

FELIX



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Union set for sabbatical showdown

DAVID ROBERTS

Bowing to grassroots pressure from Medical School students, proposals are currently being drawn up in an attempt to force the College to accept that the Medical School Presidency should remain a sabbatical position. However, the need for support from the highest levels of College, coupled with the need to find an additional £14 000 of funding, means that the battle to secure the position will be a complex and longwinded one.

Although the sabbatical position of ICSM Union President was due to be relinquished at the end of this academic year (to be replaced by a non-sabbatical officer), a combination of student support and London-wide changes have led current incumbent Becky England to draw up a set of proposals asking the College to accept the retention of the sabbatical status. Despite the fact that the role is a Union position, College support is essential, as without it any student taking a year out would not be guaranteed a place the following year.

Before the series of mergers which created the School of Medicine in 1997, only one of the major components, the Charing Cross and Westminster School, had a sabbatical - however, as the old (smaller) schools were all based



ICSM do the meeting thang

Photo: Jonas

around one campus, coordinating student activity was a much simpler process. Now, medical students are spread across four main teaching sites, and according to a draft copy of Becky England's proposal (which is due to be presented to College Council later this week), "A central figure is needed to collate opinion and then express this at the relevant committees... only a sabbatical can hope to fulfil this role".

The real sticking point in the plans, however, is likely to be the question of financing. Although ICU President Natasha Newton insists that "We need to get permission to have the sabbatical first, and then think about details later",

the issue of who is going to pay the sabbatical salary - approximately £13 500 to £14 000 once taxes have been included - is one that is certain to be prominent in the minds of many of those debating the issue. Currently, the Union are only being funded for five sabbaticals, and thus the sixth salary (generated by the addition of the Education & Welfare position) must be found by making cut-backs in other areas. ICU insists that this situation cannot continue, and Becky England has expressed a hope that the Medical School itself may be able to provide funding - but with ICSM finances currently believed to be in the same precarious state as those

of the Union, this would seem unlikely. Whatever happens, however, ICU's Deputy President (Finance & Services), Ian Clifford, insists that external funding must be found, stating adamantly that "We're not going to pay".

Although the plan is fully supported by ICU, there is still a long way to go before any suggestion can become a reality, and it may prove a struggle to force a decision through the College in time for the usual round of elections. The key issue seems to be one of support from senior staff in the Medical School - if they throw their weight behind the proposals, it is thought that the College will look favourably on the proposal, and consequently the Union is seeking the help of ICSM Principle Chris Edwards.

One of the biggest factors supporting the proposal is a comparison with the other medical schools across London. Of the four large groups created in the 1997 round of mergers, all four currently have sabbatical positions specifically designated to deal with medical issues. More importantly, however, only ICU plans to remove the position at the end of the year, which clearly suggests that, right across London, the process of integration is taking far longer than anyone initially expected.

Want to send a message to someone special? Then get your Valentine's messages to us at felix@ic.ac.uk before Tuesday evening, and you'll see them in print next Monday.

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LBS dean tops the salary scales

GARETH MORGAN

John Quelch, Dean of the London Business School, is Britain's highest-earning academic, with a salary of £252 000 in the last academic year. This is more than double the national average, and over £100 000 more than the second-placed vice-chancellor, Sir Stuart Sutherland of Edinburgh University, according to a league table published in last week's Times Higher Education Supplement.

Vice-chancellors pay rises last year averaged 4.9%, considerably higher than the 3.5% awarded to academic staff. Lecturers unions criticised the increases in the light

of last year's academic staff protests over pay. Many vice-chancellors, including Professor Quelch, received larger pay rises.

The London Business School employs two other members of academic staff who are paid more than £200 000 per year, but Professor Quelch justified their pay as being "In line with the School's ranking as the best business school in Europe", according to the Financial Times. Fees for the Master of Business Administration (MBA) course at the School are £15 540 per year for a two year course. Imperial College's Management School came second in the table.

Lord Oxburgh, Rector of Impe-

rial College, earned a comparatively meagre £107 000, slightly above the national average of £104 000. He only took a small pay rise, however, and this figure does not take into account his residence at 170 Queen's Gate. Imperial does have 67 members of staff earning above £100 000 per annum however - more than any other institution. Sir Richard Sykes, head of GlaxoWellcome and tipped to become the next Rector, earned £3.6 million last year, and is set to do "Quite well" from share options after Glaxo's merger with SmithKline Beecham. He is currently earning the equivalent of Lord Oxburgh's salary every eleven days.

In Brief

IS IT COLD THIS MORNING?

If your Monday morning lectures are unusually cold, it could be due to the College's heating system being turned off last week. The steam supply was turned off last Friday, and should have been back on (courtesy of the new Combined Heating and Power Plant) on Sunday night.

PORTALOO RETURNS

A surprise reshuffle in the shadow cabinet saw ex-treasury minister Michael Portillo move into the position of Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer. Mr Portillo, newly elected MP for Kensington and Chelsea (following the death of Alan Clark) returns to the front bench to directly challenge Gordon Brown; this follows his embarrassing defeat in the 1997 general elections at the hands of Labour MP Stephen Twigg.

Mr Portillo, 46, replaces Francis Maude, who has moved into the role of Shadow Foreign Secretary. Mr Maude was openly criticised for what was perceived as his inability to challenge Gordon Brown on key issues. With the economy in good shape and no sign of the slump and recession predicted following the collapse of

markets across South-East Asia, the general feeling is that the famously right-wing Eurosceptic Mr Portillo will have a job on his hands. Talking to the BBC, he said he would battle for a "lower burden of tax" and "less interference in business" and proceeded to immediately launch a scathing attack on the Labour Party's support for the "spectacularly badly performing" Euro, warning of the "economic difficulties" inherent in maintaining one exchange rate for the whole of Europe.

SMOKING LINKED TO COT DEATH

New research has indicated that babies who are exposed to cigarette smoke have a massively increased risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS, or cot death). The study found that for every hour a baby spends in a smoke-filled room, the risk of cot death doubles. Six out of ten cases of SIDS could be prevented, according to the authors.

ELECTIONS

When Felix went to press last Wednesday night, no fewer than fifteen candidates had put their names down for sabbatical posi-

tions. They were:

President:

Cengiz Atasoy, Will Bentley, Andrew Brown, Hamish Common, Toby Dore, Anthony Mayhew, Dave Edwards and Richard Taylor.

Deputy President

(Finance and Services)

Etienne Pollard.

Deputy President

(Clubs and Societies)

Sam Sharpe.

Deputy President

(Education and Welfare)

Stef Evans, Jonny Hall and Khilan Shah.

Felix Editor

Rosie Beckett and John Clifford New Election (Re-Open Nominations) is also standing for all posts. Campaigning starts today, and hustings are next week, in dB's (Tuesday 15), St Mary's (Wednesday 16) and Charing Cross (Thursday 17).

HOTTER THAN HELL

American scientists have isolated a compound, denatonium capsi-conate, which is one hundred times hotter than the hottest chilli. Detectable at concentrations of one part in ten million, the burning sensation caused by tasting it can last up to half an hour. It is intended to be used to stop mice gnawing through electric cables.

Racist graffiti in hall

SUNIL RAO

A number of residents in Linstead Hall, Princes Gardens, were shocked to discover racist graffiti and comments defacing a hall blackboard and, name tags on room doors last month.

The acts were first discovered on Saturday, January 15. A student visiting the room of an Asian friend found that their name tag had been defaced. A quick check soon revealed that the tags of about twenty other Asian residents - in particular, those whose name tags suggested they were obviously Asian - had been similarly defaced, and that an offensive message targeting Asians had been written on the blackboard on Level 1, the hall's Lower Gallery.

The defaced tags were collected together and the matter reported to the subwardens immediately. The blackboard was scrubbed clean, but the offending messages reappeared later on that evening - discovered by two students returning from Basics Pizzeria, after being away for fifteen minutes. This had led to strong suspicions that a resident must have been responsible.

If it was an inside act committed by a resident, the consequences would be fairly serious for the student (or students) concerned - with almost certain expulsion not just from Linstead but from College itself. At the moment, the matter has been reported to the police and security are apparently keeping a close watch on the situation, but no further acts of similar vandalism have been noted.

The next day saw the late-night

discovery that the blue sign saying "Linstead Hall" outside the hall had been defaced with a message similar in tone, written using white correction fluid. Stickers advocating white supremacist group Combat 18 were found around the residence, causing considerable concern amongst residents.

At the time of going to press, the incidents had not recurred and no culprit had been found. Warden Dr Jon Marangos was unable to comment on the issue other than to condemn racism and any racist act in general, but the opinions of individual Asian residents ranged from "it must have just been a tasteless prank" to "whoever did it deserves a good beating-up from our posse." The apparent absence of any overt threats or abuse directly targeting particular residents thus far, and the fact that there have not been any further messages of this kind mean that not a great deal can be done apart from monitoring the situation.

Lina Nawas, a reapp in Linstead Hall, commented that whoever responsible must have been "really low to stoop to that level", and affirmed that those responsible should be "severely punished and kicked out of College" for their activities. ICU President Tasha Newton, herself a resident in Linstead Hall, said that if it turned out that those involved were actually racist students, it would be "very sad" given the "more interesting backgrounds" that many students here at Imperial hail from. Many students Felix has spoken to have expressed incredulity and open horror, disgust and shame that such a tasteless act could be committed by students at Imperial.

Fees battle continues

JIM GEACH

There has been a series of cases of students rebelling against the tuition fee system. About 15 students from Oxford University have been expelled for refusing to pay their fees, and more recently, several members of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) - one of the UK's top ten universities - have also decided that the cost of education is too much, and said they will not pay either. Students occupied the School's Administration building last month, causing the School to close for a day. University College London Union considered supporting the occupation, but the proposal was vetoed at an emergency general meeting.

For students at IC who can afford their tuition fees, but refuse to pay them, the College's policy is to not allow them to move on to the next year. Kevin Butcher, Deputy President (Education and Welfare) explained that by Christmas last (academic) year, approximately forty students still hadn't paid that fee instalment, but by the end of the year, the figure had been reduced to just two or three. These students did not have the academic ability to pass that year, and so could not graduate to the next year anyway. Some colleges are not so strict though. One student at Goldsmiths College who refused to pay his fees was allowed back the following year, running up an increasing debt, which will have to be paid off before he receives his diploma - if he does not pay, he will not officially graduate.

Mr Butcher explained that if someone decided that they did not want to pay fees, be it for political beliefs or anything else, then the Union would support students but "not lead them blindly". The Union would make it clear to the student in question what the outcome of his or her decision might be, and in most cases this would be expulsion. At the moment it seems that if a student is financially sound as to be able to pay their fees, then the College will not allow them back the next year if that sum is not paid. However, if a student has the academic potential to pass the year, and come out with a degree at the end of the course but is unable to pay the fee for some financial crisis, then the College would acknowledge this fact and act accordingly. For example, the 8 per cent interest rate for late fees would be knocked off, or in dire situations the College might pay for the student itself. Mr Butcher warned "students must approach the College as soon as the problem appears" and the student must be able to prove their financial situation.

While the issue of tuition fees is currently a major area of concern for students, and recent political changes have taken the first step to amend the situation, there is little choice but to pay if a qualification is desired in the end. Yet if there are genuine problems with the payment of fees then the College has the ability to help out students. In contrast, if the problem is simply a political opinion, then students may have to sacrifice their degrees for their principles.

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Halls

DAVID ROBERTS

When Beit Hall is finally completed this summer (hopefully no more than three or four weeks behind schedule) it will be the end of the first stage in the College's planned redevelopment of its hall stock. Over the next few years, the rolling programme will see the refurbishment of Southside, Weeks and the entirety of Evelyn Gardens, alongside the sale of Montpelier, Garden, Brabazon and Olave House, with the ultimate aim of producing a set of halls which can be both profitable for conferences and suitable for the students of the next twenty years.

[history]

The main problem with the College's halls (aside from the innate problems of the cost of land in SW7 and the difficulty of getting planning permission to do anything new) is that they're all coming to the end of their lifetimes at a very similar time.

Ignoring Beit for the moment, the first of the College's existing stock of halls to open was Weeks, which came into being in October 1959. Designed as the first stage in a comprehensive building programme which would see similar halls surrounding Princes Gardens, it only came into being through a £150 000 donation from Vickers (designed to provide affordable accommodation for students with engineering scholarships). This small start was followed four years later by Southside, with the first residents moving in on May 11th 1963 (a mere few months behind schedule), and then Linstead, which was officially opened in July 1968. The latter cost £300 000 to construct, a large portion of which was donated by an anonymous benefactor, who insisted that the hall should offer its residents catering - hence the fact that Linstead still provides one meal per day.

In the same period, Imperial also started to buy up the houses around Evelyn Gardens, with the first set (numbers 54-56) purchased at the beginning of 1967. The "Student Houses" were designed to be different to halls, in that they would be student run (usually by senior members of the Union) and financially separate from other College accommodation. The buildings were broken down into a series of small flat units, which were supposed to house members of all years, with a heavy emphasis placed on post-graduates (in order to ensure that the buildings were occupied for as much of the year as possible, and thus keep rents down), at a rate slightly higher than that in the Princes Gardens halls. Over the next few years, the remaining parts of IC's current holdings around the Gardens was leased, but as pressure on bed spaces rose, their administration moved into line with the other

buildings.

After this period, the rapid expansion came to an end, and (mergers aside) the College has only gained a few bed spaces in the last twenty-five years. The only hall to have been added is Montpelier, just off Knightsbridge, which was acquired as a postgraduate residence back in 1981. Having endured a series of health scares, the building only just survived threatened closure a few years ago, when a small-scale refurbishment took place. Although it has been slated for sale for the last few years, the overflow spaces it provides (to replace those lost by the rolling refurbishment programme) are now essential, and consequently the sale has now been pushed back to July 2002.

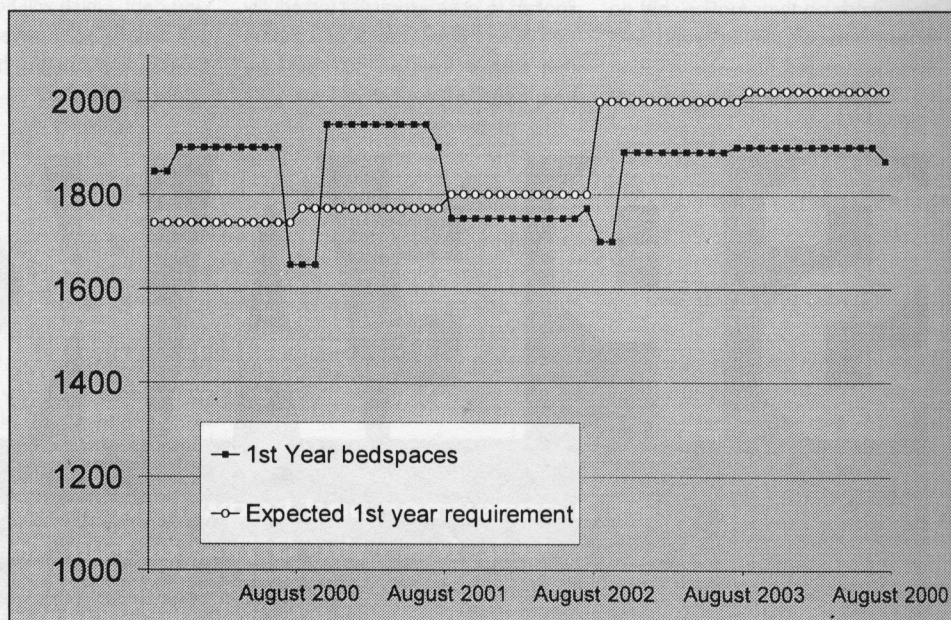
[solutions]

As previously stated, the College's problem is one of design: all of the Princes Gardens buildings were constructed to have a lifetime of something in the region of thirty years (in common with most large concrete buildings of that time) and consequently they're all heading towards the end their usable lives. The Southside renovation, in particular, has been forced upon the College more as a solution to the fact that the building's falling apart - and although knocking the whole thing down and starting again might seem like a preferable solution, it's one that's sadly unavailable, as the building is Grade II listed (as a classic example of its kind). Consequently, the College is investing £14.5 million to fully refit Southside, complete with en-suite bathrooms and greatly increased cooking facilities. Although these changes will result in rent increases (of around £5 a week, or £165 a year), they're an essential part of Imperial's business plan, as they

will allow much higher rates to be charged for conference guests. Moreover, the College planners insist that all students will be demanding en suite facilities, and thus the majority of rooms in all new halls must have individual showers and toilets - hence the large number of en suite rooms that are being included in the new Beit.

The need to refurbish, however, means that the programme will not end with Southside. Weeks is due for £1.1 million facelift the year after next, whilst Evelyn Gardens is undergoing a £12.5 million rolling refit, which should overhaul most of the older buildings into properties suitable for modern living (and modern conference guests). Meanwhile, due to the College's policy that all non-academic areas (sports, residences, catering etc) must break-even, the IC accommodation will be forced to sell-off a series of the more remote halls, in order to cover the massive cost of rebuilding. As a result, the College's investment programme schedules both Garden and Brabazon Hall for sale in summer 2001, with Montpelier and Olave House to follow twelve months later.

As the graph below shows, this will cause an ever increasing room shortage, which could seriously threaten Imperial's much prized guarantee of accommodation for every first year. The current solution to the problem involves discussions with local housing associations which are designed to locate suitable flats and properties in which to house next year's freshers and those deemed by the College to be deserving of a bed (for example, final year medics who enrolled at St Mary's are currently entitled to a place in hall, as are Erasmus students). In the long term, the College's only solution to the problem appears to be their hope that the number of first years choosing to take a place in hall will fall as a result of the imposition of fees.





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NECESSARY

IS THE PORTRAYAL OF VIOLENCE ON THE

As I watched the Tyson v Francis fight last weekend, the thought suddenly came over me: Why am I doing this - as far as I'm concerned, I don't even like boxing... Yet I was sitting in front of the TV, watching two grown men (of whom at least one ought to know better) bludgeoning the hell out of one another, all in the name of sport. Surely that's not right? With our late twentieth century idealism solidly entrenched in each and every one of us, we've all been brought up to believe that fighting is wrong and isn't something that any of us should enjoy - and yet the chance to watch two people beat each other up is a multi-million pound event, watched by 21 000 people in the arena and tens of thousands more on pay-per-view. So have we really evolved beyond the need to revel in violence, or are we just repressing our true desires?

media intrusion

The first point to realise is that, whilst it was boxing that first put the idea into my head, this ever-increasing level of violence is something that's all around us, enjoyed by the masses, not just a warped minority. As we keep being told by the conservative press and major religious groups, violence in film and television is steadily increasing - not necessarily a bad thing (the interpretation which they always attempt to throw onto their findings) but a fact of life nonetheless. In the fifties, BBC regulations stated that a man and woman were not permitted to be in bed together unless at least one of the characters had both their feet on the floor. In the seventies, US network television was so insanely cautious that regulators insisted that Happy Days star Henry Winkler could only wear a leather jacket when sitting on a motorbike (as a result of which, the show's writers simply added the bike into every shot, whether indoors or out). Today, although US television is still tightly controlled by cautious advertising executives, British TV is extremely relaxed, with all manner of sex, violence and swearing permitted after the nine o'clock watershed (and, with increasing frequency, beforehand).

A similar pattern emerges if we look toward the movies. In the post-war years, filmmakers had the ability to convey a sense of cruelty and violent behaviour without actually having the

need to show it on screen, yet today it seems impossible to suggest any semblance of violence without a detailed set of close-ups. Part of the reason for this is the increase in budget and effects technology - in the forties and fifties, it wasn't actually possible to recreate a massive car-crash or decapitation by a giant insect, yet today it can be done at the drop of a hat (albeit a hat containing about ten million dollars). Nonetheless, there has to be a reason why our moral standards have now altered to



such an extent that, whilst sex, violence and bad language was once disallowed, the British Board of Film Classification guidelines now state that a movie shall be suitable for a PG classification where "bad language may be used occasionally"; "there may be occasional nudity"; "there may be some mild sexual innuendo"; and "exciting horror scenes may be allowed".

Part of the issue is a major divide of opinions along national lines. In much of the rest of Europe, issues of sex and bad language are of very minor concern, whilst violence is considered far more carefully. On the other hand, the entire issue of censorship is treated much more cautiously in the US, where religious groups (particularly the Catholic Church and the National Christian Coalition) have enormous sway over both Hollywood and the four major TV networks. Consequently, you'll be hard pressed to find much evidence of violence or bad language on main stream US television (the occasional episode of NYPD Blue aside).

Indeed, so oppressive is the "moral majority" regime that an NC-17 rating (the equivalent of an 18 in the UK) is deemed to be the kiss of death on any movie - multiplex cinemas won't show them, network TV won't screen their trailers, and major newspapers won't advertise them. As a result, the major studios will jump tall buildings in a single bound in order to ensure that their movies make the grade and fall into the 'R' category (which means that anyone can watch, provided they're accompanied by someone over eighteen). Hence, the net result of all those attempts to sanitise US media has in fact been to open up movies like Saving Private Ryan, Boogie Nights and Starship Troopers to a family audience. Hmmm...

But, as I've suddenly realised, we've drifted from the point here - we've moved into the same realm as the censors, where extreme violence is treated hand-in-hand with sex, nudity and bad language. Which is surely wrong. The increased sexual content of modern movies is nothing to worry about or bemoan - it's simply a sign of increasingly liberal attitudes amongst the populace. Similarly, the reason you'll find so much heavy swearing in your average mainstream movie is the simple fact that life's like that - if your star says "oh darn" when he finds his girlfriend shagging his best mate, you're not really going to describe that as decent characterisation, now are you?

Of course, sex sells too - put a suggestive picture of Sarah Michelle Gellar on the poster for your latest teen-flick and you've got a hit on your hands. Include a couple of shots which imply that she gets her kit off in the trailer, and you'll start breaking box office records. However, this is only the modern manifestation of something that's been going on since the dawn of Hollywood. Suggestive shots of Marilyn Monroe, Lauren Bacall and Rita Hayworth all helped to sell their fair share of cinema tickets in their day - the only difference was that the standards of the day placed limitations on how far the star could go. In the fifties, if your star had wound up in a threesome half-way through the movie, it would have said something very questionable about her sense of morality. Now it can only help to increase her status and desirability (as anyone who's seen Denise Richards in *Wild Things* will undoubtedly attest). So, is this a sign of ever-falling standards, or the acceptance of a more relaxed attitude to life?

ROUGHNESS

INCREASE - AND SHOULD WE REALLY CARE?

For my money, it's undoubtedly the latter - and as such it's something to be applauded, not castigated.

anti-social tendencies

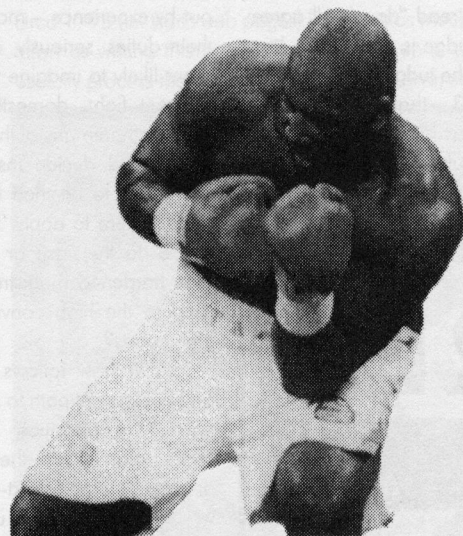
Screen violence, however, is a completely different matter. To use the same argument would be to say that we've become readier to accept violence as an integral part of society. Yet this is surely contrary to the essence of our beliefs about the development of civilisation. Surely the idea is that we've developed past the need for brutality and pain when it comes to deciding who's best? Then, pray tell, why did millions of people around the world pay through the nose to see a convicted rapist beat the hell out of some British guy they'd never heard of before last week?

This is where the two strings draw together. Ignore other issues (brief nudity and a little swearing never hurt anyone anyway) and realise that we're living in a society that is not only increasingly violent, but which revels in that fact. The reasons for this change are complex. Unlike generations before us, we don't live in the shadow of war - sure, wars still break out all over the planet, but the likelihood of someone invading Britain or any armed conflict escalating to the scale where the government would have to reintroduce conscription is now practically zilch. Meanwhile, our access to the imagery of war and suffering has grown to an unprecedented level. Turn on the news or open your newspaper on any day of the week, and you're guaranteed to find images of emaciated victims and bloodthirsty guerrilla forces staring back at you. Simultaneously, you'll hear ream after ream of figures splurged out from watchdogs, governments and research groups, telling you that the death toll from this conflict was x thousand, or the figures for violent crime have gone up by y percent. (Disturbingly, government press releases dealing with crime statistics usually state that car crime and burglary are decreasing, whilst violent crime and sexual assault are on the increase).

So, is this the answer? Does sensory overload blunt our responses and lead us to assume that violence is inescapable? Surely not - after all, time and again history has seen the most protracted and bloody wars used as a cat-

alyst to promote the creation of a new, idyllic vision of the future. A classic example came in the aftermath of the First World War: so shocked and traumatised were the leaders of all the nations involved, they vowed never to go to war again.

The difference, however, is that we have had no experience of that kind of traumatic exposure to the horrific side of organised violence. As far as we're concerned, life is what we see at the movies and on the TV, and whilst, for



some of us, that might mean we're living in a Dawson's Creek dreamland, for others it means a planet where combat only exists as a form of entertainment (you'd be scared by the ratings that the WWF gets in both Britain and the US) or sport (anyone ever watched Ultimate Fighting?). That's not to say that on-screen violence encourages us to maim and kill our neighbours (although I'm still not sure that the sight of Macaulay Culkin happily blasting flamethrowers at his enemies - who then suffer nothing more than singed eyebrows - is a positive image for kids); rather it suggests that violence has become less of a last resort. Crime related murder and assault continues to climb; bullying is on the increase; our government feels happy to level downtown Baghdad at the first sign of truculence. All three are related by the fact that, because we've never personally been forced to experience death up close and personal, we stoop to the unpleasant solution far more readily. Sure we see death everyday on the news, in every episode of *Casualty* or *ER*, and in every new summer blockbuster - but it's a sanitised vision of death, filtered and censored so that it doesn't offend our middle-class sensibilities. It doesn't scare or horrify us. It should.

By Sam Becket

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A Human Right?

HAMISH COMMON

When you think back to what life may have been like in the thirteenth century, the idea of laws demanding trial by jury and a statement of rights for citizens is unlikely to figure highly. Yet one of the reasons that England sees itself as an ancient home of liberties is because we had such a document – the Magna Carta – which still has some legal force today. Later, in the mid-nineteenth century, people in England and Wales were given further rights to trial by jury in serious cases; in the time when public hanging and flogging were the norm.

Such silly rights are obviously of no use to us today. Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, is presently pushing to abolish the right to trial by jury for a whole class of offences, with the intention of saving a few percent of

the criminal justice budget. He has been criticised by practically everyone. from civil liberties groups, lawyers, his own party, all the other parties and many judges. His bill was thrown out two weeks ago by the Lords, with Straw saying he will re-introduce it in the Commons.

“the light that shows that the lamp of freedom burns”

Juries have always had a way of forcing some democracy on a system that is populated by a distant and mainly public school and Oxbridge dominated judiciary: there was a time once when a jury deliberation room was being cleared out and a note from the foreman found which read “do we all agree: 1. that this judge is a complete bastard; 2. that the judge wants this man convicted; 3. that we therefore acquit?” Juries have a common-law right to acquit even if the case is apparently stacked against the defendant, and this ‘sympathy

acquittal’ or ‘perverse verdict’ (depending on your opinion) has been used to protest against silly or oppressive laws. Some of the more odious Official Secrets Acts trials in the seventies and early eighties, among others, resulted in acquittals when the defendants were legally in the wrong.

Civil servants and politicians, not famous for their skills at looking beyond the balance sheet or next election, often feel that juries are incapable or too incompetent to make decisions on complex matters involving criminal cases. This is not borne out by experience – most jurors take their duties seriously and may be more likely to imagine themselves in a street fight, domestic assault or robbery than many of the magistrates who would decide instead. Would you prefer to be tried before twelve people there to apply ‘human experience’ to the case or a bench of case-hardened magistrates who are used to the high conviction rate in their courts?

Straw now follows a well-worn and unpleasant path to remove these rights. In opposition he said the Tories’ plan to do the same (later dropped) was “short-sighted and wrong”. Following the usual conversion ministers have when they get into government, he has now seen the light and ditched much of his liberalism in this regard. He follows the hardened Home Office view the innocence is an inconvenience that should be dealt with severely. He is already trying to stop alleged rapists or their lawyers from cross-examining their accusers, and is supporting the removal of the right to choose one’s own lawyer. He is extending this argument to trial by jury, going against an ancient trend, and ignores the opinion of the late respected jurist Sir William Blackstone who said that “delays and inconveniences in the forms of justice are the price that all free nations must pay for their liberty... and that these inroads upon this sacred bulwark of the nation are fundamentally opposite to the spirit of our constitution and that though begun in trifles,

the precedent may gradually increase in spirit, to the utter disuse of juries in cases of the most momentous concern.”

There is now a standard method to justify the removal of liberties: state the incredible inconvenience the government has to go through to lock someone up, criticise people who defend the status quo as “fat-cat lawyers” (even though criminal law has never been a great money-spinner) and label others as members of the recently created new public enemy, the ‘forces of conservatism’. Victims come in here too as all illiberal changes in criminal law can be in their interest – they have been hijacked as a blanket justification since people can see themselves more easily as victims than criminals. It is a brave person who defends the unpopular, and politicians know they will not win an election defending criminals’ rights.

The sad thing about this is that is all quite unnecessary. The cost savings will be eaten up by an appeal right to the crown court which has to be put in because of the Human Rights Act, meaning cases will ping-pong between courts with lawyers cashing in all the way. Officials, witnesses and victims will all be delayed as much or more than under the previous system. Analogies to the Scottish system (where the right to trial by jury is curbed) are inappropriate since there the ‘sheriffs’ have much less power anyway.

We ought to feel reasonably proud of the fact that we cannot be locked up in this country for more than a year without twelve ordinary people agreeing to it. It is frankly scary that our guilt of serious offences may soon be decided by experts and imposed on us, with trial by jury reserved for the famous or people with ‘a reputation to defend’ (in this proposal your rights to trial by jury will be genuinely decided by how important you look). Since only people with such reputations are given the right to trial by jury, the proposal is itself admitting it may be unfair. If some of us deserve freedoms, we all do.

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Industrial Strength Internetting

Bashari Bakari

This new, new thing (as Michael Lewis calls the internet) really is a boon to technically minded people. Now, I don't want to turn off half my audience who are not computer scientists or electrical engineers. The whole point is that as we turn from pure technology to business, IC undergrads are better qualified than the vast majority of current e-practitioners. Most of the articles that are written on e-commerce focus on heart warming stories of a person overcoming the odds and becoming paper rich on the Initial Public Offering (IPO). I don't see any reason why e-businesses should not be subjected to the same kind of rational analysis that any other kind of business would be subjected to. I will not claim that my knowledge is in any way comprehensive but at least it will be more useful than some of the mind candy that is passing as analysis.

Have you noticed how many of the new e-commerce sites are not doing anything fundamentally new, but just doing an online version of an offline business? There is nothing inherently wrong with that - the driving force behind business is not originality but the bottom line. With that being the case, it is useful to compare the offline and online sectors of similar businesses. As most e-commerce sites are just retailers, it is useful to compare them to their offline brethren.

In 1998, an estimated £194bn was spent in the high street, while nearly £2bn was spent on e-commerce. So it is with this background that you can judge all the adverts for new web sites. As e-spending grows from this miniscule 1% of our spending, they know that if they hang on to our attention for the next couple of years and retain market share, they will become the Boots, Argos or WHSmith of the internet.

Profit is equal to revenue minus costs. This simple little equation always comes in handy when you are required to do a business case study, as seems to be de rigueur when applying for a job these days. So why are the vast majority of web based businesses losing money? Surely, the whole point of backing a company is that you expect to receive profits in the form of dividends? This basic business requirement is being forgotten for the meantime, as investors are willing to suspend their caution in the hope that their business will be one of the big boys left when e-commerce has reached its saturation level. (It's also very helpful if the rest of the investing community are similarly willing to suspend their judgement as well, and allow you to make large capital gains with your shares in loss making ventures)

The reason that they are making losses is that,

as everyone knows, surfers don't go to sites that are actually advertised on the web. You need heavy offline advertising to reach that critical mass that is so crucial to the success of any web business. For instance, I've never been to the lastminute.com web site, and I don't have any intention to for a long time yet. But inevitably, I have seen their advertising on the side of the buses running up and down Kensington High Street.

The other side of this particular aspect is that barriers to entry for web based businesses are famously low. You can run a state of the art web site circa 1993 (ie. static web pages) for about as much effort as writing this article. The next step up is to usefully process the information that surfers give, so



that they can actually order that widget. This involves showing a database on the back end of your web site, by either a) finding an ISP that can handle this or b) shelling out on a leased line to house your own computer. Then you have to think about the questions that are bread and butter to computer scientists, such as what is your data model, what legal transactions are valid, and what kind of web forms you'll use for transactions. Now, this is more than a case of just fancy graphics. You are now facing the questions that PC manufacturers faced when they developed the first Graphical User Interfaces for PCs. These are issues that the larger US web companies confronted a few years ago. For instance, you can trade shares in two clicks in e*trade once you've registered. Having said that, the key to web development is speed. The specifications of web browsers are being updated continuously, so it is more important to have magnet content that will bring users back time and again, rather than employing the latest gimmickry.

Which brings out another aspect of web based businesses. In essence, web sites are publishing

business. Granted they have features unlike any previous publishing enterprises, but nevertheless publishing businesses they are. The one thing that kills a site more quickly than anything else is stale information. That's why the e-tailers are suited to the web, because once you have the data model implemented, you can leave it up to the database and your surfers to provide up to date information. It's what has been called the stick and cauldron phenomenon. You provide the stick and the cauldron for preparing a meal and you leave it up to your guests to bring the vegetables and the meat for the feast, thereby saving you most of the work.

This publishing aspect also acts as a barrier and a differentiator between the online sites and their offline cousins. You can build a community feel around your site, and have much more information about your users than even supermarkets can dream of. So, even when your offline competitors move online, as they inevitably will, users are used to your site.

It is interesting to note that the company that kicked off the whole internet shebang in its current form, Netscape, was swallowed whole by AOL. Which begs the question: what is more important for internet success - knowledge of the technology, or knowledge of the customer? Steve Case got his business training as a marketing manager with Procter & Gamble (as did Stephen Ballmer, the Microsoft CEO, incidentally). This is quite interesting, as P&G has over a century of experience of marketing to Joe Public, and spends more in doing so (about \$200m around the globe) than any other company on earth. This marketing know how crops up again and again in some of the biggest internet companies. The heads of ebay and etoys are both ex-Disney acolytes, for instance.

Finally, take the case of last orders.com. This business was launched last October and just sells booze, delivering to you if you are within the M25. Before a bottle was even drunk, the company was valued at £100m pounds. Firstly, I would suggest that you mistrust journalists valuations of e-businesses, because if you carefully watch the headline figure that is quoted and the quoted figures a few months later it is invariably different. What is essentially taking the place of the corner shop is valued at such a ludicrous amount because the financiers were backing the management team as much as the idea.

Watch this space as I hope to get a scoop on a pre-IPO straight technology company and one of the biggest European internet companies. Email your comments to b.bakari@ic.ac.uk

Rage against the Machine

Is your computer driving you crazy? John Clifford investigates the how and why of PC rage.

We all know the feeling, with just half an hour to a vital deadline, the computer replaces all of your work with the blue screen of death. Or that creeping feeling that you would have been better off using a biro. The fact is, that although computers are the future of communications, they're not that reliable. And when your job requires you to use a computer, many of Britain's workers feel at the mercy of their machines.

Offices are becoming increasingly dependent on networked PCs, which is extremely useful when the entire system works. In the days when typewriters were the norm, the sheer amount of work that needed to be done to produce many copies of the same document required a huge typing pool.

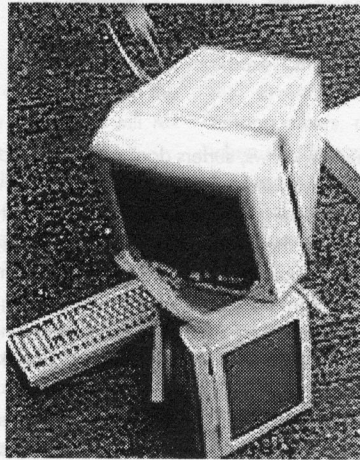
Equally, searching through a large database takes just a few seconds, compared with a pleasant afternoon in the archive room. But while technology has allowed companies to cut down on typists and archivists, the remaining staff are expected to do the jobs of many more people, which has led to a reduction in job security and an increase in stress levels. So when a computer fails and stops people from working, the failure can lead to over-reaction and a great deal of stress. So how do people deal with a computer failure?

The initial reaction is frequently one of disbelief, and asking colleagues for advice. The worst type of crash occurs when a large amount of work is lost, and the employee will be fairly desperate to get their data back if possible. But IT departments are often equally understaffed and overstretched, and several minutes on hold does not help to calm the user down. Which is why a series of recent surveys have shown that a

large number of people resort to violence. A quarter of under 25s have admitted to kicking their machines, while 70% have sworn at their computers. 75% believe that they are expected to use computers without enough support from IT, who frequently treat only the symptoms (without dealing with the underlying fault), making it likely to happen again.

Computer crashes are expensive too. The Confederation of British Industry believe that one lost hour per person per day will cost £25,000 per employee each year. And increased stress levels result in more days off, which also costs. So what's the solution?

When a computer goes wrong, the user is made to feel very stupid, particularly if the problem turns out to be a basic error, such as a forgotten password. 80% of employees surveyed believed that they need a lot more support and training in using certain packages. But even then, computers have a habit of going wrong for no apparent reason. The onus is on software manufacturers to make systems which are a lot more reliable and user-friendly (see opposite). If a piece of software has a reputation for not crashing at random, it will gradually become a lot more popular. In the meantime, the best way is to take precautions against crashes - make regular saves, and make sure you have a copy of your work on several different computers. Failing that, a number of unions are promoting positive forms of stress relief. For example, UNISON are running a series of "get even" weekends, where attendees are encouraged to use a series of highly unreliable old computers, and then smash them with baseball bats when they fail. Not recommended for the Felix office.



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Rebels or Rejects?

As mounting excitement surrounds Installfest 2000, Ewan Jones finds out about Linux

For hours the discussion had been raging, with strong disagreements about the module's construction giving way to a quieter, more technical dialogue. For a moment the chat room was silent, until suddenly a message seethed across the page. It read "Happy New Year."

This is possibly the most common stereotype of the Linux enthusiast. Even the word "enthusiast" casts up images of bearded, middle-aged men with personal hygiene issues, strangely keen to discuss their sole interest with a number of pimply, solitary youths. But maybe the image of the enthusiast is about to undergo its biggest change since the invention of the Thermo flask, as it is these people who pose the biggest threat to the global capitalist conspiracy.

"Linux" refers to a group of PC operating systems including Suse (which resembles DOS to the uninitiated), to Red Hat (which looks like a funkier version of Windows 98). But there, I'm assured, the resemblance ends. So I went to Tottenham Court Road (or TCR to its inhabitants) to find out what makes Linux, and its users, so different.

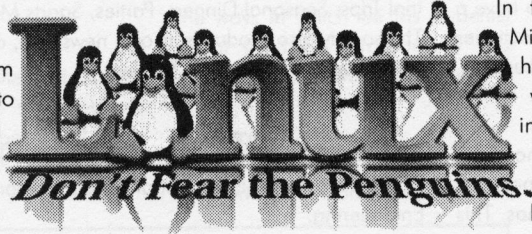
Having a desire to type which is matched only by a similar lack of cash, I have made a few contacts in the computer world. Upon entering the computer fair, however, I was still seized by a natural defensive instinct to yell "You're all virgins!" and run out into the sunlight. But my room mate's jumper and National Health glasses, together with about four days facial hair, put me more at my ease, and I headed towards the Linux area. Unfortunately, having to confess that I had never heard of a "scuzzy" rather blew my cover. However, from my conversations with the scuzzies, I learnt the following about Linux:

Unlike the secretive, shady work of such sinister capitalists as Microsoft, Linux is freely created and distributed by an International Brotherhood of programmers. This was made possible by a program written by a man called Linus Torvatis, called the Kernal, which calls on other small programs, called modules, to perform all the individual tasks necessary in order to run a computer. Unlike Microsoft's Windows, all of the code behind these modules is freely available, and Linux's International Brigade will rewrite these modules (and continually invent more) in order to make their machines work better, and will usually then make their work available.

This system of development has a number of effects. Firstly, unlike commercial programmers (who have "disillusioned idealist" written all over them), Linux's programmers are motivated only by a desire to make their system work

in the best, most efficient way. As a result of this, Linux is streamlined, making it use less of your system than the shaky electronic giants. It also leads to the well known (and worrying) viewpoint that Linux "feels more stable", which could be a godsend to the user who is used to seeing an article follow the 2nd law of thermodynamics.

Secondly, it is a well known fact that you can give a set of computer enthusiasts two random three letter acronyms (or TLAs) and they will debate for hours the relative merits of the two systems you have just inadvertently described. The same holds with Linux - as users debate the merits of one module or another, Linux evolves into a number of different species, with many versions of each. Suse is preferred for many servers, while graphical interfaces such as Red Hat are the choice of the general user, allowing a standard wallpaper of a desired female or component.



In theory, it seems, Microsoft should have nothing to worry about. Having cornered the market in operating systems, browsers and common software, and having ruthlessly purged its rivals, it could afford to start annexing small countries by now. But Linux is not really a commercial venture, and so cannot, by definition, be driven out of business. Its main market currently lies in system administrators such as in the Department of Computing, where Linux machines have pride of place, while NT machines are hidden away in a less desirable room (one with windows). Servers, both local and internet, it seems, prefer Linux, as a network is much less likely to crash of its own accord. X% of servers are believed to run Linux. It also has the advantage that the administrator can (fairly) easily tailor the system to his or her exact needs.

An even bigger threat, it is predicted, will come as more software is developed to run on graphical Linux systems, providing reliability and ease of use (and hopefully eliminating the need for your computer to become an antique curiosity within nine months) for the ordinary user without a degree in computing and with other interests. It has the potential, with some manoeuvring, to weaken Windows share of the market.

As the last of the computer fair visitors hurry home to catch Star Trek, I head back to a well-earned shave and a date. But perhaps as Bill Gates' empire begins to lose its grip, it is time to start looking at the alternatives.

Ewan Jones has never been a member of the Gloucester Road Poplar Front

IN THE NEWS

The US National Institute of Health has expressed concerns over the number of failed genetic therapy experiments on humans. Researchers are supposed to report deaths and failures, but often fail to because of the commercial nature of the work.

China are believed to be preparing to mark the new year by launching their first astronaut, using the Shenzhou capsule. The craft is based on reliable Soviet technology.

An international effort has been launched to find the missing Mars Polar Lander. MPL was believed to have been destroyed, but new data from the Christmas period shows two blips which suggests the probe may still be alive.

Horticulturalists in California have managed to germinate seeds of the rare Corpse flower. The flower blooms very rarely, producing a smell described as a combination of raw sewage and rotting flesh.

Scientists in China have produced the world's smallest nanotubes, with diameters of just 0.5nm. Nanotubes are essentially tubular versions of "buckyballs", a grouping of carbon atoms in the shape of a football.

Genetic researchers have located a gene which makes men susceptible to testicular cancer. It is hoped that the discovery will allow screening of vulnerable individuals, with the hope of catching the disease early.

Fragments of a meteorite which fell to Earth in November have been recovered in Ireland. The rock is believed to be of lunar origin by scientists at the Natural History Museum, and is the first meteorite to be recovered in Ireland since 1865.

The US National Security Agency has admitted that it suffered a serious computer crash last week, which affected the processing of intelligence information. National security is not believed to have been jeopardised.

Psion and Motorola have joined forces to develop a series of mobile internet products. The devices should have integrated voice and data capacity, and are expected to be launched early next year.

The European Union is considering a total ban on all US-produced meats, due to fears over hormonal contamination. The contaminants are legal in America, but are suspected of causing health problems in children.

Nasa have postponed the launch of the Space Shuttle Endeavour until at least next Wednesday, due to computer problems. Meanwhile, a Science columnist has undertaken not to run any more Nasa features for at least one month.

After years of being seen as serving no useful purpose, the CCU that is City & Guilds College Union has decided to do something about it. CGCU will turn all its resources towards producing big budget blockbuster movies that will make bigger losses than any Summer Ball. These resources include the CGCU societies, which will produce each individual film. Hollywood, here we come...

CITY & GUILDS COLLEGE UNION

THE HOLLYWOOD MOTION PICTURE STUDIOS

This week's Constituent College Union, C&G College Union, presents their wide range of societies



CGCU Active, *Mission: Impossible 2*

Active are a bunch of ambitious (yet moronic) students aiming to raise the profile of City & Guilds College within IC. Recently we launched the CGCU web portal, www.su.ic.ac.uk/guilds/, the MOST EXCELLENT web site in ICU's history (Feline, kiss my ****). The portal will be systematically built up, so that all CGCU

services are available online. We are also reviving a 40 year old Guilds tradition by entering a float in this year's Lord Mayors Show, and we're involved in the setting up of an internship centre. Did we mention that CGCU have been trying to do all these Active projects themselves with little success for the past five years?



AeroSoc, *Austin Powers: Aeros Are Forever*

AeroSoc is a departmental society run by students for students, which aims to promote the advancement of the art of aeronautics through information, activities, conferences and careers

liaisons. The society also encourages involvement from companies and organisations in its activities. *Does that make you HORNY?*



ChemEngSoc, *Star Wars Episode 2*

At last we will reveal ourselves to the Jedi. At last we will have revenge. The main aim of ChemEngSoc is for everyone to have a good time while studying in our department. Some of the activities the society has been organising annually are Concourse Lunches,

where companies give presentations on career opportunities, Industrial Trips, Seasonal Dinners, Parties, Sports Meets and much more. The society also produces its own newsletter, called Cracker. At last we will reveal ourselves to the Jedi.



CivSoc, *James Bond 20*

This motion picture is a perfect analogy of our society. It shows the quality of importance and distinctiveness that our society possesses. We are like the treasured and special event of Christmas. This

is an excellent motion picture as it indicates the intensity and scale of the major events we organise each year, all related to Civil Engineering.



DoCSoc, *The Matrix*

The aim of DoCSoc is to encourage its members to interact and socialise with other people. We organise video screenings for the less energetic members, publish Typo (out beloved fortnightly magazine) and arrange the obligatory subsidised meals, barnights and

talks. We also encourage and support participation in competitions (quake... err we mean programming), so members can represent the department. DoCSoc - *Welcome to the real world!* If you want to know more or get involved, contact docsoc@doc.ic.ac.uk



EESoc, *Monty Python And The Holy Grail: The Really Special Edition*

The Electrical Engineering Society is run by some *Mighty Knights of Ni*, who are responsible for the several wonderful events organised. Rest assured that they are not satisfied by the mere acquisition of strawberries, but spend their time constructively, by organising

freshers events and Christmas dinners, *Ni*, booksales, newsletters, *Ni*, the infamous EESoc Revue, *Ni*, distributing past papers, lockers, *Ni*, organise sports events, *Ni*, run the very popular EESoc cinema and many *Ni* more that don't come to mind right now... *Ni*.



MechSoc, *Terminator 3*

MechSoc has two aims: the first is to promote friendly and synergistic interaction between the students of the Mechanical Engineering department at Imperial; the other is to promote engineering by providing activities that can give students a wider and more inter-

esting perspective of the profession. In addition to academic events, MechSoc frequently organises a wide range of sports and recreational activities. All students at Imperial are invited to participate in our activities. *If you want to live, come with me.*



EESTEC, *A Fistful of Dollars (Remake)*

Electrical Engineering Students European assoCiation. What do we do? For *A Fistful of Dollars* (or Euros rather) we go on trips to other member cities in Europe, learn about their alcoholic drinks

and their electronics industry. All costs (bar transport) are covered. How? Industry is glad to sponsor us with *A Few Dollars More*. We're also preparing for our annual conference this March.



C&G Motor Club, *Mad Max 4: The Road Warrior*

City & Guilds College Union Motor Club is open to everyone and aims to provide a cheap and enjoyable introduction to motor sport and other motoring activities. It doesn't even matter if you do not own a car as the club has a Mini that it regularly maintains

and uses for off-road events. The Motor Club also runs a Kart Section, as well as Team Bo and Team Derrick, all of which are clubs within themselves. But, *if it's all the same to you... I'll drive that tanker.*



C&G Rugby Club, *Highlander IV: World Without End*

The C&G Rugby Club has a long tradition of achievements. As well as playing games against other colleges and universities, the Rugby Club also competes in the Sparkes Cup, in which the club plays

against the RSM and the RCS. However, *there can be only one*, and its usually this Rugby Club. There is also an annual tour, where the club travels to another part of Europe to play rugby.

The State of the Union

Wednesday

Paperwork day is compensated for by a fantastic evening.

Thursday

Meeting with Rev Alan Gyle from the Chaplaincy. Their offices will be part of the new welfare wing in the Beit basement.

House Committee - where did all the members go? This is obviously not an election winner. ICU Exec, on the other hand, clearly is - the room is packed. But it's nice to have you all there...

Student Development Committee. No longer is a degree alone enough to guarantee a job (for anyone other than the medics) so ICU brings you fun skills learning. Why am I bragging - it's all Kevin's doing, not mine.

Friday

Meeting with the Medical School Secretary. There are still problems for ICU post merger, and then there's the medical sabbatical for next year to discuss.

By Tasha Newton, Imperial College Union President



Human rights at Imperial. A seminar on what the new Human Rights Act will mean at Imperial. OK, so I am a terminal cynic, but it struck me as a lecture in 'how not to get sued' rather than a celebration of the ways in which we (as students) might be better protected. I was assured that this was not the case.

Monday

Booked the ballot boxes, and the election nominations move into their

second week - some sign up and are backed straight away, others seem to struggle. I remember hoping that reflected the outcome last year, it did! Good luck everyone.

Lots of students with lots of different enquiries - it's still nice to deal with people directly.

The Warner Brothers discount cards finally arrive. Come and get your discount card and promotion stuff - all you need is a photo and a Union card!

Tuesday

Motspur park money, Tim Traylor and I go to a meeting on how to spend £2,000,000. Not as pleasant as it sounds.

Off to Mary's for the bands night. Oooh my head will hurt in the morning!

- This Week's Union Meetings -

Tuesday 8th February:

- 17.30 ICU Executive (Resource Centre)
- 18.30 ICU Council (Union Dining Hall)
- 20.00 CAG Soup run

Thursday 10th February:

- 12.30 Recreational Clubs Committee treasurers meeting (Resource Centre)
- 18.00 RCC General meeting
- 20.00 CAG Soup run

Friday 11th February:

- 13.00 Social Clubs Committee treasurers meeting (Resource Centre)

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Please note: Due to the UK work permit regulations PricewaterhouseCoopers offers only very limited opportunities for graduates requiring work permits before they can take up permanent employment in the UK. If you need a permit to work in the UK, you may want to consider this before deciding to take time out of your busy schedule to attend our presentation.

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CUTTING COMMENT

AS far as I know, no one from the great Imperial College has ever travelled into space. Now let's look at the stats. Just over five hundred people have been fortunate enough to break free from our atmosphere (no pedanticisms please) - all very skilled, intelligent and healthy individuals. If we were to spread that number over the world's top academic institutions (ignoring nationality), then IC surely would have had a few astronauts by now. So, what's going wrong? Well, Imperial happens to be located in the UK, and our government is somewhat visionless when it comes to space exploration.

As you all know, America heads the way in space. Despite having its budget slashed for the seventh consecutive year (last time I heard it was around \$13 billion), the USA still spends more than anyone else. Russia still manages to uphold its own squad of cosmonauts to maintain a significant presence as the second space power. The European Space Agency sends up its astronauts with either of the two leaders, as do individual nations that are participating in particular projects. In the coming decade, expect China to start to put its own people into orbit too. The UK is part of ESA, but doesn't commit to manned space flight. The British National Space Centre will gladly boast about Britain's use of Earth Observation data, but useful stuff as it is, it's hardly particularly exciting.

Critics are constantly questioning the need for space travel, and it seems that British politicians share their scepticism. So why do we (as a species) bother? I presume everyone has at some stage gazed at the stars. But have you ever really looked at them? I'm not talking proper astronomy here, with its associated scientific buff, rather the point where you've been gazing at the whole dome of the sky for a while and suddenly it hits you: the depth. At this stage, the stars stop being pretty little pinpricks of light and take on a whole new symbolism (and you don't have to know their names to see this). The moon isn't just a brighter light in the sky - it is another world. As this perception kicks in, the night sky almost becomes 3D in nature, as the mind begins to visualise the vastness of the universe as well as its splendour. As your eyes dilate and the milky way becomes ever clearer, you can see your place in the greater scheme of things. Suddenly you can see yourself lying down, hands behind your head looking up from the surface of this tiny but beautiful Earth, circling the sun

- one insignificant reactor among the billions of our galaxy. It's a spectacular feeling. This is the reason to go. Mankind can't be expected to sit tight on his home planet when there is just so much out there to explore. Columbus must have had a similar sort of vision when he stared out across the Atlantic and wondered what the hell was out there. That urge is built into us - a Darwinian survival of the species instinct, perhaps. Whatever the case, it should not (indeed cannot) be ignored, although those individuals in which it is less expressed

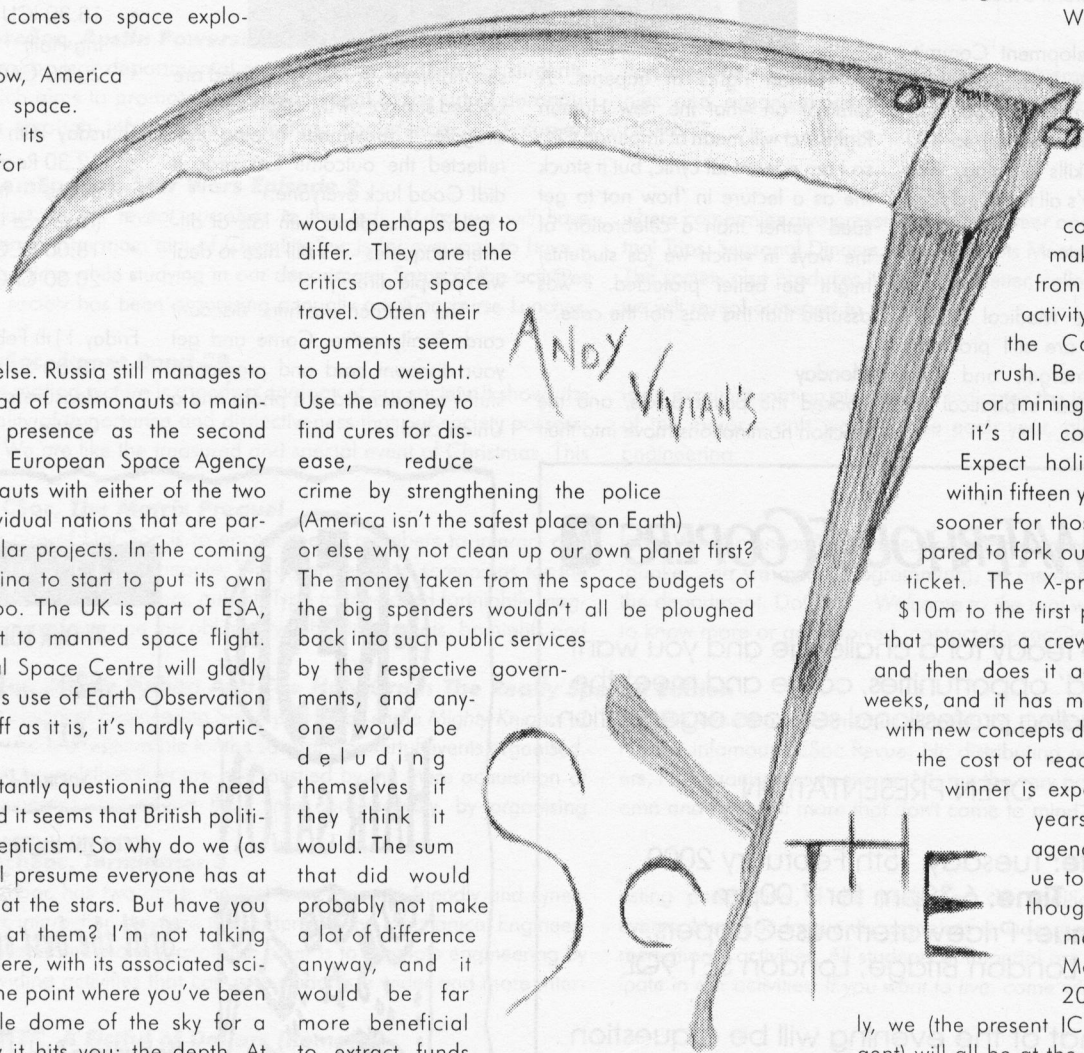
would perhaps beg to differ. They are the critics of space travel. Often their arguments seem to hold weight. Use the money to find cures for disease, reduce crime by strengthening the police (America isn't the safest place on Earth) or else why not clean up our own planet first? The money taken from the space budgets of the big spenders wouldn't all be ploughed back into such public services by the respective governments, and anyone would be deluding themselves if they think it would. The sum that did would probably not make a lot of difference anyway, and it would be far more beneficial to extract funds from the military (where there are surely massive eddies where money disappears without having achieved much). Also, by cutting space programs you would be removing a lot of inspiration for children and adults alike. It's safe to say that, unless we destroy ourselves, we will eventually do it all - so why prolong it? Ironically, it is likely that people will only begin to care more for their planet when we have finally become a proper space-faring species. Then we will all be able to look back at the fragile Earth, recognise its uniqueness (at least in the close neighbourhood) and feel sentimental enough to care for it. It would cost

the UK £100m to have an astronaut on board the international space station - a sum that initially seems a lot, but in reality is insignificant. It could be taken from the treasury without the blink of an eye, or else funded by various ministries and the lottery. Even private sponsorship could be sought. Other economically less sound nations take far greater pride in space flight. Germany and France have had numerous space travellers, and yet our single effort, Helen Sharman, was funded primarily from commercial sources. Its time for the UK's policies to change.

What will really kick start space travel is its commercialisation. When someone discovers a way of making a net profit from a space bound activity, it will be like the Californian gold rush. Be it space tourism or mining on the moon, it's all coming our way. Expect holidays in space within fifteen years - and much sooner for those who are prepared to fork out a fortune for a ticket. The X-prize is offering \$10m to the first private company that powers a crew into low orbit and then does it again within two weeks, and it has many entrants all with new concepts designed to lower the cost of reaching orbit. The winner is expected within ten years. Government agencies will continue to make the news though, with a manned flight to Mars as early as 2020. Interesting-

ly, we (the present IC student contingent) will all be at the appropriate age (~40) for such a trip...

For the moment, that spectacular view of Earth - with no visual borders between countries - is only available to a lucky few. I've always believed that 'astronaut' was the best possible job in the world, and it was even my aim to become one at one stage. Since I can't see myself doing a PhD that option disappears, but it is still my ambition to travel into space. Somehow, I don't think that will be difficult. I see it likely that nearly all of us IC students will one day enjoy the sensation of weightlessness and witness a sunrise over the curvature of the Earth.



Break Point

Back in the dim dark days, when the College languished somewhere near the bottom third of the academic premiership, Sir Ron Oxburgh stepped onto the great vessel IC and took the helm. By attracting big funding and killing off paper-shufflers, Ron has transformed the College, and we are now number two. With some more refining of the yards of red tape emanating from the Sheffield building, he could probably push us close to Cambridge.

Soon, however, Ron will be gone - and the Council has recognised that even bigger funders are now required to leapfrog our friends in the Fens. They needed a Fund-u-like™ to finish the job off. In selecting this new leader to take Europe's MIT into this bright new millennium, the College Council

approached one Sir Richard Sykes, a bluff Yorkshire businessman who has just executed the world's biggest pharmaceutical merger, and has access to the highest echelons, the biggest names, and the deepest pots. He dutifully thought it over, and agreed, providing he can continue playing with his new toy until 2002 - when he will throw it out of the playpen and be given a shiny new academic institution to keep him happy in his retirement.

But is that truly in the best interests of the College? No. Ron had many things going for him when he arrived in 1994 - a senior civil servant in the Ministry of Defence, before which he was a senior academic at Queen's College, Cambridge. He cannot be accused of having no knowledge of student life and students interests, whereas

the last time Sir Richard was near a university campus, it was at Bristol, he was studying for a PhD in microbial biochemistry, and Petula Clark was top of the charts with *Downtown*. Is it right for an institution such as IC to be headed up by somebody who has spent so long away from the demands of academia? Can we expect him to understand the needs and demands of students when contemplating top-up fees, for example? And although Imperial has only recently been through a huge merger of its own, will he pursue his obviously instinctive tendency to enlarge and centralise (with, for example the Institute of Cancer Research) and yet again put the interests of students - or will that be 'consumer units' - further down the agenda?

Don't get me wrong. The

appointment of a new Rector will be good for Imperial, as the current incumbent is obviously getting a little stale, and is enjoying his new seat in the House of Lords. A fresh start is essential, and could harmonise the College. Yet we see from the front page of this fine journal that one-fifth of the academic staff of the College were sidelined by the promise that "it wouldn't be a medic". How ridiculous. For BreakPoint's money, one man (a medic) has shown himself to be a leader of public opinion, a serious academic, holding the common-touch, and yet being able to walk with kings. That man is, of course, Lord Winston, IC's professor of fertility studies. Why do we always assume that the grass is greener on the other side of the fence?

COW CONCERNS

When a group of students from ICU went on a trip out to Imperial College at Wye, they were aware that they were going to a college with quite a different focus to the rest of IC. However, these students were still amazed when they walked past a lecture theatre at Wye and saw a large picture of a cow on the overhead projector. The lecturer was pointing at the picture, apparently explaining what the different bits of the animal did.

ONION SELLERS

Recently Kevin was in a kitchen shared by a group of IC Students. Kevin noticed that most of the cupboards (as well as many of the surfaces) were piled high with onions. The student who owns the onions, let's call him Stuart, claimed to have acquired them accidentally. Stuart had tried shopping over the internet, but failed to realise that the quantity field required him to enter the number of kilograms (not the number of onions) that he required. Stuart is now looking for ideas about what he can do with a kitchen full of onions. Kevin would like to warn Stuart, and anyone else who may be storing large quantities of onions that they can be dangerous. An amusing incident occurred when many Pentagon staff began to feel nauseous as a strange smell pervaded their offices. Their building was evacuated as an attack by terrorists using biological weapons was feared. The

army and firefighters who were called to the scene eventually found the source of the fumes to be a storeroom containing rotting onions. The room had recently been opened by a chef, who was immediately overcome, and collapsed.

CURIOUS CROSSINGS

It has recently been brought to Kevin's attention that many of the local Pelican crossings possess

Mish Mash

A Mostly Harmless Column by Kevin, a random entity who knows nothing about nothing

their own individual character. Kevin has recently been crossing many roads in the South Kensington area investigating. Kevin has concluded that it would be impossible to find such a collection of quirky crossings anywhere else in the world. For example, take the crossing in front of the Albert Hall. Here, as soon as you press the button, the lights immediately begin to change - the responsiveness is quite amazing. This particular crossing also produces a rhythmic beeping

sound, which Kevin has determined is due to it possessing two beepers which do not beep in time. In contrast the Exhibition Road crossing (adjacent to the north side of Princes Gardens) does not possess any audible signal. The most famous local crossing is the one situated at the middle of High Street Ken. Here the sound produced to indicate that it is safe to cross is unusually fast. A number of sources have suggested that its distinctive sound has been sampled to provide a sound effect for shoot-em-up arcade games.

CORROSIVE NUTS

Salt and vinegar peanuts are now available in the union bars. Kevin had never come across these before and was not particularly impressed when he tried them for the first time. They tasted fruity; more salt and apple than salt and vinegar. An explanation for this was found on the label, which revealed that citric acid had been used as the flavouring. Although Kevin is aware that it is impractical to use vinegar to flavour items such as crisps and nuts, he would like to know why hydrofluoric acid - which being an extremely strong acid can provide a strong flavour in small amounts, and is normally in salt and vinegar flavourings - was not used.

To comment or contribute:
<http://come.to/mishmash>
or email kevin@ic.ac.uk

FELIX

ISSUE 1166

Editorial Staff

Editor.....David Roberts
Deputy Editor...Marie Nicholaou

News.....Gareth Morgan
Photography.....Jonas Lindsay
Sports.....Gus Paul
Science.....John Clifford
Music.....James Holian
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Film.....Helen Clark
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Writers

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Common, Andy Vivian, Sen
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Reviewers

Katherine, Helen, Drew, Chirs,
Mark, David, Helen, Kuthead,
Ben, Viv, Andy, Louise, Tim,
Christian, Pete, James, Kunal,
Ben, AllyPally & William Burns

Photographers

Jonas & Gareth

Felix, The Portacabins, Prince
Consort Rd, London, SW7 2BB
Internal tel: 58072
External tel & fax: 0171 594 8072
URL: www.su.ic.ac.uk/Felix
E-mail: felix@ic.ac.uk

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Feedback

UNION DENIES WRONGDOING

Dear Editor,

The sabbatical team would like to allay any fears, which may have arisen after last week's allegations of problems with the distribution of Union cards. We would like to assure readers that all of the very few people who got their cards on the day of the EGM were checked against registry details and for added security college swipe cards were also checked. (Anyone who turned up on the night with registry details would have been and indeed were issued cards.)

These students are all based off campus and thus could only obtain their cards on the day itself. In the past the Med school Union has distributed the cards. This system, long planned and well thought out, was a marked improvement! Having photo ID is also a step up from the current South Ken routine.

Yours, Tasha Newton, Tim
Traylor, Kevin Butcher, Ian Clifford

FINANCIAL FIASCO

Dear Dave

Firstly congratulations on last week's issue, one of the best in recent years. It seems that there was a strong financial theme running through many of the stories, which links in very nicely with the main headline. The College financial statements are, as you suggest, always worth a quick gander, but while being legally unimpeachable, they do not give anything like the whole picture. We do not, for example, see the parlous state of Catering, because it is lumped in with the Residences cash cow. The same could be said of Conferencing. Catering, which has always been in a hole, should reach the Earth's core next year if the a proportion of the SCR costs fall at its feet as the income projections for the refurbished facility miss the costs by a

mile. We don't see how many of those 362 lucky people of £50,000 per year are in academic positions. It is no secret that many people on fairly middle ranking grades in Sheffield are earning in that region. We do not see the calamitous financial management in certain divisions of the ICSM. For all this and more, you need the infamous Management and Planning Group reports. Harder to obtain than a virgin in a maternity ward, it is high time these were published. Next year, will the statements mention how the College has been running an overdraft since August because it paid every supplier's bill rather than transfer the information to the universally dreadful new finance system?

BreakPoint, uncharacteristically lucid and understandably concerned about the Hall refurbishments, suggests that we are in no-free-lunch territory, and he's in part correct. Beit Hall, refurbished for the 2000 British Association meeting, could prove very damaging to our wealth. Budgeted for on highly questionable predictions, it will be first to clobber the students if things go awry. Thankfully, no such nonsense is being entertained for Southside, which will be paid for by the disposal of Montpellier, Brabazon and Garden Halls. Any rent hikes there will then simply be profiteering by the College rather than any necessity borne of impending doom. It is a great relief that this silly conferencing model seems to have been put back in its box before exposing the College (ie. us) to unacceptable risk.

And then we have the LSE/IC merger. This is brilliant news. Yes, it makes perfect sense, but much more importantly, it suggests that IC may soon have a Rector who is prepared to challenge the old orthodoxies and who will not tolerate the waste and inefficiency that is sadly Imperial's hallmark. Many a good man has gone native here. Now we have someone firing salvos before even starting. God help Sheffield.

All the best,

Simon Baker
Chem PG

MINIBUS MISMANAGEMENT?

Dear Dave,

Further to comments on the catering service provided by college and the union (letters 17/1, 24/1), I have discovered yet another service that is available externally at a lower price. Since the increase in cost of union minibus hire from £150 per weekend to £190, it now works out £15-£20 cheaper to hire from a commercial hire-firm. Granted, this option is greatly facilitated by the provision of union insurance for drivers under 25, but it still begs the question of how a non-profit making organisation can cost more than a profit making one. An added bonus is that the cancellation charges for the commercial firm are approximately ¼ of the union's exorbitant fee. Perhaps it's time to seriously consider Becky Leigh's suggestion to contract out such services.

Yours,

Colm Carroll
Chem PG

CHRISTIANITY FIGHTS BACK

Dear Sir,

The article last week under the title of 'Cutting Comment' has given me some concern over the misrepresentation of the Christian understanding of God. Andy Vivian states that God is all-good, all-powerful and all-knowing. This is indeed true. He asks how this God can allow evil to exist. But he ignores the understanding of God as one who is full of love for us. This God could destroy everyone who does anything that is evil. He could end the world now and bring an end to evil now. Yet he does not. His love for us is such that he will allow each person time, chance after chance to love him, to choose the good option. His love is so great, as we are told, that he sent Jesus to die for us. Those who turn to him receive from him such unlimited amounts of love, which we can never earn, that he will forgive us, and

The deadline for letters intended for publication is Wednesday 12 noon - drop into the portacabins or email felix@ic.ac.uk. Letters may be edited for length but not grammar or spelling.

count us as worthy of his goodness.

If he only permitted good to exist, by destroying evil, then we would have no choice. But we have a choice, we are not governed by fate. It is this choice that makes us free to be who we are, to take the good option or the bad option, even to ask the questions and take the view that Mr. Vivian does.

If we do accept his gift of love, we can come to know him personally. This is the purpose of religion, not to give us some nefarious 'hope' or 'purpose', that thinks might be nicer later on, as Mr. Vivian seems to think, but that we might know God. In knowing that he has given us a way to come to him through Jesus Christ, and his role in creating and preserving us, then we should, and can, be spending our time praying to him and thanking him. He is not someone who we should ignore, or ultimately can ignore.

Mr. Vivian is right when he says that Religion is waning, but this is not because God is any less important today than he was many years, or that our ancestors were more credulous than we are, but because society is choosing to ignore God, and the ways we have to understand him, and the things we know about him. His article is surely a reflection of that fact.

Alastair Knott Physics 2.

Dear Felix,

Congratulations to Andy Vine for his article on religion (Scythe, 31 January). It's surprising that so many supposedly fine minds throughout the history of civilisation have spent so long debating the existence of God, the problem of evil and the nature of free will, when all it takes to sort the whole thing out is one science undergrad with a page to fill before Star Trek.

Obviously anyone with a faith in this day and age is scientifically illiterate. Imperial should reconsider its admissions policy - at present we must be awarding degrees to several hundred of these halfwits a year!

I look forward to reading a theologian's opinion of the chemical composition of interstellar dust clouds in next week's issue.

Yours,

A Christian

SUMMER BALL UPDATE

Dear Dave,

Just a quick note to let you (and everybody else!) know that this year's Imperial College Summer Ball will take place on SATURDAY 17th JUNE 2000, at the Alexandra Palace (don't worry, it's not the hall we used last year!); it's going to cost you £50, and it's going to be a night never to be forgotten. Guest speaker is going to be Trevor Phillips (ICU President 1978!), who by that point may well be Deputy Mayor of London. There are only limited numbers of tickets available, so come on folks! To show your interest, please e-mail summer.ball@ic.ac.uk and book your place for the event of the Millennium (oh bugger, referred to the millennium, sorry!)

Cheers,

The Summer Ball Team

BLATANT PLUG

Dear Sir,

At the end of Autumn term, members of the Conservative and Labour societies met for the purposes of an organised debate, we felt that the College was missing out in the absence of a debating society and resolved to go some way towards doing something about it. Despite the effective absence of any advertising, the event, a debate on the privatisation of the London Underground, was considered sufficiently successful to warrant repeating. Our next meeting will cover the predictable yet pressing issue of Britain's possible entry into the European single currency. This will take place in the union Dining Hall at 1:00 on Thursday, February 10. The debate is free to enter, and there will be no obligation to join either of the societies.

Please contact us (alun.hart@ic.ac.uk or patrick.hayes@ic.ac.uk) if you wish to speak, suggest a topic for future debate or wish to put your name on a debating mailing list. We look forward to seeing you.

Yours faithfully

Alun Hart (Conservative Soc)

Paddy Hayes (Labour Soc)

Editorial

PICKING A WINNER

I'm fully prepared to accept that Union elections aren't the most exciting thing on the planet. Being accosted by random strangers on the Walkway, finding every surface covered by a wall of inane posters (when you're already five minutes late for a lecture), or being forced to wade through a mountain of election gumpf every time you turn around, is hardly my idea of fun. Hell, I was a willing participant in the whole process this time last year, and it bored the hell out of me.... Sadly, however, this intensely boring spectacle is actually a really important part of the year. The five grinning idiots that we finally get around to electing will represent our views and interests to our departments, our wardens, our financiers and our government. They will be in regular contact with the people who control our daily lives and, once in a while, they will actually have the chance to affect the decisions that the College makes.

So, much as you may not want to, I'm afraid you're going to have to take an interest in the forthcoming elections. By the time this edition reaches your hands, a dozen or so gallant / foolhardy / manipulative / stupid individuals will have put their names forward, and will have begun their campaigns (I suspect that the wall-to-wall posters will probably have given this away). However, with at least five or six options to choose from for some of the posts (ie President), how do you pick your preferred option? Well, firstly there are the candidates manifestoes, which will (hopefully) appear in Felix this time next week. Some may suggest a solid background of responsibility and Union posts. Although these are useful (it certainly helps to know about the way the Union and the College are run before you start the job) they're certainly not the be all and end all when it comes to selecting the best person for the job. Similarly, whilst a solid set of policies and goals is admirable, there's a fine line between pointless idealism and monotonous pessimism. For example, I expect that all the candidates

for the top job will speak of trying to improve communication (whatever that really means), and make the Union more accessible - but whilst that sounds very nice, it's hardly a concrete objective for the year. Try to see through the management double-speak and inane waffle, and work out if they intend to do anything during the year (or whether they're just after some CV points). Which, of course, never happens. Oh no.

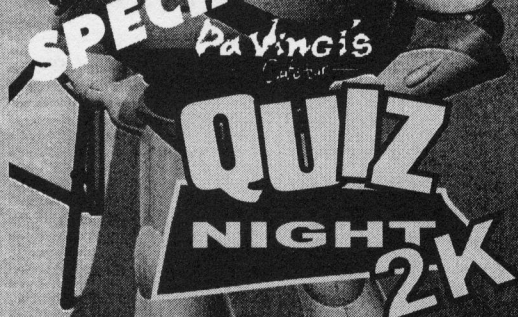
The second means of contact is through hustings. By asking the candidates the questions you want an answer to, you can not only find out their views on all the key topics (and all the silly ones too), but it's also your only chance to find out what the candidates are like under pressure. Do they go to pieces, or do they stroll through tough questioning and hostile audiences (hustings at St Mary's are traditionally a great test of this)? After all, it's incredibly important that your prospective sabbaticals have the ability to stand up for themselves and stick to their guns (whilst remaining calm and presentable) when faced with hostility - they'll face that on a weekly basis at College meetings.

Finally, there are the more ethereal aspects. All those posters might not tell you very much about policies or ideals, but they'll probably give you an insight into the candidates sense of humour and personality (and if they're promising to improve communication, this'll probably give you a pointer to their chances of success). The most decisive factor, however, is probably word of mouth. Ultimately, you're looking for a group of decent people who can get along with each other, so reputation and image is everything. Somewhere along the line, someone you know probably knows each and every one of the candidates a little, so try and get their opinions - don't automatically vote like sheep, but don't discount the possibility that some of the candidates are, in fact, complete idiots. It has been known to happen.

Dave

Tues 8th

NEARBY AND BEYOND.....
**TOY STORY 2
SPECIAL PRIZES**

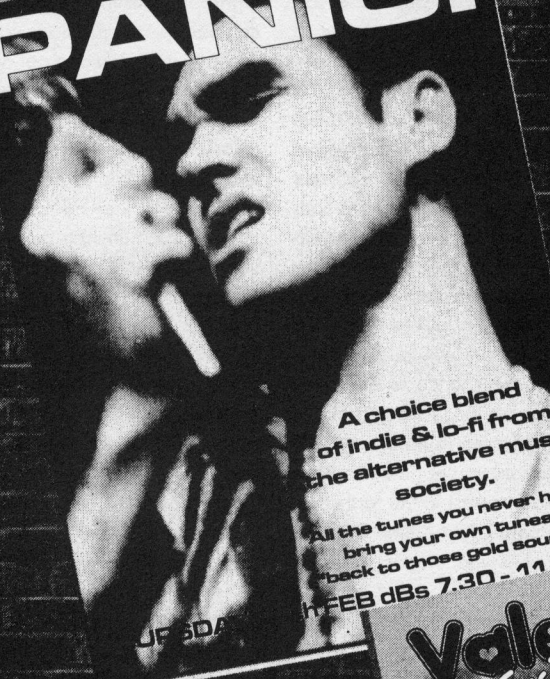


Every Tuesday 8pm
Win £50 cash courtesy of STA travel
or a crate of lager. Free to enter.

iCU

PANIC!

Thurs 10th



A choice blend
of indie & lo-fi from
the alternative music
society.

All the tunes you never hear
bring your own tunes.
"back to those gold soundz"
FEB dBs 7.30 - 11.30

WEDS

Weds 9th

icu ents presents

excess
the ultimate midweek party

every wednesday @ icu 9-1. free b4 11.
two rooms of tunes & cocktail bar

iCU it's your union - be part of it

Thurs 10th

A NIGHT FOR SWINGERS
DA VINCI'S
Café-bar

**COCKTAIL
NIGHT**

EVERY THURSDAY

iCU

GROOVY SERVICE FROM YOUR UNION

Fri 11th

Valentines
St. Trinian's
Night

Fri Feb 11th 9-2

Poppy music from
POP TARTS

Singalanga cilla at
Karaoke

Free lovehearts

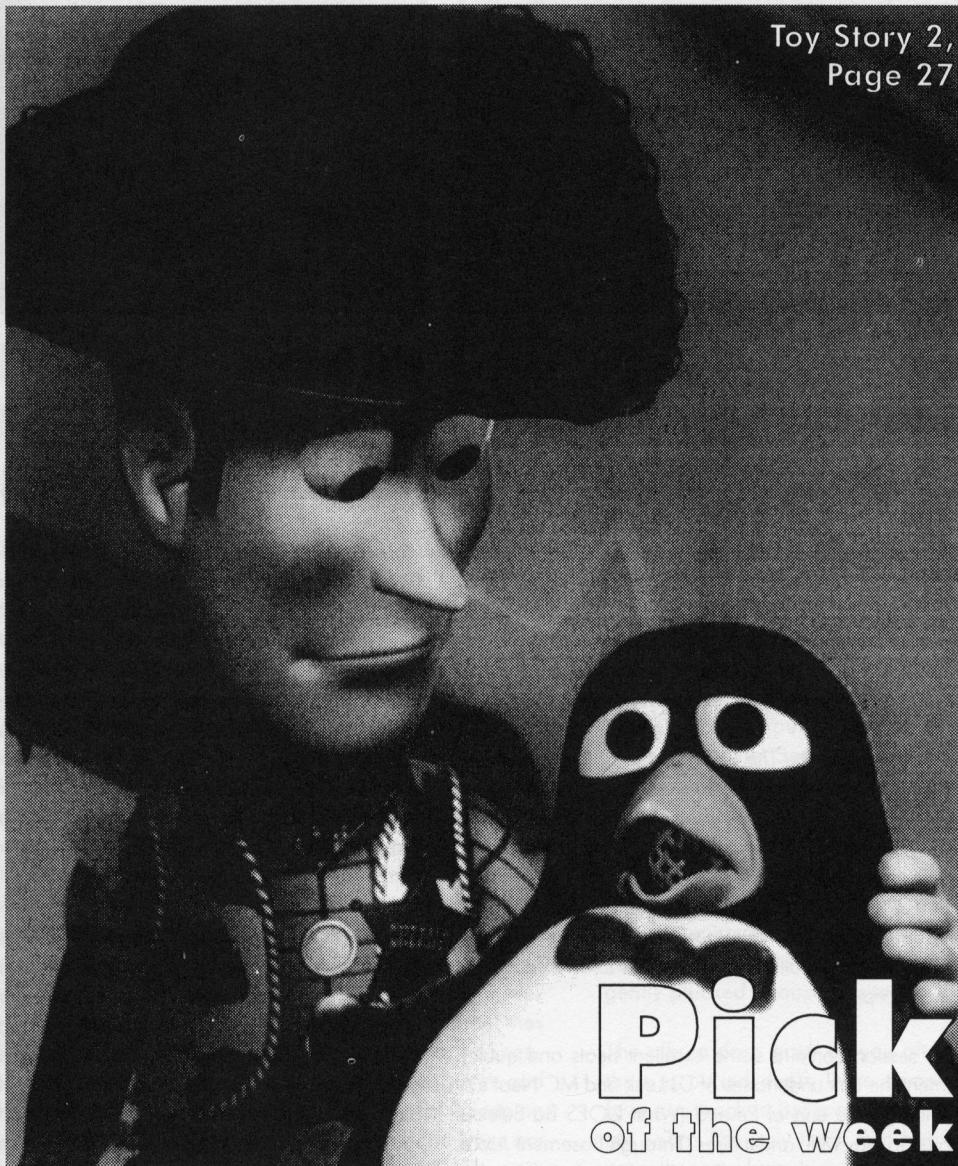
Free entry in school uniform
£1/£1.50 otherwise

iCU | ICU - the heart of IC

iCU

Your Union - Run for You

REVIEWS



Toy Story 2,
Page 27

Pick
of the week

Ratings



The Times Higher Education Supplement - the source of all Felix.



Guardian headlines, providing the last refuge for investigative reporting.



Anything in The Independent.



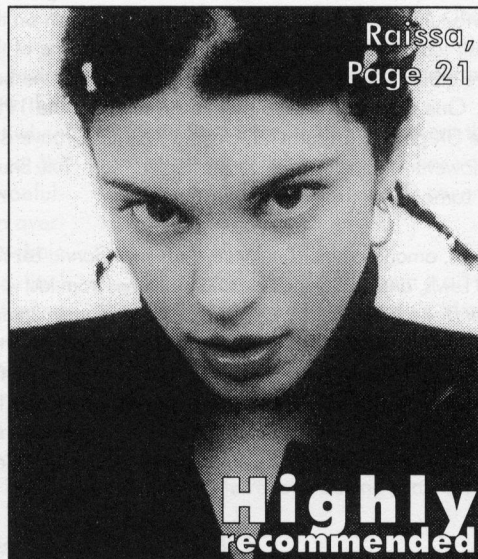
Members of the government writing in The Sun



Leader columns in the Daily Mail.



The nipple counter on the front of the Daily Sport, ensuring taste and decency prevail.



Raissa,
Page 21

Highly
recommended

THE WEEK AT A GLANCE

20 **Frequency** music.felix@ic.ac.uk

Artful Dodger - The Sound of UK Garage
Bellatrix - The Girl with Sparkling Eyes
Buzzcocks - Spiral Scratch
Campag Velocet - Vito Satan
Mariah Carey - Thank God I Found You
DumDums - Everything
Eels - Mr E's Beautiful Blues
Fixed Stars - Every Night
Gabrielle - Rise
Lambchop - Nixon
Will Oldham - Guarapero
Rachael Stamp - Hymns for Strange Children
Raissa - Believer
The Third Eye Foundation - Little Lost Soul

24 **Games** games.felix@ic.ac.uk

Destruction Derby 64 (N64)
Tzar - Burden of the Crown (PC)

The Games team are looking for your feedback on their pages - address your (constructive) comments to benjamin.roe@ic.ac.uk, and you could win a prize.

26 **Screen** film.felix@ic.ac.uk

American Pie
Double Jeopardy
End of Days
Stigmata Interview
Toy Story 2

This week's competition gives you the chance to win tickets to see Leonardo de Caprio in the Beach, plus copies of Alex Garland's original novel.

29 **Books** books.felix@ic.ac.uk

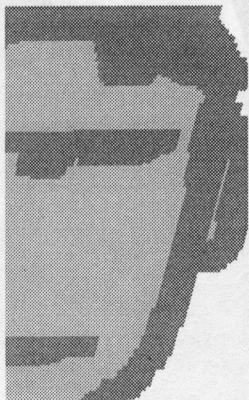
Don't Read This If You're Stupid - Tibor Fischer
Helen's Literary Review

30 **Method** arts.felix@ic.ac.uk

Krapp's Last Tape
OJ Othello
Underexposed
Yayoi Kusama



frequency



And once again it's time for music. Well, I hope you've not been neglecting your ears recently, and if you've taken the chance to visit a few live concerts in the last few weeks, I'm sure you've been having an excellent time. For some reason, the early months of the year are often the best time for concerts, and if you're prepared to dip your hand in your pocket you could treat yourself to a quite a delicious offering sometime soon.

... frequency ... get, get down

And my last words for this week must go to the terrible new William Orbit album and the satanic majesty of his production on the new Madonna record. Not only does his new album sound like it's been written on a school Casio keyboard, but his new Madonna collaboration is a hideous cover of the Don McClane classic *American Pie!* As well as being highly unnecessary, Mr Orbit's production adds some tones that make the tune as painful as anything I've heard in years. Please, if you've any decency do not buy these records, and if you're one of the unlucky people who bought Orbit's album on the back of his excellent *Adagio* single, then do yourself a favour and take it back. Nice.

The Artful Dodger Rewind - The Sound of UK Garage (Ministry)

OK, I'm not going to pretend I'm an expert on garage - I mean, a lot of it's quality, but I wanted to see if what was beneath the surface was good too. And I can now happily say that it is. Oh yes. Garage works, and this latest double album offering mixed by the Artful Dodger really does come straight from the heart (ooh, that's poor - sorry) and widens up garage awareness by including some of the best bits since UK garage really took off around '94.

Striking the match with his own *Re-rewind The Crowd Say Bo Selecta*, the Artful Dodger spins the tunes ably, running smoothly throughout with a quality mix full of variety and flair playing from the MJ Cole mix of Another Level's *Guess I Was A Fool* to the pure, unadulterated guest appearance from James Brown *Funk On Ah Roll* (Bump 'n' Flex remix). To my mind anyway, any album that features Mr Cool himself has to rock. And then there's the fact that it is, after all, Ministry's own label, and (to be fair) have they ever produced anything bad? Huh? Of course not. Fluent, infallible sound is manufactured at the MOS, and this is really no exception.

The two and a half hour session contains some excellent beats and quality tunes, and from the moment the deft undertones of DJ Luck and MC Neat's *A Little Bit Of Luck* shine through the end of *Rewind* (What DOES Bo Selecta mean?) you know it's going to play well, and it does. Through Basement Jaxx's *Jump 'n' Shout* and Doolally's *Straight From The Heart*, the first disc also includes US Alliance, Sunship and Robbie Craig, and the Artful Dodger himself presents another two tunes, *R U Ready*, and *Something*. His fourth on the album, *Movin' Too Fast*, features Romina Johnson, and for me is one of the best tunes on the entire album - which I guess would make it one of the best sounds of UK garage. One thing that puzzles me, however, is that the 1996 tune which really broke UK garage overground, Double 99's *RIP Groove* isn't included anywhere. However, tribute is paid to the fathers Karl 'Tuff Enuff' Brown and Matt 'Jam' Lamont with their own *Needs Good Love*.

The second disc contains, among others, Tina Moore's *Never Gonna Let You Go*, MJ Cole, Danny J Lewis, and one of the absolute best tunes from last year, Paul Johnson's *Get Get Down* (as danced to drunkenly on a podium in Spain's Pacha last summer by me - doh!). Truthfully, the Southampton based Artful Dodger has worked this well and it really does give a good account of the quality of the UK garage scene. If you're a Gass club regular, or listen to Ice or Mac FM (88.4 and 92.7) then you shouldn't be without this, and if not, then definitely think about it. You know it's a good sound. But what does Bo Selecta MEAN...?



Will Oldham Guarapero (Domino)

I've been trying to visualise, whilst listening to *Guarapero*, what Will Oldham should look like. He should be quite small, scraggly yet huge of hair, wearing a big, woolly, rainbow jumper, yet (in some strange, folky way) be visually stunning. This isn't really going anywhere as I have no idea what Will Oldham looks like, but think of a Bob Dylan type character as you listen. Somewhat ugly to the ear on the first hearing, slowly turning into a strange, mutated piece of beauty on second or third. You know what I'm talking about.

These songs are a very confusing forty minutes or so. The tunes are gorgeously emotional, deep feeling in every note, but with hysterically funny lyrics at the same time. Titles like *Big Balls* (yes, in THAT sense), do kind of give the game away. "I've got big balls and she's got big balls" is the basic lyric, with the odd rhyming of 'testicles' to change the pace just a little.

From the very first second the marvel of *Drinking Woman*, with its "A woman who drinks / She rests her head and thinks / of drinks / She thinks of drinks / and sleep / Though it's hours before she sinks / her head and winks" lyrics, rings out.

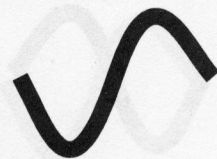
Domino records specialise in the best of the slightly obscure, with acts such as Pavement, Smog, The Pastels and Ganger (to name but a few) - and Will Oldham rightly earns his place among them. The production in some parts is very basic, and the live sections are often hard to follow, but if you're a fan of Bob Dylan's style and want a slightly more contemporary edge to it, Will Oldham is most definitely your man. An outstanding take on 21st century blues.



Pete

Louise

frequency



Lambchop Nixon (City Slang)

There aren't many albums that come with a list of recommended reading. Well, there was Moby's *Play*, but he's a bit of a nutcase: "If you eat meat you're a bastard". That sort of thing. As you may expect with a recording called *Nixon*, the literature has a crooked-past-presidential feel to it, with titles like *Tricky Dick And The Pink Lady* - but it does say "suggested", so I didn't hot-foot it down to the library. Maybe you're supposed to read these books to get an idea of the theory behind the album. Whatever, I didn't. End of story.

I really don't know what to classify *Nixon* as. There's a country thing going on in there somewhere, a little slice of Blind Melon's particular brand of rock, a kind of Counting Crows vibe (but more depressed) and a whole melange of other stuff. But it's those three major elements that are easiest to spot. Kurt Wagner's sometimes high-pitched, distressed vocals are very similar to Shannon Hoon's, there is extensive use of slide guitar and strings (fiddle as well as the more classical sweeping orchestral sounds), and the subject matter and lyrics are as abstract and beautiful as Adam Duritz's. Tracks such as (*Fearless*) *The Book I Haven't Read*, *The Butcher Boy* and *The Old Gold Shoe* are prime examples.

The melodies that are present throughout give you a smiley yet melancholic sensation, as if you know that something good won't last, or that feeling you get when you've done a naughty thing that you're bound to get caught for. It's that fusion of contentment and woefulness that makes the album that tiny bit better than average. I think that they may have overplayed the whole despair business, because when it came to the final track I was sobbing into a tub of ice cream and feeling lonely. OK, so maybe I'm over exaggerating, but it would be a terrible mistake to listen to this while on Prozac or lithium carbonate - you'd be climbing the walls looking for someone to talk to that wasn't inside your head. On the other hand, if you aren't prone to depression, have a listen.



Christian



Raissa Believer (Polydor)

Raissa is the latest bright young thing to emerge into the glaring lights of the UK pop scene. She's pretty, has a great voice, and has a batch of catchy melodic ditties ready to woo the public with. Sounds like a winning formula. But is it any good?

Alanis Morissette is the name that jumps into my mind as soon as Raissa starts to sing. Her songs and style are strongly reminiscent of *Jagged Little Pill*. Take away most of the angst and put in acoustic guitars and swooshing strings with a 'modern' beat, and you're there. Some of the tracks also sound a bit like Madonna circa *Ray of Light*, especially *Beautiful Glassy Creature*.

Believer is nice to listen to. Undemanding and unobtrusive, it makes for good background music. I played it to my girlfriend who said it was "absolutely brilliant", so maybe I'm missing something. Certainly the music is distinctly un-masculine. It can be very touching, and songs like *Step On Up* bring a lump to the throat when Raissa gently coaxes us to "Step on up, to the stars / to the stars" over melting strings and gently plucked acoustic guitars.

The album does grow on you after a few listens - always a good sign. It implies that there is added depth there somewhere, even if you can't spot it the first time. My favourite track is *Believer*, and I wouldn't be surprised if this isn't released as a single soon. The only track that has been released as a single, *How Long Do I Get* is actually one of the less impressive. It seems quite bland compared to the rest of the album, but judging from last weeks Top of the Pops, that's what gets in the charts these days. Either that or Steps clones. Steps. Of all the people to copy, is it really worth copying Steps? The whole appeal of Steps is their unique and open simplicity, plus I couldn't put up with more than one. *Piss off Scooch*.

I love Raissa's cute English accent that creeps in from time to time. There's no doubt that she is vocally talented - her voice is great, and her adorable, soft, brown eyes staring out at me from the CD cover almost say, "Go on, give this five, you know you want to."

Towards the end of the album it all starts to get a bit weird (relatively), with distorted, computerised vocals. Electronic bleeps mix with a slightly breakbeat rhythm. I like this bit, especially the track *She Bubble*, as it is a lot less conventional than the rest of the album, and it hints that there is more to Raissa than meets the eye.

Overall this is formulaic - it's not particularly original or even new. But it's done well, by a talented performer, and it's easy to listen to. And since when has originality mattered to the record-buying masses?



Tom B



frequency



Rachel Stamp Hymns for Strange Children (Cruisin')

Mention the name Rachel Stamp in a crowded room, and the chances are most people won't know who you're talking about. But there'll be some crazy, mixed-up kid in the corner who has a wicked glint in their eye at the thought of "the Stamp". Rachel Stamp is not a girl, but 3 boys and a girl who play punk rock for the twisted. I'll never forget the night they played at the Union. dBs was transformed from the usual gentle bopping with Abba to a frenzied moshpit, with arms, feet, sweat and tears flying everywhere. The band distorted the air with their crashing riffs and exploding drums, leaving a trail of glitter and feathers behind them. Each band member was wearing a floral dress, and sported the most intensely coloured hair you can imagine. There was something vaguely disturbing about a man wearing green bunches and lipstick snarling at you about being tied up. Did I say vaguely? I meant intensely! I still have the cork he spat out into the crowd. I'm glad to say that the wine that accompanied it washed out easily.

But memories like this don't wash out, and I have to say that I was disappointed that their new album, *Hymns for Strange Children* didn't have the same intensity. The whole time I was listening, I was thinking how much better it would sound live. On CD, the guitars have been quietened down, and the synth has been brought to the front, giving the songs a gentler feel, as opposed to the raw glam-punk explosion of their live show.

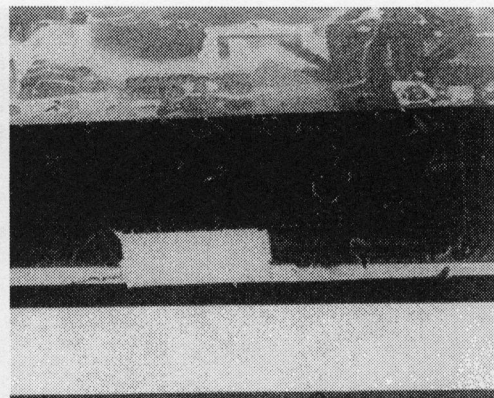
Don't underestimate this though. The songs are still fast-moving, heavy-rocking, three minute bursts. Subjects range from sex to music, from regret to joy, all with a large slice of angst on the side. Singer David Ryder-Prangley has the perfect voice for the music, ranging from effeminate, breathless, tenderness to raw, snarling outrage.

While there are some great tracks here, such as *I Wanna be Your Doll* and *Ladies+Gents* (with those fantastic lines, "Everybody knows that girls are stupid / Everybody knows that girls are evil / Everybody knows that girls are the devil"), this standard is just not maintained throughout the album. The songs also have little variety to them, all being fast and noisy, racing to get to the end. Tracks such as *My Sweet Rose* show that they can be subtler if they want to, but they have chosen not to. I think this lets the album down, and it can get a bit tedious listening to one angry burst after another.

On the whole, I think this should be viewed as a collection of individual songs, rather than an album. There is some quality there, but I know that Rachel Stamp can do better.



Tom



The Third Eye Foundation Little Lost Soul (Domino)

Pigeonholes are lovely things, especially when it comes to music. There's nothing handier when trying to describe a band to someone who's never heard them before - "They're indie-rock/pop-punk/acid jazz etc". And then along comes The Third Eye Foundation (aka. Matt Elliot) with another of his "drum 'n' bass/hip-hop/noise/classical/ambient/soundtrack" albums. At the mo', it's a pretty empty pigeonhole.

Violins play off wired breakbeats whilst a swarm of locusts attack in the background. A singer from the 40s is mauled by a distorted synth riff from hell. Evil sub-bass rallies round a brass band, whilst Roni Size falls over some drums in the background. So, this is truly original, but also bloody weird and inaccessible. It's too edgy for background music, and too abstract for close attention. But still, in Elliot, it is evidence of a maverick and intelligent musician, with a black streak of humour (his last album, called *You Guys Kill Me*, featured Jesus on the cover) running through the album. However, there is nothing here that tops his wicked recent single *In Bristol With A Pistol*. There, the marriage of swelling noise and sweet tune worked wonders, whereas here it can tend to grate, as another song drifts past the eight-minute mark.

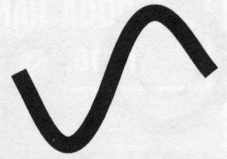
So it ain't for Steps fans. But there are still some fantastic and unpredictable moments. There's no reason why someone who listens to, say, Mogwai or Tortoise shouldn't dig some o' this ill shit. Pastoral Aphex Twin anyone?



Kunal

If anyone would like to join the music team here at Felix then they should drop into the office at 12.30pm on Tuesdays and Fridays. On Fridays we sort out the music and on Tuesdays we sort out the clubs, which with any luck will be back next week. Nice.

frequency



Buzzcocks
Spiral Scratch
(Mute)

Breakdown, Time's Up, Boredom and Friends Of Mine - four songs recorded live in 1976, a couple of years before this totally outstanding punk band hit the big time. These don't display the absolutely perfect popness of *Ever Fallen In Love?* or *What Do I Get?* but you can sense the beginnings of something amazing.



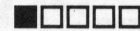
Eels
Mr E's Beautiful Blues
(DreamWorks)

A sort of contemporary version of "sweets for my sweet, sugar for my honey" with a sanitised ska mix and some growly vocals to separate the hooks. It made me want to go out and buy one of the Trojan box sets. Just sing-a-long to The Searchers and listen to the top Mellotron usage.



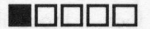
Fixed Stars
Every Night
(Mercury)

Well, whoever fixed the *Fixed Stars* was clearly untrained in the art of fixing and evidently possessed the musical appreciation of a lettuce. Remember Lightning Seeds horrid experiment with *Life's Too Short* - this is like that, only it smells just that little bit worse.



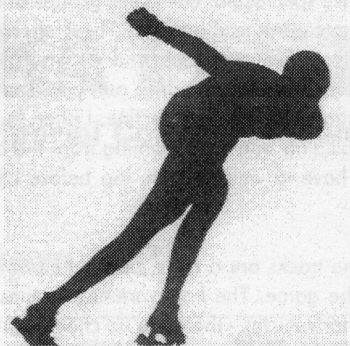
Gabrielle
Rise
(Go Beat)

"Knock, knock, knocking on heaven's door. Knock, knock, knocking on heaven's door. Knock, knock, knocking on heaven's door". She may have been a slight novelty with her eye patch and silly wavy hair, but having ditched both she's not going to fool me with a thinly disguised Eric Clapton cover.



Mariah Carey
Thank God I Found You
(Columbia)

If you're a big Mariah fan then I expect you'll really like this - but it's just like all the others. Again. Sounds nice but you'll wonder where you heard it before. A bonus, however, is that she's supported by a guy named Joe. Just Joe. Cool.



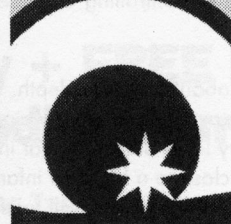
Campag Velocet
Vito Satan
(Pias)

Brooding guitar based skunk rock led by Pete Voss' distinctive snarl (somewhere between a cockney Liam Gallagher and Ian Brown). As close as this lot will come to a tender ballad. Not quite the saviours of the British rock scene, but they are certainly a band doing something a bit more daring and interesting than the majority.



DumDums
Everything
(Good Behaviour)

The DumDums look like a corporate, put together indie/ska/punk Boyzone. From their hair, denim and brand new adidas trainers alone, I loathe them. But, the A side has a lovely tune, even though they are all of the above. Expect to hear this song a great deal, as it will be a chart hit. On the plus side, though, the other tracks (as expected) were absolute tripe. So they'll be as big as the Stereophonics in a year then.



Bellatrix
The Girl with the Sparkling Eyes
(Fierce Panda)

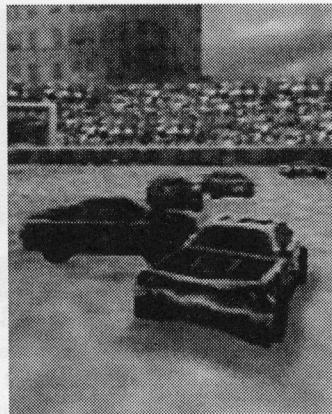
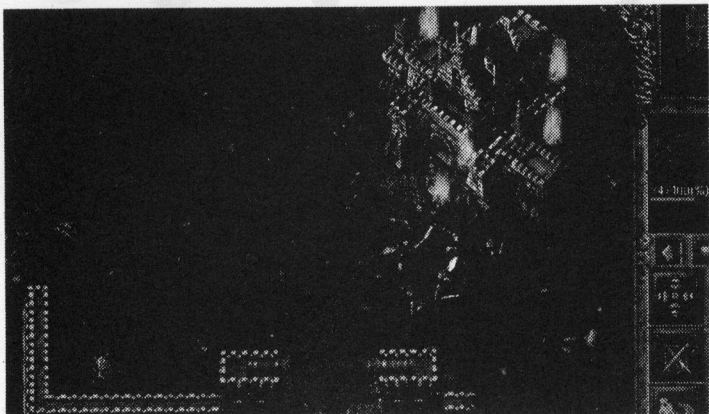
Not unlike Sonya Madan (of Echobelly fame) doing the vocals over a quirky guitar based Bis track. Bellatrix are another original Icelandic export. The song is very catchy and simple, with an angular tune running throughout. This isn't a single which will provoke a particularly strong reaction - it is, however very likable and, at best, nice.



...Singles reviews by
Andy, Louise and
Tim...



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Preview: Tzar-Burden of the Crown (PC)

I love being a games reviewer - I get to play games like *Tzar* months before anyone else has even heard of them.

On first seeing *Tzar*, I have to say I was a little disappointed. On the surface, it looks like a direct copy of that classic RTS, *Warcraft 2*. But while much of the basic structure and game play is copied almost exactly from the much loved *Warcraft*, there's enough new stuff here to grab the interest of even the most cynical gamer. The overall effect of the game is kind of hard to describe: try to imagine a blend of *Age of Empires* with *Warcraft*, and you'd come pretty close (I think). It goes beyond the normal "build farm/mine and get resources" model of other RTS games - your peasants can fish, keep cows and farm crops to get food, trade goods with each other and even gamble in pubs if you want them to. I've always found god games like *Caesar* and *Pharaoh* very addictive, and *Tzar* does give some of the sense of controlling a whole community you get with games of that type.

The most striking thing about *Tzar* is its depth. The research tree is large, and the number of units available is equally big. The game seems to have been designed with very large-scale combat in mind - I have had fights with the computer with close to a hundred infantry on each side at times. Played properly, a large game of *Tzar* will take a long time to finish, but with ever more powerful and expensive units available as you research and build new structures, there's always something new to do. Some may find the initial preparation and building a little long-winded, but if you're prepared to think about strategy games rather than just blindly clicking 'attack', *Tzar* is great fun to play.

The single player campaign has twenty-five missions to play, which should keep you busy for a while. The campaign is much more like a role playing game than the traditional RTS campaign - it actually has a storyline that follows through from mission to mission. My only complaint would be that you are often left to wander around the map aimlessly, trying to work out what to do next - which isn't much fun after a while.

While most of the combat in *Tzar* is limited to charging your swordsmen in while your archers fire from way back, there are quite a few specialist units around that require closer control, including some really cool dragons. Even if you can't play multiplayer, the computer players are extremely hard to beat. They don't fall into the classic RTS computer player trap of always attacking the same bit of your base - they will actually outflank your defenses and attack your resource-gathering peasants if they get a chance. *Tzar* definitely seems to be a game to look forward to in the year 2000.



Ben

Destruction Derby 64 (N64)

If you've been looking for a decent smash-em-up racer on the N64 these past years, no doubt you've been very disappointed with the results. Put simply, before now there hasn't been one. And while *Destruction Derby 64* from THQ isn't exactly the game we've all been dying for, it's certainly the pick of the current crop out there.

The idea behind this game is to race and crash. You get points for passing checkpoints along the tracks, and even more for earth-shuddering collisions between yourself and the rival drivers. There is no finish line as such - instead cars continue to race until there is only one left standing, at which time all the points are totalled up and the winner is announced. Thus you may find yourself caught in the thick of the action and retire early, only to discover that you accumulated enough points from smashing into your competitors to finish first overall. The problem is that, in order to have spectacular collisions, groups of cars start at opposite ends and travel in opposite directions. The first collision will result in a gorgeous orgy of grinding metal, and it's great fun to be in there. But, as the race continues and cars drop out, you'll be doing much more driving and the chances of collision decline. I often found myself swearing when I missed colliding with a car coming from the opposite direction, since it meant I'd have to wait a whole lap before I got another chance to hit him.

Some of the tracks are arenas, and it's here that you'll lap up the most fun from the game. The basic premise in these arenas is just to smash into the other vehicles - there are no checkpoints to pass and the cars are all packed in a small enough area, so there is constant action. In multiplayer especially this is a hoot, and you'll be playing these levels more than any of the others.

The graphics are alright but we expect more from our machines these days, and it would have been better if we could have seen the damage in expansion pak boosted high-res. I absolutely love to see my car taking punishment from its crashes, and thankfully real-time damage has been included. However, there simply aren't enough variations in this damage, and since most of the collisions are head on you rarely get to see more than a missing bonnet and an occasional warped back.

Destruction Derby 64 is a great idea for a game, and initially it's great fun too. You'd just expect that little bit more from the game, especially when it's already had two outings on the Playstation (with a third in the pipeline). If, like me, you're really into causing damage, you'll like this game whatever, although the feeling that it could have been better will always linger.



Kuthead

RAG WEBSITE:
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ICURAG

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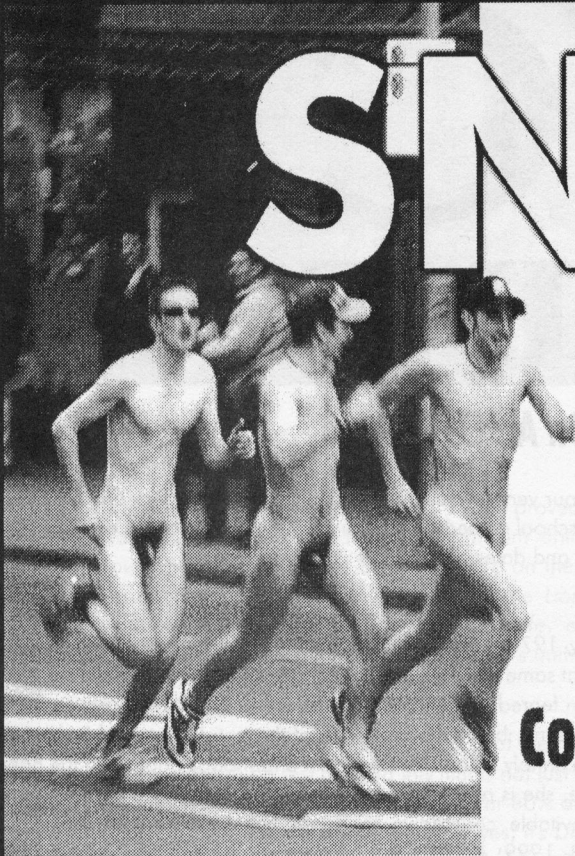
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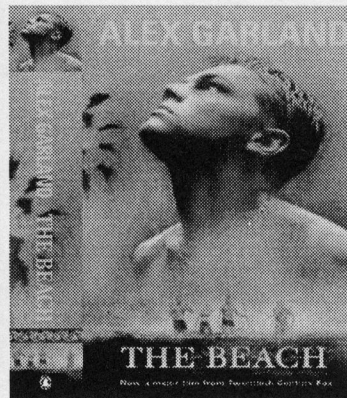
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screen



The Beach Competition

This week, the Odeon Kensington, Penguin Books and Screen have teamed up to give you the chance to win a host of prizes. We not only have five pairs of tickets to give away for Leonardo Di Caprio's new film *The Beach*, but we also have copies of the book of the same name by Alex Garland.

Just imagine being told that a paradise island is out there and you get given a map to guide you to it. What would you do? This is basically the premise of *The Beach*. Richard (Di Caprio) is an American backpacker who has been told about such an island and been given such a map. He persuades some fellow travellers to join him in his quest to find it, and eventually they find this paradise which has a small community of travellers. Richard and co decide to join these travellers - but all is not as perfect as it seems.

Essentially, this has the potential to be an ace film considering who has written, directed and produced it. Danny Boyle (director), Andrew Macdonald (producer) and John Hodge (screenplay writer) have all worked together before to bring us some fantastic films, so if this is anything like them, we'll be in for a treat.

So, would you like to win some Odeon film tickets or a book? If you would, figure out the answer to this week's question, which is:

Name all the films that Danny Boyle, Andrew Macdonald and John Hodge have worked on together since 1994

[Hint: There are five to name]

To be in with a chance of winning a prize, e-mail your answer to film.felix@ic.ac.uk before 12pm on Wednesday and keep your fingers crossed. If you have a preference for a book or ticket prize then write book or film in the subject heading of the e-mail. The winners of last week's contest (which offered the chance to win a pair of tickets to see the fantastic *American Beauty*) were:

L Shankar
P Rowlands
A Tang
G Taylor
J Fisher

Please call by the Felix office to collect your prizes. And for those of you who are wondering what the answer to last week's question was, the solution was that Thomas Newman connects *American Beauty*, *The Shawshank Redemption* and *The Green Mile*.

iCU CINEMA

What's On At ICU Cinema

This week at our very own cinema, you'll find the Arnie flick *End Of Days* and the high school comedy *American Pie*. Check the posters on the walkway for times and dates of showings

End Of Days

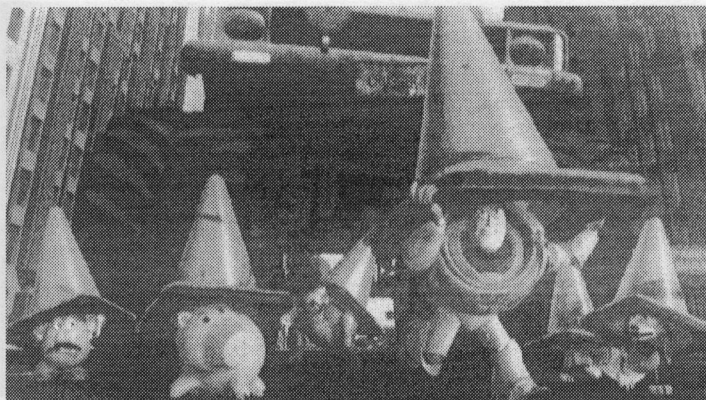
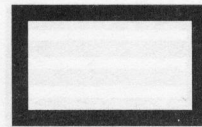
New York City, 1979: In a Manhattan hospital, a beautiful baby girl enters the world. That same day the Pope is informed of the birth of the child. Her birth has been feared for centuries. The scripture has indeed proven true: the child, Christine, bears the birthmark of the anti-Christ, and has been chosen for an unholy union. Following an unorthodox baptism in the hospital's morgue, she is returned to her mother. But things are far from normal. The inevitable countdown to doom has begun. New York City, December 28, 1999: As the world approaches the end of a century and the end of a millennium, it is the beginning of the end. Jericho Cane (Arnold Schwarzenegger), a beaten down ex-cop, wakes up to another day, oblivious to the struggle that he soon must face. Christine, who has grown into a beautiful young woman, has spent her entire life on medication, trying to numb the pain from the disturbing thoughts which haunt her. Now, as the world stands on the brink of the new millennium, it is up to Cane to protect Christine - and all mankind - from witnessing the end of days. And it is in this, the darkest hour, that all mankind must have faith..

American Pie

In terms of crudity, *American Pie* simply is on a whole new level. This certainly isn't the kind of movie you'd take your mother to (or your girlfriend for that matter), but nonetheless it has moments of genuine comic brilliance amongst the rapid-fire gags. The premise is simple - a group of four teenagers in their final year of High School make a pact to lose their virginity before they graduate, and promptly set about a variety of misadventures in a series of misguided attempts to get their end away. An average night in the Union you might think, but these guys are sadder, more desperate and more full of lame chat-up lines than anyone you might have met at IC - they will, quite literally, do anything. I won't give away too many of the jokes, for fear of ruining some of the most inspired (or sick, depending on your point of view) moments, but suffice to say you can't understand the meaning of the word "depraved" until you've seen a teenager attempt to shag an apple pie...

The problem, however, is that once you've identified the level that the movie's operating on, the jokes become phenomenally obvious - and frequently you'll find the entire cinema laughing hysterically five minutes before the punchline arrives. Admittedly the quality of the stars doesn't help matters much (the cast list peaks out with Willow from *Buffy*), but you're nonetheless left with a distinct feeling that you could probably have written something not entirely dissimilar yourself, given about a week off from College.

screen



Toy Story 2

When the original *Toy Story* was released in 1995, it proved to be a landmark production, being the first feature length film animated entirely using computer technology. It went on to rate third on the all time highest grossing animations list (behind *Aladdin* and the *Lion King*). Since then, we've most notably had *Antz* and *A Bug's Life*, each of which appealed to adults and kids by following in *Toy Story's* unintentional footsteps.

So, by telling you that *Toy Story 2* is set to be one of the highest grossing films of all time, you can be rest assured this film is not just meant for kiddies. In fact, rather boringly, I can tell you that over 60% of the audience in America were adults. Yes, it's about toys, and yes, it's Disney, but it's a winner for both age groups because of two simple facts. Firstly, it is visually stunning. The animation, by Pixar, is so advanced that you watch it like a film, not a cartoon. It gives you a visual overdose of stunning graphics. Secondly, the depth of the characterisation and storytelling is as good as any real film, due to the novel script and engaging characters.

All the old characters are back, and the same actors as in the original *Toy Story* do all their voices. The new characters are from "Woody's Roundup", a TV show in which Woody (the cowboy) starred during the 1950s. In it, his sidekick was the cowgirl Jessie (voiced by Joan Cusack), while his horse was called Bullseye. Kelsey Grammar voices the final character, The Prospector, a kindly old fellow who is not all that he seems. The story revolves around a malevolent toy collector, who kidnaps Woody so that he can make his collection of toys from "Woody's Roundup" complete, in order to sell them to a museum for lots of money. Of course, this leaves Buzz Lightyear and co to go and rescue Woody, while fighting a new enemy, Zurg.

While the story does not seem to be a million miles from the original, what does make *Toy Story 2* different to its predecessor is that it is written with adults in mind as well as the younger generation. However, this manifests itself in a number of excellent film takeoffs (*Star Wars*, *Tron*), and not really in the dialogue. Occasionally there are jokes that are not aimed for younger children, but their subtlety means that they are not derogatory to their intelligence. Indeed, it is they who get their own back by understanding some other references far better than we will.

Most family films have a stigma attached to them in student circles - admittedly usually for good reasons. However, if there was one film that should buck this trend, it is this one. If you can handle the uncool appearance of yourself going into the cinema to see it, you will be treated to one of the films of the year.



Drew

Double Jeopardy

Happily married couple Nick (Bruce Greenwood) and Libby Parsons (Ashley Judd) reside peacefully with child in backwoods America. During a dirty weekend on a sailboat, Libby awakes to find blood everywhere and her husband gone. When she is arrested and convicted of her husband's murder, Libby herself resigns to her fate and gives custody of her child to her friend Annabeth (Angela Green).

All seems normal, until her friend abruptly uproots and serendipity reveals her husband is - oh my goodness gracious - still alive. Shocked and bemused, Libby tries everything to remedy the situation. As her options peter out and her hope fades, a conveniently convicted law graduate (who just happens to be incarcerated alongside her) informs her of the double jeopardy clause. Under this loophole, she can execute her husband and not face the consequences, as she will have already served her time in prison for the charge of murder. Duly energised she lives out her sentence by spending her time working out (cue cheesy *Rocky* scenes). Six years later, Libby is finally paroled. Travis Lehman (Tommy Lee Jones), is a tough parole officer who won't allow any departure from the rules, and when Libby does try to track down her son, Lehman pursues her.

As cultured cinema goes, we enjoy fine acting, diverse plots and captivating scripts. We left the cinema not only disappointed but extremely empty. The acting was wooden and unconvincing from Angela Judd; Tommy Lee Jones photocopied his character from the *Fugitive* and *US Marshals*. Their talents were squandered in this waste of cinema roll which should be burned.

The one-dimensional plot was as sterile as a radioactive panda. It made sense but didn't flow. The peripheral characters were fitted around the plot like square bricks in a round hole. Side plots were briefly glimpsed, but were quickly squashed by the juggernaut central plot. The script kept a constant rate of one cliché per minute that made everything that much more predictable, and when not in cliché mode the dialogue was corny. Although this is a dull film in general, a few scenes stand out from the crowd, including the sinking red metro and the atmospheric bloodstained awakening of Angela Judd. Don't worry about these too much, however, as there should be just enough space on the trailer to fit them all in.

Although more of a chick flick we still wouldn't advise anyone to spend their time watching this "See you on TV next Christmas" turkey. In conclusion, this boring, meaningless, film shouldn't have been made. I wouldn't even bother watching it on video.



Chris and Mark



screen

David Morgan interviews the director of *Stigmata*

Born in 1962 and educated at Oxford University, Rupert Wainwright is an up and coming director whose most recent work is the new horror movie *Stigmata*. Check out this interview and find out what he's got to say.

You actually came across the script some time ago. How extensive a role have you played in it since?

It's one of those stories that people say "how long did it take to get the movie made". On one hand, six years wandering around throwing it at people and hearing them say "no", before I walked into a guy's office and pitched it to him in one line. I said it's about this girl who doesn't believe in God and she gets the wounds of Jesus. A priest comes from the Vatican and tries to help her. I sent him the script and he called me to say it wasn't as good as the pitch. From the moment the script was bought for MGM, I was very involved with the writing. It's one of those movies where there's so much to find out about that I really became obsessed with it... In the original draft of the script, there was nothing about this missing gospel. I started trying to find out how the movie could end. In the original ending, she literally hovered up into heaven surrounded by the Dalai Lama, CNN and the Pope. I thought, well, this might not work.

There was an interesting bit about half way through where she spoke Aramaic; she just spoke the last words of Jesus on the cross. So, I started rummaging around the New Testament trying to find out what else she could say or do. I came across this book called, "Who wrote the New Testament?" This is a really fascinating book. Essentially, it examines all the strands in the four gospels. I found out about this gospel that's sometimes called the fifth gospel, the gospel of St Thomas. As we said at the end of the movie this was found in 1945. So, I started working that in. The words "split a piece of wood and I am there" are straight from that gospel. It's something I got obsessed with.

Are you happy with the way the film has been trailed?

I am very happy with the theatrical trailer. I thought that did a really good job of indicating the range of different ideas and storylines. I wasn't quite so crazy about some of the TV ads. They seemed to be very *Blair Witch-y*, which the film obviously isn't. It's very difficult to sell this film in thirty seconds. Basically, they went for sensation rather than story.

How much do you believe in the story of the missing gospel?

In 1945 two Egyptian guys who were on the run from the police were digging for peat to take home. One of them broke the ground with a shovel and found a vase. He figured there would be gold in there so he broke it open. This golden dust spread out. It was leather dust, because there were one hundred and thirteen leather books in there. He took them home, but because he was wanted by the police he couldn't leave the house, so he gave the books to his mother. She couldn't read, so she used them for kindling. After a while they thought they could flog them to a tourist. They found an antiques dealer and they sold them to him. He eventually flogged them to a guy was running a museum in Cairo. They slowly started translating them. They took a long time to translate as it was just after the war. Gradually, the word got out that they were copies of very early gospels. A copy of one of them was smuggled out of the institute in 1949 and translated in Switzerland. That was the gospel of St. Thomas. This whole treasure trove of early gospels has been translated. Some of them are a bit mad, but the gospel of Thomas has stood out as one of the most apparently authentic. By looking at it, experts of New Testament theology indicate it may have been written as early as 50 AD. That means that it predates the four gospels of the New Testament by one hundred to one hundred and fifty years. It's very highly regarded in the world of New Testament theology as a crucial aspect of trying to understand what Jesus said.

The film is at times fairly critical of the Catholic Church as an institution. Was that something you were keen to address?

Not initially, no. But the more I discovered about the way the Vatican has hoarded all this stuff... Basically, there was this guy wandering around Israel two thousand years ago saying a bunch of stuff. About two hundred years after his death, these gospels started floating about, and no one knows which one is more or less relevant. When the Romans adopted Christianity in 325 AD they tried to organise the church, which up until that time had been a disorganised religion; it was secret and scattered.

What I say about the Catholic Church is that it is more Roman than Catholic. They have taken all the rough edges off Christianity and tried to put it all into one box. They don't want anyone to know what's going on outside the box. It's an enormous shame for Christians and agnostics alike. It's easy to be anti-Vatican, and I almost jump on that bandwagon. They have an enormous repository of what they call the secret archives, which would be fascinating for Christians and agnostics to know about - but they won't let any of it out, which is a shame.

Can you describe the style of your film?

There are two styles to the film. One is very lock down camera, very quiet, just listening to the words. The other is much more impressionistic. I was trying to take you inside the head of someone who thought they were being crucified. I didn't want to do something that was like masterpiece theatre, so you fell asleep and described it later. I wanted to make you understand. I've done a lot of research about what people say that they felt when crucified. I wanted to try and make you live through it.

There are a lot of references in the film to different sorts of movies. For example, *Altered States* was one of the movies I watched a lot. It takes you inside the mind of someone who is going mad, and you understand cultural references that are going on inside his brain.

books



Don't Read This Book if You're Stupid

Tibor Fischer

In this selection of seven short stories, Tibor Fischer races us through a selection of Londoners both home and abroad. We meet a failed web-page designer ogling women tanning on the Cote d'Azur, an unemployed Wild West enthusiast, and take a look at the underworld of London stand-up comedy. If this were not enough, we also visit a Brixton prison, a German bookshop and Midwest America. Although their activities are different, there is a common theme to their lives. These are people who have not quite made it.

Fischer relates the downside of London. There is a sense of loneliness and helplessness that pervades the lives of all his characters. More than this, he offers a new look at Londoners themselves - their sharply honed ignoring skills, the cynicism with which they view life, and their contempt for all things linked with tourists.

Despite its gritty, pessimistic message, this book is a good (almost compulsive) read. Fischer's unique ability for clever writing keeps you turning the pages. His stories focus on the moment in much the same way as his characters live for the now. But, in spite of this, the stories are diverse. Some are intimate and personal whereas others are off-hand journalistic accounts. Fischer's skill lies in finding that fine line between wit and wisdom, and treading it with ease. To top it all off he throws in a good deal of realism and acceptance of life's perversities. As Fischer is a South Londoner himself, his stories have also gained a good degree of accuracy.

Added to this there is a wealth of information on offer. You can learn how to pick a driver in the middle of a Romanian civil war, or discover how to make people laugh with just your foreskin. There is even a simple guide to being a serial killer.

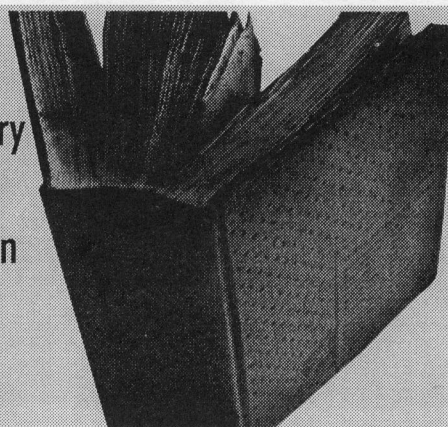
This book has been ten years in the making and includes a number of works previously published in *Granta*, *New Writing* and the *TLS* as well as several new stories and a novella. However, this is by no means a cobbled together effort by a desperate writer - each story is able to stand up to a good deal of scrutiny. The title is less to warn off the stupid than the easily offended, and even if you are stupid this is a perfect book to first encounter Tibor Fischer.

Fischer's black comedy *Under the Frog* about the antics of a Hungarian basketball team was shortlisted for the Booker Prize.



Katherine

Helen's Literary Events in and around London



TUESDAY 8TH

BINARY MYTHS 2, Conference Centre, British Library, Euston Road 18:15 - 19:30. As the readership of poetry is little more than the number of poets producing poems, what are the motivations of poetry editors? This and other questions will be addressed by a panel of poets and poetry editors. £5/£4; phone: 0207 7412 7332; tube: Kings Cross St Pancras

CRITICAL STATE Voice Box, Royal Festival Hall, South Bank Centre 19:30. Concluding the current *Critical State* series, writers John Banville, Mavis Gallant and Cynthia Ozick celebrate some of the critics who have influenced their work, and discuss their views on criticism as a form of literature. £6.50/£4; phone: 0207 960 4242; tube: Waterloo

WEDNESDAY 9TH

GEOFF WEST & CHRIS THOMAS Conference Centre, British Library, Euston Road 18:15 - 19:30. The late 19th century was a period of great expansion for the library's foreign collections. West and Thomas discuss why, focusing in particular on the collection of work by Sergei Sobolevsky. £3.50 (no concessions); phone: 0207 7412 7332; tube: Kings Cross St Pancras

JOANNA TROLLOPE Waterstone's, 150 - 152 Kings Road, Chelsea 18:30 - 21:30. A unique opportunity to meet and learn from one of Britain's most popular authors, who will be conducting a seminar on how to write a bestselling novel. £35; phone: 0207 351 2023; tube: Sloane Square

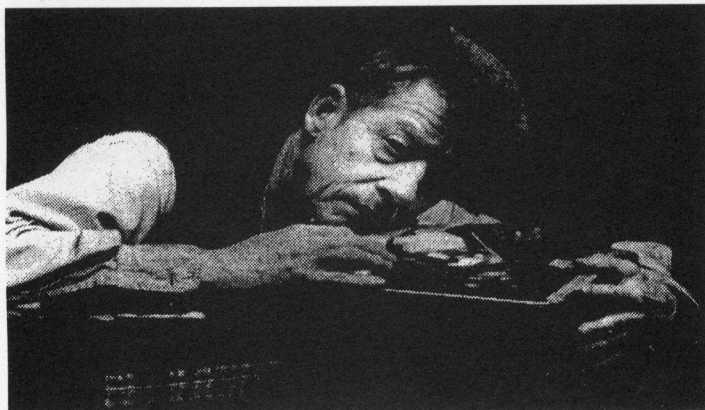
THURSDAY 10TH

STEWART CONN & MICHAEL O'SIADHAIL Voice Box, Royal Festival Hall, South Bank Centre 19:30. The two acclaimed poets will be reading from and discussing their work. £5/£3; phone: 0207 960 4242; tube: Waterloo

FRIDAY 11TH

TITANIA HARDIE Waterstone's, Harrods, Old Brompton Road 11:30 - 12:30. The author will be signing copies of her books *Enchanted*, *Hocus*, *Pocus* and *Bewitched: Titania's book of love spells*. Free; tube: Knightsbridge

△ method



Krapp's Last Tape

New Ambassador - Nearest tube: Leicester Square
 Until: 11 March
 £5 - £22

Krapp's Last Tape, by Samuel Beckett, is not what could be called easy viewing. Although it lasts only one hour, it is one of the most intense and moving performances London theatre has to offer. Genius in its simplicity, the play is concerned with Krapp, played by the fantastic John Hurt, on his 69th birthday. As he records a retrospect of the year that just passed, he replays passages at random from the earlier tapes. For the occasion, he plays the tape he made thirty years ago. As Krapp remembers the past events of his youth, we are treated to a torturous and humbling experience, which explores the ravages and deterioration caused by the passage of time.

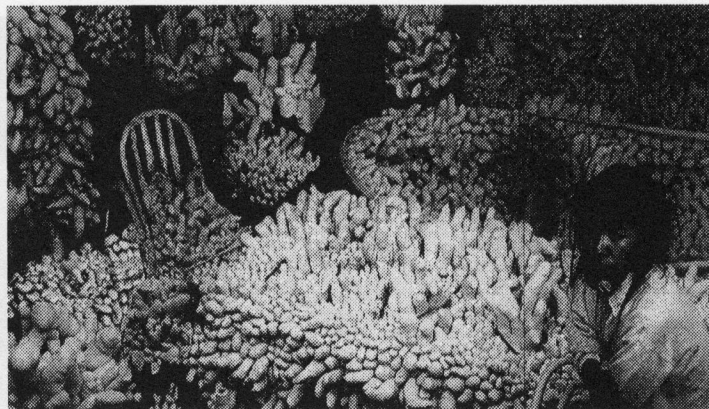
John Hurt is immensely powerful as the aging and cantankerous Krapp. His gravely, chipped voice crackles out from the stage, beautifully capturing every intonation in Beckett's script. An overhead lamp illuminates a simple set, consisting of just a chair and a desk. The enveloping darkness (which surrounds all) gives the audience a sense of loneliness, both Krapp's and their own.

Samuel Beckett was born in Dublin in 1906, and his better known works include *Waiting for Godot* and *End Game*. He wrote nineteen plays in total - all of which were performed at the Beckett festival at the Barbican last summer - and although he is renowned for being difficult, this is one of his more accessible pieces.

The play is highly autobiographical, with subtle references from Beckett's own painful past, which leaves the feeling that what is experienced is an intensely fragile, private world. By introducing the tape recorder, he explores the use of worlds as a refuge from the gross facts of experience. The pathos of life and the search for meaning, repressed in society, are openly dissected. Through Krapp's self-reflection, the audience are individually challenged to evaluate their own solitude and suffering. By switching off the tape when painful memories are reached, we are shown his sensitivity to the loss, which is glossed over by the narrative. He denies certain parts of his life and dwells on others. The play could be termed as "post-modern" (an excellent word to drop into conversations at parties) in that it doesn't attempt to answer the awesome questions which it raises. Indeed, it suggests that there is no universal answer, and that life is spent attempting to avoid this realisation. It is the responsibility of the individual to find meaning in existence. Hard going! It is the introspection this provokes that makes it such an unsettling and powerful play. If you think you can handle it, then I highly recommend it.



Ally-pally Esq



Yayoi Kusama

Serpentine Gallery, Kensington Gardens
 Until: 19 March
 Admission: Free

A room painted in acid-trip yellow and full of giant tubes and blobs, as in a dreamscape. This is really fabulous installation art! After you have taken off your shoes (are you entering a Buddhist temple?), you can actually walk about within the sculpture. Or how about the large octagonal box. Look through its porthole and you see an infinitely reflected kaleidoscope of flashing fairground lights.

All this interactive art and more can be found in this diverse exhibition from the artist, poet and novelist Yayoi Kusama. Born 70 years ago in Japan, Kusama grew up during the darkness of WW2 and studied art in its ruined aftermath. She emigrated to the USA, stopping first in Seattle (apparently to see *Frasier* and *Niles*!) before moving to New York City in the summer of 1958. Pre-1958, she worked mostly in the classical Japanese style (*God of the Wind*, 1955), but the move to New York was the shock of the new that drove her work to Western abstraction.

In New York, she fell under the influence of the leading lights of Pop Art, getting to know artists like Claes Oldenburg and Andy Warhol. Even today, many of her works (*Dots Obsession*, 1996) continue to show the monumental influence of classic Oldenburg. The Surrealist and European Minimalist movements have also informed her work; she even exhibited with the greatest of minimalists, Yves Klein.

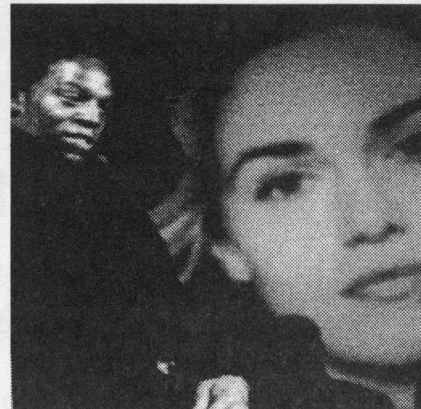
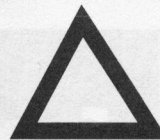
However, Kusama did not simply churn out pale imitations. By her own admission, her art is uniquely informed by the bouts of psychotic mental illness that she has struggled with since her adolescence. It is easy to see the resonances of her often tormented mind: there is something deeply disconcerting and disorientating. *Driving Image* (1959-1964), a series of mannequins painted in vibrant polka dots, struck me as alarmingly sinister.

Her countless sculptures encrusted with penises, from clothes to a life-size rowing boat, are amusing - but they do carry a disturbing charge (if only to the male half of the population). This is especially the case when viewed in the light of the unanaesthetised corrective surgery performed by the infamous Mrs Bobbitt! Is this the revenge of the wives and girlfriends against all the chauvinists? Kusama may well have intended it to be taken this way, for she was forever slowed by the terrible treacle of sexism, both in Japan and in the USA. But maybe it is also that terrible treacle which makes her work so fascinating...



William Burns

method



Underexposed

Proud Galleries
Nearest tube: Charring Cross
£1.50 Conc.

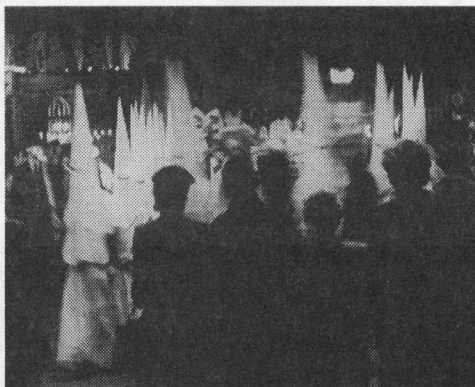


Dead journalists, cannibals and the KKK at the festival of Britain. There are even worse pictures at the exhibition *Underexposed*. Free press, all in favour say aye? Or are there some images that are so unacceptable as to warrant curbing the freedom of the press by banning them? *Underexposed* is a collection of images which are... well, underexposed - due to the fact that they have been banned. Some, I felt, should be banned - but the vast majority seemed to have suffered from a shady political influence. For example, images of the two black athletes who did the Black Power salute at the 1968 Olympics were banned in the US. Alongside this, you'll find pictures of the most awful famines and human rites disasters from around the world - all pictures which a higher power has decided that you may not see.

Not only were the pictures horrendous as images in themselves, they were often horrendous examples of the way humans treat each other. Scariest of all, however, was the fact that they could have been banned in the first place. Not only were atrocities occurring, but their occurrence could be hidden with such ease.

the dead man in the electric chair. Perhaps it was Nazi soldiers measuring an old man's nose - bizarre as this may sound, it was common practice to measure noses, as a big nose was seen as conclusive proof of Judaism. It was the image of such a bizarre practice, coupled with the fact that we now know what will have happened to the man if indeed his nose was too big. The next picture along was a train packed with those on the way to the concentration camps.

The images are often disturbing - so why bother going? There is no doubt that seeing them is not particularly pleasant, but the pictures are thought provoking, scary, and often humbling. There seems little chance of ever being free from the unseen powers that be, who decide what we can see and what we can't. Maybe just getting a taste of the power that they have is as close as you can get - this will open your eyes. I like the idea of a completely free press - but I still think some images should be banned, hypocrisy I know. The pictures are not artistic, rather they're more political. This is a collection with one thing in common - someone, somewhere doesn't want them to be seen. It hits hard - go challenge yourself.



The most powerful image that I saw was probably



OJ Othello

Riverside Studio
Nearest tube: Hammersmith
£10 Conc.

I don't know much about OJ Simpson, and not that much about Othello - but neither of those facts mattered. There is a rather obvious parallel; they are both alleged to have killed their wives, having both suspected their partners of "playing the field". The production was a devised piece of drama, intent on examining the feelings that the murderous husband has towards his wife. There was no doubt that the crimes were condemned and portrayed as the most terrible of acts. However, the main focus was not to persuade the audience of the hideousness of the crimes - the production was far braver than that. We were given the point of view of the jealous, murderous, husband. At no time were the actions condoned - but glimpses of understanding were there. OJ was portrayed as an insecure, jealous man - the love of his media "colourless" face was of paramount importance to him, yet it left him rootless.

There was only one actor in the show (well, there were two others who did a bit of random dancing at the beginning, but that doesn't count) and there is no doubt that Frank Sheppard is a brilliant actor - he was the show. He would speak as the OJ Simpson we know for most of the time, but this was mixed with some hard hitting sections of Othello. His darker, unconscious, side emerged as the jealousy increased, and we would also hear the voice of the "nigga" from the back streets, always there to remind him of his roots (and the fact that he has betrayed them). The strain of OJ's shallow world and the fact that he saw his wife as more of a trophy of acceptance from the white middle classes was obvious and poignant. This is hard hitting drama; it deals with a narrow subject but it does it well.

Ben



Ben

FELIX

S

Monday

E

Tuesday

V

Wednesday

E

Thursday

N

Friday

EVENTS

Quiz Night

8pm, da Vinci's Special Toy Story 2 prizes are on offer this week, along with a £50 first prize and various lager based offerings (courtesy of STA Travel). It's entirely free - just remember your pen.

Excess

9pm - 1am, Union (free before 11pm) As ever, Wednesday's see the Union filled with drunk sportsmen, who are happily accompanied by some of the cheesiest music known to man.

Panic

7.30pm, dBs (free) A choice blend of indie and lo-fi from the alternative music society. Apparently.

Cocktail Night

They're cheap and they get you drunk. Need we say more?

St Trinian's Valentines Night

9pm - 2am, Union (£1) I thought Valentines was about love and commitment. However, it now appears it's about school uniforms, cheesy music and karaoke. Nice.

CLUBS

Archery

6-10pm, Projectile Hall (Sports Centre).

Fencing Club

Union Gym, 12pm.

Rag

General meeting - 6pm, Southside Lounge.

CAG

Soup run, 8.15pm.

Shooting

1 - 10pm, Projectile Hall (Sports Centre).

Skate Soc

Roller Hockey, meet 1pm, Southside Lounge or 2pm at Royal Oak sports centre.

CAG Soup Run

8.15pm, Weeks Hall Basement.

Skate Soc

Nightskate - meet at 9.30pm outside Mech Eng for a tour through London.

Choir Rehearsal

6.15pm, Mech Eng Room 342

PhotoSoc

Weekly meeting from 1-2pm, Southside Upper Lounge

Music

Magma

The French fusion outfit return with their own brand of Wagnerian rock-opera. South Bank, £15

Sergeant Buzfuz

Entrancing acoustics and twisted lyrics from the widely tipped new songwriter. Lil Back Yard Club, £5

Imogen Heap

A strong alt-acoustic bill for the Barfly's new night. Upstairs at the Garage, £5

Moby

The groundbreaking US techno artist makes a rare UK appearance. Astoria, £9

Clint Boon Experience

Ex-Inspirals frontman now flying the indie-dance banner. ULU, £7

Film

Toy Story 2

Buzz and Woody return, as Disney and Pixar redefine "state of the art". Odeon Leicester Sq 3.45, 6.25, 8.45

Double Jeopardy

Intensely disappointing Fugitive-a-like with Tommy Lee Jones and Ashley Judd. Virgin Chelsea 4.15, 6.45, 9.15

Angela's Ashes

Robert Carlyle stars in this depressing tale, based on the top selling book. Odeon Kensington 5.00, 8.10

American Beauty

Kevin Spacey stars as an ordinary man obsessed by his daughters best friend. Virgin Fulham Road 3.10, 6.00, 9.00

Summer of Sam

Spike Lee returns to the streets of New York for this true story of a 70s psycho. ABC Tottenham Ct Rd 1.50, 6.00, 9.00

TV

The Vice

With gritty cop dramas now everywhere, it's glad to find one with a little class. ITV, 9pm

Gerri's World Walkabout

That's Geri as in Halliwell. Oh, my, God. Aaaaaaaaaaaaaagh... BBC 1, 10.20pm

The X Files

Tonight's episode in the increasingly silly saga is based on Rosemary's Baby. BBC 1, 10.20pm

Friends

Sorry, I know it's the same as last week, but Thursday night is Friends night. Sky One, 9pm

Steps to the Stars

Steps stars Claire and H host the first episode of their new talent show. BBC 1, 4.30pm

Arts

The Real Thing

Tom Stoppard's delicate exploration of the nature of truth in both art and emotion. Albery Theatre, 7.30pm, £12.50

Composer Portrait

The BBC Symphony Orchestra celebrates the work of Luciano Berio (who conducts). Royal Festival Hall, £11, 7.30pm

AMP's Swan Lake

The all male version of Tchaikovsky's ballet returns to London after a world tour. Dominion Theatre, £10, 7.45pm

The Woman In Black

A simple story that's guaranteed to send a shiver down the spine. Fortune Theatre, 8pm, £9

Jim Naughten

Photos of the fabulous costumes of Namibia's Himba and Herero tribes. Coningsby, 10am - 5.30pm, free

D

Saturday

A

Sunday

Y

Next Week

Kung Fu Club
(Wu Shu Kwan)
Southside Gym
4:30pm - 6:30pm.

Kung Fu Club
(Wu Shu Kwan)
Union Gym
4:30pm - 6:30pm.

The Illegal Eagles
Apparently the best
Eagles tribute band
currently doing the
rounds.
Fairfield Halls, £8

Therapy?
The baggy-shirted
metallers return to
their pared down,
punker roots.
Southampton Uni, £8

Fantasia 2000
Visually stunning
sequel to Disney's
musical extravaganza.
(IMAX only).
BFI IMAX
5.10, 6.50, 8.30

Stigmata
Entertaining tale of a
woman who the marks
of crucifixion appear-
ing on her body.
Virgin Trocodero
4.00, 6.20, 8.40

CD:UK
Ant, Dec and Cat
bring their own style
to Saturday mornings
- talentless yet fun.
BBC 1, 6.55pm

Live Football
This week's biggest
match-up from the
Premiership, complete
with daft analysis.
Sky Sports 1, 3pm

Madame Butterfly
A winner for the stag-
ing alone - the audi-
toium is flooded to
create a water garden.
Royal Albert Hall,
£20ish, 7.30pm

Yayoi Kusama
After twenty years in a
mental hospital,
Kusama's work is still
vividly hallucinogenic.
Serpentine Gallery,
10am - 6pm, free

Bust-A-Gut Comedy
Danny Bhoj, Johnny
Candon and Andy
Zaltman are next Fri-
day's so-funny-it-
hurts collective.
Between them they've
won more awards
than you can shake a
stick at - so they'd
better be good.

Counting Crows
A quality back cata-
logue plus a great
new album equals a
damn fine night at
the Royal Albert Hall.

The Beach
Combine the team
behind *Trainspotting*,
a best-selling book
and Leonardo De
Caprio and you've
got...? Find out soon.

Muscle
Gritty documentary
that gets up-close-
and-personal with
Bristol's less than
friendly "doormen".

Fosse
You've probably seen
the ads plastering
the tube - now we
can find out if it's
actually any good.
Opens next week.

Valentines St. Trinian's Night
Fri Feb 11th 9-2
Fabby music from
POP TARTS
Singalonga cilla at
Karaoke
Free lovehearts
Free entry in school uniform
£1/£1.50 otherwise

iCU ICU-the heart of IC

WANTED

iCU REQUIRES STAFF TO WORK IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS

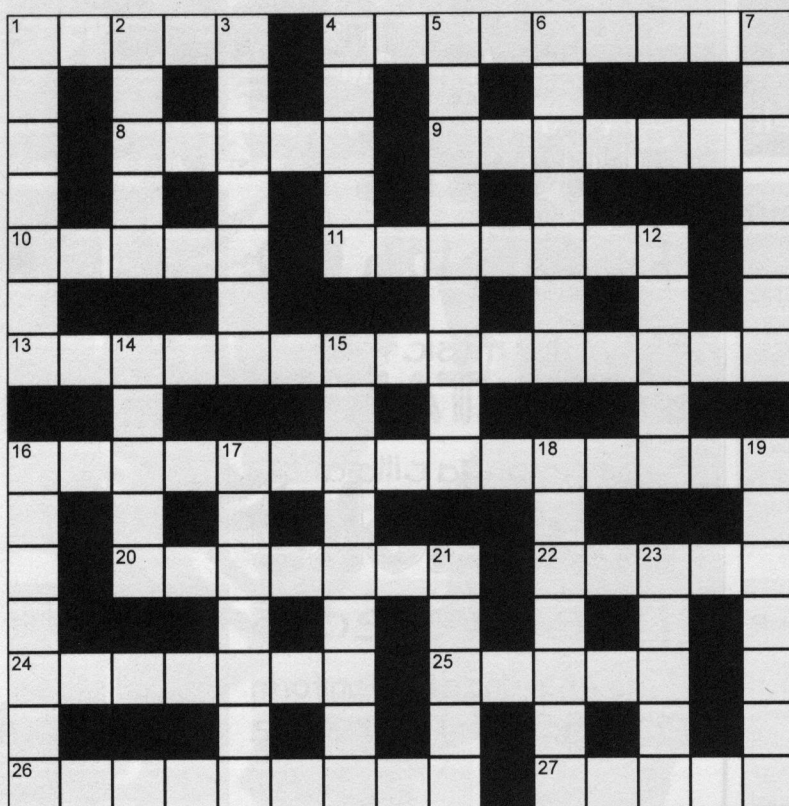
SHOP (POSTGRADS PREFERRED)

CATERING

STEWARDING

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT THE RELEVANT OUTLET OR E-MAILSHOP@IC.AC.UK (FOR SHOP WORK) OR M.HORNE@IC.AC.UK FOR OTHER WORK

The Felix Crossword 1166, by Turnip Henry



Across:

1. Complete writings are effective. (5)
4. Pets let up around one of seven. (9)
8. Promise the spanish a letter. (5)
9. Grove puts character in order. (7)
10. Disease one gets in game. (5)
11. Trot back around blokes for anguish. (7)
13. Before lunch on high, hello. (3,2,3,7)
16. Brief existence for fly on the wall? (1,3,2,3,4,2)
20. Meadow has the right to come from cows. (7)
22. Skeleton from piano. (5)
24. Rot about pedestal having no missile. (7)
25. Soldier worker is huge. (5)
26. He who looks after school may be cautious? (9)
27. Mistake made by fish eggs going back around king and queen. (5)

thrashing? (7)

2. Wind up string composer? (5)

3. Weapon similar to old branch? (4-3)

4. Schism that spelling mistake illuminated. (5)

5. In favour of weight on television. (9)

6. In Uncle Arthur you see something blurred. (7)

7. Titanium is passing on, and clearing up. (7)

12. Offal is ready to eat after some time. (5)

14. Quiet noble is precious. (5)

15. Problem before chicken made film. (9)

16. Ice cats fall over while practising great self-denial. (7)

17. Where eggs lie is most pointless. (7)

18. Copy monkey without P.R., and eat it. (7)

19. Bridge has insect above it. (9)

21. Alright bloke. (5)

23. Bounder has no right to become an animal. (5)

Down

1. Dog sounds like it's for a

Competition Winners

The results of the competitions run in issue 1164 were as follows:

NME Carling Premier Tour

The correct answer to the NME competition was, of course, (b) - Felix's favourite album of 1999 was Travis' *The Man Who*. The winner of the main prize (tickets to the tour's final night at the London Astoria) was Amy Austin. Congratulations.

Club Lux @ The Lux Centre

Lux is, as you should all know a unit of light - and (b) was thus once again the correct answer. The winners of two free tickets to the night were: Chris Swain, Mark Nichols, Steve Bradley, Kevin Walsh, Andy Kingston, Helen Pakes, Gareth Canty, Thom Leggett, James Coates and Emma West. Well done one and all - I hope you enjoy the event.

Independent Travellers World

Fortunately, everyone who entered correctly spotted that (b) was, as ever, the correct answer, as Canberra is the capital of Australia. The first five names to emanate from the Felix random prize generator were: M Poulton, C Carroll, M Hindley, Jackie Kelly and Ruth Loeffler.

Monty Python Wines

Last, and by no means least, we offered you the chance to win one of four highly-prized bottles of Monty Python Wine. As everyone in the world seems to be aware that the Norwegian Blue was a parrot, you all correctly spotted that (c) was the right answer. We had four bottles of vintage Python to give away, and the winners therefore were: Cathy Selkirk, Brian Flowers, Keith Roberts and Mathew Saunders.

All winners were notified by email last week, and all prizes have now been distributed. Watch out next week for another batch of competitions coming your way.

Crossword Competition

It's the point in Felix that you've all been waiting for - the chance to get something for nothing. Well, actually, it's not quite nothing - we are asking for a little of your excess brain power to be exerted in this direction, as you struggle to complete this week's fiendishly difficult (or hopelessly easy, depending on your point of view) crossword. You'll need to bring your completed grid to the Felix Office (outside the Physics Department, next to the liquid nitrogen tank) by 8pm on Tuesday evening in order to qualify, and the first correct entry drawn from the magic hat will win its owner a copy of the Collins English Dictionary (RRP £20), courtesy of Felix. The winners name will be printed here next week.

Last week's crossword was clearly far too easy once again, as a flood of correct entries came pouring into the Felix Office - if you're still unsure about your solution, you'll find the answers below. Having waded to the very bottom of the hat, the first entry pulled out belonged to **Catherine Luther**, who consequently wins a copy of the Concise English Dictionary. Please come to the Felix Office ASAP. Thanks.

Answers to Felix Crossword 1165 :

Across: Slime, Vista, Measure, Sauna, Flume, Admit, Ironing, Youth, Stars and Stripes, Urine, Incisor, Realm, Relax, Nacho, Bacardi, Minge, Nasal.

Down: Shaft, Illuminati, Emperors, Safari, Rummages, Vestry, Stud, Anarchism, Upper Class, Pseudonym, Nuisance, Restrain, Enrobe, Camera, Expel, Scan.

Apology!!! Sorry, I forgot to write in the number of letters in last week's '1 Down'.

International Night

"See the Overseas Societies in the biggest event at Imperial College"



Friday 11th February

Tickets on Sale now from the Union Front Desk & Waterstones
Full Ticket £15 - Cultural Show £12 - Food Fair £8

Outdoor Club

STEVE JOLLY

The picturesque village of Mungrisdale consists of a village hall with a pub right opposite. Hence our visit. Due to circumstances beyond our self-control, we had no minibus for the weekend, so three hire-cars were obtained. Driving in a manner consistent with high speed, Steve and Jeremy managed the unheard-of feat of reaching the hall with half an hour to spare before the pubs shut. Everyone else rolled up about an hour later.

Saturday morning and, with a minimum of faff, everyone scattered in pursuit of extreme activity. Grinding our teeth at the lack of vertical ice to climb, we settled for a quick (wet and slimy) Grade II+ gill-scramble followed by rock-climbing. During some intermediate gear-shopping in Keswick, Andy stunned the club by buying new stickies and Steve confused the club by buying a boiler-suit embroidered with his name and, for



some reason, the words "Vigan Motors". Meanwhile party No 2 were wending their way up Sharp Edge on Blencathra. "Nicest scrambling in the Lake District", apparently.

Those short winter days meant that everyone arrived back at the hut with time to spare, and a restrained meal (consisting of a mere three courses) was knocked up in next-to-no-time by Jeremy, our Part-Time Strolling Catering Officer Of No Fixed Abode. Mallet, despite not

coming on the trip, excelled himself (as usual) by providing a giant double chocolate cake with a replica of the club logo, sculpted in two-tone chocolate, on top. Nice. A five-hour pub session ensued.

Sunday was "more-of-the-same" day: one party off to scramble up Helvellen and down Striding Edge, another to do a couple of difficult scrambles on Doves Nest Crag in Borrowdale. Right opposite, Jeremy and Andy found a long, heavily ver-

glassed "Diff" on Raven's Crag. Despite the mile between the two parties, curious echos meant that Andy (belaying from the first stance) and Steve (noshing at the foot of a Grade III scramble) could converse almost normally: normally in this case meaning shouting "Omlette!" at each other. Back at the hut and, with mere moments left before our southward journey, Claire rushed in with the news that ice-climbers had been sighted on Helvellen. "Arse", we said.

If these tales of daring-do and custard inspire you to emulate our Olympian exertions, we'd be delighted to have you join us on one of our merry jaunts. Just find your way to Southside Upper Lounge any Thursday at 7pm and introduce yourself. Alternatively email us at the address below.

Contact: Steve
Email: outdoor@ic.ac.uk

CAFE DE PARIS

Chinese New Year Celebration



Tickets for sale everyday in JCR from 12noon-2pm

Event organised by:

IC ABACUS SOCIETY

iCU

Supported by:


Place: Cafe de Paris, 3 Coventry Street, W1

Date: Monday 7th February

Time: 9:30pm to 3:30am (doors close 1:30am)

Price: £12

Dress code: Smart

Contact: icabacus@hotmail.com ; Tel. 07747 613 818
VIP table bookings: Tel. 07788 592 177 (John Cheong)

IC ABACUS is a society of ICU

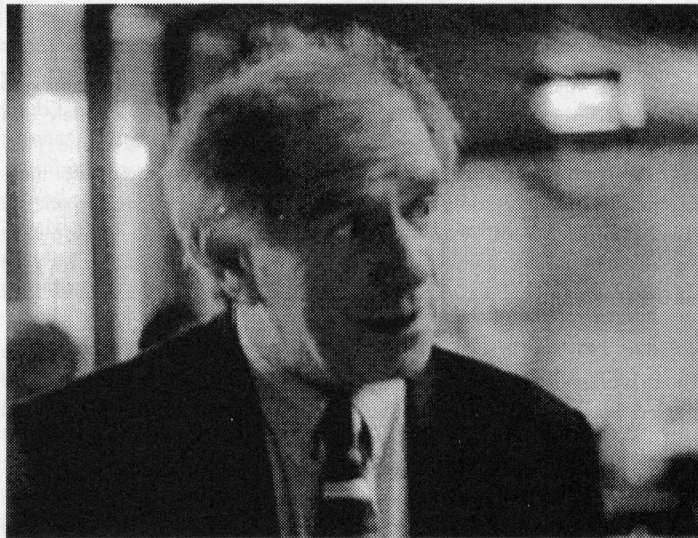
The Pimlico Connection: Johnny Ball Lecture

The Pimlico Connection are hosting a talk by Johnny Ball, on Wednesday 23rd February at 6pm in Mech Eng 220, entitled "Engineering – a brighter future".

Johnny Ball is best known for programs such as *Johnny Ball Reveals All* and for keeping us all entertained at the 1998 Imperial College Summer Ball.

Tickets are £2 for PimSoc members, £3 for other students and £5 for staff. They can be purchased from Melanie Thody or Adrian Hawksworth in the Schools Liaison Office (room 321 in Sherfield; internal extension 48044), or from one of the Pimlico Connection's committee members:

- Elin Thomas, Biochem 3
elin.thomas@ic.ac.uk
- Trevor Graham, Maths 2
trevor.graham@ic.ac.uk
- David Hughes, Chem Eng 4
d.o.hughes@ic.ac.uk
- Geoff Hewick, Computing 4
g.hewick@ic.ac.uk
- Jessica Smith, Civ Eng 3
jessica.smith@ic.ac.uk
- Nicola Convine, Chemistry 3
nicola.convine@ic.ac.uk
- Ian Edmonds, Chemistry 4
i.edmonds@ic.ac.uk
- Preethi Gopinath, Medicine 2
preethi.gopinath@ic.ac.uk



The lecture will be the final event of an "Introducing Higher Education" open day at College, which is being run jointly by the Pimlico Connection and the Schools Liaison Office.

The Pimlico Connection places student tutors in schools across

London, helping to teach subjects including maths, science and technology for a couple of hours on Wednesday afternoons. As well as being an immensely rewarding experience, tutoring also helps to develop key interpersonal and communication skills, which are regarded as essential by most employers. This March we are sending two delegates to the international COOL Conference in New Jersey to meet hundreds of other like-minded students from all over the world.

We are also trying out a student shadowing scheme, which allows Sixth Form students from the schools we tutor to experience what life at Imperial (and indeed at university in general), is really like. If this small pilot goes well, we hope to extend it into other departments next year.

If you are interested in the Pimlico Connection, contact Adrian or Elin at the addresses above.

Make yourself heard

Imperial College Union Council

**6.30pm, Tuesday 9th February
Union Dining Hall**

Including the election of a new

Post-Graduate Group Chair

Interested in standing? Then sign up on the notice-boards on the Union first floor, or contact any of the Union sabbaticals

Women lose the match but not their pride

Archers on target

Volleyball

Bad news has finally arrived, with the first defeat of the season for the women's volleyball team. This happened against Kent University, a very strong team with their own professional coaching staff providing the team with all their needs, excellent sports facilities on their campus, and a top quality record in BUSA.

Unfortunately, since we were now at the BUSA knock-out stages, the 3-1 defeat means the end of the season for us which, by recognition of our opponents, is pretty unfair for such a good team. Nevertheless, this was the best season ever for our team and you can be sure that the girls made IC proud.

Imperial started better, much better. As their coach admitted at the end of the match, they had no idea IC's women were this good. So, we took them by surprise and won the first set by 25-23, thanks to some brilliant serving and top-quality game distribution from our setters, Magali and Szun Szun. It was magnificent!

In the second set, things got harder, Kent made some readjustments, we missed some easy balls and that was enough to make the difference. Kent got it by 25-19. But still, things were pretty close and our players were definitely impressing

everybody watching. Magali and Szun Szun were setting brilliantly, Sandrine and MariJo were blocking everything thrown at them, Lucia and Rapha were attacking the serve like mad, and super-subbs Anisah and Ivonne were backing up the defence superbly! So, things were looking good at this stage.

Then, the horror set came in! Their professional coach cleverly spotted our weak points in the net and gave instruction to their two very good American spikers to attack through those points (something our London opponents were never able to do). And there was nothing we could do! They just kept on hammering us, one ball after the other, and at one stage we were 23-11 behind! This was definitely the only set where Kent were clearly the better team.

Finally, in the fourth set, we made some readjustments to the team to tackle those weak points that cost us dearly in the previous one, and things really got much more balanced. At the start, we lost four points in a row, since the players that came in were not used to playing in those positions, but then we levelled things out and reached a 22-22 position. At this point everybody was close to a nervous breakdown. You could feel the tension in the air. Kent

was surprised to see us managing to change our tactics completely and getting back into the game (they congratulated us in the end for that). Unfortunately, our lack of experience at the highest level did not help us at this stage, and we let them clinch the set 25-22, and as a result they took the match.

It was sad, very sad indeed. We could have got that fourth set and then beaten them at the last one. But that wasn't to be. Kent were stronger on the day. However, the performance of the team put Imperial women's on the map! As Kent's staff told us in the end, we could have easily gone through to the national with such a fantastic team. But we were unlucky with the draw and came up against a strong Kent side. Now, we learn from here and try to do it better next year!

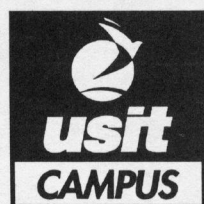
To finish, I would just like to thank to thank all those who came to play and support (especially Gabriela and Beat), to the brilliant team captain, Sandrine, and to our opponents who organised a meal for us at the end and who also had some very kind words of support and encouragement for our team. It made us feel a little bit better to know the opposition recognised that we were that good.

Archery

Sunday 30th of January was cold and windy. Four Imperial College archers braved this bitter winter morning to go to the London County Championships. The shoot was good fun even though Tim ruined yet another of the clubs arrows and our archery captain missed the target for the first time in two and a half years of shooting.

Of the quartet shooting, Tim and Colin were at their first competition and shot admirably to contribute to the team's third place in the county competition. Keith shot well again and just missed out on reaching the 500 mark. Leo came third in the Ladies Reserve competition.

Saturday 5th February was the BUSA indoor archery championships at Bath University, and with fingers crossed everyone should have made it there and back again with all their arrows in one piece - and have achieved some good scores too. The event was too late to make it into Felix this week, but you'll be able to find out how we got on soon. Further into the future there will be trials to shoot for the BUSA team in the World Student Championships in Madrid.



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PRIZES!

The winner of last week's spot the ball contest was Alan Redding. Please come to the Felix Office to collect your prize.

Spot It - Win it™ will return in next week's edition.

Sport in Brief

Ladies Hockey

ICI 18
University of Essex 0

Firstly, thanks to Humming Bird for offering sexual favours to ensure the game went ahead (Orange & BT Cellnet were also a help).

We arrived at the match all dolled up, but the Essex girls showed us up with their handbags, perms and stillettos.

The first half came and went, with us going to half time with a 1-0 lead. After a rousing team talk, we engaged our brains and stormed into the second half. Oh yes. Care bear baby fresher Helen scored some beautiful goals (four in all), before her donkey genes became prominent - she managed

to miss four open goals like a knob. Jo and her flow had a stormer of a match tackling like a spinning-top type thing. Nat rucked a goal like a concrete cow. Goal keeper Helen kept a clean sheet - Sim hasn't been around recently (she's been suffering from a bad cough).

In summary, the game play was sexual - we tonk, tonk, tonk, tonked like nobody has ever tonked before. Truly awe-inspiring stuff.

Big thanks to the umpires Graham - who's cute and cuddly - and Alex - who is facially endowed. Also thanks to anyone who received a random phone call during last week.

Ladies Rugby

IC Virgins 15
University of Kent 10

Can I just say we won! Last year we got absolutely trashed in the shield competition, so expectations weren't high.

Their scrum was eight fat mamas, and they must have been twice our weight - but we stuck with it and gave as good as we got. Size isn't everything you know - even when you have "The Big One!" (Kryzi) on your side.

Their backs weren't that good either, and their only tactic was to give it to their forwards and hope they had enough weight to get through.

Whenever we got it to our

wings, they had loads of space and caused havoc. After five minutes, all our training paid off and Ali looped around to score our first try.

After much hard work and loads of scrums, Ling got the ball on the wing and went on a brilliant run to score. They then got a try back before half time, and the score stayed the same for most of the second half, until Ali eventually broke through to score once again.

Just before the end they ploughed over the try line without ground the ball - but the ref awarded a try anyway, and Miriam said "Mae'r dyfarnwr yn ***** ddall!"

In Brief.....In Brief.....In Brief.....In Brief

Rifle Club

At the end of the last term, six members of the ICU Rifle and Pistol Club entered the West Kent Rifle League's Prince William of Wales competition.

Our highest placed shooter was Guy Dewhirst, who came 9th in D class, with a score of 286 out of 300. Andrew Eldridge came 37th in A class with 290. In B class, Ben Chowdhary and Sam Sharpe finished 42nd and 106th respectively, and 11th in their class for the pairs competition. Rachel Chan and Leonora Lang were 69th and 82nd in D class, and 15th in the pairs shoot.

Other events over the next few weeks include the BUSA Archery and Clay Pigeon competitions, and rifle matches against the universities of London and Liverpool. If you are interested in any of these competitions, or in learning to shoot, please come down to the Projectile Hall in the Sports Centre on a Wednesday or Saturday afternoon.

Netball

IC I 30
Royal Holloway II 8

This was another easy victory for the firsts, who continue to slaughter their opponents in the league. The centre third was naturally dominated by (Jess with those octopus arms), with Jane and (captain) Dot feeding the ball up court at every opportunity. The towering skyscrapers confronting shooters Shirley and Rebekah turned out to be Royal Holloway's defenders, who had the reach, but sadly lacked the manoeuvrability to keep up with our girls in the circle.

At the defensive end, Kathryn intercepted any Royal Holloway balls that dared approach the IC goal third. The little RH shooter, who had given Alex the run around in the first half, hardly troubled the scorer in the second half, adding only one more goal to her tally, leaving the firsts to walk away with another comfortable win.

Rugby

IC III 7
Southampton III 10

The pie boys were back in town, and we couldn't run for toffee (hey, who needs training before the kick off!). Despite the brave efforts of our pack, the inbred convicts got the better of us, although there was a classic dump tackle from savage Eddy, who was blood binned for his troubles.

In the second half, one of the ex-cons got a yellow card. Suddenly, we sparked into life. Having beaten seventeen men, made it past the ref (singing and all) Dave finally managed to dump it over the line thanks to a bit of Welsh wizardry.

Ultimately, however, the England A team got the better of us on the day and finished up by beating us by just three points, with a final score of 10 - 7. We now bow graciously out of the Cup at the semi-final stage.

Fencing

Imperial 6
Cambridge 12

Although the women's fencing team made it through to the second round of the BUSA Cup, we were drawn against some strong opposition.

All the members of the team performed admirably, however. Camille stormed her way through the Cambridge foil team, where she won all of her fights convincingly. The other members - Captain Katherine, Cockney Clare and 'fencing bag' Leucha - all contributed extremely well. Katherine and Camille achieved some amazing hits on the arm, and there were some outstanding attacks generally in the foil.

Unfortunately, since Cambridge had three dedicated epeeists and foilists, they were placed in a more advantageous position. Watch this space, however, for the team's escapades next year!

Want to send a message to someone special? Then get your Valentine's messages in to felix@ic.ac.uk before Tuesday evening, and see them in print next Monday.

SPORT

Ladies cash in against Bucks

Ladies Football

IC I 9
University of Buckingham 2

What a surprise. Yet again the IC ladies storm through another match. The opposition were chunky, but we were funky. Well funky in fact. The day was action packed with excitement. After spending most of the morning chasing Chelsea players to sign our match ball, we were slightly disappointed when the names rubbed off after 90 minutes of thwacking. Another topic open to discussion was the ref. Upon scouring all the local nursing homes for a suitable candidate, captain Helga decided upon the most senile, blind, deaf, and most likely to have a coronary

OAP.

As for the match, the IC ladies played with the kind of superior style that has been becoming a habit lately. The forwards had a field day, with goal scoring dominance taking effect from kick-off. Clark Kent's double hat-trick left the opposition reeling with humiliation, while the electric feeling of adrenaline running through every vessel in Kent's body was felt by the rest of the team. Tina "I'll-drink-you-under-the-table-and-then-leg-it" followed suit with another hat-trick that sealed victory for a deserving IC team.

The opposition's attempts at retaliation were tres poor. They somehow managed to score two

goals due to the referee bestowing extreme generosity on a losing team, courtesy of his own blatant short-sightedness. And all this despite lineswoman extraordinary Nona's frantic yelling and waving of the flag. The self-same blind ref created a slightly panicky moment for Hacker Harp, by beckoning her with dodgy finger movements for a completely above board (not) tackle. But luckily things didn't go the Beckham way.

In a recent interview, the IC ladies declared that they relished the winning feeling. It is definitely becoming a habit, having pasted GKT 13-0 on the previous Sunday. The future looks bright, and definitely embedded with silverware.

Skiers go to the dogs

Ski Club - Huskies Race Series

Race 2 - Wycombe Summit
Sunday 29th January 2000

After a frantic ring around, eventually enough people had assembled in Southside to pass for a team, so we started off for High Wycombe. On arrival we signed in and picked up our ski's. Venturing out onto the slope for a couple of practice runs, we were relieved to find that the slope was in far better condition than we usually find it on a Wednesday afternoon, with all the sprinklers on full blast. Soon the course was set up and we started the long wait for our numbers to be called. Even with one run taking the fastest skiers a tad under twenty seconds, we were numbers 86-89, so we were faced with a considerable wait up at the top of Wycombe Summit - exposed to

the wind, things (as usual) got quite cold.

Eventually our numbers were called, and Rosey made his way to the start gate. After putting in a reasonable run on a very varied course, he was followed by Bywater, Pete Holt and finally club captain Sarah Hughes. Sarah managed to get her own back on Rosey, after he beat her in the previous race in the series. This was followed by another immense wait for the second run. While waiting - this time inside in the bar - we noticed that a large number of the very best skiers were just trying to go too fast, and many were crashing out. After the second run, in which everyone managed to put in a quicker time, we were halfway up the lift, when we heard the unexpected announcement, 'Imperial are currently leading the

team event' We realised that this must have been because we had been the first team to get everyone down both runs so far. There was only one team yet to go who could beat us - UCL. As our team was slightly too small (we should have had five skiers) if UCL could get the whole team down, no matter if they were slower than us, they would have it. Sure enough, they all made it down intact. We only had the dual slalom to go, hardly one of our team's strong points - even with a ringer from UCL. We were knocked out in the first round (obviously our notorious false starts - a legacy from last years president - weren't quite audacious enough). All in all a successful evening's skiing - hopefully next time Marcus will turn up to ski, and even bring the pads.

SCOREBOARD

FOOTBALL (Women's)
IC I 9-2 Bucks

FOOTBALL (Men's)
Saturday (29/1) ULU Cup

ICSM 1-2 IC
RHUL II 3-1 IC III
KCL IV 3-2 IC IV
IC V 1-2 RUMS IV
QMW VI 4-1 IC VI
GKT IV 5-1 IC VII

FENCING (Women's)
IC I 6-12 Cambridge

HOCKEY (Women's)
IC I 18-0 Essex

NETBALL
IC I 30-8 Holloway

RUGBY (Women's)
IC I 15-10 Kent

RUGBY (Men's)
IC III 7-10 S'hampton

VOLLEYBALL (Women's)
IC I 1-3 Kent

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