

# OVER-WORKED AND UNDER-RECOGNISED

Meet the Students Running Welcome Week

RETURN OF RELATIONSHIPS SECTION P.27



IMAGE: YORK VISION V

**Y**ork Vision met with spoke to representatives from Alcuin, Constantine and Goodricke College committees in August to discuss how they were finding the preparations for Welcome Week, formerly Freshers' Week.

President of Constantine College Emily Eurus-Jones said: "it's quite jarring

when you get into the role and you realise how much there is to do and what the scope of it is."

Alcuin College President Simon Edwards and Treasurer Max Kerlake told us that because there are only five students in their committee, their workload has been heavier than anticipated.

Simon tells us: "I've taken a hell of a lot more work on this summer than maybe

I'd have liked...[finding out] what goes into organising a nightclub and an evening out, that's been quite a sharp learning curve.

"We've had someone employed by the University helping with lots of [paperwork] which has been extremely helpful."

This year, parts of the Welcome Week preparations have been taken on by staff rather than students, including ordering the

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Opinions expressed in *York Vision* are not necessarily those of the editorial team, members or advertisers.

## Editors' Note

Hello hello!

This time last year we were COMPLETELY unaware of how huge a part of our university experience *York Vision* would become. We strolled up to the *Vision* desk at Freshers' Fair (or is it Welcome Fair now?), picked up a paper, and carried on with our days, without a clue that almost exactly one year later, we'd be sitting in our boiling little *Vision* office, day and night, creating this paper for you all to see. It's been a bit of a full-on print in which our editorial team has turned slightly stir-crazy whilst sorting font-sizes, subedits and headline puns (and my goodness, have we got some cracking ones coming up for you). Our respective positions as Lifestyle Editor and Deputy Stage Editor last year could not have better prepared us for this print (and personally we feel as though we've brought a little bit of that to our individual articles, which you can see in the Opinion section on p6-7). In this edition we have a bunch of gripping stories, like a News article which takes a look at the University's Check-In code system; a Lifestyle article which gives some budget-friendly food shopping tips and some very interesting Science articles (did you know there's a robot-filled building next to the Piazza?).

**CHARLOTTE AMBROSE**



**AUDREY LAWLER**



Oh, and the Relationships section is back! No matter what your love life is looking like at the minute, we guarantee there's an article in there for you. In Environment, you'll find seven top tips for being a sustainable fresher, and find out why it's not a good idea to take a dip in the River Ouse, just in case that was on anyone's bucket lists for this year. And of course, we could never forget our jam-packed SCENE section which our editor Clara has tirelessly slaved away on. A massive thank you to all our amazing and brilliant writers who make all of this worthwhile - hope you enjoy!

## ELEANOR SHAW

Much like my fellow editors, this time last year I could not possibly have conceived the extent to which my first year at university would be shaped by *York Vision*. I, too, began as a non frequent attendant at weekly meetings, then became Features Editor, and ultimately ended up as Deputy Editor of the paper - which primarily means many more hours in our office. I hope you were inspired by the stand I put together at the Welcome Fair and have a thorough read through of our exciting first issue, and I can't wait to meet the new members of our paper.



**Deputy Editors' Note**

# ARE STUDENTS STILL HOLDING THE UNI TO ACCOUNT?

BY **EDDIE ATKINSON (He/Him)**

**Y**ork students' usage of a vital information gathering tool has fallen over the last five years.

The Freedom of Information Act of 2000 allows any person to request any information from a public authority, which must be provided as long as it falls within certain parameters. Freedom of Information requests (FOIs for short) are a commonly used tool for holding public institutions to account, in particular: government departments, local councils, publicly owned companies and educational institutions.

In 2014, *York Vision* used an FOI to find that the University bosses tested on almost 7,000 animals in a year, and more recently FOIs were integral to the Palestine Solidarity Campaign's

findings on university investments in companies associated with Israel.

Institutions covered by the act must respond to requests within 20 working days, and must provide all the information requested if they carry it, as long as this does not exceed a cost limit (£450), "prejudice [read as harm] someone's commercial interests" or fall under a number of other exemptions. These exemptions can be overturned if the information is deemed to be in the "public interest".

The information released is also still subject to privacy and data protection laws, so may be withheld or rounded to avoid making individuals identifiable.

*Vision* submitted an FOI request to learn how the tool has been used at the University, and how the institution has been responding.

The number of FOI requests received has fallen by 21% in the last five years, from 612 in 2019 to 483 in 2023.

The number of requests is still higher than it was in a *Vision* investigation in the early 2010s, but the University's data clearly shows a consistent downturn in usage starting in 2020.

This downturn coincided with the introduction of lockdown measures, but 2020 also saw a fall in the effectiveness of requests that may have contributed to their falling usage in the following years. A higher percentage of requests were denied for exceeding the cost limit than any other year (22.2% compared to an average of about 15%); a higher percentage of requests were flat out refused rather than rounded (39% of all requests) and 2020 was the only full year in the sample that saw no suc-

cessful appeals against decisions to deny information.

Consistently over the five year period tested, around 50% of requests had exemptions applied to them in some form, with 33.5% completely refused in 2023 (up from 30% in 2021 and 2022 but down from the 2020 high). Of these, only 10 were successfully appealed over the entire period.

The University has kept its average response time below the mandated 20 days, but has notably slowed down from its 2019 average of 14 days to 18 in 2023.

**WE NEED YOUR VISION**

## TIER E-Scooter and E-Bike Scheme in York Ends

BY ALICE LILLEY (She/Her)

**TIER e-scooters and e-bikes will no longer be available across York and the University following the ending of the contract between the City of York Council and TIER on 31st May 2024.**

The City of York Council was informed in March that TIER do not wish to extend their contract, subsequently terminating its e-scooter and e-bike trial in York.

Students will need to find alternative ways to travel as they will no longer be able to use TIER e-scooters and e-bikes in and around the city and University campuses.

This was not a decision made by the University who on their website have said: "We understand that many of our staff and students will be disappointed by this news as University journeys (to, from, across) make up a large percentage of total trips taken across the city and University.

"City of York Council is looking for an alternative service provider but there will likely be some time when there will be no e-scooter/e-bike provision across the city and University."

The University has encouraged students and staff to continue travelling sustainably where possible.

The University has met with First Bus to make operational changes to bus routes to better meet the demands of individuals at the University, particularly now that there is a travel vacuum created by the ending of the TIER scheme.

A spokesperson for the University said: "We will be making operational changes from Friday 13 September.

"This is aimed at improving the efficiency of their (First Buses) service by introducing new routes and extending existing routes to University operations.

"The fleet is now all electric, which is in line with our sustainability aims, as well as vehicles being double deckers, ensuring increased passenger numbers."

The e-scooter and e-bike trial was part of the Department for Transport micro-mobility trial and had been operating in York since September 2020.

Initially, it only operated between the University and York Hospital before being extended across the city due

to its popularity.

The trial collated data on the use of hired e-scooters and e-bikes across the city to help inform the creation of national guidelines.

City of York Council states on their website that York service users have taken over 820,000 miles on the e-scooters and e-bikes with over half a million journeys taken by nearly 60,000 users.

The council did not fund the service and only helped choose the operator for the scheme in York.

Councillor Pete Kilbane, Executive Member for Economy and Transport at City of York Council has said: "Participating in the Department for Transport trial enabled York to gain valuable insight into the use of E-Scooters and E-Bikes, and how we might look to make these permanent sustainable transport options in future.

"We're disappointed TIER have decided to withdraw from York, but we know the findings will prove insightful for the Department for Transport for the creation of their national guidelines".

## THE STUDENT UNION HAS REBRANDED

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)

**The York Students' Union underwent a dramatic rebrand over the summer, resulting in visible changes to the Union's website design, logo and official name.**

The rebranding occurred following the Union's Annual General Meeting (AGM) in February. The new Union has been renamed to the York Students' Union or York SU for short. Their Student Group Brand Guidelines states that: "Our [YUSU] acronym felt non inclusive and was inconsistent with our name."

The name change also resulted in changes to students' groups' email communications. Former YUSU email addresses were formatted as 'xxx@yusu.org' but have now changed to

'xxx@yorksu.org'.

This rebrand includes a new logo based around a coat of arms "to reflect York and its history" In the Trustee Board Meeting minutes from 7th September 2023, several points of consideration were raised regarding the proposed changes: "Trustees advised that they were concerned that if the name is 'York SU' this could get confused with YSJ University".

Pre-merger, the University of York was one of a very small number of universities which had two student unions, with one specifically dedicated to post-graduate students.

13,000 feedback responses were collected from a range of undergraduate, postgraduate, mature and international students about the decision to merge.



IMAGE: YORK VISION

## VC Speaks on University Finances

BY EDDIE ATKINSON (He/Him) AND AUDREY LAWLER (She/Her)

**On 9th September, representatives from York Vision, Nouse and YSTV (York Student Television) were invited to sit at a press conference with the Vice-Chancellor Charlie Jeffery, as well as Pro-Vice Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students Tracy Lightfoot, to question these members of the University Executive Board (UEB) on the University's financial situation.**

A primary area of discussion was regarding the targeted redundancy schemes, where Jeffery named the scheme as a "compulsory redundancy scheme", following on from their previous voluntary severance scheme: "we've had a voluntary severance scheme open for two rounds, and in those two rounds we met the objective that we set around professional services colleagues, we didn't meet it with academic staff."

In reference to the amount

of academic staff set to leave, Jeffery said "what we're talking about in this process is 30 posts which is...2% of the academic staff...in six areas of the University."

The plan is not to be set definitively into motion until around "May next year."

The process the University has adopted is one that will use consultations with affected individuals and trade unions, Jeffery stating that "we tend to go beyond what's set out in law."

York Vision followed up on this claim, to which the University replied: "We started formal collective consultation in June 2024 with recognised Trade Unions (still ongoing), the redundancies will not take effect until May/June 2025. We have therefore allowed for a full year of consultation when the law requires a minimum of 90 days."

The University went on to emphasise its strong academic departments and the impor-

tance of maintaining research funding. When Vision asked about the academic impacts these changes will have, Jeffery replied: "No courses are going to cease because of this, so no degree programs will cease because of this. So it is quite narrow in target."

Vision went on to question the impact that these changes will have on the wider student body, and how the University is to go about communicating this. Lightfoot assured that "there's a complete interactive set of communications going out to students all the way through.

"[O]ne of the areas we've been looking at is reducing assessment burden. We know that that's a cause of concern for students, both in terms of the bunching of assessments, the impact of mental health, [and] exceptional circumstances.

"There were some concerns about modules being cut, but again...we're not cutting core

modules for programs. We're cutting optional modules where there might have only been two or three students on the module, there now being two or three students in the module. It isn't a good student experience."

When asked whether the University planned on returning to a growth mindset, Jeffery said "this University doesn't lack ambition. If you take those two measures that I set out in gold TEF and top 10 ref [awards in teaching and research]. There are only four universities which have both of those markers of success: Oxford, Cambridge, Imperial and York; we have no intention of leaving that space.

"While areas may have seen some of the research funding interests fall away, or some of the student demand fall away, we're not ending those areas, we're reducing them, but giving them the opportunity to grow again. And of course, there are other areas in the University which are not sub-

ject to these measures at all, which are really thriving.

"So we have no intention of becoming smaller in the medium term. This is an adjustment to respond to two things. One is that we've had inflation at rates that we haven't seen for 40 years, and that's added about 20% to our running costs, £45 million ish, and we saw under the last government a number of measures which have impacted... international student recruitment, which means now that we're anticipating about £40 million or less of international student income than we were two or three years ago. And those two things together are the things that we're trying to deal with now, but we're not going back on our ambitions for our future."

IMAGE: YORK VISION

# Checking in with Check-in Codes

BY ALICE LILLEY (She/Her)

**C**heck-In to continue as 31% of students flagged for academic struggles. Alice Lilley investigates the new Check-In system after a year of use at the University of York.

The University of York is set to continue its Check-In system for the next academic year.

The system, which was introduced in 2023, requires that all students input a code provided by teachers to check in to all teaching sessions. This includes all in-person contact hours including lectures, seminars and workshops.

The system identified over 18,080 instances of academic engagement struggles over the year, with 31% of students struggling by the end of the year.

This university-wide tool has been implemented in all departments as an additional measure of support to monitor and aid student wellbeing. The system was aimed to enable early identification of students who show continuous low levels of engagement to create a proactive support system so that students who need help can be promptly contacted by the University.

Students are advised not to share codes with students as this may limit the system's ability to help students who are struggling.

The University clarified that Check-In data is not the only information used to determine whether the University contacts a student about their attendance.

York Student Union Community & Wellbeing Officer Freddy Russell and Academic Officer Fennella Johnson said: "The Check-In system was designed to help monitor student mental health through engagement, which is a really positive step for student wellbeing at York. "However, because it is a new

system there have been some issues due mainly to the lack of standardisation in the messages that are sent to students. We are currently working with the University to resolve this issue to make sure that students are getting positive support as a result of the system."

The University has made it clear that the Check-In system will not be used to monitor student attendance with the aim of punishing those who are found to be missing teaching sessions. Despite this, Freddy said: "I am aware... that the student reaction to check-in has often been one of fear."

When the system was first implemented, Freddie said: "there was a lot of negative feedback from students who considered it a form of surveillance." Since then, there has been a lack of feedback regarding how the Check-In system is being received by students and staff.

A University spokesperson said: "In May we surveyed staff and students to capture their feedback on check-in. The results, and action we have taken in response to this feedback, will be published on Monday 23rd September."

The University is working hard to ensure that students know the purpose of the Check-In system is student mental health and wellbeing.

A University spokesperson said: "We understand that lots of things can have an impact on our students' personal lives and studies, and Check-In is a support tool that helps us to quickly identify if it looks like someone may be struggling or experiencing difficulties. The system is a 'safety net' that allows us to reach out with guidance and support."

Check-In now forms a core part of the University's Student Academic Engagement and Well-

being Policy which was approved by the University Teaching Committee in July 2023.

The University website states that phase one of Check-In focuses on in-person timetabled teaching events only.

According to the University, future phases will consider additional engagement measures including online teaching sessions, standalone sessions and induction events, as well as the possibility of integrating information such as failed assessments and non-submissions into the student engagement system.

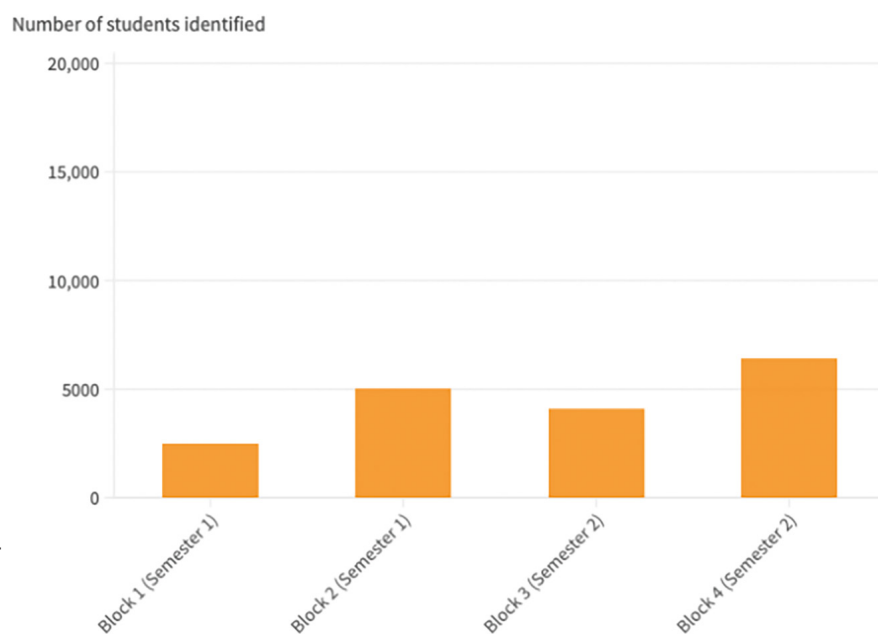
Through an Freedom of Information (FOI) request, *York Vision* found out that in the first week of use, Check-In was used for 435 out of a potential 558 timetabled events, a 78% usage rate and 19,000 codes were entered by students during week one. The University has recorded that out of the 20,480 students at the University for the 2023-24 academic year there were 19,440 student users of the Check-In system over the year. This demonstrates a high usage of 95%.

In the 2023-24 academic year, the University used the Check-In system to help identify 18,080 instances where students appeared to be struggling with academic engagement.

The system breaks the year down into four blocks, two in each semester. The data provided by the University shows that 2,515 students were identified in Block 1; 5,030 in Block 2; 4,100 in Block 3, and 6,435 in Block 4.

One student may appear in multiple blocks throughout the year if they consistently struggle to attend teaching sessions.

Check-in system data 2023/24 academic year



Academic engagement was at its highest in Block 1 at the start of academic year with only 12% of students struggling with academic engagement.

However, this number more than doubled by Block 2, rising to 5,030. Block 3 saw a slight drop to 4,100 students suggesting that at the start of the second semester some students became academically engaged again. The trend shows a spike in flagged students in Block 4, the final block of the academic year, with a peak of 6,435 which could indicate increasing academic struggles as the academic year progresses.

With a total student population of 20,480 in the 2023-24 academic year, this demonstrates that approximately 31% of students were struggling with academic engagement in Block 4 towards the end of the academic year.

The findings suggest that a significant proportion of students encountered academic engagement issues at some point, with

students increasingly struggling to maintain engagement as the academic year progressed. It also suggests that some students become academically disengaged after Block 1 and remained academically disengaged throughout the rest of the academic year.

This pattern raises questions about whether students are receiving adequate support early on and if the Check-In system itself may need adjustments to improve its effectiveness in signposting students in need of academic and wellbeing support. The growing number of students who struggled with academic engagement from Block 1 to Block 4 therefore highlights potential limitations in the Check-In system's effectiveness.

The findings also raise questions regarding how this Check-In system will work alongside pre-existing support systems in the University.

IMAGE CREDIT: YORK VISION **V**



# Overworked and Under-recognised

## Meet the Students Running Welcome Week

The pressure is on for college committees to deliver for Welcome Week

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her) AND GEORGE HOWARTH (He/Him)

IMAGE CREDIT: YORK VISION V

**York Vision spoke to representatives from Alcuin, Constantine and Goodricke College committees in August to discuss how they were finding the preparations for Welcome Week, formerly Freshers' Week.**

President of Constantine College Emily Eurus-Jones said: "it's quite jarring when you get into the role and you realise how much there is to do and what the scope of it is."

Alcuin College President Simon Edwards and Treasurer Max Kerslake told us that because there are only five students in their committee, their workload has been heavier than anticipated.

Simon tells us: "I've taken a hell of a lot more work on this summer than maybe I'd have liked...[finding out] what goes into organising a nightclub and an evening out, that's been quite a sharp learning curve.

"We've had someone employed by the University helping with lots of [paperwork] which has been extremely helpful."

This year, parts of the Welcome Week preparations have been taken on by staff rather than students, including ordering the t-shirts that students are given with their Freshers' ticket.

Paid University staff members play a vital role managing the colleges and overseeing the residences. Each college team is composed of one to five paid University staff members, although this varies between colleges and has been decreasing in recent years following the University's recruitment freezes.

Max explained, "[Alcuin] has essentially two members of staff. Right now, we have a Deputy College Manager and a College

Manager. Most colleges have at least a College Life Advisor. I think I can safely say that we're only going to have one fixed member of staff by October."

He continued: "Alcuin's College Manager will be leaving in October. As far as I know, there are no plans to find a direct replacement for their position. We've noticed the University's college websites are no longer showing the staff within the College and their direct contact details. I think this could be an indicator there will be further changes to the way Colleges are staffed."

When asked about these staffing cuts, he said, "I'm a little concerned - I think it's good having fixed college staff. It's diluting the college system."

Simon says: "York itself is very proud of its collegiate system and rightly so...but it doesn't put its money where its mouth is. As colleges and college committees, we do not get the support and funding."

York is one of only three collegiate-based universities in the North of England and Colleges also feature prominently in the University's promotional materials and their most recent prospectus.

Trying to clear up a common misconception about college committees, Simon reminds us:

"We're volunteers, by the way. We're not paid for doing this. Max and I especially have taken a lot of time out over our summer to put this together out of our own time."

Emily added this to this, explaining that she "can't get a job over summer because I've got 200 emails from one week off."

The Alcuin committee ex-

plained that they have had to deal with several inconveniences that they believe the University could have prevented, such as their Welcome move-in date being changed "relatively late", and room bookings being cancelled after they had already been confirmed.

"We know working in the colleges is difficult, particularly at the moment when we know funding is tight and all these difficult decisions are being made, but it always seems to be the student volunteers who get the rough end of the stick," Simon said.

*Vision* interviewed Martin Crosby, the Interim Deputy Director for Student Life and Wellbeing who said that: "in the longer term, we are looking at... changes and how we can put more support in place for the committees so the time they spend can be less on some of the administration and more on student leadership.

"We've felt for a long time that there is probably some work we'd like to do to make their work be recognised and rewarded more so than it is. We're putting in place this award and recognition function which means that we're much more confident that this group of committee will get the formal recognition that they haven't had in the past."

Both the Constantine and Alcuin committees have faced financial pressures due to the way that students are allocated college accommodation. Students who have chosen campus accommodation for their second and later years are divided into one of the colleges that accept returning students. These colleges change each year, meaning that the colleges' numbers of freshers change too.

This can create budgeting difficulties for committees because, as Emily explains, International Pathway College (IPC) and returning students "don't tend to buy Freshers' tickets so that reduces the funds we have available. [...] We're working a halved budget to what other years have had."

She added: "95% of all of our money for the whole year comes from Freshers' Week."

Alcuin College faced a similar problem last year, when their committee was told with short notice that half of their accommodation was being allocated to postgraduates.

"When we have the undergraduate/postgraduate swings, it's very hard to forecast," Max said.

During the pandemic, the University used to allocate significant grants specifically to college committees, but this is no longer the case. Emily expressed support for additional funding, saying: "it would help a lot for committees if there was some type of financing package available for colleges, be it a college grant or something. Obviously, we're in a dream world now because we know what the University's budget is like this year, but something like that would help take the pressure off of committees."

Despite all this, the college committee members that we spoke to all believe that the student-run nature of Welcome Week is a valuable part of the experience.

"You get to fight for your college and you get to fight for student experience. You feel like you're doing something in the world that's proactive but yeah it's a lot of emails, it's a lot of reading, and a lot of discussions", explained Emily Eurus-Jones.

Goodricke College President Atharva Inamdar said that Welcome Week "is an essential part of university life, and it's fantastic that we, as colleges, continue to uphold this tradition from committee to committee with the support of the University and the Student Union."

*Vision* reached out to York SU Union Affairs Officer Lewis Parrey for comment. He said: "College staff provide vital support to students such as wellbeing advice and free food to help with the cost of living, both of which I have benefitted from as a student. Unfortunately, offerings like these have recently become the victim of the University's cost-cutting.

"I look forward to being a strong voice for colleges in the top University Committees, standing up for the students whose experiences will be impacted because of careless cuts from the University."

Martin Crosby continued: "We're conscious that this time of year it's really busy and it's very difficult for them so I hope that they're feeling recognised on an individual, local level by their college teams and then it's about the University saying a big thank you".

*Vision* reached out to all the other college committees but were not provided with a response.

# OPINION

IMAGE: UNSPLASH

## Are These the Best Days of Our Lives?

BY AOIFE WOOD (She/Her)

**“These will be the best days of your life.”**

This is often said by an old generation who enjoyed free tuition and better maintenance support. Maybe in many years from now, looking back full of nostalgia I will say the same, but right now I am not convinced that it holds much truth for our generation of students.

I do not see myself reminiscing on my Halifax bedroom or continually filthy first year kitchen. I don't think that in 10 years from now I will recall the mysterious stain on my floor fondly. And I do hope that in the years still to

come I can make better memories than sharing a bathroom with random people.

I think for previous generations, their relationship with their accommodation might be less sour. I can't comment on how my room looked years before but I can say with a lot of certainty that it would not have cost as much as it cost me now. And if I paid a similar price for my accommodation as my parents did in their time, I could muster up some kinder feelings for my student accommodation.

Instead, as a modern student, I am met with an accommodation

crisis. If the building isn't falling to pieces then it's more than students can afford. And even if it is falling to pieces, it may still be more than we can afford. It really does put a damper on the university experience.

Once you have managed to scrape together enough for somewhere to stay, you are essentially left with pennies to feed yourself. A student enjoying a Pot Noodle for dinner is a tale as old as time but even now this sad story has been replaced by something sadder: an off-brand Pot Noodle.

I am exaggerating slightly, but it is not far from reality. After

paying my rent I have under £500 remaining of my maintenance loan for the whole year. And for many other students, their loan does not even cover rent. There is simply not enough money to cover feeding myself and making these the best days of my life.

Like many other students, I will need to supplement my loan with part time work just to cover my weekly food shop. And here we enter the work paradox. To go out and have fun you need a job but if you have a job you do not have time to go out and have fun.

And again, I do not see myself

reminiscing 10 years from now on this restless burnout lifestyle.

That is not to say student life cannot be fun. I think despite the circumstances students face today, we can make the most of the days we spend here. My first year of university was full of amazing memories, nights out and new friendships. And I recognise the privilege, both academically and socially, I have to be here at university. However, I do hope that these won't be the best days of my life and that in the future the cost of living won't be so high.

## Is Vegetarianism the way to go with Student Cooking?

BY FAYE ASKEW (She/Her)

**Once a way of living which was considered extreme, vegetarianism and veganism have had a massive rise in popularity within the last decade, and the reasons for this now go far beyond a love for animals.**

Many people have cut meat from their diets for health, environmental or political reasons, and especially in recent times, for cost. Whilst young people are already the demographic that is most likely to take on a vegetarian or vegan diet, I believe that today it has a unique appeal to students largely because of this

final factor.

The cost of living crisis heavily affects the student population; at the same time it has also driven up meat prices, whilst simultaneously, the wide array of vegetarian products made by companies tapping into a growing market means that eating a varied meat-free diet is cheaper than ever.

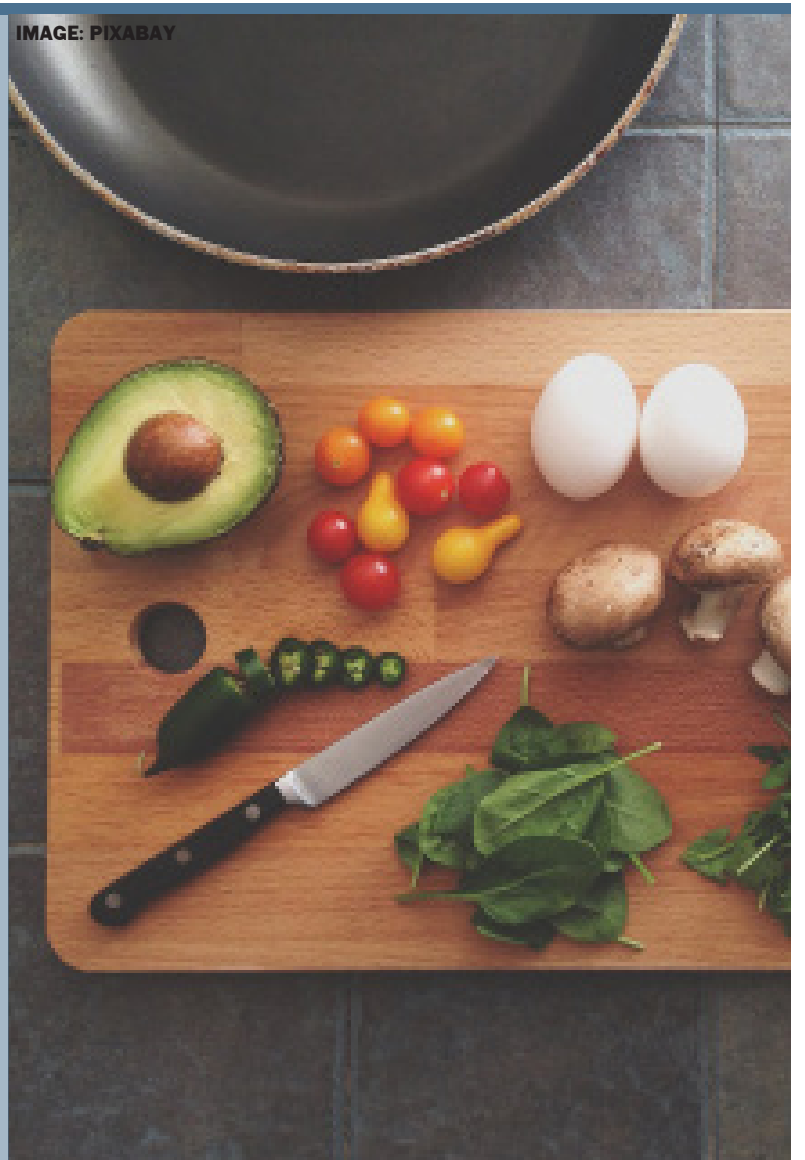
Vegetables and plant-based proteins are not only cheaper, but also quicker to cook and often healthier and more nourishing. A can of chickpeas, for example, can cost as little as 49p from Asda or Aldi, and is a very healthy source of protein which

can be safely stored for years.

Meat, however, is not only a far more expensive protein but is highly perishable. Most students are living alone and planning weekly meals for themselves for the first time, meaning a product with a short sell-by date (that often also has to be prepared very specifically at risk of food poisoning) is not ideal.

Whilst you definitely don't have to cut meat out of your diet completely, I believe that eating less of it as a student can be a good idea for both your health and your wallet.

IMAGE: PIXABAY



# OPINION

## WORDLE is the Reason I'm Afraid of Whatsapp

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)

**D**o you struggle with perfectionism and a self-destructive level of competitiveness in everyday tasks? Well boy, do I have the game for you.

My first time playing Wordle feels like a whole word away. A whole 'world' away, I mean.

It all started back in '21. Let your mind wander back to the COVID-19 lockdown—families bored and frustrated with each other's company, were desperate for a way to show off their literary prowess.

When you whip out Wordle on the 3 a.m. bus back from Revs, the immediate response is: "You still play that?" (followed by some drunken noises). But Wordle was never just a trending game for me.

In fact, I'd argue that Wordle isn't really a game at all; a game implies that you find some sort of enjoyment in playing it. Wordle has always felt like more of an obligation to me and the hold that this game has over my life is unparalleled. I imagine that for normal non-Wordlers, making the bed or eating breakfast is the thing that sets them up for the day. Not for me. Only after completing my daily Wordle can I begin to think about the rest of the morning.

I think my biggest issue with Wordle comes from the fact that you have to play it every day. You can never just miss a day. Well... technically, you can. But with all the eyes of the family group chat watching over you, eagerly waiting for you to say how many tries it took for you to guess the word.

I'd rather drop out of Uni than

have to read through the dozens of messages asking "have you done Wordle yet, Charlotte?", "When are you doing Wordle, Charlotte?", "Was Wordle too difficult for you today, Charlotte?".

And I know what you're probably thinking. "Why don't you just play Wordle by yourself but not share your score with anyone - that way there's no pressure". That is not an option.

What's the point in playing Wordle if you can't shamelessly share your score with your Wordle group chat? (there's no need to be ashamed my fellow Wordlers - I know we all have our own little designated Wordle WhatsApp groups). Personal accomplishment and a sense of self-achievement without validation from others? I've never heard of her.

If I get Wordle in five and my mum gets it in four, my whole

day is ruined. No exaggeration.

Every incorrect row feels like something that can be held over your head. Even if the word is something stupid like "neigh" or "jiffy", it doesn't matter. The winner gets bragging rights for the whole day until the sweet release of midnight when the slate is wiped clean and I get a few hours of peace until my phone explodes with messages for the newest wordle, and the whole torture continues for another day. Have I mentioned that you have to play this game every single day? There is no PTO or sick days for a Wordle-addict such as myself.

Not only that but now there are loads of new variations. So now, I no longer have to just win Wordle - I have to win Semantle, Quordle, Flagle. Isn't this all just a bit Muchle? Aren't I just a young girlie? It doesn't seem fair

that I have to block out the first 15 minutes of my calendar every morning for my "stupid games that I can't stop playing" event.

Am I part of the problem? Maybe. But hey, this is my article and I say that wordle is the word. I mean 'worst' - wordle is the worst.

I'm sure that at some point Wordle used to be a fun leisure activity for me and maybe one day, it will go back to that. But until then, Wordle will just be another thing on my to-do list and another reason why I'm scared scared to go on WhatsApp.

IMAGE UNSPLASH



## Method Acting: Pretentious Play Pretend?

BY AUDREY LAWLER (She/Her)

**T**he term 'method actor' is likely to be met with a grumble from some, perhaps picturing a self-righteous, overly-indulgent performer using their profession as an excuse for attention.

Perhaps some picture the most infamous examples of the use of 'method acting', such as Jared Leto mailing animal carcasses and used condoms to his co-stars during the filming of *Suicide Squad*. The phrase has become a byword for pretentious and often irrational behaviour in the name of better performance.

But is that entirely justified? Method acting as we know it today evolved from the practice of Konstantin Stanislavski in the late 19th and early 20th century (a familiar name for any of those who have studied Drama in

school and onwards, I'm sure). Stanislavski's 'The System' was, in short, a way in which to teach his actors to reach a fuller, more rounded portrayal of the characters in which they were playing, through accessing their own experiences using intensive mental techniques. In short, Stanislavski did not want his actors to pretend to feel; he wanted them to *actually* feel.

Lee Strasberg adapted Stanislavski's 'the System' to become the 'method' in the 1930s. His practice was adapted to the cultural norms of the United States, stating that method acting was what all actors have always done whenever they acted well. The method was the mode of getting there.

While the method may be rooted in historical practice, in today's landscape the modern manifestation of these prac

tices is not far from insanity. The 1990s saw the beginning of method madness: Daniel Day Lewis built a house in the woods to get into character for *The Crucible*, and for *Gangs of New York* he caught pneumonia after refusing to wear a historically inaccurate winter coat.

During the filming of *Suicide Squad*, Jared Leto's justification for his onset antics (which, as described above, allegedly created a nightmarish experience to his fellow actors) was that "the Joker is somebody who doesn't really respect things like personal space or boundaries." Many felt the actions of Leto denigrated the craft of method acting entirely.

There is no denying that in some special cases, method acting has been directly responsible for creating a categorically excellent performance. Some would say Leonardo DiCaprio's por

trayal of the slave owner "Mon-sieur" Calvin J. Candie in *Django Unchained* was a good use of method acting. Jamie Foxx (who played a freed slave in the film) advised Leonardo to ignore him on set entirely, to fully get into character. "I told Leo, 'You're not my friend,'" "We're not repped by the same people. This is 18-whatever-year it is and this is how we talk." As for whether the performance was worthy of such commitment, some would argue the list of nominations and accolades for the film speak for itself.

The tricky reputation of method acting proceeds it, and the concerns attached clearly trump all for many. British actor Adeel Akhtar told the BBC that the sacrifice of a personal life was impossible for some: "My kids pathologically can't let me, because they have their needs. If

I could, I'd love to, but you have to leave it at work."

Therein lies the issue. Ultimately the performance needs to warrant the use of the method to make it worth it; the ends must justify the means. In rare legendary cases, the performance absolutely warrants the choice to go 'method'. But the line is incredibly hard to toe. As Robert Pattinson framed it, "You only ever see people doing the method when they're playing an asshole." And with that notion I would absolutely agree: the method may not be all made up, but the excuses for bad behaviour certainly can be.

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# COLUMNS *In Columns*

## DOES CATERED ACCOMMODATION CATER TO YOUR PIGGY BANK? BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)

I apologise in advance to any freshers who are already settled into their accommodation for this year.

**Picture this. You've just arrived wide-eyed and full of dreams for your first year at the University of York. You're full of hope, enthusiasm and joy at the thought of starting this exciting new chapter of your life. This might be more relevant for some than others, but stay with me here.**

One of the most important decisions that you make during your time at University is deciding which college you'll be in. During the first year especially, the college you choose will affect the people you meet; the sports teams you're put on; and how far you have to walk to your lectures (I see you, Constantine).

But in my experience, the big make-or-break factor that students look for is whether the accommodation is catered. Some people love it; some people hate nothing more than the thought of having strangers cook for you every night. So, there are definitely mixed views.

Apart from giving you another reason to always carry your student card with you, there are several benefits that come with choosing a catered accommodation. The University website highlights the fact that you "won't have to worry about what to cook or what to budget for food" as one of these.

But my question is, from a purely financial point of view, is

catered accommodation the best option?

Catered accommodation is available in James, Derwent and Vanbrugh colleges. Students are served breakfast from 8.00 to 10.30 am, and dinner from 5.00 to 7.15 pm on weekdays except during vacation periods.

Here, I've made comparisons with three catered accommodations and three non-catered accommodations:

JAMES CATERED	ALCUIN SELF-CATERED	VANBRUGH CATERED	HALIFAX SELF-CATERED	DERWENT CATERED	ANNE LISTER SELF-CATERED
£238	£183	£148	£99	£205	£157
Band 3	Band 3	Band 1	Band 1	Band 2	Band 2

**Combining these averages together, we can estimate that catered students pay £10.13 per day (or £50.67 per week) for their food at the University of York. But realistically, catered students probably spend an additional £5 a week on snacks.**

### James vs Alcuin:

There is a £55 price difference. In James, you're paying £11 a day for catering, £5.50 per meal.

### Vanbrugh vs Halifax:

There is a £49 price difference. In Vanbrugh, you're paying £9.80 a day for catering, £4.90 per meal.

### Derwent vs Anne Lister:

There is a £49 price difference. In Derwent, you're paying £9.60 a day for catering, £4.80 per meal.

## So how much does the average non-catered student spend on food per day?

**...and, more importantly, is this number lower than £10.13 per day?**

*Understandably, this amount will vary on an individual basis depending your income and dietary requirements. But there are a few general estimations that we can use for comparative purposes.*

### Option One:

According to the National Student Money Survey 2023, the average university student (which includes both postgraduate and undergraduates) spends £133 a month on groceries. Assuming there are 30 days in a given month, that's the equivalent of £4.43 a day.

### Option Two:

According to a Natwest survey completed in 2023, the average UK university student spends £109.57 per month on groceries. In York, it's estimated to be around £86.51 per month or £2.88 per day.

### Option Three:

UCAS states that UK students spend an average of £44 per week on groceries. If you multiply this by two (assuming that some of the food you buy will carry you over to two weeks), you get £88 a month or £2.93 per day.

All of these figures are considerably less than what a catered student would spend. So, if you're looking at it from a purely financial perspective, you're more likely to spend more money on food if you live in catered accommodation than you would if you live in self-catered accommodation.

That being said, the University website reports that 87.6% of students "would pick/would be happy to live in catered accommodation again" and 94% said that "they would recommend catered accommodation to a first-year student." So even though catered accommodation costs more, students are still happy to pay for it. This suggests that there are more important, less quantitative factors, such as a student's free time and cooking abilities, which push students to choose catered accommodation.

I spoke to Tom Nightingale, a former catered student in James

College, about his personal experience with catered accommodation. He said: "The food was good; the repetition was a bit annoying at times...If I did my own cooking, I would have been able to do it cheaper but it was nice to have the convenience of having a meal cooked for you and being able to take your breakfast as soon as you woke up, it was really easy in that respect. You're not just paying for the actual product, you're paying for the service as well."

"But if you're a good cook, if you can cook quite cheaply, I don't think catered's the way to go," he adds.

Former self-catered student from Langwith college Clara Downes said: "I really liked it but I myself love cooking anyway, and I cooked a lot for myself, but I think I liked not having a structure of when I needed to eat and I could get my own schedule sorted."

Choosing whether to pick catered or self-catered accommodation can be a difficult, and ultimately very personal decision. The cost comparison is relatively straightforward to work out but this doesn't factor in all the smaller complexities that might sway you.

Regardless of what you've picked for your first year accommodation, whether you're in a land far away in Langwith or hearing the geese out your window every day in Derwent, the catering options of your accommodation aren't the be-all and end-all. And besides, you'll probably be self-catered in second year.



IMAGE: UNSPLASH



By Rhema Healy

## SCENE Editor's Note

Clara Downes

**Dear SCENEworms,**

Congratulations on making it to York Vision's fantastic Arts and Culture section! Oh boy do we have some treats for you. Making this print has been a truly unique and chaotic experience: from many Photoshop disasters, to Audrey spilling a berry smoothie all over herself (and my car!), we really have had it ALL.

When I turned up to a welcome talk at Vision a year ago as a

little baby fresher, I had no idea it would become such a huge part of my university experience. I am so grateful for all the things I have learned already in my first year with Vision, but most of all, for the truly incredible people I have met along the way. If you're a UoY student questioning whether to join Vision, do it, but with the knowledge that it will definitely take over your life, but in the best way possible (I swear I didn't cry three times today over fonts and textboxes).

Anyway, enough of all this sentimental waffle. Writing this at 2am before the deadline is no excuse for this excruciating Vision love letter. Head over to page three where the good stuff begins. We've got some great articles ahead: from Samuel Beckett to Gilmore Girls, there really is something for everyone.

Hope you enjoy!

Clara x



# SCENE.

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## A WORD OF THANKS:

Thank you to Charlotte and Audrey for being a constant source of laughter during this layup session, to Sam Forrest, to The Crescent, to Luke and Matty for being fantastic section editors, to The Kitchen at Osbaldwick for the supply of delicious coffee, to everyone who helped with sub-editing, to Rhema for the beautiful cover, and to all our fantastic writers who contributed to SCENE.

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## Longlegs and TikTok: A New Era of Marketing

BY MORGAN GROVE (She/Her)

**W**ith Autumn rolling around and Halloween classics waiting in the wings, it's time to reflect on Slasher Summer.

While far from your average summer camp scary movie, Neon's latest horror release *Longlegs* had film snobs and adrenaline junkies alike all waiting in anticipation, and given the classic that their Oscar-winning *Parasite* is quickly becoming, this is no surprise.

Although apparently what was a surprise, was the film becoming the highest-grossing indie horror of the last 10 years in the States, amassing over \$58.6 million just three weeks after its release, to which *Variety* called the film a "sleeper hit".

But to those of us whose TikTok algorithms have us, willingly or not, tuned into FilmTok, this box office win was anything but a surprise. *Longlegs* has been at the centre of non-stop discussion on the social media platform, and this was certainly no accident. For months leading up to the film's release, Neon specifically targeted social media with their marketing campaign, even going as far as to create interactive online riddles to solve, which then flooded onto TikTok as creators began spreading their plethora of theories.

As well as this, well-loved horror influencers

received PR boxes, prompting them to promote the film further. This hype-led marketing then culminated with a video posted by Neon on 8th July, displaying certified scream queen Maika Monroe's heart rate skyrocketing as she first saw Nicholas Cage in his *Longlegs* makeup, all while leaving his face tantalisingly hidden from the camera.

This final marketing move gets to the epicentre of what Neon have done so successfully with *Longlegs*, bringing back speculation to the cinema. What this made me personally think back to was the cult 90's horror *Jacob's Ladder*, specifically its trailer, within which we as an audience are given almost nothing revealed to us: with quick jump cuts and choppy dialogue leaving us with more questions than answers. This gives a dichotomy with current marketing, which seems to rely on revealing a huge chunk of the plot to viewers in order to reel them in.

So it appears *Longlegs* has found a beautiful medium within the genre. Keep as much of the plot under wraps as possible, while not letting this keep a release on the down-low altogether, instead embrace the sense of unknown and let it propel the discussion itself. We'll have to wait and see if any other studios take Neon's lead, and if they do, it could be a promising future for the genre with a new generation.

COMMENT

## Lorelai Gilmore: Is she Really the 'Cool Mum'?

BY LUCI O'DONNELL (She/Her)

**A**s a die-hard *Gilmore Girls* fan, the show is on my watchlist every year when autumn comes around.

The first time I watched the show I immediately fell in love. Despite the fact that I know the entire plotline, there's something about the small-town quirks and loveable characters that draws me in. However, rewatching *Gilmore Girls* as an adult has left me with the realisation that our quintessential fall girl Lorelai Gilmore kind of sucks.

*Gilmore Girls* aired from 2000-2007 and has become somewhat of a cult classic; it is endlessly funny with an engaging and relatable storyline. But the fact that the autumnal comfort show aired in the early 2000s means that it seems to fall victim to the sad trend of post-feminism: the idea that feminism was no longer needed because women had already 'achieved all', and any new problems were the fault of women alone.

The show follows the lives of single mother Lorelai Gilmore and her Ivy-League bound daughter Rory Gilmore in the small town of Stars Hollow. The main plot line follows the mother-daughter duo through their daily lives as Lorelai advances in her career and Rory in education.

We see many of these 'sexism disguised as empowerment' tropes within a lot of our favourite early 2000s shows and mov-

ies prevalent in this period of pop culture. Among these tropes, the most relevant to *Gilmore Girls* is the 'cool girl'.

This trope was best described and deconstructed by the brilliant Gillian Flynn in her novel *Gone Girl*, but in simpler terms the 'cool girl' is just one of the guys. She likes junk food and never diets yet miraculously maintains within the ideal of women's beauty standards. She goes with the flow, and never has mature and difficult conversations because, you know, she's 'cool'. She's not like other women who are too girly or expect things like commitment. In other words the 'cool girl' is the male fantasy wrapped into a package of empowerment to make her palatable to the post-feminism taste, and is sold to a female audience as the new ideal woman. Lorelai is the embodiment of the archetype.

Unfortunately, come season 6, she pushes away from just fitting the aesthetic to dragging her relationships into the trope. If this weren't enough, *Gilmore Girls* adds insult to injury by applying the 'cool girl' trope to Lorelai's parenting, even though she's not a 'cool mum' in the way Amy Poehler in *Mean Girls* is. Instead she compares her parenting skills to the likes of others in order to put herself at the top of the 'cool mum' pedestal. It's as if Lorelai's cool mum status is the model of maternity and everything in between is less. This ranking of mothers compared

to her is something I find strange, and I wish shows would refrain from pitting its female characters against one and other.

Whether it be her lack of commitment to any romantic partner, her friendship-like bond with Rory or her totally unnecessary comments about other female characters, she really isn't this revamped 'cool mum' that we originally thought. Much of the show's conflict revolves around the unstable relationships of the three Gilmore girls - Emily, Lorelai and Rory, with 90% of it being the result of Lorelai's actions.

The show begins with Lorelai returning home. From the very start, it's made clear that Lorelai does not have a great relationship with her parents and in turn hates the idea that Rory will. I'm still undecided on if it comes down to an issue of pride or jealousy but watching the back and forth arguments between Lorelai and her parents over Rory's life eventually gets tedious.

Family relationships aside, Lorelai doesn't make up for it in her friendships. Her and her best friend and business partner Sookie are the epitome of a one-sided friendship. Sookie does practically everything for Lorelai yet throughout the seven seasons this never seems to be reciprocated.

If I wasn't aware that Rory was Lorelai's daughter I'd be inclined to assume that they were friends. Their whole relation-

ship is honestly a little weird but somewhat understandable considering the small age gap. In this sense, they grew up together and it's justifiable that they're a lot closer than most mothers and daughters.

One of the main themes when writing the show was that Rory is more mature than her mother. Yet this does not excuse how Rory ends up, more times than not, playing the role of the mother. Lorelai also doesn't seem to respect Rory's own relationships and never really warms up to any of her boyfriends - perhaps because she can never keep any of her own. Again, this may go back to her being jealous or simply just not wanting anyone else in Rory's life.

Although all of this is meant to portray her as the 'quirky' character, it's just plain mean. So is it really that extreme to call Lorelai problematic?

Despite everything said, *Gilmore Girls* is still one of my favourite shows. Personally I do still think her character, and the show as a whole, is the perfect time capsule for the 2000s. Yeah she's controversial but we're forced to love her. She's flawed but who isn't? Especially in the early 2000s. Her imperfections are the show, it's literally what *Gilmore Girls* is about...

However, we all need to take a step back from this 'cool mum' label and see Lorelai for what she is - problematic.

# All The World's Yor(k) Stage

BY JACOB BASSFORD (He/Him)

Image: Ella Tomlin

## STAGE

**O**bsessed with Glee? Remember that one gag from the Simpsons where Side-show Bob performs a rendition of HMS Pinafore? Always wanted to perform a Shakespearean soliloquy? Or do you just want to try something completely new that you have never done before?

The University of York has plenty to offer in terms of performance societies. Here's an honest take on the performance societies here on Campus West (because God forbid a society can use the theatre department's facilities on Campus East).

### CHMS

Central Hall Musical Society, so named because apparently they perform in Central Hall. This is the only musical theatre society, and the most high-profile of the performance societies, putting on grand-scale productions such as *Carrie* and *The Addams Family*. With showcases and main productions twice a year, CHMS can offer a lot on paper.

### Drama Society

This is the other big performance society on campus. They have weekly performances, be that at weekends or ODNs (Original Drama Nights), where every Monday an original drama piece written by someone within DramaSoc is performed. Drama Society has their own venue, the Drama Barn, which is a great performance space especially for ODNs, but can quickly become limited when they put on more household plays. The other big quirk is that there is a chance to perform in an original play at the



Edinburgh fringe! And finally, despite the multitudes of plays and original performances to choose from, there is always a decent chance of DramaSoc performing a Shakespeare play.

### Tech Soc

This society in recent years has improved beyond recognition. Not only is it a great society to hang out with, these people know their stuff. The relationships between TechSoc and the other performance societies have never been stronger. If you're into lighting, sound and other stage tech I would definitely recommend this society. If that sounds a bit scary, Drama Society does workshops with their own members on how to run tech in the Drama Barn, so there are other options!

### Shakespeare Society

Performing a range of the Bard's plays or works from that era (and yes, you can also pitch Marlowe and Webster), ShakeSoc's MO has always been putting on university-friendly modern interpretations of Shakespeare's works. The society is much more of an all-year round society than it used to be, with showcases and socials in between performances to get as many people involved as possible. Crossover with DramaSoc, TechSoc and even the G&S society is also pretty common, so there is no need to tie yourself solely down to Shakespeare. But there is the chance to perform some of the greatest speeches in the English language, although good luck trying to pitch a university-friendly version of Hamlet.

### Gilbert & Sullivan Society

Perhaps the most specialist of the performance societies at York (as well as the oldest at the University), G&S society perform the comedic Victorian operettas of W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan twice a year.

Usually, their big winter production is performed at the Joseph Rowntree Theatre in York, which has the advantage over Central Hall of being an actual conventional theatre space to perform in. The society is starting to get a big rep in the British G&S scene, and recently won Unifest, a competition of university G&S societies at the International Gilbert & Sullivan Festival in Buxton over the summer.

### Pantomime Society

Pantomime Society harks to the great Panto tradition of subversion with performances of original productions as well as colourful and interesting reimaginations of old ones. With very accessible choreography and generally low-key productions, PantoSoc (or PantSoc as they like to be known, a very Panto-esque pun) is another standout performance society here at York.

### Comedy Society

There is a lot of crossover between DramaSoc and ComedySoc for various reasons, and similarly to DramaSoc, the chance of a Edinburgh Fringe festival performance is there. The society houses multiple different subsections, including their sketch troupe *The Dead Ducks*, and their improv group *The Shambles*, allowing plenty of diversity in comedy. There are plenty of opportunities for gigs and open mic performances in student bars across campus and collaborations with DramaSoc.

So there you have it, an overview of all the performance societies! At the end of the day, regardless of the societies you join, there is a great chance of being in some big productions and meeting friends for life! Give it a go - you'll never know which performance society could be the one for you!

## BREAKING: OUR FAVOURITE STAGE COLUMN MAKES AN (UN)EXPECTED RETURN!!!

**W**hat's this? There's a vacancy in the Stage Editor position? And Alice has departed? Looks like it's up to me to step up, in her legacy, and fill in the long-awaited return of reviewing one of my favourite stages for Stage.

This edition, we're once again proving that I really don't see as much theatre as I should, especially for a theatre student, as we look at another venue from my home city, Newcastle Upon Tyne: the Northern Stage.

This is a theatre I've visited on many occasions. I have a very vivid memory of attending a Frantic Assembly workshop in one of Northern Stage's spaces, and whilst I certainly remember the feeling of total exhaustion very well (physical theatre

might not be my calling), I also remember thinking how adaptable and welcoming of a space Northern Stage is.

The complex houses three different stages within it. The largest, stage one (having 447 seats), can be moulded to whatever function is required of it: I've seen shows fully in the round, in thrust, and end-on throughout the years, and each time the same spaces feel utterly unrecognisable.

The theatre is renowned for its variety in the productions it puts on. It is able to host local, national and even international productions, as well as being a registered charity.

My only criticism is the seats are not the comfiest, which is not ideal for longer performances.

What's on?

**York Barbican**  
10th October: Peter Hook & The Light  
18th October: Squeeze

**The Brudenell (Leeds)**  
23rd September: Maximo Park  
27th September: Orlando Weeks

**The Crescent**  
2nd October: Terry Reid  
4th October: The South  
5th October: Rachel Croft

**The Fulford Arms**  
26th September: Tom Sheldon Trio  
14th October: King No-One  
15th October: The Blazers

# MUSIC <sup>5</sup>

## INTERVIEW

# 'Adapt to Survive': The Journey From Near Closure to Revitalisation for The Crescent Community Centre

BY MATTY APPLETON (He/Him)

**Since opening its doors as a Working Men's Club (WMC) in 1904, The Crescent has seen two world wars, 25 different Prime Ministers, six monarchs and a monumental amount of struggle. We spoke to The Crescent's co-owner and General Manager Bob Morwood-Leyland to discuss how a venue so steeped in history has cemented itself as York's premier music venue.**

Bob opened the interview by addressing the amount of hardship The Crescent has faced in the last 20 years, discussing how, as recently as 2015, the venue itself folded and was forced to sell up. The reasons for this, Bob discusses, are due to how "drinking habits changed when the 24 hour drinking licensing came in place," stating that, "it wasn't long after that you couldn't smoke indoors [and] night time culture became more prevalent. Working Men's Clubs got left behind."

In recent years, WMCs in Britain have

Image: Simon Godley

often been fighting to keep the doors open. Once pillars of community spirit and recreation, the private members clubs have seen a radical drop in membership, with the number of clubs in Britain dropping from 4,000 in 1970 to 2,200 in 2024. Originally built on the peripheries of city centres or housing estates to be close to a working class community, WMCs became desirable for developers, with many converted into flats and hotels due to the decline in business.

In January 2019, The New York Institute, a WMC only a short walk from The Crescent, was forced to close its doors after 90 years in business, later to be developed into 20 flats. Bob stated that The Crescent itself would have been "worth a lot of money", stating that the reason for the development of the venue into a gig venue and maintenance of the community space was due to the fact that York "can't lose it to developers."

Thus, the conversion of The Crescent into the cornerstone of York's bustling music scene was born from adversity. As recently as 2015, the club itself "couldn't afford to run anymore" with The Crescent's efforts to keep the doors open due in a large part to their rebranding

as a music venue. When voting on the decision to sell The Crescent, Bob stated that the members: "knew we would keep it open, we wouldn't just flip it over... and make money on it", thus voting to sell it to brothers Bob and Ed Morwood-Leyland and mother Alice Morwood-Leyland at a reduced price, with Bob stating that: "it was in our interest, and the interest of the people around us, to have somewhere like this", with similar venues such as *Fibbers* and *Duchess* closing not long after The Crescent reopened as a music venue.

Originally built as a community space for recreation and education of working class men prior to the creation of a welfare state, the venue became revitalised from imminent closure to vibrant revitalisation. In the last year alone, artists such as *DEADLETTER*, *English Teacher*, *Porij Radio*, *Ben UFO*, *Dj Yoda*, *Wheatus* and *Goldie Looking Chain* have all played the venue, becoming a vital component in not only the York music scene, but the Yorkshire music scene as a whole.

The club itself had at least one sold out show a week in August 2024, with many more planned for the rest of the year. Bob cited the Brudenell social club as an influence, a Working Men's Club whose successes as an independent gig venue allowed them to create a 400 capacity concert hall in 2017, whilst still operating effectively as a centre for the local community as well.

This is undoubtedly a vital component in The Crescent's philosophy; it serves not solely to operate as a gig venue, but maintains its roots as a community space, preserving the principles it was established with in 1904. Upon entering The Crescent for the interview, loud music could immediately be heard, with DJ decks in the bar. I was later informed that this was "Wednesday Night's Open DJ Decks", with Bob describing how locals "meet up once a week, have a catch up, swap stories, [and] listen to some music" with the club becoming inno-

vative with their ways to "get bums on seats". Bob went on to state that: "what they [WMCs] used to do is the bingo and the quizzes", however now "unless you're keeping it fresh, people lose interest." The Crescent still provides quizzes, has a regular dominoes and darts team, whilst also offering pool and free bar billiards in the games room, yet is simultaneously innovative in the events it offers to the community.

What is made abundantly clear when visiting The Crescent is the community spirit. The space maintains its identity as a space for recreation and community, yet continues to innovate the ways in which it provides this. The venue's success is attributable to its diversification and ability to "adapt to survive". We may never be certain where The Crescent would be without becoming a gig venue in 2015, or if other struggling Working Men's Clubs may follow suit, for now however the Crescent remains a pioneer, and a cornerstone of York's music scene.

*Special thanks to Bob Morwood-Leyland for his time during this piece.*

## MUSIC Editor's Note

Hi! I'm Matty, a third-year English student and the new music editor for Vision. Music has always been one of my strongest passions, from collecting vinyls, to playing bass in a student-band. Music journalism combines two of my strongest passions, making me very excited for the year ahead!

Matty Appleton



# 'I Will Always Come Back to Writing the Stuff That Sounds Like Myself'

Clara Downes interviews Sam Forrest, frontman of *Nine Black Alps*, for *SCENE*.

BY CLARA DOWNES (She/Her)

**S**am Forrest is a musician and singer-songwriter from York, best known for his position as frontman of the popular alternative-rock band *Nine Black Alps*. Alongside this, Sam is involved in several other bands, including *The Sorry Kisses*, and *Sewage Farm*. He also produces music as a solo artist: his newest album, *Caught Under a Spell*, was released in January of this year.

The album title *Caught Under a Spell* is a lyric in one of the album's songs, *Everybody's Gone Insane*. Forrest tells me his reasoning for choosing this poignant line: "I think it's just about the fact that everybody has their own mental challenges... and in a way we are all under our own spells of our own making."

Forrest seems struck by the effects that the difficulties we face can have on connecting with others in our lives: "A lot of the themes in the album are about miscommunication, and the difficulties we have communicating with each other... because of our own spells that we find ourselves under."

The last song in the album, *Holy Mountain* - a personal favourite of mine - stands out to me with its more stripped back feel, raw and emotional lyrics, and a beautiful acoustic guitar riff throughout the entire

four minutes. Forrest elaborates further on the theme of mental struggles during his explanation of this track: "I think I was writing about a retreat that we... well, that I personally go to in my head, my own holy mountain away from the world."

I now ask Forrest about his process for writing *Caught Under a Spell*: "I was just recording at a friend's garage space for about one evening a week... I originally wanted the whole album to be just bongos and classical guitar, but then my friend has a garage with a drum kit in it, so I thought 'okay I'm gonna try and play drums.' I'm a really bad drummer so most of these evenings was me trying to play drums, and then I'd go back home and try and piece things together."

**"I think too much is in tune nowadays"**

He reflects: "I think I wanted it to be honest in the fact that I'm not a drummer, I'm not really a great singer, and there's things out of tune and out of time on there... I like the organicness of things being out of tune. I think too much music is in tune nowadays... I know for a fact that it [the album] is real."

Forrest moved to Manchester due to the music scene in York being rather limited at the time: "Everything felt a little traditional at that time, whereas in Manchester, there's much more variation, much more punky kind of alternative things going on... I kind of wanted to find something a bit more aggressive or a bit more alternative."

In 2003, Forrest formed the band *Nine Black Alps* in Manchester with three other musicians. After only a handful of gigs, they signed a record deal and became well-known within the music industry: "It was very, very surreal. It was all a complete accident, and we were very inexperienced... I'd slogged away in bands in York for years, and nobody gave a shit, and then I moved to Manchester, we played like, two gigs, and got a massive amount of industry interest."

Forrest now elaborates on the effect that this quick success could have had on his mindset: "It's hard not to believe that sort of... 'Oh, I'm a genius now', because everybody is saying 'Oh you're a genius'... I was writing exactly the same sort of songs as I

"Suddenly the

**SPOTLIGHT**

was before, but suddenly the spotlight got shone on what I was doing."

I now ask Forrest to tell me about his favourite accomplishment within his music career. His surprising response resonates: "I never listen back to what I've done. I listen to everything I do obsessively until it's finished, and as soon as it's finished, I never listen to it again, because otherwise I'd find something wrong with it. And

**"I never listen back to what I've done"**

yeah, no, I just, I can't go back to it. It's not enjoyable for me."

Forrest emphasises that the feeling of reward comes from the creative process rather than the finished result: "I just like the process of doing it. I like making music... I don't really like nostalgia... it's too much of a time trap to go back. I'd rather just sort of focus on what I want to do now."

It wasn't long before Forrest returned to his North Yorkshire roots. I'm curious to see what he thinks of the York music scene now: "I moved back to York after about three years in Manchester because I missed the friendliness of the musicians.. in Manchester everything was very kind of cutthroat and competitive... in York I don't think anybody gives a shit about that... people in York seem to like music for music."

As for future releases, Forrest is working away at multiple projects: "One of my bands is called Sewage Farm, and we've got an album being mastered at the

moment. I've also started out another band in Hull called *Strange Pink*, and we are mixing an EP at the moment, and I am currently writing my next album."

He tells me he is in the process of deciding exactly what he wants to do with his next album: "It is really exciting. It's the best part... I have full control. I kind of get less and less control the more I do."

I ask Forrest whether he finds this extensive creative scope daunting: "I know my limitations, and that no matter how the complete freedom you get to write the music, I will always come back to writing the stuff that sounds like myself."

**GHT**

got shone on what I was doing"

**“people in York seem to like music for music”**

**“in Manchester everything was very kind of cutthroat and competitive”**





# 'This is What Art Should do: Make us Feel More United'

# ART

BY CLARA DOWNES (She/Her)

**This summer I spent three weeks in a beautiful village in the north of Italy, where I au-paired for a 7-year-old boy and helped him with his English. While I was there I had the opportunity to discover the work of Italian artist Maria Lai. This combination of experiences gave me an unexpected insight into the significance of relational art: art that builds connections between people or a community, often involving audience participation.**

The village of Pezzolo is located in Valle Di Scalve, a mountainous valley in the province of Bergamo. When I arrive, I am hit with the striking view of mountains towering above the village, just a few steps from the front door, and the sound of inaudible Italian dialect trickling through the narrow streets.

The little boy is fearful to engage with me in the few hours we spend due to a prominent guage barrier. I soon realise that attempting to strike up conversation is too intimidating, so I retrieve paper and colouring pens and begin drawing objects I know he will find recognisable. Soon across his face comes a look of relief, as he quickly reaches for a pen and copies my drawings. "Sun", I say pointing at the sketch. "Sole", he returns in Italian, looking rather pleased with himself.

I begin to structure our time together through creating things: over the next few weeks we experiment with paint, pens, cutting and sticking, Lego-building, and baking. It doesn't take long before the once timid and shy boy transforms into a body of confidence and enthusiasm, as this creativity acts as an escape from the previously immense linguistic divide.

During my stay, his mother gives me a book written by Elena Pontiggia, which follows the journey of Italian artist Maria Lai. Lai used the artistic concept of relational art to connect together the people

of her hometown, Ulassai, a mountainous town in Sardinia.

In 1978, Antioco Podda, the town's Christian Democrat Mayor, invited Lai to design a World War II memorial for the town. Lai refused, and instead proposed carrying out a unique project that she believed would bring the town closer together. After a year and a half of deliberation, the Mayor agreed and requested she do just this.

In September 1981, Lai convinced the whole town, many incredibly sceptical, to take part in Legarsi Alla Montagna (Bound to the Mountain). Her project was inspired by a well-known myth amongst the town: a little girl sheltering from the storm in a cave sees a blue ribbon blowing in the wind. She runs out of the cave and into the storm, chasing the ribbon. Moments later the cave collapses.

Lai's project recreated this myth by connecting every house in the town with a strip of blue denim, with knots or pieces of bread attached to it as a coding system of the nature of the relationship one household had with another. The ribbon led up to the top of Mount Gedili, a mountain next to Ulassai.

While the ribbon represented a fuse between the town's inhabitants, even those in conflict, the act of carrying out the project brought the town together too: "It urged people to bury the hatchet, to make peace, to develop relationships with each other, with nature, and with art," reflects Pontiggia.

Maria Lai's project was the first significant demonstration of relational art in Italy, and had a

lasting and monumental impact. While the denim strips no longer remain in Ulassai, the bonds that the project created and mended amongst the residents of the town are still intact.

Upon learning about Maria Lai, I came to realise that my bond with the boy had also been made stronger through the practice of creating things together. Where there was once a division – due to language rather than conflict! – there was



Images: Clara Downes

now, in its place, our own way of communicating, playing together, and relating to each other. The art allowed us to educate each other on our own cultures and languages.

My time in Pezzolo taught me many things about Italian culture, language and but perhaps the most valuable lesson learnt was the importance of

relational art in binding people together. Of course, Maria Lai's project did not bring about world peace, but it stands out as a demonstration of the impression art can have on a population, and furthermore what we can use relational art to achieve.

As Lai remarks, "Questo dovrebbe far l'arte: farce sentire più uniti. Senza questo non siamo esseri umani." – "This is what art should do: make us feel more united. Otherwise, we're not human beings."

# Why Everyone Should Read Beckett

BY MATTY APPLETON (He/Him) AND MORGAN GROVE (She/Her)

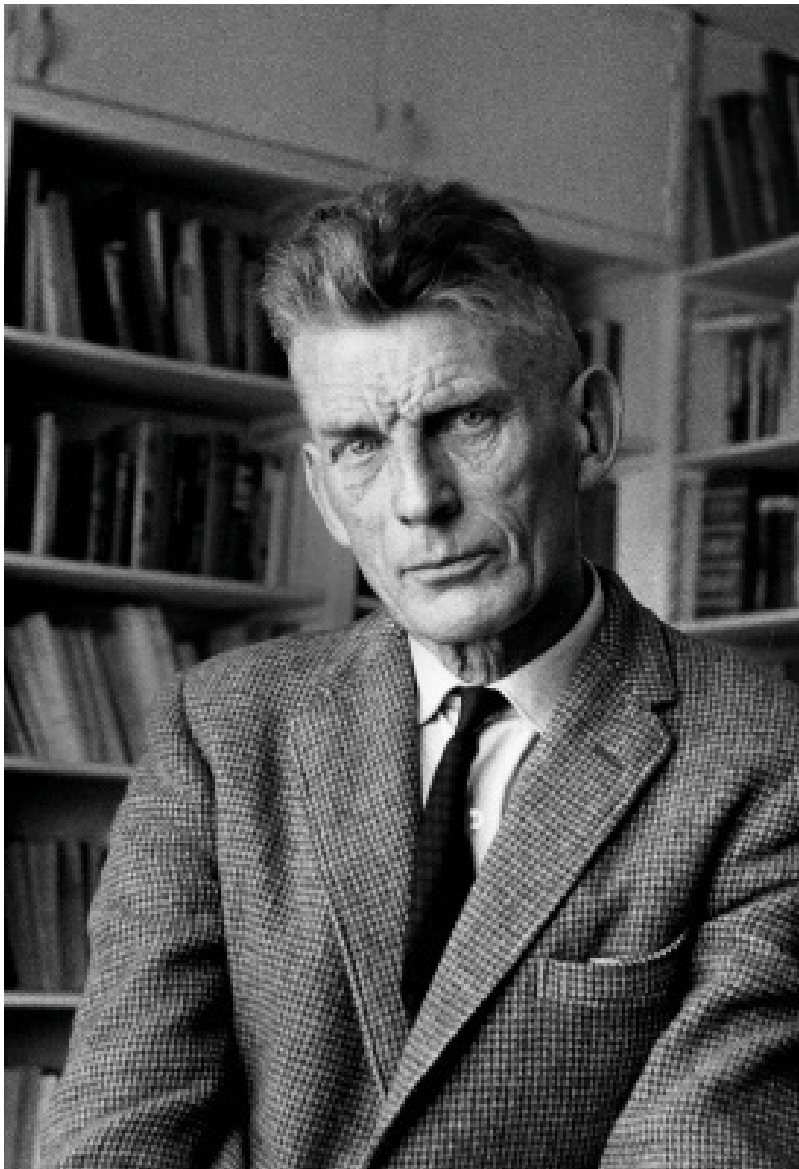


Image: Gisèle Freund (1965)

**S**emester one. Reading lists have long since rolled in, and we're sure everyone is already deep into the realms of required texts from authors long since deceased. Whether to your delight or disgust, we're here to offer you one more: Samuel Beckett.

The world often associated with the work of Beckett is one of nihilism and defeat, only read or watched by those who feel they are far too serious or literary for jokes or musical numbers. But Beckett is far more than the pessimistic brush he is often tarred with; through Beckett you can understand one important thing: the beauty of the meaningless.

We live in a literary sphere that is increasingly consumed by tropes. Novels seem to build

from how they will be perceived; a story is centred around enemies-to-lovers before it is even a sparkle in a writer's eye; every last part of a character's journey must be broken down and segmented until it is a palatable cliché. And this is why we believe, as our headline suggests, that everyone should read Beckett. The nothingness of Beckett is what makes his resistance so poignant, Beckett has to be understood at his word because there is nothing except his word. He himself has proven this, in his letters to Alan Scheidner, urging in reference to his own work "don't seek deep motivation everywhere", and actively rejecting adaptations that attempt to place his stories within a setting, such as Joanne Akalaitis's 1984 play that placed the action within the context of a nuclear bunker.

Indeed, Beckett plays with this meaningfulness and resistance to interpretation within his seminal and most critically acclaimed work *Waiting for Godot* (1952).

The play, consisting of two acts, showcases friends Vladimir and Estragon engaging in conversation whilst, predictably, waiting for the titular character of Godot, who never arrives. Act 1 of *Waiting for Godot* features Beckett's most notorious line: "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful" encapsulating the meaningfulness and mundanity of Beckett.

Yet this, for the first time, showcased mundanity and nothingness on the stage, attributing classlessness to inherently hierarchical spaces such as theatres. The classlessness and meaningfulness of Beckett's plays is characterised by their lack of action, driven solely by dialogue. Characters themselves exist solely for their dialogue, and refuse any form of interpretation or allegory. As Thomas Driver stated in reference to critics interpretations of Beckett's plays "If the critics and public see only images of despair, one can only deduce then they themselves are despairing." Thus, if Beckett's work is inherently meaningless, any ulterior interpretations reflect on the individual rather than the text.

Therein lies why everyone should read Beckett. Its inherent meaningfulness and absurdity levels the playing field, the individual can only interpret from the text what they truly feel within themselves. Beckett's tireless efforts to preserve this crucial meaningfulness within plays such as *Endgame*, *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Happy Days* can be ascertained most crucially through stage directions, which strangle any attempts at innovation from over ambitious directors. Beckett himself stated that "any production of *Endgame* which ignores my stage directions is completely unacceptable to me", with a *Guard-*

ian review from a 2015 performance of the play stating that "innovation [was] choked" by "strict staging Edicts." Thus, Beckett himself utilised stage directions as a guardian over the crucial meaningfulness of his plays, a meaningfulness which allows the individual to see no political allegories or metaphors and solely reflect upon their own morality.

Even 70 years since its original publication, Beckett's work is celebrated for its inherent absurdity and meaningfulness. His work, perhaps more than any other author, attributed classlessness, meaningfulness and absurdity to hierarchical spaces. For these reasons, plays such as *Endgame* and *Waiting for Godot* deserve to be near the top of everyone's reading lists, they preserve a crucial sense of meaningfulness which only Beckett could achieve, leaving the reader to see only what is reflected deep within themselves.

SCENE.  
Recommends...

**Cleopatra and  
Frankenstein**  
By Coco Mellors

*Addictive, moving, devastating and humorous, this fantastic piece of literary fiction follows the destructive impact of an impulsive marriage. A must read novel for Sally Rooney fans.*



9  
LITERATURE

LITERATURE  
Editor Vacancy

SCENE.  
Recommends...

### Happni Bakery

Located in the heart of York, this newly opened bakery serves delicious coffee and a variety of baked goods for your Sunday brunch fix! Sit in and takeaway are both available.

# Three Fresh-er Alternatives That Leave Instant Noodles in the Past

Image: Unsplash

BY TILLY BOWEN (She/Her)

**W**e all know that finding something new to cook at university can be a struggle, especially if you're just learning to cook for yourself away from home, or if you're stuck in the same cycle of toasties for lunch and pasta dishes for dinner. So here are three recipes that are nutritious, leftover and budget friendly and something different to try!

#### 1. Ham and mushroom pastry parcel

These pastry parcels are a perfect choice for lunch as they can be frozen and cooked when you want them, and they can be eaten on the go!

##### Ingredients

Pack of sliced ham (£1.49 for 120g)  
Sliced Mushrooms (89p for 250g)  
Cheese (£2.49 for 400g)  
Plain flour (75p for 1.5kg)  
Milk (£1.20 for 2 pints)  
Butter (£1.69 for 250g)  
Puff pastry (99p for 320g)  
Salt  
Pepper  
Oregano

##### To make the parcel filling:

Add 50g of butter to a pan and melt on low heat. Once melted add 50g of flour and mix until combined. Gradually add milk and whisk until the mixture becomes smooth. Add grated cheese and whisk until combined, adding more milk if needed. Add your chopped mushroom and ham and season with salt, pepper and oregano.

#### Assembling the pastry parcels:

Cut your pre-made pastry into equal squares and spoon the filling into the middle.

Place another pastry square on top and press down the edges with a folk.

Make a small cut in the middle of the top sheet of pastry and brush with milk.

##### Cooking time

Place in the oven for 20 minutes until golden.

This recipe should make four parcels.

You can also freeze the remaining parcels and cook them from frozen.

#### 2. Black bean tacos

These bean tacos are a great quick and nutritious option for lunch or dinner that leave you full and satisfied.

##### Ingredients

One can of black beans (49p)  
One small red onion (30p)  
1 tbsp of tomato puree (59p for 200g)  
Cheddar Cheese (£2.49 for 400g)  
Small wraps (69p for 8 pack)  
Vegetable stock cube  
Paprika  
Chilli flakes  
Salt and pepper  
Garlic  
Oregano  
Optional guacamole (99p for 150g)  
Dice your small red onion and add to a frying pan with oil and garlic (fresh or granules). Let the onion sweat and then add 1 tbsp of tomato paste and mix. Drain your black beans and add them to the frying pan and season to taste with salt, pepper and your spices. Let the bean cook for a few minutes and then add in a vegetable stock cube and a two tbsp of wa-

ter then lightly mash the beans. Once the beans are fully cooked, fold a small wrap in half and add the bean mixture to one half of the wrap and add cheese on top. Repeat depending on how many wraps you would like and then place them on a baking tray and cook for 10 minutes at 180 degrees.

Serve with guacamole.

If you have leftover beans, you can reheat them the next day and serve with rice!

#### 3. Spicy tuna, tomato and broccoli pasta

Here is a great sauce recipe to spice up your routine pasta! This recipe is packed with lots of flavour, protein and vegetables.

##### Ingredients

Tin of tuna (55p)  
Cheese (£2.49 for 400g)  
Premade spicy tomato sauce (99p)  
One small red onion (30p)  
Packet of pasta (1.29 for 1kg)  
Cherry tomatoes (69p)  
Broccoli (£1)  
Garlic  
Salt  
Pepper  
Put your pasta on to boil. Add some oil and garlic to a frying pan. Cut your broccoli, red onion and cherry tomatoes into small pieces and add to the pan. Season with salt, pepper, oregano and chilli flakes, if you like extra spice, and let them fry. Add in your pre-made spicy tomato sauce to the pan and mix. Drain your tuna and add to the sauce. Break up the tuna so the sauce is smoother. Drain your pasta and add it to the sauce. Season to taste and top with cheese!



# SUDOKU

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**EASY**

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**MEDIUM**

**HARD**



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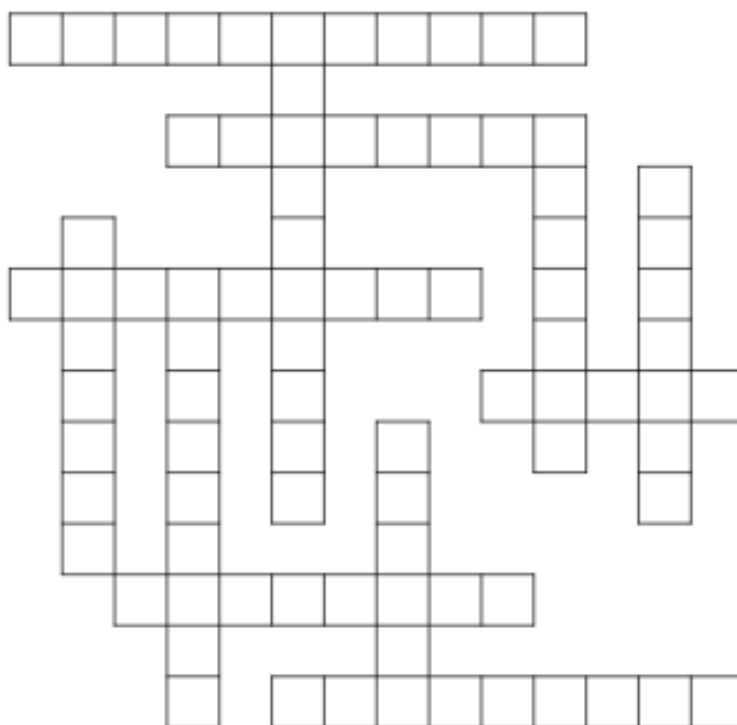
## SETSQUARE

ADD THE NUMBERS 1-9 INTO THE BLOCK BELOW. ALL EQUATIONS ARE READ LEFT TO RIGHT OR TOP TO BOTTOM (IGNORE BIDMAS).

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x			x		+	
		-		+		= 4
÷			-		x	
		x		+		= 10
= 14				= 26		= 42

## FITWORDS

FIT ALL THE WORDS BELOW INTO THE GRID TO THE RIGHT



**5 LETTERS**

JAMES

**9 LETTERS**

DAVIDKATO

GOODRICKE

WENTWORTH

**6 LETTERS**

ALCUIN

**10 LETTERS**

ANNELISTER

**7 LETTERS**

DERWENT

**11 LETTERS**

CONSTANTINE

HALIFAX

LONGBOI

**8 LETTERS**

# Blurble.

Watch any movie at City ScreenYork (Picturehouse) with **TWO FREE TICKETS** for you and a friend!

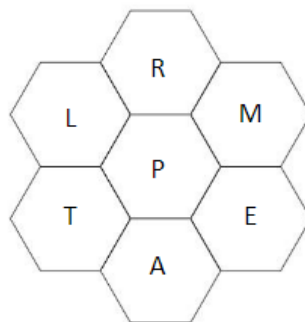
If you completed the Blurble, then be the first to let us know and we'll get you tickets! Simple as that. (Just take a pic, or send your answers to [games@yorkvision.co.uk](mailto:games@yorkvision.co.uk))

You have a blurb describing a Film, TV show, Theatre production, or, well, basically anything. Guess the title and fill in the blanks.

After nearly being killed by a snowman in act one, our lead hero ventures off into the abyss to find a talking frog. Under the guidance of this talking frog with a speech impediment, our hero trains to kill his asthmatic father. Meanwhile, said asthmatic father is waiting in the sky with a nicely prepared meal when our hero's best friend starts attacking him, ruining what could have been a lovely reunion.


**FREE CINEMA TICKETS YOU SAY?**

## WORD FLOWER

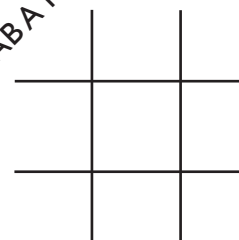


FIND AS MANY WORDS AS YOU CAN USING ANY OF THE LETTERS IN THE FLOWER. EACH LETTER CAN BE USED AS MANY TIMES AS YOU LIKE, BUT EACH WORD MUST CONTAIN THE CENTRAL LETTER.

10 - 15 GOOD  
16 - 25 GREAT  
35+ AMAZING!

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR ANSWERS, STUCK ON A PUZZLE, OR JUST WANT A CHAT, FEEL FREE TO EMAIL ME: [GAMES@YORKVISION.CO.UK](mailto:GAMES@YORKVISION.CO.UK)

GRABA FRIEND!

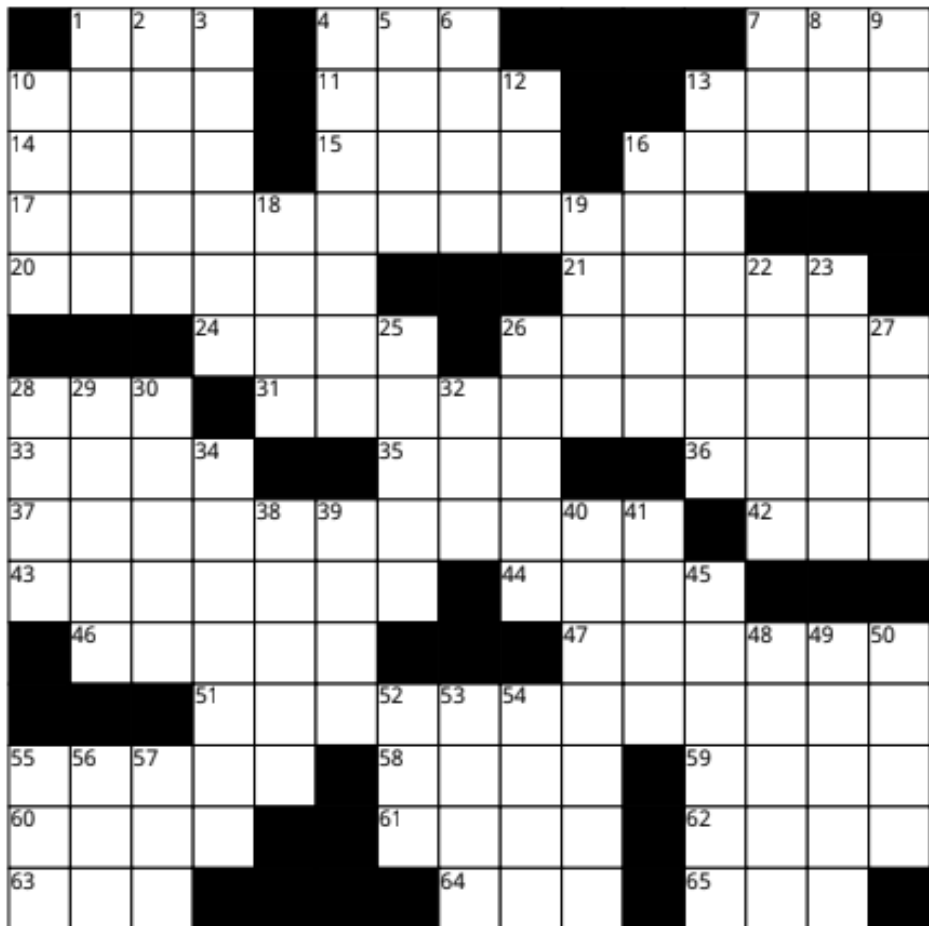


TURN OVER TO THE BACK PAGE FOR SOME MORE PUZZLES!

# GAMES

**GAMES**

## THE BIG ONE.



### ACROSS

- 1) 26D'S SOUND (3)
- 4) "WELL, AREN'T \_\_\_\_ PAIR" (2,1)
- 7) ROUTE (3)
- 10) CHARLIE AND \_\_\_\_ (4)
- 11) HALF OF BINARY DIGITS (4)
- 13) \_\_\_\_ AND THE LAST DRAGON, DISNEY FILM (4)
- 14) HYDROCARBON SUFFIXES (4)
- 15) ACTRESS SINGER OF FOOTLOOSE (4)
- 16) ARMY HEADQUARTERS (5)
- 17) CARNIVOROUS PLANT (5,7)
- 20) "YES, CAPTAIN!" (3,3)
- 21) FORMAL RESPONSE TO "WHO'S THERE?" (2,2,1)
- 24) TRAIN COMPANY WITH A RED LOGO (4)
- 26) MUSEUM GUIDES (7)
- 28) NOT GOOD (3)
- 31) COUGH (5,6)
- 33) AN ELECTRONIC KEY (1,3)
- 35) NAME SPELLED OUT IN THE ALPHABET (3)
- 36) FA FOLLOWERS (2,2)
- 37) PERSON ON A POST WEDDING HOLIDAY (1,1)
- 42) NORSE GOD OF WAR (3)
- 43) HAVE, ENDNOTE (ANAG) (3,4)
- 44) NAUTICAL SPEED UNIT (4)
- 46) CONNECT WITH, BY ROPE (3,2)
- 47) LIKE MOST ROADS (3,3)
- 51) LEADERS OF FIREFIGHTERS (4,8)
- 55) DESERT REFUGE (5)
- 58) LARGE, HEAVY BOOK (4)
- 59) GAWK AT (4)
- 60) "HUH?" (4)
- 61) ARRIVE (4)
- 62) SHAKESPEAREAN KING (4)
- 63) YOUNG BOY (3)
- 64) REJECTIONS (3)
- 65) ARID (3)

### DOWN

- 1) WINNIE-THE-POOH'S FAVOURITE FOOD (5)
- 2) \_\_\_\_ WOODS, ORIGINAL VOICE OF CINDERELLA (5)
- 3) INFORMAL (6)
- 4) LONG FISH WITH DOGLIKE TEETH (4,3)
- 5) HYDROXYL COMPOUND (4)
- 6) ETHEREAL (4)
- 7) IS NO LONGER (3)
- 8) VOTE OF SUPPORT (3)
- 9) "\_\_\_\_ QUEEN" (3)
- 10) HOT ROCK (4)
- 12) PERCH (3)
- 13) SLENDER SWORDS (7)
- 16) TRAYFUL OF COOKIES (5)
- 18) MATCH UP (4)
- 19) MOB ACTION (4)
- 22) SNOBBISH SORT (5)
- 23) EUROPE'S "BOOT" (5)
- 25) PUT IN NEW GRASS (5)
- 26) PLASTERED (5)
- 27) CELEBRITY (4)
- 28) GERMAN ROAD (4)
- 29) THE GAME IS \_\_\_\_ (5)
- 30) "\_\_\_\_ KNOWYOU" (4,1)
- 32) FROM \_\_\_\_ Z (1,2)
- 34) FUNDRAISER (7)
- 38) ABOMINABLE SNOWMEN (5)
- 39) "LOVE \_\_\_\_ LEAVE..." (2,2)
- 40) MEAL COURSES (7)
- 41) USES OARS (4)
- 45) "... HAVE AND \_\_\_\_ " WEDDING VOW (2,4)
- 48) BET (5)
- 49) CALM, AS FEARS (5)
- 50) RIVER OF FLANDERS (4)
- 52) AND SO ON: ABBR (3)
- 53) 1969 LANDING SITE (4)
- 54) BULLETS (4)
- 55) WISE BIRD (3)
- 56) "EUREKA!" (3)
- 57) LOW (3)

# THE BACK PAGE OF SCENE.

## THE LITTLE ONE.

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9				

### ACROSS

- 1) TITLED WOMEN
- 6) SHOCKED
- 7) LIGHT WOOD
- 8) NATIVE OF MEXICO
- 9) TAUNT

### DOWN

- 1) SPONGE GENTLY
- 2) TRANSFIXED
- 3) ISLAND NEAR SICILY
- 4) SNAKE SHAPES
- 5) "THE FINAL FRONTIER"

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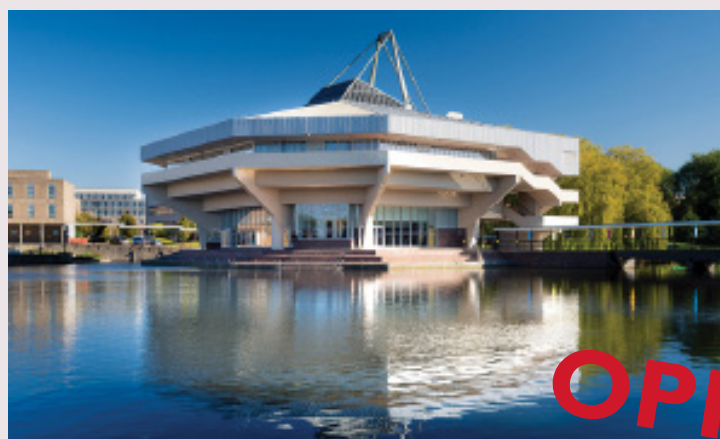
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# COLUMNS

## Sabb You Seen Your New SU Officers?

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)

**Freddy Russell, Community & Wellbeing Officer**

**As the former President of ComedySoc, what's your favourite joke:**

"I have a few, like, sort of favorite bits of stand up. Billy Connolly's wildebeest section is this great thing where he acts out this entire David Attenborough documentary perspective of a wildebeest and it's so funny."

"The more we can get students involved with just average members of the local community, the more we can start to build those relationships."

"I'm really looking to try and work towards a vision of support services where people can be properly referred from one service to another, and there's more communication between the service."

"One of the things I want us to really want to emphasize when it comes to cost of living funding, is that I really want it to always be matched and always be relative to what the cost of living for a student actually is... if the cost of living for a student's gone up that we need to increase funding as well."

**Ezreal Xie, Equality and Inclusion Officer**

**Favourite animal:**

"I love kittens and puppies, but here in the UK, my pet is a cute dragon."

"In the library, there are many places for undergraduates to liaise and study...but for post-grads, I don't think there's this sort of place for them to have their own quiet space."

"I want to bring more scholarships to students and to build more facilities on campus such as disabled bathrooms and some blind alleys."

"When I first walked on campus West, I didn't see many facilities on the roads such as blind alleys for disabled students... If there are no blind alleys for disabled students, that's not according to equality and inclusion."

**Kaitlyn Beattie-Zarb, Activities Officer**

**Favourite Taylor Swift song:**

"I think maybe Long Live is one of my favourites. All Too Well, the extended version - that's good too".

"There are tactics for engaging students, there's ways to get students to come along, you can promote the society and offer a different range of activities if you're struggling. Or get me to promote it; I'll shoot out a little message."

"We do have an activities access grant that is made to support students who struggle with any of these costs. There are a few eligibility requirements, proof of low income but it's not too difficult to get."

"At the moment, we have this thing called Societies Committee, which is a representative from every area of societies, so like one representative for arts and performing societies. My hope is to set up some meetings with the groups themselves so I can talk to every president at least once."

"There's so many sorts of groups so figuring out how the union and the uni can get involved in these." groups and help them flourish is a wider challenge."

**Tanisha Jain, Sports Officer**

**Favourite sport:**

"I feel like cricket is in my religion, like it's in my blood but basketball is my sport. I feel like I was kind of born into cricket but basketball I chose. So cricket is my religion but basketball is my sport."

"One of the main reasons I wanted to be the sports officer was because I'm a woman of colour, I'm queer, I'm international, I'm neurodivergent...a lot of people consider this as a disadvantaged background... but I consider those to be my strengths and that is one of the reasons that I wanted to become the sports officer so other people who look like me.. can look at me and say 'I have a space in sport'."

"I'm very proud of our college sport system. I do this say this quite often that our college sport system is the best in the country and I will not take anything else."

"We'll be making Roses more inclusive and accessible as well. I really am keen to include more disability sport in Roses as well and have open categories so that everyone can take part in Roses."

"We need to win this year. I will do anything to win this year, and we will win this year. I'm going in with a winning mentality...I am not hearing the word 'lose' when it comes to Roses."

**Fenella Johnson, Academic Officer**

**What's your favourite band:**

"My all-time favourite ever band is Motionless in White but at the minute it's Boston Manor."

"The first thing we're trying to do just as kind of a bit of an icebreaker and to try and set the scene with online distance learners is to get coffee vouchers out to them so they can have an online coffee morning. We're giving them the money to go out and get a coffee basically...if we catch them early at the start that will hopefully build a community that will last throughout the whole term."

"I think it's about setting up a community and then I think it's about solving those problems that come up within the community."

"If you get an essay with feedback that's quite vague, actually just being able to go up and speak to them...is sometimes more useful than just having it on the screen in front of you. That's one thing, especially with the academic reps this year I really want to get them to push their courses to advertise that more."

**Gen Andrews, Union Development Officer**

**Favourite song to play on the guitar:**

"At the moment, I've been listening to a lot of Oasis because obviously. Half the world away is such a beautiful song."

"I want to get people over to East...and then my kind of eventual aim is to have something along the lines of, you know The Kitchen at Alcuin...a space that's a little bit multi-purpose."

"In commercial services, we're hoping to be able to track the carbon output of foods that have been put in the venues. It's quite small scale but what I'd like is for whenever you buy a ticket, like for Viking Raid for instance, and you get a PDF with the barcode, something along the lines of below that, [there will be] a page which shows you carbon output and the ways that have been taken to reduce waste and things like that."

"I want to work with venue managers to look at how you can really build the buzz in separate venues."

**Lewis Parrey, Union Affairs Officer**

**What's the deal with the rubber duck collection that you mentioned in your manifesto?**

"I have a few rubber ducks on my shelf. One of them came from like Freshers' Week and I just got one from Flares, they had a load of rubber ducks in Flares so I just got one from there and I genuinely don't know where the other ones have come from. They have just appeared."

"There's an international student courtyard party kind of thing and as SABBs we're going to go to that and sort of be there to talk to international students and really hear them. So I think that's the first step: it's about being visible and accessible."

"Now we're a combined student union, we represent post-grads as well so anytime any issue comes up it's 'what about post grads, how does it affect them?' that's the question we're always asking. Again, we want to make ourselves visible and accessible to postgrads as well and really understand their unique challenges because they're not always the same experiences and challenges that they have as opposed to undergrad students. It's already out like our Trustee board minutes for those students who want to go in and have a look at them but I also think we can do more to condense that down into a small format maybe through our Instagram for example so we can sort of get [to] those students that don't want to spend hours looking through the minutes."



# FEATURES

## What the Duck are UoY Students Funding?

A life-sized bronze statue has been cast to immortalise the deceased Long Boi following a massive student-led fundraising campaign. But is Long Boi all he's quacked up to be?

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)

**S**tanding proud at 70cm (2'4), Long Boi was presumed to be an Indian Runner duck-Mallard cross who resided near the lake at Derwent College. But more than that, he has been mentioned in James Corden's Late Night Talk show, made headlines at the BBC and even been dubbed a brief "internet meme" by Wikipedia.

With his list of qualifications as long as his neck, Long Boi has made a name for himself beyond his humble origins.

Last year, the former YUSU President Pierrick Roger launched a project on York Unlimited, the University's fundraising platform, to raise donations and create a memorial to honour the deceased duck. The Long Boi fundraiser raised a massive £5527 from 340 donors. Alongside the donation request, Roger wrote that: "Long Boi was much more than just a very long duck or just another University mascot."

Pierrick clarified that "any excess funds will be donated within the University to either Mentally Fit York because of the joy Long Boi brought to our community or to a Travel Abroad Award in the form of a York Futures Scholarship named after Long Boi."

The University has a record of 20 donations over £50 and 10 donations over £100.

Donations to the statue ranged anywhere from £1 to a staggering £500, showing that this is a project that students and staff members alike were keen to get involved in.

While a significant number of the donations were made anonymously, *York Vision* was able to speak with donor Gary Brannan, 36, who donated a generous £50 to the Long Boi statue.

Mr Brannan was an undergraduate student at the University of York. Since then, he has been employed at the University for over 10 years and works at the Borthwick Institute for Archives. During his time in York, he has seen the legend of Long Boi come to life and grow into a true Quacks-to-riches Cinderella story.

Speaking about Long Boi, he tells me that "he wasn't around when I was an undergraduate...I was here up until 2005 and there was no Long Boi then, but when I came back in 2014, there was a Long Boi. "The whole Long Boi thing, I think it took off in about 2017-2018. I think that's when it really caught on from my memory. That's when he became a meme, if you like, at that point." Henrique Plihal Ferreira is a 21-year-old studying Biotechnology. He donated £20 to the

Long Boi statue and explained: "The funniest memory I have is just seeing how much of a celebrity he was for humans but not so much for fellow ducks. Just seeing him pampered by people but running from other ducks was always a curious and funny moment," he says, adding that the concept "of this exceptionally tall campus duck was always very cool. Almost from a fairytale."

Antonio Garcia-Dominguez, a lecturer in Software Engineering at the Department of Computer Science at the University, donated roughly £20 to the cause. "In one of the modules I teach, we have students develop video games, and there have been many fun references to him and the rest of the York fauna in those games. I can tell you that it's rare to see a game without a duck or a goose involved somehow, regardless of what we set as the brief each year."

Lauren Shields, 21, said: "As someone who guides students around campus through outreach in my department, I love to tell them about York and ask if they know about Long Boi. It's safe to say that students across the UK still know who he is!"

One of my initial concerns about this project was the degree to which it was instigated and funded by students. Mr Brannan had this to say in response: "I'll take it from the position of someone who works with the University art collection. We didn't suggest it; it came from the students. We were fully supportive of it...gently in the background, helping them out in terms of...working out how you do a commission and stuff like that. But the fundraising was done by students."

"The design was chosen, I think through the students as well. We've kind of let this develop organically.

"Who created the legend of



Long Boi? Did the University create it? No. It was created by the students...from my perspective, this is something that the students have generated and we're really, really delighted with that. I think that's something we want to see more of."

The Long Boi statue will solidify his memory on campus, ensuring that future years of students will not be deprived of his presence. Roger said that once the sculpture is completed, it

will be placed alongside the lakes by Derwent College, which was believed to be one of Long Boi's favourite spots.

Radio 1 host Greg James will cover the unveiling which is set to take place Thursday 26th September.



# LIVING WITH AN EATING DISORDER AT UNIVERSITY

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)

**Trigger Warning: This article discusses disordered eating and themes of mental health which some readers may find upsetting.**

**A**bigail Barrett and Lucy Booth arrived at York as neighbours in James College. Before coming to university, they both had a history of disordered eating, and struggled to navigate the change of starting university.

Two years on, they're still flatmates, but also the incumbent President and Treasurer of BEAT society, promoting awareness of eating disorders and fostering a growing community on campus.

Abigail and Lucy opened up to me about their personal experiences with disordered eating and how this has impacted their time at University.

Having unrestricted autonomy over your diet can be daunting for those who have a difficult relationship with food. Abigail tells me that "at home you always have someone checking in on you and seeing you eat but it is much more independent when you get to university."

The transition of moving to a new city, feeling estranged from your family and dealing with an overwhelming workload can induce a lot of stress, causing old eating habits to creep up again, even if someone has recovered.

Lucy says: "During uni, I struggled quite a lot with eating, especially when I was going through a stressful situation. It's a bit of a control thing."

"Sometimes it would just be so much easier to skip a meal because I was so stressed that I didn't have an appetite. And then my health hit a bit of a crisis point and it was sort of a wake-up shock that my body needed quite a bit more food to function than I was eating."

On their Instagram, BEATSoc posts useful advice on how to cope with the transition to university life. They advise people to "make sure you have easy snacks and meals at the ready for

Welcome Week" and encourage those in recovery to "surround yourself with people that you feel comfortable with."

BEAT is the UK's eating disorder charity which supports people suffering from eating disorders and offers online support. They estimate that approximately 1.25 million people in the UK struggle with an eating disorder and a significant portion of these people are between the ages of 18-25.

In April 2022, the UK government launched new legislation ruling that cafes, restaurants and takeaways with over 250 employees legally had to display the calorie information of non-pre-packed food and soft drinks. This was passed in spite of public concern from eating disorder charities that doing so would be at the risk of people with eating disorders, for whom calorie counting can be a very dangerous fixation.

"The uproar from the community was just like 'why would you do that?'" Abigail tells me.

Forcing menus to display the calorie count can prevent students with eating disorders from participating in some social activities. Some larger restaurants offer menus without the calories, but a lot of smaller restaurants don't, and this can be another stumbling block which makes it harder for students with eating disorders to get involved in university life.

There are still ways around these obstacles. On request, some larger restaurants offer menus without calories written on them, and many independent cafes (including some here in York, such as Plush!) aren't obliged to put calories on their menus whatsoever, so the alternatives are there for those navigating recovery and reducing anxiety around eating.

Before coming to university, Abigail was diagnosed with

anorexia nervosa. Anorexia has the highest mortality rate of any psychiatric disorder and a full recovery often takes years of treatment.

"Because I was under 18, I went to CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services)," she tells me, "so I was kind of forced into recovery...I'd go every week and they would weigh me, do blood pressure and that. Because I had anorexia, their goal was making sure I was at a healthy weight, and that my blood pressure was fine and my heart was fine, so I didn't really get any sort of therapy. I didn't really talk about the mental side of it, it was very much focussed on the physical, even though it's a mental illness, which wasn't great."

**"I was just scared that people were going to try and help and...I was like 'no, I need that', but then you have the other side of your head which is like 'no no no, we don't need help.'"**

Eating disorders are severe mental illnesses which affect people of all ages, sex, ethnicities, and backgrounds. There are several different types of eating disorders and some are less well known than others.

"For Awareness Week last

year, it was about ARFID, which is Avoidant/Restrictive Food Intake Disorder. So that's about nothing to do with body image, but...sensory issues with food," Abigail says.

"It gets ignored and discredited so easily as someone being fussy when it's really a sensory issue," Lucy adds.

A survey of over 200 students with eating disorders found that 32% were diagnosed after starting their course. Almost a fifth (18%) said that their condition had forced them to drop out of their degree course. Another 39% had to take a break from their studies.

Many GP services rely on a BMI system to qualify and get support.

"A lot of people aren't able to access help at the moment because if their BMI (which is stupid), is deemed as normal, they're just like 'oh you're not sick enough'" Abigail says, "...it's not about [the] body; it never is. And that's what's wrong with how people are being helped from GPs..."

There are several professional support channels for people who are struggling or know someone else who is struggling with an eating disorder. The University of York's Open Doors services offers free advice for people who are struggling, who can give out mental health support and check-ins as often as you want. The charity BEAT's crisis team can offer support at all times of the day.

I asked them why it can be so hard for people with eating disorders to reach out for help.

Abigail said: "You can feel a lot of guilt with things like eating disorders. Not to generalise, but you can feel extremely guilty and extremely ashamed of it and you don't want to tell people because you're embarrassed, and then again with anorexia, for me anyway it was like I didn't

want to tell people because in my head I was fine [...] and if you tell people you're worried they're going to want [to] help you, and that's the thing that your eating disorder doesn't want you to do.

"In my head, I was just scared that people were going to try and help and...I was like 'no, I need that', but then you have the other side of your head which is like 'no no no, we don't need help.'"

Lucy says: "you just feel like you've got so many other things going on in your life at the same time that it almost goes on the backburner where you're like, if someone did come up and try [to] help you, you'd want to talk about the situations that are causing it [instead]."

"You can never tell by [their] body if someone [has] an eating disorder, I think that's the main takeaway," Lucy says.

**If you're struggling or are worried about someone, you can contact BEAT's helpline at 0808 801 0677 (England), 0808 801 0432 (Scotland), 0808 801 0433 (Wales), 0808 801 0434 (Northern Ireland), or visit their website <https://www.beateating-disorders.org.uk/>.**



IMAGE: BEATSOC

# LIFESTYLE

**FAYE ASKEW**  
LIFESTYLE EDITOR

## AOIFE'S GUIDE TO FOOD SHOPPING

BY AOIFE WOOD (She/Her)

**After a year of shopping and cooking for myself, I have a plethora of advice to share with incoming students.**

Some of you lucky ones will have catered accommodation (cherish this). But for most of us, we are met every day with the almost overwhelming pressure of deciding what to eat for dinner.

To gain your faith in me as a food shopping expert, I will begin by giving a rundown of my budget and what I was able to buy with it.

My weekly food budget was

£15, with an absolute upper limit of £20. Generally I was able to stick to the £15, and only went over when I needed to repurchase items I did not buy weekly, like oil, tinfoil and rice. With this £15, I would be able to make seven main meals, lunches and breakfasts, making my overall food cost per day just over £2. Obviously, everyone's budgets will be different and this advice is what worked best for me and my diet.

My first piece of advice is to choose your supermarket carefully. I found Aldi to be amazingly affordable and fit almost all my food shopping needs. Aside from just being affordable, Aldi also has a very helpful website. Each week, I would search the website and add everything I wanted to buy to my basket to get an idea of how much I would be spending. This allowed me to easily shop within my budget and helped prevent any impulse buys.

For people on an even tighter budget, I would also recommend shopping around for some items. For me, this meant shopping for rice and egg noodles at an Asian Supermarket in town. Not only did this save money but it also meant I had way more options to choose from.

My second piece of advice is to plan your meals. How you do this is really up to you. I know lots of people who just batch cooked one meal and ate that for a week; others batched cooked several meals and varied eating these across a few weeks. If the idea of eating, say, fajitas for seven days straight doesn't sound satisfying, you may have to do slightly more planning.

Before my food shop, I would sit down and think of three meals I wanted to eat that week. Then I would head to the Aldi website and add all the ingredients to my basket. To fill the rest of the week, I would come up with

other dishes I could make using those ingredients. Occasionally, I would have to add a few extra things to the basket, like instant noodles and soup, to ensure I had food for every day.

The next big thing to consider is storage. Buying for one person can be incredibly difficult since most things come in family sizes and single portion items often cost more per kilogram. Luckily, so many things can be kept in the freezer. I always kept my bread in the freezer, along with lots of leftovers.

Regarding storage, not all vegetables are created equally. Cabbage, for example, can last a few weeks in the fridge while spinach wilts quickly. My list of long-lasting vegetables includes: celery, broccoli, carrots and peppers. Learning how to store foods is important too and a quick Google search can help you here. For example, spring onions last the longest when refrigerated

IMAGE: PIXABAY



IMAGE: PIXABAY

upright in a glass of water.

My next piece of advice may cause a few laughs but it has had such a positive impact on my food shopping experience. Buy a shopping trolley. One of those wheely things often sported by the elderly. Having a trolley meant I could buy enough food for the whole week in one food shop without aching for the rest of the week. If you have a car, you can skip this piece of advice but for those of us who don't, a shopping trolley will seriously improve your shopping experience.



IMAGE: PIXABAY

## How to Make Friends During Welcome Week (and keep them!)

BY FAYE ASKEW (She/Her)

**When I first arrived at university as a fresher last year, making friends and having a social life was one of my biggest worries.**

Passing my courses and adjusting to living on my own felt like something I had control over, whereas meeting people I'd get along with felt totally random. Whilst I definitely didn't have as much to worry about as I thought, as the people in York have been extremely friendly and I have found tons of opportunities to meet and make friends, I still have some tips and advice that will make it that much easier to find your people at university.

One of the easiest ways to open doors to new friendships when you first arrive at university is by literally knocking on them. Be the first person to meet all your new flatmates by just seeing who's in their rooms and intro-

ducing yourself to them once you're unpacked and settled in - bonus points if you ask them to do an activity with you, like going to collect your freshers' wristbands or having a look around campus. You'll need to get to know and get on with all your flatmates eventually anyway, so you might as well make yourself known as someone friendly who's up to chat. Once you've gotten to know people in your own flat, you may also want to go and knock on the doors of your neighbouring flats as well; this can be especially fun for pre-drinks and nights out.

I'd also recommend that you go to your daytime College Welcome events. This one may seem self-explanatory, but I feel like it's something many people skip in lieu of the night-time events. Your college will likely host freshers' meetups (hopefully with free food) in your college hub or common room. Whilst I found

them to be another good opportunity to chat to new people, they're especially important for beginning to get to know faces around your college. University is a much smaller world than you might think, and starting to know and recognise people can lead to friendships later on (and can be good connections to have when people need numbers for flat parties).

Another great place to meet people is through your course. Talking to people in your lectures is a great idea, and in the first couple of weeks I found them to be the place where people are the chattiest. However, for me seminars are where I made more lasting friendships, as you're guaranteed to see the same few people week after week. It is true that smaller groups of seminars can make people more nervous to talk to each other, especially with it feeling like everyone is listening in. However, if you do

make the effort to reach out and chat to people, the consistency of seeing them each week can make friendships a lot easier to form rather than in lectures, which can have hundreds of people sat in them.

We've also all heard that it's a good idea to join societies if you want to make friends, but let me tell you why. Not only will you immediately be connected with people who share the same interests as you, but you will see them weekly in a setting where you're partaking in said interest together, or at a social. Be it football or chess (or your favourite student newspaper), you will have the opportunity to begin conversations and partake in team activities with like-minded people.

In conclusion, whilst I hope these tips can be as helpful to as many of you as possible, as cheesy as it may be, the most important advice I can give is to not worry about it too much. If

you can put yourself out there as much as you can, and stay true to yourself and your interests, I'm sure you will have no problem making long-lasting friendships. Whilst Welcome Week is a busy time for social interaction, it's still completely normal to feel lonely during this time and after; moving away from your friends and family is not an easy thing to do, and finding friends may take time and patience. College and course social events continue throughout the entire year, and many people don't find people who they truly click with until later on in their university education.



IMAGE: UNSPLASH

# RELATIONSHIPS

## Should You Swipe Left or Right on Using Dating Apps?

BY FAYE ASKEW (She/Her)

**A**lmost everyone I know has downloaded a dating app at university at least once (including myself). Scrolling through someone's Tinder at the pub has led to many evenings of entertainment for myself and my friends.

I'm not going to pretend that dating apps are the ideal way to go in terms of finding a partner, and you'll likely come across a lot of weirdos, but meeting someone 'naturally' can also be less than ideal.

One massive perk of dating apps that I've found is that it gets you outside of your immediate circle; there's nothing worse than running into someone you've

dated in your block, across from you at a seminar, or God forbid, every day in your own flat.

Having a wider dating pool minimises the drama in your own friend groups, which especially after the chaos of Welcome Week can be a welcome break. That being said, dating apps mean you interact with a lot more people in a much shorter span of time - I am no stranger to having to run away from a friend's Hinge match in a bar. Still though, I'd say the potential for day-to-day awkwardness is greatly minimised.

Another good thing about dating apps is they force you to closely evaluate what you actually want in a relationship. On apps such as Hinge you list your likes

and dislikes; the type of relationship you're looking for, the genders you're looking to date, and, of course, you get to view the preferences of the users you are swiping on too. Even if you don't end up dating anyone from your dating app of choice, this kind of introspection can help you reflect on the type of person you'd want to date in general, and may help you to recognise who you'd be a good match with off of dating apps.

Lastly, if you're someone who's been nervous about dating or not had much success with it, they can help you get acclimatised to putting yourself out there and facing both rejection and attention in a relatively stress-free way. Especially if you get your

friends to help set up your profile and sort through your matches with you, dating apps can just be a bit of fun.

At the end of the day, loads of people at university are in the dating scene both on and offline,

and getting used to talking to people you may be interested in can't be a bad thing.

And if it does get too much? Unlike the real life dating sphere, you can just delete it and be done with it.



IMAGE: PIXABAY

## A SMALL LIST OF ICKS

BY AUDREY LAWLER (She/Her), CLARA DOWNES (She/Her)

AND CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)

**Is ick an outdated word? Maybe. But do we still need an article to go in here? Definitely.**

The three of us conducted lots of thorough research, scheduled a time to meet, and carefully constructed a list of our biggest icks. Of course, this was all done plenty of time before the print deadline. Here are the fruits of our investigation.

**1. Calling women 'females'**  
Are you conducting a biological study or what?

**2. Walking barefoot**  
Put the dogs away.

**3. When people 'hover' in clubs**  
You didn't pay £6 to not even dance!

**4. Not knowing the difference between "their", "there" and "they're"**  
Did you pass your SPAG tests?

**5. When their trying on new shoes and they walk around the shop to try it out**  
Okay catwalk.

**6. Using the crying-laughing emoji in text messages**  
Charlotte only found out whilst writing this that it was socially unacceptable.

**7. Not liking the taste of coffee**  
Yeah enjoy your 14 sugars (hypocritical, of course).

**8. Saying "doinked" or "wacked" et cetera as alternatives to drunk are unacceptable**  
But creativity points awarded.

**9. Making a joke and no one laughs**

**10. Repeating a joke after no one laughs the first time**

**11. Singing the wrong lyrics to a song**  
Especially if the lyrics are on a screen right in front of you.

**12. Being obsessed with maintaining your Duolingo streak**

Charlotte would like to add that this does not apply to a Wordle streak. Audrey and Clara heavily disagree.

**13. Missing when trying to hit a pinata**  
Or even worse, hitting the pinata and it not breaking.

**14. Preheating the oven**  
No explanation needed.

**15. Not reading Vision**  
I mean, it's a cliché for a reason right.

## No More Heartbreak and No More Meaningless Club Snogs

BY JACOB BASSFORD (He/Him)

**The Relationship section is back! And it just so happens that I wrote an article back in March 2023 entitled "Heartbreak and Meaningless Club Snogs" for the section last time.**

It was one of my favourite pieces I have ever written for *York Vision*, and was a therapeutic and humorous attempt at reflecting on what had been a pretty self-destructive series of events in my love life at university, hoping that readers would find my experiences useful or at least a fun little read.

The version of me who wrote that article was probably at one of the lowest ebbs in my life; this wasn't only because of a non-existent love life, but that was admittedly a big factor. Back then, despite what I had written about it being okay not to find true love at a young age, I was utterly convinced that I had missed

the boat for finding a serious and stable relationship. Seventeen months later, writing this somewhat related sequel (like a direct-to-DVD installation, if you will), I am delighted to inform you - dearest readers - that I did indeed find a love that was healthy, stable, safe and comfortable; proof that even useless Byronic fools like me can still find love. My wonderful, gorgeous girlfriend, shoutout to Cara, has (amongst being just utterly amazing every day) restored my faith in romantic love and I could not be happier.

To reflect on that article, and my views on this have not changed, we are all worthy of love, even the platonic love which I have developed for so many of my friends since arriving here in York in September 2021. Love has the power to hurt and destroy, but more than this, love is importantly one that can

heal and mend anything, from heartbreak to getting a bad score in an exam.

If you are a fresher reading this, here are some words of reflection (not advice: I don't want to be that guy who stays on for a Masters and acts all omniscient). At the end of the day, I genuinely do believe everything happens for a reason. Yet, I see too often at university people denigrating themselves or others to the point of self-destruction in the name of the potentiality of a relationship. Avoid the sharks, and while on the very odd occasion it could work out, I would avoid flatest or STYC-cest, and most importantly always be yourself. The right friends and future partner(s) will only truly love you for you, not a false version. Have fun and take care of yourself.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

# WHAT IS THE INSTITUTE OF SAFE AUTONOMY? AND IS IT AS SCARY AS IT SOUNDS?

IMAGE: YORK VISION

BY **EDDIE ATKINSON (He/Him)**

**J**ust a few yards away from the Piazza on Campus East stands a boxy building with an ominous title in big black letters on its front wall, accompanied by an inscrutable logo.

The title 'Institute for Safe Autonomy' often mystifies students, conjuring up an image of scientists in white jackets monitoring sentient robots, and raises the slightly concerning question of what unsafe autonomy would look like.

Really, this image isn't too far off. The institute, which officially opened on 20th February 2024, is a collaborative space for experts and enterprises "to safely explore how robotics and connected autonomous systems can benefit people and the planet." Promotional material is covered in images of shiny white robots, mechanical arms, drones (both aquatic and airborne) and, of course, the exposed ceiling wiring that devotees of the Spring Lane Building will be so familiar with.

The BBC reported that the building itself cost £45 million, although its website only boasts of £15 million facilities. These include an 18,000 litre water tank, a six metre high indoor test space, rooftop testing capabilities and eleven specialist labs. It also, slightly disconcertingly, has "automated doors, wide corri-

dors and a high-capacity lift to enable robots and autonomous vehicles to move freely throughout the building."

The institute claims to "take a safety critical approach", and defines its aims under four main categories: "design and verification", "assurance", "communications", and "society and ethics". While much of this is self-explanatory, two of the four stand out as less technologically focussed than one might expect. The institute takes a much more holistic approach to AI than might be assumed, with law and politics experts operating alongside the usual physicists and engineers. They define their assurance focus as "overcoming barriers to regulating and assuring the safety of autonomous systems", and society and ethics as "examining whether these new technologies are beneficial, fair, and trustworthy."

The space was designed as a "living lab" which, cutting through quite a few buzz words, means that it operates as a collaborative "ecosystem". It generates involvement from four key sectors of society (government, academics, the private sector and citizens), and facilitates testing in the real-life settings that products will eventually be used in. It is also designed to allow gradation of testing from controlled labs to shared indoor office spaces and eventually into the outdoors.

The building is expected to run off the solar farm that is to

be constructed on Campus East, and to achieve net zero energy by 2025. The solar arrays will also function as part of the "living lab", being used to develop and test robots and systems designed to maintain such farms.

The institute is home to the similarly named "Centre for Assuring Autonomy", which focuses in particular on regulation, and reassuring users that technologies are entirely safe. The centre is a £10 million partnership between the University and Lloyd's Register Foundation, and is very open about its findings, which are freely available on its website, and "intentionally developed for use in any domain". It has in particular focused its research on the automotive industry, health and social care, maritime systems, agriculture, manufacturing and aviation.

Overall, the Institute for Safe Autonomy lives up to its imposing title: it is at the forefront of Artificial Intelligence research and genuinely has cutting edge robots and mechanical arms dotted around its labs. What is reassuring however is its emphasis on responsible and ethical development, and its holistic approach to a growing and often anxiety-inducing technological wave.

While the mysterious building by Piazza is developing potentially life-altering systems and equipment, it is also carefully studying the political and ethical impacts of its work.

## Neuroplasticity: Trauma Changes How Your Brain Works

BY **JUI NADKARNI (She/Her)**

**Neuroplasticity refers to the brain's ability to adapt throughout life in response to experience.**

For example, your brain might demonstrate it when navigating around your town or learning a new language. In other words, the brain can be viewed as 'plastic' and is most flexible early in life; at birth you have 100 billion brain cells with few connections between these cells.

Research into neuroplasticity is even more important when helping people recover after trauma. Examples of physical trauma include brain damage from incidents such as a motorbike accident or surviving an accident where an iron rod penetrates the skull like in the case of Phineas Gage. Alternatively, psychological trauma can refer to incidents like violence, sexual assault and loss.

So how does neuroplasticity help people with trauma?

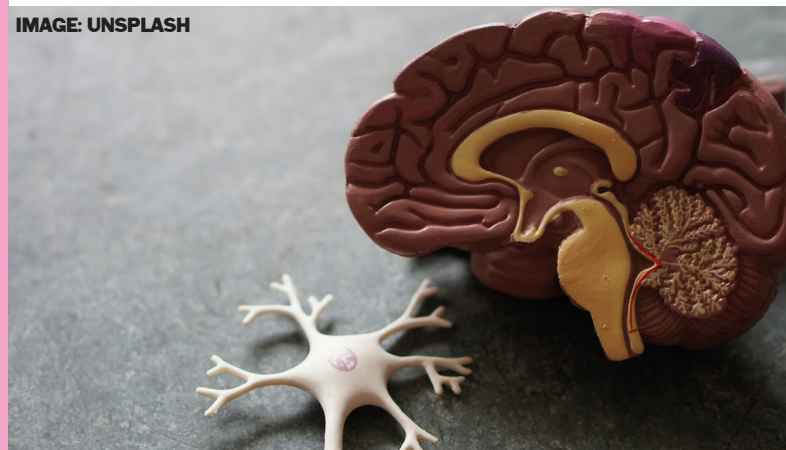
There are successful interventions for people with physical and psychological trauma due to research into neuroplasticity. Studies have shown that rehabilitative functioning such as developing a routine and aiding memory with cues has helped patients with physical trauma. For example, if a patient has suffered damage to their cerebral cortex from a bullet, rehabilitative functioning could help the brain to find new neural networks by learning in a different way to before the trauma. Similarly, bilateral stimulation can help patients reprocess their trauma or triggers when suffering from psychological trauma. The

after shave of a man who sexually assaulted a woman may trigger a panic response every time she smells it, even though she knows lots of men may wear the same scent. An example of bilateral stimulation is eye movement processing which increases neural connections rather than isolating the incident to one part of a neural network. The person may feel less of a panic response to the after shave due to the activation of neural connections.

Although the interventions provide support for both the evidence of plasticity and recovery after trauma, there are individual variations. As mentioned previously, the brain is more 'plastic' earlier in life and is more likely to adapt and form new neural connections than an adult brain. This is normally the case where trauma is physical rather than relational-based. Genes also affect brain plasticity as individuals with polymorphisms (genetic variation) have lower neuroplasticity. They will require different interventions to achieve results similar to an individual without this gene. Education levels also impact neuroplasticity; someone with more access to education or a higher IQ will likely recover more quickly from trauma as their brain is more 'plastic'.

Therefore, interventions will vary in success depending on a variety of factors such as age, gender, genetics, environment and the localisation of brain injury. Future research could focus on how different interventions are needed depending on the individual in relation to neuroplasticity after trauma.

IMAGE: UNSPLASH



# ENVIRONMENT

## Welcome to the University of York! (in the city flooded with sewage)

BY AMBERLEY NORRIS (She/Her)

**As we welcome freshers into the beautiful, historic city of York, it is with tremendous shame that we must rip down this pleasant facade to warn you of the growing issue of pollution in the River Ouse.**

If you're heading into the centre of York, it's inevitable that you'll pass by the river as it winds through the city. It's hard to miss as it often floods the backstreets

of York, causing mayhem for the riverside houses and businesses, in particular The Lowther, leaving customers climbing on ramps to access the popular student destination.

Although the river may seem like a minor inconvenience with regards to its likelihood of flooding, beneath its surface it is a very serious environmental and health concern.

To break down the different pollutants being released into the river, the main contributors include agricultural runoff, untreated sewage and traces of pharmaceutical products. Agricultural runoff happens when fertilisers and pesticides seep into the river from farmland. The consequences of this type of pollution can cause a process called eutrophication, where bodies of water grow large amounts of algae after becoming too enriched with nutrients.

Although this may sound pretty harmless, it has the potential to kill masses of aquatic biodiversity from the depletion of oxygen in the water.

If that wasn't distressing enough, that is not all! Untreated sewage

has been discharged into the river adding harmful bacteria. There have been multiple incidents within recent years whereby, after experiencing heavy rainfall, the city's sewage system becomes over capacitated, resulting in the rainwater and sewage flowing directly into the river.

In recent tests of the water quality by the environmental group Round Our Way, high E.coli levels were discovered along with high levels of ammonia and bacteria. The results of these tests were deemed "poor" by the Environment Agency, suggesting negative impacts on human health if in contact with the water.

A study done by our very own researchers from the University of York found contamination of rivers around Yorkshire containing antidepressants, anticonvulsants and other treatments resulting from consumption of medicines and drugs. Professor Alisair Boxall, from the University's Environment and Geography department, suggested that the elevated levels of pollution resulted from an increase in tourism putting a strain on systems as well as less advanced treatment of sewage.

Therefore, this is a gentle

reminder to think twice before dipping your feet into the river or getting involved in any river-based sports due to the significant public health implications.

So what can be done to address such a major issue? An investigation by The Water Services Regulation Authority (Ofwat) found that Yorkshire Water discharged untreated wastewater into the region's rivers for an average of seven hours a day in 2023. However, they have committed to invest £225 million in reducing storm overflow operations. Although, the sincerity of these claims could be questioned with privatised companies prioritising dividend payouts to board members over critical infrastructure investment. Unsurprisingly, the focus on profit diverts valuable resources away from long term sustainability, causing significant environmental degradation of the River Ouse.

With global warming inflicting an increase in frequency of flooding, the local government is lobbying for change. As students, you can help tackle York's water quality crisis by supporting local environmental initiatives as well as staying well informed about the importance of keeping the river clean.

## 7 Ways To Make Your First Year More Sustainable

BY MORGAN GROVE (She/Her) AND TOM NIGHTINGALE (He/Him)

**This article will serve as a little reminder and a mini guide on how to maintain a sustainable mindset as you settle into a new environment – and how doing this can actually improve your university experience.**

### 1. First Bus for nights out

Whether or not drinking is your thing, nightlife can be a core part of the Welcome Week experience. To get into York for a night out, most students make use of the First Bus electric buses which run frequently from campus into the city centre, lowering the carbon footprint of your night out. The buses into town are also an opportunity to meet people outside of your accommodation block and college - many great memories can be made, and friendships created. The temptation to order an Uber should be avoided, as they are more expensive than a bus ticket but also because, even for electric cars, the carbon footprint can be almost double that of a bus.

### 2. Collapsible water bottle

Carrying on with a slightly

niche but useful tip: owning a collapsible water bottle. After the plethora of unexpected pre-drinks that ended up happening during the first few weeks of semester one, many single-use plastic bottles (and unfortunately a few metal ones) ended up scattered across campus as there was no other way of transporting the necessary drinks. So a collapsible water bottle is the answer. They fold up tiny when empty, so after pre-drinks are over, just put them in your bag or your pocket ready for the next night.

### 2. YorCup

Away from nights out, but still keeping on the theme of plastic drinkware, there is plenty you can do to be a sustainable university student! The University has introduced a waste reduction scheme called YorCup where students can purchase a reusable cup for £5 and get their first drink for free. This has been successful in reducing the amount of single-use cups, with an estimated 1.8 million cups saved from landfill. Why not explore the University's on-campus cafes with your new flatmates and get yourself a YorCup?

### 4. Second hand costumes

From dressing as a sexy cat, to dressing as Pitbull, there is no limit to the fancy dress themes that will be launched at you with minimal notice on a Tuesday night, so of course it's a first thought to just Amazon Prime accessories to your door that will eventually end up in landfill. But York's charity shops are often pretty well stocked with the strangest accessories you could dream of, ready to be given new life. Even easier than this is to ask those around you what they have in their wardrobes, this means everyone rarely has to spend money on new costumes, instead you just cycle what you all have!

### 5. Swap Don't Shop

On the subject of second hand clothes, the University's very own Swap Don't Shop society gives students the perfect opportunity to revitalise their wardrobe without the fast fashion cost. Simply head along to one of their events where you can trade in your old clothes for tokens that are then cashed in for new clothes - it's as simple as that!

### 6. Meal prepping

A great way to reduce your food waste (and save your wallet) is to prepare meals by batch cooking, splitting it up into tupperware and putting in the fridge, or freezing, for the week ahead. From experience, this also saves you from the expensive trips to Nisa between lectures. Not only saving you money, meal prepping can also be a great way to eat healthier and feel better across your busy first year.

### 7. Watch your bins!

This final tip may seem

obvious, but you'd be surprised how many people aren't fully sure of what is and isn't recyclable. All on-campus accommodation will have recycling bins; the important part is making sure that nothing non-recyclable is going in those bins, otherwise it's all a bit pointless! On a similar note, make sure food waste goes in the correct small bin. This small, silly sounding tip can make sure you're doing your bit to help the growing waste problem.



IMAGE: UNSPLASH

## SPORT

## Retirement of a Sporting Star: Andy Murray

BY LUCI O'DONNELL (She/Her)

**T**he Paris 2024 Olympics has come to an end and tennis legend Andy Murray has stepped onto the court for the final time. The Scotsman leaves behind an unforgettable legacy greater than just the sport.

Competing for the last time alongside Dan Evans, Murray bowed out of the men's doubles quarter-finals, just missing out on another Olympic medal. A sad day for tennis fans but a somewhat rewarding end to his exceptional career.

The British pair set the bar throughout the competition and despite their obvious loss, cemented their place in the tennis world. In fact, Sky Sports described their opening match as an "epic first-round comeback", a winning streak they would carry with

them until their final match against American duo, Tommy Paul and Taylor Fritz.

It's clear that throughout their matches the duo relied heavily on tiebreaker games against both Kei Nishikori and Taro Daniel, as well as Sander Gillé and Joran Vliegen. Team USA did not however give them the opportunity for such an advantage. Concluding their Olympic journey with a devastating 6-2, 6-4 straight-set defeat.

Despite the chance of another Olympic gold fading away, Murray told ESPN reporters after his and Evans' final match, "I'm proud of my career... I worked really really hard to achieve the results I did at a really difficult time to win the major titles...I'm looking forward to a rest now."

Murray's shift away from the spotlight has us all looking back on his achievements

over the years. The tennis household name first started his career back in 2005 and went on to win some of the world's most demanding tournaments - the US Opens (2012), Wimbledon (2013 and 2016), the Olympics (2012 and 2016) and of course made it to the Paris Olympic quarter finals this year. All of these have rightfully secured his place as one of the greats.

With his retirement it definitely feels like we're seeing the end of a tennis era. In a time where we saw the dominance of Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic, Murray was one of few players who was ever really able to challenge the 'Big Three' (with 29 wins against them). During his career Murray won a grand total of 46 titles. These include three Grand Slams, two Olympic golds, and world number one

for 41 weeks. The fact that he played most of his career during the time of the 'Big Three' and still has this many titles under his belt is nothing short of impressive.

Not only was he sensational on the court but he was also a huge advocate for equality in tennis. Most notably, he wrote an article for the BBC in 2017 about the need for more recognition for women in sport and hired female coach Amélie Mauresmo. His fight for equality has made him more than just a tennis player, earning the respect of many on and off the court.

For the past couple of weeks my social media has been filled with different variations of 'thanks Andy' posts. It really does go to show just how influential and inspiring Murray's career has been to thousands across the world. Murray was the reason I first started following and enjoy-

ing tennis years ago and one of the biggest reasons I got into sport at all. To be able to see his thrilling journey from start to finish is incredible. So yes, all the 'thank you's' are more than warranted.

From his send off in Paris to now, Andy has shared his journey through retirement with his followers through witty social media posts. One of these was a self care selfie, captioned "I knew retirement was going to hit me hard." Although the ex-tennis pro is now getting some well deserved rest, tennis is absolutely going to miss him.

Murray's career has been fuelled by pure determination, resilience and remarkable talent. As he paves the way for a new generation of tennis enthusiasts and future players, we may never see anyone like him step foot on the court ever again.

# London's Calling: Counter Strike Returns to Wembley

BY TOBY CHESHIRE (He/Him)

**The weekend of 15th June signalled the return of higher tier Counter Strike esports to British soil, as eight teams vied to take the trophy of the BLAST Premier Spring Final 2024.**

Under the hustle and bustle of red buses and suited commuters, a crowd of several thousand esports fanatics, including myself, gathered at the OVO Arena Wembley to enjoy a weekend of Counter Strike 2 competition. Tournament organiser BLAST brought their annual tournament to London in a culmination of multiple months of cut-throat qualifiers.

The last Counter Strike event

of this prestige in the UK was back in 2018, where favourites Astralis bested Natus Vincere (also known as Navi) in the very same arena, which I also had the pleasure of attending.

The semi-finals saw the European mix of Vitality take on the heavy favourite in Spirit, a Russian team in strong form. Despite losing the first map in a best of three, it was the heroics of Spirit's Dmitry 'sh1ro' Sokolov that sent them to the finals.

The other semi-final was similarly a European mix in which Navi took on the Russian-side of Virtus Pro. Unlike the other match, Navi made mincemeat of their oppo-

nents, besting them in two games. Solid performances from Justinas 'jL' Lekavicius kept Navi up, while the fast frags of wonderchild Ihor 'wonderful' Zhdanov were the gut punches to keep Virtus Pro down.

However, the score doesn't tell the full story. Being in that crowd, it was clear that the arena wanted Navi to win. From the chants, to the cheers, to the sea of yellow and black Navi jerseys, the mood was electric when they were doing well.

The final was set - Spirit versus Navi. All eyes on London, fans across the globe tuned in. But save for just one map in the best of five, Navi collapsed under the sheer firepower of Spirit.

It was Navi's funeral. Spirit's 17-year-old prodigy Danil 'donk' Kryshkovets combined with sh1ro to lay the team into their coffin. The fans of Navi in the arena were silent, mourning the loss.

donk secured a well-deserved MVP medal, his third of the year, while his team bagged another piece of silverware for their trophy cabinet.

On a more personal level, the event served as a great reminder of why I love esports. The thrill of the game makes up part of it, but the rest is formed by the community. Being a mostly online hobby, there is always a disconnect between that and real life.

However the feeling of being surrounded by people who love esports, wearing their favourite team's jerseys, all cheering together, is simply irreplaceable and unforgettable. From meeting like-minded fans, to loudly chanting with those in the arena, to hanging out with fans in the pub after, it is the people that made it special.

All I hope, as a Navi fan myself, is that I don't have to watch them lose in a final for a third time in person - I don't know if my heart can take it.



IMAGE: PHILIP DYER (AKA 3klikphilip)

JACOB BASSFORD  
SPORT EDITOR

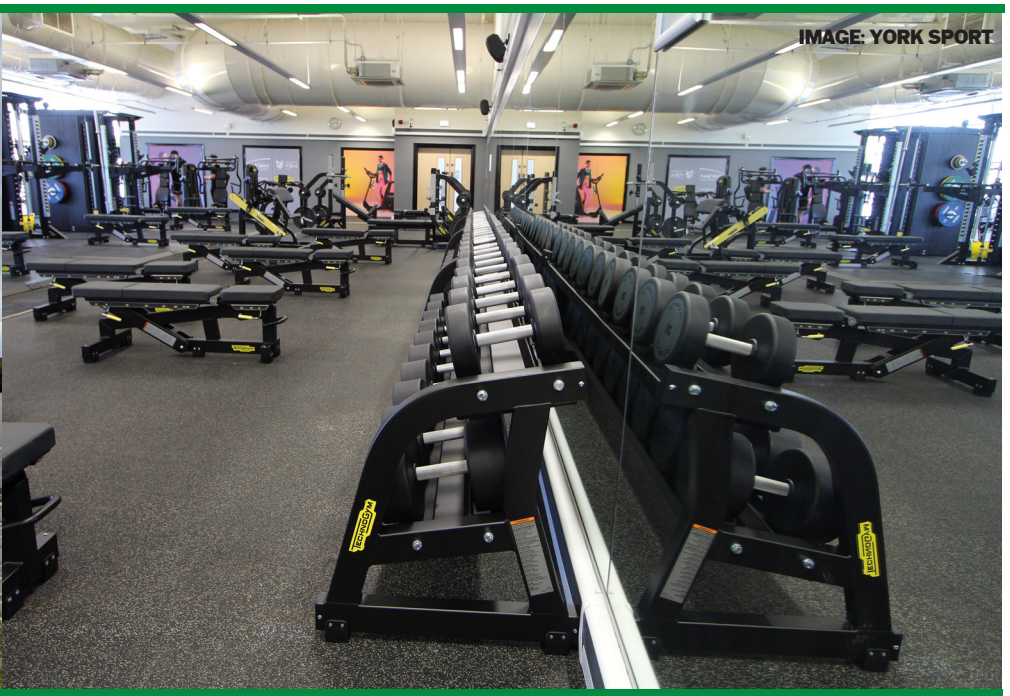
# York Sport Village Memberships Have Increased for First Time in Six Years

BY JACOB BASSFORD (He/Him)

IMAGE: JACOB BASSFORD



IMAGE: YORK SPORT



**I**n light of refurbishment to the York Sport gym facilities, membership prices were increased from 1st August 2024.

On Monday 1st July, an email was sent out to York Sport Village members, announcing that from 1st August, the Student Saver Membership would increase from £30 per month to £33.

York Sport Village is a large multi-use leisure centre on Campus East, and was completed in 2012. Despite not increasing prices since 2018, York Sport have decided that before the start of the new academic year, the Student Saver Membership (which allows members access to the gym, pool, studios and the Sauna at restricted times throughout the day) will now cost £33 per month. These price increases are in light of a big refurbishment to the Centre's gym that was completed on the 31st July.

Officially speaking, the 'Village' (alongside York Sport Centre on Campus West) used to be operated by a separate entity to the University, as York Sports

Village LLP (Limited Liability Partnership), before its assets were hived up to the University in August 2023, as revealed by the University's financial documents published in January 2024. In the email to members, York Sport confirmed that as of 1st August, York Sports Village LLP will no longer legally exist and it will operate fully as a part of the University, despite the latter already owning 100% of its assets for nearly a year.

It is unclear what impact this will have on students, but the price increase shows that for now, there are no cost benefits for this change in ownership for students having a 'Village' membership. It could be that these moves are financially motivated, or this is an attempt by the University to eventually improve access to sport facilities for its athletes to improve not only their chances at Roses, but BUCS performances in general.

However, again, because of the price increase, this suggests more of the former than the latter and that the Village could become a purely profit-making venture for the University in order to shore

up its deficits.

Also in the email, York Sport confirmed that access times to the 'Village' gym for students on the Saver membership will change from 6:00 -16:00 on weekdays to 7:00-14:00. They claim this is because of a change in "gym usage patterns [that] we have seen since the return to facilities post-covid" yet this reduction of three hours will reduce flexibility for students on a saver membership to access the gym to fit around their university timetable or for athletes like University rowers around their early morning sports team schedule.

It is easy to see this change becoming controversial, and alongside the price increase, the benefits of a York Sport Village Student Saver Membership could become increasingly difficult to defend.

Keith Morris, the University's Head of Sport, gave *Vision* the following statement on these changes to York Sport Village Memberships and the refurbishments made to the gym that were completed by Wednesday 31st July: "York Sport membership prices have not changed since

August 2018 despite significant increases in the cost of delivering services and operating the facilities over the last 6 years.

"The recent University of York Active Lives Survey again mirrored national Active Lives Survey results in referencing access to facilities, time, cost and having someone to train with as considerations affecting participation.

"These factors and challenges have been recognised by York Sport and raised with University of York Students' Union and University sports working group members, as we have sought to create more offers and incentives for students than ever before.

"12 month memberships remain available at 12 months for the price of 10, reducing the overall cost of membership. We also remain committed to providing student-focussed membership offers and activities, including our off-peak student membership, which will shortly be available at York Sport Centre for the first time, as well as continuing our work with Sports President Tanisha Jain, colleges and the University Access and

Outreach team.

"Users will benefit from over £600k invested into the refurbishment of the gym and cafe at York Sport Village, as well as improvements at York Sport Centre which will increase the amount of equipment and improve the changing facilities.

"These are improvements that have been specifically requested by users and hopefully the student members will see the value in the quality of their facilities as demand for activity on campus continues to grow."

*Vision* reached out to Tanisha Jain York SU Sports Officer for comment. She said: "As much as I understand that the price increase was needed since the membership prices hadn't been raised since 2018 in line with inflation, I was not informed or consulted prior to this increase and will be working closely with York Sport to ensure that our students get the best out of their time at York."

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& 7

OPINION

**Are These the Best Days of our lives?**

P.6



IMAGE: UNSPLASH

**Wordle is the Reason I'm Afraid of Whatsapp**

P.7



IMAGE: UNSPLASH

**Method Acting: Pretentious Play Pretend?**

P.7



IMAGE: PIXABAY

**Is Vegetarianism the Way to Go With Student Cooking?**

P.6



IMAGE: PIXABAY

SPOT-LIGHT  
S.6-7

## CHECKING IN WITH CHECK-IN CODES

P.4

IMAGE: YORK VISION

IMAGE: PIXABAY

## SHOULD YOU SWIPE LEFT OR RIGHT ON USING DATING APPS?

P.27