Celebrating outstanding staff
see page 2
The dedication and outstanding contribution of staff at York St John University was highlighted during the University’s first Celebrating Exceptional People Awards.

The awards have been introduced to give recognition to individuals and teams who have provided an outstanding contribution to the student experience at the University. This year’s winners were presented with their awards at a special ceremony alongside 10 members of staff who were recognised for their huge contributions over the past 25 years with long service awards.

Vice Chancellor Professor David Fleming, said, “The strong message coming through all the nominations is the impact that every nominee has on the experience of our students and how vital their work is to the success of the University. Every member of staff should be incredibly proud of being nominated; it is a reflection of their significant contribution to making the student experience at York St John so exceptional.”

The winners of the four Celebrating Exceptional People Awards were Chris Bartram, Senior Lecturer in Music; John Gray, Senior Lecturer in Sport, Health & Life Sciences; Liz Mellor, Reader in Music; and the Student Advice Team, led by Kathryn Ward and comprising Stephanie Ley, Debbie Moody, Aimee Ross, Rachel Draper, Karen Senior, Gelayol Holme, Sarah Howat and Wendy Kirk.

Long-service awards for completing 25 years of continuous service were presented to Jane Appleton, Cleaner, Domestic Services; Duncan Brooks, Senior Lecturer in Design; Hilary Hunt, Faculty Admin Manager, Faculty of Arts; Chris Elias, Senior Lecturer in Business Management; Stephen Friend, Senior Lecturer in Theology and Religious Studies; Greg Hoyland, Senior Lecturer in Theology and Religious Studies; Tina Holliday, Management Accounts Technician, Finance; Bryan Jones, Resource Acquisition Librarian, Information Learning Services; Kevin Colbert, Higher York Access Centre Manager, Student Services; and Liz Whitaker, Senior Careers Information Advisor, Student Services.

Construction work has started on York St John’s newest student halls of residence on Carmelite Street, adjacent to Hungate.

S Harrison Developments Ltd has chosen national company Miller Construction as the main contractor to build 258 student bedrooms. The £12 million scheme, which will see around 100 construction jobs created in the city, is scheduled to be completed in time for the start of the 2013 academic year.

Vice Chancellor Professor David Fleming said, “Demand to study at York St John is continuing to rise. This year we’ve seen an impressive 11.3 per cent increase in undergraduate applications for our courses starting in September, during a period when overall university applications are down 10 per cent in England.”

The new accommodation on Carmelite Street will be car free, with students living within easy walking distance of all the city’s amenities. It is set to achieve a BREEAM ‘very good’ rating for its sustainability and energy usage. Commenting on the latest development, Students’ Union President Adam McKimming said, “Student feedback has been very positive about our Gray’s Wharf and Percy’s Lane accommodation so we’re really looking forward to having the new site ready for our 2013 students.”

Pictured above: David Chesser, Pro Vice Chancellor (Resources); Colin Parkin, Director of Facilities; Steve McManama, Miller Construction Area Director; and Rich Smith, S Harrison Project Manager.
Partnership with York College launched

York St John University and York College have signed a partnership agreement that will enable the University to validate the College’s programmes. It also formalises an existing relationship that maximises opportunities for students, helping them to achieve their goals, from basic skills to postgraduate degrees.

Dr Alison Birkinshaw, Principal of York College, said, “This is an exciting opportunity for us to work with York St John University to build high-quality Higher Education (HE) provision to suit local and regional needs, built upon the strong levels of expertise in both our organisations. We are very much looking forward to working with the University, alongside our other HE partners, to the benefit of our students and their communities.”

In reply, Vice Chancellor Professor David Fleming, said, “We are very passionate about making HE an option for everyone. This new partnership with York College is based on a shared vision to offer a clear progression route through to HE and to help fill some of the skills gaps employers are looking for in York and the region. We’ve already seen how successful we can be at working together to produce exceptional graduates and are looking forward to developing this further.”

Below: (Standing, left-right) Bob Saynor, Assistant Principal: Lifelong Learning and HE, York College; Sue Reece, Pro Vice Chancellor (Development); and Deputy Vice Chancellor Professor David Maughan Brown. (Seated) Vice Chancellor Professor David Fleming and Principal Dr Alison Birkinshaw, York College.

Midnight Walk for charity

Six women from York St John Business School – academics and administrators – raised £1,152 for St Leonard’s Hospice by taking part in their Midnight Walk on 23 June, which had the theme ‘Angels and Demons’. It was pouring with rain but lots of fun!

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HEA recognises York St John staff

Two members of staff from Psychology have received awards from the Higher Education Academy (HEA).

Dr Jacqui Akhurst has been selected to receive an HEA 2012 International Scholarship, and Charlotte Elwell received the HEA Psychology Technician of the Year Award jointly with Laura Scurllock-Evans from the University of Worcester.

Jacqui said, “I am thrilled to have been chosen for the HEA International Scholarship Scheme. My project aims to investigate ways of supporting students’ learning when engaging in community-based learning in Africa, addressing the impacts on their development and knowledge related to employability.

The work will also reflect on what learning in this way might teach us about enhancing local community engagement in the UK and integrating such work into Psychology programmes. ” She will deliver specific outcomes for dissemination within the UK sector at the end of her scholarship, after spending time in South Africa at the University of KwaZulu-Natal and in Tanzania at St John’s University of Tanzania.

Charlotte and Laura were chosen because of the outstanding support they gave to the student learning experience in their departments. Julie Hulme, Discipline Lead for Psychology at the HEA, said, “Both demonstrated exemplary skills in using specialist psychological technology, software and resources to support students.”

Celebrating human movement

A group of second-year Theatre students took part in Immovable, one of the projects which formed imove, Yorkshire’s cultural programme for London 2012. Immovable was run by Mind the Gap Theatre Company, which is based in Bradford and creates award-winning theatre, working alongside actors with learning disabilities.

The students chose to work with community groups from York and the surrounding area. They let the groups in on the ‘secret’ that a six-foot-square cube of York stone would ‘appear’ as if from nowhere in the middle of the night in the centre of York. The students facilitated workshops with their groups that culminated in a performance based around the concept of Immovable on and around the cube, which was placed near the Minster.

The students enjoyed the challenge of working towards a public performance and were excited to be a part of a professional project with a high profile. Immovable was streamed live on to the web via a 24-hour webcam which captured all the action. For more details, visit www.mind-the-gap.org.uk/immovable

Students with the cube outside the Minster.
Social work: the right career?

Students from the Faculty of Education & Theology attended a course on Preparing for a Career in Social Work, delivered in partnership with the City of York Council Workforce Development Unit. The aim was to help them consider the relevant skills, knowledge and abilities required to enable them to successfully access career options relating to social work.

The project was delivered following a successful application by the Education & Theology External Relations team to the Higher Education Funding Council for England’s learning and teaching fund, Teaching Enhancement and Student Success. The sessions included policy, practice and regulation, experiencing social work – a day in the life of a newly qualified social worker, and why choose social work as a career?

Chris Shipley, Workforce Development Officer for City of York Council, said, “It was obvious that the students were engaged and interested in the information provided. We would like to wish all of them success in their chosen career path.”

From Juniata to York St John

The University welcomed 11 members of staff from Juniata College, Huntingdon, Pennsylvania, on a fact-finding visit in June. The aim was to strengthen departmental to departmental collaboration for student exchange programmes, and to build links between academic staff which may enable staff exchanges. The visitors had meetings and presentations with colleagues from across the campus, as well as meeting students before they went on exchange to Juniata. They were also invited to join in with some of the Create 12 events.

York St John has had a student exchange programme with Juniata for over 20 years. It is a small and friendly college with excellent facilities. Valerie Holmes, International Exchange Officer, said, “The visit was well received by York St John colleagues and the visitors gave their thanks for the warm welcome and hospitality they received. They also expressed a determination to work together and see what the next 20 years of partnership brings.”

Changing Engishes

Undergraduate students from the Centre for Languages and Linguistics in the York St John Business School have presented their work at two national conferences, showcasing their research-informed contribution to internationalisation and employability policy in UK universities.

At the British Conference of Undergraduate Research, third-year student Stephen Hall presented the findings of his dissertation, *Lingua Franca in (inter)action: the experiences of non-native English language users and native speaker service-providers interacting in a British university*. He reflected on data collected during his work placement at the University of York’s Green Chemistry Centre.

At the Higher Education Academy Arts and Humanities Annual Conference: Pedagogies of Hope and Opportunity, four second-year students – Derek Anzalone, Kaspar Forrest, Jeannette Kadia and Magda Szczypka, presented the results of their Language and Communication in the Workplace module, supervised by Rachel Wicaksono, Head of Subject for Languages and Linguistics. The only students to present at the conference, they demonstrated their contribution to an award-winning online tutorial (www.englishlinguafranca.com), which aims to raise awareness of English as a lingua franca in mixed language classrooms.

For more information about postgraduate student and staff research in these and other related areas, see the newly launched web pages of the multi-disciplinary Language and Identities in Interaction Research Unit at www.yorksj.ac.uk/lidia or contact Dr Chris Hall, Reader in Applied Linguistics, E: c.hall@yorksj.ac.uk
York St John and London 2012

The Olympics and Paralympics provided a wonderful summer of sport. Several York St John students, staff and alumni were lucky enough to take part.

Four York St John University students soaked up the Olympic experience by taking part in the British Universities and Colleges Sport Outdoor Athletics Championships in May. The event formed part of the London Prepares test events at the Olympic Stadium in Stratford, East London. Nick Hardy (3,000 metres steeplechase), Sarah Kemshall (5,000 metres), James Buck (400 metres) and Rebecca Wilkinson (800 metres) were able to take advantage of all the facilities available in their respective disciplines.

Jennifer Dunn, a third-year Sports Society and Development student, was involved in the Olympic football competition at Newcastle Sports Direct.com stadium. She said, “I’ve been playing football since I was 12-years-old and have always enjoyed watching the sport. I would love to work within the sport industry as an event organiser or development officer so this was really valuable experience for me.”

Lisa Wiles, a Physiotherapy graduate, runs her therapy clinic, Hands That Heal, in Pocklington. At the Olympics and Paralympics, she treated athletes from around the world. Her first role was in Newcastle, working with soccer teams for ten days; she then went to London for the wheelchair basketball games as part of the Paralympics.
Catherine Hague, a second-year Sports Society and Development student, helped with the goalball competition at the Paralympics. Having been involved in the sport during her time at University, Catherine was asked to apply for the role by Olympic organisers.

A graduate in Sports Studies and Physical Education, Chris Newsham was the Football Accommodation Manager for the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG). His role was to plan, prepare and operate every aspect of the football team accommodation – for 28 teams with 500 athletes, across both the men’s and women’s competitions. He said, “Managers reported to me in each of the five co-host cities and we had to coordinate all aspects of transport, security, medical, anti-doping and sports operations within the hotels.”

Three Sides Theatre, a theatre company formed at York St John last October, was chosen to be an official street performer for the Cultural Olympiad. Founded by third-year Film and Television Production with Theatre Studies students, Carys Cook, Sarah Kay and Chris Ward, Three Sides Theatre use performance and the media as a way of bringing communities together. The group said, “Overall the experience was incredible, we learnt so much about travelling with our work, operating as a professional company and most importantly we met lots of incredible people and heard some fascinating stories!”

Graduate Julee Sanderson was part of the Olympic opening ceremony. She said, “It still sounds very surreal to me to say ‘I was drumming during the Olympic opening ceremony’ but I was! The best moment for me was after the rings were lit and the music stopped; there was a brief pause and then the stadium erupted into applause. I was also lucky enough to be marshalling in the athletes’ parade. My position was in front of the royal box, and I had a very peculiar moment of coming out of a dance move and looking up to see the Queen looking right at us. It felt a long way from my final-year performance in St Mary Magdalene’s Leper Chapel in Ripon!”

Dr Helena Johnson, Physiotherapy Lead for Strategic Development, Health & Life Sciences, is Chair of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy’s Council and recently hosted a reception in London to highlight the contribution of the physiotherapy profession to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. She is also working to promote the wider legacy of the Games by encouraging more people of all ages and abilities to take regular exercise. She said, “It’s great that the Olympics and Paralympics are inspiring people to lead more active lives or take up new sports. Physiotherapists can help people of all ages and abilities become more mobile and active.” Find out more about the individual physiotherapists who are supporting London 2012 at www.csp.org.uk/news

Vice Chancellor Professor David Fleming said, “It’s fantastic to see our students, staff and graduates using the skills they’ve gained at University to be part of the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics. We are very proud of everyone who was chosen for this once-in-a-lifetime experience to work, perform and volunteer at this year’s Games.”
Domestic Services

The providers of a range of essential services across York St John, the in-house team of 65 staff from Domestic Services work together to create a secure, clean and comfortable environment for everyone who works, studies or lives at the University. Hazel Welsh, Domestic Services Manager, said, “We all take pride in delivering a vital function across all areas – teaching rooms, offices, public areas and student accommodation.”

“Domestic Services work together to create a secure, clean and comfortable environment at the University.”
In order to minimise the disruption to office and teaching areas, most of the cleaning is carried out either early in the morning (from 6.00am) or in the early evening (from 4.45pm, finishing at 9.00pm). Student accommodation is generally cleaned between 9.00am and 2.00pm.

Day-to-day cleaning is backed up by a full clean of each area once a fortnight and regular spot cleans. “Our cleaners are divided into teams, which come under our four Domestic Supervisors, and each person has an area they are specifically responsible for – and they all take pride in their work. They contribute to the smooth running of the University,” said Hazel. “Many of our staff stay with us for a long time and are well known to colleagues across other departments.”

Cleaners also develop a good rapport with students who live in residences. They can often play an important role in noticing if a student is unhappy and would benefit from support from Student Services.

“We also work closely with staff from Accommodation, the Portering Service and Estates,” added Hazel. “Our staff are made to feel part of the team from their interview onwards – and I’ve often been told that we are very welcoming. We have a wide age range – including a student this year! We all come together three times a year as a group and the teams meet regularly. Staff Development and the University’s Health and Safety Officer help us to provide training.”

Starting as a part-time, charge-hand cleaner at York St John 31 years ago, Hazel benefited from the encouragement of the then Domestic Bursar to receive training from the Hotel Catering and Institutional Management Association and she was steadily promoted to her current role: “I love it. I oversee all house keeping and the replacement of furniture, soft furnishings and carpets when we do refurbishments. It’s a challenging job and I’m never bored!”

Once students leave York St John at the end of the academic year, Domestic Services prepare for the various summer schools, student lets and conferences that occupy the rooms in some of the residences. “We service the accommodation like a hotel,” said Hazel, “making beds and changing linen as well as cleaning. Many delegates have visited the University several times before and so know the cleaning staff, which helps to create a friendly atmosphere.”

The summer break also enables Domestic Services to undertake deep cleaning across the University estate. One focus of their efforts this year has been contributing to the refurbishment of kitchens, bathrooms and 105 bedrooms at The Grange. This project began at the end of July and was completed in time for the arrival of students on 15 September. The teams are also involved in preparations for arrival day across all the residences.

Hazel has seen many changes and developments at York St John since she joined the staff in 1981. “The University is a rewarding place to work and I definitely like to see a job well done,” she said. “The vital thing about delivering a good service is the strength of the team working with you and job satisfaction.”

Who we are
Hazel Welsh
Domestic Services Manager, ext 6643
Sue Kearney
Domestic Supervisor (Lord Mayor’s Walk and Percy’s Lane), ext 6645
Lorraine Robinson
Domestic Supervisor (LMW evening shift), ext 6645
Linda Wilson
Domestic Supervisor (The Grange and City Residence), T: 644578
Lisa Tutill
Domestic Supervisor (Limes Court, City Residence and LMW), ext 6645

Did you know?
Our team:
Male/female split is 32%/68%
In one year we used:
103 litres concentrated cleaning liquids
383 litres toilet cleaner
34,000 waste collection bags
We clean:
Lord Mayor’s Walk:
37,674.53 square metres
The Grange:
8,886.33 square metres
City Residence:
2,740.22 square metres
Limes Court:
2,717.22 square metres
Widening Participation

Experiencing University life

The Widening Participation Summer Schools 2012 – ‘Is university for me?’ and ‘Access to Healthcare Professions’ – welcomed 39 Year 10s to the campus for a real insight into University life.

They came from 11 schools in Scarborough, Skipton, Cross Hills, Wakefield, Pontefract and Catterick Garrison. Thirty-six per cent had not visited a university before, and 82 per cent came from families with no previous experience of Higher Education (HE).

Each participant was selected by their teachers as having the potential to progress towards HE. Other widening participation ‘flags’ included whether a young person was in care, disabled, BME (black, minority ethnic), from a low-income occupational background or from a single parent household. There was no charge to the school or applicant’s family so costs were not considered a barrier.

The participants were greeted by an enthusiastic team of Student Ambassadors and staff from Health & Life Sciences and Schools & Colleges Liaison. Workshops, presentations and activities throughout the day focused on giving current information on finance, budgeting, survival skills, university jargon, navigating a prospectus and choosing a degree, as well as an in-depth introduction to health professions. At the end, presentations were made by teams of the young people in the Fountains Lecture Theatre on their ideal university and degree subjects and on the roles of the health professions.

The social centre of activities was the Students’ Union, which provided an excellent meeting space. Pre- and post-event evaluation was carried out to gain an insight into the cohort. The participants said they felt more motivated to aim towards gaining a degree and all stated they would recommend the York St John Summer Schools to a friend.

Language Buddy Scheme

The Language Buddy Scheme was set up 12 months ago with home and international students of York St John studying English Language, Counselling and Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL).

The Scheme organises social, cultural, educational and recreational activities aimed at encouraging friendship and strengthening solidarity between Turkish women living in York. Students’ voluntary efforts have helped women understand the richness and diversity of English culture and heritage, with trips to various York museums, Castle Howard, tenpin bowling and Yorkshire Lavender.

Paramjeet Kaur-Singh, BME Project Leader, said, “It is not only the Turkish community that have benefited from these visits, but also our students who have developed their own skills and knowledge of a different community for whom English is not their first language. I would like to extend a big thank you to all the student volunteers who gave their valuable time to be involved in this project: Chaya Manawamma, Samantha Robinson, Holly Thackeray, Poppy Toward, Danielle Nicholls and Zewelanji Chamunda.”

The Buddy Scheme was celebrated in July by an exhibition in the Arts foyer of Turkish culture and the achievements of the Turkish women. They displayed their arts and crafts, together with fantastic Turkish cuisine.
Reflective practice and evidence-based practice are two key skills that shape the way health professionals think.

However, because they are generally seen as discrete subjects in health education programmes, they are usually taught separately. A project led by staff in the Faculty of Health & Life Sciences is seeking to integrate these skills into a Model of Professional Thinking (MPT), in order to ensure that allied health professionals have the skills to deliver best practice. Attracting interest from colleagues internationally, the project is encouraging the development of further networking and research.

In 2009, Dr Katrina Bannigan, Reader in Occupational Therapy, and Alis Moores, a former Senior Lecturer at York St John, published a paper outlining their thoughts on the need to support students to understand the link between theory and practice. Appearing in the Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy, it proved to be the journal’s most downloaded article in 2010, and was in the top five in 2011. One of its readers was Debbie Pearson, Senior Lecturer, who, in consultation with Katrina, developed a template for the MPT that could be used by students to help them during their placements.

She said, “When we talk to students about how they integrate theory and practice, they often find it hard to articulate their experiences. I felt that the MPT gave a fresh look at the issues. One of my students showed me her notebook, which was full of thoughts about her placement but she found it difficult to organise them into a useful resource. In consultation with physiotherapists and occupational therapists in the Faculty, we drew up the template which encourages students to organise and reflect on their placement experiences, using the MPT as a structure. The relationship between reflective practice and evidence-based practice is overt within the model, and students are reminded of a need to enquire, investigate and evaluate the evidence as an integral part of their reflection.”

Katrina and Debbie delivered a seminar on the MPT and introduced the template at the annual conference of the College of Occupational Therapists in Glasgow in June 2012. This was also an opportunity to launch the MPT website, which includes a downloadable version of the template. “Around 30 delegates attended our seminar,” explained Debbie, “and as well as colleagues and students from universities and services in the UK, we also attracted people from Australia and New Zealand. The discussion took off and many of the participants are introducing the MPT to their own colleagues back home.”

Debbie discussed the MPT template with colleagues from the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys Trust as part of a Practice Placement Master Class. She also visited the University of Ruse, Bulgaria, in her role as professional practice placement lead for Occupational Therapy, and introduced the MPT template to staff and students there. They were interested in how the model could support the development of their professional thinking, and they translated the MPT template into Bulgarian.

A group of Level 3 Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy students at York St John will work as co-researchers with Katrina and Debbie to evaluate the use of the MPT as part of their dissertation module during the next semester. “We will reflect on their findings,” said Debbie, “as well as the evaluations received from our international colleagues. We will continue to develop the MPT as it has so much potential for our students, as well as other allied health professionals and their work in health and social care settings.”

For further information, please visit the MPT website at www.yorksj.ac.uk/MPT
In the spotlight

Charlotte Thomas, Senior HR Advisor

What attracted you to join York St John?
I worked in the private sector for five years and felt that I definitely needed a new challenge. I joined the University in January this year. This is an exciting time to be in Human Resources (HR) in Higher Education. I felt that the values of York St John matched my own, with a strong focus on employees and their wellbeing. The culture also played a big part for me. I’ve always favoured smaller departments and as the HR team is fairly small here there are plenty of opportunities for hands-on practice.

Describe your career so far
I did a Business Studies and Information Management degree at the University of Sheffield and after I graduated my first job was with a recruitment agency. I liked the interaction with people and became drawn towards HR as my career focus. I joined an IT company in Harrogate as a HR assistant, achieved my graduate qualifications and was promoted to a HR advisor. My professional background is as a HR generalist, which I enjoy as I like the variety of being exposed to different kinds of HR issues. The move to York St John has enabled me to continue this interest whilst also allowing me to lead specific projects.

What does your role at York St John entail?
My main focus is to provide wide-ranging advice to managers and employees, in such areas as performance and attendance management, and employee benefits. I also take the lead on specific project work as well as ensuring that we have consistency across the University in the application of HR policies and procedures. There are so many opportunities within the HR team – always something different happening – and the week goes so quickly!

Any special projects that you want to introduce?
I have particular responsibility for supporting the Staff Wellbeing Agenda. Over the coming months I will be working closely with trade union representatives and colleagues across the University, reviewing current approaches to stress management. Together with colleagues in the HR team I am also looking to improve internal systems with a focus on efficiencies. This will enable us to improve productivity by spending less time on routine admin work and more time on important HR issues. For example, I will be supporting key projects such as e-recruitment, which will see a move away from the current paper-based system. This should make the job application process easier for applicants as well as internal staff. I am currently involved in the development of the pilot system, which involves working closely with colleagues from IT.

Another project is the implementation of an employee self-service module for the HR Management Information system, which will give managers and employees greater control over their team’s and individual information. It is hoped that employees will be able to take control of the personal information which the University holds about them by allowing them to update details online – such as a change of address. Of course, anyone without access to a computer will still be able to change their details using more traditional methods.

What have been your impressions of the University and the city?
The campus is fantastic; it’s great to work somewhere with such lovely surroundings. Everyone is so friendly and it’s exciting to be part of an organisation that is forward thinking and committed to growth. And the city has great shops!

How do you spend your time away from York St John?
My husband and I have a springer spaniel, Rocky. He is our first dog and we spend plenty of time taking him for long walks whatever the weather – trying to tire him out! We also enjoy socialising with friends and family.
The London Olympics and Paralympics were a great disappointment – to the cynics and the pessimists who predicted we would grab defeat out of the jaws of victory.

Whilst the 2012 Games will go down in history as one of the best, if their legacy is to be secured we must ‘run through the tape’ and put as much effort into building active communities as our medallists did to win. The Games were like a great wedding but what is really important is the marriage that follows.

The best word to describe our new 57-acre Centre for Sport on Haxby Road is ‘big’, and its scale is matched by our ambition to develop it into one of the best sports venues for student and community sport in Europe. A lot of work has been done to have the following facilities ready for our students:

• a refurbished pavilion
• temporary changing facilities, lecture room and fitness & conditioning gym
• a cricket pitch
• two rugby pitches
• six football pitches
• a six-lane athletics sprint track and long jump pit
• three tennis courts and two netball courts
• a bowling green.

This is just the start and our intention is to develop the site dramatically over the coming months. As impressive as our new facilities are, the sports programmes that we are planning to run there will be even more so. The site will be brought to life over the next 12 months by hosting:

• the home fixtures of student teams playing in the Wednesday BUCS leagues
• Varsity matches – the first one will be against Teesside University on 10 October, involving 600 athletes
• community sport clubs including a rugby club, a football club and a cricket team
• sports-related charity events – the first, on 9 September, raised money for the British Heart Foundation.

In addition, our students will benefit from:

• a sports science support programme and improved coaching
• sport-related internships and work placements.

Our new Centre will also provide a venue for activities that promote wellbeing, health and social inclusion. Those who are not ‘the sporty type’ will find a range of recreation, leisure and health opportunities on offer, including:

• guided walks, freedom trails, heritage pathways and cycle ways
• green exercise programmes and inclusive fitness
• outdoor activities, ranging from photo competitions to gardening
• placement and voluntary opportunities.

We will take inspiration from the Paralympics – they demand from us all a positive response and action to ensure sport is inclusive and accessible. We will use our sports programmes to push boundaries and enable all participants to reach their full potential. We already host the largest goalball club in the UK but much more needs to be done. And we must also create a high-performance culture which will benefit all areas of the University, not just sport.
The annual North Yorkshire Sports Varsity will take place at the new York St John University Sports Centre Nestlé Rowntree Park on 10 October. Students from Teesside University will travel south to compete against students from York St John in what is believed to be York’s largest multi-sport event this year.

“This is a great opportunity for us to showcase our new sports facilities,” said Adam McSkimming, President of the Students’ Union. “2012 has already seen an amazing summer of sport and it is great to be able to carry on that momentum – and have the ‘home advantage’ for the first time in several years! It’s not just about the teams: everyone can get involved and I hope we attract a large crowd of supporters. We’ve been working closely with Professor Andy Smith, Head of Sports Performance and Participation, and he’s been a fantastic help. The Nestlé Rowntree Park is an amazing development for the University and the Union, and will help us to deliver the best student experience.”

The elections for Programme Reps will also take place in October; the Union (instead of the University) will oversee their work this year, with a view to carrying on this role in future. Adam explained, “We are working hard to encourage student engagement across the campus, using social media to inform our members. Facebook has been really useful in keeping first-year students in touch with the University before they start their courses.

“Community engagement is one of the themes of my Presidency and I want to make sure that our students have access to lots of opportunities to develop their CVs. We are working with staff from Careers and Employability and local charities to develop the range of volunteering opportunities available in the city. We are also backing a scheme organised by the Chaplaincy to develop a team of student Community Coordinators. This builds on the Chaplaincy’s success in recruiting 25 student volunteers to help new students move into their accommodation during Welcome Week.”

Three new members of staff are helping the Sabbatical Officers to implement their plans for the Union. Matt Walton is the Sports and Social Development Coordinator; Rosie Hedger is the Academic Development Coordinator; and Joanna Gunns is the Marketing Sales Coordinator. And new developments within the Union building itself include the installation of a big screen – 134”! – which will show sports and be used for events such as karaoke.

“I stood for election as President as I wanted to put something back,” said Adam. “I want to help our students understand how fast their three years at York St John will pass and that they should make as much of their time here as possible. To quote Albert Einstein: ‘The only source of knowledge is experience.’ York St John has been incredibly welcoming and supportive of me and I want to pass that on.”

“We are working hard to encourage student engagement.”
Student Services

From CPD to CYPE

The subject area of the Faculty of Education & Theology previously known as CPD has been formally renamed as CYPE (Children, Young People and Education).

The name change was prompted by concerns over the generic and inaccurate description that the title CPD provided, and by the need to signal the involvement of the subject area in much more than education. It has an increasingly diverse academic profile – with Foundation Degrees in Working with Children and Young People, and Supporting Learning; the new BA in Working with Children, Young People and Families (with the BA in Youth and Community Work coming on stream for 2013); the established BA in Education Studies; and the MA in Practitioner Research.

The launch was attended by Pro Vice Chancellor (Resources) David Chesser, Professor Julian Stern (Dean of the Faculty), staff, students, alumni and partners. Among the speakers was alumna Jo Whitehead, who has graduated with FD, BA and MA degrees and could testify to the transformative power of her experiences at York St John. The visiting speaker was Gill Walker, Chief Executive of Patchwork People, a social enterprise organisation.

“We asked Gill as she was able to reflect on the rapidly changing times in which we are operating,” explained Dr Mike Calvert. “She has gone from being a teacher to head, to school improvement adviser to assistant head of children’s services to redundancy at 55. During the last year she has redefined herself as an entrepreneur in order to meet the needs of young people of the North East.”

New Student Wellbeing Team

“After my father died suddenly, I stopped going to class and got behind in my work. Eventually I just felt that the world was crashing in around me and I couldn’t go on.”

Unfortunately student distress such as this is not uncommon. Student Services have noticed a significant increase in the numbers of students experiencing domestic violence, suicidal ideation, self-harm behaviours and other mental health issues. All students find university life challenging from time to time but with support from friends and family most weather the difficulties and thoroughly enjoy their time at York St John. Sometimes, however, the challenges can seem overwhelming and it is then that professional help can be useful.

To make this help more accessible, a new team has been formed within Student Services. The Wellbeing Team brings together specialist Welfare Advisers, Counsellors and a Wellbeing Adviser with expertise in the area of mental health. Complex student issues can also have a major impact on academic, accommodation and security staff and the Wellbeing Team will not only support troubled students but will provide advice and guidance to staff who are working with them.

For more information about the Wellbeing Team or Student Services, please contact Anthony Payne, Head of Student Experience, E: a.payne@yorksj.ac.uk

YSJ 2012 Day at the Races 2

Saturday 13 October, York Racecourse, Time TBC

County Stand tickets are available to order from the Alumni Development Office for £19 (usual price £28). For further information, please e-mail alumni@yorksj.ac.uk

A small proportion of each ticket sold will go to the SPARK Scholarship Fund.
Contact Yorktalk

Any comments, news or stories for the Winter 2012 issue?
Please contact Louise McKenzie in the Marketing department on T: 6466 or E: l.mckenzie@yorksj.ac.uk with your suggestions by Friday 2 November.

This magazine is also available online and in other formats. Please contact the Marketing department on T: 6960 or E: marketing@yorksj.ac.uk