



DOG ATTACK!

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Topic: Bizarre

Some of the more faint-hearted amongst you may have thought to yourselves at some point in the last few weeks: "Ooh, I wonder if one of those scary looking security dogs walking around the uni is going to bite anyone." Well, unfortunately for me, one of them did. I was witness to an unprovoked attack by one of the Alsatians, and it got me wandering why they are here in the first place.

No doubt, everyone that uses the Highfield campus will have noticed the slightly odd presence of a pack of snarling companions to our security guards, and will have been witness to a number of growls, barks, and the subsequent squeals of frightened girls (and probably a few of the rugby lads as well). As I pitifully sob over the two teeth marks in my thigh, and soak up the sympathy of those around me, I question whether the inclusion of these aggressive, and seemingly unpredictable creatures in the University environment is doing more harm than good.

If I was a suicidal terrorist, a hammer-wielding loon, or even a cunning library book thief, the prospect of an encounter with one of the monstrous mutts would indeed be a daunting one, and may make me think twice before I inflicted my reign of terror over the defenceless students. It may, however, be necessary to ask yourself when the last time was that you saw any incident happen at the University in broad daylight that required even a raised voice from a security guard, let alone a fully fledged lunge for the jugular from a demented hunting machine.

The stern hounds give the place the atmosphere of a high-security prison, or suggest that an impromptu drugs search is just one false move away, and their occupancy of the walkways serves to promote a sense that we are in fact the ones being kept under control. Look at one of those pugnacious pups the wrong way and they will snap a crazed warning at you, and any attempts by the security guards to control them seem to be worryingly inadequate. It seems to me that whether the plaintiff is an unlucky student or a hapless yob, the unruly dogs are a law-suit waiting to happen.

I am convinced that if the victim of a bite attack was more devious (or perhaps more shrewd) than myself, he or she would now be photographing the injuries with a little added ketchup for effect, and claiming psychological damage due to the trauma of it all to the delight of a drooling solicitor. I am not going to sue, but instead I will be a good little jobsworth and write an article for the University publication. Hmm, having said that...

No, I can't be bothered.

I appreciate that the move to step up security on campus is an issue that is ultimately concerned with improving the safety and sense of assurance among the students. I also appreciate that the introduction of a team of canine guardians may have come in response to concerns that have been raised over the inadequacies of the security guards or the system in place over recent years. Surely, though, an increase in manpower is the best move. What can the dogs really do that the guards, or in the worst-case scenario, the police, cannot do (apart from biting through human flesh, of course)?

To coin an old cliché, dog's a man's best friend, and I am myself a dog lover. I love curling up with a nice cuddly bundle of fur, and throwing sticks for them to be loyally returned. I am just a little bit perplexed as to how I have been attacked by the very dog put in place to protect me. Give me a guard-hamster any day.

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