

new smoking law affect us?

By Daniel Whitehead
NEWS EDITOR

HEALTH SECRETARY, Patricia Hewitt called it a moment, which "is going to save thousands of peoples lives". She was referring to the vote made last Tuesday which saw MP's from all three main political parties voting unanimously on a full smoking ban across public places in England. With changes coming after growing fears of the effects of second-hand smoke.

The ban which is due to be introduced in Summer 007, has received mixed reaction during a survey carried out on York campus by Nouse last week; with the most prominent argument against the ban being concerns over civil rights. James Copeland from Alcuin college said its an "infringement

on civil liberty". Helen Tillen also from Alcuin added "if we want to die, why can't we? They are trying to eradicate all the cool people from society."

Such concern over whether it is people's right to be able to smoke in public societies was the main reason behind several MP's voting against the bill in the commons last week. Simon Clark director of smoking support group Forest thought "The Government should educate people about the health risks of smoking but politicians have no right to force people to quit by making it more difficult for people to consume a legal product." These views were shared by a non-smoker who argued "bars and clubs should decide whether to be non-smoking".

Despite this, several students thought that the risks

posed to bar staff in a smoky environment were 'unacceptable'. A York Graduate, currently working at the Charles said 'the fact that I won't be working in a smoky environment any more is brilliant. I won't have to clear any more ashtrays, or ask people not to smoke at the bar.'

With second hand smoke being widely considered to increasing the risk of cancer and shortening life expectancy, health worries were as expected the main argument of non-smokers and smokers alike who were in favour of the ban. Smoker, Matt Gregory said 'I don't think people who are non-smokers should have to breathe my fumes, it's embarrassing!' This view was echoed by Owain Lewis a non-smoker who thought that 'peoples lives are more important than others addictions'.

This was the common view of the majority of non-smokers who were surveyed, with many expressing their pleasure at the reduction in air pollution in bars and clubs. Lucy Watkins was asked in Vanbrugh bar on Friday evening about her thoughts on the new legislation and said 'I think it's a really great idea, just here in Vanbrugh it stinks of smoke and it's awful, the changes are a good thing for health'.

James Copeland was more interested in not having to wash his jumpers so regularly.

Although the students interviewed lavished much praise upon the laws, some undergraduates voiced their concerns over the Governments role in encouraging Britain's smoking epidemic over the decades. Tom Van Rassum, a smoker who was surveyed in the Charles on Friday evening said 'I don't see how the government can tell me I can't smoke', 'if people want to go out and smoke they should be able to. Its our choice'.

His friend Jonathan Davidson, who is also a smoker, added 'the amount of money the government has got from us over the years from taxing cigarettes and now they suddenly expect the population to stop smoking, are the government going to provide nicotine patches?' Some also criticised the government for being old-fashioned. Kevin Atkinson, a York resident argued this is not New Labour this is old Conservative. We argued about Russia doing this kind of thing in the seventies.

However as one student who wished to remain unnamed remarked "the bill is bound to cause controversy as there are so many views".

New bill promises ban in public areas

By Daniel Whitehead
NEWS EDITOR

AFTER MP'S unanimously voted in new legislation which will ban smoking in all public places, how will this affect York students on campus?

Well for many of us who are in second or third years not at all as we will no longer be here. But for first-years, the new law will see considerable changes to the way smokers go about their day to day life. All campus bars and events will prohibit all smoking. This will mean anyone who wishes to light up will have to leave the event and smoke outside as all corridors will also be smoke-free zones.

However, it is less clear as to how college rooms which currently allow students to smoke in them will be affected. The bill states that members of the public in private housing will be allowed to smoke but as university corridors are communal it would seem likely that all campus accommodation will also become non-smok-

ing areas. The university when asked about how the legislation would be implemented said that it was "too early to say".

The ban which is already been implemented in the Republic of Ireland is due to be introduced in Scotland during this spring and in Northern Ireland in April 2007. And health ministers warned that the new legislation is likely to see people who choose to smoke in non-smoking areas being fined £2,500 which is an increase over a thousand percent on current fines which are a maximum of £200.

Concerns have been raised to what will happen if smokers are forced outside. With some environmentalists predicting further rises in greenhouse gas due to increases in the number of patio heaters. The heaters according to the Radio 4 Today show account for "over a million tonnes of CO2 gas every year in the UK alone. This will cancel any benefit from an in increase vehicle taxation.

The key facts:

- The smoking legislation will come into force in Summer 2007
- In England smoking will be prohibited in all public areas including bars, clubs and restaurants
- Fines for smoking in non-smoking areas are to be raised from £200 to £2500

Two youths involved in University police chase

By Daniel Whitehead
NEWS EDITOR

Two youths were arrested following a high-speed police chase that ended in Wentworth on Sunday evening.

During a routine stop and check by a local police patrol car in Tang Hall, the two males said to be aged between 16 and 18 fled the scene. After a chase which

lasted several minutes, the van which was a Ford Escort came to a halt, after crashing into a fern tree on the fields situated above the Biology department.

The youths attempted to escape from the car at the time of the crash, with one being arrested at the scene and the second escaping despite attempts by several police to capture the fugitive on campus. However, he later handed himself in to

the police station after 'further enquiries' had been made to his whereabouts.

Police officers at the scene of the crash refused to comment at the time of the incident. But later in the evening, duty Sergeant Pearson of the York Police Department said that the youths were "from the Eastern side of York", and known to have been involved in "several crimes of a similar nature in the past". He added that the chase involved two police cars in the original road pursuit and further vehicles were deployed to search for the youth when he fled on foot.

Nouse became aware of the incident after a youth was seen running passed our offices between the hours of six and seven on Sunday 19th February. A second year Politics undergraduate who



A Ford Escort (above) collided with a fern tree near Biology on Sunday and the airbag was released during the incident (bottom right). Photo: Adam Sloan

wished to remain unnamed witnessed one of the youths fleeing the scene. He said 'I was walking home past Vanbrugh after a hard days

work and observed a sporty looking youth sprinting past me. Soon after a policeman followed and I realised that he was in pursuit'. When

asked whether he had considered making a citizen's arrest he added 'I didn't think it was my prerogative to chase after him'.

