

MEDIA HEADS
AUTUMN TERM REPORT

Emma Kempson- Ripple Editor

This year's *Ripple* journey has been a rather bumpy ride, with an extremely difficult start of the year. Left with no media training, no handover from the previous editor and not one single design template to work from, it seemed we were in trouble.

After I had selected a highly- skilled team, we set to work on creating our first ever magazine, trying to figure out the software as we went along. Our first issue was met with mixed reviews, and we realised that our design efforts were in need of major improvement. Cue a division of roles: I would take charge of the magazine's content, and Hayley would focus on layout, with me overseeing both sides of production. The second issue saw a major change in design and we were highly commended on our achievement, however struggling to define *The Ripple's* identity was still proving to be an issue; we need something that marks us apart from all other magazines and we need to develop our own brand.

That's where the company 'Seed Creativity' come in. We are currently being provided with media training from the editors behind *From Dusk to Dawn* magazine to improve upon our design and really create a high- quality publication. I have had my eyes opened to the importance of imagery within *The Ripple*: before now it has been a last- minute job, but our training has highlighted that a great photograph can really make or break an article. From now on we will be sourcing our own imagery for every feature and implementing illustrations to add that 'je ne sais quoi'. We will also be trained in the marketing and advertisement side of publication, and I believe this will ensure that we are running more like a 'professional' magazine, providing the students with the best service possible.

Funding is, and always has been, an issue with the media groups, and with printing costs so high, it is vital that we are able to pull in more money through advertisement and/or sponsorship to enable us to produce a fifth edition in May. Our training from 'Seed Creativity' will teach us how we can really sell our product to local companies, and the implementation of a paid membership this year was established to help with this, as well as define ourselves as a well- respected society and encourage high- quality journalism.

We aim to come up with a marketing strategy alongside LUSH and LUST to create a media product that local companies and businesses will want to buy in to, and my decision to appoint a sponsorship secretary this year with a particular strength in this field will be vital in this process. Working with the other two media groups is something that has been encouraged by the Union from the very beginning of the year and we are always trying to forge these links. With the emergence of the Tingo website, we aim to produce a media hub with exclusives from across all three groups, and we have been informed that both LUSH and LUST will be adding content there very soon.

Creating and maintaining links within the Union was always my main priority, and I set this out in the very beginning in my manifesto. This year we have been forging a relationship with the University Photography Society, and using the resources we already have available

to us is absolutely crucial. I have stayed true to my promise of a focus on local news and features as opposed to national scoops, and I really do believe that this is the reason *The Ripple* has seen a great improvement from last year. This is a magazine by the students and for the students, and so university- based content is always prioritised; this can also be seen in the fact that the University News section has been extended to six pages now, instead of four.

Content wise, we have been inundated with fantastic articles and opportunities, and the creation of Tingo is highly important here, as whenever there isn't room for an article to go in the magazine, we can put it online. This means that more students are able to get their work published, and we can release more articles that are not date- dependent and therefore interfere with print deadlines. The website is continually being developed and design and branding is still something that needs to be established, however we are certainly on the right track.

Regarding articles, the standard of journalism has been outstanding, and by sending out e-mails to all members about content needed I ensure that events and topics that need to be addressed are included in the magazine. We have been involved with the Radio One Student Tour which truly was fantastic, and the interviews we have been able to get have been extremely exciting, with Kasabian, Fearne Cotton, Zane Lowe, Billy Bragg, the Vice Chancellor Professor Sir Robert Burgess and Dave Spikey just to name a few. Furthermore, *The Ripple* has opened up several opportunities for our team, with an involvement in a marketing campaign 'Cheer Up Leicester' for Dave's Leicester Comedy Festival being just one. Our next project is the Executive Elections, and this year, through *The Ripple* and Tingo, we aim to provide the students with the most media coverage there has ever been about them, with interviews, exclusive scoops and daily articles.

So, the road to success is never an easy one, but with the help we are being given by Seed Creativity, by continuing to uphold strong links within the Union, by increasing advertisement funding, and by maintaining a high level of quality control of articles published, I do believe we are set for a very exciting second semester.

Roxanne Pointu - LUST Director General

LUST has had a massive boom in membership this year and so it has meant that the dynamics of the station and its exec team have needed to accommodate this. We have extended our exec from 5 members to 15, gained sponsorship and have had successful weekly socials. Training has been a massive issue within the team as only 1 of the 5 original exec members was fully trained on editing and camera work. Regardless of the process being slow, we have all managed to sharpen and acquire new skills and our move to using DSLR's has not only brought us into the more modern and refined side of television, but has meant that digitising and uploading content does not take hours but minutes. Our machines are ridiculously slow which does not help with the editing process, however we will be upgrading their RAM this semester. Admittedly our output has been held up by their issues which has taken time to resolve this year. Regardless, it's all part of the learning process. A lot of the Freshers tapes were corrupted and so not of much use due to insufficient storage facilities which are sadly out of our control. However, we are working on using whatever bits

of Freshers we can recover to create a promo for Refreshers. Furthermore, we have filmed Battle of the Dances and are working on their DVD currently. We have high hopes that varsity should be done this semester also, but I do stress that it has not been an easy feat considering our team are completely new to authoring DVDs and varsity is possibly the hardest task we've had in terms of editing with our machines. This term we are going to concentrate predominantly on the National Student Television Awards (NaSTA). It is vital, in my opinion, to do so as it offers students a great experience of networking and having some of the top people in the industry assess our work as a station. Furthermore, NaSTA have been a continuous means of support with regards to training and technical help. Regardless of NaSTA being our top priority, we do not want to let our shows slip and so with a new production schedule in place, are working on skit shows that are available for all members to partake in and our main shows for which the material is currently being edited to put online. Our website is almost ready to go live, but I would prefer it to do so once I have some decent content from this year to put up with it. The LUST Lounge screen has finally been put up and we are currently in the process of selecting what we want to use for it. We were also the first station in the country to display our work on the NaSTA YouTube channel which has received positive feedback. We have always done relatively well within NaSTA, having won awards almost every year and my hope is to continue doing so!