

In Brief

A cup of coffee and a holiday, please...

Café concept could spark a revolution in travel industry... [more](#)

»

Make a date to find fast friends

Speed sessions arrive in Bedfordshire... [more](#)

»

Boxing clever in the world of model cars

Scott goes online to blow away the cobwebs... [more](#) »

Have you got it takes to sit on the bench?

Bosses urged to make time for magistrates... [more](#) »

Over here - the US medical students keen to play a part

Luton college is a secret success story for town... [more](#) »

County to host pilot counselling project

Scheme can bring comfort to road crash victims... [more](#) »

WI girls gets set for a skin flick session

Hundreds will flock to special screening of hit film... [more](#) »

Around the County News

Over here - the US medical students keen to play a part

Luton college is a secret success story for town

For more than a year, 200 young medical students from the United States have been living and working in Luton. But how many locals have heard of their alma mater – the American-run St Christopher's College of Medicine?

Precious few, it would seem. But now that it has had time to get established, that's something the college wants to address.

Back in the States, American medical schools are expected to be involved and active in their communities, and staff and students at St Christopher's can't wait to start making a positive contribution to Luton life.

"We're here and we're ready and eager to make a difference," is the message coming loud and clear from St Christopher's.

Trying to become a doctor in the United States is a pretty competitive business – an average year sees 39,000 well-qualified applicants chasing 15,000 places.

Which is why some 24 establishments like St Christopher's have been set up in various parts of the world – private, independent, US-run medical schools offering training to students, mostly American, that will qualify them to complete their clinical training back home in the States.

"The American medical hierarchy is very powerful and puts strict limits on admissions to medical schools," explains Dr Paul Cherian, Associate Dean for Medical Education at St Christopher's.

A+A-1=*



Happy to be here: some of the college's 200 students

In Brief

Bethan still daddy's little girl

TA soldier dad reunited with girl born two months before his call-up to Iraq... [more](#) »

Gong for Jack in Queen's Birthday honours

OBE for Britain's highest ranking Asian fire officer... [more](#) »

Feast of soccer in memory of Emily

Police organise tournament as tribute to murdered teenager... [more](#) »

Bedford a laughing stock to US readers

Coast to coast columnist holds art experiment up to ridicule... [more](#) »

A £1.1 million Victorian gem - and a Luton address

Mansion with links to town's industrial past goes on the market... [more](#) »

End of the road for a famous Luton name

Oakleys of Chapel Street is to close for good... [more](#) »

Another pat on the back for ambulance staff

Report is full of praise for county's team... [more »](#)

Chubby kids can learn how to change their ways

Fitness instructor sets up special squad... [more »](#)

Fancy a flash of Beryl's beauties?

Britain's favourite artist's work on show in pioneering exhibition... [more »](#)

Dazzling Dave hopes to magic up a top title

Houghton Regis trickster in the running for entertainer award... [more »](#)

Baby joy for amputation battler Jessica

Deep vein thrombosis victim gives birth in same hospital where she lost her legs... [more »](#)

Is there a Luton link to Diana's missing millions?

Pub regulars chew over code mystery as star's lost fortune is sought... [more »](#)

Heavyweight Andre learns the power of the jab

Hormone injections could help combat obesity... [more »](#)

Tarzan swings in to pick up a gong

Uni honour for former deputy PM... [more »](#)

"It's very expensive to run schools like this in the US. It's cheaper to run them over here. Why Luton? Well, originally we were in Cambridge but as we needed to expand, it became cheaper for us and for our students to move to Luton.

"Now, we're increasingly getting applications from UK students."

Running a medical school obviously requires the co-operation of hospitals and universities, and St Christopher's has an association with King's College and Ealing hospitals in London and is very grateful for the use of laboratories at the University of Luton.

Now they are keen to explore possibilities of co-operation with Luton and Dunstable Hospital and with Luton teaching Primary Care Trust. Dr Cherian said: "It's a fact that the more medical students there are in a hospital, the higher its standards are raised. The standard of care goes up, it really is a boon for a hospital. In turn, that offers benefits to the whole community."

If it's more economical for the college to operate over here, that's not the case for its students, who find the general cost of living noticeably higher in the UK.

Not that American students are as frightened of debt as their British counterparts, having long been used to loan systems.

It's not uncommon for medical students to end up owing around £70,000, said Dana Eilen, former president of the college's American Medical Student Association (AMSA). "But once qualified, doctors' salaries are very high so it's acceptable."

They are also used to a much higher standard of student accommodation, and were amazed at the 'box' sized rooms in which most British students live.

They have been disappointed that many landlords are unwilling to rent to them because they are 'students' and point out that most of them in fact are graduate students, having already completed a first degree. "And we do a LOT of studying, not partying, unlike many British students," they protest.

On a less serious level, Dana spoke for them all when he also expressed great disappointment at Luton's lack of a Starbucks American coffee shop.

"They are great places to study, and that's something we miss in Luton. There aren't many places to study. We need a Starbucks!"

Despite all this, the students are convinced they've made the right decision. "I think that by throwing yourself into an international community, and especially such a multicultural one as here in Luton, you will end up becoming a better doctor," said Jarrett Flood, president of student government.

"Luton is providing us with that opportunity and we are very

Will Hoo treasure be saved for the nation?

Minister places temporary export ban on £900,000 bronze work... [more »](#)

TV medics have starring role in L&D drama

Docs from The Royal rely on hospital for emergency delivery... [more »](#)

Cheers! A health unto our unsung heroes!

Winners announced in first Herald & Post health awards... [more »](#)

Chef chalks up five-star menus for youngsters

No more lunchtime lumpy potatoes... [more »](#)

A model start for Big Brother star Nush

Reality TV star's Luton life revealed... [more »](#)

Are you a sucker for a robot vacuum cleaner?

Luton firm is first to the market with hand-free machine... [more »](#)

Let me entertain Hoo!

Singing star Robbie has role in latest location shoot at stately home... [more »](#)

Super slim Tina's success in the spotlight

Magazine profile of Luton woman who slimmed down from size 22 in a matter of months... [more »](#)

Quick-thinking copper phones home for help

999 call for help in remote Rocky Mountains is relayed through Bedfordshire call centre... [more »](#)

Mark's back in the top 40

Second single success for Luton star in the making... [more »](#)

Super slimmer Jackie is a Blondie bombshell

'I couldn't be happier - I used to look more like Buster Bloodvessel'... [more »](#)

Action! Another Luton Uni graduate makes the big time

BBC job boost for Gemma, 21... [more »](#)

Hard man Bronson shows his softer side

Serial hostage-taker donates artwork cash to good cause... [more »](#)

L&D patients to take part in cannabis trial

Pain relief project could OK medical use of banned drug... [more »](#)

Airline's eighth series takes to the skies

EasyJet up for another screen test... [more »](#)

Mela is the word on the street

Huge crowds expected for festival... [more »](#)

willing to come out of our comfort zone."

Dr Cherian speaks very highly of his students.

"They wouldn't come all this way to study medicine if they didn't have high motivation.

"I believe the level of motivation here is about 100 per cent higher than you would find at any other medical school in the States."

It's a motivation that extends to a real desire to make a contribution to their new community.

Jarret and his vice president Iman Zeidan, together with Dana and Angie Estadilla, who has taken over from Dana as president of AMSA, are eager to go out into the community and help in areas of particular need across the town.

Jarrett said: "As a student body, we feel we can be a real asset to the community. We want to give something back.

Angie added: "Perhaps we could run some sort of screening programmes or health information programmes. There is a lot of HIV and teenage pregnancy in this area, so we know there is a need."

Dr Cherian agrees: "We see a medical school as something that provides a service rather than as a business."

Not surprisingly, the students didn't have to spend long in Luton before hearing how disparagingly people, especially locals, tend to talk about it.

"Okay, it's not a perfect place, nowhere is," said Jarret. "But we don't want to criticise it, we'd like to help to make it better."

22 September 2003

Search Our News Archive

Enter Search Text

Search Type

[Advanced Search](#)

Where the hemline meets the waterline...

Fashion student's Venice-inspired designs could be the start of something big... [more »](#)

Is this the world's biggest wedding cake?

17 tier monster costs couple more than £1,000... [more »](#)

Duke dies only eight months after succeeding to title

Devoted custodian of Woburn well known to TV audiences... [more »](#)

Historic regiment in the firing line

Anglians could be hard hit by defence cuts, MP warns... [more »](#)

Say cheese, says the wedding photographer

Special occasion cake that you've just gouda have a look at!... [more »](#)

Old boy AI turns back the clock for TV Time Team

Bedford School secrets uncovered by televised dig... [more »](#)

'Night blight' campaigners want to see stars

Report highlights Bedford's worst offenders ... [more »](#)

Champ Paula is equal to Anne's mind games

Bedford star runner is top celebrity in national IQ test...
[more »](#)

Bedford's best and brightest offer a claim to fame

Notables ancient and modern will feature on heritage trail...
[more »](#)

Sponsorship? What planet are you on?

Firms cool on backing Eagle mission to Mars...
[more »](#)

Admiration for advert from a bygone age

Victorian cigarette plug will not be uncovered for long... [more »](#)