



# Officers abused as tensions rise in the Holylands

LORCAN MULLEN  
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Students' Union officers have faced a cold reception in the Holylands, while rumours of increased community tensions have gathered pace since the recommencement of the academic year.

According to SU President Shane Brogan, Union officers cold-calling in problem areas of the Holylands (identified as such by the number of complaints to Queen's Community Services) had doors shut in faces, were subjected to verbal abuse, and witnessed students drinking on the streets. Brogan explained that the blanket calls were being made in order to educate students on their rights and responsibilities. At the same time they have also been highlighting the presence of student representatives in an effort to reduce anti-social behaviour.

Attempts have been made

to ease the worries of local, non-student residents of the Holylands, with council passing stricter statutes in the wake of events on St. Patrick's Day. Off-campus regulations have been tightened, a list of guide penalties have been drawn up, and fines have been raised from an average of £250 to £500.

The Union is attempting to remind students of QUB's strict (and seldom remembered) off-campus code of conduct. Reports state that students involved in the St. Patrick's Day disturbances are still being addressed by the university's disciplinary process. In recent weeks, two students have been suspended for a year by the Committee of Discipline. Sources claim the long delay in their processing can be explained by the university's patchy knowledge of accurate term-time addresses.

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Feature  
Last orders?

Page 6



Interview  
Charlie Vernon

Page 7



# "Arrogant and elitist" CBI stir fees debate

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The Confederation of British Industry (CBI), an influential lobbying body representing the interests of UK company bosses, has made a controversial inter-

**I am astonished that the CBI should be making such offensive recommendations**

Wes Streeting  
NUS President

vention in the debate on fees. They are calling for an effective doubling of the cost of an average degree, in tandem with a gutting of the current student support structure.

The organisation has called for: the introduction of commercial interest rates on student loans (this would greatly increase the cost of paying

off accumulated debt), fees of £5,000 or more, a cutting of existing student support (with much more stringent means testing) and "efficiency savings" in universities, coupled with an ominous-sounding enhanced role for the private sector in cost-cutting. The CBI has also urged the government to drop its aim of 50% participation in further and higher education.

While the report of the CBI's higher education "taskforce" would ordinarily be just another think-tank publication, recent developments in the governance of higher education have vastly increased the role and power of business in any decision-making process. Universities are now administered from the Department of Business, supervised by the secretary of state for Northern Ireland Peter Mandelson.

With Lord Mandelson's well-known sympathy for business and bosses' views in particular seen as a key part of his political

“  
Mr Gregson also said he feels that The Gown's relaunch has created a much more "sustainable" future for the student-run publication.

The Gown re-launch

Page 3

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The views expressed within this publication do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the editors. The Gown is based in the Students' Union building, but is independent of both the Union and Queen's University Belfast.

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## The £3225 pub crawl

Editorial by Catherine Wylie

As a student myself, I can confidently say that many of us get drunk once in a while and regret it the next morning. At the beginning of term, with the novelty of returning to Belfast, it is in these weeks that the wild nights may occur.

However, from personal sightings, having heard from a number of acquaintances, and simply reading The Gown inbox, it seems that the Holylands has made previous negative media reports somewhat of a reality in the opening weeks.

We pride ourselves on being the student voice on campus, and encouraging unity whilst standing up for students. But when students walk around a residential area in broad daylight holding cans of lager, it is hard to convince outsiders of a believable positive image.

Sabbatical officers doing door-to-door calls in the Holy Land were met by, at times, extreme negativity and narrow mindedness. This is very disheartening, as a bad start offers the possibility that this will continue, and the media image of

binge drinking QUB students will remain.

In our last issue we ran a fees story on our front page. I was apprehensive about whether or not this was a good idea, as it doesn't scream of anything a fresher would want to hear about in their first week of freedom in the big smoke. Notice that tuition fees are once again on the front page, due to remarkable interest shown in our debut story. This would suggest that student apathy is perhaps not as rife as we thought. It appears that students DO care and ARE interested in issues that directly affect them, and those following in their footsteps. Therefore it would be fantastic to see a more campaigning Union, one that sets aside more money (and emphasis) for campaigns, rallies, protests, and petitions. Will The Gown ever have headlines such as "10,000 students storm Stormont" or "Fees opposition sees students camp in Quad"? I see no reason why not, but awareness and understanding are crucial, and that is where the Union, along with The Gown, should play a vital role.

Continued from page 1

philosophy, the department of business is currently notoriously susceptible to lobbying from bodies such as the CBI or the similarly-inclined Institute of Directors (IOD). There is a pervasive worry among insiders that the findings of the CBI's higher education report will have a direct bearing on any re-organisation of the student finance system.

While Northern Ireland is in the midst of a review into higher education policy (as reported in the last issue of The Gown) its UK-wide counterpart has been postponed until after the upcoming general election. With student support and funding a divisive and difficult issue, both main parties have opted to stay quiet on the subject for the time being.

Indeed, the intervention of

the CBI is sure to cast doubt on the reported progressive inclinations of our own fees review, and marks a worrying shift in the political debate: should discussion solely centre on the scale and scope of fees in the

**Wes Streeting  
National President of the  
National Union of  
Students, condemns the CBI's  
recommendations  
as 'offensive'**



pre-existing system, calls for a substantive overhaul will likely fall on deaf ears.

The chair of the Northern Ireland-based review, Joanne Stuart, who also leads the Institute of Directors (IOD) here, will likely factor the findings of a business lobbying body into the

## The Hood

Hanging around the quad two Mondays ago, your favourite gossip monger had the pleasure of spying on those who attended The Gown re-launch in the senate room. I almost choked on my cigarette when I noticed a certain VIP walking in looking rather nervous. Not only was I afraid of getting caught smoking illegally on campus, but here was VC Gregson mixing with the enemy – journalists who also happened to be Gownies. A nightmare combination you

would think for old Greggy, who has been QUB's answer to Katie Price in recent media. If you ask me, I think he realized how bad it would look on his part if he didn't attend, considering the esteemed Gown Trust members were making their first official appearance. Did he think these intelligent gentlemen would be new recruits for the London clubs?

Scandal is in abundance in the Union too I see, with a certain member of the executive requesting his face to be immortalised on the wall of Bar-sub. Oh how thoughtful of this



Living Tours Belfast is an innovative new experience of the city, giving you the chance to 'Shake Hands With The Past'. The cross between a walking tour and a piece of promenade theatre, is the brainchild of Janice Kernaghan, a local actress and theatre practitioner who saw the gap in the market for a performed tour of Belfast. The idea came from a 'Dragon's Den' style assessment during her Master's in Drama and Performance Studies at Queen's, when the students had to come up with a viable creative business idea.

"At the end of my second presentation, two of the 'dragons' (arts and business professionals within N. Ireland) gave me their cards and said to get in touch if I wanted to make it a reality. One of these was David Gibson, the Teaching Fellow in Entrepreneurship at Queen's. He put me in touch with the Enterprise SU, and without their support I don't think this project would have happened".

Janice added "We're always on the look-out for more talented students to take part in Living Tours Belfast, and with our expanding line-up of tours we'll need more actors than ever". If you would like to audition, e-mail [janice@livingtours.co.uk](mailto:janice@livingtours.co.uk) or call 07933 168 160.

deliberations of her own process. Shane Brogan, QUBSU President, believes, "There will be an impact, whether she admits it or not."

Mr. Brogan, when speaking to The Gown, went on to lament the likely disparity a fees review may cause should it lead to an increase in Northern Ireland, as suggested by the CBI: the rise would be delayed in England and Wales until the findings of their own review, creating a price gap, punishing mostly Northern Irish students.

NUS president Wes Streeting issued a strong rebuttal to the CBI proposals, deeming their actions to be "gross hypocrisy."

"I am astonished that the CBI should be making such offensive recommendations. When the fat cats at the CBI recommend that we abandon targets for widening participa-

tion from poorer students, they are talking about restricting the opportunities of other people's children rather than their own."

Unsurprisingly, Wendy Piatt, Director General of the Russell Group of universities (of which QUB is a part) reacted warmly to the recommendations of the CBI.

The ATL union, which represents a number of lecturers in Northern Ireland, also attacked the CBI stating, "It is arrogant and elitist to argue that widening participation in higher education will allow lower quality students into university. The reverse has been true as a higher proportion of students are getting firsts and 2:1s."

**Join the discussion on the never ending saga of tuition fees.**

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hard-working, diligent boy, who clearly has the student body's best interests at heart - Always thinking of punters' viewing pleasure whilst they sup on pints. Worse of course is the alleged incident during the summer whereby this executive's infamous double act turned up drunk/hungover to an important conference. Did they think they were going to the All-Ireland final?

Never a group to shy away from sensationalist actions, rumour has it that one executive member was caught with his hand behind the bar on a night

out in the Union. Pushing the boundaries of a man in power a little to far in my opinion, but who am I to criticise?

I also see the Speakeasy has begun serving lunches and appear to be testing out a new system of serving food. Get lunch at your peril and hope that the waiter eventually brings your grub. It will be a case of YOU spotting your pizza before it's too late.

I advise you to be vigilant at all times. I always am...

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# VC Gregson: Student newspaper has role in developing Queen's University community

Professor Peter Gregson, Vice-Chancellor of Queen's University Belfast, has expressed his belief in the importance of student newspaper 'The Gown' in developing the Queen's community.

Speaking at the independent newspaper's relaunch, Professor Gregson commented on the importance of students making the most of the "extra-curricular opportunities" on offer at Queen's. The Gown, he believes, is a fine example of this in practice.

Mr Gregson also said he feels that The Gown's relaunch has created a much more "sustainable" future for the student-run publication.

As part of the revamp, the free newspaper- which is fund-

ed entirely by advertising, will increase production to become fortnightly during the forthcoming academic term. A new interactive website has also been launched to encourage student comment and debate.

The newspaper has also established 'The Gown Trust', which is a group made up of successful past contributors to the paper, who will give support and advice to the student volunteers. Among the trustees is former Irish Times foreign correspondent Conor O'Clery, who is in no doubt of the personal value and importance the paper has had for him.

"Looking back after more than three decades as a journalist, I can say categorically that I could not have made the first step if it hadn't been for The



Current Editor Catherine Wylie, Trustee Conor O'Clery, Vice-Chancellor Peter Gregson and Trustee Aine Fox.

Gown", he said.

Other distinguished former contributors who have become Gown trustees are the Independent newspaper group's Brendan Keenan, esteemed travel writer Ian Hill, barrister Brian Garrett and recent editor Aine Fox.

Brendan Hughes, a current student volunteer for The Gown, said: "After several setbacks in recent years, including the economic downturn causing a drop in advertising revenue and mounting debts, The Gown was very close to stopping the presses for good. However, volunteers

at the newspaper have worked hard over the summer months to ensure the paper will continue."

Current Editor of The Gown, Catherine Wylie added: "We believe The Gown has an essential role on the Queen's campus. Not only does the newspaper provide its volunteers with hands-on experience in journalism, media and business, but also gives an independent voice to the students at the University. We are confident that we have secured this voice for many more students in the future."

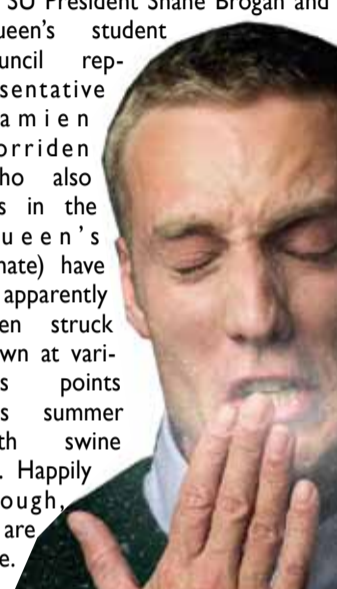
## News Briefs

### Union ground floor welcomes Spanish bank

The Spanish bank Santander has replaced the Bank of Ireland branch on the ground floor of the Students' Union. The BOI opted not to renew their lapsed 25-year lease. Students had often complained about the bank's inconvenient policy of not dealing with cash on the premises. LM

### Swine flu hits Union leaders

NUS-USI President Ciarnan Helferty, SU President Shane Brogan and Queen's student council representative Damien Corriden (who also sits in the Queen's senate) have all apparently been struck down at various points this summer with swine flu. Happily though, all are fine.



Guest strip by Adam York Gregory

www.theflowfieldunity.com/

# Sabbaticals set to see performance related pay

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The Student Union executive has passed measures designed to attach the pay of officers to performance over the course of their year on the job. The proposed changes to the Union's pay structure will give sabbatical officers a base living salary of approximately £12,000, with the rest of their salary (approximately £3,000) payable in relation to their efficacy in their elected role.

The performance related pay will be assessed by a remuneration committee composed of

the Students' Union President, Shane Brogan, at least one lay assessor and a student representative drawn from council. This is intended to give students a much more tangible say in how execs are rewarded for their efforts, especially given the questionable performance of a number of previous officers.

As the SU constitution specifies the president as line manager of the other executive officers, with a theoretical responsibility for setting pay, these measures are constitutionally legitimate. However, The Gown understands that there will be a full vote at the first meeting of the

Student Representative Council (SRC) to clarify roles and responsibilities related to the remuneration reform.

Students, especially freshers, are encouraged to get involved in the student council elections, set to be held in late October.

**Have your say**  
How much do YOU think the Sabbs should earn? Email us with your comments, or visit the website.

www.thegown.org.uk

# Debt and unemployment: Stats promise bleak future for UK students

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Statistics published by the UK department for Schools, Children and Families have prompted fears of a difficult immediate future for current students and new graduates. Various surveys suggest the current figure of 2.5 million unemployed contains a large number of recent

£23,500

The average debt of a student on leaving university

graduates struggling to reconcile unpromising job prospects with enormous student debts. Current political debate surrounding student finance suggests this situation will only get worse in the near future.

According to the department's report, those left unemployed by the current state of the economy, in the UK and Ireland, will likely suffer permanent damage to prospects, lifetime income and social standing, deeming a prolonged period of

joblessness in youth.

According to figures gained through a survey conducted by the website push.co.uk, published earlier this month in The National Student, says students can now expect an average debt of £23,500 on leaving university.

Neil Munroe, external affairs director for the company, said: "In the midst of the economic downturn we are now experiencing, it is vital that students keep a keen eye on their financial situation, especially as their parents may not be able to bail them out."

Students with money difficulties are advised to contact the Union's money adviser Connie Craig, at the student advice centre on floor two of the Union building.

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# Duke's Special on stage

Duke Special talks to The Gown about the vibrant Belfast music scene and his new projects in London

NIAMH HARGAN

Gifted heavy-weight of the Belfast music scene, Duke Special comes fresh from the success of "Dukebox" - a one-off extravaganza in Custom House Square - and is heading for the bright lights of the London Stage, but first, he speaks exclusively to The Gown about the journey so far.

The man who counts local artists Julie Feeney, Iain Archer, Panama Kings and Fight Like Apes among his personal favourites, describes the Belfast music scene fondly, as having "a terrific sense of optimism and DIY" with the beginnings of that all-important infrastructure to support it. With new venues popping up each year and

increasing numbers of international artists being lured to Belfast, it's clear that music is becoming a serious industry in Northern Ireland.

In 2007 Duke Special along with Snow Patrol and Foy Vance performed at a series of gigs, organised by the Northern Ireland Music Commission in New York and Washington DC. The motivation behind it was to present Belfast artists on a global stage, and highlight the musical talent and range coming out of this Northern Irish City.

He has also been working on a new project, the much-lauded play, "Mother Courage And Her Children," which stars actress Fiona Shaw and opened last week at the National Theatre. Adapted from Bertholt Brecht's

classic work, the play tells the tale of Mother Courage, who drags her cart across the battlefields, profiteering from a war that destroys her children one by one. And Duke Special's role? To write and perform the 12 songs that the play will feature. Commenting on this new project, Duke Special said, "It's really hard to know how these kinds of one-off showcases impact on your career, although, I'm currently involved in a play in London which came about through a chance meeting with an actress at a US showcase, so you never can tell!"

As an extra treat, he will also perform free "after-show gigs" each weekend in the National Theatre's foyer, playing from his back-catalogue of hits.

The downside to all this of course, is that his "Mother Courage" commitments will keep him in London until December, so his legions of fans at home will be waiting a while for another of his inimitable, exuberant shows

[www.dukespecial.com](http://www.dukespecial.com)



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# Arts & Entertainment

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## Reviews

Film  
Dorian Gray  
Oliver Parker  
Momentum Pictures

Dorian Gray was never going to be as good as the original text. I wish I could judge this film based on its own merits but Dorian is a hero of mine, the gloves are off.



Firth's razor-edged performance as the mephistophelian Lord Henry is something to marvel at, leading Dorian down the dark pathway towards hedonistic satisfaction.

The problem is Dorian himself; In Wilde's original 'A Picture of Dorian Gray', he revels in his own hedonism. In 'Dorian' he seems a bit out, even in the middle of the erotic scenes and, at the height of the sex/drugs/BDSM he seems to be saying, "Are we done yet? Can I go back to being miserable?" Barnes excels at portraying the emotionally fraught, gothic wet

blanket, but is little suited to the demanding rigours of the anti-hero's role. Even the famous homosexual scene between the painter and Dorian Gray plays out more like a drunken marital rape than an embrace of forbidden passion.

The artless storytelling explains Dorian's hang-ups through a series of flashbacks and pseudo-nightmares.

On the positive side however, the setting is excellent, airy and closed, dingy and clean, making for a thoroughly immersive and solid surround.

The problem can be reduced to this: The film is another half-hearted attempt at a horror film, which Dorian Gray was never intended to be. The pale and limp hero, dark setting, spirited love interest and cheesy infernal scene, all point to a big gothic heffalump as opposed to the slick, witty and hatefully pleasurable experience that this movie should have been. DC



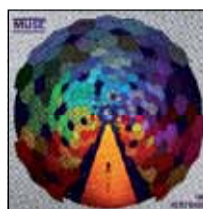
Film  
District 9  
Neill Blomkamp  
Tristar Pictures

The plot has us in straight away; the exposition is given through a combination of news reports, amateur filming and live action. Essentially, a group of alien's derogatorily called 'prawns' land on earth and are shepherded into a militarised ghetto. The visual effects are stunning and, in a movie like this, it would be too easy with the technology to allow the film to depend on it entirely, but they are believable. The one criticism I would have is that it relies too heavily on intertextual referencing, borrowing from Halo, Children of Men and many more, but it's decent nonetheless. Oh, and don't buy popcorn beforehand. Just don't. DC



Album  
The Resistance  
Muse  
Warner Bros.

'The Resistance', Muse's follow up to 'Black Holes & Revelations' is an unholy mess where 'Revelations' was a largely inspired synthesis of diverse genres.



There are a few good moments, mostly in the charming 'Exogenesis Symphony', but sadly the stronger songs seem marred by an oddly swampy recording style, or frankly bizarre musical and lyrical tics; 'Undisclosed Desires' sounds like a Timbaland Eurovision entry.

'Uprising', the new single is an strangely flat conflation of a staggering variety of past songs, good and bad. Featuring Blondie's 'Call Me' in that cheesy guitar squeal, the Doctor Who theme, several mediocre Goldfrapp singles and 'Futurism', a Muse bonus track from 2003's 'Origin Of Symmetry'. The

title track gracelessly combines clumsy dystopian themes with the main hook from Grease's 'Summer Lovin' - no really - whilst 'United States of Eurasia' comes across as an under thought rehash of Queen's hammiest worst and the delightful theme from Disney's Aladdin.

The well worn pseudo-political lyrics, gauche references to Orwell's '1984', are uniformly awful and make this reviewer and once proud Muse fan genuinely queasy.

Regardless of this rather poor offering, the band are now on tour which encompasses venues in both the UK and the US, with their Dublin and London concert dates now sold out. LM



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Richard Grayson

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## Are you heading for a pint... or thirty?

In these opening weeks of term when partying is the order of the day, Haroula Pasparakis looks at the effects of alcohol advertising

HAROULA PASPARAKIS

How many times have you and your friends discussed the night before as being “messy” or feeling “wrecked”? For many young people, referring to a night out like this is standard; indeed, it almost defines the night as being a success. With the increasing number of alcohol-related illnesses, and even deaths in young people, it is time that we examined the extent to which alcohol advertising influences young people and how great a role alcohol plays in our lives.

The glamorous promise of a good time and a bargain is causing young people to compromise their health. The British Medical Association (BMA) recently proposed the total banning of all advertisement and marketing of alcohol. This follows a series

of reports which examined and deplored the psychological and physical effects of alcohol advertising on young people.

Undoubtedly, the pitiful condition of Northern Irish teen-

### Know your health limits?

Half a pint of beer or cider: 1.5 units

A small glass of wine: 1.5 units

A single measure of spirits (e.g. whisky, vodka, rum or gin): 1 unit

Government recommendations say that a man should not drink more than 3-4 units a day and a woman should not exceed 2-3 units a day. In real terms, this means men shouldn't exceed two pints of lager or beer, or three glasses of wine a day, while women should avoid going beyond a pint or a couple of glasses.

ager Gareth Anderson is an anti-binge-drinking campaign in itself. Shocking statistics released by the BMA in their report entitled “Under the influence”, stated that 40,000 people die each year as a result of some form of alcohol abuse. As the UK has already been reported to have one of the highest rates of alcohol consumption and abuse in Europe according to the BMA, it is questionable whether alcohol can simply be regarded as a luxury item to be consumed responsibly and legally. The BMA believes this problem could be alleviated by prohibiting the advertisement of alcohol at sports and cultural events, and banning ‘happy hour’ and ‘two for one’ promotions. ‘Alco pops’ and similarly sugary alcoholic drinks will also be closely monitored in attempts to deter underage and binge drinking.

Nevertheless, a total ban on advertising may not fully solve this problem. Alcohol manufacturers could invest the saved money into developing a greater range of beverages or even cut prices using the unspent adver-



# 40,000

The number of people that die each year due to alcohol abuse

tising budget.

Derren Brown recently demonstrated on his show the varying reactions exhibited by people responding to subliminal messages and advertising. Some will succumb, others will be mildly influenced and some not at all. Still more choose the

infamous “six for six” in the Eg on a Tuesday night, and some choose not to drink at all. If cheap booze were to be controlled or eliminated, it cannot be guaranteed that people would not simply buy and binge on the next lowest priced drink.

With the future of alcohol advertisement uncertain, it is debateable whether completely removing (or rather, attempting to remove) alcohol from a person's subconscious will produce positive results, or whether it will expose a nation of free thinkers and drinkers.

## A library for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?

PADDY MAGEE

Billed as ‘A library for the 21st century’, QUB College Park library has opened in good time for the new academic term. On first appearances it looks like the old Main Library and the Seamus Heaney Library have been blended together into a swish new building that houses all our academic needs in one place. But is it really THAT good?

A wide range of facilities, an extensive range of reading materials and a C. S. Lewis reading room it certainly has, but how does it meet our everyday needs? First impressions are definitely good. Entering the large reception, there are plenty of seats and chairs where you can meet your friends or study group. To the side there is also a café. This is already a big improvement as the poor social facilities in the other libraries often led to excessive noise in the study areas, particularly in the Heaney library.

When it comes to actually using the library, the facilities are impressive. With over 2000 reader stations and PCs on every floor, accessibility shouldn't be the issue it was with previous libraries, which were often overcrowded. One concern is that the open plan layout of the library may lead to increased noise levels, but otherwise the



arrangement of the study cubicles should discourage too much talking.

Upon asking students, feedback was positive. Third year dentistry student David Johnston was impressed with the new computing facilities, and pleased with the availability of power outlets and wireless internet at every workstation which allow students to use their own laptops. As a ‘Tales of Narnia’ fan he also likes the C.S. Lewis reading room, particularly the ornate door which is a replica of the wardrobe from the movie, ‘The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe.’ Ross Carson, a second year Theology and Politics student was also pleased with the new library, especially the extra space and increased access to computers and reading materials.

All things considered it does appear that the College Park library is a welcome addition to the Queen's campus. Beautifully built and finished it has the most up-to-date facilities and is user friendly. So let's hope the benefits are seen on results day.

## Alas, poor Bebo

MARTIN FERGUSON

Bebo has been the surrogate mother to the growing phenomenon of social networking. It was for many students, their first electronic identity. However Bebo appears to be losing its battle with its sophisticated cousin Facebook. Like Madonna, many users have ‘changed faiths’ and found a new social networking teet to feed from, mostly status updates and annoying applications which fill your QOL inbox to the hilt like a child let loose at a Woolworths pic'n'mix. But why has this happened? Have people become Face-hooked and Be-bored?

Bebo has not enjoyed the greatest of public approval due to the South Wales suicides, cyber-bullying and death tributes which have become common place and by association a Bebo trend. This has created a much more restricted environment upon a networking site that was at one point open and accessible to all. But is this to blame? Many suggest it was due to ones ‘social economic background’. If you are a Bebo user you tend to be of a lower socio economic background, whereas Facebook would make you at the very least a Hyacinth Bucket (Pronounced Bouquet) type of user. It would suggest you would have at least some cultural knowledge of at least one

Asian country and more than 3 GCSEs at grade C or above.

However it is important to note Bebo as a social networking site in the context of being used in Northern Ireland and the south. If we look at the bigger picture, we can associate the growing interest of the youth here in social networking, as a liberating and useful tool that otherwise in the late 70s and 80s was a sexually repressed society to some extent. Therefore the parents of the new users of these sites when they began would see their sons or daughters use them as tools to meet new people outside the darkened corners of the clubs and pubs. Bebo was an outlet at the beginning coupled with Ireland's terrible dating culture. But it would appear it has begun to wear thin with the now more cyber savvy and mature student users. Facebook is far more superior in its presentation, user friendly apps, advertising and subtly addictive status updates. Facebook has knocked Bebo off its pedestal as more and more people flock to its ranks waiting to be poked. The added availability of phones which can adapt to the social networking sites also has allowed facebook to excell, and has become a cyber fashion trend with lots of accessories and a small price tag.



## Mirror Mirror, on no wall

DISHEVELLED REPORTER

Do you know what you look like? I'd imagine that you have quite an accurate idea of the dimensions of your face, pimples, open pores, unwanted moustache et al. However, on living in student accommodation in Belfast, you may well forget where exactly your frown lines are. Mirrors are in severe scarcity in HMO digs. Males are walking around with shaving cuts, females are sporting dirty tan lines; It truly is carnage for the appearance of students. Landlords obviously believe that mirrors are a luxury and not a staple item in a bathroom. While standing at the sink, our future doctors, lawyers and, ahem, journalists, have been forced to stare at a blank wall, whilst doing their best to avoid tooth paste spillage. Some fear that the lecture halls of QUB will become a much less glamorous place in the coming weeks. And who could blame them? But the question remains...Does Mr Laird have a mirror in his bathroom? The Gown guesses that he has!

# Charlie's Game

## Charlie Vernon speaks to The Gown about his career and education

CONNOR DALY  
sport@thegown.org.uk

An acquaintance with the Law and Accountancy Societies, a permanent fixture within the university and Catholic Chaplaincy Gaelic football squads; Armagh Harps and County Armagh GAA star Charlie Vernon most certainly made the most of his four years at Queen's.

Charlie said a great help in his sporting development was undoubtedly the GAA scholarship he received throughout his university life. Free anytime access to Queen's PEC resources - including a top class swimming pool and an Astroturf football surface - would arguably encourage almost any sports enthusiast. Admitting however

that UJJ may hold the advantageous reputation of being "slightly ahead" of its university counterpart with regard to the availability and quality of sporting facilities, the Armagh midfielder was more than satisfied

### Player Profile

#### Charlie Vernon

**Club:** Armagh Harps  
**Age:** 22  
**Height:** 6' 1"  
**Weight:** 14st  
**Occupation:** Student  
**County Debut:** Feb 06 v Kildare  
**Club Honours:** 2 Armagh MFC, Ulster & Ireland Rules  
**County Honours:** Ulster SFC 2006, 08, Ulster U21FC 2007, Ulster MFC 2005



with the facilities on offer.

Charlie cited his concern at the current financial package available to QUB's Gaelic squad, especially when compared to that of other universities such as the University of Ulster's Jordanstown campus.

"There is always room for improvement", Charlie claims; with more sponsorship and further financial assistance, perhaps the university may seek to recruit full time coaches, and grant more scholarships potential sporting stars of the future.

Playing Gaelic for both a list of clubs and for his county,

not only at under-21 but at senior level also, one would wonder how Charlie Vernon was possibly able to keep to such a strict sporting and academic schedule. The first two years at Queen's were tough, and especially due to travelling back and forth from Belfast and Armagh, Charlie explained, this required a "big commitment". Indeed, the former Queen's student went as far to admit that his degree "nearly took a back seat" to such commitments. However, time management was always the key to progression, and Charlie has most certainly witnessed gradu-

al success on and off the pitch as a result.

After four well-spent years, Armagh's emerging GAA star has now left Queen's to study for a Masters in Advanced Accountancy at UJJ, the university he still considers "the old enemy". On the field, Charlie hopes to build on previous years and maintain his presence on the Armagh County panel. Though a broken jaw may have brought last season to a premature end, Charlie has bounced back and is ready to answer the call of club and county.

# The karate experience

CONNOR DALY  
sport@thegown.org.uk

Every fortnight a member of The Gown sport team will visit a different club around Queen's. Many students tend to stray away from sporting clubs if not included from the beginning of the academic year; The Gown hopes to diminish this attitude. All students are encouraged to join a sporting association, and by reporting our experiences, we aim to promote QUB clubs and help students make the most of their stay at university. During the course of the last fortnight, The Gown attended Wado Ryu Karate at the PEC.

Never before had this Gown reporter attended a Wado Ryu Karate session. The one-hour beginner's class was certainly enjoyable; though testing, a gruelling warm-up was exactly what was needed to adjust to the flexibility and lightening pace of the sport.

Entering into the unknown can be a daunting experience at times, but this was certainly not the case during this session. At Karate, special attention is paid to newcomers; stretches and exercises are explained and implemented thoroughly. Beginners spend an hour participating, and can then choose to watch regular members continue their disciplined training.

Karate is not a sport empha-



sising the test of strength, but a promotion of technique. Attending this session, it was difficult to realise the importance of relaxing before attempting a decent face, and body shot; much too tense, a rookie mistake no doubt. Only time and practice could fix these faults.

We strongly recommend all students to attend Wado Ryu Karate; a positive sport of traditional training. Sessions take place at the PEC three times a week; attending your first session, simply ask reception for directions to the venue.

Like any new activity, beginning sessions may cause some confusion - the Japanese language being an example; but don't let this put you off. The Karate lesson concluded with instructor Michael Cole's advice that we shouldn't worry about other participants' levels of experience.

# Queen's soccer pass tough United test

IAN BLACK

James Laverty's 40<sup>th</sup> minute goal gave Queen's reasons to be optimistic following a disappointing start to their IFA Championship 2 campaign. Queen's bounced back from an injury-hit squad and three straight league defeats receiving their first points in a 1-0 victory over Annagh United.

Conditions at QUB's Newforge Lane home were perfect; however it was the Portadown side starting strongest after kickoff. Annagh exerted early pressure with Queen's slow to settle, eventually growing in confidence with Peter Thompson making several shots testing Annagh's goalkeeper. Queen's looked sharp in attack on the right wing with Paul Kennedy's pace splitting the Annagh defence.

The students scored on the eve of half-time after some clever play. Kennedy released Brendan Ward who made a charge on the goal drawing the Annagh goalkeeper out. Ward's pass across the goal mouth was coolly met



by James Laverty with a clinical finish. Queen's kept the strain on Annagh after the break and looked likely to score again, however Kevin Brigg's cracking diving header was unfortunately judged offside. Annagh failed to capitalise on their chances and Queen's were comfortable in frustrating their efforts.

The Linesman's flag stayed down as Laverty was gifted a perfect opportunity to dispatch Annagh with a second goal. Closing in on goal in a one-on-one encounter the keeper managed to foil this effort correctly predicting which side to pounce. Despite a vigorous effort by United to equalise in the dying minutes, Queen's withstood the pressure and deserved the three points on offer.

Laverty and his Queen's side will undoubtedly take confidence from this solid performance as they prepare for a long season ahead.

## Roundup

### PEC courses begin 5<sup>th</sup> Oct

Monday 5<sup>th</sup> October witnesses the beginning of over 80 activities at the PEC; from swimming to Salsa, from boxing to yoga. For a copy of the Adult Activity Programme Autumn 2009, visit the QUB PEC website. CD

### QUB hurling & camogie 'Back to School' bash

Upstairs admission to Tuesday October 6<sup>th</sup>'s school disco is only £3. Why not support QUB's sporting clubs? Make sure to bring a school uniform that fits. CD

### Fancy a game of five-a-side soccer at the PEC?

Meet new friends and show off your skills: Email your name and phone-number to sport@thegown.org.uk to enter the game. CD

### Help The Gown help your club!

If your club or society is running any events that you want publicised, let us know!

www.thegown.org.uk





WHITE LIES

8TH DEC, MANDELA HALL



The xx

15TH DEC, SPEAKEASY



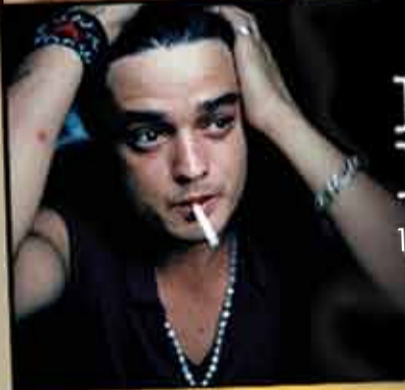
Enter Shikari

11TH DEC, MANDELA HALL



newton faulkner

10TH OCT, MANDELA HALL



PETER DOHERTY

13TH OCT, MANDELA HALL



TINARIWEN

16TH OCT, MANDELA HALL

THE CAVE SINGERS

ESPERS

WOODS

THURS 12TH NOV SPEAKEASY

IMELDA May

21ST OCT, MANDELA HALL



Richard Hawley

2ND DEC, ULSTER HALL



GREAT LAKE SWIMMERS

14TH NOV, SPEAKEASY



LITTLE BOOTS.

28TH NOV, MANDELA HALL

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