.

I am very keen on promoting both charity and volunteering events. Last year, four teams went into schools and taught their sports to children - it looks amazing on your CV and is great experience. Taking over from RAG, LUSU Gives has been created this year as an association of the different charity societies we have. Different groups have held individual events to raise money in previous years, but I want to create this on a larger scale by involving more clubs and holding the events in the same week, so get thinking of what your club is going to do in the first term now!

I have spoken to different societies and sports teams to find out what they would like to bring benefit to their clubs. The general feedback - affecting groups every year - is the need for floor space and time in the sports centre. It wasn't until finding myself in this position that I realised the difficulty of timetabling. Working with the sports centre, I can see the demand they face from clubs as well as from external members. This is something I will continue working to try and improve over the coming year.

This summer, I have seen the grounds plans to be implemented over the next year. If all goes to plan, this will include a synthetic cricket pitch and an additional Astroturf pitch. I

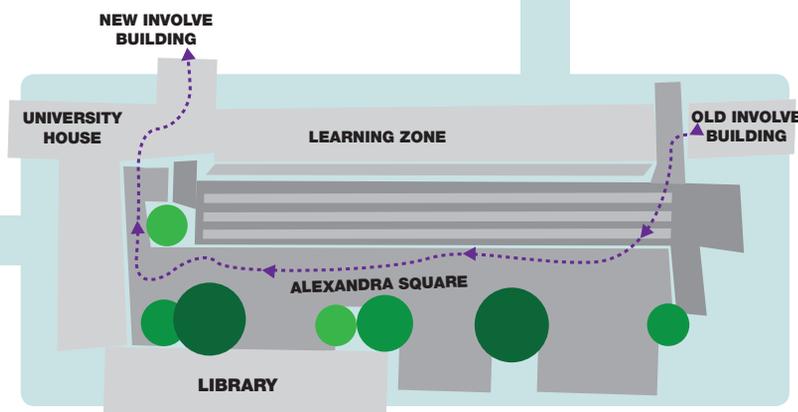
have been speaking to various clubs about what they would like to create or take part in next year. If there is anything you would like to do, then the summer is the best time to work on it, so please get in touch. For this, I welcome any of your suggestions too.



involve

we've moved!

LUSU involve has moved into a new building! You can find us here...



SPORT

Out with the old and in with the new

Long Overdue Carter Shield reform is being prepared

Laurence Pullan
Sports Editor

The Union's sabbatical officer for Activities, Liz Ashworth, has started her tenure by enforcing radical change to the once popular, now problematic, Carter Shield. The Carter Shield is known by some to be the most prestigious inter-college sporting accolade, where colleges meet on a weekly basis each Sunday to compete in a variety of activities such as dodge-ball, indoor hockey and ultimate frisbee. Latterly, however, attendance has dwindled, and the Shield has failed to inspire students like in previous years.

For the past three years the Shield, named after Sir Charles Carter, the founding vice-chancellor of the University, has been retained by a dominant Fylde College. The turn-out of Graduate College for the 2011-2012 season proved to briefly add excitement and impetus to the competition; but the underlying problems with the Shield were still made painstakingly obvious with poor attendance from the other colleges.

Preliminary plans to change the Carter Shield have been discussed by Ashworth and

activities staff in the Union. Initial ideas for the Shield have been based on the popularity of other annual, and therefore infrequent, inter-college sporting competitions such as the Founders Series, the Patriots Cup and the Legends Shield, which are always well attended and display tremendous college spirit.

Ashworth intends to use the essence of these popular sporting weekends and apply the same frameworks to the Carter Shield for the coming year. The activities officer seems to ooze optimism as she looks to exploit long-standing college rivalries and channel them into a newly branded, fortnightly Carter Shield competition. Indeed, a new logo for the Shield has been formatted and a visual campaign looks set to be introduced to create interest.

A clearly enthused Ashworth summed up her feelings of the new-look Carter Shield: "It's finally changing. By putting it on less regularly, working with college sports reps and the inter-college sports officers, and finding out what the students want to play on the weekend, I'm hoping for it to become more successful. I want to create a social atmosphere, like in the other inter-college sporting

events in the summer term."

One of Ashworth's main objectives is to bring an air of sociability to the Shield, to attract participation from students who may not normally have interest in playing sports. It has been suggested that each fortnightly sport played will be completed on the day, rather than hosting a "final's day" where the winners of each sport are determined at a later, and inevitably inconvenient, date for some students. The remaining date, where the finals would normally be fought out, look set to be replaced by, as Ashworth summarised, a "sport's day" themed occasion where students could take part in more relaxed events.

To add to the sociability factor of the Carter Shield, Ashworth is also interested in utilising the Union's social spaces such as the college bars and the Sugarhouse; where participants of the Shield could potentially obtain free entry, food and drinks offers for competing.

The inevitable Carter Shield reform, although tentative and uncertain thus far, looks set to have a distinctive, and perhaps even more importantly, different, image this year.



New Carter Shield logo