

“DIFFICULT AND PAINFUL”

University Slashes 272 Jobs to Address £24 Million Shortfall

**STUDENT
CINEMAS ON
CAMPUS**
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V IMAGE: YORK VISION

BY **ALICE LILLEY (She/Her)**

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Editors' Note

Hello! We're back again with a fresh new issue of *York Vision* (I bet you missed us!). The weather outside might be frightful, but the articles inside here are delightful. This print could not have been put together without the work of our excellent new section editors, so shoutout to all the hard work they've put in - thank you! Another shoutout to the University's wifi for going down mid-layup. Very cool! Now, onto this edition. In News, Alice and Charlotte have (somehow!) managed to land themselves an interview with none other than the former Lib Dem MP himself, Vince Cable. In Opinion, Josh's article takes us across the pond, exploring the concept of Wokeism in America. Moving onto Features, are you interested in the brutalist architecture of York? So is Faye! Plus a very interesting feature on abortion law from Aoife. Have you ever wondered whether there are more plug sockets or seats in the University of York Library? I bet you haven't...but you are now, right? Skip ahead to Columns to find out the answer. In Science, Alex gives us a rundown of the previous Nobel Prize winners and in Environment, Dani shares with us seven 7 tips to make your life more plastic-free. In Relationships, there's some budget date ideas (we all know it's getting to that time of year where the student loan is running out), and some tips on how to survive long distance relationships. Finally, Lifestyle is full of some fun pieces - Patricie explores whether to get a film camera or not, and Audrey asks the question of whether Christmas is still fun for adults?



So, get stuck in and enjoy!

ELEANOR SHAW
I HAVE to start with a massive thank you to all of our new (and returning!) writers, section editors, and deputy section editors; having such a big team took an enormous load off of our backs! This new edition is jam-packed with all of York's news, analyses of the unfortunate US election, our wonderful arts and culture section, and of course plenty of Christmas-related content for the festive season. After many intense hours in the office, I hope you enjoy reading this edition as much as we enjoyed producing it!



Long Boi Statue Ignites PETA Backlash

The Long Boi memorial has triggered a response from PETA over menu options available at the University.

BY ALICE LILLEY (She/Her)

Animal rights charity PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) has urged the University of York to honour Long Boi's legacy by removing birds and other meat from all campus menus.

The campaigning group sent an open letter to the University's Chancellor Dr Heather Melville following the unveiling of the Long Boi statue by Radio 1's Greg James.

The group has offered to create a vegan starter kit stand next to Long Boi's statue to help students pay tribute to the duck by stopping eating animals.

PETA Vice President of Programmes Elisa Allen said: "Just like Long Boi, every bird is an individual with a unique personality who experiences love, joy, pain, and fear and doesn't want to be hacked to bits for their flesh any more than we would."

"PETA is urging the University of York to honour Long Boi's memory by sparing a thought for

all of his feathered brethren and leaving birds off the menu."

The University has declined to comment on the letter.

York SU officers supported an increased range and number of plant-based options; however, they rejected a motion 6-3 against transitioning all union-led catering to an 100% plant-based menu in November 2023.

This followed York students voting in March 2023 in favour of 100% plant-based campus catering by a record-breaking margin of 142 votes, the highest number of votes ever for a YUSU suggestion.

30 academic staff at the University joined staff from other universities in signing an open letter in support of the campaign.

The motion was put forward by Plant Based Universities, a student-led campaign that encourages universities to transition to 100% plant-based catering and was launched in late 2021.

Responding to PETA's let-

ter, Plant Based Universities Co-Founder Nathan McGovern said: "Long Boi's death and outpouring of sadness across York's campus should really be a sign for the university to step up and do his legacy justice by making a just and sustainable transition to 100% plant-based catering."

"Perhaps PETA are under-reaching by not asking for the complete switch!"

"We hope to see the complete switch happen as soon as possible."

The University announced a collaboration with Forward Food to increase plant-based options on campus in April 2024.

The collaboration involves training chefs to expand plant-based options and a plant-based culinary education session.

12 universities nationwide have voted to transition to 100% plant-based catering following the movement largely driven by Plant-Based Universities.

This includes universities from Cambridge to Kent, Birmingham

to UCL.
A *York Vision* Instagram poll found that only 13% of students supported the PETA letter with 87% opposing the move to a meat-free campus.



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WE NEED YOUR VISION

“Difficult and Painful”: 272 Staff Members Cut as the University Tackles Financial Crisis

BY ALICE LILLEY (She/Her)

The University has lost over 200 staff members through the voluntary severance scheme, announced in April 2024, which aimed to reduce University finances as part of a wider effort to save £34 million.

The voluntary scheme was aimed at covering a £24 million deficit in the University’s finances and met its redundancy targets for professional services but targets for academic staff were not met.

In an email sent to staff, Vice Chancellor Charlie Jeffery said: “The conversations of the last few months and especially those of the last few weeks have been difficult and painful.

“We will miss them both personally and as we adjust to different ways of working without them.”

The scheme covered all academic departments and was part of the wider aim of saving £34 million.

It involved staff voluntarily putting themselves forward for redundancy and a financial settlement for staff who accept the arrangements proposed by the University.

The University has focused its voluntary severance scheme on staff looking to retire early or move on from York.

The University announced a compulsory redundancy scheme in September 2024 requiring 30 academic staff redundancies over six years, however, it announced on 30 October 2024 that the compulsory scheme would be ending. This redundancy scheme was introduced because the previous voluntary severance scheme failed to reach its targets.

The compulsory redundancy scheme was ended without any additional job losses, as University executives accepted an “alternative proposal to achieve savings on staff and other costs by voluntary means”, according to an all-staff email from Charlie Jeffery.

Jeffery said: “Unfortunately, [the] budget is unlikely to be favourable to universities and will not address the deep-seated problems of Higher Education funding.

“Some of the measures may even make university finances

more difficult in the short term.”

The University employs around 6,100 staff and has an annual turnover of £520 million.

York Vision interviewed the Vice Chancellor, Charlie Jeffery and Pro-Vice Chancellor for Teaching, Learning and Students, Tracy Lightfoot from the University’s Executive Board in September 2024.

When York Vision asked if there is a recovery plan for staff redundancies, Jeffery said:

“We aren’t ending these areas, we are reducing them.”

Jeffery said that the schemes are necessary due to inflation rates which have increased the University’s running costs by around 20%, approximately £45 million and a decrease in international student applications reducing University income by around £40 million.

Jeffery explained that these reasons are behind the postponement of the £35 million Student Centre for at least three years.

Jeffery said: “We will get back to that as soon as we are in a stronger position.”

Lightfoot acknowledged the impact of the delays on student societies who were planning to use the space.

To address the gap in financial revenue, the University has 24 new degree programmes launching September 2025 and is working on building agreements with

international partners in India, China and the United States to bring more international students to York.

A University of York spokesperson said: “We have been tackling savings targets in several ways: postponing planned capital projects, extensive savings from how we are using our estate, energy-saving changes, and reducing other non-staff operating costs where we can.

We have had a strong focus on comprehensive voluntary options to reduce staffing costs.”

The University and College Union (UCU) at the University has strongly criticised the University Executive Board’s decision to implement the voluntary redundancy scheme and implement structural changes to the University.

A statement published on the University and College Union’s website stated that the scheme will force hundreds of staff to leave during semester one in October, severely impacting teaching quality, increasing workloads and harming the wellbeing of remaining staff.

The UCU said: “There is a clear and articulated attempt to make the future look as bleak as possible so as many people as possible will leave.

“What an appalling way to operate and it is this type of deliberate harm to our members that we cannot stand for.”

The UCU also heavily criticised structural changes being made to the University through the “Changing the Way We Work” initiative which involves centralising administrative serv-

es, getting rid of double-blind marking and removing the Board of Studies which are academic departmental committees that help run departments.

The UCU said: “What we cannot accept is a top-down mish mash of ideas that will make the working conditions of our members demonstrably and irreversibly worse.

“Some are obvious empire building changes, like getting rid of the Board of Studies, which would act to centralise power.

“Others, like the removal of double-blind marking, speak to a race to the bottom and ditching proper academic standards in the pursuit of ‘efficiency’”

The UCU encouraged students, staff, alumni and local leaders to resist the changes which they argue will irreversibly damage the reputation and value of a University of York degree.

Vice-President for the UCU’s York branch’s Jonathan Fanning, said: “Although we are pleased that the institution-wide compulsory redundancy scheme has been withdrawn some staff remain at risk.

“It is unfortunately true that making staff redundant at the university is all too common.

“We believe that there should be better opportunities to transfer people between projects.

On compulsory redundancy, Fanning said: “The University management never demonstrated beyond doubt that reductions to payroll are the only possible solution to its financial problems.

“[Without] sound financial data it may even be the case that the university overshoots its sur-

plus targets in the coming years, meaning that many job losses, and their impacts upon student experience, would in fact have been unnecessary.

“We will be looking very closely at all aspects of the University spending and finances over the coming years to see if this is the case.”

On the voluntary severance scheme, Fanning said: “We have to take some issue that the schemes entered into to avoid compulsory redundancy are truly voluntary with a number of staff feeling that they had no choice but to accept hours cuts that will reduce their availability to students.”

York SU Union Affairs Officer Lewis Parrey said: “The University’s approach to get its finances back on track has resulted in a pretty extreme course of cuts and redundancies.

“The speed of University actions has resulted in the student experience being neglected, which should never be the case.

“The University’s focus needs to be investment back into student support and avoiding a mentality of stagnation which would be detrimental to students.

“The Students Union will of course play our part in holding the University to prioritise students going forward.”

“It’s clear that students are in need of more support and staff are often wanting to provide this, but simply unable to because of reduced resources and staff.”

York SU Academic Officer Fenella Johnson said: “It’s not going to be evenly spread across the University. Some students will notice it, and some might not notice anything at all.”



IMAGE: YORK VISION

A Long Way to Net-Zero

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

The University of York is behind schedule on all of its 2030 climate change targets, despite making progress in other areas.

These targets were set as part of its Sustainability Plan for 2021-2030, which is based around the UN's Sustainable Development Goals. This includes the commitment to net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 for direct and energy-related CO₂, which is known as scopes 1 and 2.

The University's plan defines six target areas that cover different aspects of sustainability.

This includes: Quality Education, Sustainable Research, Climate Action, Cities and Communities, Consumption and Production and Health and Wellbeing.

These six goals are divided into 50 sub-goals; the University claims to have achieved 4 of these, and to be "on track" to reach a further 21 (as of November 2024).

The remaining half are behind schedule - with 18 labelled as "advancing" and 7 as "not started" - including every one of the goals related to climate change. These include key measurable targets for reducing CO₂ emissions:

This includes: Carbon net-zero for scope 1 and 2 emissions by 2030, 30% reduction in scope 3 (indirect) emissions by 2030, compared with 2017-2019 data and Carbon net-zero for scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions by 2050.

York Vision reached out to the University for comment, in which a spokesperson replied: "[W]e are really serious about creating a more sustainable future and we are proud of the progress we have made so far, such as our recently installed Institute of Safe Autonomy Net-Zero solar farm, which not only helps reduce our carbon footprint but will form a 'living lab' where researchers can develop and test new robotic and AI technologies to improve the renewable energy sector."

"We know there is more to do to achieve our sustainability goals and we are investing in renewable technologies and working with staff and students to embed sustainable thinking across all areas of the University, including initiatives including our energy saving campaign."

The University failed to achieve its previous carbon reduction goal.

In 2011, as part of a previous Carbon Management Plan that it deemed "credible, fundable and deliverable", the University committed to reducing annual emissions from 25,000t CO₂e (tonnes of CO₂-equivalent) to 14,300t CO₂e by 2020.

However, in the 2020-21 academic year, the University stated in an interim report that it was still emitting 24,600t CO₂e, barely less than 2011.

The 2011-2020 Carbon Management Plan was narrower in scope than the current

(Almost) Halfway Point for Sustainability Plan 2030

Sustainability Plan, This plan broadens the focus to other areas like the impact of the University's teaching and research as well as wider community action.

In these other areas, the plan has been more successful. For instance, 8 out of 9 of the Health and Wellbeing goals are labelled as "achieved" or "on track", one of which is to embed the Student Wellbeing Officer roles within departments.

The University also claims that "[f]or the academic year 2024/25, Environmental Sustainability at York (ESAY) is once again offering a suite of sustainability-related York Interdisciplinary Modules (YIMs) which have been designed to equip students to work collaboratively in multi-disciplinary teams to solve local, regional and global sustainability challenges."



IMAGE: UNSPLASH

40% OF STUDENTS DISSATISFIED WITH CHECK-IN



IMAGE: AUDREY LAWLER

York Vision reports on the results of the Check-In feedback after a year of use at the University of York.

40% of students are dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with the University's check-in system following a Check-In Staff and Student Survey conducted in May 2024.

The feedback survey which had 2,163 student responses found that 32% of students are very satisfied or satisfied, 28% are neutral and 40% are very dissatisfied or dissatisfied.

In response to the feedback, York SU Community and Wellbeing Officer, Freddy Russell said: "The feedback is certainly concerning, however it was collected before the changes implemented this year."

York SU Academic Officer, Fennella Johnson said: "Hopefully students will see an improvement."

"It's not a Big Brother Check-In. It's meant to be from a wellbeing perspective."

The system, which was first introduced in 2023, was implemented to support student wellbeing by proactively identifying

and reaching out to students with consistently low levels of engagement.

Check-In 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.

In September 2024, *York Vision* found through a Freedom of Information (FOI) request that Check-In flagged 31% of students for academic struggles by the end of the 2023-24 academic year.

In a statement posted on the University of York website, the University said: "We're committed to doing what we can to improve your experience of Check-In."

The University is responding to staff and student feedback by improving its Check-In system to improve student experience.

This involves improving email content to ensure emails are supportive and helpful to students flagged by the system, incorporating online recordings of lectures into Check-In and integrating Check-In alongside the VLE so that Check-In can

use VLE activity to assist with decision-making surrounding wellbeing and engagement.

Other action being taken by the University includes introducing QR codes for Check-In from September 2024, allowing students to view their Check-In attendance and adding Check-In to induction sessions so that students are aware of the system and its function.

The University has acknowledged that there are two areas raised during the feedback where the University cannot make changes.

This involves using Duo Two-factor authentication because it is a security measure and the need to send engagement emails to students who may be struggling. The University understands that there are many reasons students may miss a Check-In milestone however, Check-In emails are necessary to support students' wellbeing.

A University of York spokesperson said: "We are committed to doing what we can to improve the student experience of Check-In."

BY ALICE LILLEY (She/Her)

VINCE CABLE ON TUITION FEES, TRUMP, AND TAXATION: AN INTERVIEW WITH THE FORMER LIB DEM LEADER

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her) AND ALICE LILLEY (She/Her)

Former leader of the Liberal Democrats Vince Cable became the party's leader after being re-elected as the Twickenham MP in the 2017 snap election. Before this, Cable had held his position as MP for Twickenham since 1997.

Over the course of his life, Cable has served as Secretary of State for Business and Trade, as well as Innovation and Skills during the coalition government from 2010 to 2015. He is currently a visiting professor at the LSE (London School of Economics). And he's even made an appearance on *Strictly Come Dancing*!

We began by talking with Cable about his economics background, and how he first got involved in politics.

"It sort of began here in York actually," he explained, "because I lived here and my father was quite political, he was very right-wing and so we used to argue. I [had several] angry debates with my dad over dinner.

"Then I went to the University of Cambridge and I got heavily involved in university politics.

"I lived in Kenya for some years, and came back to live in Glasgow with my wife and young children. That's when I really got involved politically, it was part of local campaigning.

"I was a member of the Labour Party and got in-

involved in the campaigning around closing shipyards, bad housing and apartheid.

"I actually stood for Parliament for the first time in Glasgow in 1970. The problem was that I was a bit of an outsider."

Cable moved to Twickenham and went on to be an MP there for 20 years.

"When I went into Parliament, I had a reasonably good grounding in economics.

"If you know a little bit and nobody else knows anything, you get a certain credibility."

"So I became quite famous, notorious during the financial crisis."

It was then that Cable became Business Secretary in the Cabinet. We asked him, given his experience in this role, what his reaction was to Rachel Reeves' budget.

"[The changes] were necessary: it was necessary to

have a substantial increase in taxation because public services are in a very poor state. I think people have to get used to the idea that if they want good public services, they have to pay for them. That means taxation. So, yes, I agree with that.

"I think the big negative thing... is not about the budget itself, but the preparations. I think the Labour Party made a bad mistake in opposition, not being honest about the need to raise taxation substantially. And they should have said to people that you're going to have to pay more VAT, more income tax.

"But as a result of not doing that, what they've got into looks a bit sneaky, and they've got into bad taxes. This national insurance for employers looks like a victimless tax but it's actually going to hit consumers, it's going to hit workers indirectly."

As we talk more about the Budget, we come to the topic of tuition fees.

"The simple headline is that tuition fees are good policy, but bad politics. They were introduced by the Labour Party when they were in government

because they realised it was the only way to finance universities. British universities are generally highly regarded for high quality, and if you've got to finance research as well as teaching, you've got to have some income, and the government can't just underwrite it when you've got pressures from other sectors, defence, health... so it had to come from students!

"... Maybe it should be different: low interest rates, I think would be sensible. The threshold is now too low so a lot of quite low-paid graduates are paying back student debt. But the principal is right, and the government, I think, had no choice, and particularly as we had that drop off in overseas students, universities are in a desperate financial position."

Keir Starmer's popularity has shifted a lot since being elected Prime Minister. We asked Cable what he thinks Starmer is doing well on and where he is falling short.

"The thing he dealt with very well was the riots that happened a few days after he became Prime Minister.

"I think that they made a big mistake... in not being honest about taxation, which they are now having to pay for. In terms of big picture stuff, I think they've been a bit weak in not doing more to rebuild our relations with the European Union."

The conversation then turned towards whether Cable has any personal regrets from his time in government.

"In terms of economic policy, I wish I had won my argument with George Osborne about having more borrowing to invest, which

is actually what Rachel Reeves has now done ten years later."

Speaking about the Liberal Democrats' future, Cable advised: "I think we should be a bit more outspoken about the need for rebuilding bridges with Europe, particularly now we've got Trump as president."

"We've got two priorities, one of which is to defend our existing seats, and that's coming down to good constituency work, plus producing some kind of results on the campaigning issues the Lib Dems have pushed, which are carers and river pollution.

"... People have now largely forgotten that the Lib Dems used to run Liverpool, Newcastle, Oldham, Sheffield, Cardiff, Bristol, and we've got to get back to that role as a constructive critic of Labour because if we don't, the seats will go to Reform."

When asked about what the Liberal Democrats should do to become the official Opposition in Parliament, Cable was eager to stress the importance of Europe, local government and climate change.

"They need to be a bit more explicit about Europe and the commitment to Europe. I would be much more outspoken in saying Britain needs to have higher taxes for better public services, and I think particularly areas like education.

"The Lib Dems should be... pushing very hard to get more funding into local government rather than central government, because councils are closer to the public. At the moment, they're disempowered, and many of them are bankrupt, so reforming local government would be a high priority."

Cable went into detail on the new budget, speaking about how there has been no increase in petrol duties, but also that the day before it was announced that there would be an increase in bus and rail fares.

"For an environmentally minded government that shouldn't be happening," he told us, "the Lib Dems should be making waves on that kind of issue."

The Lib Dems are known for their strong support for electoral reform. But given the rise of Reform UK we asked Cable if he has reconsidered his position given that proportional representation will also benefit Reform.

"We do need electoral reform."

"The fact that you get more people from Reform is neither here nor there. They exist as a force. We've seen with Trump, we've seen in Germany that populist parties are very, by definition, very popular.

Just sweeping them under a carpet and pretending that they don't exist is the worst kind of response. You've got to let them be represented in Parliament proportionately and then take the moment in terms of argument, not trying to suppress them."

To wrap up the interview, we asked Cable for the proudest moment in his career.

"Probably getting married twice," he exclaimed smiling, "Both happy marriages I think, that probably counts for more than public life."

IMAGE: PIXABAY



OPINION

IMAGE: PIXABAY

America Just Killed Wokeism: What Happens Now?

BY JOSH TURNER (He/Him)

Kamala Harris' campaign embodied 'woke' values: she was running to become the first female and minority-ethnic President; an advocate for equality, respect, and human rights. Her resounding defeat reminds us that America's woke era has peaked, at least for now.

'Woke' was initially coined by black communities in the mid 1900s to describe someone who was politically well-informed and vigilant. It was important to 'stay woke' to combat political corruption and injustice. This has continually featured in black civil rights movements, as Erykah Badu reflected in her 2008 song Master Teacher, "I stay woke" so "stay woke".

More recently, woke campaigning has covered a number of issues: arguably the #MeToo movement was woke, certainly Black Lives Matter was, and advocacy for transgender rights, the climate, and refugees are clearly the current woke focuses. I think that being woke in 2024 means championing, or at least supporting, marginalised issues that might not otherwise receive the attention they need. This is, of course, a good thing.

However, 'wokeness' has been demonised by some on the right, where it has often been painted as Gen Z sentimentalism which hinders or even hurts society. Badu exposed how: "[woke] doesn't belong to us any more" as aggressive political rhetoric has corrupted it into a vague left-wing threat that apparently must be stopped. This is a repeated feature of Republican messaging; during his campaign,

Donald Trump blamed "woke" government for the struggles of many Americans, whilst his running mate JD Vance defined it as: "cultural progressivism in a way that alienates half of our country".

It is important to acknowledge cases where woke campaigns or campaigners go too far and negatively impact people - sometimes with serious consequences - but these are not proportional to the often deafening volume of the anti-woke rhetoric.

So, you have empathetic, honest woke values and you have the strawmanned, misrepresented "woke mob", but why did it hurt Harris and the Democrats so much?

The Death of Woke Culture in America

In short, it is because the woke movement has died out. Following a peak around 2020-21, people are just not as interested. Not only was that during the Covid-19 pandemic, when most people spent more time online, but living standards have recently been decreasing. Saira Rao, a vocal campaigner during BLM protests, commented: "The pulse of anti-racism, anti-colonialism, anti-imperialism, anti-genocide, is dead. There is no pulse." Attention has turned elsewhere.

This is reflected in polling around woke issues. Repeated Pew Research polls highlighted that the number of people who acknowledged 'white privilege' (that white people experienced benefits that black people do not), was at its highest in 2020; and data from General Social Surveys (GSS) showed that criticism of discrimination for

limiting certain social groups' outcomes peaked in 2021 and has since fallen off. These dates clearly mirror the shocking murder of George Floyd and the enormous BLM movement that followed. Whilst the protests were obviously successful in sparking a conversation, understanding, and sympathy for these issues seems to have already subsided.

This can also be seen with #MeToo, as the highest percentage of Americans who believed sexism to be a very or moderately important issue peaked at 70% in 2018. Similarly, in 2019, 57% of Americans agreed that women faced obstacles that made it harder to get ahead, but both figures have significantly declined since then (both statistics taken from GSS polls).

Anti-Wokeness in the Election

The Democrats' failed campaign clearly highlighted American ambivalence towards woke issues. Although the accusation often seemed motivated by misogyny, Harris did not have a convincing economic plan. She spoke vaguely of growing and empowering the American middle class, but the pillars of her campaign stood on woke issues. Abortion rights - although it is unbelievable that they are still an outspoken issue in 2024 - were a central guarantee, along with greater opportunities - suggesting more diversity, equality and inclusivity (DEI) initiatives - and respectful treatment of immigrants.

Probably the most obvious example of the Democrats misreading their voters was their

focus on Trump's disrespect for Latin Americans. Following the discriminatory comment of a Trump rally speaker - comparing Puerto Rico to a "floating island of garbage" - Democrats tried to make this a voting issue. Campaigning through targeted ads and numerous events with Jennifer Lopez, who is of Puerto Rican descent, they attempted to turn more Hispanic votes against Trump.

In the end, only 56% of this demographic voted for Harris, a disaster compared to Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden receiving 65% and 66% respectively.

This signalled a prioritisation of material over cultural issues. A trend that was also evident in the 46% of women who voted for Trump, despite 64% of American women expressing support for legal abortion - according to Pew Research Centre. Similarly, Harris gave the African American and Asian American communities a chance for a representative President, but lost popularity in these groups by 2% and 7% com-

pared to Biden in 2020.

In fact, Harris was the least successful of any Democrat candidate this century among young voters, the most woke group, receiving only 54% of the Gen Z vote.

The Democrats tried to motivate woke votes, and Harris' victory over a convicted felon, a racist, and a misogynist could have stamped the success of the #MeToo and BLM movements on America.

Instead, the American electorate has ushered in at least four more years of bigotry and discrimination which will now become entrenched in national policy as well as rhetoric.

The marginalised groups given an audience by woke culture will suffer the most. The hope must be that, just as with #MeToo and BLM, further injustices will be met by voices brave enough to represent themselves and others against this mass ignorance. Wokeness in America is dead for now, but it can - and must - return.

IMAGE: PIXABAY





Fashion Show 2024

Is the Spark Gone?



IMAGE: PIXABAY

BY **CHARLOTTE THIRKETTLE (She/Her)**

After a six-year hiatus, the iconic Victoria's Secret Fashion Show returned for fans to enjoy on the 15th of October 2024 in New York City.

After the plug was pulled on the show in 2019 due to bad reviews and controversy due to their lack of diversity, the 2024 show was somewhat more refreshing when it came to representing models of different body types, race, and mobility.

However, is this simply too little, too late?

Many critics were left with a bad taste in their mouth post show, with minorities feeling tokenised instead of proudly represented. Only a handful of the 28 models who walked were plus-sized or had a disability and the "plus-sized" models were ranging from a US dress size 8-16.

This is mostly women on the more curvaceous side, so the representation is still lacking. As well as this, it was certainly noticeable that the plus-sized models were dressed more conservatively than their slimmer counterparts. This is not exactly representative of Victoria

Secret's 'sexy' brand.

Not only was this show an issue for the modern audience, but the OG fans like myself were equally underwhelmed. The original, iconic, 2000s essence of the show was certainly weaker and, with expectations being high, a slicked-back ponytail rather than the famous bouncy blowout just did not cut it, especially on the legend herself, Adriana Lima. Despite this, it was exciting to see the distinguished Angels such as Candice Swanepoel and Alessandra Ambrosio back on the VS runway. However, some may argue that they were not rightfully celebrated. While the show focused on modernity, bringing back esteemed models for them to not even open the show or have any particularly innovative outfits or components (such as Gigi Hadid's opening look with enormous, pink feather wings), could certainly be seen as a wasted opportunity.

Many other iconic components of the show were notably forgotten, for example, the camera panning to the significant others and family of the

models while they supported with signs. This could even be seen by the audience's own photography with Dylan Sprouse holding up a cut out of Barbara Palvin's dog, something the official broadcast did not acknowledge.

Like the show, even the models themselves lacked life. The energy and playfulness was dulled, with many of them, even the younger generation, acting far too seriously. This cannot be said for famed Tyra Banks; however, with her finale exuding the spirit of the past shows.

The musical performances too, could not be critiqued. Celebrating female voices, Lisa, Cher and Tyla killed their performances, with Tyla's looks and outfit being the talk of the night on social media despite being amongst all the VS models.

Overall, the show itself was arguably quite underwhelming for many watchers, not fully satisfying the new viewers or seasoned audience. Will the show return in 2025 fully revived or has the spark been left in the 2000s?

OPINION

Our Fees Going up is a Pain, But it Won't Fix the Universities' Weak Finances

BY **GAVIN SOUTHWAY (He/Him)**

The University's weak financial position is certainly at the forefront of many staff and students' minds right now, with year after year and deficit after deficit. This year's £24 million saving scheme forced a voluntary severance scheme of 272 staff members.

It might be difficult to feel any sympathy for universities. But we've just had a government that capped home tuition fees at £9,250 a year, while clamping down on overseas student visas, thus presiding over universities nationally and seeing their incomes collapse on both sides.

A new government, but no change either: the Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson has already said that universities should expect to stand on their own two feet. Universities UK, the body representing the sector, has suggested that tuition fees may need to go up to £12,000 or £13,000 a year for universities, currently relying heavily on overseas students to make a hopeful profit. You might remember the backlash over York potentially charging lower tariffs to overseas students earlier this year.

Perhaps our hopes were pinned on the Budget, but no luck there. National Insurance contributions for employers have gone up instead. The Universities and Colleges Employers Association estimates it hands the sector a wonderful £372 million pay bill. Afterwards, we learnt that next year's fees will rise to £9,535.

Put simply, although home fees are frozen at £9,250 for this year, from September 2025 they

will be linked to the Retail Price Index inflation measure – one which considers everything but mortgage interest – and, according to the Institute for Fiscal Studies, will go up to £10,500 in 2026. Anyone watching the Budget might have noticed a lack of mention of universities. We also learned that now students' maintenance loans will go up as well, if only slightly, which may be handy given that maintenance loans nowadays rarely cover our rent.

You may remember University publicity not too long ago trumpeting the million-pound donation left by alumnus Dr Allen Samuels. Donations are a handy source of income for universities, and they help fund what tuition doesn't cover – in this case, Dr Samuels stipulated that the money be used to help remove barriers for disadvantaged students. Back in 2010, when universities were allowed to charge home students £9,000 a year (if they would help disadvantaged students), it was either that or unlimited fees, and even then, the Government didn't expect almost every university to charge the full amount. As the cliché goes, it could have been worse.

An op-ed about university finances was published in the Yorkshire Post by our Vice Chancellor Charlie Jeffery who earns £312,000 a year. But for a Labour government that won many votes from Tory voters, enticed in 2019 by Boris Johnson's wish to 'level up' the North, increasing tuition fees is one of the greatest instruments for helping the humble University.



IMAGE: PIXABAY

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involved in *Vision* is interest and enthusiasm. If you have already had an insight into this world great!.. but you don't need ANY experience.

Make sure to follow us over on our Instagram @york_vision. As well as this, be sure to let us know when you have purchased a membership through the YUSU website and we can get you set up on our mailing list and Slack channel.

We'd love to hear from you. Despite going into the busy exam season, you can get involved as

soon as possible.

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COLUMNS

In Columns

SEATS

Which one are you more likely to find in the Library?

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE (She/Her)

I doubt anything has divided the internet more, and provoked as much scrutiny as the question “are there more doors or wheels?”.

First raised in a Twitter poll in 2022, this seemingly innocent question stumped the world and prompted serious online debate. You can tell that it's a complicated question when even ChatGPT can't give you a straight-forward answer (don't ask me how I know that).

Most infuriatingly, it was impossible to come up with any real answer.

The debate was never really settled; people slowly began to forget about the once all-consuming question and move on with their lives.

But something inside my inner philosophy-student brain has kept ticking away at me over the years. So I decided to conduct my own little investigation, but this time focusing on something a bit more

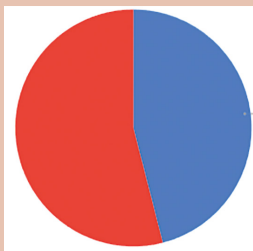
relevant for York students:

"Are there more seats of plug sockets at the University of York's Library?"

So go ahead, make your guesses and place your bets now...

VS

We asked this question to York Vision's Instagram followers. Here are the results:



Sockets = 54%
Seats = 46%

With a seat: socket ratio of 1704:1015, it's no wonder you're struggling to find a seat in the library during exam season!

I initially thought seats would be the clear winner but it turns out there are a lot of hidden plugs, behind printers and photocopiers and on the floor. Plug sockets normally come in packs of four, and it wasn't uncommon to see four plug sockets on a single desk, which gave them a head start from the get go.

Things I gained from doing this (arguably pointless) investigation:

- I will never look at a plug socket the same way again.
- There is never a good excuse for having your phone run out of battery when you're at the library.

Here are the results:

Morrell:		Fairhurst:		Burton:	
Seats	Sockets	Seats	Sockets	Seats	Sockets
569	1028	302	442	144	234

Fun fact: There are more plugs on the second floor of Fairhurst than there are seats in the whole of Fairhurst library!

Special mentions:

Most amount of sockets - Morell first floor [562 seats]
Most amount of chairs - Morell first floor [268 seats]

Highest seat: socket ratio - Fairhurst
Highest socket: seat ratio - Morrell

Some Ground Rules

You might already be thinking, surely there's an answer to this online somewhere. As someone who has already spent several hours digging around the University library website in a desperate attempt to find this information, I can assure you, there is not.

That meant I had to get my research the ol' fashioned way: by walking around with a notepad and pencil (okay, so I actually used the Notes app on my phone, but I'm trying to paint a picture here, so go with me). Before I go into my results, I want to get a few things straight.

1. Not to sound all philosophical, but what even is a seat? People can sit on tables, sit on the floor, sit on other people's laps... so for the purposes of this investigation, I'll restrict my definition of a 'seat' to 'chairs' and 'stools'. Booths will also count as several seats, depending on how many people can fit on it at one point.
2. It doesn't matter if the chair or plug is working properly, if it looks like a chair/plug, it's getting a point!
3. After much contemplation, I have decided that toilet seats won't be counted as seats (controversial move, I know)
4. I'm only going to be counting the seats and sockets in open spaces - closed study rooms where you can only fit 10 or fewer people won't be taken into consideration.
5. I'm only counting rooms that students have access to. In theory, behind one of those locked doors in Fairhurst, someone might have crammed a room full of collapsable chairs, merely for the express purpose of skewing the results of my experience. So, for simplicity's sake, I'm only going to be counting seats and plugs that are visible.

SOCKETS : SEATS

1704 : 1015

SOCKETS



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FOOD

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2 SCENE.

Dear SCENEworms,
We are BACK and better than ever with another issue of SCENE, York Vision's fantabulous Arts and Culture section! Our wonderful section editors have worked long and hard to comprise 12 articles and a games section...

Over in Screen we have Aman's raving review of Sean Baker's *Anora*. In Stage, an interview by our Stage Editor Amelia with members from ShakeSoc about their most recent production of *Much Ado About Nothing*. In Music, Layla ranks Radiohead albums (read, listen and

cry), and Matty, our Music Editor, explores the Grammy nominations and what they tell us about current Pop Music. In Spotlight, an interview with the Head Chocolatier from York's Chocolate Story, as well as an interview with York Student Cinema and Movie Society by our Screen Editor, Mads. In Art, our Art Editor Rhema interviews the owner of The Blue Tree Gallery, York, and Holly critiques the Art of Paula Rego. In Literature, a fantastic insight into budget-friendly book-shopping spots by Eddie, and an article on the impact of 'Book-

Tok' on Literature by Grace. In Food, an inside scoop into SCOOP, the on-campus cooperative by Freya, as well as a scrumptious summary of a few food stalls featured at the York Christmas market by Tilly. In need of a Sudoku or Blurble fix, or two free cinema tickets? Head over to our GAMES section carefully curated by Luke. Christina Anto's beautiful, moving and powerful poetry can be found below, as well as on the back page.

Get cosy, grab a hot drink, and enjoy this SCENE-sational issue!

Clara x

SCENE Editor Note:

Clara Downes

~



Image: Christina Anto

A Colours Show

BY CHRISTINA ANTO (She/Her)

They do not see colour.
In fact, they do not see her at all.

In her place there is a void
Only visible to the naked eye

They are deaf to her heartbeat,
The melodies from her tongue they do not hear.

Silent judgement bleeds from their eyes,
it is laced within in their words.

It fuels her nightmares and haunts her dreams.

They seldom see her smile light up the night,
Or feel the soul behind her eyes.

There is a sorrow there,
Defeat she must bear.

And yet,

“she is forever strong.”

“She is relentlessly tough.”

“It is impossible for her to break.”

OUR SECTIONS AND THEIR EDITORS

COVER

Rhema Healy

EDITOR'S NOTE:

SCENE Editor: Clara Downes (She/Her)

SCREEN

Editor: Mads Carlier (They/Them)

Deputy: Aman Fazil (He/Him)

STAGE

Editor: Amelia Dsouza (She/Her)

MUSIC

Editor: Matty Appleton (He/Him)

Deputy: Layla Roberts (She/Her)

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Editor: Eddie Burgess (He/Him)

Deputy: Grace Martin (She/Her)

FOOD

Editor: Freya Hughes (She/Her)

Deputy: Tilly Bowen (She/Her)

GAMES

Editor: Luke Plant (He/Him)

A WORD OF THANKS:

Thank you to SCOOP, Maria at The Blue Tree Gallery, Abdulla Alsaleh from Movie Society, Clementine Hargreaves from YSC, James Tipper from World Cinema Society, Raven Meade, Simon Bingham and Freya Leadbetter from ShakeSoc for being fantastic interviewees. Thank you to the Minster Gate Bookshop for providing a photo on very short notice! Thank you to Rhema for the cover, and Christina for the beautiful poetry. Finally, a very very special thanks to all the FANTASTIC section editors who worked tirelessly to make each section into a work of art - I hope you survived the torture of InDesign!!!

S. 1

S. 2

S. 3

S. 4

S. 5

S. 6-7

S. 8

S. 9

S. 10

S. 11



Image: Universal Pictures

‘A Frenzy of Love And Anger, Solitude And Solemnity’ - A Review of Sean Baker’s *Anora*

REVIEW ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

The golden darling of this year’s Cannes Film Festival, Sean Baker’s latest humanist romp, is an exuberant yet quietly devastating tribute to those who dare to dream.

To be honest, whilst watching *Anora* for the first time, I wondered what made it so loved. The winner of this year’s Palme D’or, it received fervorous praise - not atypical for a Sean Baker film whatsoever - and as a huge fan of his previous work myself, I anticipated something soul-stirring. So, when whatever that special ingredient that makes his films so potent seemed to elude me for most of *Anora*, I was left feeling perplexed.

Wrapped from head to toe in a persisting raucous atmosphere, *Anora*’s seemingly complete devotion to the humorous side of

the raw chaos of life is enjoyable, but somewhat disarming given my expectations. However, in true Sean Baker fashion, it ultimately serves to create a precise image of the human experience, albeit just more subtly than his previous films. Yet to me, that is perhaps what made it all the more affecting by the end.

We follow Ani (Mikey Madison), a Brooklyn-based exotic dancer who, on a working night, encounters Vanya (Mark Eydelshteyn), the debauched yet childishly joyful young son of an uber-rich Russian oligarch. A whirlwind romance ensues, as Vanya showers Ani with riches and opportunities that extend far beyond the muted hallmarks of her usual life, culminating in a sudden Las Vegas marriage.

However, the couple are not left to their new luxurious idle life for long, as parental figures in Vanya’s life catch wind of the elopement and set about forcing the annulment of the marriage, yanking Ani out of her newfound comforts. Struggling to hold onto the vestiges of a dizzying dream made true, Ani is forced to confront the reality and truth of her romance with Vanya as their love lies under siege.

The tale unfolds much like how an unhinged bender would. Framed initially through steamy neon close-ups and off-kilter pans, the majority of *Anora* is infused with abrasive humour, perpetuated through its eclectic cast of characters. From the high-strung Toros (Karren Karaguilan) commandeering the frenzied quest for annulment to the somewhat aloof yet endearing henchman Igor (Yura Borisov), the interactions between them all serve as comedic gold whilst still fleshing out each and every one of them as positively human - flaws and all.

With all of this set to the backdrop of a punchy and overstated soundtrack, you may be left puzzled as to why, after all was said and done, I was left with what can only be described as some ineffable brand of tragedy.

Well, just like any wild bender - the high passes. The visuals become more reserved and soft; a beautiful intimacy glitters from silent car rides and hurried walks along darkening boardwalks. As the reality of the situation becomes clearer, *Anora* slowly but surely captures all the flurried emotions of the coming grief.

Despite its initial boisterous veneer, the film is cunningly raw, chipping away at you emotionally bit by bit. So as the last minutes unfolded, I looked down and realised there was already a huge pit in my soul, and my heart had long since fallen out.

Admittedly, I spent a lot of the movie waiting for a particular gut punch, a particular scene that might turn the whole thing on its head and throw everyone into shock and tears. Without saying too much, some may say the last few sequences fulfil that - maybe so, but to me, none of those moments were necessarily inherently shocking. It only served as the final tap on an already splintering sheet of ice that the film had quietly been working away at - and it gave away in the most sobering way possible.

I really haven’t felt this way about a movie in a while - I can’t even say that a lot is going on in my life personally that would make a film like *Anora* resonate even more true with me. So the fact that I feel such a genuine gaping void by the end of it all is a testament to the film. And should I be surprised? Sean Baker is reputed for capturing the human experience in an unadulterated fashion - and *Anora* only

cements this.

The fact that it all exists in one rolled-up package - a frenzy of love and anger, solitude and solemnity - is in itself an incredibly accurate portrayal of human life. So all in all, I have to concede that this is an utter triumph of a movie. In the hours that followed my viewing, I had never been closer to breaking down into tears. Even in the ensuing days, I was hard-pressed to shake a silent sad shroud, I couldn’t articulate more as to why, but that is the feeling I was left with - and you never forget a feeling.

Anora is a punchy yet deceptively pensive ode to those who live on the fringes, to those teetering through the corridors and thresholds. It’s a celebration of the pipe dreams we hang onto; a crutch for many in a world that often values us for what we provide, rather than who we are. And most gut-wrenching of all, it captures the death of dream - and despite how we may rage and struggle for what we want, life doesn’t always work out the way we hope.

BY AMAN FAZIL (He/Him)

Editor’s Note:

Welcome to your news source on all things film! I’m Mads, your new SCREEN Editor. I’m currently watching *Riverdale* (no judging), or catching up on the latest releases at YSC. Speaking of them, find my article on the importance of student cinemas over in the SPOTLIGHT section! Editor: Mads Carlier (They/Them)

I’m honoured to be toiling away for SCREEN. Find me bundled up in the local Picturehouse or in front of any good movie. Regarding my article, send me an email or shout at me in the street if you have any thoughts. Always keep it avant-garde. Deputy: Aman Fazil (He/Him)

SCREEN

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What’s on?

Hundreds of Beavers @ YSC on 2nd December
The Wild Robot @ YSC on 6th December
Perfect Days @ Picturehouse on 3rd December
Godzilla Minus One / *Minus Colour* @ Picturehouse on 5th December
Queer Preview at Picturehouse on 9th December
Daft Punk and Leiji Matsumoto: Interstella 5555 @ Picturehouse on 12th December

What's On?

DramaSoc's 1984
by Robert Icke and Duncan MacMillan
Directed by Will Sedgley
Drama Barn
25th November

Image of An Unknown Young Woman by Elinor Cook
Scenic Stage
5th and 7th December

Parliament Square by James Fritz
Scenic Stage
6th-7th December

INTERVIEW

ShakeSoc Shakes Things up!

Editor's Note

I'm Amelia and I'm the new editor of Stage! The curse of a first year English student is to read more drama than you actually watch, so I'm beyond excited to just kick back and enjoy some good shows. Musicals have an absolute hold on me with my current favourite being Hades-town.

This year, UoY's Shakespeare Society kicked things off with a production entirely rehearsed and performed within 48 hours.

BY **AMELIA DSOUZA (She/Her)**

After a single day of auditions, the 48-hour countdown to showtime began on the 5th October for ShakeSoc's annual Freshers' play. This year's show was "Much Ado About Nothing", directed by Freya Leadbetter.

The comedy follows the story of Benedick and Beatrice, who are tricked into falling in love despite their loathing for each other. The play's lighthearted chaos was the perfect choice to induct the Freshers into the society. SCENE spoke to two cast members to hear their thoughts on the experience.

What was your role?

Simon Bingham: Benedick.

Raven Meade: Friar Francis/the sexton.

What did you enjoy the most?

SB: I enjoyed meeting a bunch of other Freshers who loved theatre. I also liked how we were able to perform with very low stakes, so we just focused on having a great time.

RM: Just coming together with people who like Shakespeare and making friends through it!

Did you find elements of it challenging?

SB: It was challenging to remember all our blocking [the staging of the actors] in time, and to try and perfect how I wanted to perform each line, but having scripts on stage took a lot of stress away.

RM: While there were parts that were challenging, I found it more fun overall. Since we didn't need to be off-script and were given the script a week in advance, we could focus on the performing aspect, which made it fun and challenging but not stressful.

What were the rehearsals like?

SB: They were so much fun: a lot of goofing around.

RM: Our incredible director, Freya, had an idea of how it would look but was also open to suggestions which made the rehearsal process so much fun. Since it was done in such a short timeframe, we were there from 11 or 12 until 5 but the time just flew by!

What interested you the most about your character?

SB: Benedick is a great character because although he's normally overly dramatic and swears he'll stay a bachelor forever, he also knows when to be serious and loyal to those he loves.

RM: I love how quick [Friar Francis] was to suggest that Hero faked her death. He had no reason to do this or any reason to care about the relationship but does it anyway and it somehow works out!

STAGE



Image: Freya Leadbetter

MUSIC

Every Radiohead Album Objectively Ranked

BY LAYLA ROBERTS (She/Her)

The British rock band Radiohead, formed in 1985, remains one of the most innovative and influential bands of the century. Their ability to straddle the lines between genres is unmatched and unseen by any other band of the modern era. Having released nine studio albums and one live album, there is something for everyone.

9. The King of Limbs

At number 9 we have the 'best, worst' album of all time, with a short track list and a run time of only 37 minutes. Released in 2011, *The King of Limbs* has a few hits such as *Codex*, but nowhere near enough to compete with other albums. Unfortunately, something has to come last.

8. Pablo Honey

At number 8 we have Radi-

ohead's debut album released in 1993. Despite featuring their most popular song *Creep* (which has nearly two billion listens on Spotify), this album was just the start of something greater.

7. Amnesiac

Many people won't be happy with this rating, but Radiohead's album *Amnesiac*, released in 2001, secures seventh place. It is a concerted effort to replicate the success of *Kid A*, the band's fourth studio album, but struggled to live up to its predecessor. With a run time of 43 minutes, the song to mention on this album is the closer: *Life in a Glasshouse*.

6. Hail to the Thief

Coming in sixth, is one of the most underrated albums of all time, *Hail to the Thief*. With a slightly longer run time of 56 minutes, it was released in 2003

with more consistent bangers than other albums, featuring *2+2=5* and *There, There*. This album is definitely worth a listen, despite being labelled their 'dud' album.

5. A Moon Shaped Pool

Coming in the top 5 is *A Moon Shaped Pool* which has a 52-minute run time and is Radiohead's most recent album. Fan favourite *True Love Waits* finds a home in this underrated album released in 2016 after its first performance in 1995. Featuring songs like *Burn the Witch* and *Present Tense* this album cannot be rated any lower.

4. OK Computer

At number 4 we have most new listeners' favourite album *OK Computer* released in 1997. This album features such a large amount of classic bangers to the point that those who aren't fans

still sing along due to the tracks' popularity. *Exit Music (for a Film)* was first written for Baz Luhrman's film *Romeo and Juliet* and made it onto the album. Their most popular songs *Karma Police* and *No Surprises* also find a home on this album.

3. The Bends

Starting off our top 3 is Radiohead's classic album, *The Bends*, released in 1995. Just is by far the best song on the album as well as other hits such as *Fake Plastic Trees* and *High and Dry*. This album is consistent banger after banger and does not let you down.

2. Kid A

Opening the new millenium in the year 2000, with a 47-minute run time, we have *Kid A*. Despite an amazing flow between tracks, a few songs let the album down as they don't live up to the stand-

ards of *How to Disappear Completely* and *Idioteque* holding it back from first place. *Treefingers* should probably not have made it onto the final album.

1. In Rainbows

Taking home the gold is *In Rainbows*; released in 2007 with a shorter run time of 42 minutes, this may be one of the best albums of all time. Radiohead initially sold this album as 'pay what you want' to value their fans' appreciation and bypass record labels. Their most consistent album, *In Rainbows* is definitely underrated given it features songs such as *Nude*, *All I Need* and *Jigsaw Falling into Place*. Truly, no one can hate this masterpiece.

MUSIC Editor's Note

I'm Matty, the Music editor! My favourite artists are Fontaines D.C, The Beatles and Mac DeMarco.

Hey, I'm Layla, a first year English student and the new deputy music editor for Vision. My favourite music artists are Jeff Buckley, Led Zeppelin and Radiohead

5



Image: Unsplash

The 2025 Grammys: Shaping Today's Sound

BY MATTY APPLETON (He/Him)

Considered the most prestigious, esteemed awards in the music industry, The Grammy's recognise profound excellence within the music industry, helping to track shifts and changes in what is considered 'popular' within the modern musical canon.

With artists such as Chappell Roan, Sabrina Carpenter, Charli XCX, and even The Beatles nominated for Grammys at next year's awards (the latter's first nomination since 1997), we can examine what is being recognized and acclaimed within the current and ever-changing music industry, including TikTok driven popularity, Genre-experimentation, and a focus on social empowerment.

In terms of genre experimentation, one need only look at the diversity of nominations awarded to Beyonce, who holds 11 different nominations. Beyonce has been awarded nominations for a variety of different genres and categories, including Best Pop Solo Performance, Best Melodic Rap performance, and Best

Country Song for her seventh studio album, *Cowboy Carter*.

In this sense, the 2025 Grammy nominations have shifted to represent experimentation, genre-blending and creativity, which may allow for further experimental pop-music in the future.

Although the Grammys respond to trends with its nominations, it can also shape the music industry by determining who receives acclaim. Beyonce's ability to adapt her sound and style, and to experiment in different genres may inspire other artists within pop music to experiment with their sound.

Best New Artist is where confusion begins to become apparent. Artist Sabrina Carpenter's breakthrough year means she has joined the exclusive club of only 13 artists nominated for all of "The Big Four" in one year: Album of the Year, Record of the Year, Song of the Year, and Best New Artist. The same can be said of Chappell Roan, who also gains acclaim in each category. Carpenter and Roan, however, can hardly be considered 'new artists', with Carpenter's *Short N' Sweet* being her fifth number 1 album on the US Billboard charts, leaving many critics to

debate whether the award should be rebranded as 'Best Breakthrough Artist'.

Furthermore, the Grammy's have continued to respond to TikTok driven sounds, with Roan, Carpenter, and Charli XCX's popularity attributable, in part, to their successes at marketing themselves on social media. Charli XCX's album *Brat* in particular is a modern triumph in social media marketing, gaining nominations for Album of the Year.

Finally, a resurgence in Pop-Punk and Rock has been signalled by the 2025 grammy nominations, with artists The Black Keys, Green Day, Idles, and Fontaines D.C each gaining nominations. This reacts to the release of many monumental albums within the rock industry, including Idles' *Tangk* and Fontaines D.C's *Romance*, which appear to be dragging Rock music into the mainstream.

The 2025 Grammys will take place in Los Angeles Crypto.com Arena on Sunday, 2nd February.

Through The Lens: A Look Into Student Cinemas on Campus

BY MADS CARLIER (They/Them)

When examining the array of film-related societies on offer at the University of York, the options can feel almost overwhelming.

For Abdulla Alsaleh, President of Movie Society, the decision was easy: “I went straight to that table and I said ‘I want to join [Movie Society], let me do whatever,’” he says, reminiscing on his first fresher’s fair.

The diversity of films on offer was what caused Treasurer of World Cinema Society James Tipper to join: “I gravitated towards the World Cinema Society because so much of it was new to me... I would have liked to have said, then, that I’d watched a lot of films. In my naïveté I felt my knowledge of French cinema was absolutely unparalleled, but I was very quickly humbled. My eyes were opened.”

York’s student-run cinemas include both tight-knit societies and wider groups of student movie-goers. York Student Cinema (YSC), for example, is open to the public as well as students, a fact that, according to Film Coordinator and Treasurer Clementine Hargreaves, is often overlooked. It shows films three times a week, and has been screening films since the late 1960s.

“I feel like the YSC community is such a good one, it’s got such a good spirit around it. It’s an infectious passion, and it did a lot for me in first year. I really found a home there”, she says.

Often, what brings students together to watch films at these societies is the desire to talk about films and to share their in-

terest with others. For James, being part of World Cinema Society and “being surrounded by people with the same fervent passion about films” is a highlight.

Abdulla emphasises the social aspect of these societies, even when the films screened have serious topics. “Week one of this year, we watched a very politically charged Brazilian film called *Black God, White Devil*, and then later that night we went to Sunday Revs.” He added, “We still engage with films in a very in-depth way. That doesn’t mean we can’t have fun as students.”

YSC holds various interactive screenings, where audiences are encouraged to shout out or react however they want. “I think *The Room* screening [at YSC] was my favourite experience, because it was my first interactive experience,” says Clementine. “I’ve never heard people in a cinema laugh harder.”

She elaborates that, in cult screenings of *The Room*, directed by Tommy Wiseau, it is tradition for audiences to throw plastic spoons at the screen whenever a framed picture of them shows up, as the film famously had terrible set decoration. “The screening was very fun. The cleanup was not, but that’s beside the point. It was so funny, and I thought it was such a fun thing to be a part of.”

Being part of a student cinema means that committee members have complete control over what is screened, which can be satisfying when audiences react well. “It’s very gratifying to play a film you’re fond of and see the audience enjoying themselves”, James says. “With film, more than with most other societies, there is a more personal slant of being able to show something so important to you with others that a sports society, say, is unable to accommodate.”

For Clementine, screening *The Nightmare Before Christmas* was particularly special: “It’s such a nice thing to share that love with other people. Being able to put a film that I have a lot of passion for on a schedule [...] is such a nice thing. It’s just the atmosphere is so good.”

For Abdulla, his favourite screening experience as part of Movie Society was *A Woman Un-*

der the Influence on his birthday last year. “It just felt very special”, he says, “just sharing this very personal thing with everyone else. That was the highlight of [...] my whole year last year.”

The screenings of these societies have plenty of atmosphere, often showing to a full room of people. The popularity of World Cinema Society’s first screening of the year, according to James, made it his favourite so far.

“We screened *Memories of Murder* to a packed room, and everyone seemed to love it. It was the first screening we did as the new committee, so it was really encouraging to see such a

the biggest turnout. Because we’re showing these unique films, we end up getting a turnout regardless of what we show, because people just want to talk about them.”

When asked whether film was important to students, the answer was a resounding “yes”: “Absolutely, even if just for the sake of escapism and time away from studying,” says James.

“Everybody watches films to some extent, so it makes for a really good social grounding too.”

Abdulla emphasises the importance of watching diverse

important: “I think film is just sort of important to people, you know what I mean?” she says. “Important to students? It should be, it ought to be.”

SPOTLIGHT

good turnout,” he stated. “It was a really formative experience for me, and a really wonderful start to my year.”

The popularity of screenings is not always the focus, however: “I guess, I’m just glad that now, after three years of doing this, these three societies are more willing to show films that are less mainstream,” says Abdulla. “Everyone’s really trying to show stuff that they love regardless of whether it will get

films as a student, as they “can really shape how you view the world... “I wouldn’t be as politically engaged now, as I was, say, five years ago, if it wasn’t for [...] the films I’m choosing to show to the people who come to Movie Soc. [...] People come up to me saying: ‘There’s no way I would have ever watched that film had it not been for Movie Society showing it.’ And to me, that just feels wonderful, just hearing that.”

For Clementine at YSC, film is universally





Images: Eleanor Shaw

A Chocolate Story: An Exclusive Interview With One of York's Master Chocolatiers

BY ELEANOR SHAW (She/Her)
AND FAYE ASKEW (She/Her)

Beginning his York's Chocolate Story (henceforth YCS) career as a tour guide

(and part time Santa Claus during festive season), Mark Watson is now working as YCS's Head Chocolatier after eight years of rising the ranks. But what does it involve to work in this coveted position? And how exactly do the chocolatier's come up

with and create their chocolate masterpieces? Keep reading if you want to find out, as Mark spills all in this delicious, chocolate-theme interview...

Mark first explained his journey to becoming Head Chocolatier: "I started as a tour guide,

worked as Duty Manager, and I was even Santa Clause in the grotto - I needed a lot of padding for that! And then I did things like writing the guidebook and creating walking tours, but I eventually moved into chocolate, which is kind of the most sought after job.'

I asked Mark if he had always intended on becoming a chocolatier: "No not really! Once I had tried it though, I realised that there's a lot of satisfaction and fulfilment from actually making a product from start to finish... We come up with the chocolates, flavours and the designs, and then they go into the shop and are sold. So from start to finish we're producing it, and I just found that side of it very satisfying.'

I then asked Mark what a day at work looks like: "It's a bit of everything with this job!... Start of the day is always tempering the chocolate; you have to do this before you can work with it. We have these big old fashioned wheel temperers, with a wheel spinning round and a spout coming off the wheel, they take about 30-45 minutes to temper.

"We get on with making chocolate for the shop, chocolate for the tours, and then we try and have showpieces on display for the public. We've got a chocolate Totoro out there at the moment..."

"We often have birthday parties and hen do's, so we have a couple of late nights a week here till 10pm doing master classes and things. So it's pretty varied really, a lot more varied than a regular chocolatier just working in a chocolate shop."

The ideas for the chocolate flavours come from the whole staff, and even the public:

"We do often get requests from the public. There's been a lot of people asking about pistachio chocolate so after Christmas we'll bring that in." In fact, Mark's favourite flavour comes from the public selection box, apple cinnamon ganache.

"I always try to get the other chocolatiers involved in coming up with ideas because it's nice for them to have a bit of ownership and to make a product and see it sell. The only problem is when someone first becomes a chocolatier they tend to want to go as crazy as possible with the flavours and you sometimes have to pull them back.

"You have to bear in mind whatever flavour you put inside is competing against the flavour of the chocolate, so it might sound nice to begin

7

with but when you put it in your mouth it can just taste like a mess."

YCS uses Belgian Coveteur chocolate, which contains cocoa butter instead of palm or vegetable oil. They use fresh ingredients for their fillings, no preservatives, which gives their handmade chocolate such a delicious taste:

"It's not sitting in a warehouse for several months before it's being sent to the shop for sale, it's going straight to the fridge downstairs and usually being bought and eaten within a week of it being made."

However, another thing which sets their chocolate apart is the collaborative process in which new ideas are made: "It can be several days from having the idea before you even start trying the product, and that's just in a small kitchen where they're constantly trying out ideas, whereas here if we don't have a product in we can just run to the supermarket, buy a product just to test it out and see what it's like."

The chocolatier's are currently about to roll out a Christmas selection, with a delicious sounding array of flavours including mince pie, cinnamon cookie, marzipan, Irish cream and mulled wine.

The flavours aren't always quite as delightful, however: "Last summer I wasn't here, so none of this is my fault, but they did a cheeseburger flavour chocolate."

As if that wasn't bad enough, YCS's flavours during Halloween were even more peculiar: We made a baked bean and marmite ganache... Again, I wasn't here, so it wasn't my fault."

I closed the conversation by asking Mark for the sweetest perk of his chocolate career. This question had an obvious and immediate answer: "Free chocolate!"

"What's your least favourite thing?", I asked. The answer was again obvious: "Being pestered for chocolate all the time."

Luckily we didn't have to pester, as Mark kindly sent us on our way with a bag of chocolates, which we can confirm were absolutely delicious!

With thanks to Mark and York's Chocolate Story for making this interview possible.



‘Potters, Painters And Jewellery Makers’; My Visit to Blue Tree Gallery

BY RHEMA HEALY (She/Her)

Have you ever wondered what the inner workings of a gallery are? How artists get to be a part of their collections? How does the art scene survive in York?

This week I had the pleasure of interviewing the owner of one of York’s local galleries – Blue Tree Gallery. I knew I would love the gallery before I entered as it always looked so inviting every time I would pass by on my tedious trek to University.

When I entered, I was warmly welcomed by Maria who began her passion project of opening Blue Tree in 2009. This time, being an unnerving and somewhat apprehensive leap of faith, as it was just off the back of the recession. People weren’t necessarily looking to invest in a new piece of artwork during this financially precarious period, and consequently it was not the most secure foundation for a new business. But against the odds, it is still flourishing today, 15 years later!

In relation to the art itself, the gallery’s range is infinite. From unique jewellery pieces to mono-

print illustrations, they manage to display such a variety in their small space that even if you appreciate art to a very tiny degree, you should find something that catches your eye.

I asked Maria what exhibition she felt she had a particular personal affinity with: “Our most eclectic shows are the best, when we have four or so artists, four very different styles, but four styles that we really love.” She repeated the word ‘eclectic’, emphasising that is how she would describe the style of art they display – “eclectic over linear”.

Maria also believes in a significant focus on colour; the art on show really does reflect this pursued direction, revealing why it is such an eye-catching window display for passersby.

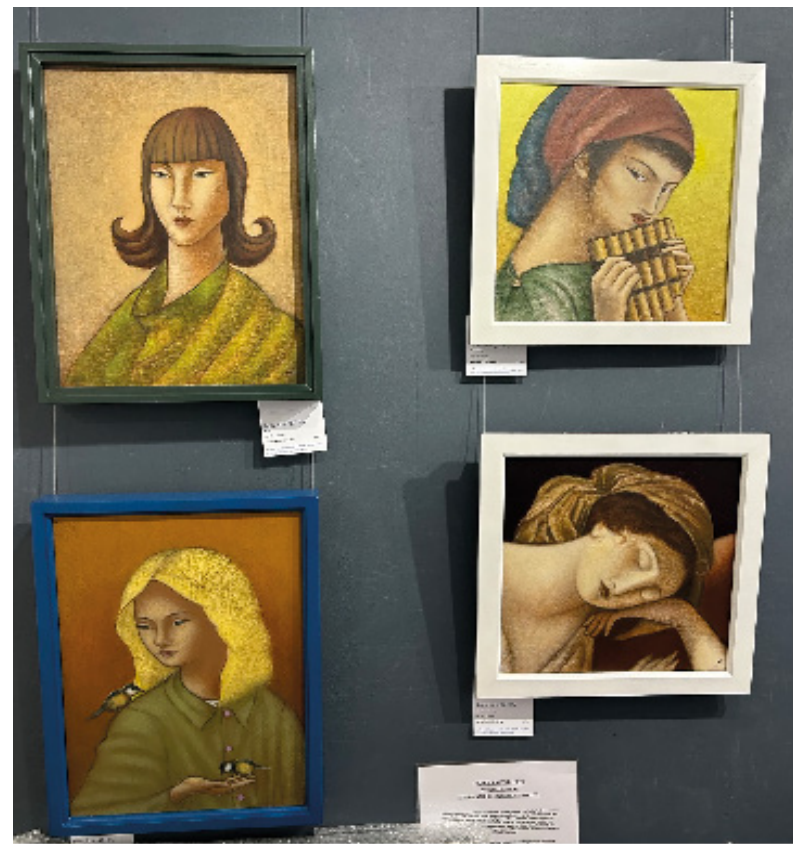
In addition to colour, Maria explained how the genre of art that Blue Tree tends to exhibit is: “definitely contemporary fine art, rather than traditional – even our landscapes aren’t a traditional view of the world.” This is exactly what I loved about the exhibition: the original take on modern art that was elegantly displayed.

Usually, I find modern art too interpretive and often I will be

left questioning whether I really considered it art at all in the traditional sense, but Blue Tree’s art managed to completely avoid this. All of the art was modern in a tasteful, beautiful way that screamed creativity and a love for our surroundings and nature.

We also discussed the exhibiting process, putting oneself in the artist’s shoes rather than the curator. Maria explained to me how the artist will apply by sending images of their work and a small statement relating to it – about their process, any previous exhibitions or competitions and what their art focuses on. They will promote themselves and reach out to Maria, and often their work will be submitted into multiple exhibitions over the years and the gallery will build up a rapport with them.

Lastly, I was intrigued to find out about the art opportunities in York and whether Maria felt that York was a place with lots of artistic growth and promise. I asked her her views on the York Art Scene: “I think [York] has an amazing art scene.” Maria feels as though the creators attract other creators and art becomes a local community either inten-



Images: Rhema Healy

ART

Editor’s Note

Hi, my name is Rhema and I’m a second year English and Philosophy student and I love art! My favourite period is the Pre-raphaelites and I would have to say my favourite painting is Ophelia, by Millais. I love going to museums and galleries and I can’t wait to be your new art editor!



‘The Erasure of Human Identity’: The Political Significance Behind Paula Rego’s Art

BY HOLLY WHITAKER (She/Her)

Paula Rego was a Portuguese artist who gained most of her publicity from the late 90s to the early 00s, creating innovative and sometimes unsettling works that certainly do not shy away from political taboos. She has dedicated multiple pictures to the topic of conflict, one of her earliest works being *The Interrogation*, a commentary on the systematic torture carried out by the Portuguese government under the rule of António de Oliveira Salazar.

The fact that the faces of the two henchmen standing behind the sufferer are not visible emphasises the inhumanity of

this abuse, along with her splayed fingers and twisted limbs which seem to convey pain and anguish to the point of disfigurement. I think that this is perhaps more of an embodiment of the mental effect of torture on the individual.

Growing up in Portugal herself with early experience of political injustice, Rego was strongly influenced by the matter in her art and later drew from other conflicts such as the Iraq War in her painting *War*. This was a much later piece inspired by photographs of the event featured in newspapers at the time. Similarly to her earlier paintings, Rego does not give faces to most of the people, but the focus instead seems to be on a woman carrying an injured child as other children

stand in front of them.

It initially seems a rather odd choice to give these people the heads of rabbits, which has been interpreted as how identity is erased as a result of war, but Rego has said “I would do a picture about these children getting hurt... It’s very difficult to do it with humans, it doesn’t get the same kind of feel at all. It seemed more real to transform them into creatures”.

This erasure of human identity could mean we can disconnect from the reality of this extreme violence enough to acknowledge it, otherwise, we would be made too uncomfortable to accept that these kinds of events were taking place, looking at it instead as fantasy or over-exaggeration.

ART

Budget-friendly Bookshops: A Student's Guide to Affordable Reading in York

BY EDDIE BURGESS (He/Him)

In a city where the cost of living is so high, buying books may seem like an unaffordable hobby. However, York has a surprisingly large choice of budget-friendly bookshops on offer.

Minster Gate Bookshop: 8 Minster Gates

In my opinion, the nicest bookshop in York is the Minster Gate Bookshop. An extremely aesthetic and quaint building, this treasure is tucked away on a little side street right off of the York Minster. In what clearly used to be somebody's actual home, the shop comprises seven charming rooms spread over four floors filled with second-hand, antiquarian and discounted books. If you're looking for the best prices, it's worth focusing on the 'Bargain Basement', which sells new copies of a range of classic and modern novels, generally at half-price. Furthermore, if you want even

cheaper books, in this room you can also find second-hand books for as little as 50p. In general, the whole shop is very cool and really feels like a hidden gem of York.

Amnesty International Charity Bookshop: 19 Micklegate

Just out of the busiest part of the city centre, Amnesty International is located across the river only a couple of doors down from Ziggy's nightclub. Despite a small shop front, Amnesty International stretches really far back and has a great selection of both contemporary novels as well as classics. A lot quieter and spacious than other bookshops in York, this shop is great for people who want to take a bit more time to browse book options before purchasing. Most importantly, the shop also offers a 10% student discount on all donated stock, making it a must visit for students!

Oxfam Bookshops: 69 Low

Petergate, 46 Micklegate

The two Oxfam bookshops in York are also great places to find books at bargain prices. Although both of these shops are very small with a more limited choice, they are still definitely worth checking out, with both having a good classics section, as

well as sections for poetry, art, literary criticisms, and biographies. The Micklegate branch is also almost opposite Amnesty International so can easily be visited in one fell swoop.

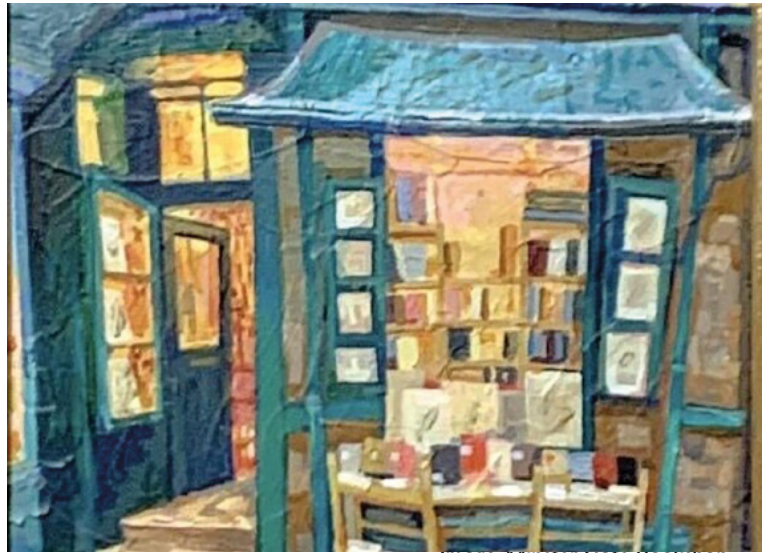


Image: Minster Gate Bookshop

SCENE Recommends

Goodbye to Berlin- John Isherwood

A semi-autobiographical account of an Englishman living in Berlin during the rise of Hitler, this book also served as the inspiration for the hit film 'Cabaret'.

Wandering Souls - Cecile Pin

A fascinating novel following three Vietnamese refugees starting a new life in Thatcher's Britain.

LITERATURE Editor's Note

Eddie (Editor) and Grace (Deputy) here and we are your Literature editors for SCENE! We're looking forward to providing the most interesting book-related news throughout the year. Enjoy this edition's page!

Has 'BookTok' Ruined Literature?

BY GRACE MARTIN (She/Her)

BookTok refers to a community on TikTok dedicated to producing content about books and literature. Although book-themed social media accounts have been around for years, BookTok has exploded into mainstream media, with many sections of bookstores now being dedicated to popular books on the platform.

BookTok took off during the 2020 lockdown, and has rapidly expanded since then. Popular authors on the platform increased their sales by 14 million between 2020 and 2021. This has had huge impacts on the publishing industry.

One of these key changes has been the increased diversity in consumer demographics, especially for young girls. Out of 2000 respondents, The Publisher's Association's poll found that 59% of 16-25 year olds claim to have gained a passion for reading due to BookTok. Whether this is just a result of lockdown boredom, or the desire to be 'on trend', the longevity of engagement with BookTok content post-pandemic shows the significant influence social media has had on young people's readership levels. This book-buying boom has helped promote smaller authors, pushing their work into a space that was previously dominated by

established writers.

For example, Alex Aster promoted her novel *Lightlark* on TikTok, catching the attention of a publishing house in 2021. *Lightlark* then sold 24,000 copies in its first week, and Aster signed a six-figure deal with Universal in the same year for its movie adaptation.

However, BookTok isn't without its critics: Many argue that writers are sacrificing creativity, literary value, and quality for the sake of marketability. Some claim that writers are starting to focus on becoming viral on BookTok rather than producing quality work.

But can you blame them? It's notoriously difficult to become an established writer and BookTok trends can provide aspiring authors with a guide as to what individuals want to consume. However, sometimes these viral trends can be damaging. The romance genre is easily the most popular on BookTok, with its heartwarming nature running parallel with the easy-to-read style of writing that TikTok tends to promote. Some authors, however, write lightheartedly about relationships that are toxic, violent, and should never be romanticised.

One example is that of Colleen Hoover. Colleen Hoover is seen as a BookTok prodigy, having sold over 32 million copies of her books as a result of the platform.

Hoover's work often covers complex topics such as domestic abuse and toxic masculinity. Her main male characters are deeply problematic, yet are presented as the perfect 'book boyfriend'. Hoover has been criticised for watering down, or completely ignoring, the severity of these themes.

Some think the tactless manner in which she covers these topics is especially dangerous when considering her demographic predominantly consists of young girls. Of course, literature can (and should) cover heavy topics with nuance and complexity. The problem lies in the way some authors present these relationships as 'sexy'.

However, there's no doubt that BookTok has been a force for good in other areas of the publishing industry. Reading reduces stress, increases mental stimulation, and promotes cognitive development. For the most part, TikTok has provided widespread access to this, and this impact should be celebrated.

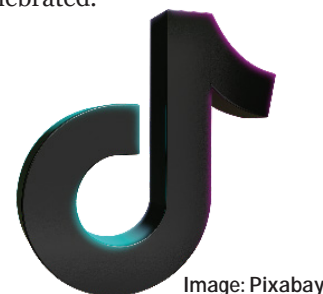


Image: Pixabay

LITERATURE

Editor: Eddie Burgess
Deputy: Grace Martin

LITERATURE

10 — Inside SCOOP: Your guide to Campus' Student-Run Shop

BY FREYA HUGHES

SCOOP is York's student-run cooperative, selling sustainable goods from the heart of Campus West. The shop boasts an impressive range of products, all 100% plant-based, from grains and spices to toiletries like soap and washing-up liquid. SCOOP is perfect for a big shop, restock or quick visit between lectures. There's something for everyone, all at a wholesale price that won't break the bank.

I visited the non-profit to learn more about its products, values and how to use it speaking to volunteers to understand what makes SCOOP such an important and unique part of our University.

The Origins and Mission of SCOOP!

Fifteen years ago SCOOP started as two shelves of stock in a student's house. Over the years they faced challenges, particularly in the Covid years, but their message has remained consistent throughout. Original members wrote: *"We might not be challenging Tesco and Morrisons' profits but we are challenging reliance on these faceless giants and promoting an alternative vision of society and community."*

The values of collaboration and sustainability have remained at the core of SCOOP as it's grown. Volunteers aren't only dedicated to their work, they have also created a welcoming community of like-minded individuals. Socials like craft and games nights are frequently advertised on Instagram.

"It's definitely massively built my confidence."

I spoke to Co-Chair Jazz who told me about their own experience volunteering at the shop: *"It's really nice, you get to meet like-minded people coming in. It's always fun to hear what they're going to cook with the things they're buying!"* SCOOP is always open to new volunteers, they told me the weekly socials are "open to everyone, they don't have to be a member."

How to Visit SCOOP!

The shop is open every Wednesday and Friday, though it's best to check the opening hours on their Instagram beforehand (@yorkscoop). SCOOP is based in D/M/028, between the Courtyard and Spring Lane, which is hard to miss if you look out for the colourful signs in the window.

To achieve their low-waste goals, products are sold in plastic-free packaging or out of glass jars. Customers are encouraged to recycle by bringing their own containers to use and donate, whether these are old bottles, jars or Tupperware boxes. The shop does have a supply of paper bags and donated boxes, so if you forget, don't let this stop you visiting.

During my visit, volunteers Jazz and Alistair were super helpful, taking the time to show me the weigh-out system the shop uses. If your product is in a jar, simply tell the volunteers, and they will fetch it for you. This system helps reduce food waste and overspending because you can tailor the quantity to your needs. The co-op had an array of products to choose from. Jazz told me their bestseller was the dried mango, which is among the many snacks they have to offer including: Happi oat milk chocolate, medjoul dates and Hebden Tea. SCOOP also has a great variety of essentials such as grains, spices and eco-friendly toiletries, notably menstrual products. In supermarkets, these can be hard to find and expensive, but SCOOP makes sustainable



Image credits: Freya Hughes

shopping easy and affordable.

Memberships are available on the York SU website for only £5.00. These reduce prices by 10%, so it's well worth investing if you plan on becoming a regular customer!

What are Veg Boxes?

Veg boxes, full of local organic produce, are priced from £8.90-18.50 and are available for members. There's a range of options including farm, root, fruit and salad boxes, so you can be sure you end up with your favourites. Orders must be completed on the York SU webpage before 9pm on Wednesday and Student ID is required for collection which is each Friday.

Jazz highlighted why the co-op is so special *"It's quite unique not every university has a SCOOP"*. SCOOP is such a distinctive feature of our community, it's inspiring to see students standing up for their values on consumerism and the environment, while actively building a community. Hopefully you'll be visiting soon!

SCENE Recommends

Batanga

Batanga can be found off Fossgate serving authentic Mexican food like street corn, mole and birria. They also have great selection of veggie dishes, the watermelon ceviche has such a unique flavour, it's a must try! The affordable prices, amazing quality and £5 cocktails all make this my favourite place to eat in York!

Festive Flavours: Exploring the best food stalls at the York Christmas Market

BY TILLY BOWEN

The much loved and anticipated York Christmas Market is back in our wonderful city, as of the 14th of November! The market provides lots of holiday spirit and of course lots of delicious food and drink to try. There is a great selection of treats for everyone; whether you prefer savoury or sweet, they have it all!

Many of these food businesses incorporate local produce to support producers across the county, and many make their treats using traditional Yorkshire techniques. There are thirty one different food traders at the market this year, offering a wide range of different food and drink to try for yourself or give to another as the perfect Christmas present.

I have picked out a handful of stalls that look absolutely delicious to give you a taste of what the market has to offer!

The Chilli Jam Man:

The Chilli Jam Man is run by Simon, who started making chilli jams after he fell in love with South East Asian flavours. Simon and his small team produce a range of chilli jams, sauces and oils, all made from the very best ingredients. The Chilli Jam Man has also won countless Great Taste awards! Visit The Chilli Jam Stall at the

Editor's Note: Freya Hughes

Hi, I'm Freya the new Food Editor! I love sharing my favourite recipes and spots to eat with friends and I'm excited to do this through Vision. I hope we can help you explore York's amazing food and drink scene and discover new recipes!

Deputy's Note: Tilly Bowen

Hi, my name is Tilly and I am a second year history student and this year's Deputy Food Editor for SCENE! I have always loved cooking, baking and all things food, and I'm so excited to write about York's food scene this year! This issue I've written about the much loved York Christmas Market and all the great food stalls they have this year! Hope you enjoy it!

Image credits: Tilly Bowen



Christmas Market and pick up a chilli jam to spice up your sandwiches and platters, and browse the selection of chilli gifts for the perfect Christmas present for a spice-lover!

Northern Brownies:

Based in Leeds, Northern Brownies bakes a wide range of fresh, delicious and chocolatey brownies for all sweet treat lovers to enjoy. Their brownies come in different flavours including salted caramel, chocolate orange, Nutella and Kinder Bueno! These artisan brownies are the perfect treat for yourself, or you could grab a box of six for friends and family to enjoy! You can even order Northern Brownies to be delivered through the post. Be sure to check out their stand for a Christmas treat!

The Crusty Pie Company:

The Crusty Pie Company was established in 1990 and has been making incredible pies, sausage rolls and pasties ever since. The Crusty Pie company provides the best hearty food to keep you full and satisfied, ready to spend hours looking at all the great stalls that York Christmas Market has to offer!

I hope you all have the best time looking round this year's Christmas Market and enjoy some great food with friends and family!

BOTTLE

ETON

UNIFORM

SMILE

PLANET

RACING

POUNCE

WHISKEY

PINCH

MOON

NOVEMBER

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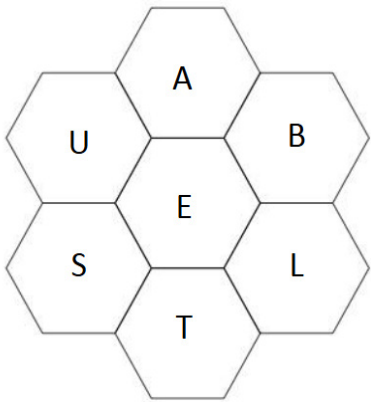
OLIVE

STAR

LIME

CONNECTING WALL

THE 16 WORDS TO THE LEFT CAN BE SORTED INTO 4 GROUPS OF 4 WORDS, CAN YOU SORT THEM CORRECTLY?



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 - 20 GREAT
21+ AMAZING!

Blurble.

Watch any movie at City Screen York (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)

**FREE
CINEMA
TICKETS
YOU SAY?**

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

After receiving a strange message, our hero is offered drugs to 'see the real world'. He is reborn and then joins a rebellion against computers where he learns Kung fu and that spoons do not exist.

GAMES

SUDOKU

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

GRAB A FRIEND!

TURN OVER TO THE BACK PAGE FOR SOME MORE PUZZLES!

GAMES

THE BIG ONE.

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49						50			51		52			
53			54		55					56		57		
58				59				60			61			
62								63						
64								65						

ACROSS

- 1) THIN LAYER; COVERING (7)
8) TYPE OF COFFEE BEAN (7)
15) VILLAIN IN SHAKESPEARE'S THE TEMPEST (7)
16) CHARITY GIVER (7)
17) CAT ACTIVITY (7)
18) RAINING PELLETS (7)
19) BBC NEWS RIVAL (3)
20) HONKED (6)
22) LATIN "TO BE" (4)
23) FILM PIONEER MARCUS ____ (4)
25) LIKE SOME CAMERAS (4)
26) SISTER (3)
27) PERMITTED (5)
29) DUBLIN'S LEGISLATURE (4)
31) FUTURE STALLION (4)
32) WORSHIPPED (6)
34) "IT'S MY DUTY" (3,3,2)
36) CHRISTMAS GREENERY (9)
38) ELEMENT WITH THE SYMBOL TA (8)
41) "WOAH,THATS COOL" (2,4)
45) BABY'S CRY (4)
46) GENETIC MOLECULES (4)
48) "DRESSED TO THE ____" (5)
49) BREAKFAST GRAIN (3)
50) MONUMENTAL (4)
52) TOUCH LIGHTLY (4)
53) PICKET LINE CROSSER (4)
55) SMALL GUN (6)
57) CANONIZED FR.WOMAN (3)
58) PHONE MEETING, BRIEFLY (7)
60) ENTER COVERTLY (5,2)
62) SNOB (7)
63) REFEREE CALL (7)
64) ACCEPT FOR A LESSER CHARGE (5,2)

DOWN

- 1) CHARLES' WIFE (7)
2) LIKE SOME SALAMANDERS OR SLOTHS (3,4)
3) IN A SINGLE TRY (2,3,2)
4) DRAG (3)
5) "PUT A SOCK ____" (2,2)
6) SPANISH BOYS (5)
7) THINGS TOUCHED BY MIDAS (2,4)
8) STICKY STUFF (8)
9) STREET (4)
10) DARTH VADER'S CHILDHOOD NICKNAME (3)
11) BUNDLE OF HAY (4)
12) DEFENSIVE DENIAL (2,2,3)
13) SEEK ADVICE FROM (7)
14) SILVER: PREFIX (7)
21) HIKING AIDS (5,4)
24) AFFECTION (6)
28) STAR WARS PRINCESS (4)
30) ALLOWS (4)
31) COLLABORATE IN A PUBLISHING HOUSE (6)
33) SOME CAMERAS FOR SHORT (4)
35) HENCHMAN (4)
37) LISTEN TO A RADIO SHOW (4,4)
38) BALLROOM DANCE (3,4)
39) SMALL BATTERY (3,4)
40) ACTRESS PORTMAN (7)
42) HOW KEBABS ARE COOKED (2,1,4)
43) CHAIN OF AMINO ACIDS (7)
44) DEAD SEA SCROLLS PEOPLE (7)
47) GAVIN & STACEY FOR EXAMPLE (6)
51) GREEK HOLIDAY SPOT (5)
54) ALPHA FOLLOWER (4)
55) LETTER (4)
56) NOT RIGHT (4)
59) SCOTLAND YARD ORG. (3)
61) THAT, IN SPAIN (3)

THE BACK PAGE OF SCENE.

THE LITTLE ONE.

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8				
9				

ACROSS

- 1) THE DEVIL WEARS ____
6) RENEWABLE ENERGY
7) TRY TO HIT A GOLF BALL
8) SHORT AND STACCATO, MUSICALLY
9) MANY MAKE A FOREST
DOWN
1) SECRETIVE SUMMONS
2) CREW MEMBER
3) VISITOR OF WONDERLAND
4) MOVE TO THE BEAT
5) ANCIENT GREEK CITY



The Crest of Life

BY CHRISTINA ANTO (She/Her)

How often it is that we do not realise what we have until it is lost.

Only then do we feel its presence so harshly
And only then do we wish time was kinder to us.

We are often blind to the beauty and bloom of those around us,
Oblivious to the light and love

Seeping softly, sweetly, slowly

From them to us
And us to them.

It lingers there for a time,
underneath the hum of life and all its variety

Subconsciously, it keeps us afloat.
Gently hands us the strength to continue.

And when that time has come to an end,
Only then do we see because of them,

A brighter beauty within ourselves.

COLUMNS

"I am not a fan of Semesterisation"

Alice Lilley interviews York SU Academic Officer Fenella Johnson, covering semesterisation, AI and academic misconduct and the University's financial struggles.

Interviewing Academic Officer Fenella Johnson

BY ALICE LILLEY (She/Her)

What does your role involve?

"I work with all of the academic reps and the department reps. I chair the Academic Leadership Teaming (ALT) meeting every other week.

"I represent students on the University Teaching Committee, Senate and standing committee on assessments. It involves general campaigns and ensuring students' voices are heard at these academic meetings."

What inspired you to run for the role of Academic Officer at York SU?

"I was the chair of the Graduate Student Association, which doesn't exist now, but I worked closely with the GSA Academic Officer, Welfare Officer and President. I was also the Athena SWAN equality Officer in Sociology and I liked looking at decolonising the curriculum from an academic point of voice. When the elections came up I thought 'Why not try?'"

What are your top 3 goals for this academic year?

"I am working on an academic misconduct campaign, not directly linked to my manifesto but [it] is something I am passionate about that has come up repeatedly. I feel like there's a lot of miscommunication around it...I am looking at a transition day for postgraduate students (PGS). We have Step Ahead for undergraduates, but I think there's a big need for PGSs to get that attention, and to fix assessment bunching."

Assessment bunching occurs when multiple exams and assignments are scheduled close together.

"With academic misconduct, I'm personally motivated because I got it twice in my undergrad degree and, the second time, I was told that it wasn't academic misconduct but poor practice, yet it was going to be recorded

centrally as academic misconduct, and my marks were capped, which was confusing messaging.

"I took that [concern] to the advice service here when I started and we've looked at the email templates and they will use the same messaging.

"They've removed the poor practice cap, so marks shouldn't be capped for it. But the communications around it and template letters that I have seen we are sending students still are very aggressive and don't signpost students to the correct support services well enough."

What do you think about AI and how it fits in with university studies?

"There are loads of working groups at the University about AI.

"My opinion is that AI is not going to go anywhere and it is just going to be more embedded into everything we do going forward. I feel like the University, to some extent, needs to get on board."

"We need to look at what other universities and other businesses do and see what policies we can make.

"You shouldn't ChatGPT your whole essay but there are ways you can use it to help generate ideas or use it like Grammarly. If we don't come up with a policy soon, people will be unfairly punished and some will get away with it and that is not fair either."

What is your view on semesterisation?

"There has been no student consultation on semesterisation and it doesn't seem that there has been student consultation or

feedback since implementation. "I know semesterisation has caused a lot of issues in departments, even something as small as mixed messaging around consolidation week, where no one knows what it is. Are you supposed to go home, go on holiday, be at University?"

"I am not a fan of semesterisation. I think it's quite unfair to international students.

"The break we have means that a lot of international students can't get home because you finish on, say, 16th December, and then you're expected to be back early in January.

"The positive is that it has put every department on the same timetable so everyone has a consolidation week. [T]he teaching weeks may be longer but people don't feel like they have enough time for assessments."

"Semesterisation was pushed through quite quickly and maybe the ideas were to implement it and fix the problems that arise from it later, when we should have pre-emptively thought of the problems and had solutions so that the transition was more seamless."

A spokesperson from the University responded to this: "We welcomed feedback on our plans for semesterisation, consulting with the student unions throughout the process, which began in November 2021 when details around semesterisation and modularisation were first announced.

They continued that: "monthly meetings, which included Academic Reps from GSA and York SU, started in April 2022 and we continued to liaise closely on all aspects of the new semesters, up until their introduction in September 2023."

Should students have been consulted on the removal of double-blind marking?

"I'm a big advocate that if we're removing something, you have

to have feedback from students on it to know if that was the right decision or if changes must be made."

"I feel like some decisions made over the past few years have gone under the radar and been pushed through without much consultation. You might have us in the meetings and we represent the student voice, but we don't speak for every student."

What is the most challenging part of working at the York SU so far?

"I think coming here and then being told that this is your manifesto, your job, you do what you want with it, and then being kind of left with that has been difficult. "...No one's sitting here going, this is a really good idea, I'll help you facilitate it and then you go and bring it back to them. I've got all these ideas but it's been hard to know who to go to."

How do you think the University has handled the financial situation and consulted staff and students during this difficult period?

"Being in meetings with Charlie Jeffrey and being in the Senate, where they spoke quite a lot about this, they have as much as possible done this in a voluntary way, which I do think was the correct way to go about it, and not just to be like, 'you're all sacked'. I think the situation is hard, and when you face issues with finance, it's not just a financial problem, it's a personal problem. [T]hey're all staff and you create such a big community here and then suddenly you have to say goodbye to a load of people and that affects students too."

"Initial worries [were] about postgraduate research students and what if their supervisor leaves because that will potentially upheave their entire PhD. That was a big concern."

"It's not going to be evenly

spread across the University. Some students will notice it, and some might not notice anything at all.

"I guess we will start seeing how much of an impact it has had now that it's all coming to an end, but I think making sure that we're monitoring the impact and, if there are parts where things are not going as smoothly, that we're picking that up quickly and making changes so that if students notice it once, they're not noticing it continuously throughout their degree."

Recent Check-In feedback found that 40% of students are very dissatisfied or dissatisfied with Check-In. What's your reaction to this?

"Before I came in, my handover from Meely (previous YUSU Academic Officer) specifically stated that we as a Union oppose Check-In unless things change. We've been in meetings, Freddie (current York SU Community and Wellbeing Officer) and I, about Check-In looking at what has and hasn't worked.

"We've changed the template and communications going out. We've looked at the student feedback and said 'Fix this, please'. So hopefully, going forward into this year, things are improving."

"I think it's ensuring people know it's not a Big Brother check-in. It's meant to be from a wellbeing perspective."

"I think it's pushing that even more and ensuring the communications going out are better. I'm not surprised the feedback was bad, but hopefully, students will see an improvement."

FEATURES

RESTRICTIVE BRITISH ABORTION LAWS
HIDING IN PLAIN SIGHT

BY AOIFE WOOD (She/Her)

As the law stands in the UK, as of the 1967 Abortion Act, abortion is illegal except under certain circumstances.

For an abortion to take place, two medical practitioners must agree that one of the following circumstances is applicable:

- The pregnancy has not exceeded 24 weeks and that the continuation of the pregnancy poses more risk than termination (this can be a physical or mental health risk to either the pregnant individual or any of their existing children).
- An abortion is necessary to prevent grave permanent injury to the health, mental and physical, of the pregnant individual.
- The continuation of the pregnancy involves risk to life greater than if the pregnancy was terminated.
- There is a substantial risk that if the child were born it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities.

Any termination of a pregnancy that does not pose a risk is illegal.

People who procure an abortion outside these exceptions face court, and the possibility of a life sentence. For instance, in 2022 one mother was taken to court for allegedly taking an abortion pill. She was charged under the Offences Against a Person act 1861, which states: "Every woman, being with child, who, with intent to procure her own miscarriage, shall unlawfully administer to herself any poison or other noxious thing, or shall unlawfully use any instrument or other means whatsoever with the like intent [...] shall be guilty of felony, and being convicted thereof shall be liable to be kept in penal servitude for life."

So why do the British public not seem to care?

It is not that they are against

abortion or that they agree with the current abortion laws. A 2023 YouGov Poll found that 87% of Britons thought abortion should be allowed in the UK, with only 6% disagreeing.

Further results from the poll suggest people in Britain are not fully aware of the limitation on access to abortion. When asked: "Do you think the current law makes it too easy to get an abortion, too difficult to get an abortion, or is the balance about right?", 55% said the balance was about right and only 10% felt it was difficult.

This suggests that British people think abortion access is about right. However, when asked: "to what extent, if at all, do you think abortion should be allowed BEFORE 24 weeks?", 65% said abortion should be available to any woman who wants it.

This is in conflict with the Abortion Act, which states the termination must also mitigate risk.

Similarly, when asked: "In events where women have had abortions outside the set rules (for example, by having an abortion without the consent of a doctor, or beyond the legal time limits), do you think they should or should not face criminal prosecution?", 52% said that the woman should not be prosecuted.

This shows further conflict with current abortion law, which treats these abortions as illegal - with at least six women having been tried in court for ending or attempting to end their own pregnancy since 2022.

This demonstrates that despite believing abortion access in Britain is 'about right', the majority of British people do not actually agree with current abortion law and implies that people are not fully aware of the restrictions on abortion access.

Our parliament also seems to treat abortion as a non-issue. Unlike in the US, where abortion became a key issue in the presidential election, the UK 2024 General Election paid almost no care at all.

The importance of abortion law in US elections is well evidenced: A 2024 Gallup poll found that 32% of US voters say they would only vote for a candidate for major office who shares their views on abortion. And candidates in elections treat abortion as a key concern. Kamala Harris, for instance, put forward restoring and protecting reproductive freedoms as a core policy - stating that:

"As President, she will never allow a national abortion ban to become law. And when Congress passes a bill to restore reproductive freedom nationwide, she will sign it."

However, in the 2024 UK General Election, no major party mentioned abortion in their manifestos aside from the Liberal Democrats.

In the Liberal Democrat manifesto, the pledge mentioning abortion reads: "Protect everyone's right to make independent decisions over their reproductive health without interference by the state and ensure access to high-quality reproductive health-care, including enforcing safe access zones around abortion clinics and hospitals."

That being said, a minority of people are placing an importance on Abortion Law.

For example, at <https://petition.parliament.uk/>, a petition calling for "the UK government to remove abortion from criminal law so that no pregnant person can be criminalised for procuring their own abortion," has been launched.

At time of writing, this petition is one month old and has 2,169 signatures; it will run for five more months. In this time, if it reaches 10,000 signatures the government will respond.

Has opposition to UK abortion

law ever had success?

In the past, similar petitions have failed to reach this signature requirement bar one in 2022 which petitioned for abortion to be included in the proposed Bill of Rights.

This petition reached 167,690 signatures and was debated in parliament. The length of the debate (4:30pm to 7:25pm), shows some degree of care for the issue in our parliament though no changes occurred as a result of the debate.

The Women's Equality Party, which campaigns for the full decriminalisation of abortion, also demonstrates some interest in the issue.

In 2024's local elections, the party saw two candidates elected. In the general election, though, they received only 1,275 votes

- suggesting this interest is still very low.

To conclude, the British public seems to care little for abortion law in comparison to the US - this largely is to do with a lack of awareness of the existing abortion laws.

Parliament could be seen as to blame for this, with no parties proposing any changes and therefore not bringing the issue to light.

Whilst there are some movements to change abortion law, these have limited popularity, and the majority feeling remains that abortion law is 'about right.'



IMAGE: YORK VISION

In the run up and aftermath of the US Election, American abortion law was at the forefront of everyone's minds. Somehow, though, much of the British public do not seem to care that abortion is not enshrined in our laws.

IMAGE: YORK VISION V

PROTECTING AGAINST PROGRESS? BRUTALISM IN HISTORIC YORK

BY FAYE ASKEW (She/Her)

In a city so concerned with protecting history, there is a part of it's architectural past which many would rather forget...

For the 8.9 million tourists who visit York every year, stepping onto the city centre's cobbled streets can feel like stepping back in time.

The beautifully preserved architecture spanning 2000 years provides the perfect setting for charming shops, pubs and cafes, which together creates a bustling, wholesome high street atmosphere. This is in stark contrast to the decline which many other towns and cities in Yorkshire have been experiencing, and as such the preservation of these historic buildings is well within the city council's best interests.

Yet, nestled amongst the grandeur of the city's beautifully preserved Georgian buildings, soaring churches, quaint mediaeval streets, and the Minster, is a different side to York's architectural history.

Brutalist architecture, whether you love it, or – more likely – hate it, is one of the most iconic architectural movements in British history. Commonly associated with post-war social housing complexes, even historic York did not escape its influence.

The origin for many of these buildings in York is the same story as in most UK cities: a quick, cheap solution for the issue of slum housing after WW2.

In York the central areas of Walmgate, Hungate, and Bedern, all situated within the city walls, faced massive issues of overcrowding and poor sanitation, leading to the demolition of their old Victorian buildings. Whilst most of the residents affected were relocated

to new housing in areas outside of York such as Tang Hall and Heworth, the original areas were given a modern 20th century glow-up as well.

The houses that were rebuilt in areas such as Walmgate weren't quite the looming concrete towers which came to dominate the skylines of other UK cities; an effort was made to blend them with their historic surroundings whilst still keeping the post-war ethos of simple, cheap, social housing.

Tourists spent
£1.7 billion
in York in one year
alone

However, their modern designs did open the door for other brutalist building projects in York, on much grander scales. These later buildings don't shy away from York's more attractive areas either, which is partly what makes them so controversial.

Stonebow House towers over the Shambles, additionally boxed in by the giant concrete cube design of the Telephone Exchange, whilst the Aviva building and the Park Inn dominate the river side view.

Today, many of these buildings are detested for their ugly and loud imposition on the delicate landscape of the rest of the city. But why is this the case, when they were once heralded as ushering in a new era?

One explanation is simply that tastes change. In the past, architecture styles developed very slowly over time, each movement heavily inspired

by the last and built on the foundations of hundreds of years of architectural movements that came before it.

However, modernism broke the mould. Much more fast-paced and experimental, buildings today like many other trends, go in and out of style very fast, with city planners constantly striving for bigger and better.

Whilst most people can appreciate the beauty and craftsmanship in older buildings, modern styles are much more subjective, and brutalism is the most controversial of the lot. **Brutalism fell out of style across the UK so quickly in this way because it was so intrinsically tied to social progress.**

Brutalist estates were originally built to usher in a new era of hope, with housing that promised a better life.

However, once these areas found that they were still plagued with social issues and unrest people began to be disillusioned with council housing as a whole, and as such negative views of the style they were built in also began to rise.

As the collective vision of these new brutalist structures as modern utopias began to waver, the buildings were allowed to fall into disarray, cementing their association with neglect and ruin. Another reason brutalist buildings can be so controversial in York specifically is because it has such a uniquely preserved history, even after the war.

Whilst York did experience some patches of heavy bombing during World War II, it was nowhere near the extent of other nearby UK cities such as Leeds and Manchester. Whilst many

cities had a massive need to rebuild, and quickly, which the brutalism throw-up concrete style is perfect for, for York it was less necessary, and as such its instances are sparser.

Whilst the harshness of brutalism can work better in a city with a more vast landscape of modern buildings, in York, these buildings typically stand alone, surrounded by shorter, older buildings, meaning they can stick out like a sore thumb.

Brutalist buildings across the UK have varying legacies. In many places, whilst they began to be hated through the 80s to the early 2000s their historical and architectural value is now being more appreciated, with many becoming listed buildings and continuing to be a part of the expanding landscape. However, in York the case is a little different, as it often appears that brutalism is where modern building projects stopped.

Could it be the case that York's failed attempt at modernising in the 60s has put the city off new developments?



IMAGE: YORK VISION V

WHY BUY A FILM CAMERA IN 2024?

By **PATRICIE SPERKOVA (She/Her)**

Throughout my life so far, I've seen film cameras fade in and out of fashion, but lately I feel like they're making a real comeback. In my hometown, a new film lab has just opened, there's a film-camera-only shop in Leeds, and film developing labs are in demand. What makes it, in this age, so popular? What draws people in to take up something that could end up as blank spaces on an unpredictable roll of film, when digital cameras and the best smartphones can produce perfect photos with ease, and even at night?

An article I read on infoobesity opened with this thought by an American graphic designer Milton Glaser: "to me, that has always been the essential function of art: to make you attentive. In the presence of art, you begin to become aware of something which you were not aware of before you experienced it." And I thought, that's EXACTLY what I feel when using my film camera!

It's hard to rationalise why I bought my first film camera three weeks ago in the first place: I think it was partly to learn something new. A month ago, I didn't even know what ISO meant, but I admired people who did, and I realised I didn't have to be jealous; I could learn, too. I also wanted to give my Instagram profile a shape, capturing my own memories in a more meaningful way. But now? I think what really draws me in is the mindfulness, attentiveness, the chance to slow down and just see.

Picture this: after long days of commuting, work, or school, and talking to people you might not feel like talking to, most of us take a break on our phones. We all do it, but it is a TERRIBLE idea. Scrolling doesn't relax our minds; if anything, it does exactly the opposite. Exhaustion squared. Digital smog, visual overload,

noise. Inability to focus. But what happens when I pick up my film camera instead?

Well, it's different. I have to PLAN what I want to shoot. My attempt is singular, unique, and finite, so each photo becomes an intentional choice. Rather than taking 10 pictures of what I just cooked, I have to start observing my surroundings. And, I want my photos to be different from fast phone snaps, so I have to observe and pay attention with curiosity, as if through a different lens, looking for all the strange

details, shadows, and contradictions in the city that might tell an interesting story when captured.

When I have planned what I want to shoot, I have to think again! Damn! I have to find the right light, angle, and moment before taking the shot. And when I finally press the shutter, I'm left with a feeling of mystery. I know nothing. I have no idea if the shot worked until I get the film developed days or weeks later, and I'm leaving the place. It's a process that costs time and money, but somehow it doesn't feel wasteful.

After I take a picture, I see more. My vision sharpens. I notice more around me: I see the smallest details that come together to form a mosaic of stories. I see how objects interact within a space, and I feel more grounded in reality.

It may sound ironic: using a piece of technology to escape the overwhelm of our digital age. But it's not

about ignoring the contemporary world; it's about connecting more deeply with it, being more attentive and mindful, without distractions. Glaser put it well: "...suspend previous beliefs about what the world is. Attempt to experience it directly, by observation and attentiveness. Beyond that, I can't imagine any other way to develop the sense that we are all in the same boat, experiencing the same needs and wants."

The outcome of my efforts with the camera feels valuable, but it is about more than the final images: the entire analogue process is deliberate, authentic and personal. Each step makes me feel more present, slowing me down to connect deeply with my surroundings. And what is exciting is that creating your own style doesn't stop with buying the camera; it fuels a curiosity to explore different types of film and all the settings on the machine. Made to last a lifetime!



IMAGE: PIXABAY



IMAGE: PIXABAY

DOES FESTIVE SPIRIT HAVE AN EXPIRY DATE?

By **AUDREY LAWLER (She/Her)**

Christmas undeniably felt better as a child. The excitement of festivities (and very rarely, snow) was certainly a huge contributor, but the main event for myself and many children alike was the prospect of receiving presents from Santa Claus.

The peak time for children to believe in Father Christmas is five years old, according to research into 'magical thinking' from The University of Texas international survey. This belief usually stops on average at eight years old. This varies within the UK slightly: in England children will believe until they're 8.03 years old, and in Scotland 8.53 years old.

From here, children's belief in Santa can face numerous obstacles. Other children could spoil the secret, they could catch their

parents in the act, or (if they are a particularly sceptical child) they could find it unlikely that Santa would make it around the world in a night, or not seem to give any presents to children in poorer countries.

I personally kept up my belief of Father Christmas for a rather unusually long time. Upon consultation with my mother, I have been told I was around the age of nine when I stopped believing in Saint Nick, above average for UK children. Yet I've found it difficult to replicate the same magic every Christmas as I've grown older. Each Christmas that passes feels less and less like an occasion and more like something that just happens.

I imagine most readers will be in on the secret (I do apologise if

I've destroyed anyone's illusion), but there is a chance that once one magical aspect of the holiday is disproven, the rest follows suit. But it's all rather depressing, isn't it?

How can adults keep up the Christmas magic, even despite this? Is there an age where Christmas spirit is, naturally, dead?

This Christmas, I am on a personal mission to bring the magic back. Perhaps it is the bleaker days, the encroaching deadlines, or the crippling lack of funds.

That doesn't mean forcing myself to believe in Santa's existence again, so instead I have thought up several (relatively cheap) ways to bring back some Christmas magic even as a university student.

Watch Xmas TV

Gavin and Stacey is back, along with another classic which I am VERY excited for - Wallace and Gromit. What better than to sit in front of the telly this year with some company, and delve into some festive nostalgia?

Drink All Day! [note: not always a cheap option]

Crack open the bucks fizz early! Bring mulled wine to pre-drinks! Treat this with caution.

EAT BAD FOOD!

Anything goes at Christmas. I think at this time of year especially, it is perfectly reasonable to have a pork pie for Breakfast, or pigs in blankets all day long.

Listen to Xmas Music For Fun

Whack out the Wham, why not! I've been listening to fruitcake by Sabrina Carpenter non-stop, and I recommend you do the same.

Club Together and Get Some Decor For Your House

A festive space is a festive mind. Better yet, make your own decorations as a bonding activity. How about some paper snowflakes for your windows (as long as your landlord allows it), or a table centrepiece for a festive dinner party?

Secret Santa On a Budget

This saves on the pennies, since you only need to get one present for your friend group, and everyone receives something! Just please stick to the budget, or else friendships do have the potential to end.

Wear Xmas Jumper Every Day

This one may not be as practical, but you get the picture.

Santa might not exist, but as an adult you've got to throw yourself fully into Christmas. It'll be depressing otherwise.

EMMA MALIN
RELATIONSHIPS
EDITOR

HOW TO SURVIVE...

BY **EMMA MALIN (She/Her)**

Relationships are a huge part of university life, whether that's new connections formed at university, long distance relationships, something-ships, no strings attached, some strings attached we can all agree that relationships have all sorts have complexities.

It's easy to assume that love is the eternal flame that keeps the world turning, but is love on its own enough to make a relationship last?

Adult relationships are hard, especially at university. There are so many new factors that may not have been issues before like time, money, distance etc.

The real world has its own set of challenges and love on its own isn't enough to combat them. The best way to explain it is to ask someone to think of a relationship as a house. Love is like a strong foundation, which is essential to the house's structural integrity, but it needs more than just a concrete base. When it comes to university relationships, a common struggle is the long distance factor.

This doesn't just apply to couples going to different universities, but also how relationships work over summer and winter breaks, where people can often be scattered across the country (or world) for weeks on end.

Distance truly can be make or break. However, it is possible to make it work. I have narrowed it down to the three C's. Communication. Common ground.

Countdown.

Communication is vital for any relationship to flourish, but for long distance relationships it is especially important. Both parties have to be willing to make the effort and take time out of their busy days to check in with each other.

Luckily we live in the modern day so it's not all snail mail and messenger pigeons. Take advantage of tech, video calls, phone calls, instant messaging, apps like Locket, and even other options like playing online games together (if that's your thing).

Secondly, consider your communication styles. Do you have the same style of communication, are you both big texters? Do you prefer phone calls? How often would you like to check in or have long catch ups?

These are all questions to discuss with your partner that will help make sure you are both on the same page and that no one is feeling forgotten. University life is busy, and only gets busier so availability and free time may change. You may not always have the time to have a few phone calls a week that are a couple hours long so make sure to consider hurdles like this as well. This leads well into the next C. Common ground.

As previously stated, communication is important for a strong relationship, but so is common ground. Whilst it might seem obvious that a couple will have things in common with each other, distance can sometimes

highlight otherwise.

It's important to have more in common than just each other. Music, sports, cooking, politics, reading. Find things to talk about and enjoy with each other that don't require you to be physically together. This could be starting a little two person bookclub, streaming your favourite sports teams game together or simple things like cooking challenges.

Finally, the last C is countdown. Make sure that you have something to look forward to! When doing long distance, a lot of things can make meeting up hard. Problems like scheduling and finance can really put a spanner in the works.

However, when you do have a date, make sure to look forward to it. Log it in your countdown app or add it to your joint calendar. It's important to have something to remind you that the distance isn't forever.

LONG DISTANCE

DATE IDEAS THAT WON'T BREAK THE BANK

BY **EMMA MALIN (She/Her)**

Dating at university can be stressful enough without the added layer of financial strain.

However, we shouldn't let our dire financial situations get in the way of our love lives and spending time with our partners. Here are some budget-friendly date ideas that won't break the bank.

You can't get much for free these days, but one thing you can do together for free in town is visit the York Minster. You have to have your student cards to gain free access but it is totally worth it and saves a joint total of £36. What a steal! The minster is a beautiful building and there is a lot to look at inside, such as the crypt and the Exhibition on conserving the St Cuthbert Window.

Another great thing to do for cheap is walking the city walls, a York must-do! One of the great things about this is that you can walk for as little or as long as you like. In total this takes around two hours, and there are multiple different places to enter and exit the walls.

If you're in the mood to start the festivities then the York Christmas markets are also a

great option. This year there are 75 different market stalls to noseay at.

It's also completely optional whether or not you want to spend money there, I went last year and spent nothing. Me and my friends just checked out all of the stalls and enjoyed the Christmas vibes. You could even bring your own flasks of hot chocolate.

There are also a lot of small things you can do whilst strolling around town. For example: following the cat trail, trying the tea samples outside of Hebden Tea shop and laughing together at people who are waiting in line for three hours to buy a ghost.

Last but not least is the Museum Gardens. The gardens are open every day from 9 am to 6 pm and the grounds are extremely beautiful. There's a lot to wander around and look at, like the ghosts in the gardens and the ruins. As well as this, there are plenty of seating areas to sit and chat. Hopefully, next time you get the dreaded "it's up to you text", you can consult this list for ideas and save some money.

IMAGE: PIXABAY

FIVE TIPS ON GOING NO CONTACT

BY **EMMA MALIN (She/Her)**

No contact often leads to basically no contact, kind of in contact, almost back together and then the cycle repeats. Here is how to hold your ground and keep your dignity when it comes to being

1) Block/Remove them

This is the best way to stop yourself from being reminded of them.

By blocking and removing them you won't find yourself being able to keep updated with what they are up to and their life without you. Sometimes it's best to not know. If this feels harsh, you can also mute stories and posts for a less extreme option.

2) Don't romanticise

After a breakup, a lot of us are guilty of romanticising all of the good parts and conveniently forgetting the bad ones. Don't let yourself get caught up twisting your heart strings over that one

time they offered to pay for your bus ticket...

3) Let it Out

There's often the temptation to message your ex to tell them everything you miss, or don't miss. It's normal to want to let them know how you're feeling and vice versa, but some things are better left unsaid. I recommend talking to your friends instead, who can often give helpful advice. I also recommend writing your feelings down. This could be in your notes app or the old fashioned way, in a notebook.

4) Distraction.. But not too much

Distract yourself! Try to avoid

pottering around in your room thinking about them instead go out and distract yourself. For example, throwing yourself into your uni work and extracurriculars, or spending time with your friends and having a bit of fun. However, although distractions are great, try not to go too far with it. Trying to fill one gap in your life with something or someone else straight away will only end in tears. Give yourself time to breathe.

5) Think about your future self

When your finger is hovering over that send message button, take a moment to think of how

you will feel about this decision in the future. Are you going to wake up the next day and kick yourself for sending it? Make positive choices for future you, and don't let pesky heartbroken you sabotage your progress.



IMAGE: PIXABAY

SPORT

Confirmed: Women's International Rugby Teams at York Next Summer!

BY JACOB BASSFORD (He/Him)



In exciting news for rugby fans at the University and in the local region, we can now get excited about the big names playing at York LNER Community Stadium in the 2025 Women’s Rugby World Cup!

On the 22nd of October, after the draw had been completed, the full fixtures were announced, and we now know the ten teams that are coming to York in August and September 2025!

These are the following Rugby World Cup fixtures happening in York next summer:

- Canada vs. Fiji (Pool B) - 23rd August at 17:30**
- New Zealand vs. Spain (Pool C) - 24th August at 17:30**
- USA vs. Australia (Pool A) - 30th August at 19:30**
- Italy vs. South Africa (Pool D) - 31st August at 15:30**
- USA vs. Samoa (Pool A) - 6th September at 13:30**
- Japan vs. Spain (Pool C) - 7th September at 12:00**

There is plenty to get excited about these fixtures. Although the home nation (and World No. 1) the England Red Roses will not be playing any World Cup fixtures in York (fret not as they will be coming to York in March to play Italy in the Six Nations), there are some big teams with big names coming to LNER Community Stadium!

We have defending champions New Zealand (also known as the Black Ferns) playing Spain. We also have World No. 2 Canada who pushed England all the way in WXV 1

this autumn. And finally, and most excitingly, we also have the USA coming to town, potentially reinforced with Olympic sevens bronze medalist and icon of the game Ilona Maher.

So even though this is happening just a couple of weeks before the start of the 2025/26 academic year, there are plenty of thrilling encounters to entice you to York early to watch a once-in-a-lifetime tournament on the doorstep of your own university.

This is not just exciting in terms of matches, but York Sport were able to reveal to Vision that four, as yet unconfirmed, international teams will be using the University of York as a training base during the World Cup, a superb opportunity to put the University on the map but also an unbelievable chance to see some of the game’s emerging superstars in training on the campus sport’s facilities.

Keith Morris, Head of Sport at University of York, gave Vision this exclusive comment:

“To have 10 of the 16 teams taking part in next year’s Women’s Rugby Union World Cup coming to York to play is brilliant for the city and for the University as we support the event and one of the four teams training in York. We look forward to welcoming representatives from at least four of the teams to campus in the coming weeks as we finalise arrangements for one of them to train at the University next year.”

All matches of the 2025 Womens Rugby World Cup will be covered live by BBC Sport. Applications for tickets for the tournament are available until 11:00 GMT on the 19th November and can be accessed from the official Rugby World Cup website.

Esports Recap

BY TOBY CHESHIRE (He/Him)

League of Legends: T1 Win Worlds (Again)

The League of Legends World Championship, better known as just “Worlds”, has drawn to a close. The annual tournament is the crowning event of the year, and no tournament brings prestige and honour like Worlds. The cup is culmination of months-worth of cut-throat qualifiers, leading to a full month of play before a victor is crowned.

Those familiar with League will need no introduction to T1, and especially their star player, Lee “Faker” Sang-hyeok. As the most decorated player in the scene, Faker is no newcomer to the grand final stage. Having won Worlds a staggering four times before this year, the ceiling of what he can achieve seems to be limitless.

The grand final was between T1 and Bilibili Gaming, who locked horns across all five hard-fought games in the best of five, playing in front of the O2 arena in London. Online, a peak confirmed viewership of 6,940,000 tuned in to watch history be made. Initially, Bilibili got the lead, but T1 just refused to go down, winning the final two games in the BO5 to consign Bilibili to the silver medal.

Another year, another Faker masterclass. He has risen, fallen, and risen again across his career. The pedestal we put him on could touch the sky, and forever points towards an exciting notion of what’s to come. Another year, another Faker masterclass. He has risen, fallen, and risen again across his career. The pedestal we put him on could touch the sky, and forever points towards an exciting notion of what’s to come.



Counter-Strike: All Eyes on Shanghai

Over in the world of Counter-Strike Esports, teams are preparing for the final, yet most important tournament of the latter half of the year - the Shanghai major. Similar to Worlds, the major is the pinnacle tournament of the scene. Running twice a year, teams will have the opportunity to write their name in the history books for years to come.

There’s no clear favourite for the trophy just yet. Natus Vincere have had strong performances recently, having made 6 consecutive grand final appearances and taking home the trophy in three. Perhaps they have run out of steam however, as they were eliminated from the most recent tournament, BLAST World Final, without a win to their name.

What about the winners of said tournament then, G2? Spearheaded by superstar Nikola “Niko” Kovač and wonderchild-prodigy Ilya “moNESY” Osipov, the team oozes firepower and can outclass any team

on a good day. Unfortunately, inconsistency plagues the roster’s performances - you can never rely on G2, but you also can never count them out of a match.

Team Spirit’s Danil “donk” Kryshkovets has a skill ceiling higher than almost any other player. If he can reach it, the trophy is all but guaranteed to be theirs. However, it’d be a mistake to underestimate the three-time HLTV #1 Player of the Year winner, Mathieu “Zywoo” Herbaut. The aforementioned Frenchman could lead Team Vitality to a second major title.

Legacy, prestige, dominance. These words have become synonymous with the teams who have etched their name in the history book of Counter-Strike through the wins at these majors. What new chapter will be written in Shanghai later this month remains to be seen.

It’s an exciting time to be an esports fan. With 2025 round the corner, a new year will bring more exhilarating tournaments to come.