

YORK VISION

est. 1987

SCENE
arts & culture

IMAGE: HAL MUXLOW/FISHER

LOCKED OUT!

CAMPUS NOT IN USE FOR STUDENTS

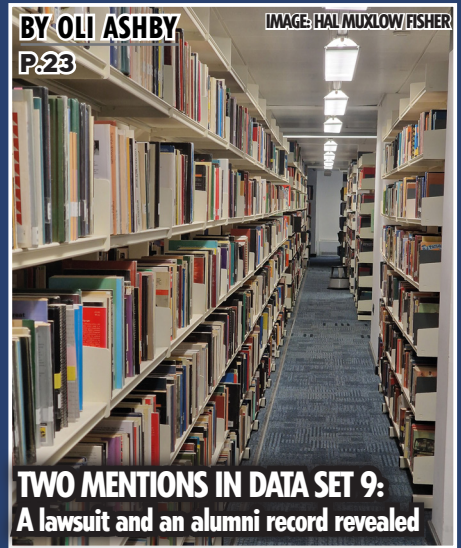
BY JESSICA-JANE HAYES P.5



UNI OF YORK IN THE EPSTEIN FILES

BY OLI ASHBY
P.23

IMAGE: HAL MUXLOW/FISHER



TWO MENTIONS IN DATA SET 9:
A lawsuit and an alumni record revealed

IMAGE: RETHINK/PAYMENT INSTAGRAM



IMAGE: YORK VISION

YORK MP SLAMS DISGRUNTLED EX-DUKE

BY GAVIN SOUTHWAY

P.23

INFLUENCERS CHANGING YORK'S NIGHTLIFE

BY LAYLA ROBERTS

P.7

RETHINKING STUDENT LOAN REPAYMENTS

BY AOIFE WOOD

P.8

THE PEOPLE'S PRINCESS OF YORK

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE

SCENE 6-7



IMAGE: @THE YORK DIANA

Hi guys! We hope you love this edition of York Vision as much as we do. I'd like to thank all our brilliant writers and our editorial team for working so hard to get this edition out! We recently won Best Design at the SPA Regional awards, and hope we have kept that standard just as high in this edition. There's plenty of diverse articles for everyone's tastes, from articles about the extent of the University of York's involvement in the Epstein files, to plenty of Wuthering Heights content, and opinion articles that we suspect many of our readers will relate to. If you want to get your own work published, or are just interested in finding out more about our lovely community of writers, we have our weekly meetings in SLB/205 every Monday, at 6.30pm and we would love to see you all there!

We want your Vision!

IMAGE: PIXABAY



BARGAIN BRITAIN

(NOT IN YORK, MATE)

BY LAYLA ROBERTS

A student accommodation provider, Canvas Student, revealed the UK's most affordable cities for students, and shockingly, York has been rated the most affordable.

As a student who is lucky enough to receive the maximum student loan and has a part-time job, I still struggle to afford the cost of York. And somehow we're the most affordable city?

The average rent for University of York students is £190 a week (if you're lucky). This equates to £9690 for 51 weeks, for those of you trying to do the mental maths. With rent prices on the rise, many students find themselves struggling to keep up with the demand.

One night out alone will set you back at least £25: £6 for a pint before the club, £6 club entry, £5 for transport roughly (depending on if you're feeling fancy enough to splurge for an Uber or happy to lug it on the bus), and the rest of your money goes towards drinks in the club.

I simply refuse to believe Canvas Student's data is correct. It claims a pint is £4.24. In this economy? Maybe 10 years ago that would have been the case.

How on Earth are we ranked as the most affordable when our neighbours further up north in Durham have it so much cheaper?

Club entry? Free. Drinks? Student bars that will only charge you £2-£3 a pint.

Durham University has free pool tables in their colleges, and what do we have? Card machines.

To be completely fair, the York Students' Union is fighting to lower students' costs and have recently dropped drinks in The Glasshouse to match Whetherspoons' prices.

The two other universities on the podium for most the affordable university city are Leicester (which has the lowest average rent in the study) and Nottingham which scoops the bronze medal offering a relatively affordable cost of living for students.

Understandably, London was ranked the least affordable city for students. But I struggle to believe that York isn't ranked shortly after, just based on our rent demands.

So whilst I love being a student at York, my bank balance most definitely doesn't.

YORK RANKED UK'S BEST BARGAIN... MEANWHILE STUDENTS CHOKE ON £5 PINTS

Rank	City	Price of coffee	Price of eating out	Price of beer	Total for grocery essentials*	Monthly public transport pass
1	York	£3.50	£15.00	£4.24	£7.54	£85.00
2	Leicester	£3.14	£17.00	£4.75	£8.04	£72.50
3	Nottingham	£3.30	£15.00	£4.50	£7.91	£72.50
4	Sheffield	£3.51	£15.00	£4.24	£7.76	£77.83
5	Coventry	£3.49	£15.00	£5.00	£9.16	£57.00
6	Newcastle	£3.68	£15.00	£5.00	£8.40	£65.00
7	Cardiff	£3.42	£15.00	£5.00	£9.17	£60.00
8	Birmingham	£3.50	£15.00	£5.00	£8.63	£69.00
9	Exeter	£3.52	£15.00	£5.50	£7.31	£80.00
10	Glasgow	£3.60	£16.00	£5.00	£8.08	£70.00

*The combined price of grocery essentials = milk, fresh white bread, white rice, eggs, and bananas

GET INVOLVED



WHAT: **Vision's Next Weekly Meeting**

WHERE: **SLB/205**

WHEN: **9th March 6.30pm**

YORK VISION

News Editor:
Oliver Ashby

Opinion Editor:
Aoife Wood

Features Editor:
Gavin Southway

Lifestyle Editor:
Kate Koles

Relationships Editor:
Emma Malin

Science Editor:
Shahama Anver

Environment Editor:
Carrie Parker

Sport Editor:
Luci O'Donnell

Editors-in-Chief:
Charlotte Ambrose
Layla Roberts

Deputy Editor:
Jessica Hayes

SCENE Editor:
Freya Hughes

Managing Director:
Eleanor Shaw

Deputy Managing Director:
Gavin Southway

Chief Sub-Editor:
Connor Szulist

Sub-Editor:
Hal Muxlow Fisher

Got a story, or a reading,
passion for writing, photography...?
editing, GET INVOLVED!



Charlotte and Layla

NOT A LACK OF SPACE. A LACK OF ACCESS.

UNRATIFIED AND UNLOVED

A MEMOIR FOR THE SOCIETIES TIME FORGOT

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE

There are over 100 student societies on the Adopt an Activity page of the York SU website, as of 09/02/26.

A wholly inhospitable wasteland, this page is essentially a dumping ground where abandoned (read: unratified) societies are left to die (read: wait for new students to ratify them).

Among the unfortunate societies waiting to be re-homed are *Free Speech Society*, *Freedom from Torture Society*, and *Speak Free Society*. I'm sensing a trend here.

Women Breaking Barriers Society and *Supporting Women in Science* are also up for grabs. I'm going to be optimistic and presume that this is because the women have already both broken the aforementioned barriers and feel supported in science.

Among the notables, *Extinction Rebellion UoY Hub* went extinct. *Metaphysical Society* is also on the list. Or it might not be. It's hard to say for certain. *Meme Society* is also patiently awaiting its new forever-home, but I'm not sure if its opening description of "Yes, we are a society" adds much to its credibility.

However, my personal favourite has to be *Public Transport Society* which advertises itself as being a haven for anyone with a "love/hate relation with pacers to the speedy 802's". I'm not sure what this means, but I love their enthusiasm.

Students looking to restart any of these groups should visit the Students' Union societies' page for more information. Groups are only held on the Adopt an Activity page for three years, after which, they are catapulted into oblivion (read: archived).

CAMPUS IN USE

...JUST NOT FOR STUDENTS

BY JESSICA-JANE HAYES

Campus space is becoming harder for students to access.

Societies are struggling to get rooms and complaints are brushed off with barely any communication. Meanwhile, the University keeps blocking off rooms "just in case" there's a conference.

The University of York said: "we know student-led societies are central to your university experience and we recognise how important reliable space is for these activities. After space has been allocated for teaching, learning and important University events, we ensure societies then have priority booking. Only after that do we enable the spaces to be booked by other members of our University community."

In regards to cancelling bookings the University first always

"emails the organiser directly, and our policy is to relocate rather than cancel whenever possible. Last-minute changes only happen in unforeseen circumstances", as a strict code of conduct when it comes to room booking changes.

Some student groups have described feeling pushed; it's not that the campus lacks space — it's that students can't get to it.

Between King's Manor being handed over to York St John in June 2025, and Wentworth College's Nucleus being mothballed due to high operation costs, for a campus university, it's starting to feel like the campus isn't really for students anymore.

Student society representatives have reported room booking issues. One student, who wanted to remain anonymous, said: "Initially we

were informed of a clash with important departmental bookings, despite there not being a clash when bookings were made, so effectively our bookings had been overridden."

Occurrences like these give the impression that students and societies are being deprioritised.

Other students have experienced poor communication regarding available spaces.

Another student commented: "The responses typically did not provide a very clear timeline for confirmation, and we were advised to 'wait for processing,' and 'the result will be out at the end of this week' (but does not come out in reality) or to 'try alternative rooms/times'."

There is a real risk of losing the dynamism that students

bring to campus spaces.

There is plenty of space available to account for the entire student body on campus.

The issue is gaining the opportunity and permission to use these spaces.

It seems that the main prerogative is for these spaces to sit idle, gathering dust until the University decides they want to book one of them out for a conference.

Staff may not realise how rich and active the student social life is after working hours, and how much it relies on accessible spaces.

The Campus Space Campaign launched in late February to push the University to prioritise student access to campus space, and to encourage societies to make noise about their difficulties booking campus space.



IMAGES: ALEX HOLLAND



BETTER LATE THAN NEVER: "Relaxed" graduations take centre stage

“ Having wheelchair accessible platforms alongside the stage to enable wheelchair users to be integrated with their peers, friends, and family during graduation for the first time has made every difficult day over the last 8 months feel worthwhile, and the relaxed graduation was incredible! 8 students were awarded their degrees at the ceremony, and the pride on every face in the room as those students crossed the stage was truly beautiful. ”

YorkSU's Equality & Inclusion Officer, **Abi Harrison**

FINALLY! ACCESSIBLE GRADUATION REVAMPED

BY JESSICA-JANE HAYES

The University has launched an alternative graduation option, targeted at improving accessibility. It presents students with the choice to opt for a "relaxed" graduation experience, consisting of smaller groups and a quieter, more streamlined environment.

The event was widely praised, and for good reason, especially for major accessibility improvements.

For the first time, wheelchair users could independently access the stage via ramps, rather than being lumped at the back of the stage.

The previous set up was less than ideal, and this lack of accessibility could have led students to feel separated from their peers at such an important life event.

So whilst it is excellent that the University has made these adjustments, it is a shame it took so long.



STUDENTS PAY THE PRICE FOR UNI PROFIT PUSH

Does our beloved University truly prioritise its students? The stats say no.



IMAGE: HAL MUXLOW FISHER

All looks calm on the lake, but beneath the surface, students are paddling hard to stay afloat.



BY JESSICA-JANE HAYES

In 2024, the University of York reported a £9 million deficit. In 2025, it boasted a £9 million surplus. And this exponential increase in liquid assets has been sucked directly out of students' pockets.

This dramatic turnaround has been achieved through cuts to student-facing services and increases in student costs, rather than structural or executive-level changes.

On-campus accommodation rent costs have increased by an average of 9% since the announcement of increases in 2025. This feels contradictory to the University's previous commitment to cost-of-living support.

Can a "cost of living hub" negate the financial strain that these eye-watering rent prices place on students' shoulders?

In the University's cost of living report, they recognise that: "Money really matters for health and wellbeing.

"The amount of money that people have, the amount they have relative to other people, and the gap between rich and poor are all incontrovertibly relat-

ed to both physical and mental health, across the population."

As a community together at York, it is clear that we see this issue as a priority. But a sense of action feels stagnant, no real relief is felt from the student body as accommodation prices continue to rise - an issue that the University has consciously contributed to in 2025 - the same year that their money worries resolved themselves.

This issue is not just campus-focused; the average rent in York has doubled, making the city increasingly unaffordable for students. Despite hosting two major universities, York is evolving into a high-cost, tourism-driven city that is progressively out of reach for the average student.

Approximately 55% of York students juggle part-time jobs along with full-time study just to support general day-to-day living expenses. Valuable study time is compromised, as students spend hours working minimum wage, when they could have been studying for a degree that has already cost them thousands. The University said they: "are concerned

about the financial challenges students face and offer a range of support, including bursaries and hardship funding." They actively promote many opportunities for students to access help if they need it as they understand that moving away from home can be difficult especially when juggling finances.

During the semester two press conference, Saabs reported that funding for wellbeing services and college support has been reduced. The University currently employs just one housing adviser for 20,000 students, leaving thousands without adequate guidance during a housing crisis.

However, the University has some meaningful mechanisms to combat students' financial issues. The Student support fund was launched in 2020, with the aim of supporting students experiencing "short term unexpected financial difficulty."

In November 2025, the Students' Union launched its 'Welcome to York: Housing Hell' campaign, stating that "the student housing crisis is at breaking point."

After students finish their first year in on-campus accommodation, they are promptly thrust into a new breed of housing horror. On top of this, their pockets are already filled with dust in the wake of the horrendous first year accommodation costs.

The Students' Union urged for the council, the University and MPs to take student housing issues seriously. It seems that the simple concept of a place to live is stretching students to the limit.

Financial stability is contributing to increased stress, both academically and generally. In 2025, the University performed well in the National Student survey (NSS).

The University published that satisfaction with regards "Student Voice rose to an overall satisfaction rate of 73.7% (up 3.0%.)" - University of York performs strongly in National Student Survey 2025. Do student loans adequately cover the rising costs for students in 2026? The stats say no.

YORK SU BOSS GONE AFTER JUST ONE YEAR

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE

York SU recently welcomed in their two new Co-Chief Executive Officers, Rachel Barber and Gemma Vessey in a public statement on the York SU website.

Gemma Vessey had been Deputy CEO of York Students' Union, while Rachel Barber stepped into the position from her role as Director of Representation and Student Support Services.

Yeme Onoabagbe, the former CEO, previously occupied the position for just one year. Starting the role in January 2025, she had packed her bags by the end of the year, announcing her departure from York SU in early February 2026.

There is no public information regarding the reason for her exit. But Onoabagbe's LinkedIn post, made in February, reads "as we begin 2026, I'm excited to share that I'm exploring my next leadership opportunity" and that she is "forever grateful to the teams at Student Minds and York SU for their support."

She also says that she is searching for a new permanent position, saying "please do share or point me toward any leadership roles that you might think a good fit."

IMAGE: YORK VISION



DID YOU KNOW YORK SU HAD A CEO? WELL, NOW THERE ARE TWO OF 'EM.

PRIDE GOES DIGITAL: CASH BOOST FOR LOCAL LGBTQ+ LIFELINE!

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE

The Yorkshire-based LGBTQ+ charity Out Together has secured Government funding to expand digital services in West Yorkshire.

Out Together has partnered with Patient.info to develop vital digital inclusion hubs and support services for older LGBTQ+ people.

By expanding Out Together's digital inclusion hubs across West Yorkshire, they aim to improve the overall well-being of

hundreds of people in the region. Commenting on the partnership and expansion of the digital inclusion hubs, Chair of Out Together, Thomas Porteus, shared: "Digital confidence has become essential for accessing healthcare and managing your wellbeing. Yet too many older LGBTQ+ people are still excluded. Through this partnership with Patient.info, we can combine trusted health expertise with safe, welcoming community spaces."



OUT TOGETHER COMMUNITY/HUB EVENT AT THE PLAYHOUSE IN LEEDS



YORK MP SLAMS DISGRUNTLED EX-DUKE

BY GAVIN SOUTHWAY

Should the Grand Old Duke of York still make royal choices?

York Central Labour MP Rachel Maskell has argued that Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor, the former Duke of York, should have his succession rights revoked.

She told the BBC "time and time again, we have seen that Andrew has been conservative with the truth", and said his position as Counsellor of State should also be removed.

"All of these titles and positions need to be addressed, so we are just left with Andrew the citizen, and a citizen that is fully accountable."

The ex-Prince, who forfeited his title in response

to his association with Jeffrey Epstein, may still make delegated decisions for King Charles if requested. Maskell proposed a law change last year to allow the King to strip him of his title unilaterally, but the Government refused to make time for it.

Mountbatten-Windsor is currently eighth in line to the throne.

Andrew has repeatedly denied any wrongdoing.



IMAGE: PIXARAY



IMAGE: UNIVERSITY OF YORK

MIND YOUR MONEY HABITS

BY JESSICA-JANE HAYES

When was the last time you checked your bank statement and didn't feel that sinking feeling of regret?

Are all the night outs drying out your pockets? For many, university is our first taste of freedom. However, becoming an independent adult requires responsibility that young freshers aren't exactly familiar with.

This week has been national student money week, with the university giving students a range of resources and activities to increase their financial literacy. Sounds like the

last thing you would want to do amongst day to day study stresses. But this information will develop life long knowledge.

Flagstone's new research reveals how money habits formed in your early twenties can shape long-term financial resilience. So next time you're asked to go out for a "quick pint" after a lecture, you might think twice and stick to water. Flagstone's study reveals that "by the time young adults reach 25-34, nearly seven in 10 (68%) say they would rather spend money if it saves time - almost double the

proportion of 45-54-year-olds (36%)."

It seems that a little extra day to day planning can save a significant amount of money in the long run!

The university has put special emphasis on sports betting awareness, as this can be a slippery slope particularly for male students. Flagstone's main finding states that the majority of young people would rather spend money than spend time.

Simple tasks such as meal prepping and mending broken clothes are neglected. Quick fixes

of meal deals and fast fashion are too readily available, poor for the environment and your bank account.

It seems that this crafty new approach to national student money week including creative clothes mending, free bags of fruit and veg and "levelling up lunch" promote a slower, more conscious method of living in our fast paced modern world.

68% WOULD RATHER SPEND MONEY TO SAVE TIME

IMAGE: UNSPLASH



YOUNGER ADULTS ARE TWICE AS LIKELY AS OLDER GENERATIONS TO PRIORITISE CONVENIENCE SPENDING.

IMAGE: HAL MUXLOW/FISHER

COLLEGES IN CRISIS?

FOR DECADES, THE UNIVERSITY OF YORK HAS STOOD NOTABLY AS A 'PLATE GLASS' UNIVERSITY WHICH EMBRACED THE ANCIENT OXBRIDGE TRADITION OF A COLLEGIATE SYSTEM. HOWEVER, AS WE MOVE THROUGH 2026, THE QUESTION EMERGES: IS THE UNIVERSITY SLOWLY SHIFTING TOWARDS A MORE CENTRALISED, NON-COLLEGIATE MODEL?



BY SAMEEN BAQA

Unlike traditional British universities, the University of York is a collegiate university, which means every student automatically becomes part of one of the University's 11 colleges, and each college has its own constitution and committee.

The 11 colleges are split across Campus West (Halifax, James, Vanbrugh, Derwent, Alcuin, Wentworth) and Campus East (Goodricke, Anne Lister, David Kato, Constantine, Langwith).

Similar in nature to Oxbridge, Durham, and Lancaster, York's colleges are intended to be small, self-governing communities that handle everything from housing to high-level pastoral care. At York we have two separate college teams, one that works with West campus colleges and one with East.

The University believes that this new system will be able to provide a better care for students, stating that: "following a detailed review of our College life offer – which involved talking to student leaders and the Students' Union - we've moved to a simplified support system. Students can now get help through a dedicated College Wellbeing Officer, who is part of a new, joined-up Mental Health and Wellbeing team.

Colleges exist to create community: at the heart of the collegiate system is decentralisation, with the college acting as the 'home' for both social and pastoral life.

However, over the last few years, the University has implemented a major structural overhaul that marks a definitive move away from this traditional decentralised model.

THE LOSS OF STAFF

Financial pressures and a voluntary

severance scheme in 2024 and 2025 led to the loss of several dedicated college managers. There are now two college staff teams, one for East and one for West, with all colleges sharing these staff collectively.

For example, for Halifax College, committee queries are directed towards the 'Campus West' team, which would have previously been addressed to a Halifax-specific team.

Similarly, independent college receptions have also been phased out in favour of a digital-first approach or a central campus desk. For instance, all parcels, regardless of college, are delivered to Campus East or West's mailrooms, whereas they would have previously been delivered to the respective colleges.

YORK COLLEGES: JUST 'BRANDED HALLS OF RESIDENCE'?

The most recent big change, implemented this academic year, has been the migration of wellbeing and welfare support. Previously, if a student required guidance, support was offered within the college.

The new reality is that most formal support has been moved to a centralised Student Hub. The advantage? It could offer students improved services. The disadvantage? It forces students away from their college.

The increasing number of changes to colleges suggests York is losing its once distinctive collegiate element.

OFF-CAMPUS RESIDENCE

In addition, there is an increased preference for off-campus living as opposed to college accommodation, including Vita, Fusion, and Student

Castle. This is the case for both first-years and returning students.

Whilst each student is still affiliated with a specific college, many opt for these private halls, potentially resulting in them becoming 'ghost members' as they are physically disconnected from their college hub.

I think college accommodation is simply no longer as desirable as it used to be.

Campus prices are rising regularly, often no longer matching the quality provided. Private providers, whilst charging significantly higher prices, offer amenities which colleges simply do not match, including private gyms, cinema rooms, and accommodation-only events.

The deterioration of college accommodation is likely responsible for the decline in college feel as students are drawn towards better-equipped private halls further from their college communities.

BUT WERE YORK COLLEGES ALWAYS LIKE THIS?

Arguably York has never been an Oxbridge-style system; it has always been one where the university owns everything and handles all teaching.

Oxbridge colleges are independent, self-governing systems where formals are common and colleges are often catered.

Durham is often seen as the middle ground, with degrees handled centrally while colleges still function as a student's primary home.

Lancaster is perhaps York's closest comparison: both are collegiate universities founded in the 1960s. Yet even Lancaster maintains a strong College Advisory Team system within each college. Because York

has recently moved its wellbeing staff to a central hub and shifted towards a more shared management system across colleges, it is now in practice less collegiate than Lancaster.

SO, IS YORK THE ODD ONE OUT?

While York keeps its college branding through sports rivalries and mascots, it has shifted key professional services, including mental health and administration, to a centralised system.

In 2026, York has become the most centralised collegiate university, with colleges serving almost exclusively a social function, and academic and pastoral life entirely centralised.

The University states that "Our college communities team focus on providing a sense of belonging to all students. They are now able to dedicate more time to supporting our student committees to focus on what they do best - offering a full programme of events and activities and helping to build community and connection - knowing there is professional support and guidance in place when it's needed."

HALIFAX COLLEGE: MORE MASCOT THAN MANAGEMENT?



IMAGE: YORK VISION

DEPENDENT ON THE EFFORT, MOTIVATION, AND COMPETENCEN OF STRANGERS

THE GROUP PROJECT GAMBLE

BY ANNA GEE

By the time you reach university, you've likely learned two universal truths: tuition is expensive and group projects will test your sanity.

In theory, group projects are meant to teach leadership, communication, and teamwork. In reality, they reward the freeloader and punish the ambitious, turning grades into a high-staked gamble.

From the moment a group project assignment is announced, students are suddenly anxious; their grade is no longer entirely theirs and has become dependent on the effort, motivation, and competence of strangers.

The promoted dynamic of a

group project is to organise individual strengths and assign applicable roles and tasks. However, this is only plausible if all are eager to contribute equally and take responsibility for the ethical strain of depending on each other.

In social psychology, 'social loafing' refers to the phenomenon of some participants reducing engagement when tasks are shared, while others over-compensate. This compulsory interdependence and asymmetrical labour contribution leave personal merit to the mercy of others.

In no other assessed environment is effort so vulnerable to the apathy of strangers.

You may have had a conversation with someone who has participated in group work and heard a valid complaint. It is easy, and satisfying, to be absorbed into a shielded collective and be alleviated of responsibility, even where participation is meant to be divided evenly amongst teammates.

Everyone is suddenly entitled to escape the spotlight of assessment, while their peers carry the weight. It is likely that many would help themselves to this satisfaction, considering university pressure and the stress of a defining grade label.

When justifying university group projects as preparation for professional life, there is a significant friction created by the disparity between corporate and educational environments. In a workplace, underperformance is corrected and promotions go to high achievers, while everybody receives a salary.

Employees rarely endure the experience of their entire futures resting on the incentive of others. Students are paying for their education individually and are being rewarded collectively, while employees are a collective being rewarded individually.

Alternatively, within university-guided discussions in workshops and seminars already exercise a student's collaborative skill and the inter influence of studious minds. These methods provide development, yet students still remain coerced into high-risk group projects.

This raises the question: to what extent does ungraded

group work differ from graded? Individual autonomy is stripped. Modern achievement often derives from competition, accountability, and personal initiative.

These conditions are impossible under collective grading. Students comply with team-based assessment, immersed in the subtle oppression of modern academic life, yet the lessons promised are illusory.

There is also an ethical dimension. Students pay thousands of pounds, often with interest, for an education meant to cultivate our potential, yet we are forced into a shared risk assessment. Is it fair to tie success to our peers? Should universities compel students into a system where merit can be undermined by the laziness of others?

This raises broader philosophical questions: is this pedagogy, administrative convenience, or social conditioning?

Either way, the system sacrifices individual application to protect the negligent. It undermines autonomy and leaves students vulnerable to arbitrary outcomes.

Collaboration itself is not the problem. Working with others is valuable. The issue is the structure of assessment. Universities can cultivate

teamwork while protecting individual achievement. If the aim of the task is to educate, then why do graded group projects exist?

An alternative solution to summative group grading, which would maintain encouragement and accountability, could be peer assessment. This would foster a similar pressure for performance while ensuring that everyone is carrying their own weight.

Group projects, as currently implemented, often fail the students they are meant to teach. While collaboration is valuable, it does not require high-risk, dependent grading.

Universities need to rethink assessment. Students deserve systems that reflect individual input, respect autonomy, and cultivate skills fairly. Group projects should be beneficial, not a gamble for the more favourable end of parasitism.

Until universities reconcile collaboration with fairness, students will continue to incur disadvantage from unwarranted merit.

Collaboration can develop intelligence but grades must reflect exertion. Until these align, group projects remain an exercise in inequity.



IMAGE: UNSPLASH

ARE INFLUENCERS CHANGING YORK NIGHTLIFE?

BY LAYLA ROBERTS

The vibes on the dancefloor have changed this past year, from small groups dancing with their backs to Jason Riley to concert-like crowds, shoving for a glimpse of a social media star.

Over the past few months, York has been bombarded with *Love Island* stars and TikTok influencers, boosting sales to the city's most famous clubs.

Most recently, messy girl and fish whisperer Danibabes graced us with her presence in Salvos to kick off Refreshers Weekend. Her presence had the majority of campus raving and tickets sold out as everyone wanted to meet the TikTok star.

Scenes from social media showcase how the atmosphere in the club changed dramatically from the usual Friday night scenes. Rather than a multitude of small groups dancing back to back, the crowd were all focussed on the DJ booth attempting to get a glimpse of the influencer.

York has also had its fair share of *Love Island* stars gracing us in our clubs. Harrison Solomon, famously known as the 'Young Bull' from *Love Island 2025* and this year's current *Love Island All Stars*, was the main attraction in Flares on 17th October. Fresh out of the villa it appears he wasn't ready for his fame to dim, clinging onto public appearances

to try to stay relevant before his return to South Africa for his second attempt at love.

It begs the question: are these influencers visiting students to stay relevant and keep the cashflow steady, or because they want to meet their fans?

Other stars, like Big John and Nicole Mura, have appeared in Ziggy's behind the DJ booth and staging meet and greet photo ops at the back of the club.

With the influx of influencers arriving in York, nightlife is inevitably changing. Students are going to the club for a chance to be noticed by their favourite influencers rather than to have a drink and dance with their mates.

Now the 2026 *Love Island All Stars* has ended, we can likely expect more islanders headlining club nights.

It is apparent that nightlife is changing in York, with influencers starring as the headline event of the night. But with the abundance of different clubs in York, if the new scene doesn't appeal to you, you can still escape to the standard clubbing environment. The surge in influencer appearances in our clubs is still one to question. What do they get out of seeing a bunch of young drunk students on their weekends?



IMAGE: PIXABAY

An Interview with Rethink Repayment on Student Loan Reform

OI, REEVES WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

R

BY AOIFE WOOD

Student loans have re-entered the political spotlight after chancellor Rachel Reeves confirmed in the Autumn Budget that the salary threshold for Plan 2 repayments will be frozen at £29,385 for three years from April 2027.

Reeves defended the move as “fair and reasonable,” saying that her role is to “get the balance right between tax and spending.” Amid the growing debate, a graduate led campaign called Rethink Repayment is arguing that the system is in need of reform.

“The government has changed the goalposts,” a spokesperson for Rethink Repayment told me, describing repeated freezes of the student loan repayment threshold as a key motivation behind the

campaign. Launching the campaign in July 2025, founder Ollie Gardner had “been talking for a while about how the repeated freezing was unfair,” the spokesperson said, adding that the Autumn Budget freeze “spurred the campaign really into action.”

At the heart of their campaign are three main proposals. They want the repayment threshold to rise with inflation, interest capped at CPI - described as a fairer inflation metric by the spokesperson, and the repayment rate reduced from 9% to 5%. The spokesperson explained that the proposals were modelled with a team of volunteer economists to ensure they were viable, stressing that these changes represent areas where there is “real change and reform that can be done.”

The spokesperson argued that these changes would allow

students and graduates to make more informed decisions about their futures. “Young people that are just trying to save for a house or anything are really struggling,” they said, adding that transparent repayment conditions would allow young people to treat university as “a real investment in their future.” Reflecting on their own experiences, they shared that “we thought we were signing up for something but it ended up being something else.”

The campaign has not been without its critics. The spokesperson said some journalists and MPs have dismissed them as “angry millennials”, suggesting that “the only reason they are angry is because they’re earning enough for this to affect them, which means the education was worth it” and that they should be grateful.



"FIGHTING FOR A SYSTEM THAT ALLOWS YOUNG PEOPLE TO DO WELL"

The spokesperson rejected this view, saying that “taxing ambition on young people is never the way to incentivise them.” They explained that under the current system, combining a 9% student loan repayment with 2% National Insurance and 40% income tax, can pull graduates into a 51% effective tax bracket. It’s “incredibly high,” they said, noting that young people “can’t buy houses, they can’t go out, they can’t do what they want.”

In response to the criticism they faced, the spokesperson also emphasised that it’s “also not fair because the terms of the loan have been changed on us.” Highlighting the importance of the movement for “fighting for a system that allows young people to do well” and to “hold the government accountable.”

While Rethink Repayment’s proposals focus on Plan 2 loans, the spokesperson said they hope the campaign sparks wider conversation about student finance. Right now, they explained, they are focused on their core proposals, spreading the word as much as possible and getting support but, on a macro level, “tackling it at this stage, hopefully, will allow all future student loans to also be held accountable”.

The spokesperson encouraged readers to support Rethink Repayment by visiting their website (rethinkrepayment.com), where you can learn more about the campaign, sign up to their mailing list, and access an MP email template.

Rethink Repayment can also be found on Instagram (@rethinkrepayment), where they post regularly.



ALL IMAGES: RETHINK/PAYMENT/INSTAGRAM

SEMINAR OR SCAVENGER HUNT? WELCOME TO CAMPUS WEST

BRUTALIST AND

CAMPUS RANTS:
 A satirical section for all hot takes on York and Uni life.
 Write in at vision@yorksu.org or come to our weekly meetings.

ALL IMAGES: HAL/MUXLOW/FISHER

BEWILDERING

CONCRETE, CORRIDORS, AND NOT A CLASSROOM IN SIGHT

BY AMELIA DSOUZA

Most students enter Campus West with an acute awareness that this University was built in the 60s but there is one quintessential experience that really makes it sink in.

No amount of gazing upon Campus West truly prepares you for navigating yourself to the different seminar rooms where there are corridors upon corridors hidden behind the plain concrete. There is sympathy for the dwellers of Campus East who find themselves lost on West looking for their seminar rooms; however, the fact that many Campus West people cannot easily navigate themselves to obscure seminar rooms points to a fundamental problem with the University's construction.

Take D/L/007: it firstly appears as a flat lecturer theatre on the timetable. In reality, it is a seminar room. On the UoY app, it is demarcated by a completely different building and the directions emphasise that this is only an approximate location, which feels a bit tame for how misleading it is.

The online Campus Map website has the most useful directions and even those fail to actually guide you to this room.

"Behind Courtyard Bar" it vacuously states.

Behind in what sense? The corridor that leads to Hendrix Hall? Do you enter Courtyard then find your way to a corridor behind it? The block that Courtyard is connected to is in fact Block L, so you would not be remiss in thinking that you would be able to find a room that is meant to be in Block L by walking through the corridors of that block.

Yet, this seminar room is entirely inaccessible from the main Block L and requires you to enter through a separate entrance which you wouldn't know unless you specifically used the Campus Map website.

Sometimes it feels as if the University expects the ghosts of builders past to spring up and guide students to their destination.

These problems are not isolated to Derwent, which is often used as the poster child for the University's brutalist architecture. Seminar rooms in the Vanbrugh nucleus can be accessed through two different staircases which lead to the same floors but not the same seminar rooms.

Along each corridor is a mix of offices, seminar rooms as well as the main history department reception. James College's main building is a maze of corridors that connect to each other, leading you in a never ending square, and yet for some reason there is always a locked door separating you from the corridor your seminar room lies in.

It is one matter for students to be unnecessarily stressed by running around frantically for a seminar that should be in the building they're in but still cannot find. The real insult to injury is when tutors run into the room ten minutes late because they themselves struggled to find the room.

It almost feels like an elaborate scheme when the timetabling department is throwing darts at a list of obscure rooms and manically chuckling as they slot groups into them.

The cumulative amount of time wasted by students and tutors is inconceivable as it is entirely possible that, after finding a room in the first week, the location may change in a random week due to clashes in timetabling.

If York prides itself on intellectual discovery, it might start by ensuring we can at least discover the seminar room.



SCENE!



STAGE.

**Big Names...
Bigger Show**
by Oli Ashby

MUSIC.

**SCENE's
Music Medicine**
by Zareena Pundole

art.

**Fancy some
Food for Thought?**
by Summer Pass

SCENE.



THE SCENE TEAM

OUR SECTIONS AND THEIR EDITORS

COVER: S.1

@halartydesigns (Instagram)

EDITOR'S NOTE: S.2

Editor: Freya Hughes (She/Her)

SCREEN: S.3

Editor: Amelia Dsouza (She/Her)

STAGE: S.4

Editor: Amelia Dsouza (She/Her)

MUSIC: S.5

Editor: Zareena Pundole (She/Her)

SPOTLIGHT: S.6-7

Writer: Charlotte Ambrose (She/Her)

ART: S.8

Editor: Izzy Read (She/Her)

LITERATURE: S.9

Editor: Grace Martin (She/Her)

FOOD: S.10

Editor: Vacancy

GAMES: S.11

Editor: Luke Plant (He/Him)

WRITERS

Summer Pass
Layla Roberts
Oli Ashby
Kate Koles

Charlotte Ambrose
Devin Whelligan-
Woodworth
Amalie Cleveland

Editor's Note:

Welcome to the first SCENE edition of 2026!

I'm so grateful to our wonderful section editors for taking the time (and patience!) to lay up their pages. Even when the computers seem determined to test us, pulling this edition together has been such a joy. I'm incredibly proud of how it's turned out, and I hope you love reading it as much as we loved creating it.

As always, this issue is a real mixed bag; we've got a little bit of everything, from recipes to reviews, and that's one of my favourite things about editing the paper. I get the first chance to read everyone's articles and see the unique insights, writing styles, and passion that our writers bring to their pieces.

So, grab your popcorn buckets because in Screen Kate is addressing Emerald Fennell's highly controversial adaptation of *Wuthering Heights* - Charli XCX and all. Flip the page to

find our exclusive interview with UoY royalty... the one and only York Diana. Meanwhile, over in Music, Zareena shares her 'Music Medicine' to help you power through the ups and downs of Semester 2.

This is my final print as SCENE Editor, and I couldn't be more grateful for my time in the role. Redesigning SCENE has been such a privilege, and I hope I've encouraged our Section Editors to truly make their pages their own. Final words? Stay fabulous. (Freya Hughes - Editor)

Amelia Dsouza Screen Editor

Hi! I'm Amelia and I'm the Screen Editor this year. I cannot wait to keep you up to date with all the latest things in Screen: the good, the bad, and the controversial.

Zareena Pundole Music Editor

Hi everyone, I'm Zareena and I'm the Music Editor for *Vision*! I've loved putting together the section for this issue. Stay tuned on our website for future music-related interviews, reviews, and more!

Grace Martin Literature Editor

Hi, I'm Grace and I'm your Literature Editor this year! I'm so excited for another year of talking about everything to do with books, reading, and culture - if you want to get involved don't hesitate to get in touch with me!

Upcoming Events

Here are just a few of the upcoming events in York. Find more on our Instagram where we post regularly and remember to support your local music venues!

6th of March

- Sherelle x Sherelleland at the Crescent
- Autonomy 6! + The Penny-drops + Dom Patrick + Sub-state at the Fulford Arms

7th of March

- Transmission - the sound of Joy Division + Neoplastic at the Fulford Arms
- Rattle + Ladies Nite + Jasmine Lowe + Small Gauge + Weather + Balloons at Fulfordgate Club
- Machinal DramaSoc Show

8th of March

- Gabriella Hunzinger + Elsa Hewitt + Lola Simms at the

Crescent

- The Deadlians at the Fulford Arms
- Amnesty Jazz Night at the Micklegate Social
- Machinal DramaSoc Show

9th of March

- Rich Reddy + Rakshasi at the Fulford Arms
- The Ferryman DramaSoc

10th of March

- Tang Hall Smart Level 3 Band Night

11th of March

- Brave Rival at the Fulford Arms

12th of March

- Bandsoc Battle of the Bands Semi-Final at the Lounge

13th of March

- Pablo Carrizo + Frankie Dobson + Call it Vain at the Fulford Arms
- The John Conference Ephemera at Fulfordgate Club

Our Instagram:



Our Website:



The 'Saltburnification' of *Wuthering Heights*

It seems Emerald Fennell is at it again, riding on the high from her very successful *Saltburn*, she has reprised her trusty Jacob Elordi to take a stab at adapting *Wuthering Heights* into a glossy, shock-value-heavy, erotic reimagining. When the trailer for her adaptation dropped, it seemed she had a very different vision to the gothic classic than people were expecting. A vision of a whitewashed Heathcliff with a horrendous Yorkshire accent, a bleach blonde Catherine Earnshaw sticking her fingers into Elordi's mouth, and a Charli XCX soundtrack thundering across the windy moors. To put it simply, she has taken a classic story rooted in racism, classism and generational trauma and reduced it to a 'dark erotic romance' created simply for aesthetics.

The most glaring controversy of Fennell's adaptation is her casting choice, once again she has cast Jacob Elordi as her main lead. Talk about beating a dead horse. This casting choice has not only made the film terribly unexciting and overdone but has also stripped away the core plot of the entire novel. With Heathcliff's character at the centre of the novel, he is a founding described as 'dark-skinned' and of Romani 'appearance'. His isolation from the Earnshaw household and society due to his race and class is inseparable from his descent into revenge and cruelty.

Instead of exploring the depth and significance of what Heathcliff's character symbolises, Fennell desperately tries to create this image of a 'dark romance book boyfriend', the Heathcliff in her trailer is a tall, handsome rugged man, roughly tearing open Catherine's corset and sending her brooding looks while shirtless in a barn full of hay.

Fennell does a fantastic job of stripping away the core of the novel and reduces it to an overdone aesthetic of a 'sexy brooding man'. Heathcliff is not, and never was, meant to be a swoon-worthy antihero. He abuses his wife Isabella, hangs her dog, digs up Cathy's grave and enacts generations of misery and revenge, on those who ostracised him. His actions are meant to horrify because they are not the result of a romantic temperament but the aftershocks of systemic prejudice. His character and descent into

brutality, cruelty, obsession, and revenge is an indictment of how racism and class exclusion deform lives. Casting Jacob Elordi, a conventionally attractive, white Australian actor, erases this entirely and strips the character of the very conditions that define him. Once again, taking meaningful stories and acting roles away from people of colour just for the shallow purposes of attaining views for her film.

The casting of Catherine Earnshaw fares no better. In the novel, Cathy is wild, headstrong, and selfish, a 17-year-old whose passionate but destructive bond with Heathcliff tears apart both their lives. Her marriage to Edgar Linton, made out of ambition rather than love, and her premature death from illness and emotional instability, haunt the narrative and fuel Heathcliff's generational brutality. She is, in many ways, as unsettling as Heathcliff himself. Instead we get Australian bombshell Margot Robbie, sipping blue cocktails in neon red sunglasses to Charli XCX. Turning the character of Isabella, who in the novel is a survivor of domestic violence who escaped Heathcliff's abuse to protect her son, into a BDSM enthusiast crawling to Heathcliff with a dog collar on is a perfect example of Fennell's obsession with surface level spectacle rather than substance. Reducing the women in the novel from nuanced, strong characters to sexual fetishes makes it hard to believe this adaptation was directed by the same Emerald Fennell who made *Promising Young Woman*.

Fennell has become known for her use of shock value and stylisation. *Saltburn* epitomised this approach: gaudy, excessive, hyper-sexualised, and deliberately scandalous. The problem is that this poor attempt at generating shock through heavily stylised sex scenes, oversaturated visuals, mainstream actors and pop anthems is unnecessary. Bronte's novel is already shocking. From the very first reviews of the book in 1847, *Wuthering Heights* was recognised as something dark and unsettling, with Bronte herself describing it as 'wild, confused, disjointed', it horrified audiences for nearly two centuries with its depictions of abuse, brutality and obsessive love that curdled into hatred. If Fennell wanted to tell a sexy, gothic tale of obsession and ruin, she could have written an original script, instead she has taken one of the most radical novels in English Literature about the generational impact of classism and racism and reduced it to a tasteless erotic romance.



"I recognise myself in you"

A review of *Sentimental Value*

Trier's latest work showcases a gut-wrenchingly beautiful portrayal of family dynamics, generational trauma and emotional distance.

Sentimental Value is the latest drama from the Danish-Norwegian filmmaker Joachim Trier. Premiering at the 2025 Cannes Film Festival, the film has scored big: winning the Grand Prix in Cannes in 2025, taking home a number of Golden Globes earlier this year, and recently securing nine Oscar nominations. I had the pleasure of watching this masterpiece thanks to the York Student Cinema where it became clear to me that its success is well-deserved.

The film follows the lives of sisters Nora (Renate Reinsve) and Agnes (Inga Ibsdotter Lilleaas), and their father Gustav (Stellan Skarsgård), who, after leaving in their childhood, re-enters their lives following the passing of their mother. Gustav, who is a renowned filmmaker, approaches Nora, a stage actress, with the hopes that she will take up the lead position in his latest and final work. She declines the position without reading the script, struggling to accept the re-emergence of her father in her life. Gustav instead turns to a young, up and coming American actress, Rachel Kemp (Elle Fanning), to play the lead role.

Throughout the film, we learn about their family history and how trauma has shaped each characters' ability to commu-

nicate emotional intimacy. As more about the family is revealed, the similarities between Nora and Gustav in their response to their trauma begin to unravel. It becomes clear that Gustav's difficult personality and absence as a father are largely a response to the challenges of his traumatic past in which his mother, who had spent time in a Nazi camp, had committed suicide. Nora mirrors her father's difficulty communicating her emotional turmoil. Not only is she in a constant battle with her own mental health problems, but the rehashing of her trauma that was brought by the renewed presence of father further intensifies her inability to confront and communicate her emotions.

Trier describes the film as "a love letter to cinema", stating that he wanted to give recognition to how "cinematic language somehow gets us closer to people than we can in our everyday social life". He captures the power of cinema beautifully, not only through his storytelling and use of their family house as a focal point throughout the film, but also through the character's connection to the arts. We see how both Nora and Gustav have turned to the arts as an outlet for emotions which they have been unable to articulate in their private lives. In highlighting their reliance on artistic expression, the story pays a powerful tribute to the arts as a means of communicating the most vulnerable parts of ourselves.

BY KATE KOLES

BY AMALIE CLEVELAND

STAGE.

Big Names, Bigger Play...

A Review of Tom Morris's star-studded production of Othello

Tony Award-winning Tom Morris directed the classic Shakespeare play last winter, *Othello*, featuring David Harewood OBE reprising his role as Othello, Toby Jones OBE as the cunning Iago, and Caitlin Fitzgerald playing Desdemona.

On December 19th, I had the opportunity to see *Othello* at the Theatre Royal Haymarket, down in London. With such a strong cast and a superb director, expectations were at an all time high, and it did not disappoint. The minimal set only added to the atmosphere, with the use of doorways on the stage,

building walls between the characters whilst also showing their connectedness, at times almost acting as mirrors; challenging the actors to frame themselves and how they see each other, crucial to the plot, as Othello says "I'll see before I doubt".

This is David Harewood's second incarnation as Othello, the first being when he was the first black actor to play the role for the National Theatre in 1997. Harewood says in an interview with *Square Mile* that he came to this role more relaxed, but did concede that he had to stop himself from becoming emotive during Othello's big proclamations of love. Harewood gives the role a heightened sense of maturity, especially in aspects where one would expect the character to hold some naivety, Harewood plays much more into Othello's jealousy of Cassio's youth, looking inward towards Othello's insecurities, instead of relying on the poisoning of Iago alone.

For me, Toby Jones played the best version of Iago I have ever seen. His Iago is a vessel of pure chaos, really making us doubt the motives he proclaims. The strongest line he bellows, "I hate the Moor!", really trumps all other motives he posits. Jones makes Iago an anarchist, a troublemaker for the sake of trouble. He carries a hunched posture throughout, and outside his monologues, he remains rather emotionless,

trying to be that voice of reason for the characters around him. We only see him passionate within his monologues, or his violent outbursts towards his wife, amazingly displayed by Vinette Robinson. He encompasses the role so well that when he is on stage, you feel the parasitical energy of the character. Caitlin Fitzgerald's Desdemona also brought something new to the role, with Fitzgerald seeming much less like the pure virgin that we imagine Desdemona as, but instead an older, stronger woman. Their passion seems much more equal, where Desdemona and Othello seem both in control of themselves, which we then see deteriorate throughout the course of the action. One striking moment was Desdemona's death, where a loud sound effect mimics the sound of her neck breaking. The lack of sound effects up until this point, make it all the more horrific, with Fitzgerald's display of desperation leading up to this moment making it all the more final.

Overall, the play was a slick, polished production, with amazing performances from the stellar cast. Expectations were met, with the leads owning their parts so that you forget who they are, as they become their characters



BY OLI ASHBY



What's on in York?

**DramaSoc
Original:
The Ferryman**
March 9th

**NT Live:
Hamlet**
Theatre@41
March 10th

**Shakesoc's
'The Tempest'**
March 6th-8th

**Secret Garden:
the musical**
York Theatre Royal
March 17th- April 4th

**DramaSoc
Presents:
Machinal**
March 13th-15th

MUSIC.

Album Review: Back to Black

“I don’t understand, why do I stress the man? When there’s so many bigger things at hand.”

- Tears Dry On Their Own

Relased in October 2006, Amy Winehouse’s album *Back to Black* is filled with raw emotion inspired by her rocky relationship with Blake Fielder-Civil. Winehouse’s expressive vocals and introspective lyrics, fused with her inspirations from 1960’s Soul, Jazz, and Blues music, blew up the charts with the release of this groundbreaking album.

Released three years after her debut album, *Back to Black* consists of 11 songs spanning 34 minutes in total, making this album a great quick listen during your commute.

The project sees Winehouse reflecting on her struggles, turning them into something more powerful and inspiring. The song where this is most palpa-

IMAGE: FFION KIDNEY VIA FLICKR



ble is ‘You Know I’m No Good’, as she channels her pain into a musical masterpiece.

Despite the backlash Winehouse faced in the media, the strength she had to lay out her pain to the public is so

admirable. It’s no surprise that the record’s lead single ‘Rehab’ soared to the top of the charts, winning Winehouse her second Ivor Novello award, alongside a staggering five Grammys overall.

The most underrated song on the

album in my opinion is ‘Me & Mr Jones’ exploring themes of intense emotional attraction, infidelity and desire, all based on her real life experiences.

How Amy Winehouse is able to transform her personal struggles into such captivating music is inspiring.

Despite its dark themes and lyrics, it’s hard not to belt out most of *Back to Black*’s songs in the shower. Amy is one of the greatest artists I’ve had the pleasure to listen to, and I would recommend everyone to take a moment to appreciate her as a person, as well as a musician.

BY LAYLA ROBERTS

SCENE’s Music Medicine

BY ZAREENA PUNDOLE

Sunnier spells are (hopefully?) on the way to York as we finally escape the depths of winter, but they will undoubtedly be mixed in with the rain showers and windstorms that spring brings.

Never fear, SCENE’s got you covered, rain or shine, with a musical prescription to keep you weather-proofed.

SUNNY - Thundercat and Tame Impala - *No More Lies*. This track’s vibrant atmosphere is perfect to soundtrack warmer weather.

SUNNY WITH CLOUDS - Erykah Badu - *Window Seat*. Especially apt if you are on a bus.

CLOUDY - Jacob Alon - *Don’t Fall Asleep*. With dreamy strings and hypnotic vocals, this song is sure to lift your spirits when skies are grey.

WINDY - Canelle - *Diamond Cuts*. This French hyperpop track will provide you with the power to strut safely through blustery weather.

LIGHT RAIN - Tom Misch, Loyle Carner - *Colourblind* - this song’s comforting, soft guitar will keep you warm even if the rain is cold.

HEAVY RAIN - Magdalena Bay - *Human Happens*. What’s better to listen to when it’s pouring than grungy, growling bass?

This Spring in York...

7th March - Baroque+ Day: Ensemble Hesperis - National Centre for Early Music

11th March - Notre Dame Reimagined: Le Remède de Fortune - an experimental music experience inspired by the famous cathedral, preceded by a talk by its composer, Habib Shehadeh Hanna

20th March - Suspicious Liquid Album Relaunch Party - Fulford Arms

15th April - Immeasurable Equation: The Music of Sun Ra (University of York Jazz Band) - Sir Jack Lyons Concert Hall

22nd April - Jalen Ngonda + Guests - York Barbican



IMAGE: MAKBULA NASSAR VIA WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Introducing the People's Princess!

York's Gay Scene Reaches New Levels of Royalty

Can you even consider yourself a UoY student if you haven't drunkenly stumbled into York's Princess Diana on a night out?

When he's not kitted out in royal attire, Kian O'Brien is a regular 19-year-old History student at York. But, equipped with an eloquent string of pearls, darkened sunnies, and an impassioned resolve to clamp down on hate speech, he transforms into Princess Diana.

More than just a friendly face on club nights, this social advocate has captured the hearts of York. But beyond all that, Kian wants to remind people that social activism comes in many forms, and that "anything I'm doing right now, anyone can do."

SPOTLIGHT

BY CHARLOTTA

Who is the York Princess Diana?

@the_york_diana is an act that continues to enlighten, and sometimes enrage, students on campus.

In O'Brien's own words, he said: "The way I see it, York Diana started from just a joke, just a charity thing. But now it's become a bit of a movement."

And this movement has taken Diana to all sorts of places. Her 1000 Instagram followers might spot her sipping Green Shits at Stone Roses, handbag in clutch. But she's also known for making an appearance at more controversial events, passionately waving a sign at the anti-Reform Society protest that took place last year.

But amidst all the chaos, O'Brien always wants to remind people that there is a strong element of delinquent fun and young spontaneity at the heart of it, saying: "It cheers people up to see me on a night out or if I'm having a chat with someone - it's just like, all light-hearted, it's a good laugh. But it also brings forward who I view as an important figure and who I think should be remembered."

Inspiration from the real Diana...

The real Diana (1961-1997) was the first wife of the current monarch, King Charles III (then Prince of Wales). The much-loved member of the Royal Family was unceremoniously dubbed 'the People's Princess' for her genuinely caring attitude towards numerous philanthropic causes, even against royal discretion.

In stark contrast to the media's current focus on the Royal Family, for many, Diana's beloved character has prevailed, even after death. Alongside her assiduous interests in child terminal illness and homelessness charities, she is best known for the humanising and unprecedented support she showed to people with HIV/AIDS, who faced heavy stigmatisation and social shame at the time.

She stood up for a vulnerable group of people at a time when she wasn't expected to, at a time when it would have been better (by societal and royal standards) to keep a distance. But Diana was never one to shy away from the cause, famously saying: "HIV does not make people dangerous to know. You can shake their hands and give them a hug. Heaven knows they need it."

O'Brien spoke very highly of her, saying:

"I support the values she believed in of equality, love and compassion."

He told me that everyone has an inspiring person, someone who motivates them. And for him, Diana is that person.

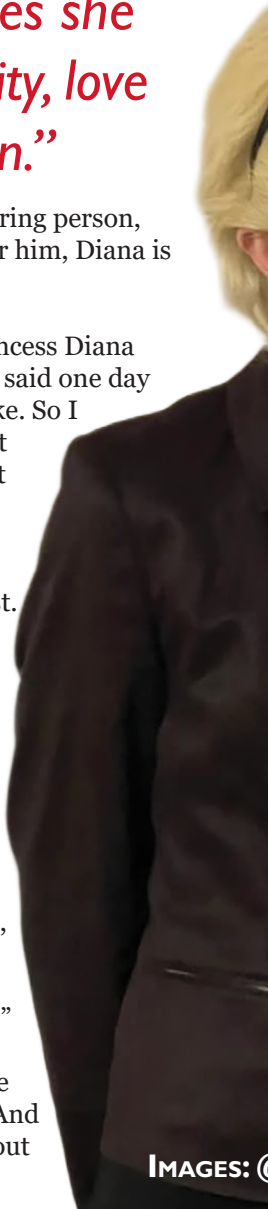
O'Brien's drag-inspired version of Princess Diana started in Freshers' Week. "I basically said one day I'd get an outfit, sort of as a bit of a joke. So I got it and did it in Freshers' Week. But then people loved it! And it sort of just grew from there."

But for O'Brien, his admiration of the historical figure goes deeper than most. Dealing with relentless homophobia from a young age motivated him to become a role model for others.

Dealing with homophobia

"I came out when I was 13," he shared, "which was a really young age. I had to experience the challenges from a young age, and sort of grow around it."

"There would be times in school where I'd be pushed or get called the f-slur. And other people wouldn't really help me out with it."



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

IGHT

OTTE AMBROSE

Dealing with Online Attacks...

But it hasn't all been tiaras and sparkly heels for O'Brien...

"I think the majority of people on campus definitely support what I'm doing, but, at the same time, there have been critics who will engage with my Instagram page... They don't want to say it to me to my face; they want to hide behind their screens."

"There are definitely groups on campus who don't like me, but to be honest, I think that's an encouraging thing. They understand I have that power to start conversations."

York's LGBTQ+ Scene...

But on the whole, O'Brien found York to be "quite an accepting city", especially having grown up in a small village. With 24% of the York student population identifying as lesbian, gay, or bisexual, the Office for Student Statistics indicates that York is somewhat diverse in this aspect, compared to other Universities, like Oxford (22%) and Cambridge (19%).

"When I came to York, I was in that environment where I was around more like-minded people (which I couldn't say the same for when I was at college or secondary school)." Speaking about the LGBTQ+ community in York, he thought: "there is definitely a clear vibrant community here."

"I do think that genuine work needs to be done. Because when I think of the gay scene, if I go into town, there isn't really a dedicated gay club, or like a clear space for gay people, necessarily." The straight-ification of historically gay communities, particularly bars and clubs, is a national phenomenon. Spaces that used to purposefully demarcate areas for gay people to congregate - free from persecution and legal discrimination - are being culturally overturned.

"I think there is a gay scene in York, but it needs to be revised. Personally, I don't think it's visible enough, bearing in mind that I'm a gay person, so I'll be engaged with the community anyway."

"I asked people: what does York Diana mean to you? People said, a voice for the community, a safe space for LGBTQ+ issues and honouring Diana's legacy"

"I'm not necessarily arguing that York or the University isn't an accepting place for LGBTQ+ people because it definitely is. But I think sometimes it's just about taking a bit more of that radical stance and doing more about it and emboldening people to stand up for themselves and root out the hatred. Because it's one thing to speak about it and, you know, just put a flag up. It's another thing to actively seek out that discrimination."

At the end of the interview, O'Brien confirmed that he has no plans to stop The York Diana. "I think it'll be something that will always be there. I don't know if I'll always stay in York, but the page will always be there. The page is never going down."

As a final question, I asked him if there was anything that he wanted people to know about The York Diana that they wouldn't be able to tell from the Instagram account. He said: "I guess it's the fact that I am just an individual. I'm a student like anyone else. I was never particularly popular in secondary or college. I am not the Students' Union, I'm not the University body, I'm not the City Council, it's difficult for me as an individual to do things about it."

"But I can offer support, and I can definitely be that sort of safe space. At the end of the day, I'm just an individual. Anything I'm doing right now, anyone can do. And I think the message is that people should be nicer to each other, people should be more lighthearted, and just have a bit of fun."

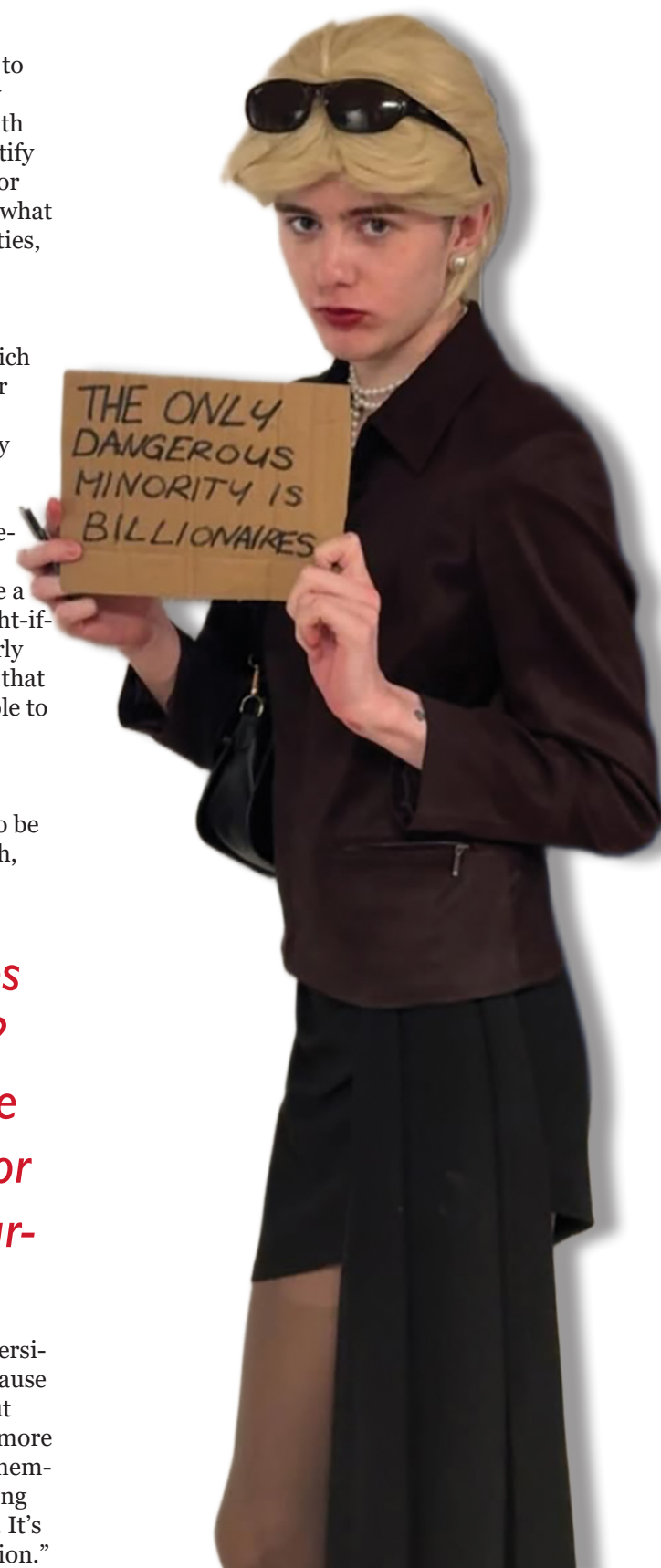
According to the Office for Students Statistics, approximately 11% of the total student cohort, identify as lesbian, gay, or bisexual. But O'Brien emphasised that it isn't easy for closeted students to take comfort in this fact.

"Even nowadays, some people won't come out because they are too scared of the reaction of others. And I know that if I were in their position, seeing someone be open about it, and being that sort of figurehead would encourage me a lot more."

During his time at York, O'Brien has done well to channel his personal experience into a public mission against hate speech, particularly through the York Diana's Instagram account.

"I've always had those beliefs, but I think creating the York Diana has definitely enhanced the impact it can have."

"If I go out on the street, and I hear someone using a homophobic term or bullying someone, I'm going to call it out... I think a lot of the issue is being a passive bystander."



ART.

Fancy some Food for Thought?

Opening night at the Norman Rea Gallery

BY SUMMER PASS

Do you ever feel a little peckish for something creative, and can't quite put your finger on what you fancy? The Norman Rea Gallery's new exhibition has more to bite off than you can chew.

Earlier this month, the gallery opened its doors for a delicious opening night. Their newest exhibition, 'Food for thought', presents a range of artworks inspired by food from all over the world, including some of our very own talented creators here at the University of York. The opening night was a gathering of York's creative community: a celebration of consumption, colour, and the influence of the creative spaces accessible to us.

In our society, food has been transformed from a human necessity to a status symbol and political stance. For me, this exhibition pulled away from that view and helped me rediscover the heart and humanity behind food. Cooking and eating are essential activities ingrained in our routines; however, they are also creative outlets and symbols of culture, heritage, and community in all its forms.

As students, we are overly conscious of costs and conveniences when we are buying and cooking, instead of the process of creating and simply sitting and eating either alone or in groups surrounded by those we appreciate. This exhibition is a reminder of how food can be an opportunity to connect with others in the current fast-paced, pricey, consumerist culture.

I was lucky enough to attend the opening event myself and discuss the pieces on display with the community behind the gallery. Visitors were greeted outside the gallery, where a homemade cake was being served. It was a sweet gesture (no pun intended) and very fitting for the homely, community-driven character of the event. The

atmosphere was comfortable, and the crowd was buzzing with constant conversations while they admired the artwork on show. I thought the soft lighting and live music made a stark contrast to some classical gallery exhibitions I had attended, with their sterile white lights and silences. I found this to be a telling sign of how dynamic and welcoming the University's creative community is. It was so inspiring to see how involved students are in the artistic events and opportunities available.

All the pieces on display were so unique and expressive, with a variety of different angles on the theme. This wide spectrum of interpretation allowed visitors to explore the many aspects of food and cooking across society and global cultures. Alongside the artworks, there was also a food bank donation box and activities, my personal favourite being a communal recipe book which invited visitors to add their favourite recipes for others to read and try out themselves.

It was an amazing exhibition with a great deal of thought and intention behind its theme. It was a joy to be able to speak to other visitors throughout the event. From small conversations about our favourite pieces to opinions on the exhibition and the art community itself. I was particularly interested in the intent behind the theme and other people's views on the subject. I was told some curators took a more cultural or social route, whereas other interpreted it as a more politically angled theme; but ultimately it's all down to personal interpretation, and visitors are encouraged to take away whatever they want from their time at the gallery.

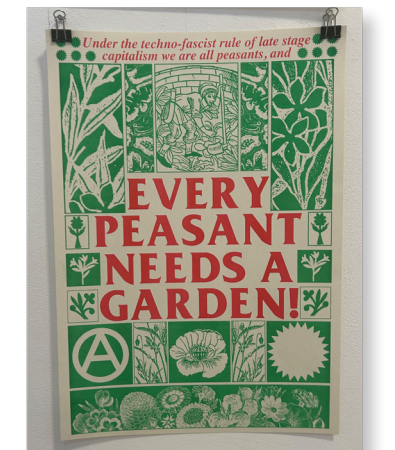
Overall, it was amazing to see how strong and widespread York's creative community is; everyone I talked to was so proud of one another and spoke about how they had formed strong friendships throughout their time at the gallery. I can't wait to see how this collective continues to pull together and grow, and I look forward to attending more amazing events such as this one.

Left (order of descent)

1. @sarahlunderwood - 'Lemon and Sugar'
2. @daisy_tortuga - 'Cherry'
3. @reageorgeart - 'Weening I, 2026'
4. @wonky_picnic - 'What a Treat'

Right (order of descent)

1. @matt.midwood - 'and you will call it fate'
2. @blacklodgepress - 'Simplicity as a means of resistance'
3. @abibi_art - 'What a pomegranate asks'
4. @Ellie.stOne - 'Romance'



LITERATURE.

Mother Mary Comes to Me

Thoughts on Booker Prize winner Arundhati Roy's new memoir

By Devin Whelligan-Woodworth

Arundhati Roy's new memoir is a humble and honest reflection on growing up in the shadow of a trailblazing mother and the fluctuating consequences of success.

Like the simple yet elegant cover of this hardback, Roy's prose is straightforward yet effective; maintaining a precise narration throughout the bulk of the text, only to dive into the most gut-punchingly poignant descriptions of significant moments.

Arundhati Roy's memoir is as much an account of her mother's life as it is her own. We see two aspects of Mary Roy (Arundhati Roy's mother): that of a mother, and that of a revolutionary. Mary Roy is the founder of a non-traditional school in Kottayam, Kerala called Pallikoodam, and she is also known as a women's rights activist. In 1986 she won a Supreme Court case against a male-favouring inheritance law in Kerala, meaning that women in that area were finally able to

have equal rights to their male siblings in inheritance. Arundhati Roy details the experience of being the daughter of a radical; though her mother was forward thinking in many ways, she was a strict and oftentimes needlessly cruel mother. Roy explores the contrast between her mother as a pioneer who is idolised by many, and a mother who disciplines her children in ways that many would deem immoral and backwards.

When Roy leaves life with her mother behind to pursue her own, she finds herself (despite studying architecture) entering the world of scriptwriting and acting. We see Roy as a literary figure starting to take shape. For many Western readers, Roy's award-winning debut novel *The God of Small Things* seemed to burst from nowhere, so it is enlightening to read about the other projects that lead her to her seminal work.

Roy recollects a life that is integrated, like the architecture of Pallikoodam school, into the landscape of India, both politically and geographically. As a youth she was fascinated by the hippie movements of the 70s; marching along to the beats of Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix. After the success of her novel, she found

herself to be a prominent and beloved voice to Indian people, so she attempted to use this voice to call attention to injustices in her country. She spoke out against the building of the Narmada Dam which has caused the displacement of indigenous peoples and damage to ecosystems. As a result, she has become a polarising figure who is frequently met with hostility, censorship and temporary imprisonment from the Indian government.

Despite the complex relationship between mother and daughter in this memoir, the revolutionary spirit that prevails throughout indicates a united life-force between Mary and Arundhati, and though her fondness for her mother is inconsistent and fraught at times, the pride in her mother's achievements never wanes. This memoir is an accessible and insightful look into Indian politics, the contemporary literary world, and an intricate tug-of-war between mother and daughter.



IMAGE: DEVIN

Which Reads Better?

The battle between the Kindle and the physical copy

The proliferation of e-book use over recent years has sparked a cultural debate over whether physical books or their Kindle counterparts are the superior reading format. This debate has fervent support on both sides of the argument, however, I find myself sitting somewhere in the middle. I use both and I love both. For that reason, here are my potential pros and cons of both physical and Kindle books that frequently feature in this debate.

PHYSICAL COPIES

Pros...

Longevity: physical books can last years - they can be shared, displayed, and passed down through generations. Along with this, donating books that you no longer want to keep can allow them to have another lifespan, increasing sustainability.

Aesthetics: there's no doubt that books are pretty, and often feature as an aspect of home design. Buying a book can feel more special and intentional when curating a collection, heightening the pleasure from the hobby.

Screen-free hobbies: reading books provide an opportunity to escape the screens that dominate contemporary life, and also prevent any potential eye-strain that may be caused by excessive reading of an e-book.

Cons...

Expensive: buying brand new books is expensive, with Waterstones often charging £9.99 for a paperback and up to £20 for a hardback. This quickly becomes unattainable if you are an avid reader.

Overconsumption: the desire for an aesthetically pleasing bookshelf risks the progression to overconsumption and storing books you will never read. Do you really need multiple special editions of the same book?

Inconvenience: as with any physical product, books need to be stored somewhere. Owning many physical copies of books may become an inconvenience when you run out of space to store them.

KINDLE

Pros...

Convenience: the ability to store hundreds of books on one small device can save tons of space, making it perfect for travelling. You can also read across devices, for example, if you have the Kindle app on your phone you can pick up from where you left off even if you don't have the device to hand.

Accessibility: the ability to change font size and style can make for a more accessible reading experience, allowing you to adjust the settings to suit your needs.

Budget-friendly: books are often cheaper for Kindle, with Amazon Prime including free titles and monthly 99p deals.

Cons...

Missing out: for many, the new book smell and the perfectly curated book shelf is part of the joy of reading. These sensory experiences are obsolete when reading from a device.

Technological flaws: the initial purchase of an e-book has a hefty price tag. Along with this, Kindle's requirement of WiFi for book downloads can be inconvenient if you are caught in a low-service environment without any pre-downloaded books to hand.

Ethics: Amazon is a notoriously unethical company. Although there are many types of e-readers, Kindle remains the most popular choice, and committing yourself to a Kindle requires committing yourself to purchasing from Amazon.

By Grace Martin

FOOD.

The world beyond pesto pasta

Expanding the horizons of student staples

BY FREYA HUGHES

Put that pesto pasta down! We get it, cooking at university can feel like a part-time job on top of lectures, deadlines, and your ever-dwindling bank balance. It's quick, it's cheap, it's green (technically), and it's probably carried you through more late nights than you care to admit. But surely there's more to student cuisine than a never-ending loop of bland carbs and straight-from-the-jar sauces.

When you finally get a breather this semester, why not break the cycle? Treat yourself to something colourful, rich, and flavourful.

Whether you're craving comforting classics or something that feels just a little bit bougie (without completely annihilating your budget), we've got you covered.

Here are SCENE's top suggestions for upgrading your student food game... no pesto required.

SPANAKOPITA

A crispy, cheesy Greek pie that can feed you for days!

Ingredients

- 1/2 a bag of spinach
- 1 block of feta cheese
- 1 baking potato

- 1/2 an onion
- 1 egg
- 1 roll of filo pastry



IMAGE: CREATIVE COMMONS

Method

1. Peel the potato and slice lengthwise into long thin slices
2. Boil these slices until soft
3. Meanwhile, wilt the spinach and squeeze out the water
4. Then, slice and fry the onions until soft and translucent
5. Crumble the feta cheese into a bowl
6. Next, combine the feta cheese with a whisked egg, the spinach and the onions.
7. Season the mixture with salt and pepper
8. In a baking dish layer two sheets of filo pastry, sliced potato and then the feta mix
9. Repeat this process until the tin is full
10. Brush the top slice of filo pastry with butter
11. Cook at 180C for 30-40 minutes
12. Slice and enjoy!

CALDEIRADA DE BACALHAU

Enjoy a bowl of this spicy Portuguese fish stew.

Ingredients

- 1 or 2 cod fillets
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 2 tablespoons of paprika
- 1 teaspoon of chilli flakes
- 4 cups of vegetable/fish stock
- 1/2 cup of white wine (optional)
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- Handful of fresh parsley
- 1 onion thinly sliced



IMAGE: FREYA HUGHES

- 3 potatoes

Method

- In a large pot saute the onions for about 5 minutes
- Then add the chopped garlic and cook for 30 seconds, until fragrant
- Afterwards, add the stock, paprika, chili flakes, salt, and pepper. Season to taste and add the lemon juice
- potatoes are soft (approx. 10 minutes)
- When the potatoes are cooked, slice the cod into chunks and cook in the broth
- Garnish with fresh parsley and enjoy!

SCENE Recommends...

Treat yourself this spring, York's food scene has so much to offer!

Black Wheat Club

Must Try Dish: Marjoram Sausage Bun

Black Wheat isn't just another trendy Fossgate opening. The quality and flavour in every dish is undeniable! It'll quickly become your favourite brunch spot!

IMAGE: FREYA HUGHES



Kalpakavadi

Must Try Dish: Meen Pollichathu

If you haven't tried south Indian food, a visit to Kalpakavadi should be a priority, they serve delicious Kerala classics from Dosa to fish curries.

IMAGE: FREYA HUGHES



Everest Gurkha

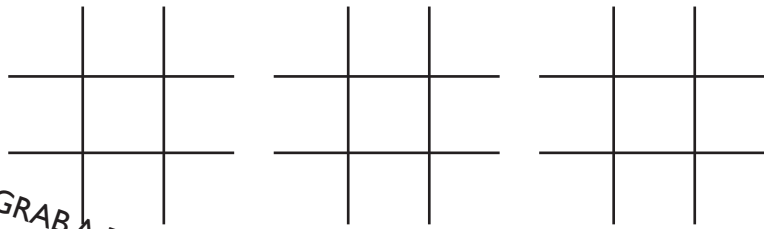
Must Try Dish: Momo

Everest Gurkha serves homely Nepalese classics from the heart of York. It's impossible not to become addicted to their Momo!

IMAGE: FREYA HUGHES



GAMES.



GRAB A FRIEND!

CONNECTING WALL

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

DOC	THUMB	LAUGH	GRUMPY
HOOT	FLOPPY	SNEEZY	MESSY
BUMP	DISC	TICKLE	HAPPY
WASTE	SHAME	QUIET	ZIP

SUDOKU

EASY

7	8	3	6			5
						7
	4	5			6	8
2	9		1		5	
	7	6		3		
	5			4	6	7
	2		8		3	4
1				2	7	
3	4		6	7		

MEDIUM

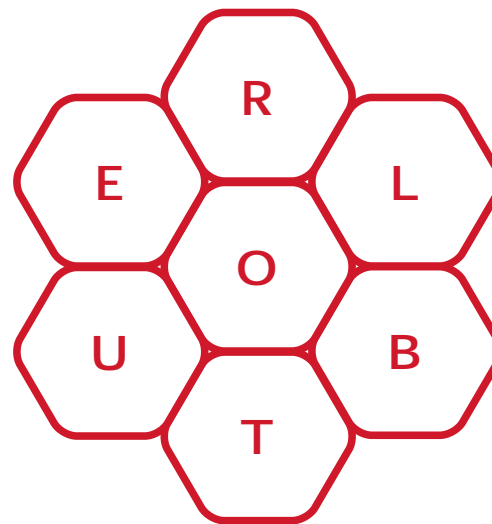
1		9	6		5	
			8			4
3	5		1		2	
4		7	2		8	
5	7		9	4		
			4			9
7	5			4	1	6
					5	
		6	2	5		3

HARD

				3		
6		7				
	3				1	7
8	6		1	5	3	
2		9			6	4
	7		4			5
9						2
	2		4		7	9
4	7		2	8		6

WORD FLOWER

FIND AS MANY WORDS AS POSSIBLE, LETTERS CAN BE USED MULTIPLE TIMES. THE CENTRE LETTER MUST BE USED AT LEAST ONCE IN EACH WORD.



TURN OVER THE PAGE FOR MORE PUZZLES!

IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR ANSWERS OR MORE GAMES, EMAIL: GAMES@YORKVISION.CO.UK

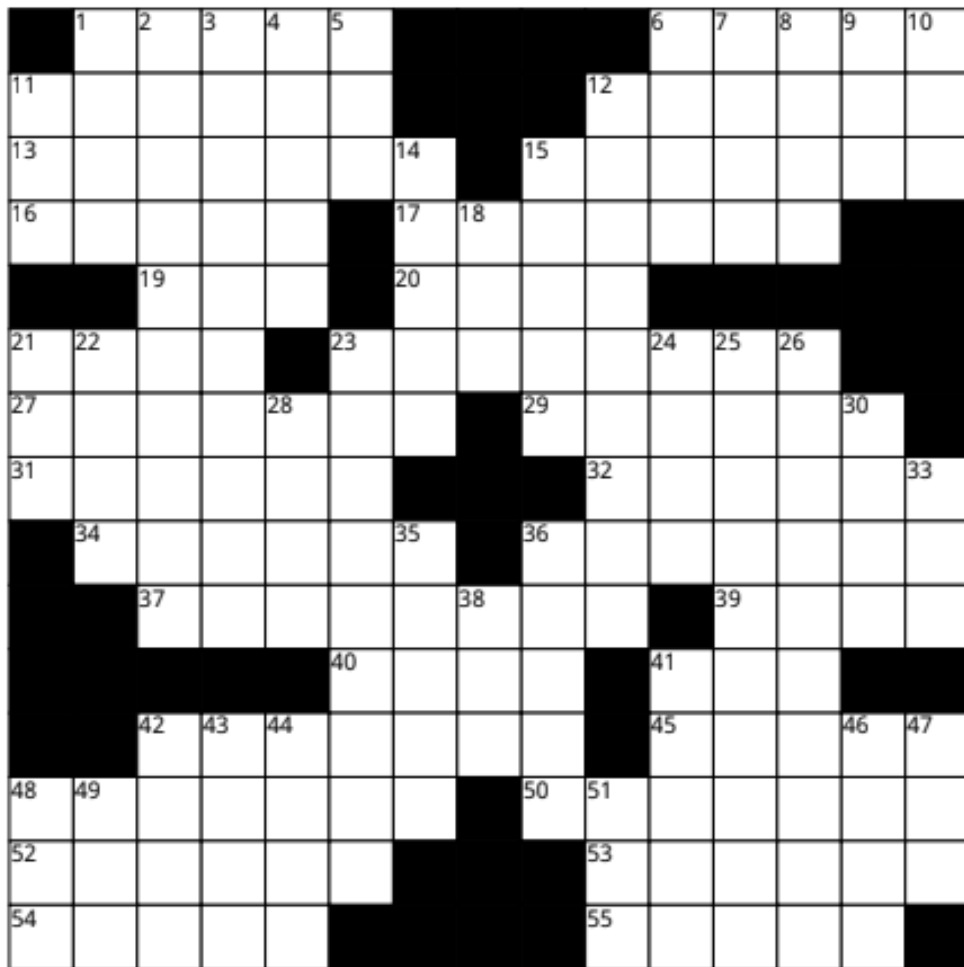
GAMES PAGE BY: LUKE PLANT

SET SQUARE

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

	-		+		= 3
x		-		x	
	-	1	x		= 18
÷		+		÷	
	x		-		= 13
= 10		= 16		= 14	

THE BIG ONE.



ACROSS

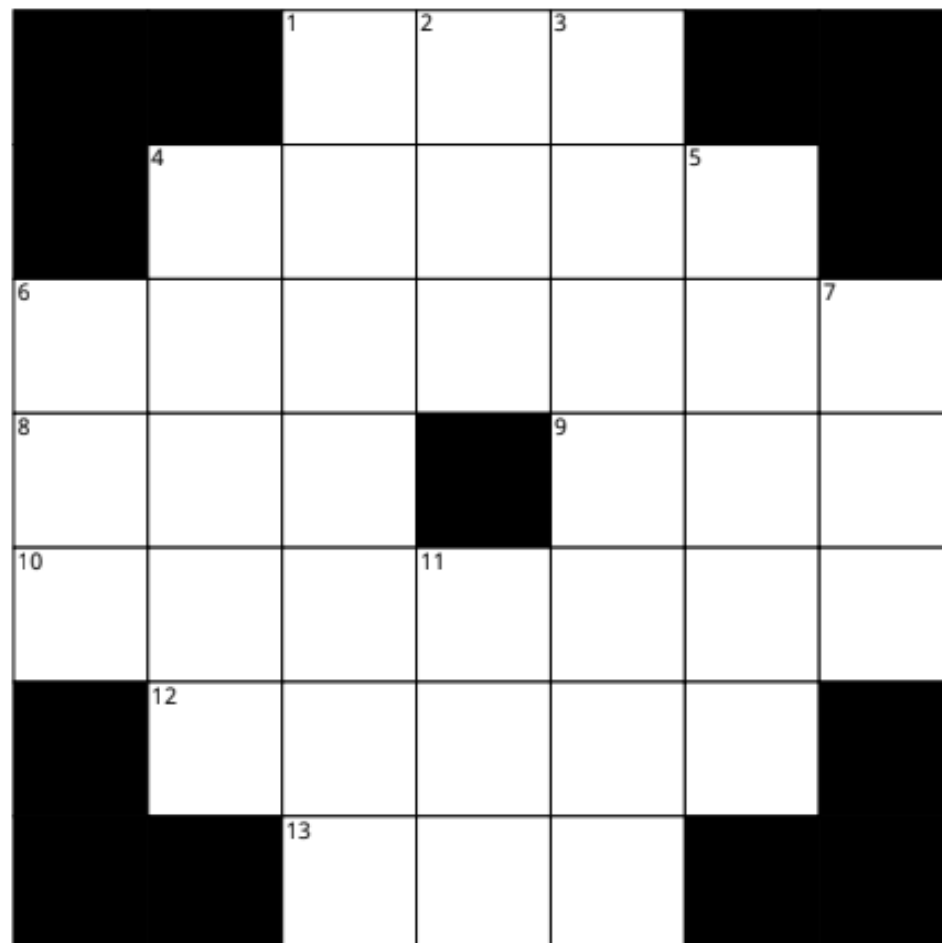
- 1) VILLAINOUS LOOK (5)
- 6) FAD (5)
- 11) PAPER FASTENER (6)
- 12) DJ KNOWN AS THE ANTHEM KING (6)
- 13) CAPITAL DE ANDALUCÍA (7)
- 15) COAST (7)
- 16) KIRK'S "FINAL FRONTIER" (5)
- 17) PROOF OF PURCHASE (7)
- 19) SCALE ABBR. (3)
- 20) TRY TO FLY (4)
- 21) LIKE WATER ____ DUCK'S BACK (3,1)
- 23) SCRAPS (8)
- 27) CURED AND DRIED FISH (4,3)
- 29) HELIX (6)
- 31) PLAYGROUND RETORT (3,3)
- 32) NATIONAL PARK IN MAINE (6)
- 34) FINDS A NEW TENANT FOR (6)
- 36) 1ST YEAR (7)
- 37) BEAM UP, E.G. (8)
- 39) INVENTOR/ACTRESS LAMARR (4)
- 40) T.REX E.G. (4)
- 41) PAMPERING PLACE (3)
- 42) WARNING SIGN (3,4)
- 45) HEATS UP (5)
- 48) RULE (7)
- 50) SKATING. ANAG (7)
- 52) SPEAKER (6)
- 53) COUNTERPART OF OVERS, IN BETTING (6)
- 54) FILL THE TANK (3,2)
- 55) "CRIKEY!" (5)

THE BACK PAGE OF SCENE.

DOWN

- 1) WALK (4)
- 2) ARMADA (5,5)
- 3) SHOWDOWN FOR THE AGES (4,6)
- 4) THOSE WOMEN, IN FRENCH (4)
- 5) FAM. MEM. (3)
- 6) SPICED TEA (4)
- 7) HOARSE VOICE (4)
- 8) LANDED (4)
- 9) AY TO ____ (3)
- 10) DUTCH CITY NEAR ARNHEM (3)
- 11) PUNCTURE SOUND (3)
- 12) ISOLATE (4,5)
- 14) YAPPED LIKE A DOG (5)
- 15) GLANCES (5)
- 18) "A NIGHTMARE ON ____ STREET" (3)
- 21) SPANISH SHE-BEAR (3)
- 22) JAMIE OF "M*A*S*H" (4)
- 23) CHEERED ON (6,3)
- 24) AGREEABLE (4)
- 25) RACCOON, TO THE WEB (5,5)
- 26) IN THE DUMPS (3,7)
- 28) "I MAY DESTROY YOU" CREATOR MICHAELA (4)
- 30) FIBBED (4)
- 33) SUFFIX WITH CUSTOM (3)
- 35) TELL, AS SECRETS (5)
- 36) KERMIT'S RELATIVES (5)
- 38) ____ ROLL (2,1)
- 41) MOVE LIKE A PENDULUM (5)
- 42) GENETIC MOLECULES (4)
- 43) "____, BRUTE?" (2,2)
- 44) LET GO OF (4)
- 46) RED PLANET (4)
- 47) SOME OFFICERS, FOR SHORT (3)
- 48) MACHINE PART (3)
- 49) POP STAR RITA (3)
- 51) LETTER AFTER PEE (3)

THE LITTLE ONE.



ACROSS

- 1) IN ADDITION
- 4) PREPARE TO PROPOSE
- 6) JORDAN RIVER OUTLET
- 8) THREE-LETTER SANDWICH
- 9) OMELET INGREDIENT
- 10) SOURCE OF SUFFERING
- 12) VACANT
- 13) "____ QUEEN!"

DOWN

- 1) BODY-STRUCTURE SCIENCE
- 2) HOMER'S NEIGHBOUR
- 3) VERY DRY CLIMATES
- 4) N.F.L. STAR TRAVIS _____
- 5) LONG-LIMBED
- 6) AUDIO UNITS: ABBR.
- 7) MATURE
- 11) KICK ____ FUSS

YORK VISION

YORK'S AWARD WINNING TABLOID NEWSPAPER

INTERESTED IN WRITING
FOR US?

VISION@YORKSU.ORG

Website



Instagram



Membership



ALL UNI OF YORK MENTIONS IN THE EPSTEIN FILES

BY OLI ASHBY

One could spend hours looking up different names and words in the notorious Epstein Files. Out of curiosity, I typed in “University of York”. There were two mentions of the University, both coming from ‘Data Set 9’. Whilst the two named people have absolutely nothing whatsoever to do with Epstein's illegal activities or his sex-trafficking crimes, it's interesting to see how the actions of one pernicious individual have so broadly infiltrated our social circles.

MENTION ONE:

The first of the two mentions comes in the form of reference, found in EFTA00802274.pdf. There is another version of this file, but parts are redacted in that version, whereas this version seems wholly unredacted. We know that the document itself was written by Dr Bernard Jansen, upon researching the qualifications in the introduction. The document serves as an expert opinion on the following question: “What is the level of dissemination of defaming statements associating Mr. Bradley J Edwards with the illegal activities of Mr. Scott Rothstein as a result of Mr. Jeffrey Epstein's lawsuit against Mr. Edwards?”

Edwards was a lawyer who represented three victims of Epstein's alleged sex trafficking and abuse. Upon Epstein being granted a non-prosecution agreement, Edwards put forward a claim that Acosta (the then United States attorney) had broken federal law by allowing this to happen without informing the victims. After more than a decade of litigation, a federal judge ruled in Edward's favour in 2019. In response to this, Epstein filed a suit against Edwards, claiming that he had conjured up charges in an attempt to extort money from him. Edwards responded with a counter lawsuit of malicious prosecution, positing that Epstein's lawsuit was an effort to intimidate him and inflict a financial burden.

In the end, a deal was reached, and Epstein apologised to Edwards publicly. What Dr Bernard Jansen was asked his opinion on was how much Edwards was defamed because of Epstein's lawsuit against him. The study found, in what Jansen describes as a conservative estimate, that Edwards was defamed in 104 separate stories or articles, with 9,669,542 individual unique visitors, to the date that he filed the report. Where does York come into all this, I hear you asking? In Jansen's credits, it shows him presenting a paper at the 10th Anniversary of the Oxford Internet Institute International Symposium, Journal of Information, Communication and Society, which was hosted by the Department of Sociology at the University of York in 2006. So not really much to do with York.



From: Quora Digest <[redacted]>
To: jeevacation@gmail.com
Subject: Can we die due to pain (assuming the reason for the pain is not fatal)? - Quora
Date: Mon, 19 Dec 2016 14:47:26 +0000

Quora Top Stories from Your Feed
Your Quora Digest

Can we die due to pain (assuming the reason for the pain is not fatal)?

Jennifer Borrett, studied at The University of York
Updated Dec 10

Yes. Kneecapping is considered one of the most painful injuries there is (a person shot at close range in the kneecaps). The pain is so extreme that there have been cases o... [Read More](#)

MENTION TWO:

The second mention is again, seemingly coincidental. It is found in EFTA00675138.pdf. Here we find an email from Quora Digest, which is an automated email from the site with some sample questions.

The first question in the list is titled: “Can we die due to pain (assuming the reason for the pain is not fatal)?” This question shows the beginning of an answer from Jennifer Borrett, an alum of the University. York's mention in this is a bit lacklustre, but this document itself is quite interesting.

If you scroll down, you see part of an email conversa-

tion between Epstein and a redacted user. Looking in the nonsensical blue text, you can see what was redacted later in the email, “Sochi confirmed Sunday!”. Sochi is a city in Russia, where notable former Norwegian Prime Minister Jagland met with Putin, where he planned to pass a message on to Putin on behalf of Epstein.

So, yes, York is mentioned in the Epstein files, but are there any indications that any member or former member was personally involved with Epstein or was aware of his sex trafficking operation? Not at all.

PISSED proposals, POOR sleep

THE LIFE OF A SHOTGIRL

"I really love this job... but it does make you want to die a little bit."

**Lily* is a fake name to protect her anonymity*

BY CHARLOTTE AMBROSE

Not often enough do we spare a thought for shot girls.

Often the messianic saviour of the night, the shot girl keeps the party roaring on long after the pre-scheduled Irish exits. She enchantedly comes to life at the pinnacle moment, with a twinkle in her eye, and uncanny powers to inspire raging club-goers to tap their phones with just the click of her heels.

Her mystical ability to make a hand-poured platter of drinks appear more appetising as the night progresses means she is, despite her best efforts, unable to escape her fate of being branded as the 'loveable temptress', one that robs unsuspecting drunkards blind (and looks good doing it).

Every shift promises to be a colourful concoction of alcohol-frenzied madness. From spilling drinks to marriage proposals, there's never a dull moment on the job. The job itself is also cloaked in a thick cloak of mystery. Sure, the girls pour the drinks. But it's the other club-goers who call the shots, controlling everything from how much commission the girls get, what time they leave, and, in rare cases, whether they need to file a police report at the end of the night.

THE EVER LOVEABLE TEMPRESS?

Lily is a shot girl at a popular club in York, whom I met with to gauge her personal experience with the job. (Her real name has been removed to protect her anonymity). Dealing with drunk people is a big part of the job, she told me, because when the drinks are flowing, people aren't always considerate to those doing the pouring.

"Drunk people are dickheads," Lily told me, very matter-of-fact, before

adding: "but the crowds vary venue to venue. I've been proposed to twice. In one shift. By two very drunk men."

And when drunk people are around, it's easy for shots to go flying. She laughed, telling me about a time she went four consecutive shifts getting an entire tray of tequila rose spilt over her. Then, likely judging from my reaction, she quickly added that, as lovely as a tequila-rose scented shampoo might sound, it is a whole different ballgame when the drink is thrown on you.

OLD MEN CALLING THE SHOTS?

"I've had some people ask to buy me," she said.

"To buy you?"

"More times than I can count. It's when I ask them: 'Would you like to buy a shot?', and they say 'Well, how much do *you* cost?'"

Speaking about the job more generally now, I asked Lily if she liked the work. "A lot of people would hate it." Then, after a moment's pause, she added: "A lot of people do hate it."

Lily went on to explain what she described as a 'love-hate relationship' with the part-time work. "I mostly love it because it's a lot of fun. And, in my experience, the bouncers are usually quite good at looking after you. I really love this job, and I'm really good at it too. I get good numbers, but sometimes, it's like, you know, it does make you want to die a little bit."

"The level of harassment is insane. I've never had a shift where I haven't been majorly harassed at least twice. Usually by older men. But often uni students as well."

WHEN/AFTER THE DANCING STOPS

According to the Sexual Misconduct Survey, the first sector-wide survey of sexual misconduct at universities, almost a quarter of students (24.5%) have experienced at least one instance of sexual harassment since starting their studies.

Nearly half of lesbian, gay, and bisexual students reported experiencing sexual harassment, and women were nearly three times more likely to experience sexual harassment than men. For Lily, this is an unavoidable part of her job.

She told me in detail how the men would touch her: "hand round the shoulder, hand round the waist, hand round the bum, hand on the boob sometimes..."

"How does that make you feel when you come home?"

"Disgusted," she said.

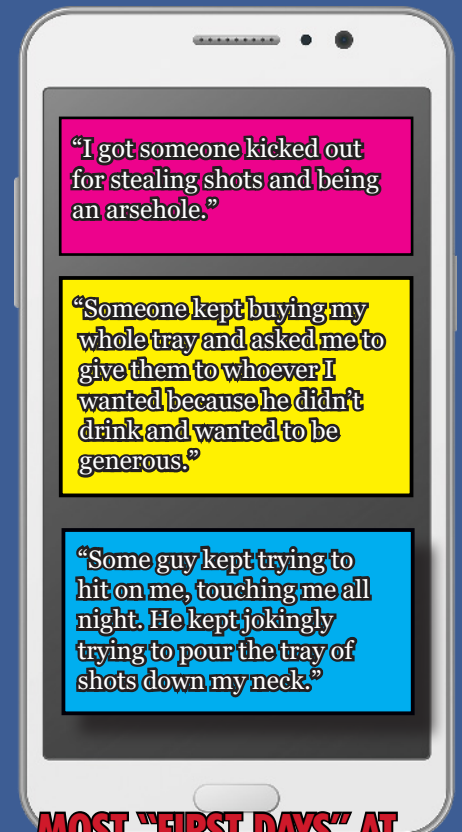
"Absolutely disgusted. Because, I mean... it's one thing, men being creepy, and like harassing verbally, right? But, like, um, when they touch you it's, like...it's like...it's just not nice at all.

"And I'll push them away as much as I can without trying to cause a scene, I always try not to cause a scene."

"But, yeah, no, it's insanely common. Like, just to be touched up and groped, it's insanely common."

Lily has even been followed home before, in the early hours of the morning after her shift.

"It's a very common thing where, if you get a lonely or sad drunk man, they'll feel very attached to you. They'll tell you all their traumas. And then they'll think they're a little bit in love with you - and they'll even tell you that."



MOST "FIRST DAYS" AT WORK START WITH NEW SOFTWARES AND SENDING EMAILS. Lily had someone "accidentally spit in her mouth".



schedules, PROTI-SHOT sales tactics...

IMAGE: PIXABAY

DEALING WITH DISASTERS

When situations occur, Lily told me that she would always recommend splashing out for an Uber, rather than waiting for the bus. When it comes to personal safety, shot girls can't afford to play fast and lose. It's important to remember that this is not a normal student's 9-5 Saturday job. It's late nights that blend into early mornings. It's missing 9 am lectures because you only got to bed at 6 am, after a fight broke out in the smoking area. It's being on the clock when everyone around you is having fun. It's experiencing the brutality of in-person 'rejection therapy' over and over again

ARE SHOT GIRLS "GIRLS' GIRLS"?

On a more positive note, Lily recounted her overall positive experience with the bouncers in her club: "They're very good at looking after you and making sure that, if it looks like something is about to happen, they'll step in immediately and

make sure you get home safe." But she warned me that this wasn't a given. Far from it, in fact. She found that the reliability of the bouncers often varies from club to club, from speaking with other shot girls.

Veering us swiftly onto the topic of pay and commission, Lily explained that, in her company, she gets hourly pay plus commission on the drinks she sells.

But this isn't always guaranteed; in fact, most companies don't provide hourly pay and sometimes make you provide the alcohol yourself. "A lot of shotgirls only get, like, 25p per shot," Lily said plainly.

And any of my suspicions that this fact would generate a heightened sense of competitiveness amongst the shot girls (aided by the late hours, perpetual suspicion of harassment, and false compliments) was quickly put to bed when Lily started gushing about the "lovely community of shot girls" in York.

"Most shot girls are really good at looking out for each other. 99% of shot girls are the loveliest people to work with ever."

In fact, she told me that a lot of the time, the girls who end up buying drinks from her are former shot girls themselves, looking to pass it forward.

Not that Lily really needs their

help to target.

Selling 221 shots during a hour shift (during Welcome Week) and frequently hitting over 100 shots on a given night, she told me her biggest tip for making the sale: "friendly goes a lot better than flirty."

FRIENDLY, NOT FLIRTY

"When it comes to being flirty, a little bit of that helps. With the right crowd, of course. But more often than not, it's off-putting because some people instantly think it's a scam.

"Some of the shot girls I know are the most beautiful women you've ever met in your entire life. But they often do terrible sales. Absolutely terrible sales.

"Once again, I think it's because it makes you suspicious of the scam."

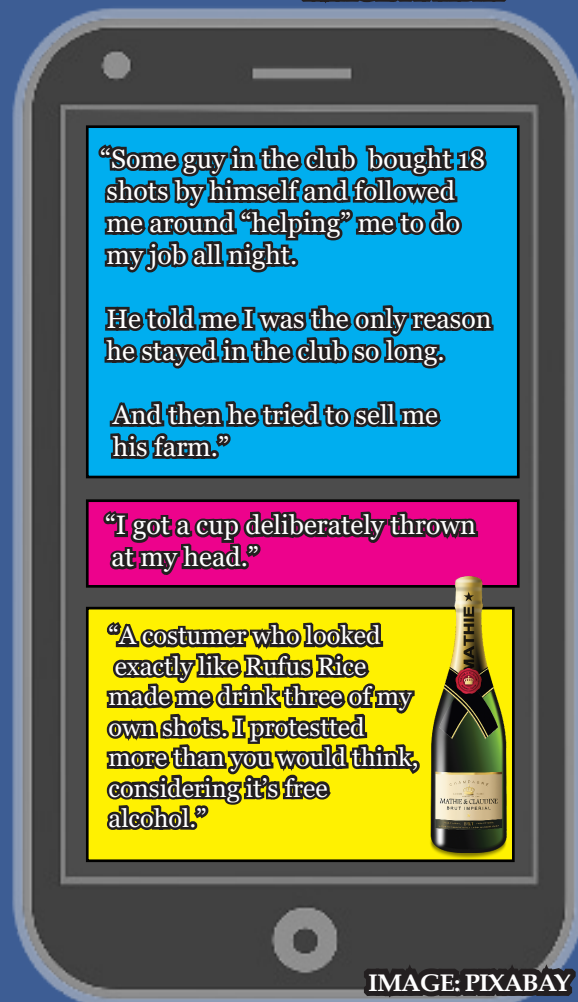


IMAGE: PIXABAY

"I made double commission today!

...But, I got called a prostitute four times on shift."

"I got ANOTHER drink thrown at me."
"Some random man begged me over and over again to call hima b*tch."

"Someone asked to buy me last night in the club."
"Another guy asked 'well, how much do you cost?'"

"I got stuck in a corner behind four couples making out."
"And I think I might have accidentally asked someone who was getting f*ngered if they wanted a jagerbomb."
STUFF OF NIGHTMARES!

"At the end of a 9.5 hour shift, a grandfather and grandon duo get into an argument about which one can ask for my number."

"I made friends with this sweet 60-year-old woman and got her home safe."

SHOT-STITUTE?!

"And the thing is, sometimes people will only buy shots of you if they think you're attractive. But sometimes that does more harm than good."

But she told me there was a massive misconception about the whole "shotstitude" thing.

"Shotstitude?" I echoed.
"I mean, you do have to flirt a little bit for the job. And I think, you know, that's sort of what you're signing up for..."

"Some companies make you wear very specific outfits that are very short and, erm... showy. What I wear is always fairly covered. But I do also make an effort to look nice, I always do a full face of makeup, earrings, nice outfit, but I don't show a lot of skin usually. Like, I make an effort to look nice but not to, like, just have everything out. Because then it feeds back into the whole 'friendly goes further than flirty thing'."

"I go to the bathroom and I get stopped by this drunk woman. She starts taking stuff out of my bag, saying she loves me, and she starts with 'I wish my daughters were like you'. I've been invited to her wedding."

"I was physically dragged into the photo booth."

YET LILY WOULD STILL RECOMMEND IT

To wrap up, I asked her if she would recommend the job to other female students. And her answer, much to my surprise, was a definite "yes".

"Yeah, I would. You have to be very prepared for it as in, for some people, it's just not the sort of thing they could do. And that's no reflection on

them. And you need to make sure you go through the right company, because most people pay abysmally. But for me, my company is great because it's hourly pay (above minimum wage) and you get commission, and you get to pick your shifts, so it's really flexible. I would definitely recommend it. I love my job, but you have to sort of know exactly what you're getting yourself into, because you are getting yourself into something that can really be horrible in a lot of ways."

For any new shot girls, she advised them: "just remember 1,000 insane things are going to happen to you

every shift. It's insane.
"Even when it's a dead night, there are a million horror stories. To me, that's part of the fun."
"Don't take it personally. And always go to the bouncers if, for one minute, or even for one second, you're uncomfortable. Stand your ground and don't let people take advantage of you."

She ended with: "I love it for me, but I don't want to mislead people about exactly what it is. Because the simple fact is, there is harassment. And there's a lot of rude people. And there's a lot that can drive you slightly insane."

THE PROBLEM WITH NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

IMAGE: UNSPLASH

EXPLORING
GLOW UP
CULTURE,
CONSUMERISM
AND THE
PROBLEM
WITH THE
2026
REBRAND



BY KATE KOLES

We are three months into the New Year and I've not deep cleaned my room or joined the gym, or done dry January, or meal prepped, or developed a twelve step skincare routine, or even made resolutions for the year.

Every January the pressure of resolutions and achieving them rolls around, where when a new year begins we are expected to strive to be 'better people': to be skinnier, with better skin, a full wardrobe refresh and good grades. We base the success of our entire year on whether we achieve this or not, and if we don't then there's always the next January and the next and the next.

But meaningful long lasting change doesn't automatically begin on January 1st; the new

year does not guarantee a magical reset where you will become the best version of yourself. This can happen any day you want to and it doesn't need a shopping haul of useless items to accompany it. Many of us have been guilty of the habit of just 'writing off' the year once we give up on our resolutions a couple months in and that is why I don't believe in resolutions.

If you are on social media, you probably saw the words '2026 rebrand' and 'glow up' probably a bit too much in January. People are preparing for 2026, promising to be the best version of themselves by slapping on a Shark CyroGlow face mask, making their Bloom supplement drink, and rolling out a yoga mat every morning. The more things we buy,

the happier we're are convinced we are going to be: buy that iPad and planner and your life will finally be together, if you buy the products for that hour long everything shower and Dyson Airwrap you'll achieve your '2026 glow up' and your year will be so much better. True fulfilment is apparently just a purchase away.

For centuries the beauty and cosmetics industry has capitalised on women's insecurities and disguised it as attaining confidence. We have been taught 'look good, feel good', but how are we meant to feel good when every day a new product is pushed towards us that 'you just have to have', and who decides what looking good is?

Is it us or the beauty standards enforced on us that treat bodies like

trends made to be modified and customised: Kardashians made curvy popular in 2010s but 90s Kate Moss super-model skinny is back and apparently now big noses are a Hollywood must-have.

It is exhausting keeping up with it all when it seems like every day a new insecurity is created for everyone to obsess over. The concept of a 'glow up' is pushed on us, encouraging us to spend money on useless items to feel like you have your life together.

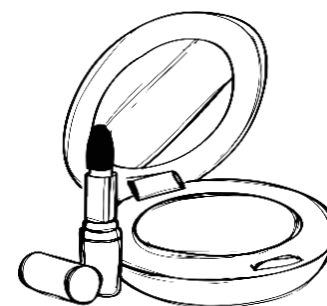
A shopping list of products endorsed by influencers and ads are not New Year's resolutions.

They are a marketing strategy designed to persuade and guilt us into spending money on things that will probably

be untouched in some miscellaneous drawer by mid-March.

January 1st is just another day, and January is just another month. It's already draining enough with the cold weather, early sunsets, and exam season without adding unrealistic expectations to reinvent yourself.

Being productive, polished, or rebranded does not guarantee a good year, and not becoming a "new you" doesn't mean you've failed.



THE SIN SLEETS AND GOTHSOC RISKS!

BY JESSICA HAYES

York seems to be embracing its gothic heart, as a dark cloud of gorgeous gargoyles descend this winter.

New to the 25-26 academic year, GothSoc is making this beautiful city proud. In the shadow of the Minster, you may see a huddle of cloaked baddies cackling into the night, but don't worry, these ghoulies are friendly!

President of GothSoc, Hannah, tells me about the birth of this already thriving community; after taking part in Fringe Society she realised that "a more specific goth society seemed to be missing, especially in a city that prides itself on gothic architecture!"

She aimed to embrace all elements of goth, focusing not just on music - but the subculture as a whole. Including literature, film, ar-

chitecture, and fashion. There have been many craft nights! In general, she describes the atmosphere as a "nourishing, positive community!" She stresses that this is not an elitist, gatekeeping clique: "it's also really important to me that everyone is included and represented."

A range of drinking and non-drinking events are on offer, including chill film nights and bar crawls. I personally have been a member of GothSoc this year and have met so many wonderful people. Hannah recognises that she has helped friendship groups form as "clearly people are finding their people in this space we've created, and everyone feels able to be themselves apologetically!"

Zoe, GothSoc social secretary, also notes that "between the wonky cobblestone streets and the ghost

stories below the looming spectre of the Minister, York is a pretty goth place to live." Like Hannah, she agrees that "anything that keeps the subculture alive and thriving in the social media age is awesome to see."

Zoe has also found social connections through the society that she helped create: "I've met so many lovely people through the society already and can't wait to see how it grows after I graduate."

There is something quite remarkable about the way students have come together to carve out space for such an expressive community.

For those who once struggled to find where they belonged, Goth Soc has become a genuine home. Despite seemingly intimidating aesthetics that outsiders fixate on, it may well be one of the kindest societies at York.



IMAGE: JESSICA-JANE HAYES



IMAGE: UNSPLASH

**MEET THE SOCIETY
BRINGING
COMMUNITY, SELF
EXPRESSION AND
ALTERNATIVE CULTURE
TO CAMPUS!**

IMAGE: UNSPLASH

DEPOSITS LOST, FRIENDSHIPS TESTED...

SECOND YEAR HOUSING HORROR

BY LAYLA ROBERTS

All over social media, horror stories and tales of other life forms taking over communal spaces scare freshers yearly, and rightly so.

The second year housing crisis overwhelms social media platforms like TikTok, as well as everyday university conversations. I haven't gone a day without hearing or witnessing some sort of drama relating to housemates my entire second year of university thus far. From nightmare kitchens to war in the living room, second year housing stories will haunt you.

The rush to find student housing and housemates when you're only a couple of months into uni is incredibly daunting, and no doubt the cause for such nightmares in second year.

Being in second year accommodation is Hunger Games-level survival with nightmare housemates stealing your food.



Attack of the Hams (left out overnight)

From your milk to your snacks, the leeches you live with will scrounge in your cupboards for anything they can get. But don't worry they'll say they'll replace it!

The nightmares begin the instant the contracts are signed. People drop out before the keys are even given, leading to the struggle of finding a replacement tenant so late into the game. All your friends will have already signed with other people, so you'll have to result to Facebook groups and the York Snapchat stories.

More than likely, the people you find on Facebook will be at the bottom of the barrel. A post grad computer science boy asked to fill the spot in our house; a house of four girls going into second year. He honestly couldn't have been a worse fit (sorry). Glad we passed on that.

When I eventually moved into the house, I was greeted by a mould-infested mattress and a pair of used boxers in one of the drawers. I wonder what the cleaners did for the whole two weeks they had to get the house ready for its new tenants. To say that everyone I know is paying around the £190 a week mark, if not way more, the housing companies shouldn't allow new tenants to move into their properties that are barely liveable.

It's a canon event that everyone at university will experience, having an unhygienic housemate that clearly hasn't done chores once in their life, making it your problem. From never washing their dishes to pissing in the kitchen sink (boys), I've seen and heard

it all these past few months.

Cups growing mould and raw meat left open in the fridge; I'd dread to be the vegetarian that had to deal with that.

It is unbelievable how some people think the world works, using your tupperware to catch silverfish because apparently they are really clean creatures that he *needs* to keep the kitchen clean.

And don't worry, first years, the drama around bins won't disappear going into your second year. If a rota isn't developed, you'll end up playing Tetris fitting your rubbish on top of the already overflowing bins.

That outrageous deposit you've paid will never be seen again, especially if boys are involved in the picture. From holes being punched into the wall to floorboards being snapped in half, that deposit was gone the second you thundered through the door.

The biggest struggle from moving out of student halls into the house is the amount of communal items you have to split between the group, toilet roll, washing up liquid, bin bags, and much more.

And there is always one person who does not contribute in the slightest.

They will happily use *way* more of the communal items than the person who actually paid for it.

Many people will also experience the awkwardness of people's partners moving in. Coming to university, the independence gets to peoples' heads. Moving away from mummy and daddy can generate a power trip.

IMAGE: OLI ASHBY



BIN THERE, DONE THAT: Second year housemates are back with a licence to spill

So, of course, the most logical step is to have your partner move into your student accommodation.

But for the housemates that have to deal with a bonus housemate they didn't sign up for, the repercussions can be unbearable.

If your accommodation doesn't come with bills included, the costs rise from having an extra person using the water and electricity.

On top of that, you have to deal with the constant public displays of affection in your kitchen (like jeez, get a room).

I struggle to find many positives in second year housing when all I hear is tales of nightmare housemates. So to answer the question "is the second year house curse myth or fact?" It is most definitely a fact.

CAMPUS

CRUSH

Campus Crush is making its return to the Relationships section for a second time. Have your lecture outfits been on point recently? Have you been looking broody and studious in the library? You could be someone's campus crush. Whether it's the possibility of finding the one, or just for a little bit of gossip, take a look at these rose-tinted tip-offs.

BY EMMA MALIN

For the chance to find true love, send in your responses to vision@yorksu.org.



Vending machine nightmare

If you were the girl having a 1v1 with the vending machine in Vanbrugh because your snack was stuck, as much as it was funny I also thought you were pretty cute. Perseverance is an attractive trait. I also hope you managed to retrieve whatever it was that was stuck! - **Alcuin Boy**

Timetabled fate?

Every week I have a seminar and there is always the same guy also waiting for his class on the other side of the corridor in spring lane. If you are the boy with the wired headphones and bashed up white converse, just know I think it's fate! - **Constantine Girl**

Campus gym

To the person that is always working out in their pyjamas at the campus gym, I think we are soulmates. I wish I had your confidence, I think it's weirdly charming. Maybe one day we can have a gym date in matching PJs! - **David Kato Girl**

Quackers for you

To the mallard always swimming around on the campus west lake near derwent dining, I think you are stunning and I would love to take you out for some bread crust crumbs sometime? - **James College Duck**

INVADERS SWAP

THEIR SUPPER

THE E-FISH-ENT ASSIMILATION OF ENGLISH VIKINGS

ANYONE FOR POTLUCK?

IMAGE: UNSPLASH

BY SHAHAMA ANVER

Biochemical research published last month, analysing viking pottery, shows that the Vikings Migrants ate less fish and more meat, like the Anglo-Saxons.



IMAGE: UNSPLASH

Picture your everyday Viking (because every York student needs to be able to do that): horned helmets, thick fur capes... and heaps of dried fish.

However, bioanalysis of artefacts from archaeological sites in York found that English Vikings didn't cook as much fish as their Nordic counterparts.

Vikings are renowned for their heavy marine diet. So much so archaeologists often use evidence of fish-eating as an

indicator of Viking migration.

In fact, when Vikings first migrated to England there was such a significant shift from freshwater to marine commercial fishing that the event is given the rather dramatic name of the 'Fish Event Horizon'.

The research team were expecting to find evidence of this increase in marine cooking, when analysing the fatty acid residues of pottery. They analysed around three hundred pottery vessels from ninth to eleventh-century England and compared these to vessels from Danish sites.

The results were surprising. Instead of marine fat residues, the team found traces of fatty acids from other animals like cows and pigs. It seemed that despite importation of stockfish to towns like York, the Vikings quickly adapted to the Anglo-Saxon diet.

On one hand, this shows the importance of the emerging use of biochemical analyses in archaeological studies. It is a growing field, even featuring in an exhibition at the Wellcome Trust in London.

In this exhibition, protein scientists used mass spectrum analysis to work out which proteins were present on an artefact in order to predict its use.

On the other hand, this research also shows how Vikings integrated into the pre-existing Anglo-Saxon society.

We often see Vikings as aggressive raiders, but this evidence paints them in a different light. In the words of the authors, "In moments of culture-contact, diet and material culture are fundamental elements of identity-making."

As an ardent lover of fish and chips, I may not agree with the Vikings' choice to eat less fish. But I can certainly attest that cultural fusion brings about the best dishes.

IMAGE: PIXABAY



IMAGE: PIXABAY

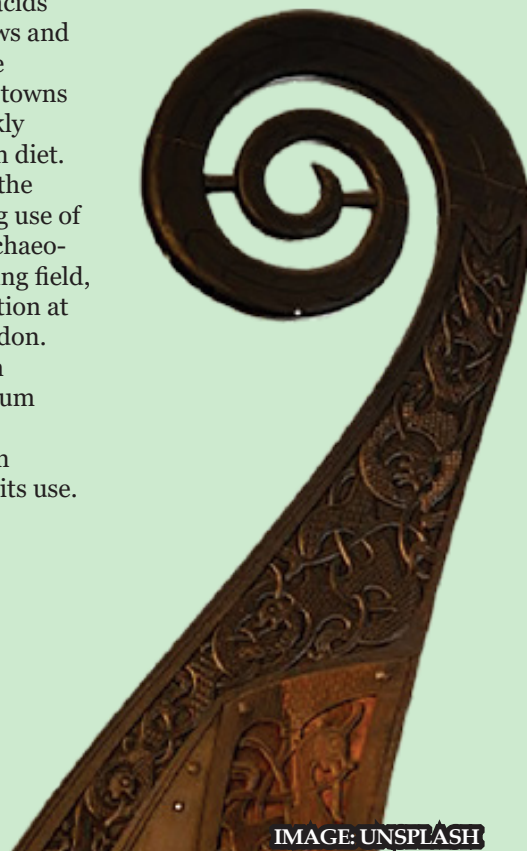


IMAGE: UNSPLASH

DR SCHRODING-HER VISION'S SCIENTIST/AGONY/AUNT



IMAGE: PIXABAY

"WHY DO STARS TWINKLE?"

**WHY DON'T THEY SHINE STEADILY
LIKE A LIGHTBULB?**

The astronomical term for a twinkling star is 'atmospheric scintillation'.

This describes the phenomenon of a flickering star, changing brightness, and even colours as we see from our perspective on Earth.

However, if you were standing on the moon and looked out upon the vast space ahead of you each star would shine solidly. So what is the difference between these two? The answer is the Earth's atmosphere.

In the Earth's atmosphere wind moves air around all at different speeds, with rising hot air and sinking cold air mixing together. Twinkling happens as starlight travels towards us, passing through the atmosphere at different temperatures and densities. The starlight is distorted by these factors, bending it and changing how we view it.

Think of a lucky coin in a fountain, it looks still under the calm water until another coin is thrown in and the water ripples, making the coin appear to move even though it's not. The water in the fountain is the Earth's atmosphere.

Planets don't twinkle like stars, as they are much closer to Earth so aren't affected by the atmospheric distortion as much. As stars are so far away, they appear to us as tiny point sources of light, meaning the atmospheric factors have big effects leading to the twinkling of stars that we see on Earth.

**Do you have questions for our
resident scientist?
Submit them via our Instagram!**

RAIN, RAIN... WILL IT EVER GO AWAY?



Students flocking together inside the Ron Cooke Hub

RAIN OF TERROR:
York becomes the UK's wettest uni (probably)

BY CARRIE PARKER

Across the UK, the relentless rain and soggy weather since the beginning of January have broken records for the wettest start to the year, with some parts of the country complaining that they haven't seen the sun since 2025!

But will the rain ever stop? And is this weather linked to climate change?

Rain has fallen somewhere in the UK every day for weeks on end, with more than 100 flood warnings in place across the country and further downpours expected.

This has been driven by a succession of weather systems: storms Goretta, Ingrid, and Chandra battered the UK in January, creating increasingly saturated ground which has led to large scale flooding in many areas.

This pattern has been fuelled by a southward shift in the jet stream (a fast-moving band of wind high in the atmosphere that helps to steer weather systems across the Atlantic) which has directed successive areas of low pressure towards the UK. This has also affected Spain and Portugal, where floods have had catastrophic impacts.

While the low pressure systems in the UK have not experienced conditions as intense as other countries, they have still been significant enough to break daily rainfall records in some areas.

Scientists believe that fossil fuel pollution is making the jet stream more erratic, allowing extreme weather systems to remain over the same areas for prolonged periods.

These so-called 'blocking systems' are predicted to become more frequent as global emissions continue to rise.

At the same time, rising global temperatures are intensifying rainfall. As warmer air can hold around 7% more moisture for every one degree Celsius rise in temperature, heavier rainfall becomes more likely.

This has contributed to increasingly wet UK winters which have been recorded roughly two decades earlier than climate models had predicted.

Scientists project that climate change will be responsible for more wet winters and drier summers in the UK.

However, the recent weather has meant that England is now free from drought for the first time since May as water sources such as reservoirs and aquifers are slowly reaching healthier levels.

So yes, the sun will return (eventually). But the bigger question is whether this winter's relentless downpours are simply a one-off. As the climate continues to warm, the UK may need to prepare not just for more rain, but for a new normal.

BY GAVIN SOUTHWAY

Remember the avalanche of adverts for the YorCup recycling scheme a few years ago, that over 12,000 students joined (probably including those who lost their band)?

The idea was simple. Pay £5 for a green band that you hand in if you purchase a hot drink at a University catering outlet, and get your first drink free. Hand in the cup - without the band - at an outlet and get rid of those annoying coffee dregs, while also

avoiding the dreaded "latte levy", a 20p - now 50p - charge for a disposable cup.

It has been successful: the cups' manufacturer's website, Ecups, boasts of slashing savage single-use cups by 1 million (now 2 million), and saving the University £250,000 on disposable duds.

Yet the hot drinks levy still left students cold: at least one candidate in last year's SU elections promised to find where all the money went, with suspicion swirling around how quickly the money was burnt, just like your tongue after that cheeky cappuccino.

The University website claimed part of the money raised by the Latte Levy paid for new YorCup bins (if you know where, correspondence to the usual address).

The University website also claimed that £500 was donated to the student group Scoop, and helped to issue 250 bamboo lunch boxes during Welcome Week, as a result of the Latte Levy.

Students returning after the Christmas break might have taken note of a tactic to bring back



the brand of YorCup bands.

Those slippery sleeves have returned in a design competition between each of the catering outlets. Those ordering coffee could vote for their favourite display using a QR code.

Just to sweeten the deal, catering outlets now offer a 20p discount when ordering with a YorCup, as well as avoiding the latte levy, in case the plea to stop using disposable cups wasn't obvious already.

It remains to be seen whether this new drive leads to new interest.

The University is welcoming suggestions for how the disposable cup charge fund could be used in future. Ideas and proposals can be shared with arnaud.rustan@york.ac.uk.

RETURN OF THE YORCUP

COMPETITION BRINGS NEW ATTENTION TO ENVIRONMENT SCHEME



The University stated that: "more than 750 votes were counted across the QR code forms and social media, with the competition also boosting YorCup purchases and the visibility of the scheme across campus. Vanbrugh Cafe and Dining was voted the winner in recognition of their creativity and enthusiasm."



IMAGE: CHARLOTTE AMBROSE

IMAGES: GAVIN SOUTHWAY



ALL GAIN NO GLORY?

MPS BACK YORK CITY'S CASE FOR ONE EXTRA LEAGUE PROMOTION PLACE

BY GAVIN SOUTHWAY

What if your club has its best season ever, grabbing second place behind the league leaders, yet loses the chance of promotion in a scenario that could not happen in any other league?

That was York City's situation at the end of the 2024/25 season. And the National League has used it as a case study for its "3UP" campaign, calling on the Football League (EFL) to hand one more promotion and relegation place to non-league teams.

Currently, only two teams switch between League 2 and the National League every season, compared to

three or four in England's other leagues. This is an arrangement from 2003, when the EFL allowed one more club to be promoted and relegated.

The National League says a third promotion place would "remove an unfair bottleneck"



into League football, and argues that the increasing professionalism of non-league has made the overall football pyramid out of step with clubs' standards.

The EFL, however, holds that any extra place should come as part of wider reforms. It's quite understandable to stall the deal, considering that they would be voting to send down an extra club of their own.

A cross-party coalition of MPs, however, disagrees. York Outer's Luke Chalmers, tongue firmly in cheek, said in a video:

"Well, we're gonna be top of the league this season anyway."

On a serious note: "The 3UP campaign: hugely important. I'm fed up of many good clubs being robbed, absolutely robbed, of that chance of promotion."

"You look at League 2. So many of those clubs are actually getting promoted from the National League and they stay up. I have a clear message to the EFL: give back to the fans, fix the

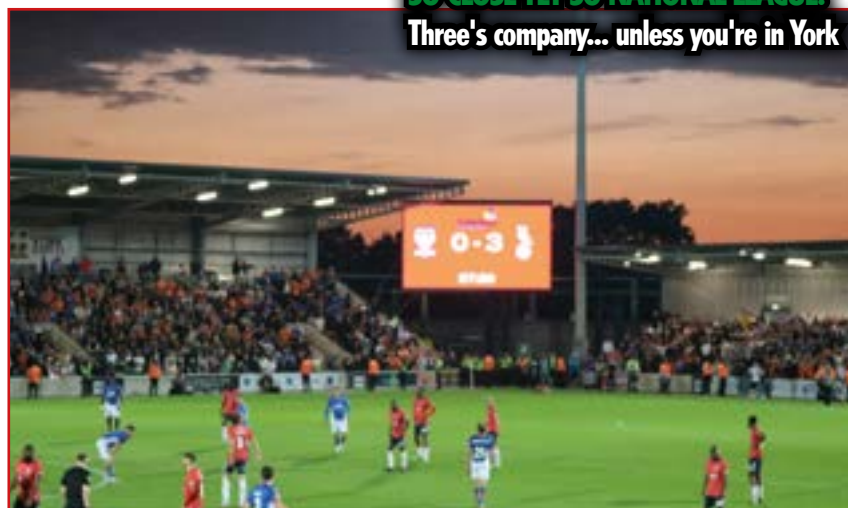
pyramid and back the 3UP campaign."

York Central MP Rachael Maskell told the York Press that: "The National League is long overdue for a third place, as the competition is fierce and the clubs seeking promotion are proven to be competitive in the football league."

93% of fans back the idea, but when

York Vision asked York's assistant manager, João A. he said the team was focusing on the next win. If anything, it seems to be working: York are top of the National League at time of writing, and have a good shot at automatic promotion. But, as last season showed, there's room for a cruel twist of fate.

SO CLOSE YET SO NATIONAL LEAGUE:
Three's company... unless you're in York



IMAGES: GAVIN SOUTHWAY

The 5k That's Changing Saturday Mornings

BY CARRIE PARKER

While a 9am start to the weekend may seem unappealing, here's one good reason to set your alarm.

What began in 2004 with just 13 runners in London's Bushy Park is now a Saturday morning staple for many.

Organised by parkrun, this global initiative sees over 400,000 walkers, runners and volunteers participate in a timed 5k every Saturday morning at more than 2,000 locations in 23 countries across 5 continents.

Parkrun takes place across a vast range of locations, from stately homes, forests, rivers, lakes and reservoirs to nature reserves, parks and even prisons.

It is also super accessible and entirely free. All you need to do is register online to receive a barcode which will be scanned after the event to give you your result. There are no subscriptions and

no obligation to return, only the option to show up.

In the UK, parkrun works with almost 2,000 GP surgeries, where doctors can "socially prescribe" the events for their patients who can experience both physical and mental health benefits through participation.

It doesn't matter if you run, jog or walk, there's absolutely no pressure or judgement, with parkrun being known for its friendly and encouraging atmosphere.

Much of parkrun's appeal and success lies in its sense of community. Whether you're a seasoned runner or just wanting to make steps to improve your fitness, the shared achievement of crossing the finish line creates something more than just a run.

Milestones are celebrated at 25, 50,

100, 250 and 500 runs, when you can order a colour-coded t-shirt to commemorate your achievement. Likewise, parkrun "challenges" involve completing a number of different runs in particular ways, with popular ones including the "alphabetier" which requires you to run a parkrun that starts with each letter of the alphabet.

York currently has three parkruns: Heslington (on the cycle track at the Sports Village on Campus East), York (at the racecourse) and a more recent addition York Community Woodland near Poppleton.

A particular advantage of these local events is that their courses are

incredibly flat making them ideal for beginners (or simply those looking for a steadier run).

As hard as it may be to ditch your Saturday lie-in and lace up your trainers instead, as a weekly parkrunner I can promise that it is worth your while.

THE ONLY RUN WORTH LOSING SLEEP FOR



IMAGE: CARRIE PARKER

NEW ERA OF FIGURE SKATING

Identity, Inclusion and Individuality

BY LUCI O'DONNELL

Winter sports have exploded in popularity around the Olympics thanks to social media, and for good reason, though it's hard to tell whether the credit belongs to HBO's *Heated Rivalry* or the endless stream of TikTok edits turning skaters into viral icons overnight.

Figure skating has long been one of the most tradition-bound events in the Winter Olympics - a sport defined by classical music, balletic lines, sequined costumes, and unwritten expectations about how champions should look, move, and present themselves.

For decades, success in the sport was often associated with a narrow aesthetic: delicate presentation, restrained personality, and conformity to established norms. But today that mold is beginning to change, with Team USA seemingly at the centre of that shift.

For much of its modern history, figure skating rewarded a specific mold. Programs leaned heavily on European classical traditions. Costuming and choreography followed familiar patterns. Even personality was often filtered into a polished, restrained performance style.

The sport celebrated excellence, but it also quietly enforced uniformity. Skaters who pushed too far outside the aesthetic norm sometimes found themselves misunderstood by judges or commentators, even when their technical content was strong.

Today's American team looks and feels different. It reflects a generation more comfortable with individuality, cultural diversity, and openness about identity. That evolution is visible not just in program music and choreography choices, but in the athletes themselves and the stories they bring with them to the rink.

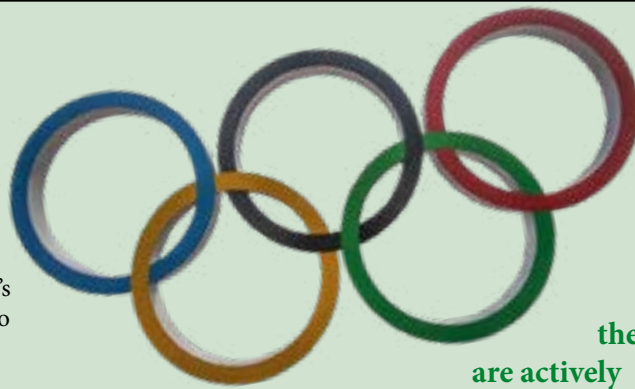
Alysa Liu is a clear example of that shift. A first-generation American and the child of immigrants, Liu rose to prominence as a

record-breaking prodigy, landing ultra-difficult jumps at an age when most skaters are still climbing the ranks. But what has kept people talking is not just her technical ability, it's her refusal to be boxed into figure skating's traditional persona.

Her relaxed demeanor, alternative style choices, and candid attitude toward pressure and expectations have made her stand out in a sport that historically favored carefully managed images. When she stepped away from elite competition at a young age and later returned on her own terms, she challenged another deeply rooted assumption that skaters must follow a rigid, nonstop pipeline from childhood to podium. Her path suggested that longevity and self-definition can matter as much as early dominance.

Amber Glenn represents another important break from convention. As an openly gay national champion competing at the highest levels of the sport, Glenn brings visibility that figure skating has rarely seen among its top singles competitors. The skating world has long included LGBTQ+ contributors behind the scenes, but elite competitive visibility has lagged. Glenn's openness, combined with her athletic success, signals a cultural shift in what acceptance looks like in judged sports. Social media has seen her pride first hand, she posts alongside Liu:

"They hate to see two woke b*tches winning" "If 'woke' means people who use their platforms to advocate for marginalised communities in the country



they are actively representing... then yeah sure?."

For younger fans and athletes, especially Gen Z viewers who expect authenticity rather than image management, that visibility is not a side note - it is central to why her presence matters.

This changing roster also lands in a broader national context. In a tense cultural moment where immigration and belonging are frequent topics of debate, a U.S. team featuring multiple children of immigrants competing under the American flag offers a powerful counter-image: excellence powered by diversity.

Sport has always told a version of a country's story to the world. Figure skating, once seen as culturally narrow, is now helping tell a wider one.

Importantly, this evolution does not mean the sport is abandoning its foundations. The technical standards remain high. The training is still grueling. The precision and artistry that define great skating have not disappeared. What is changing is who gets to interpret those standards and how they express them. Programs now pull from broader musical genres. Performance styles are more varied. Personality is less filtered.

The definition of "presentation" is expanding from polished uniformity to intentional individuality.

That matters for the future of the sport. Younger audiences are drawn to athletes who feel real, not manufactured, competitors who bring their full identities with them rather than fitting into a preset role. When viewers see skaters who reflect different backgrounds, orientations, and styles, the barrier to entry, as a fan or as a future athlete, gets lower. A sport built on tradition is not losing its identity; it is updating it. The ice is still a place of discipline and difficulty, but it is increasingly also a place of self-definition. Team USA's current lineup shows that figure skating's next era will not be shaped by a single ideal image of a champion, but by many and that shift may be exactly what keeps the sport relevant to the generation now watching.

COLLEGE VARSITY SET TO TAKE PLACE ON INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

IMAGE: BARDIA BAHRAMI



Girls just wanna play sport

BY LUCI O'DONNELL

The University of York is set to host a high-energy College Varsity clash against Durham on the 8th of March, with organisers promising one of the biggest and most vibrant sporting days of the year.

The event will take place across West Campus, with all fixtures open for spectators, creating a festival atmosphere designed to bring students, staff and the wider community together.

This year's Varsity carries added significance as it coincides with International Women's Day. Alongside the packed schedule of competition, organisers are placing a strong emphasis on celebrating and supporting women in sport. Campaign messaging throughout the day will highlight participation, visibility and encouragement for female athletes at every level.

The focus comes in response to concerning trends: studies show that 43% of women report falling out of love with sport after leaving school. By showcasing competitive college teams and creating an inclusive, supportive environment, organisers hope to inspire long-term engagement and challenge that pattern.

With multiple sports, back-to-back matches and lively crowds expected, the Varsity aims to be more than a series of games - it is being positioned as a statement event. Students are encouraged to attend, support their colleges, and be part of a day that champions both competition and equality in sport.



IMAGE: BARDIA BAHRAMI



The iconic duo gliding for gold

IMAGE: TEAM USA

YORK SCENE

est. 1987

STAGE.

Big Names... Bigger Play

A Review of Tom Morris' star-studded production of Othello

By OLI ASHBY

MUSIC.

SCENE's Music Medicine

Songs to get you through Semester 2!

By ZAREENA PUNDOLE

ART.

Fancy some Food for Thought?

Opening night at the Norman Rea Gallery

By SUMMER PASS

LITERATURE.

Mother Mary Comes to Me

Thoughts on Arundhati Roy's new memoir

By DEVIN WHELLIGAN-WOODWORTH

SPOTLIGHT:

Introducing the People's Princess!

Exclusive Interview with The York Diana



OUR INSTAGRAM:



OUR WEBSITE:



ILLUSTRATION BY SAMPHIRE UBSDELL