

# UCL student saves race battle casualty

Alix Pryde

UCL STUDENTS recently found themselves with a front row seat at an extreme example of racial unrest. On 28 April residents at Pranker House, a UCL hall of residence in North Gower Street, were drawn to their windows to witness a young man being stabbed and beaten.

The incident was the latest in a long history of violent racial attacks in what the police describe as a 'flashpoint area'.

### 'Flashpoint area' say police

It occurred after several white youths, believed to be from outside the area, had threatened a local shopkeeper. Brandishing a stick and a hammer, the youths allegedly threatened to kill the shopkeeper and wreck his shop.

Two Asians who had entered the shop moments before refused to leave the premises, and the white youths left the shop. The owner dialed 999 in order to alert the police, but was told that no units were available at the time, but one would be sent as soon as possible.

When the youths returned minutes later, they found between ten and fifteen local Bangladeshis waiting for them. In the ensuing violence an eighteen year old youth was stabbed.

### Youth stabbed in fight

From a window at Pranker House Joseph de Saram, a medical student at UCL, witnessed the victim receive a severe blow to the base of the skull "You could see the metal bar bend round his head," he said.

Mr de Saram then ran outside in order to administer first aid: "When I got outside I saw that he was bleeding from the base of the



Police at the aftermath of a racial incident that recently occurred near Pranker House, a UCL hall of residence.

spine as well as from the head." The police have said that his prompt action almost certainly saved the man's life.

Drummond Street has a history of racial disorder. In the past year, anything from broken milk bottles to CS gas have been used as weapons. According to one

restaurantier, there have been racial problems in the area for more than fifteen years. He explained how, at first, the community would 'turn the other cheek' to the racist abuse, but progressive generations have refused to do so.

The police say they are seeking to prevent any further

disturbance by increasing their presence in the area. They fear that, as in previous summers, when there have been as many as four or five incidents a week, this summer will bring an increase in the violence.

Since the battle on 28 April other incidents have occurred. Last week an Asian man was allegedly

threatened with a sawn-off shotgun which was aimed at him from a distance of only six inches from his face.

As one resident of Pranker House said recently, "Riots on your doorstep are about the only living thing Pranker has in common with LA."

## Loans defaulters to go to Court?

Four former UK students may be facing legal action for failing to pay money they owe under the Government's student loans scheme.

When *Pi* asked The Student Loans Company, the Glasgow-based company that administers the scheme, which institutions these students came from, a spokesperson said that the Company "is not prepared to

### Viviane Kaiser

release any details about the students."

The first batch of deductions (the company predicts a default rate of six or seven per cent) began last month, when 57,000 borrowers graduated last summer. 80 per cent have made the contributions due, and about

7,500 have made detailed applications for deferment on grounds of unemployment or low salary.

The Student Loans Company insists that all repayments are closely monitored, with non-payers being chased up within a fortnight of repayment falling due.

It warns that wilful defaulters will be taken to court.

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