EDITORIAL

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In bringing together an eclectic collection of articles, selected from across the many undergraduate courses of the University of Central Lancashire, it is interesting to observe the common threads and overlapping interests which unwittingly draw them together. *Diffusion* Volume 7, Issue 1 is no exception. In this issue, which includes eight articles from seven different disciplines (Built and Natural Environment, Midwifery, Social Work, English Literature, Religion Culture & Society, Forensic Science and Forensic Psychology) the most obvious interconnecting thread, weaving its way across four subject specific boundaries, is that of legality and the systems in place to uphold the law.

From Social Work Jonathan Leniewski’s research into ‘Young people’s voices being heard in the community of Clayton Brook’ raises concerns about social unrest in the community, not least the relationship between the police and the young people of Clayton Brook. The legal question is also crucial to Bridget Chandler’s English Literature article, which addresses ‘Revenge and the problems of justice in Thomas Kyd’s *The Spanish Tragedy*’, a popular play in the 1590s in which personal revenge is set against a failing judicial system that in turn raises questions of legal, moral and divine authority. The thread then broadens into Forensic Science with Alan Forrest’s analysis of the implications following a legal suit which resulted in a ‘landmark ruling’: ‘*Jones v Kaney*: the removal of expert witness immunity and its potential impact on forensic scientists’. The question of law and order then threads into Psychology with Leah Greenwood’s research exercise, ‘Adjusting the search space in the facial composite system EvoFIT’, which attempts to improve this computerised system, currently used in police investigations to reconstruct images of suspected perpetrators.

In addition to the legal aspect there are other connecting interests. Diverse as they are Chelsea Page’s article from Religion Culture & Society, ‘God in a scientific world: creationism v evolution’, and Holly Rain’s from English Literature, ‘Survival in Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake* and *The Year of the Flood*’, share a common concern for the pervading struggle between science and faith. This major question will, I hope, also cross further disciplinary boundaries as it draws in readers from all subject areas. Even the first two articles: ‘A study into the effect of climate conditions on radial growth patterns of a number of tree species’ by Rebecca Wild from Built and Natural Environment, and ‘The use of water immersion in the facilitation of “normal labour”’ by Emily Hall in Midwifery, although again sharply focused on very different issues, both share a general respect for the natural
world and the ways in which informed observations of nature, or what is natural, can benefit scientific progress.

These broader interests and overlapping concerns serve to highlight the benefits of a multi-disciplinary journal, which provides readers with a wider perspective in which to place their own increasingly specialised areas of study.

In selecting outstanding work by undergraduate students, it is inevitable that four of these articles (Wild, Leniewski, Page and Greenwood) were written in the final year of an honours degree programme. However, I am delighted to point out that of the remaining four, three (Chandler, Rain and Forrest) were produced in the second year of study and one (Hall) in only the first year.

I should like to express my gratitude to the members of staff (First Readers) who recommended these articles and supervised minor revisions in the editing process, the reviewers (Second Readers) who provided valuable feedback in the early stages, and to members of the Editorial Team who attended production meetings and helped to bring this issue to fruition. But the credit overall lies with the student authors themselves: their articles bear witness to the diligence, enthusiasm and hard work which went into each outstanding achievement.