

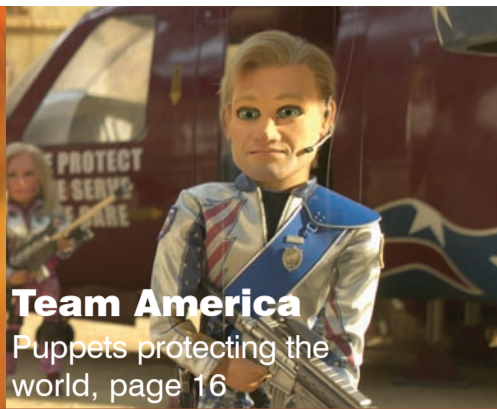
Tsunami appeal

Imperial alumnus Brian May gives his support, page 2



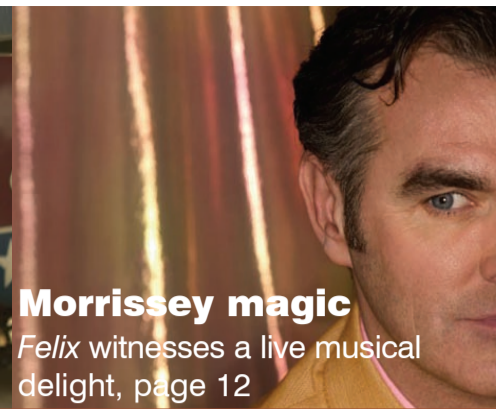
Sixth sense

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Team America

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Morrissey magic

Felix witnesses a live musical delight, page 12



Felix



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Time to get a job?

The Careers section returns with an in-depth look into consultancy, featuring an interview with Imperial alumnus Michael Walton who now runs his own consultancy business.

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Lots of letters

A full page of letters to the editor, covering pay problems, security, exam anguish, Babar Ahmad and fun in Felix.

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Starting your week

Felix kicks off a Monday morning at Brixton's 414 club, a hidden treasure of hard dance.

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Dynamic dance

We savour Matthew Bourne's unique treatment of the classic ballet Swan Lake.

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Student sport

Indoor frisbee fun for the Disc Doctors and champagne hockey from the medic Thirds.

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The Disc Doctors

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Union divided over policy as hall rents rise again

By Dave Edwards
Editor

As hall fees at Imperial College look set to rise by around 5%, the Union Council is divided over its stance on how rents are calculated across the various different halls.

The exact rent rises, which will depend on the particular hall or type of room, will be announced in the coming weeks. There were disagreements among student representatives as to whether or not rents should be based on students' ability to pay, and whether or not certain rooms should be overpriced in order to make others cheaper.

The overall cost of an Imperial education is already set to rise markedly for some students with the introduction of £3000 'top-up' tuition fees in 2006.

The College currently guarantees all first year undergraduates a place in hall. By law, College Residences must be self-funding. Each February, the Head of Residences recommends a system of increasing rents by different amounts in different halls and for different types of room. This is subsequently discussed by the Rector's Committee on Student Residences (RCSR) and the final decision rests with the Rector.

The current hall application form allows students to express a preference for room type (single, double, triple, en-suite) and catered or self-catered, but students cannot choose a particular hall or specify a price range.

In recent years, rent increases have been much higher in the more expensive halls than in the cheaper ones. Students living in the more expensive halls, espe-

cially Beit, are subsidising those living in cheaper halls as a result. One argument is that students living in Beit can afford higher increases, whilst those elsewhere are less well off and hence cannot.

A Beit Hall resident told Felix: "The system really needs improving. Beit Hall is great but is it really worth £125 a week? And why should I pay over the odds to make the cheap halls cheaper? What's that about?"

At Tuesday's meeting of Union Council, student representatives considered three options.

Option 'A' was to maintain the status quo, but ask students to indicate the price range they are prepared to pay. Expensive halls would take most of the rent rises, subsidising cheaper halls.

Option 'B' was to spread out the rent rises more evenly, removing the artificial premium for rooms in the more expensive halls. Students' ability to pay would affect their rent.

Option 'C' was the same as 'B' but with no link between rent and ability to pay.

Just over half the Council expressed an initial preference for option 'B'. After a lengthy discussion, a slightly amended version of this option was narrowly defeated. A number of delegates supported option 'A'. Interestingly, the only people in support of option 'C' were the President and the Deputy President (Education and Welfare), who prepared the paper and who represent the Union to the RCSR.

Sam Rorke, the Deputy President (Education and Welfare), said: "We had a useful discussion and I look forward to returning to the issue in the future." When asked why he did not sup-



Students living in Beit Hall are likely to pay upwards of £130 per week in accommodation fees next year. Part of this cost is currently used to subsidise cheaper rooms elsewhere

port a link between rents and ability to pay, Mr Rorke pointed out that "there are already other mechanisms for students suffering financial hardship".

Sharine Brown, Head

of Residences at Imperial College, told Felix: "Our rents compare favourably with other London universities and with the private sector." She said that rents were likely to increase above inflation

due to high costs in areas such as construction, cleaning and utilities.

Felix will bring you details of the RCSR's decision and the finalised rent increases later this term.

Felix

Issue 1312

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NEWS

Brian May offers support to Imperial RAG's tsunami appeal

By Siddharth Singh
RAG spokesman

RAG is proud to announce that it has just received a letter of support from Brian May, the lead guitarist from Queen.

Mr May was an undergraduate in the Physics department at Imperial College. In his letter, he recounts his own experience at Imperial and the need for students to be aware of and committed to worthwhile causes.

Meanwhile, the total has now reached 'never before seen heights outside RAG Week' of £3569.38.

On behalf of Imperial RAG, I would like to ask all of you to contribute in whatever way you can. More craziness is planned for RAG Week.

My own memories of student life at IC are still strong enough to understand that life in college doesn't leave a lot of spare cash. But even small contributions make a difference, and your awareness of, and commitment to a cause which, all around the world is still NOT being adequately addressed by governments, is precious.

Thank you.

And may your study take to places which fulfil you, and help build a better future for the world.

Sincerely

Brian May

QUEEN 2005.



Former Imperial student Brian May's letter to RAG encourages students to contribute

News in brief

Mech eng library safe for now

The mechanical engineering department's library and reading room will not close or be moved in the immediate future.

Discussions have taken place on the possible closure, as reported in *Felix* issue 1310, but the decision has been deferred "for some time," according to Helen Dawson, the department representative.

Ms Dawson said: "There is the option of making the reading room a faculty room for the use of engineering students in general so that it will not be lost."

She offered a note of caution, warning that "the fight is not over for good" and pledging to make sure that students are better represented when similar issues are considered in the future.

Halal chicken in College

All freshly prepared chicken dishes served in the main Imperial College catering outlets at South Kensington will be halal from Monday onwards. This fact will be demonstrated to customers on the menus.

College Catering said they were pleased to have sourced halal certified chicken from their butchers. They also announced that they were looking at potential suppliers with regard to offering halal beef and other meats in the future.

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imperial college union

Harry's Nazi blunder

By Emily Gwyer

Oops, he's done it again. The world's most entertaining royal didn't so much stick in a toe as belly-flop into the waters of controversy again this week after photos of Harry dressed as a Nazi were leaked to *The Sun*.

The relief on the pages of the tabloid was palpable. After weeks of being serious and worthy while writing about the tsunami, at last they had a chance to do what they do best - write about the royals and do some serious mealy-mouthed moralising.

The fact that what Harry did was indeed extremely offensive to large numbers of people round the world (and it was reported all around the world) was immaterial - all *The Sun* wanted was another chance to point, laugh, and throw a few stones.

So the editorial was superb. "Old soldiers will

be sickened when they see the young prince behaving like a drunken member of the Hitler Youth," shouted the paper, suggesting dubiously that "This outfit will just encourage British neo-Nazis and racist skinheads to believe that their sick views are right".

Meanwhile, they praised William's choice of costume (a leopardskin leotard with paws and tail. And they wonder why this country is going to the dogs).

The Mirror stooped so low as to get the waitresses present to comment on how 'well-endowed' William is and how lovely he looked in his spangly leotard. Oh, dear Lord.

The fact that Harry's great grandfather Edward VIII was a Nazi supporter was gleefully brought up by *The Guardian* and *The Mail*, both of whom also questioned whether the princes should have attended

the party, which was held by a British Olympic showjumper who also happens to be one of the people who invaded the Labour party conference in support of hunting.

The Telegraph was sympathetic: "We can all agree that Prince Harry is not very bright... it would be ludicrous to suggest that the prince was displaying any sympathy for Hitler when he wore what looked like the uniform of Rommel's Afrika Korps".

But the same newspaper also remarked: "This is not the stupidity of a 20-year-old, who has gone through 17 years of the best formal education that money can buy. It is the stupidity of a rather backward child of 12," and castigated Prince Charles for having insufficient control of his children. Even William came in for some bashing - as the 'sensible one', he was expected to have suggested

to his brother that perhaps Hitler was not the best fancy dress role model.

However, just when the fuss was dying down, the papers latched onto the fact that Harry's blunder could have cost London its 2012 Olympic bid. The London bid is largely based around the city's status as officially the most multicultural city on earth; a member of the royal family prancing around as a member of the SS is not really in-keeping with that idea.

The Queen's comments that she thought the bid would go to Paris didn't help either, for that matter. Until then, the London bid had been seen as by far the most dynamic, and some thought that it was catching up on the French favourite. Now, some serious grovelling is required if the bid is to get back on track - the IOC members begin to visit the five bid cities in May.

Business

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Currency galore

Keeping to the theme of the US economy, **Numaan Chaudhry** takes a deeper look at the dodgy dollar and strong sterling

Having fallen 16% against a basket of its trading partners' currencies over the past three years, the US dollar should, in theory, make US-made goods more competitive with those made abroad, boosting US growth and employment.

But a growing number of experts warn that the US's gaping budget and trade deficits will lead to a crisis in which a sharp decline in the dollar drives up interest rates sharply, squeezing the economy.

There are plenty of troubling examples. Over the past decade, a dozen smaller economies from Mexico to Thailand have gone from growth to deep recession when their currencies collapsed. Even rich countries like Canada have been forced to adopt ascetic budget policies to cope with currency-induced turmoil. "We are increasingly vulnerable to the kind of sudden stop, where the capital inflows dry up all at once, that's been the bane of emerging markets over the years," says an economic historian at the University of California.

Could it happen in the US? A review of past crises suggests the US has enough going for it now to avoid a similar fate. Yet the scale of the imbalances now hanging over the dollar are also without precedent, suggesting a crisis is still a possibility.

The contrasts with the most recent dollar crisis, in the late 1970s, are both encouraging and unsettling.

Between September 1977 and October 1978, the dollar fell 16% against major currencies, aided downwards by rising oil prices and sluggish economic growth that pushed the US from a trade surplus to a trade deficit. The weaker dollar helped boost the price of imports, and inflation jumped to over 8.2% from 6.5%.

Worried that the falling dollar might undermine its anti-inflation efforts, the Carter administration announced a 'multipart support package' in 1978: the Treasury would use sales of gold, foreign borrowing and the International Monetary Fund to defend the dollar. At the same time, the Fed would raise its discount rate 1%.

The dollar stabilized but still remained weak, and inflation continued the rise up to 10% by June 1979. In the summer of 1979, Paul Volcker was appointed, from his previous position of presi-

dent of the New York Federal Reserve Bank, as Fed chairman. Volcker concluded that dramatic action was needed to break the crippling inflation rates.

On 6 October, the Fed adopted a new monetary policy for strangling inflation by targeting growth in the money supply, knowing that it would send interest rates soaring. Volcker's new strategy worked; inflation was smothered and this eventually bolstered the dollar, but the price was high: the deepest recession since the Great Depression.

As it stands, the US has proven its strength in the global economy by maintaining a 'twin deficit', both a large current account and budget deficit. The average emerging economy would have already gone belly-up with these twin deficits, but the US has been spared because it can still borrow in dollars instead of foreign currency, meaning others bear the pain if the dollar depreciates.

By contrast, developing countries often borrowed in dollars to take advantage of lower interest rates, but faced a crushing repayment burden when they could no longer keep their currency pegged to the dollar.

Even rich countries, however, have been rocked by a run on their currencies. It happened to Britain in the 1970s. Several times in the early 1990s, Canada's dollar came under pressure because of big twin deficits.

The central bank raised interest rates in response, but that worsened the budget deficit by adding to interest on the public debt. When Standard & Poor's, the respected credit ratings agency, reduced the credit rating on Canada's foreign currency debt, Canadians thought they would default.

The US today has an eerie similarity with Canada of ten years ago, since both current account and budget deficits are about the same size relative to GDP, at 5%.

However, the US has an additional advantage over any other country when it comes to crisis prevention: its economy is simply too large and too important for the world economy to passively accept a dollar collapse.

That is one reason many countries prop up the dollar. China runs a massive trade surplus with the US, something that would normally force the yuan, the



Dodgy dollar: will US deficits lead to a cash crisis?

US-pegged currency, to rise against the dollar. To prevent that, China buys billions of dollars in Treasury securities. That protects its exports and helps keep US interest rates low.

It has been a decade since the dollar's drop seemed dangerous enough to spark a firm response from the US and its allies.

In early 1995, there were reports of massive dollar sales, some triggered by derivatives strategies, driving it down sharply against the German mark and Chinese yen. Bond yields were also rising and this required intervention from the US Federal Reserve: Alan Greenspan waded in and bought \$600 million of marks and yen.

The next day it repeated the action, joined by 13 central banks. The dollar stabilized and bond yields dropped.

Fosters to bid for Southcorp

Other business news this week: Fosters Group Ltd is to become one of the world's biggest winemakers by buying out Southcorp in a hostile \$3.1 billion offer.

Already owning 18.8% of Southcorp's shares, Foster's said it will bid \$4.17 a share for the remaining 81.2% of Southcorp and assume about \$500 million of Southcorp debt.

As was the case with M&S and GoldFields earlier this year, and indeed in many pre-

vious hostile takeovers, the bid from Fosters is "inadequate and opportunistic," according to Southcorp.

Shares in Southcorp, last quoted at \$4.25, surged earlier this week after the takeover bid was announced. A two-year high of \$4.76 was reached before the closing price at \$4.61.

Counter-bids are expected from the likes of Diageo PLC and Pernod Ricard SA, none of which has significant Australian wine assets, making such an acquisition ideal. Interest may also come from Constellation Brands Inc., which has a significant Australian presence already and has bought California's Robert Mondavi Inc.

During the past year, shares

in Southcorp have risen a staggering 75% on hopes it will be taken over and on expectations of a turnaround in the US wine market, a particularly strong market for the corporation.

Shares in Fosters ended down 7% at \$5.27 each as some investors worried about integration risks and prospects for a protracted and expensive bidding war; this led to the stock touching a two month low of \$5.22 during the day.

Fosters CEO, Trevor O'Hoy, described the offer as a "great price" and "outstanding opportunity" for Southcorp shareholders. This should come as no surprise; many would say the same thing.

Science

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Saved by a sixth sense for the tsunami

Can animals predict the occurrence of natural disasters? **Sonja van Renssen** looks at the evidence of and potential use for the natural world's awareness of imminent events

Why did a tsunami that killed more than 150,000 people harm no more than a handful of animals?

Over the last few weeks, we have been bombarded with terrible images of chaos, destruction and death. The cost in human lives has been made brutally clear. Yet wildlife officials in Sri Lanka, where more than 30,000 people have been reported dead so far, insist that there have been no recorded animal deaths. Similar reports are appearing from other devastated areas and one cannot help but wonder: where were they all when disaster struck?

As anecdotal evidence emerges of unusual animal behaviour prior to the catastrophe, the debate over whether animals can sense impending disaster and flee from it has resurfaced with a vengeance.

The roots of this debate stretch back to ancient Greece. In 373BC, historians recorded that animals including rats, snakes and weasels deserted the Greek city of Helice en masse just days before it was destroyed by an earthquake and tsunami. Tales of animal behaviour that appears to anticipate disaster have surfaced across the centuries ever since.

In spite of this wealth of anecdotal evidence, however, the majority of the scientific community does not recognise a link between animal behaviour and earthquakes. The United States Geological Survey (USGS) says on its website:

"Changes in animal behavior cannot be used to predict earthquakes. Even though there have been documented cases of unusual animal behavior prior to earthquakes, a reproducible connection between a specific behaviour and the occurrence of an earthquake has not been made."

In the recent press coverage of the Indian Ocean tsunami disaster, Andy Michael, a geophysicist at USGS, was quoted as saying: "What we're faced with is a lot of anecdotes. Animals react to so many things – being hungry, defending their territories, mating, predators – so it's hard to have a controlled study to get that advanced warning signal."

True, but this did not stop the USGS from attempting an extensive series of these studies in the late 1970s. The trigger for this flurry of activity was what has prob-

ably become the most famous example of alleged animal activity prior to an earthquake in modern history.

On 4 February 1975, Chinese authorities successfully evacuated Haicheng, a city with one million people, just days before a 7.3-magnitude earthquake struck (the Indian Ocean tsunami was caused by an 8.9-magnitude earthquake). They claimed that their decision to evacuate was based in part on observations of animal behaviour.

The ensuing excitement at USGS was further boosted in 1977 when researchers found that 50% of local people surveyed after an earthquake in California had noticed unusual behaviour in their pets prior to the event. The impossible suddenly seemed possible.

"In 373BC historians recorded that animals deserted the Greek city of Helice en masse just days before it was destroyed"

But it was followed by disappointment. The California findings were not deemed to merit further action and it emerged that the Chinese had neglected to mention a rare series of smaller quakes that had occurred in the area before the big one. The USGS ceased all research into a possible link between animal behaviour and earthquakes in 1980.

China did not, and nor did Japan. Whether because of their susceptibility to earthquakes or a philosophy that embraces nature, these two countries have continued to research animal behaviour as a possible earthquake prediction tool. They have had false alarms, of course, but they have had successes too.

Continued research in the Far East led to the headline-grabbing news in September 2003 that a Japanese medical doctor had conducted a study which demonstrated that erratic behaviour in dogs could be used to forecast earthquakes.

The study was contentious – *The Guardian* was at pains to point out that it was "even being regarded with caution in Japan" – but its reporting here reflects the continued allure of believing that animals have some kind of sixth sense to warn them of impending danger, even in the absence of scientific evidence.

The USGS is correct in



Prescience: do animals have an ability to predict natural disasters and ensure their survival? Can they be trained to give warnings before earthquakes?

saying that "a reproducible connection between a specific behaviour and the occurrence of an earthquake has not been made". However, just because there is no way of explaining something does not mean that something does not exist. The Chinese have taken this view in their construction of a network of experimental stations to collect and analyse animal behaviour observations.

Where Western geologists

"...a Japanese medical doctor had conducted a study which demonstrated that erratic behaviour in dogs could be used to predict earthquakes"

and seismologists have been reluctant to entertain the notion of animal behaviour as a predictive tool, biologists and behaviourists have proposed various theories to explain how animals may sense earthquakes seemingly before they happen.

Rather than postulating the existence of a mysterious sixth sense, the majority of these theories draw on animals' highly evolved existing sensory apparatus to make their case. Remember too that animals respond to each other: the flight of one may trigger an exodus.

Earthquakes shake the ground and one of the most obvious ways in which ani-

imals could 'predict' them is by picking up advance vibrations that are too small for us to feel. Many animals, ranging from rodents to elephants, are known to use shockwaves in communication.

Joyce Poole, Director of the Savanna Elephant Vocalization Project, has worked with African elephants for 25 years and says that research on acoustic and seismic communication indicates that elephants could easily pick up vibrations generated from an earthquake-tsunami. Fellow researcher Caitlin O'Connell-Rodwell describes how the soft skin on the undersides of elephant feet is comparable to the taut surface of a drum and is similarly sensitive to the tiniest vibration.

But even if they can pick up vibrations that warn them of impending danger, how do they know where to run? A Dutch ethologist, Paul Koene, explains that elephants instinctively head for higher ground when they feel threatened. This fits in well with anecdotes of Sri Lankan elephants breaking loose for the hills just before the tsunami hit.

An alternative theory that has gained acceptance in recent years is that animals pick up on magnetic field changes that occur near the epicentre of an earthquake. Many animals are known to use the earth's magnetic field to navigate, including pigeons and turtles.

A third hypothesis postulates that it is changes in electric charges that alert animals to a quake. Certain species of fish are known to be sensitive to variations in electric fields – the electric eel is the most obvious example – and researchers believe they may pick up on the electric charge variations in water that sometimes precede earthquakes.

On land, organisms may respond to changes in the polarity and concentration of

"An alternative theory is that animals pick up magnetic field changes that occur near the epicentre of an earthquake"

atmospheric ions, or charged particles. This could allow animals to detect the air-ionising effects of radon gas, which is sometimes released from the ground before an earthquake.

A piezoelectric effect has also been invoked: changes in the pressure exerted on crystals like quartz result in electrical charging of the crystals' surfaces. This is believed to generate enough electrical energy to drive the creation of airborne ions before, during and after an earthquake. Animals may anticipate earthquakes much as they sense oncoming thunderstorms.

That organisms should respond to vibrations, mag-

netism or electrical charges does not exhaust the range of theories that advocates of an earthquake-animal behaviour link have put forward.

More controversial hypotheses include the idea that animals react to ultrasound emitted by fracturing rock before an earthquake occurs. This theory has been heavily criticised by geologists who claim that no such sound is emitted.

Yet the most contentious argument of all remains the idea that animals do indeed possess a sixth sense, something fundamentally different to the five senses that we currently recognise. Perhaps animals perceive and respond to stimuli that science at present simply cannot measure.

Here we enter the realm of biologists like Rupert Sheldrake, who try to explain mysteries such as why dogs sometimes seem to anticipate the arrival of their owner, even in the apparent absence of any physical signals.

Critics will be inclined to make short shrift of the sixth sense theory in its most literal form and will point out the lack of scientific evidence to support it. Nevertheless, and here we return to the essence of the problem, critics and advocates alike suffer from the problem of how to conduct controlled experiments to test the earthquake-animal behaviour hypothesis.

Everyone agrees that there is an abundance of anecdotes detailing unusual animal behaviour prior to earthquakes and no one denies that amazingly few creatures appear to have died in the wake of the recent tsunami. Yet neither believers nor sceptics can realistically confirm or deny a direct link between animal behaviour and an impending disaster.

As scientists, we instinctively question and search for evidence. Perhaps this is a case where we should follow the East in their simple acceptance of a natural phenomenon. This does not mean that we should cease studying how animals may 'predict' earthquakes; it means that we should use their abilities, even if we do not understand them, to save human lives where we can.

The Anthropological Survey of India's plan to immediately document the animal-based warning systems that enabled all five aboriginal tribes inhabiting the badly-hit Andaman and Nicobar islands to escape unscathed is a step in the right direction.

Titan welcomes new visitors

Remarkable images from a distant world. **David Osumi-Sutherland** reports on a discovery that has provided us with more questions than answers

Titan, Saturn's smog shrouded moon, is not giving up its secrets easily. Last Friday, after a seven year, two billion kilometre journey, the European Space Agency probe Huygens descended to the surface of Titan, beaming back pictures and data as it went. The scientists gathered at mission control in Darmstadt, Germany, for the descent were ecstatic with the success, but are likely to be puzzling over the results for years to come.

In the lead up to the landing, some scientists made bold predictions about the nature of what would be found at Titan. John Zarnecki, who heads the Open University team that built Huygens's surface science package, predicted the presence of weather on Titan with clouds, rain and even oceans.

"It's much too cold for a water based weather system to exist, but the temperature is right for simple hydrocarbons thought to be present in the atmosphere, such as methane and ethane, to cycle between gas and liquid."

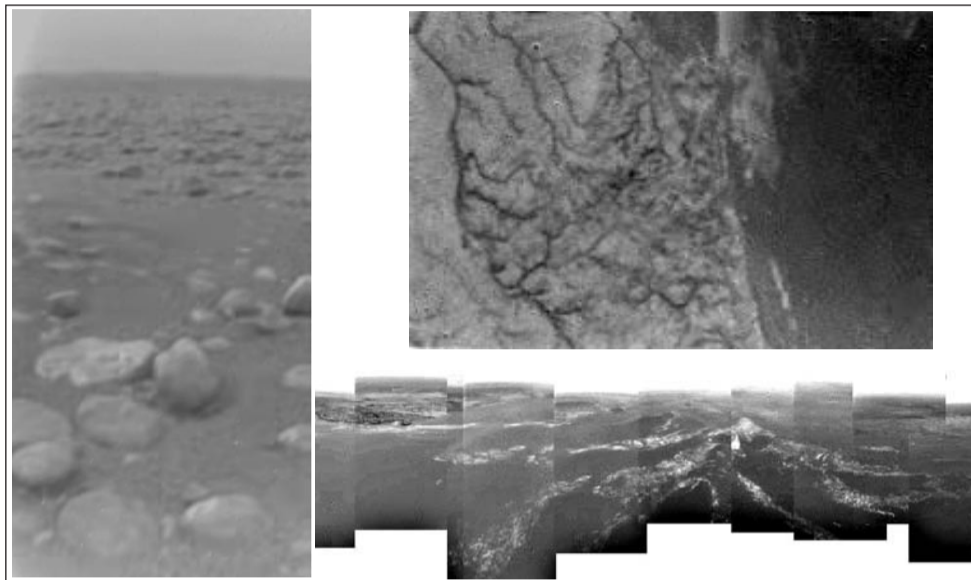
Last October, infra-red and radar imaging equipment on the Saturn orbiter Cassini penetrated the thick cloud that surrounds Titan for the first time, finally revealing the moon's surface. But these images proved to be more puzzling than informative. The surface clearly had features – light and dark regions with sharp boundaries – but what were they? Marty

Tomasko, head of imaging on the Huygens mission would not speculate at the time, but noted that the lack of specular glare (basically glinting sunlight), suggested there was no ocean.

The pictures taken by Huygens during its descent to the surface at first seem more promising. One image, taken from 16 km above the surface seems to show streams flowing to a coastline. A panoramic view stitched together from pictures taken at 8km is dominated by an almost featureless dark area dotted with low clouds, at the edge of which appears to be a coastline. Could this be Zarnecki's predicted ocean?

Mission scientists are cautious about such interpretations. Marty Tomasko notes: "You have to be careful, because we're biased by the things we see on Earth."

Tomasko suspects that Huygens landed in the dark region. If he is correct then "sea" may not be the best analogy for this region. Under the probe was a device called a penetrometer, designed to measure the force of the impact as Huygens hit the surface at 10 mph. The results beamed back from this instrument suggest a hard crust that cracked on impact to reveal a soft layer, "something like crème brûlée", says Andrew Ball of the Open University, a colleague of Zarnecki's on the Huygens surface science team. The landing site also



A surface strewn with perhaps rocks or blocks of ice (left), channels flowing into a coastline (top right), and clouds and the edge of a coastline seen at 8km altitude (bottom right)

contains scattered small rocks, possibly of ice, that appear to be weathered.

While the region of Huygen's landing site does not appear to be a 'sea', it may well be a reservoir of methane: Huygens' mass spectrometer (chemical analyser) detected methane evaporating from Titan's surface at the landing site. It also recorded ethane, acetylene and other complex hydrocarbon molecules.

The evaporation fits with Zarnecki's prediction of a simple hydrocarbon based weather system, as does the presence of low clouds or ground fog and of stream or river type features. Unlike the barren deserts of Mars,

Titan seems to be quite a dynamic place.

It could be dynamic in other ways besides having weather. Many scientists believe that Titan's atmosphere – a mix of Nitrogen and simple hydrocarbons – is similar to the present on the early earth. Perhaps the most scientifically exciting question for the Huygens mission is whether natural chemical processes on Titan could produce the complex hydrocarbons that are the building blocks of life as we know it. Data from the mass spectrometer, being analysed right now, should be able to tell us the answer soon.

The surface is too cold for

life as we know it (around -180°C), but some scientists, including Open University Astrobiologist Barrie Jones, have speculated that some form of geothermal energy on Titan could warm things up enough for life.

Digital processing more careful assembly of individual images into mosaics should soon give us better pictures of Titan's surface. The spectra of light reflected from surface will give clues more clues about the chemical composition of the surface.

One thing is certain, scientists will be analysing Huygens' data for years to come as they try to unlock Titan's secrets.

News in brief

Oxford science centre to probe mysteries of the mind

Can there be a predisposition for fundamentalism? Do the faithful cope more easily with pain? Are they faster to recover from illness? Such are the questions scientists and theologians will attempt to answer at a new study centre which starts experiments into human consciousness in the next few months. The Oxford Centre for Science of the Mind (OXSCOM) could be the first of its kind in the world, its founders believe.

Canadian researcher invents new solar cell

It may only be a matter of time before we will be using our shirts to charge our mobile phones. Researchers at the University of Toronto have invented a flexible plastic solar cell that is said to be five times more efficient than current methods in converting energy from the sun into electrical energy. The cell harnesses infrared light from the sun and can form a flexible film on the surface of cloth, paper or other materials.

Fossil fuel curbs may speed Global warming

Cutting down on fossil fuel pollution could accelerate global warming and help turn parts of Europe into desert by 2100, according to *Global Dimming*, a BBC Horizon documentary. The documentary describes research suggesting fossil fuel by-products like sulphur dioxide particles reflect the sun's rays, "dimming" temperatures and almost cancelling out the greenhouse effect.

Record warm winter stirs sleepy Estonian bears

Estonia's warmest winter for two centuries has woken some of its 600 bears several months early from hibernation, wildlife experts said on Friday. The bears' early reappearance has raised concerns for the survival of this year's cubs. "It has been very warm and wet and many flooded rivers have forced bears out of their dens and out of hibernation," said a senior official at the Baltic country's State Forest Service.

Controversy over 'Hobbit man' discovery

By Sophie Hebden
Science Communication

Last year, an Australian team of archaeologists discovered a tiny human skeleton nicknamed 'the hobbit' in an Indonesian cave. But last week things suddenly turned sour, when a top expert questioned the validity of the findings in a national newspaper.

Nature published their analysis of the 13,000 year old bones last October, which was hailed as the most important discovery in paleoanthropology of the last 150 years. The team claimed that the bones were that of a new human species: *Homo floresiensis*. They described her as a one metre tall, 25 year old, intelligent female, descendent of our long-extinct ancestor. But in *The Guardian* last week critics questioned her sex, and, most significantly, that this was not a new species at all, but a pygmy version of *Homo sapiens* with a common brain disease.

Professor Teuka Jacob from Gadjah Mada University in

Yogyakarta, Indonesia is one of the world's most experienced paleoanthropologists. He told *The Guardian* that "There is plenty of other evidence of pygmy peoples in the region. There are pygmies still living in west Papua, the Andaman and Nicobar islands, and in the Philippines. But they are all *Homo sapiens*. They're just a smaller size. These pygmies were once quite normal common, but only pockets remain. There was far more diversity of people before." He explains the unusually small brain volume of the skeleton as a result of mental abnormalities caused by the disease microcephaly.

But the plot thickens. Jacob has Flores Hominid locked in a steel vault. The Australian co-author of the original paper, Professor Richard Roberts, has accused Jacob of stifling the study by holding onto the bones. This is an accusation Jacob vehemently denies. Co-author Professor Peter Brown said that Jacob has a reputation for holding onto materials and not

allowing other people access. Jacob rejects these charges and accuses the Australian team of unethical behaviour and inexperience, and says that the referees of the *Nature* article were one-sided.

Cambridge biological anthropologist Dr Jay Stock told *Felix* that the *Nature* article was "rigorously reviewed by six top palaeontologists." He does not think that Jacob's accusations stand. Stock could not confirm the details of the stand-off over possession of the bones. He feels that Jacob's comments to *The Guardian* have damaged the reputation of palaeontology, because his criticisms should have been published in an academic journal where referees can check the evidence before it is made public. He continues: "Jacob does a disservice to human palaeontology and studies of human evolution by raising these disagreements publicly. It undermines the science that we agree on." The uncertainty over the Flores Hominid discovery has led



The skulls of *Homo floresiensis* (left) and *sapiens* (right)

Muslim and Christian creationists to use Jacob's comments as evidence against evolution.

An underlying argument fuels the dispute: where did modern *Homo sapiens* evolve, in Africa or in a number of places scattered around the world? If *Homo floresiensis* is another species of human, it would undermine the multi-

region theory.

Stock told *Felix* that the next step is to look at Flores Hominid's DNA, to try to resolve whether it is a new species of human. He said: "I'm not sure if samples were taken before the skeleton was taken by Jacob. No-one has reported any DNA results yet." This dispute seems far from resolved.

SCIENCE

science.felix@ic.ac.uk

Creationist textbook stickers declared unconstitutional

By Zoë Corbyn

Science Communication

"Be very, very careful what you put into that head, because you will never, ever get it out" – Cardinal Wolsey (c1473 – 1530)

In the United States, the Georgian school district that added stickers to high school biology textbooks saying that evolution is "a theory, not a fact" has been ordered to remove them. A federal judge ruled last Thursday (13 January) that the stickers were an unconstitutional endorsement of religion.

Officials from the Cobb County School District, in suburban Atlanta, put the stickers inside the books' front covers in 2002. They read: "This textbook contains material on evolution. Evolution is a theory, not a fact, regarding the origin of living things. This material should be approached with an open mind, studies carefully and critically considered".

The stickers were to counter criticism from over 2,000 par-

ents that the new textbooks did not include information about creationism or 'intelligent design'. The case was bought by the American Civil Liberties Union on behalf of five parents concerned that the stickers encouraged their children to reject the scientific theory of evolution in favour

"In the US, there is a long tradition of Christian fundamentalists and creationists opposing evolution"

of a religious view on origin.

According to the decision: "The sticker sends a message to those who oppose evolution for religious reasons that they are the favoured members of the political community, while the sticker sends a message to those who believe in evolution that they are political outsiders. This is particularly so in a case such as this one involving impressionable public school students who are likely to view the message on the sticker as a union of church and state."



Christian creationists want evolutionary theory banned

The basis for the decision is interesting, hinging on whether the stickers violated the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the United States Constitution. This clause states that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof", and also applies to states. It means the government must "pursue a course of complete neutrality towards religion".

In his decision, the judge took the viewpoint of an informed, reasonable observer – someone aware of the events leading to the adoption of the sticker and that the language of the sticker essentially mirrored the viewpoint of religiously motivated citizens. Even though the sticker may not have explicitly advanced a particular religious viewpoint, considered in context, the judge decided that an informed, reasonable

observer would take the sticker to mean that the School Board agreed with the beliefs of the Christian fundamentalists and the creationists. The judge concluded, therefore, that the stickers must be declared unconstitutional. "It conveys an impermissible message of endorsement" he said. "The Board has effectively improperly entangled itself with religion by appearing to take a position".

The stickers, funded with taxpayers money, were also found to violate the Constitution of the State of Georgia. This says that: "No money shall ever be taken from the public treasury, directly or indirectly, in aid of any church, sect, cult or religious denomination or any sectarian institution".

The areas outside the scope of the case should also be noted. Namely, the case did not consider whether science and religion are mutually exclusive (it took no position on the origin of the human species); whether it is constitutionally permissible for state school teachers to teach

creation; or whether evolution is a fact or theory or how it should be taught.

In the US, there is a long history of Christian fundamentalists and creationists opposing evolution. As early as the 1920s and continuing into the late 1960s, the judicial system was resolving challenges to anti-evolution statutes, which made it criminal to teach evolution in schools.

Several other states, including Ohio and Tennessee, have recently sought to force the teaching of creationism in schools, but these have been repeatedly struck down by the US Supreme Court as unconstitutional. In 1987, the US Supreme Court ruled that creationism was a religious belief that could not be taught in state schools along with evolution.

In this age, people should be permitted to learn science unadulterated by religious doctrine. The American Civil Liberties Union is to be commended for its vigilance in this and other cases. The scientific community certainly has a lot to be grateful for.

Pundit on science



Reginald Pundit, tabloid free-lancing columnist and professional after-dinner speaker, gives his exclusive uncensored views on science.

Huygens schm-uygens
I'm tired of reading all these liberal apologists making excuses for the Huygens mission.

Space-turkey

It may have travelled over a billion miles across the solar system, survived the harsh Titan atmosphere, landed with pin-point cruise missile accuracy, and expanded the frontiers of space exploration, but let's face it...

The pictures were rubbish.

They were so bad that at first ESA mission control thought they had taken the wrong turn at Jupiter and landed on Mars.

How a \$2 billion dollar mission can't afford to hook up a decent digital camera is beyond me.

They do digital at Dixons for £32 nowadays: no excuse.

And to these people who say that the mission will reveal conditions on a primitive earth, I say...

Surely if they spent the billions on time travel (something I have always advocated) they would have found the answer more easily.

65 yr old Romanian pensioner gives birth

It's a testament to the sick and twisted minds of GM scientists that they decided to implant a cow embryo in the old Romanian woman in the first place.

Horror

It's not funny and not clever and I might add that despite being a staunch advocate of GM crops (and consumer, I might add) I have to stand by my guns and say:

This GM train has careered off the rails. Let's stop the madness of calf implantation before your cat starts giving birth to puppies.

Comet probe take-off

I think you'd all join me in wishing the best of success to NASA's Deep Impact mission which took off this week.

The mission has been designed to crash into comet Tempel 1 and take out its nucleus and the future of the human race depends on it.

Scientists have proven that comets pose a dangerous threat to the planet.

Imagine Wales flying straight at Planet Earth at over 3000 kilometres per second and you'll be in the right, albeit dangerous, ballpark.

It was also revealed this week that the Comet poses a threat to some of the world's most sacred archeological treasures:

According to a NASA source, "Deep Impact could punch a crater in the comet big enough to swallow Rome's Colosseum".

Shuddering thought.

● **Do you have some science humour in you? Then contact science.felix@ic.ac.uk with your comedy**

Space: humankind's natural environment

By Darius Nikbin

Science Editor

The news on Earth this week: robbers armed with samurai swords hold up McDonalds restaurant in Winnipeg, cops in West Memphis use taser to subdue nude jogger, 'good' crocodile saved Sri Lankan pensioner during tsunami, and finally, granny ends up in hospital after mistaking superglue for eyedrops.

Following the success of the Huygens mission, it is almost as if humans were destined to go into space.

Within the last century, which is equivalent just a millisecond in the history of mankind and a nanosecond in the history of the Earth (I won't bore you with the calculations), humans have managed to send astronauts into space, land men on the moon, put rovers on Mars, and now land a probe over a

billion kilometres away on a moon of Saturn.

It should be clear by now that space is mankind's most natural environment. Here we fight and destroy one another and the Earth's environment, but in space humans are forced to collaborate and set aside their differences for a truly common cause. In this sense, Huygens is a triumph because it was collaborative and has reminded us again that space exploration is an essential, if not the essential goal of mankind.

The coming decades will be very important. The dangers we will be facing for centuries to come are overpopulation, the destruction of the environment, a decreasing supply of raw materials, intellectual deficiencies and malaise throughout populations, and a resurgence of religious fundamentalism both in the East and the West.



An artist's impression of Stanley Kubrick's vision of the space station of the future

Unfortunately, at this point, we are not all united as to what needs to be done. But the exploration of space does provide a common purpose. So, bearing in mind that with every set-

back (such as the Challenger and Columbia disasters) there are calls to abandon the space programme, it is the responsibility of all scientists to promote space exploration.

Because nothing in science is black or white.
Except sheep.

I, science

A science magazine for Imperial

We are now looking for feature writers and ideas for articles related to research at Imperial College and elsewhere.

To get involved, contact us now at science.felix@ic.ac.uk

Afternoon Coffee

Learn more about the European Internship opportunities available for summer 2005.

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Comment

felix@ic.ac.uk

State of the Union

By Mustafa Arif
Union President

● This space is intentionally left blank, due to your President's inability to meet the deadline

No room for your club? Let us know

Room bookings

In reply to last week's letter from 'a disgruntled director', we apologise for the problems clubs have been facing with room bookings in the Union and College. We realise there are problems and are working to rectify them.

With regard to College rooms, we have been in talks with the Conference division, who look after Internal room bookings, to make them aware of the problems we have been having and ways in which they can be avoided in future. We are also working on a written agreement on what rights our clubs and societies have for College rooms, to ensure that there are clear guidelines. All the complaints we have had have been passed on to them and we will be meeting with them in the coming weeks to see what progress has been made.

It is important that if you have any problems you pass on the details on

to myself and our Facilities Manager, who has direct contact with College internal bookings and will be liaising between College and clubs as the central point of contact, to improve the process and improve communication.

We know that problems are occurring, but we need full details if our argument is to have strong standing with College. Let us know at dpfs@ic.ac.uk and facilities@ic.ac.uk.

The College is installing a new room booking software system, which has more capabilities and should reduce problems in the future.

There have also been difficulties in the Union, but again only a few details ever reach us so it is hard to see where the real problem lies. Hopefully, after this response, we will get more information about the problems. We do realise that there are issues and are trying to ensure that we improve the process when the system is failing the needs of



SAMEENA MISBAHUDDIN
DEPUTY PRESIDENT
(FINANCE & SERVICES)

our clubs.

We have a limited number of rooms with a very large number of groups wanting to use them for meetings, rehearsals and other club events, therefore bookings can be difficult to find.

We do also hire out our rooms to external organisations because

they bring in a large revenue (approximately £100,000 per year) which we reinvest into the Union. We try to ensure these bookings are at times when students and clubs want them least (such as during lecture hours and holidays). Our priority is student club bookings, but we need to generate income which is reinvested into the Union for maintaining the building and ultimately funding our student activities.

Budgeting

If you are on the committee of a club or society, you will know that the budgeting process is currently underway. Over the last few months, a Budget Review has been undertaken, with the feedback from clubs and societies being conveyed via your CSC (Club and Society Committee) or FU (Faculty Union) representative and improvements made for this year's process in response.

The budgeting system for this year attempts to be fairer and more flexible. There is much more club and CSC/FU involvement in the final allocation. There is only a finite amount of money (currently £350,000) that the Union is able to spend directly on club and society budgets.

The new method tries to ensure that the available money will be allocated fairly and in accordance with the clubs' needs, thereby allowing it to be spent effectively rather than being locked away in areas where it will never be used. It also tries to ensure that the clubs and societies enjoy ownership and involvement of their budget by allowing them to decide how to target the money allocated to them.

So, do think carefully about your budgets. If you've had budget problems this year, please ensure that they don't happen again. For more information, contact your CSC or FU representatives.

No glove, no love

At university there is often a lot of partying going on, and for many it is a time when you spread your wings and feel free. University is also a time when many people discover themselves sexually and, as the your social experience increases, it is often a chance for you to meet new people and let some of your barriers fall.

If you are sexually active it is often easy to forget about the risks and not protect yourself against sexually transmitted infections (STIs). It is good to enjoy sex and feel good about our relationships, but at some point in your life you may find yourself facing difficulties or problems about your sexual health.

Staying sexually healthy is about dealing with sexual problems as they happen and avoiding them in the first place. STIs are on the increase in this country and it is important to be aware of the risks and to protect yourself from these infections.

There are at least 25 STIs, including chlamydia, gonorrhoea and genital herpes. STIs are some of the commonest infections around the world and affect people of all ages, races and sexualities. As well as being easy to catch, we also know that you're more at risk from HIV if you sleep with someone who is already carrying an STI.

Whether you are straight, gay, bi or transsexual, you need to protect

yourself against these infections by using the right type of contraception. And you need to do this until both you and your partner are sure there's no chance of either of you catching or passing on an STI.

Here's a list of some of the better-known STIs:

Chlamydia

Symptoms: In women, this infection often produces no symptoms, but can block the fallopian tubes, causing fertility problems later. You may notice slight discharge or pain on urinating. In men, it often affects the urethra and causes marked symptoms such as discharge or pain on urinating, described as 'non-specific-urethritis' (NSU).

Treatment: Testing involves a special swab, or urine or blood tests. Treatment is with a specific type of antibiotics, but it can require several courses of tablets. Your sexual partners should be contacted and checked as well.

Gonorrhoea

Causes: Caused by a bacteria and can affect the vagina, urethra, penis, rectum and even the mouth if you have oral sex.

Symptoms: Women tend to notice a profuse, yellow or greenish watery vaginal discharge and pain on urinating. Men may see a yellowy green discharge from the penis and have

ADVICE SERVICE



NIGEL COOKE
STUDENT ADVISER

pain on urinating. Itching or anal discharge is also possible, though some people get no symptoms at all and carry the infection from one partner to the next.

Treatment: There is a risk of damage to your fallopian tubes, with reduced fertility, if the infection is not treated. If you have gonorrhoea, you should not have sex until you have had swabs done and a course of antibiotic treatment. Your sexual partners should be contacted and checked, too.

Herpes

Causes: Herpes is a virus (herpes simplex type II) similar to the one that causes cold sores (herpes simplex type I), and is transmitted

sexually. It's possible to spread the infection to the mouth during oral sex and you might get type I infections in the genital area.

Symptoms: It can cause painful coldsore-like spots (ulceration) around the vagina and the penis. As with cold sores, once you've had them, the virus stays in your system throughout your life and could flare up again.

Treatment: There are now antiviral antibiotics, which can be used to control and reduce a 'flare-up', but they aren't a cure. If you're pregnant, there is a risk of the baby getting a severe and potentially fatal herpes infection, so if you have active ulcers you need to discuss it with your midwife or GP.

Syphilis

Symptoms: It may start with a sore in the vaginal or anal area, or around the genitals in men. Once the initial ulcer heals, it can stay in your system for years.

Treatment: Swabs that are usually used to test for STIs may show nothing, so blood tests are also used in diagnosing syphilis. Although cases are rare now, this serious infection can cause infertility and affect the heart, blood vessels, skin, bones and brain if left untreated. The infection can be treated with antibiotics and, like other STIs, it is important to contact and test all sexual partners.

It is important for you to know the symptoms of STIs and not ignore them in the hope that they will go away. If you feel that you may have contracted an STI or if you would like a sexual health check-up, you will need to make an appointment at your local genito-urinary medicine (GUM) clinic. To find out where it is, you can come to the Information and Advice Centre or phone Sexual Health Direct on 0845 310 1334.

Alternatively, if you live locally you can make an appointment at the Imperial College Health Centre. Check out their webpage, www.imperial.ac.uk/healthcentre/health.htm.

The Information and Advice Centre (IAC) has loads of leaflets on this issue. The IAC also has a limited supply of condoms which we give out for free – just pop down to the East Wing basement in Beit Quad and take a few.

If you would like further information on this article or if you have any queries on any subject we cover please contact us.

Don't let your concern turn into a crisis – make the IAC your one stop shop for all of your welfare issues.

● The Information and Advice Centre is now in the East Wing basement of Beit Quad. Open: 10am-6pm Monday-Friday. Phone: 020 7594 8066. Email: advice@ic.ac.uk.

COMMENT

Letters to the Editor

Pay problems

Dave,

In response to your front page article 'Pay problems for student staff' in last week's Felix:

I have been working here for over two years now. The fact that it takes six weeks to get pay for some shifts is of course ridiculous, but I think the most important part of your article to highlight was what Mustafa Arif had to say about non-student casual staff still being paid weekly!

When the change happened, we were told that it was necessary for us to have our pay scheme changed in order to bring us in line with the rest of college's staff, as this would reduce costs in payroll. The fact that there are still staff being paid weekly by college payroll enforces my belief that it was not necessary to fast-track all of us student staff onto the scheme. There could have been far more time for negotiation with the Union and planning by the college to make sure that if it did eventually become truly necessary for us to be on monthly pay, it could have gone ahead without all the glitches we have experienced. These included not being paid, being paid too much, tax and NI not being deducted, emergency tax being deducted and so on ad infinitum...

Perhaps, too, if we had been warned of this change, those of us who are hard up enough to need our cash "up front" would have had a chance to make alternative arrangements before the start of term. It would have been even nicer if we had been consulted on the change, but then again, as it seems that Mustafa himself was barely consulted, that might be like asking for the moon on a stick.

Yours,
Jess Baker
IV Chemistry with Management

Security and medics

Dear Felix,

Today, Tuesday 18 January, a student had a fit in the entrance hall of the Sir Alexander Fleming Building.

Students present at the time were reported to have done nothing except continue to purchase their food from the shop while watching on. Eventually a student had the sense to ring Sheffield Security (of which there should be a fully trained medical officer at all times), after which four (allegedly) burly but medically incompetent guards appeared with no first aid equipment and proceeded to join in the staring contest.

Paramedics were eventually called and arrived within minutes and dealt with the situation accordingly. One of the students who originally aided the suffering student was rewarded by a 'Well done miss,' by one of the security officers.

Lessons to be learnt from this: Sheffield Security need to review their procedures for first aid training; medical students really don't know what they're doing even when threatened with a real life situation.

Kind regards,
Name and department supplied

More exam anguish

Dear Felix,

I'd like to write a short response to Mr Rorke's letter in issue 1311.

Can I just point out that I personally pointed out to Mr Rorke the issues several weeks before the end of the autumn term and heard nothing back from him on the subject and it was up to the students themselves within their departments to kick up a fuss to get their exam dates changed! Surely since dates are confirmed two years in advance as (Sam so courteously pointed out to the readership), the DPEWs of the last three years had plenty of time to realise the problem far earlier?

Yet another example of the union's bumbling inability to see into the future and take preventative action, leaving them shrugging their shoulders and scratching themselves; letting the students down inevitably.

Yours Sincerely,
Tim Weinert-Aplin
Aero 4

Dear Felix,

Two weeks ago I had a letter published here. Despite it being anonymous I have since received some repercussions. I would like to re-iterate the points in the article 2 weeks ago.

1) In response to a Felix headline last term I pointed out that Mech Eng was not the only department with a ridiculous Christmas period, we in ESE also had problems – fault for this in my opinion clearly lies with college who set the term dates – why we could not have started that term earlier I do not know.

2) Also in response to a Felix headline last term, examinable material (indeed an exam) was scheduled in the lunch period – clashing with some peoples humanities courses (hence why nothing should be timetabled in the lunch hour). The only option I was given was to sit it in the afternoon, which clashed with a departmental lecture. I eventually sat it then. I believe no student should be put in this position – I do not accept that Monday 3rd being a Bank Holiday as an excuse, it has been scheduled then for a long time. If exams were indeed supposed to have being scheduled for the 'first Monday' of term (10th) then there would not be a full day of departmental lectures that day. I believe blame for this lies with the department, as other departments don't seem to

have had this problem.

The point I was trying to make was that individually these problems would not have been that bad but combined between them they could cause students great distress in what is an important year of there degree.

I would also like to point out and apologise to the secretarial staff of the department, who may have misunderstood the article, I believe they are not at fault for the above problems, the job they perform, which includes being a link between students and the department is performed consistently in a faultless manner with a cheerful attitude, and all the more admirable bearing in mind the "fluid and laissez faire" nature of the department (as discussed above and in my previous letter).

Thankyou
John Sykes
MSci Geology (3rd year)
(The Still Disgruntled Rock Hunter)

Babar Ahmad

Dear Felix,

We, the family of Babar Ahmad, reject outright and condemn the decision of the Independent Police Complaint's Commission (IPCC) to formally discipline one of the several Anti-Terrorist Branch Police Officers who caused life-threatening injuries to Babar whilst in their custody on 02 December 2003. We further question the timing of this decision, more than a year after the assault, and a week prior to BBC2's documentary on Babar's case on 26th January 2005. We feel that this is a cynical ploy to create a scapegoat out of one officer to spare the superiors from blame.

Our faith in the British Justice System is such that we always expected a "cover-up" from the outset, but we did not expect the IPCC, Crown Prosecution Service and members of the medical profession to be part of it. This is the fourth time that the authorities have charged their version of events of what happened to Babar on that day. First they declared in court that Babar's injuries were old injuries. Then they said that "some" of the injuries were old. Then they said that Babar kicked, punched and violently resisted arrest. Now they are saying that the injuries were not old and some of the officers used excessive force. They have also claimed that the officers acted as such because they believed Babar to be a highly dangerous terrorist who trained in Al-Qaida camps.

This latest decision leaves a number of questions unanswered:

1) If Babar violently resisted arrest and attacked police officers, why was he not charged with assaulting police?

2) Where is the medical evidence of any injuries sustained by the police officers?

3) If only one police officer assaulted Babar, why did the others stand there and watch?

4) Why did 3 independent eye-witnesses (neighbours) inform the investigation that they did not witness any struggle?

5) Why has Babar not been charged with making false allegations against members of the police?

6) If Babar was a highly dangerous Al-Qaida terrorist, why was he released without charge in December 2003?

7) Why did the IPCC ignore the opinion of Dr Manolis Gavalas, an independent medico-legal expert who examined Babar?

We would like all of the officers concerned to be charged and prosecuted, not just disciplined with a slap on the wrist. We are considering taking further action and we seek an urgent independent public inquiry into this matter.

Family of Babar Ahmad

● *Terror Suspect's Dad*, a documentary on the 'Free Babar Ahmad' campaign, will be shown at 10pm on Wednesday 26 January on BBC2.

Fun in Felix?

It saddens me to write this. In years gone by, the pages of noble *Felix* were filled with interesting columns and funny stories. So much so in fact that my vastly inferior writing skills were never called upon. Now, however, things have changed. Very much for the worse. First we lose the format for cost reasons – fair enough. But did you have to cull all the writers as well? I mean you didn't even pay them. They had vision, skills and possibly even ideas.

The idea of a student paper is not to deliver daily news from the business world, or even daily national news. That's what actual newspapers are for. A student paper should offer information about student life – funny events, places to eat, general crude. It should be interesting. Fair enough we're all geeky enough to appreciate computers and gadgets. But maybe more reviews of games and funky stuff and less dry pieces about operating systems – which as anyone knows, aren't interesting, even to mac fanatics.

You need to have information on how the university is being run and plans for the future. You also need to have columns on how wonderful donuts are and how ignoring deadlines seriously reduces dancing ability at dB's. However, these shouldn't necessarily be vying for space in the same column.

So what needs to be done? Basically there needs to be a drive back towards fun – everyone needs a break from knowledge occasionally surely? Is there really no place for fanning about? What are we, serious scientists or students? There is so much more to life than studying. I mean really there is. No matter how much you pay to study, you're

missing out on the whole aim of university if you use it just to work. Like meeting people, having fun, maybe even putting something back into the uni and/or the community. But obviously it is not obligatory – I would not be where I am today if it weren't for my highly developed sense of apathy and a keen knowledge of how best to avoid doing stuff. Still I know that occasionally a little effort makes everything better. In this instance, it is mainly that if by some quirk of fate I manage to encourage people to write something, I will have something to read and I won't have to spend weeks deciding whether or not to write something instead of staring blankly into the Mission Failed screen of GTA 3.

Tristan Lane
Medic, 5th year

Dave Edwards, Editor, replies:

Felix is a popular newspaper this year. Almost all of our 4000 copies disappear quickly each week. I have received more compliments on the new style of Felix than I could possibly count.

Cost was only one factor behind the change of format. The new 'compact newspaper' style defines Felix as a student newspaper, rather than lying somewhere between newspaper and magazine. The new style looks more like a 'real' publication and is taken more seriously and given more respect as a result.

We didn't cull any writers – they either left College or just stopped writing, unfortunately. To imply that our current team of contributors lacks vision, skill and ideas is a cheap and ultimately pointless insult to these hard-working, talented volunteers.

Many Imperial students are interested in national and/or business news, and we are able to give a limited amount from our own perspective, so why shouldn't we do that? The operating system articles have attracted several comments and questions from readers – it's clear that people are interested in that kind of thing.

Of course there is space for 'fun' articles, but we need people to write them. Incidentally, Coffee Break already offers two pages of fun and games each week. I'm not sure that we should be offering 'general crude', whatever that is.

Any student is welcome to write for Felix. We really do want as many people as possible to get involved – it's what we're here for, and we include something like 80-90% of what we receive. I accept that there is less fun, comedy, humorous columns etc in Felix this year, but that's only because no-one seems to want to write them! If there's something you want to see in these pages, you can do something about it – either make a specific suggestion or write it yourself. Contact me at felix@ic.ac.uk.

● I am pleased to say that Tristan Lane writes for *Felix* in this week's Sport section, page 23, and in next week's Comment section

Send your letters to felix@ic.ac.uk. Make your voice heard

Letters may be edited for length, but not for spelling or grammar.
Letters are printed at the Editor's discretion.

Careers

felix@ic.ac.uk

Looking for a career in consultancy?



GABRIELLA SILVESTRI & CASSANDRA ALDRICH
CAREERS EDITORS

Many are keen to pursue a career in consulting. Reasons why include good money, a jet-setting lifestyle and the chance to tell MDs how to run their companies.

Graduates aiming for the City often choose consulting over banking due to the project based and problem solving nature of the work. A career in consulting is a lifestyle choice, which gives the opportunity to work for many different companies in a succession of different challenges. There is the satisfaction of making a difference and seeing people take over your ideas and put them into practice successfully.

Consultants tend to specialise in one or more areas that could be divided into four main types:

'Generalist' includes the large consulting firms offering a wide range of services from strategy consulting and human resources to IT. Examples of these are Accenture, Deloitte Consulting, IBM Business Consulting Services and Computer Sciences Corporation.

'Strategy consulting' are the smaller organizations that offer strategic advice to companies on a project-by-project basis. This involves long range planning, the reorganization of a company's structure, rationalization of services and products, and a general business appraisal of the Company. Within this category are firms like McKinsey

and Bain.

'Human resource consulting' firms offer specialist advice in personnel policy, manpower planning, job enrichment, job evaluation and industrial relations. They include Aon Consulting, Mercer Human Resource Consulting and Towers Perrin.

'Niche firms' consist of consultants leaving the larger companies and setting up their own consultancy firms in a particular sector, or offering a specialist service. In a consulting situation, there are usually five 'phases' to a process: entry (contacting and contracting); diagnosis; implementation; consolidation; and evaluation.

Responsibility is a pillar of a successful consulting process, together with empathy and trust. The client finds himself in a situation without the ability to resolve it. When assignments go wrong, inevitably consultant and client have a rather different perception of the situation. The client will usually believe that the consultant did not come up with any original ideas and produced recommendations which were either impractical or otherwise unacceptable. From the consultant's perspective it may look a little different: the client did not provide an adequate briefing. They could never make time available for meetings but still wanted everything done in a hurry.

So, if such a challenging environment attracts you, here are some tips:

You will need to display a wide range of personal qualities. A would-be consultant must possess the following traits:

- Integrity – your client's needs come first
- An analytical mind – every problem must have a solution



Consulting: solving big business problems in a challenging environment

● Clarity of expression – both verbally and in writing

● Empathy – the ability to recognise another person's point of view, although not necessarily agreeing with it.

It is not important to have a business-related degree and it is advisable to take sub-

jects that you will enjoy and at which you will excel, as grades are the most important factor to firms. Do as much research as possible before choosing a consultancy. Talk to firms you are interested in and to people who have worked with them.

There are several good sources of information on a career in consultancy, such as the MCA (Management Consultancies Association) website, www.mca.org.uk, and the IMC (Institute of Management Consultancy) website, www.imc.co.uk.

Tips from an Imperial graduate

Michael Walton (Imperial alumnus) set up his own consultancy business. He tells *Felix* about his line of work:

How would you define what consultancy is to students?

This is difficult, but I would say that in my industry, a consultant is a person or company which supplies various technical services that cannot be conducted with the client's own resources. These services are usually related to projects and have a limited time span, and a well-defined 'result'. Alternatively, a consultant is often called in on

an ad-hoc basis as a trouble-shooter, often in a legal situation as an expert witness.

After you graduated did you already know that you wanted to get into consultancy?

No, this was never planned, but being attracted to major projects, it was the only path to take in the long term.

Did you have different jobs in between finishing your studies and going into consultancy?

You have to gain a wide range of experience to have credibility as a consultant. This can

only be achieved by putting in the years at various levels of responsibility in industry. I worked in production and technical services before joining a consultancy. I then had a five year stint as a sales director importing industrial consumables, before returning to consulting with my own business. So that's 12 years production/tech, eight years consulting, five years sales, and a further eight years on my own.

Do you think being at Imperial equipped you well for your career?

Partly, but when you leave

with your degree, the real work starts – you basically only have limited technical knowledge, and no experience of industrial practice and technology in a real sense – especially IR issues. Another big issue here is the interaction of various disciplines needed in a major plant, particularly process and maintenance engineers.

Do you have any advice to students wishing to get into this field or advice resulting from your experiences?

Do not choose consultancy too young. Spend at least

five years, preferably more, before considering this, as it is easy to be pigeon-holed. The best way to get into this is with a large engineering consultant such as Bechtel or KBR. This allows a wide range of experience quite quickly.

Any additional information or thoughts?

I would hesitate to recommend starting out by oneself too young, it is not easy – I am over 50! Some commercial experience is also needed to avoid financial pitfalls. A business course would be very useful.

Careers events

Employer drop-in session

Deloitte
Wed 9 Feb, 12 – 5pm.
Sign-up begins Mon 17 Jan.
Book at Imperial Careers Service.

Employers skills led workshops

PricewaterhouseCoopers / Psychometric Testing
Wed 26 Jan, 1.30 – 3.30pm
Venue: SAF 120.
Sign-up begins Mon 10 Jan.

IBM assessment centres

Wed 2 Feb, 1 – 3pm
Venue: SAF 119.
Sign-up begins Mon 10 Jan.

Postgraduate Study & Training Fair 2005

Wed 26 Jan, 12.30pm – 7.30pm.
Business Design Centre, Islington, London.

MBA Fair 2005

Wed 26 Jan, 12.30pm – 7.30pm
Business Design Centre, Islington, London.

Procter & Gamble Recruitment Presentation

Tue 2 Feb, 7pm.
To save time on arrival, pre-register at pgevent2005@pg.com.
The Strand Palace Hotel, The Strand

Introducing Careers in Development

15 Feb.
By the end of the day you will have a realistic and informed view of the sector together with practical tips on how to get into it.
Cost:
£20 – University of London students and members of GradClub
£40 – All other participants.
For more information, email milkround@careers.ln.ac.uk.

Introducing Careers in Charities

16 Feb.
This new course will cover the main career areas: campaigning, fundraising, policy-making and lobbying, research, marketing and PR, administration and project management.
For information, email milkround@careers.ln.ac.uk.

Around Campus

felix@ic.ac.uk

Christmas at Silwood

By Andy Brown
Silwood Park Correspondent

The end of the calendar year had come at last. For most of the Silwood residents, Christmas is a stressful time of the year, with exams before and after the break, and a quiet time for those who are not going home.

Before we departed, we had a couple of days to let off some steam. This year saw the return of the much-loved Silwood review, a light-hearted look at the world of science and life on the campus over the past year. It is a night loved by all, a time to get a beer and have a laugh, with the added bonus of raising

money for charity. It is a night like no other, where everyone is put on a level playing field, from the gardeners to the campus Dean, everyone laughs at others' expense and then doesn't complain when the jokes come on to them.

This year's story took a panto tale and added an element of Silwood individualism. Dick Whittington leaves his PhD at Silwood with his subconscious bunny companion, in search of fame after being fed up with living in the middle of nowhere. After coming across many interesting characters on his travels, a Brummie-accented voice from above tells him to go back to Silwood and run for

Union President against the campus Dean.

On his returning trip, he passes a Richard and Judy show, our Union President on blind date picking a romantic holiday with his supervisor, and course organisers trying to explain and justify why one course consists solely of female students. At one point, somehow, all the senior lecturers end up on stage doing the 'macarena'.

After some strenuous campaigning, Dick wins and is worshipped by all Silwood residents, gets his girlfriend back from the Dean, and they live happily every after (with the exception of some senior lecturers who were left trau-

matised). Congratulations have to be given to Tom Ezard, Kelly Moyes and Katy Barton for scriptwriting and organising the rabble.

The following morning was Christmas Day (a little bit early, admittedly, being the 17th). The day started off bright and early. Well, early yes, bright no! Our traditional Christmas morning fun run was welcomed with wind and rain, which made it a little less fun! But did that stop anyone, of course! The Christmas fairy, a few elves, a superhero and even the Christmas tree had dragged themselves out of bed to do the three mile run/walk around the grounds and roads of Silwood. For the

more serious runners, this was not even a walk in the park and they had finished long before the vat of mulled wine and tray of mince pies were warmed up!

Once everyone had had a chance to dry off, the day continued with the lazier residents finally getting out of bed and joining everyone else in the main hall for some expertly sung Christmas carols, with the odd serenade by a very merry, slightly intoxicated, Christmas tree! Christmas dinner followed, with only the odd attempt to catapult food to neighbouring tables. It was a serious scientific experiment trying to get the weight, shape and moistness

of a brussel sprout just right that it would be projected off the end of a party popper for the correct distance, although the winner had to be the age-old flicking mince pudding off a spoon.

The evening's entertainment commenced as we finally managed to get a karaoke machine and continued to impress all of Silwood with our singing ability...

The only person really worthy of holding the microphone was the Christmas fairy with her rendition of Alanis Morissette's *Ironic*. However, as the drink continued to flow, this didn't stop anyone from believing they were the next Britney Spears or Will Young.

What's on

felix@ic.ac.uk

THURSDAY 20 JANUARY

TALK
ENGINEERS WITHOUT BORDERS
1pm
Room 342, Mech Eng
Priti Parikh discusses slum networking in India.
Contact:
jignesh.parekh@ic.ac.uk

UNION EVENTS
PINKS: ANN SUMMERS PARTY FOR BREAST CANCER CARE
6.30pm
dBs, Beit Quad
£3.50
An evening to raise money for Breast Cancer Care, including organised entertainment from Ann Summers, auctions of eligible bachelors, blind date and a raffle. Women only (sorry boys!)
Contact:
michelle.maloney@ic.ac.uk

UNION EVENTS
QUIZ NIGHT
7.30pm
Reynolds Building, Charing Cross Hospital
£2 per person
Win an Xbox, Game Cube or PS2! Come down and prove how much knowledge you have.
Contact:
lucy.pickard@ic.ac.uk

UNION EVENTS
DRAMSOC PANTO: JACK AND THE BEANSTALK
7.30pm
Union Concert Hall, Beit Quad
£4.50 students, £6 others
Dramsoc use the Union

Concert Hall to its limit, with flying, trapdoors, pyro and shaving foam.
See: www.dramsoc.org/tickets

FRIDAY 21 JANUARY

UNION EVENTS
DRAMSOC PANTO: JACK AND THE BEANSTALK
7.30pm
Union Concert Hall, Beit Quad
£4.50 students, £6 others
See: www.dramsoc.org/tickets

UNION EVENTS
ROCK CITY
8pm-2am
Beit Quad
£3
Playing the best rock party tunes. Snakebite and black £1 a pint.
Contact: union@ic.ac.uk

SATURDAY 22 JANUARY

UNION EVENTS
DRAMSOC PANTO: JACK AND THE BEANSTALK
7.30pm
Union Concert Hall, Beit Quad
£4.50 students, £6 others
See: www.dramsoc.org/tickets

MONDAY 24 JANUARY

UNION EVENTS
MEDICS RAG KRISPY KREME DOUGHNUT SALES

Every lunchtime this week Sir Alexander Fleming Building and JCR
£6.95 per box
Place your pre-orders with our team of doctors & nurses and you can expect to collect your boxes of freshly made original glazed doughnuts on Friday 28 January! For a minimum donation of £3 our nurses can also deliver it to your department/lecture theatre/office at an agreed time. Stock is limited so do pre-order yours. ICSM Rag supports Macmillan Cancer Relief.
Contact: loretta.ko@ic.ac.uk

TUESDAY 25 JANUARY

UNION EVENTS
STA TRAVEL QUIZ NIGHT
8-10.30pm
Beit Quad
FREE
The quiz is a bit of a tradition at the Union, with cash and beer prizes on offer. Get a team together and see how much you really know.
Contact: union@ic.ac.uk

WEDNESDAY 26 JANUARY

TALK
AROUND THE WORLD IN 86 DAYS
12noon
Mech Eng room 220
In the summer of 2004, electrical engineering student James Devine spent his holi-

days travelling around the world visiting construction sites. The aim of this journey was to gain a better understanding of sustainability and sustainable issues in construction.
The three month itinerary included visits to Dubai, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Australia and the United States. Whilst travelling, James received a crash course in global business etiquette, including cultural challenges as Sushi with contractors in Japan, just like in an HSBC advert.
James will be giving a lunchtime talk going through some details of what he learned about sustainability, pictures of the highlights from his trip and advice for anyone looking to organise their own 'global' internship.
Contact:
james.devine@ic.ac.uk

UNION EVENTS
SPORTS NIGHT
8pm-12midnight
Beit Quad
£1 (Free before 9pm)
Carlsberg and Tetley £1 a pint all night in all bars.
Contact: union@ic.ac.uk

THURSDAY 27 JANUARY

VERY IMPORTANT
FELIX PUBLISHED
10am onwards
Pick up the next issue of your student newspaper from your department or the Union building.
Contact: felix@ic.ac.uk

Running an event? Tell us about it!

Felix will print your listings free of charge. Just email felix@ic.ac.uk and tell us:

- the name of the event
 - who is running it
 - the time
 - the location
 - the cost (if any)
 - a brief description of the event
 - a contact email address
- Please put 'LISTINGS' in the subject field.

ALL WEEK

FILMS: VUE CINEMA, FULHAM BROADWAY
Student discount ALL WEEK
RAY (15)
Daily: 2.30pm, 5.50pm, 9pm.
Sat and Sun only: 11.20am.
ELEKTRA (12A)
Daily: 1.20pm, 3.50pm, 6.15pm, 8.30pm. Fri and Sat only: 11pm. Sat only: 11am.
A VERY LONG ENGAGEMENT (15)
Daily: 1.30pm, 4.30pm, 7.45pm.
Fri and Sat only: 10.45pm. Sat and Sun only: 10.30am.
GARDEN STATE (15)
Fri to Wed: 8pm. Mon to Fri: 5.20pm. Fri and Sat only: 10.30pm.
FINDING NEVERLAND (PG)
Fri to Wed: 5.40pm. Mon to Fri: 12.50pm
CLOSER (15)
Daily: 2pm, 4.20pm, 6.45pm, 9.15pm. Fri and Sat only: 11.40pm. Sat and Sun only:

11.30am.
TEAM AMERICA: WORLD POLICE (15)
Daily: 5pm, 7.20pm, 9.40pm.
Mon to Fri: 2.45pm. Fri and Sat only: 11.55pm.
MILLION DOLLAR BABY (12A)
Daily: 2.15pm, 5.30pm, 8.15pm.
VANITY FAIR (PG)
Fri to Wed: 1.10pm, 6.30pm. Sat and Sun only: 10.10am.
WHITE NOISE (15)
Fri to Wed: 4.10pm, 9.30pm. Fri and Sat only: 11.50pm
LEMONY SNICKET'S A SERIES OF UNFORTUNATE EVENTS (PG)
Sat and Sun only: 10am, 12.20pm, 2.40pm.
THE INCREDIBLES (U)
Sat and Sun only: 12.10pm, 3pm.
HOUSE OF FLYING DAGGERS (12A)
Fri and Sat only: 11.20pm.
THE POLAR EXPRESS (U)
Sat and Sun only: 11.50am.

Music

music.felix@ic.ac.uk

Music is back!

Andrew Sykes ushers in the new year with a suitably futuristic release from your new favourite French electro-prog duo, M83

ALBUM REVIEW

M83

Before The Dawn Heals Us
(Goom Records)

★★★★☆

The music press is fickle. In 2003, you couldn't move for articles praising French duo M83's second record, the gloriously OTT *Dead Cities, Red Seas And Lost Ghosts*, using adjectives like 'superlative', 'emotive', and (my favourite) 'transcendent'. The mixture of cheap-sounding yet expensive synthesizers and drum machines, making desolate but organic-sounding soundscapes, seemed to defy comparison or explanation. So, flushed with their success, our Gallic chums retreated to their studio to record this, the follow-up. Unfortunately, the music press has long since recovered from its infatuation with their brand of prog-electro, resulting in a general half-hearted panning of the album.

So, is it as good as *Dead Cities...* is? Yes, but in a different way.

Don't Save Us From The Flames is a classic example of punked-up M83 at work; pleasant female harmonies drift over furious drums, underpinned by some thunderous guitar-as-synth attack. There's a distinct eighties feel to the track that M83 have never exhibited before; something in the way the synthesizers and guitars overlap. They've also discovered the concept of mas-

sive choruses, as demonstrated by the wonderfully titled *Teen Angst*. Gorgeous arpeggios of keyboards and stilted, barely understandable vocals cascade into walls of strings and utterly enveloping, wordless vocal harmonies offset against a cheap, skittering drum machine. I have absolutely no idea what they're singing about, but it's truly moving.

Asterisk is reminiscent of *America* from *Dead Cities...*, the huge electro basslines and synthesised strings now combining with a much more upfront use of guitars. When you least expect it, the track drops back to the menacing bassline, before lurching back into the main riff. 'Lurching' is perhaps the wrong word, since the most frightening thing about it is the precision with which the noise is unleashed.

As with *Dead Cities...*, at least half the album is made up of meandering, layered songs that seem to build and build until there's little room to breathe in the sound. Whereas these would previously drift on for six minutes plus, most of them clock in at under four minutes. This newfound brevity is both a blessing and a curse; whereas it seemed that the songs would often run short of ideas well shy of the end (bar the sublime *Beauties Must Die*), now you almost will them to continue and explore. A prime example is *I Guess I'm Floating*, with its gentle keyboard progression that cries out to be built up and built up. Instead, it's merely faded out two minutes in.



M83: French, progressive, and named after a distant galaxy. Pretentious, moi?

Car Chase Terror harks back to M83's debut with its extensive use of sampling; crickets and passing traffic provide a backing for a truly disturbing roadside dialogue between a mother and her daughter about a demonic stalker. As the girl pleads "Turn the key, go, go!" walls of synths and double-time drums create a sense of desperation, of panic, that aims (and succeeds) to instil the same fear in the listener.

I've mentioned the things that make this album great, but one song really defiled my enjoyment of it. The offender, *Can't Stop*, is almost unredeemable, sounding like a poor Bee Gees pastiche that destroys the otherwise perfect first half of the album. Whatever possessed them to repeatedly sing, in Chipmunk voices, "I can't stop, yeah" for more than two minutes eludes me. Perhaps a huge dose of LSD is to blame. Thank

your chosen deity for programmable CD players, eh? I advise you to simply skip it, and never ever listen to it. You'll save yourself the pain of a single song spoiling this otherwise great album.

File under:

Mind-expanding electronica
If you like this, try:
My Bloody Valentine - *Loveless*

The break-up of The Smiths far behind him, and his partnership with Johnny Marr long forgotten, Morrissey brings his live show to the stadiums of old England



Morrissey: boy in da corner

LIVE REVIEW

Morrissey

Earls Court

★★★★☆

The return of Stephen Patrick Morrissey to the music world from his self-imposed exile in Los Angeles was quite possibly the musical highlight of 2004.

With the release of the album *You Are The Quarry*, arguably his best work since the break up of his band The Smiths in 1987, Morrissey took aim at his critics, who "had my face dragged in fifteen miles of s***", and fired with deadly accuracy. Depending on your personal opinion, the enigmatic Mancunian is often called either 'the Pope of mope' or 'golden-voice'. On the evidence of his recent material and this gig at Earl's Court, I am more inclined to refer to him by the latter.

Tonight, 'golden-voice' would have silenced any nay-sayers in the arena. He opened with the bombastic *How Soon Is Now?*, a 1984

Smiths classic, sounding as fresh as the day it was made, with the more hard-edged Boz Boorer replacing the original swampy sound of Johnny Marr's guitar solo. He followed this with *First Of The Gang To Die*, the story of gang member Hector's cruel death to 'a bullet in his gullet'.

Other highlights included the single *Let Me Kiss You*, and the two classics from the legendary 1986 album *The Queen Is Dead* of *Bigmouth Strikes Again* and *There Is A Light That Never Goes Out*, where he sings "If a ten ton truck kills the both of us, to die by your side, well, the pleasure and the privilege is mine." Morrissey, affectionately known as Mozzer, can be completely unlikable and at the same time compellingly charismatic, charming and malicious in one sentence. Tonight was no exception.

Many of the later tracks saw Morrissey in his usual belligerent mood. Soon after lambasting "lockjawed popstars, thicker than pig-s***" in *The World Is Full Of Crashing Bores*, he takes a shot at Labour and the Tories in *Irish*

Blood, English Heart, and at his critics in *You Know I Couldn't Last*. One aspect of Mozzer's music is that, if he isn't brilliantly laying into one of his enemies, he pontificates on his lonely, asexual lifestyle - one that many of his fans seem to relate to. In *I Have Forgiven Jesus*, Moz blames Christ for giving him "So much love in a loveless world".

He finished the night with a Smiths tear-jerker, *Last Night I Dreamt That Somebody Loved Me*, which pretty well speaks for itself but was moving mostly because of the beautiful keyboard solo at the end.

Despite the appalling arena, this gig was sheer adrenaline. Even in my spot, which seemed so far away I may as well have been in South Ken, the band's electrifying performance combined with Mozzer's primal northern vocals had everyone disappointed that it didn't go on longer.

A question posed in Morrissey's 1990 hit *Piccadilly Palace* was "Why do you smile when you think about Earl's Court?" Following this performance, I had plenty of reasons.

Andrew Sykes

Music Editor

Album roundup

The Others release their middle-class baiting long-awaited debut, Feeder return from hiatus but fail to impress, and Digger's done good with the new Fabric release

ALBUM REVIEWS

Feeder
Pushing The Senses
(Echo)
★★★★☆

Now I don't think Feeder have ever been cool, but the nature of cool is so fickle that I am going to ignore it while listening to this album. In fact, I am ignoring coolness so much I am wearing ankle warmers (so last season) and smoking crack (so 2001). Anyway, back to the task in hand.

Everyone should be aware of Feeder's situation: their last album *Comfort In Sound* was released in the wake of drummer Jon Lee's apparent suicide. The tragedy was obviously hanging over the album as it was released quite soon after the event. Reviewers didn't want to slag the album off in case they were accused of manslaughter or arrested for being big meanies. This obviously hid the fact that their last album was rather bland. So I bet reviewers are frothing at the mouth to rip into this exploration of the banal known as *Pushing The Senses*.

I genuinely wanted to like this album because I am anticipating the bad reviews. However, as the CD ended, I sighed in despair.

It is, for all intents and purposes, *Comfort In Sound 2*, except without the stadium rockers. What we are left with is a mellow mess of emotions and clichéd lyrics. The closest we get to something that remotely rocks is the title track or *Pilgrim Soul*, which is anthemic rather than rocking. Having said that, it still feels like an overproduced *Insomnia* from their earlier days, with added handclaps (though not even the power of the handclap can save this song).

Which leads me to the production; Gil Norton, the producer of *Comfort In Sound*, returns behind the desk. This time, he's ready to insert some 'electronica' into the mix to make you think their sound has advanced even if the songwriting hasn't. It adds an overproduced sheen where there are no new ideas, just the same idea fattened up. When Norton produced The Pixies, the sound went from the still raw Surfer Rosa sound to

the more palatable Doolittle sound, but Franck Black and Kim Deal's songwriting still retained vitality. Grant Nicholas' writing does have underlying uplifting themes such as the celebration theme in *Dove Grey Sands* but they aren't communicated effectively enough to take you anywhere.

Burn *Pilgrim Soul* off this album as it is Feeder at their best, driving with a typical sing-along chorus. The ponderous lethargic nature of this album is never engaging or uplifting as it intends to be with its bright colour scheme (suspiciously looking like the *Winning Days* by the Vines album cover, another unengaging follow-up).

The singing and songwriting fight hard to find a message and a melody to convey it with, but it all ends up feeling laboured. It appears that their energy has evaporated and they need a week of electric shock therapy whilst on Pro-Plus. Take, for example, their first single, *Tumble And Fall*: it's not a piece of Anthology 101 but a plodding string-laden moan-athon. Not a good sign of things to come.

File under:
Sluggish indie-pop
If you like this, try:
The earlier, better Feeder

Matty Hoban

The Others
The Others
(Mercury)
★★★★☆

A tricky one this. You see, in my opinion, there is no need for this album to exist. The Others have always been more about their live shows; I saw them at Glastonbury and the dedication that was shown by a large chunk of the crowd was impressive, fans who have followed them all the way. And in return, front man Dominic Masters was down there with them, putting his heart on the greasy sleeve of his charity-shop suit jacket.

The fans are obviously very important to the band. In the past it was

common practice to have their entire fan club on the guest list for shows, so those who couldn't afford to could go, could. They get an album dedication: *Community 853* is named after them.

After their dedicated fan base The Others are probably best known for their "guerrilla gigging", playing with minimal announcement in unconventional places, namely a Hammersmith & City tube, the foyer of Radio 1, and probably your bedroom if you asked them. These are the important things about The Others, their semi-mythology.

So, on to the music. It starts really promisingly, with *Lackey*, upbeat new-wave drums and bass, with razor-sharp guitars similar to *Slow Hands* by Interpol. But in general you get your Libertines-esque urchin-rock standard backing. It's only a matter of time before Pete Doherty starts selling backing tapes like this to fuel his crack addiction. A strange bunch as well. The bass player's an ageing goth, the guitarist is a skinhead called something like Johnny Lager, and... well I couldn't tell you anything remarkable about the drummer, even under threat of being force-fed the millions of copies of Busted's third album they'll never release (Busted RIP).

OK then, what's the point? Why do they have a fan base at all? Enter Mr Masters, his skinny frame and lank hair railing against all authority. He doesn't sing, oh-no, 'cos that's what the record company wants him to do. Instead he executes a lazy drawl that turns "out of here" to "ou-ha-ere", or the track *Pshychovision* to "psah-cow-vee-shown". It came as no surprise that the favourite gig he's been to is an Oasis concert. Occasional bursts of "chicka-chicka-chick-ow!" had me grinning, and I'm sure "ba-ba-ba-ba-ba...bow!" had McFly's lawyers reaching for the phone. Right, so he's no Jeff Buckley, what else could they have going for them?

Lyrics? Well... kinda. You can see how the lyrics in debut release *This Is For The Poor* could affect some people: "this is for all the kids who stand out in the crowd, for all the one's who've been shoved around, this is for every disappointment." So is he some new-age poet, speaking for the "kids", eyes open to the plights of the poor? No. Masters really has very little to say. "I want ya to myself, I need ya more than anyone else" from *Southern Glow*... yawn. "Don't wanna sell my soul to the man today" from *Lackey*... ooh not the demonic "man" who pays your wages (or rather doesn't, you cheeky little job-dodger).

Lines like "I did acid before I did hash, I never wanted to sell my ass" had me pissing myself laughing, but when in the otherwise taut and brooding *Almanac* he moans "I came to London when I was 18, I had no money it was only a dream" my iPod almost got defenestrated. I mean, boo-de-fucking-hoo.

So musically boring, vocally boring, lyrically boring. "This is for the poor, not the rich kids," rails Masters. It seems the "rich kids" have bought themselves the right not to listen to a substandard Libertines support



John Digweed: one of the forefathers of modern dance

band. One last thing, please don't give my address out to any of their fans, I feel they may be less than understanding...

File under:
Obsessive fanbase urchin rock
If you like this, try:
The Libertines, obviously

James Millen

John Digweed
Fabric 20
(Fabric)
★★★★☆

Digweed is one of the forefathers of the modern dance scene. He's been successful all around the world for over a decade, created what some call the first DJ mix CD, *Renaissance*, with Sasha (which has recently been remastered), and he's even got his own show on Kiss.

The Fabric/Fabriclive series of mix CDs is now up to number 20, with each mix giving a subtly different slice of the broad genre we call dance music. The smart ones amongst you will have subscribed to the series and received a new mix every month for the rather good price of £6.

So here's number 20, and given the prowess of the DJ and the quality of the series so far, we're all expecting it to be pure gold. The mix starts gently, easing us in with soft rhythmic elements and a mellow vocal sample. The sounds develop to fill more and more of the sonic canvas until a solid drum beat finally appears after five minutes or so.

Moving smoothly into track two, with the pulse of the music building, then into another within a few minutes, the music drops into a breakdown with a simple but effective vocal, and when the beat comes back you realise how deep into the mix you already are. Track four, DJ Rasoul's *True Science*, picks up the pace further, with a foreboding bass riff then a some funky sax over the top to keep things moving.

The next track (The Glass' *Won't Bother Me*) is similarly bass-led but with a more developed, funky house style riff. The next track is Billy

Dalessandro's *In The Dark*, which is dark and tribal. At the end of this one, Digweed skillfully brings up the chunky overdriven bass of track eight, *Venom* by Bobby Peru. This track progresses with bleepy and metallic sounds going all over the place, until towards the end a much more solid beat comes in to tighten things up a bit.

Moving into the next track, Martin Solveig's *Rocking Music*, the sound gets more serious and driven for a few minutes, before the bassline from Slam's *Lie To Me* washes up and releases the pressure – the kind of bassline that destroys a dancefloor. A few minutes of this and the mix moves on, into the robotic whining of Angel Alanis' *Knob Job*. Again the bassline moves things on, resolving the tension built from the previous mix.

Next up is Josh Wink's mix of Infusion's *Better World*, with a sample of "The beat don't stop" introducing the track before it unleashes yet more killer bass. I've been hearing this track out and about all over the place, and it really hits the spot. This is the 'peak' of the mix, which would be at around 3-4am in a club. After this track is Superpitcher's *Happiness* ("I want happiness/I seek happiness"), which keeps things moving, but towards the end has a good minute which is just a synth noise being wound up and down, before it finally becomes a riff and the actual music returns. This kind of think is usually OK on the dancefloor, but as one of my friends put it, "What are we supposed to do now?" Next is *Emico* by Joel Mull, a beautiful slice of prog, surrounded by emotive strings, and the mix is finished with the strung out pseudo vocals of Matrix and Danny J's *Vertigo*.

Diggers has done it again, and brought us what most would describe as a virtually perfect set. This has blissful beats that'll keep you warm until the summer comes. Get it.

File under:
Deep and chilled prog house
If you like this, try:
Sasha – *Involver*

Simon Clark



The Others: bloody hell, is that Robert Smith?

Nightlife

clubs.felix@ic.ac.uk

The best way to start your week

London is full of hidden treasures. Club 414 in Brixton is one of the shiniest

CLUB REVIEW

Just Groove

414, Coldharbour Lane
£10

★★★★☆

414. Every hardcore hard dance fan in the city should know these three digits. For those that don't, the 414 is an absolute gem of a club – situated at number 414 Coldharbour Lane, Brixton, for over a decade it's been supplying the nocturnal hordes with just what they want – pumping, pounding, bouncy music, all weekend.

The place is tiny, holding a couple of hundred at the most, and consists of downstairs, with bar and the dancefloor, and upstairs (via a narrow, twisty iron staircase) which serves as a chillout area. There's no music upstairs – the relentless thudding of the music from beneath is plenty. There are, however, a snack bar serving teas, coffees, pot noodles and the like, a projector screen, a fish tank, and giant Connect 4.

The music policy is simple – hard.

Hard house, hard trance, and 'Nu-NRG' are some of the names for this kind of sound. Solid four-to-the-floor beats at a giddy speed, plus more drones, horns and hoover sounds than you can shake a glow stick at. The place is open for the majority of the weekend: Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10pm to 6am, and afterparties on Saturday and Sunday from 6.30am until 2pm. Come here any time and you will find more or less the same thing – banging tunes, and a wild and eclectic crowd of revellers to bounce alongside or chat to.

With all this in mind and after an uneventful weekend, plus the added bonus of no lectures on Monday, I went down to check out Just Groove, 414's regular Sunday night party.

The first question that might spring to mind is: who the hell goes to a hard house club on a Sunday night? Well, me for a start. The rest of the crowd is made up of those looking for somewhere to stomp out the dying hours of their all-weekend session, and, well, randoms. There is always a nice mixture of people – I had a nice chat to a Greek guy in



DJ Roosta

his fifties (wearing a tweed jacket) who's been coming here since it opened.

"So you like hard house then?" I asked, half rhetorically. The grin and definite nod said it all. Later I saw this chap bouncing around the club, giving it just as much oomph as anyone else. My point's not that this guy stuck out, quite the opposite. In clubs like this, anything goes and all are welcome, especially in somewhere this cosy. The only thing people would object to is pretension, if there was any. Instead, the attitude here is spot on – give it some on the dance floor, or hang about upstairs and have a cup of tea, a chat, and a

couple of rounds of giant Connect 4.

On the floor was where I spent most of the night, enjoying the wonderful sounds of DJs Skol, Muzz and Roosta. These guys have been residents here for at least as long as I've been coming, which in itself speaks volumes. To be consistently delivering the goods to the beat-hungry whilst helping the club go from strength to strength year after year, these guys are most definitely doing a lot of things right. As the night rolled on, so the music intensified. Needless to say I couldn't move my body fast enough, with the music pushing me on with electric, acid-tinged sounds and breakdowns that build with a million snares until they peak, offering a moment's respite for the crowd before the beat returns to hammer them some more.

A couple of the tracks I can pick out were a super-energised mix of Members of Mayday's happy house anthem *10 in 01* and a remix of Pure White's classic hardcore track *4am* (which itself sampled Beverly Craven's *Promise Me*).

The club was by no means full tonight, but that didn't matter. The

place is so small that it never feels empty, and with only 50 or 60 people there you will see, if not speak to most of them, and everyone here is genuine and friendly. The bar staff are cute and fun, too. I did leave with a bit of ringing in my ears, so next time I'll remember my ear plugs.

Over all the time I've been coming here, the 414 has changed a bit, but it's still got all of its charm and character. Upstairs used to be bare, cold and dirty – now there's a carpet, the windows are properly blocked and there are some nice fairy lights to complement the UV murals. The spiral staircase itself is decorated with more fairy lights, and around the dance floor there's more UV-active decoration. The vibe remains.

So, if you're ever looking for something a bit harder, or if you've been out and don't want to go home, I'd recommend you pay a visit. If you can make it for Just Groove it's well worth it for the novelty of clubbing on a Sunday alone – it's a great way to start your week.

Simon Clark
Nightlife Editor

We'll get you on the guest list – come and review clubs for Felix! Email Simon on clubs.felix@ic.ac.uk

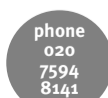
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Arts



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Swan Lake!

Azadeh Khatiri on a unique treatment of the classic ballet

Swan Lake

A Matthew Bourne Production
Music by Tchaikovsky
Sadlers Wells, EC1

A dear friend decided to treat me for Christmas by taking me to see what turned out to be one of the most exhilarating shows I have ever watched, and I have watched a good few!

For a Tchaikovsky fanatic like me, who is familiar with the music, Matthew Bourne's *Swan Lake* was deeply touching, and by the end of the show I was left with an overwhelming mixture of emotions and shock. His contemporary take on the original story is his passport to freedom to exercise what would normally be unacceptable in conventional ballet, from the homosexual nature of the love story to the 21st century humour and social issues that amused and thrilled the audience throughout.

The story revolves around a prince whose royal lifestyle has left him with deep complexes about his self-worth and a craving for love. While his mother, the Queen, indulges in the power and vanity that come with the job to have all pleasures at her

will, he grows up longing for a caring touch that finally seems to be fulfilled after falling in love with a swan, who he meets when trying to take his own life in a lake.

The twists and turns of the story, though beautifully crafted, leave the audience with a deep feeling of shock, as the swan later turns up at a royal party as a man and tries to seduce the Queen. The Prince is devastated and is locked away by the Queen, as he is thought to be mentally ill. The swans, which seem

"one of the most exhilarating shows I have ever watched"

to have been a figment of his imagination to fill the emotional gaps in his life, revisit him in the last scene, their rage ultimately depriving the lovers of their lives; the Prince is found dead by his regretful mother the next day.

The set design and the costumes were magical, but then again they are rarely less than perfect on the West End. What really sets this production apart is the dancers' graceful ability to evoke very powerful emo-

tions in the audience, and I strongly recommend everyone to see it at least once.

Unfortunately the current run has now ended, so you will have to wait for another revival. The ballet was premiered in 1995, so surely a tenth anniversary run will be in order.



Something of a more traditional take on *Swan Lake*, as presented by the Moscow Ballet. Take note, here the swan is female

Continuing on the theme of dance...

If you read the article next to this, or if you are a fan of dance, you will have gathered, or in the latter case already be well aware, that Sadlers Wells is London's most exciting venue for dance.

Sadlers Wells hosts a wide range of performances ranging from ballet, of the avant garde variety or otherwise, to rather less classical expressions. They are also a venue to which visiting opera companies come.

Many of Matthew Bourne's rather creative reworkings of classic ballets are staged at Sadlers Wells with great regularity. Other Bourne ballets include *Cinderella* and *The Nutcracker*, which, like *Swan Lake*, are well-established and loved classics. Modern re-workings are not to everyone's tastes, but if you're curious and don't want to take yourself out to Farringdon you can get a good selection of DVDs of his ballets - you needn't leave home as you can order them via the internet. Or, if you are feeling energetic, you could go to see performances of Bourne's ballet *Highland Fling* at the beginning of March.

Currently, Sadlers Wells is hosting the Flamenco Festival London

until Sunday 30 January. This is the second year in which the festival has run, and this year you can even make the most of post-performance enthusiasm and take part in flamenco classes following the show at Sadlers Wells. During the two-week duration of the festival, a wide range of dance troupes and star dancers will be performing traditional, contemporary and more forward-looking versions of this iconic dance form.

A number of companies will be visiting Sadlers Wells later on this year, including the Phoenix Dance Theatre, the Northern Ballet Theatre and the legendary Sylvie Guillem with 'The Ballet Boyz' (yes, that is an atrocious name). This year has already seen highly acclaimed performances of stark, modern, somewhat conceptual works by the San Francisco Ballet.

For more information on Sadlers Wells, go to their website at www.sadlerswells.com. Season programmes for the main stage and the subsidiary stages are available there, as well as booking information.

Paola Smith
Arts Editor

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Listings: page 11

Closer to perfection or perversion?

Closer has been touted as one of the best movies of the year, with numerous nominations and awards. **Vidula Vinayagamoorthy** can't really see why

Closer

Director: Mike Nichols
Starring: Natalie Portman, Jude Law, Julia Roberts, Clive Owen
Length: 104 minutes
Certificate: 15
★★★★☆

Photographer Anna (Julia Roberts) meets Dan (Jude Law), an aspirant novelist at a photo shoot. However, at that time, Dan is dating Alice (Natalie Portman) and Anna has just come out from a divorce. As time goes by, Anna meets and marries dermatologist Larry (Clive Owen), and Dan and Alice are still dating. This 'minute' problem of both Anna and Dan being 'taken' does not stop

them from having a secret affair. Director Mike Nichols brings out the four characters in *Closer*; based on Patrick Marber's 1997 London play.

The movie uses words as weapons. Weapons of conquest for the need of falling in love and weapons that wound cruelly when they want out of love. This is an invitation of pure coldness at heart and the feel of disgust for the fragile four-letter word. Obviously, when words don't work, sex is used as the ultimate weapon of mass destruction.

It is an endless infliction of deceit and pain. Some may find this movie truthful or revealing. But some may find the characters immoral, shallow, cruel and twisted

in their own ways. At the end of the day, there isn't a character that you can stand up for. The improper, spiteful, predictable games played by Dan and Larry turn their girlfriends to an increasingly depressive state, even though this movie never loses its gloomy surface of sexual deception.

Yours truly saw *Closer* in a sold-out theatre. As there were so many people, and as it has received such praise, one would expect this to

"At the end of the movie, you just feel so depressed. It is for the grieving heart"

be a great movie. The story starts off nicely, with the first line being "Hello, stranger", and the theme of relationships of strangers is carried throughout the movie. Everyone meets as strangers.

Leaps in time keep the viewers confused for the first minute of each jump. Why couldn't there have been "one year later" at the bottom of the screen?

After the first half of the movie, you just can't help but wonder, why this obsession? At the end of the movie, you do nothing but wonder, what's the point? Was there a punchline somewhere that was missed?

However, the dialogue in this film has as a superior rhythm of smart, quick and witty lines. It is hilarious



A cheeky glance

and unbelievably hurtful (the truth does hurt). It is put together with short, melodramatic, quiet sentences that signify the strength of mind and the weakness of the body. The opening music (Damien Rice - *The Blowers Daughter*) will be stuck in your head for ages.

It is based on ruthless, pitiless, sad, sorry people cheating on each other because they can and because it feels good. The boredom does catch on after a while into the movie. After all, *Closer* is based on a stage play and it must have worked in that way. It would still be petty, sleazy and disgusting, though it thinks it is influential, outrageous and uncompromising.

The film tries so hard to be multi-layered and meaningful, with characters begging for each other to be completely honest with them and talking about the nature of truth. But each one of them is so selfish and mean that it is hard to even bother to care.

If these are typical modern relationships then it is no wonder there are so many single people. For all its efforts to be refreshingly honest, *Closer* just comes across as annoyingly childish and cynical. Watching this is like watching *Eastenders* with all the sleeping around.

At the end of the movie, you just feel so depressed. It is for the grieving heart.



Golden Globes 2005 Best supporting actor winner Clive Owen (right)

Stupidity and political incorrectness at its best

Team America: World Police

Director: Trey Parker
Starring: Trey Parker, Matt Stone
Length: 98 minutes
Certificate: 15
★★★★★

Who remembers *Thunderbirds*? To recap, they were an elite squadron charged with the responsibility of ensuring world security. However, history will remember them more for the animation techniques that brought them to life.

Forty years on, with modern technology, it would be reasonable to assume that films where you could see the cast's strings as they move were consigned to an era gone by. Wrong!

In their latest masterpiece, *South Park* creators Trey Parker and Matt Stone use their unique brand of humour to lampoon the war on terror. The film follows the elite 'Team America', whose mission is to ensure that the world remains safe from the terrorists, giving the pup-

pets a chance to show that they can save the world from 21st century bad guys.

From the opening scene where the team "accidentally" destroy half of Paris through to the profound "dicks, pussy and assholes" speech, this film was designed to offend everyone in equal measure, regardless of their politics. The captions that position Paris and Cairo relative to their distance from America and the distance from the Panama Canal to the "real" America provide an excellent geography lesson for slack-jawed yokels, but all this hard work would result them in being rewarded with seeing the mouthpiece of the sanctimonious left, Michael Moore, suicide-bomb the Mount Rushmore headquarters of the Team.

Wanton destruction is a major theme running through the film, mocking the self-importance, insensitivity to other cultures and lack of empathy for non-US casualties of American foreign policy. In addition to the Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe and The Louvre, other structural

casualties include most of Egypt's ancient landmarks.

The most scathing criticism is reserved for liberal Hollywood actors and their well-intentioned but misguided ventures into global politics. Lead by the Film Actors Guild (or FAG), they attempt to use their acting powers to stop Team America. They co-organise a world peace conference with Kim Jong-Il, who turns out to be in cahoots with the terrorists planning to blow up most of the world. Naturally, Team America save the day in the most unorthodox manner possible.

The fecklessness of the UN is also spoofed. Hans Blix warns Kim Jong-Il that if he does not have access to all his palaces then the UN will write him a letter saying that they are 'very, very mad' at him. At this point Dr Blix becomes a snack for Kim Jong-Il's pet sharks with no hint of a James Bond style escape.

This film is a must see. The plot is ridiculous, the score obscene and the humour about as dark as it comes. It will have an effect on you



Strong language, sexual references and sex, all involving puppets

one way or the other: either you'll laugh to the point of explosion or fire off letters to the production companies. If you are one of the sensitive souls who is easily offended, this

film is not for you and my advice would be stay at home and have a cold shower in the hope that it might thicken your skin.

Stephen McAloon

FILM

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It's a knockout

After *Mystic River*'s phenomenal success, Clint Eastwood returns with his 25th directorial offering – another candidate for the Oscars, says **Robin Wilkinson**

Million Dollar Baby

Director: Clint Eastwood
Starring: Clint Eastwood, Hilary Swank, Morgan Freeman
Length: 132 minutes
Certificate: 12A

★★★★☆

At 74, Clint Eastwood has certainly earned the right to kick back and take life easy. The fact that he's still active and involved in quality films is definitely the movie-going public's gain.

As someone who does not like films with violence just for the sake of it, I would probably have avoided this one if it were not for the stellar cast – and I'm glad that I was swayed. This is not a film about

boxing; it is a film with boxing in it that delicately deals with themes of morality, forgiveness, perseverance and human relationships without falling into the Hollywood trap of labouring the point to hammer the lessons home. The pace is steady, but not dull, and the subtlety of the film makes it a pleasure to watch rather than the torture of sitting through a sermon.

If you have not yet seen the film and don't know much about it, my advice is don't read any further. Avoid other reviews and the film synopsis, and just go see it.

Eastwood gives his usual grizzled performance as Frankie Dunn, a trainer who finally has a fighter with a chance at the championship title and is adamant that he does

not train girls. Hilary Swank makes the film her own and is outstanding as Maggie – white trash who desperately wants to make something of herself through boxing and has decided that Frankie is the trainer to get her there. The progression of their relationship from surly old man and over-eager wannabe to gruff but caring trainer and promising fighter is gently steered by Scrap (Freeman), a former fighter who helps out at Frankie's gym.

The supporting cast does not

“My advice is don't read any further. Avoid other reviews and the film synopsis and just go see it”



Golden Globes 2005 Best director winner Clint Eastwood (far left)



The ugly stick beat on these two quite heavily

let this fantastic trio down: Jay Baruchel (Danger, the gym's dummy) steals every scene he is in – praise indeed considering the company he is in – and Brian O'Byrne is the most 'human' Catholic priest I've ever seen, exasperated beyond patience at Frankie's deliberate needling, and refusing to take any crap. Maggie's trailer park mother (Margo Martindale) has to be seen to be believed.

Eastwood's direction is beautifully done, with moody lighting and gritty images of Frankie's dingy gym making way for brighter and cleaner shots as the relationships between the characters, and Maggie's

dreams, progress. Little finishing touches are everywhere, such as Maggie's galloping into every fight with hedonistic enthusiasm, Frankie's small involuntary smile when she wins her first fight, and Scrap's satisfaction at making it to fight 110.

The script is excellent, with the griping and bickering between Frankie and Scrap the highlight. In fact, it comes so naturally to them that it seems as if the scriptwriter has documented Eastwood and Freeman hanging out and having 'grumpy old men' conversations.

The only flaw was Frankie teaching himself Gaelic – as a device

for character development it was unnecessary, and was a jarring note because of its randomness.

The action scenes are superb, but not for the squeamish. The choreography makes the fights absorbing, so much so that I found myself twitching along with Frankie (although I resisted doing air punches) and smiling in relief whenever Maggie won a fight. Frankie's methods of stemming the bleeding from cracked cheekbones and broken noses made me wince far more than the actual fighting.

This is a thought-provoking film, thoroughly deserving of the awards it has gathered.

Scorsese's best shot at an Oscar (again)

The Aviator

Director: Martin Scorsese
Starring: Leonardo DiCaprio, Cate Blanchett, Kate Beckinsale
Length: 170 minutes
Certificate: 12A

★★★★☆

They said that *Kundun* would be a masterpiece. It wasn't. They said that *Bringing Back the Dead* was his most powerful film since *Taxi Driver*. But it was rubbish. They said that *Gangs of New York* was Martin Scorsese back at his very best. They couldn't be more wrong. It was against this backdrop of disappointment after disappointment that I went to see Scorsese's biopic of legendary aviator Howard Hughes.

The Aviator begins with Howard Hughes (Leonardo Di Caprio), the son of a wealthy Texan industrialist, as director and producer in Hollywood, making some of the most influential and ground-breaking movies of the 1930s. The film covers his relationships with some of the industry's most beautiful divas such as Katherine Hepburn (Kate Blanchett) and Ava Gardner (Kate Beckinsale).

But Howard Hughes was much more than just a movie-maker. His most important legacy is to be found in the aviation industry. Without

Hughes' innovations in engineering, commercial air travel may never have become possible so quickly. The film also looks at the rivalry between Hughes' airline TWA and that of Pan-Am, which was owned by his rival Juan Trippe (Alex Baldwin).

Away from the glamour of Hughes' playboy Hollywood lifestyle, Scorsese does not flinch from looking at the darker side of the story and Hughes' inner demons, which drove him to achieve, but were to eventually destroy him. Hughes suffered from a host of psychological neuroses, symptoms of which included paranoia and obsessive hand-washing. His problems grew worse as he grew older, and the film reflects this (although we are spared seeing Hughes in his later years when his condition turned him into a complete recluse).

Very rarely in American cinema are American heroes presented in this way, and credit goes to Leonardo Di Caprio whose surprisingly excellent performance balances the bipolar nature of Hughes' character to Oscar-winning perfection.

The film runs just shy of three hours and this can be an issue. It just seemed to repeat itself over and over again, the standard sequence being Hughes faced with challenge, Hughes surmounts challenge ingeniously, Hughes confronts psycholog-



Golden Globes 2005 Best dramatic actor Leonardo DiCaprio in *The Aviator* (Best dramatic film)

ical problem, Hughes faces another challenge, and so on and so forth. You feel that the film is not actually getting anywhere. Thankfully, the superb cinematography, the trademark Scorsese sweeping camera movements and the lavish sets compensate greatly for this fault.

Above all *The Aviator*, similarly

to *Forrest Gump*, is a promotion of the American Dream. You leave the cinema with the feeling "if Hughes could do it then I can do it". If Howard Hughes or *Forrest Gump* could change the course of history and overcome their respective challenges then anyone can make it in America. The difference is that

Forrest Gump was an entirely fictional character and Howard Hughes lived and became the richest man in the world. The difference is that *The Aviator* is not purely an ode to the American dream, as *Forrest Gump* was, but a thoughtful and brilliantly made reminiscence of America in its heyday.

Darius Nikbin

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Bollywood meets old England

Haj Alttahir sees director Mira Nair and star Reese Witherspoon fail to impress in the adaptation of Thackeray's classic novel

Vanity Fair

Director: Mira Nair
Starring: Reese Witherspoon,
Jonathan Rhys-Meyers, Gabriel Byrne
Length: 141 minutes
Certificate: PG
★★★★☆

The new film version of the classic novel by William Makepeace Thackeray centres on Rebecca (Becky) Sharp, a shrewd woman who rose through the ranks of British society by playing men at their own game.

Born into poverty and orphaned at a young age, Becky (Reese Witherspoon) resolves to infiltrate English society and fulfil dreams of glamorous gowns and posh dinners. Becky can rely only on her wit, guile and sexuality as she makes her way up through London society. She leaves school with her best friend Amelia – a stupidly optimistic creature who was Thackeray's parody of good-girl heroines – and finds employment as governess to the daughters of Sir Pitt Crawley whilst befriending Crawley's moneybag dowager aunt Matilda, who eventually invites her to London.

Matilda is outraged when Becky secretly marries her favourite and rather dashing nephew Rawdon – a soldier, a gambler, and as good a match for Becky as can be imag-

ined. Naturally, she treats him like dirt. Aunt Matilda cuts off all social and financial ties with the newlyweds, forcing them to find other ways of financing Becky's needs. This starts off with gambling to pay off the somewhat persistent bailiffs but eventually leads to Becky getting involved with a rather slimy Steyne (Gabriel Byrne), whose assistance comes at a higher cost than she anticipated.

If you haven't read Thackeray's

“The result is a social satire without any bite, but don't let that put you off”

Vanity Fair, and let's be honest, most people here haven't (including me), Mira Nair's new film version will probably pass as a reasonable approximation with a pleasant enough ending.

However, there is a problem: Thackeray wasn't interested in being pleasant. “I want to leave everybody dissatisfied and unhappy at the end of the story,” he once said about his cynical bestseller.

What the book has is a great anti-heroine: Becky Sharp, the amoral, two-faced social butterfly who climbs the ladder until she gets the money

and position she craves. It's a great part for Reese Witherspoon, who proved she could play a soulless and mesmerizing female as Tracy Flick, the conniving high school student of 1999's *Election*. She was chillingly conniving in that film. If Witherspoon had tapped into Flick's ruthlessness we might have had something here. It's a huge disappointment, then, that Witherspoon and the director have neutered Becky Sharp. Becky has been changed into a shrewd, somewhat misguided, essentially sympathetic heroine. She has been made lovable – and a *Vanity Fair* with a lovable Becky Sharp has no reason to exist.

Witherspoon gets the accent and the bearing reasonably right, but everything else is missing. Don't get me wrong here – I don't think this is her fault, she's actually very good but it's difficult to condense a 900 page book into a two hour film. All the attention seems to have been lavished on the lush settings and perfect costumes, while details of character and plot development seem to have been overlooked.

Byrne (the slimeball) is particularly impressive, as is Eileen Atkins as Aunt Matilda, who must have had the best one liners of the whole film. Although James Purefoy gives a good account of Becky's dreamy husband, the other suitors are less impressive. Rhys Ifans' well-mean-



Reese Witherspoon as a strangely lovable Becky Sharp

ing Dobbin gets stranded with a dreadful line towards the end of the film after he decides to return from his trip to India. I can't really explain it but it is so shockingly bad that it's very funny.

While Nair can't be accused of delivering a conventional corset drama, fans of the novel will feel the film is a rather cheap appreciation of Thackeray's tale, particularly given the skilful way she handled

the human complexities in her previous film, *Monsoon Wedding*. Nair glosses over the intricacies of the story with sumptuous visual flourishes that might be expected after watching her last film, which was truly gorgeous.

The result is a social satire without any bite, but don't let that put you off. It's still worth seeing for the one liners, the visuals and the extremely dashing Rawdon Crawley.

Preview: Elektra

Released: 21 January

Director: Rob Bowman
Starring: Jennifer Garner, Terrance Stamp, Goran Visnjic, Kirsten Prout
Length: 97 minutes
Certificate: 12A

From the pages of Marvel Comics, creators of *X-Men* and *Spiderman*, comes *Elektra*.

Shrouded in mystery. Tainted by tragedy. Trained to kill. Then left for dead. But for Elektra (Jennifer Garner), death was just the beginning. Now she's back, with a vengeance.

Tortured by her past and haunted by her own mysterious death, Elektra finds herself resurrected. Although her sensei has trained her well in the strict discipline of ninjutsu, he cannot begin to tame her burning rage over the brutal murder of her parents. Elektra's need to avenge this untenable crime forces her into exile. She becomes an assassin – the best in the business. But for a woman like Elektra, killing is no way to make a living.

To save herself, Elektra needs something more than a reason to kill; she needs a reason to live. She finds it in the form of her latest target Abby (Kirsten Prout), a feisty 13-year-old in whom Elektra sees so much of herself, and Abby's father, Mark (Goran Visnjic). In her desperate struggle to save them, Elektra



KAPOW. HAI-YAH. BOSH

finds something she did not even know she was looking for: redemption.

Along the way, Elektra encounters an army of assailants with deadly supernatural powers, from an assassin bearing tattoos with a life of their own to a disease-spreading demon. Her only allies are her combat skills, her sai and a limited ability to see the future.

Directed by Rob Bowman (*The X-Files*, *Reign of Fire*) and influenced by Asian-flavoured cinema, Elektra has spectacular stunts, elektra-fying martial arts sequences and one of Hollywood's most appealing actresses taking centre stage as the beautiful and deadly assassin.

Elektra is poised to be a killer at the box office this year. **Alan Ng**
Film Editor

Elektra comp



As part of the build-up for the release of *Elektra* (21 January), 20th Century Fox have generously provided you with the opportunity to win two goodie bags (containing a sleek armband, ladies' T-shirt, smart key chain and single strap rucksack), as well as two t-shirts and two keychains for

runners-up.

All you need to do to win is be one of the first to tell me:

In what movie did Elektra first make her big screen debut?

Email your answer to film.felix@ic.ac.uk. Usual *Felix* rules apply.

Alan Ng
Film Editor

FILM

film.felix@ic.ac.uk

A diamond in the dust?

Hollywood puts a new spin on American history

National Treasure

Director: Jon Turteltaub

Starring: Nicolas Cage, Diane Kruger, Justin Bartha, Sean Bean, Jon Voight, Harvey Keitel

Length: 131 minutes

Certificate: PG

★★★★☆

What would you get if you threw together a wholesome family adventure with a big Hollywood name, a fetching female sidekick and a million references to the American Declaration of Independence? That's right! A nice little action-packed Disney movie called *National Treasure*. Stick in super-producer Jerry Bruckheimer and you have a recipe for box office success.

National Treasure tells the story of one man's quest for the ultimate prize – a treasure so wonderful that several generations of his family had spent their lives (and their family fortune) in search of it.

According to legend, since the dawn of civilisation a hoard of priceless objects has been building, fought over by everyone including the ancient Egyptians, Romans and Greeks. This treasure had been passed down through the ages until it was discovered by the mysterious Templar Knights who decided that it was too great to be possessed by any one person. Over time, the Knights became known as a secret society, the Free Masons, leading to the treasure being hidden during the American war of Independence by the US's Founding Fathers. It has been lost ever since.

This is where our hero Benjamin

Franklin Gates (Nicolas Cage) comes in. He is beginning the last stages of his family quest, which leads him to steal The Declaration of Independence which cleverly has the treasure map on the back of it. Cage plays the lead with humour and gives his character the doggedly determined nature and infinite intelligence that one would certainly need in order to get from one 'clue' to the next, because there are an awful lot of clues.

The makers of this film seemed to have tried to squeeze in as

“Even to my uneducated mind, I think there has been just a little bit of artistic licence taken”

much American history as possible. Clues are everywhere – on the Liberty Bell, the letters of Benjamin Franklin, Wall Street and even the one hundred dollar bill. It is, therefore, just a little far fetched for them to expect us to believe that the American Founding Fathers had the time and wit to devise such cryptic messages.

It is even more difficult to believe that one man could possibly follow this hopeless trail. But follow it he does, and he is not alone, accompanied by his young sidekick, Riley (Justin Bartha), and Abigail (Diane Kruger). Sean Bean is also along for the ride and is again typecast as the villainous Englishman who will



National Treasure: the first spin-off from the highly successful Dan Brown novel *The Da Vinci Code*

do anything to get his hands on the prize. Cameo appearances by two Hollywood legends also help to add acting weight to this picture.

The film is slightly jagged and uneven, with the first hour made up of a few action sequences and long periods of clue deciphering. However, as the end draws near, all things intellectual are left behind as chase sequences and shoot-outs dominate. There is not enough violence to terrify little children but just enough to keep an older audi-

ence watching.

Cage and Kruger have a nice dynamic between them, as their characters start out with a relationship of animosity that later leads to mutual respect. There are many scenes spent lingering on the fact that the Declaration is the most important document in history which is, of course, only Hollywood's interpretation of reality. Not knowing that much about American history, I also could not dispute how the story has been woven with

the events that happened during American's emancipation from the British. But even to my uneducated mind, I think there has been just a little bit of artistic licence taken.

National Treasure has proven to be a big box office draw in the United States, but it seems a little too patriotic to do very well here. I did enjoy the film, but only because of the enduring *Indiana Jones* feel to it. I would recommend it only to those who appreciate this kind of movie. **Mandirassa Osakonor**

Veer-Zaara: a love legend

Veer-Zaara

Director: Yash Chopra

Starring: Shah Rukh Khan, Preity Zinta, Rani Mukerji, Kirron Kher

Length: 193 minutes

Certificate: U

★★★★☆

Director Yash Chopra brings us a tale of love, courage and integrity. The aim of this movie was to overpass the differences between Indian and Pakistani people (again) through a 'forbidden' love story between an Indian pilot, Veer Pratap Singh (Shah Rukh Khan), and a Pakistani girl, Zaara Hayaat (Preity Zinta). Hence the title of the movie: *Veer-Zaara*.

Before going any further, the author would like you to consider the possibility of a rescue pilot who sits in prison without speaking to anyone for 22 years but upon meeting a young beautiful Pakistani lawyer Saamiya Siddiqui (Rani Mukerji), who calls him by his name as opposed to his prison number, decides to speak. Not only does he speak, he tells his whole past to her, which keeps the movie going for three hours. So you would have to let your imagination run wild, suspend your sense of disbelief and belief in impossibly passionate love between two people. Just a little.

The past starts off with Veer, a rescue pilot. He meets a carefree and beautiful girl, Zaara, who came to India to fulfil her nanny's dying wish. Zaara is trapped, due to a bus accident, and Veer saves her, which leads to an unshakable bond that eventually ties them up in unconditional and irreversible love. Veer is mesmerised by Zaara's beauty and morals while Zaara is swept away by Veer's passion to help others and his undying love for her.

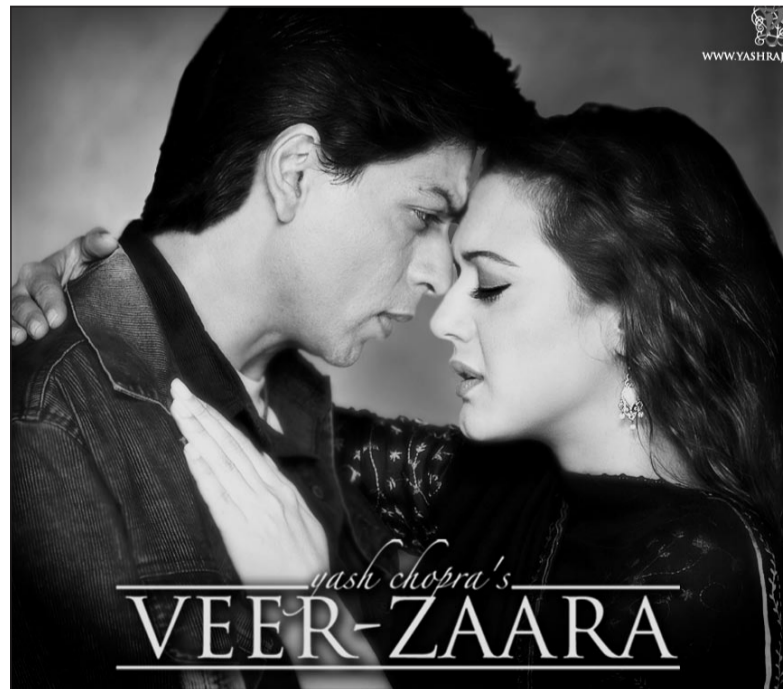
The story also includes the colourful and merry set of Veer's home town Punjab, where Zaara meets his uncle (cameo part for Amitabh Bachchan) and aunt (Hema Malini), his foster parents. This couple do nothing but argue adorably during their scenes and you can't just help smiling throughout their lines. This gives a hint of comedy to the movie. After this innocent visit of Zaara's to India, Veer's life is never the same as destiny has a different 'ending' to their 'happily ever after'.

However, this movie does tend to seem like a normal romantic love story where boy meets girl: both fall in love, the parents resent it, therefore girl has to marry the guy chosen by her parents, then courageously, the man goes over to the girl's house to win over the girl. Though this film does have this scenario, there is a little surprise from

the master of romantic movies. The story is moved across two nations with different cultures. It isn't just a love legend, but a transformation of Veer. The audience is kept riveted with twists that change the current air of the movie.

This is a simple tale of immense nobility and idealism that may strike some viewers as implausible. Modern day isn't filled with demeanour, speech, attitude and emotions that bring out the human spirit. That doesn't mean we can't let ourselves be immersed into an idealistic love tale. After all, when you add the amazing shades of emotions thrown by Shah Rukh (including the wonderful facial expressions) with the cheerful and down-to-earth acting of Preity and the overly-teary but confident scenes of Rani Mukerji to the utterly beautiful theme song, this movie allows you to surrender to the romantic passion between Veer and Zaara. It's as simple as falling in love.

The score, with lyrics by Javed Akhtar and music composed by the legendary late Madan Mohan, comes with an outstanding quality of sound that reminds us how far Bollywood movie music has come. The soundtrack takes you to places where the heart dances and the soul sings out in pure bliss. It's a lovely feast for the ears. Movie music can-



Bollywood strikes again

not get any more intimate. Putting together this music with colourful dresses, beautiful scenery and good choreography brings up a good entertainment.

In short, *Veer Zaara* is a movie that will appeal to nearly all who have imagination beyond realism.

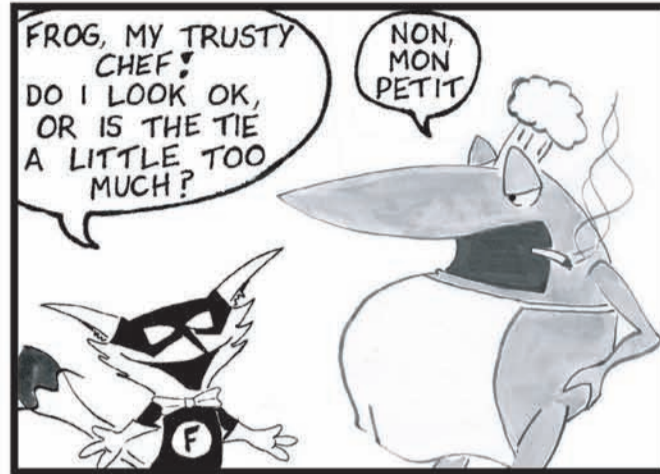
However it does lack an innovative plot structure.

This is a movie that will make you laugh and cry. All in all, it's an emotional film that certainly needs to be seen, if only because Shah Rukh Khan is in it.

Vidula Vinayagamoorthy

A SMALL PLOT

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Coffee Break

coffee.felix@ic.ac.uk

It's the second proper week of Coffee Break, and already we're scraping the bottom of the barrel. But hey, at least we're honest enough to admit it! Answers on the back of an email to coffee.felix@ic.ac.uk as always, please

Odd ones out

This is a test of all-round general knowledge, or guessing, as we like to call it.

We've given you eight sets of things, and in each set there's one out one out. You just have to tell us which. If you don't know, just guess!

1. Metal Lyrics

Crappy Death Metal music, as well as being loud and annoying, is also famous for its over-elaborate lyrical wordplay. Here are four sets of lyrics, only one of which we've made up. Tell us which one.

A. 'When suddenly there shone a hideous light and a voice like three insanities soared up in thistled speech'

B. 'Oh, blackened dusk, eyes burning; abandon me, forsaken one'

C. 'This morning when I awoke from the cushioned calls, eyes pouring their little hearts'

D. 'Pulling out the poisoned fangs, the venom never goes away'

2. B-Movies

There are some god-awful films around these days, but then again, it's always been like this. The titles years ago were way more amusing.

Here's four B-Movie gems for you, one of which we made up.

A. Boogie Jungle

B. Frankenhooker

C. Stop it, you're killing me!

D. Cat-women of the Moon

3. TV Superstars

Apologies if you didn't grow up watching early nineties kids' TV shows on a Saturday morning, you're just going to have to guess this one. These are absolute legends of TV.

A. Roy Castle – trumpet virtuoso, *Record Breaker*, and all round good egg. Sadly no longer with us.

B. Neil Buchanan – "This is an art attack! This is *Art Attack!*" Awesome. Also did my fave programme ever, *Finders Keepers*.

C. Keith Chegwin – a man who would do seemingly anything for his 'art'. Once presented the most disturbing programme ever shown on British TV, *Naked Jungle*, starring his knob.

D. Les Dawson – a legend of the comedy circuit, it's a little known fact the Les began his career on kids' TV show *Dawson and the Donkeys*.



Les Dawson: see question 3

4. Pointless Research

Millions of pounds are wasted every year at institutes across the world, finding the answers to questions that nobody really cares about. Of course, that never happens at Imperial. One of these has been made up.

A. If a tree falls in the forest, does it make a sound?

B. What is the formula for the most scary film possible?

C. Why does toast always land the wrong way around?

D. When exactly is the Millennium?

5. Baby Names

A name is for life, not just for birth-

days, but some parents don't seem to realise this and give their kids ridiculous monikers that they'll just grow up to hate. Only one of these didn't make the top fifty most popular baby names in 2003.

A. Archie

B. Tyler

C. Kurt

D. Poppy

6. Way To Go

Live fast, die young, leave a beautiful corpse. It seems a great motto to live by, unless you happen to die wanking tied to a door, or something. That's not so cool. The following are all genuine causes of death, apart from one, which is just a lie. Or at least we hope it is, you never know.

A. Attacked by swan

B. Fell off a building in a spitting contest

C. Took out the engine of a truck whilst lying below

D. Ran over by commercial airliner

7. Opening lines

The last book I read was *James and the Giant Peach*, so I'm not exactly a literary expert. I've heard, though, that not all books are as well-writ-

ten or exciting as James' whimsical journey with some overgrown insects. Some are as badly written as this page. Here are four opening lines, all awful, but one has been made up.

A. 'Why do nuts women always have cats?'

B. 'She popped the elastic at the top of her second sock and pushed her sexually ambiguous Timed watch up along the blonde hair of her handsome forearms'

C. 'She stuck to his prime grade A tush like shrink wrap to a rump roast'

D. 'As the years had gone on, his elderly neighbour had become to look more attractive'

8. Wrestling Giants

Wrestling, truly the sport of kings, bizarre outfits, strange 'special' moves and weird names, this homoerotic display of obesity has shaped many people's opinion of what a true man is. One of these 'wrestlers' isn't real. Unlike the sport, which is.

A. Giant Haystacks

B. Brutus 'The Barber' Beefcake

C. Andre The Giant

D. Phil 'The Power' Taylor

Beat the intro

Okay, turn off *Google* and put down *The Guinness Book of Hit Singles* – cheating is for tossers.

Right, now that that's out of the way...

The music section of pub quizzes is always a favourite, but a little difficult to translate to the page. Plus, you lot cheat and just whack it in *Google* or whatever. So, to make it hard, you just get one line this time, specifically the first one. Here's a bunch of famous opening song lines, you just have to tell us the name of the song and who sang it.

The difficulty ranges from piece-of-piss to taking-the-piss, so don't worry if you don't know all the answers. Some of these songs are new, some are old, some are good, and there's some crap there too. We've tried to include some stuff from most genres, so it's not all indie shoe-gazing. Just try! That's unusually optimistic for us...

1. "Very superstitious, writing's on the wall"
2. "We're caught in a trap"
3. "America... America... America, fuck yeah!"
4. "You will, you won't"
5. "I see a red door and I want it painted black"
6. "She was more like a beauty queen from a movie scene"
7. "Oh, my love, my darling"
8. "I was dreaming while I wrote this, forgive me if it goes astray"
9. "The race is on to get out of the bottom, the top is high so your roots are forgotten"

10. "Ah, look at all the lonely people"
11. "Dirty old river, must you keep rolling"
12. "Riding along in my automobile"
13. "I've got sunshine, on a cloudy day"
14. "I tried to discover, a little something to make me sweeter"
15. "It's a god-awful small affair to the girl with the mousy hair"
16. "I made it through the wilderness"
17. "You know I – thug 'em, fuck 'em, love 'em, leave 'em"
18. "Under blue moon I saw you, so soon you'll take me"
19. "Well you're dirty and sweet, clad in black, don't look back, and I love you"
20. "I would like to leave this city, this old town don't smell to pretty"
21. "The change will do you good, I always knew it would"
22. "There's a lady who's sure all that glitters is gold"
23. "All you people look at me like I'm a little girl"
24. "You spurn my natural emotions, you make me feel like dirt"
25. "I wanna take a walk, rain cloud, coat on"
26. "Shyness is nice, and shyness can stop you"
27. "Jumped in the river, and what did I see?"
28. "So I look in your direction"
29. "When routine bites hard and ambitions are low"
30. "In the deserts of Sudan"

1	16
2	17
3	18
4	19
5	20
6	21
7	22
8	23
9	24
10	25
11	26
12	27
13	28
14	29
15	30

FUCWIT League

This week's quizzes are pretty straightforward, but there are lots of points available. Remember, there's still time to catch up and win!

Odd Ones Out: There's a point for each correct answer here.

Beat the Intro: And a point for each answer here too. Artist and title for the point please.

FUCWIT LEAGUE 2004-5

Smith & Wesson	170 points
Management Slackers	127 points
Team Willy J	93 points
Araldite Sniffers	91 points
The Illegitimate Bionic Progeny of Jeremy Beadle	69 points
Schoolboy Error	59 points
Team Robin	52 points
Team Bulwer	42 points
Oliver Carson	29 points
The Schist ones	21 points
KPN ²	11 points
Natasha Kundi	10 points

Send in your entries to
coffee.felix@ic.ac.uk

SPORT

sport.felix@ic.ac.uk

Champagne hockey sees medics dominate

HOCKEY

ICSM Men's 3rd 3
St George's Men's 2nd 0

By Tristan Lane

A crucial BUSA and ULU double header was contested in the watery sunlight of a beautiful Chiswick afternoon. Or something equally poetic.

Classic sporting spirit was on display from both sides, with the perfect level of aggression shown. There were no arguments more than a couple of words, and

happy smiling faces all round at the end. What more could you want? A close sporting contest? Done.

It was a fantastic game. Though ICSM dominated, often with eight or nine players camped in the opposition half for minutes on end, George's would eventually release the pressure with a classic Arsenal-inspired break that at the very least kept our goalkeeper Rao entertained (he who complained at never doing anything). For the first game after Christmas, it was a bravura display from the

Thirds, with everyone playing their best game this season. It might be down to pride, or the fact that the team has played together virtually unchanged all season. Personally I put it down to sheer freakish luck.

We started the game slightly apprehensive - rumour had it that they had a South of England ringer in their midst, but we managed to conquer that demon by spending the entire first five minutes camped in their half. This initial domination settled the team down and we started to play some champagne hock-

ey. There were runs, spins, and even passes. However, this domination didn't lead to goals. For all our attacking prowess, George's managed to put up an impressive defensive display and looked to counter at every available opportunity. Fortunately our defensive boys were also playing like legends, just like the guys up front.

Eventually, after many chances flashed past the goal or straight to the keeper, the pressure paid off with Avi, newly promoted from defence to wing, popping his cherry

like a pro with a deft finish after some ping-pong action in the goal-mouth. One-nil.

Despite trying to up our game even further for the rest of the half, wary of a quick break, we couldn't force a breakthrough and Rao was called upon to make some cracking interventions. After half time it remained much the same - lots of pressure, little breakthrough. Until suddenly, from out of nowhere, Terry slapped in a cheeky little number. Two-nil.

Then, straight from the restart, a bit of devilry from our

forwards stole the ball, and with a little bit of faffing Terry slammed it straight into the back of their net to make it three-nil. Credit to George's, who came back for more and didn't let their heads drop. The last ten minutes allowed Terry some cracking hat-trick avoidance, but by then it was already tied up.

This was frankly the best game of hockey that I've ever played - fun, tiring and bloody good spirit. Exactly what's needed on a Wednesday afternoon! And Rao didn't even get sent off!

Disc Doctors at indoor fun tournament

Continued from page 24 Mathias did a three pint challenge in about 41 seconds. The night finished and everyone piled in the cab back to our tournament accommodation.

The Next Morning

Everyone woke up at around eight and headed, hangovers and all, by car to the sports centre. Apparently, the WAS team had three of their six players throw up before getting home, one of which was

out of the window of the taxi (without the taxi driver knowing, more impressively). One player was so hung over that they had sent their brother to play the first match on their behalf. It did take the team a while to explain that he wasn't allowed to push the opposition whilst marking them!

Disc Doctors 4
Bears 4

Let's be blunt. We weren't expecting too much energy

from the first game. There was much panting and numerous dodgy discs from both teams.

DD did score early on, but they also had more chances that they should have scored from. The Bears were trying hard but were often stopped early by DD players for a quick turnover and endzone attempt.

Bears 3 7
Disc Doctors 6

After Saturday's close game,

Bears 3 were out for revenge and the team pulled no punches. It was everybody's last game of the tournament, and the final aim was to come out fighting.

DD started off calm and collected, scoring two points from two good passes to Mathias followed by Stas. Sarah, Matt, Mary and George played their hearts out, resisting the pressure from the cheering Bears crowd.

With the score level at five all, "slogging your guts out" would have been an under-

statement. The game was unbelievably tense as the scores matched at 6-6. Bears went ahead 7-6 with 30 seconds to go and, despite their attempt, the Disc Doctors just could not get the last point. This was a fantastic game, the best one of the tournament, just going to show that in Ultimate you should never give up, even if the game doesn't count for much.

With all games finished and the day over, all teams sat down for the presentation.

Every team was given a bottle of vodka to take home. Finally ranked 18 out of 20, captain Stylish went up to collect the Disc Doctors' prized vodka.

With the spoon winners WAS, the plate winners Grizzlies and the final winners Vice (by only two points), the group decided it had been a great weekend. Disc Doctors said their thanks to the hosts and picked up a much-needed Burger King, before taking the train back to London in order to collapse!

Felix Crossword 1312

by Snufkin



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10				11		12		
		13					14	
15				16				
17		18			19	20		
			21					
22						23		
	24		25					26
27		28			29			
30	31					32		33
			34					
35						36		
37			38					

Across

- Free guidance about time is giving people ideas (9)
- Hayworth Heritage Centre (4)
- Buy and sell wood (4)
- US maestro starts to manipulate an ancient zither - easy listening? (6)
- Tarantino interrupts at frequent intervals (7)
- Volunteers' theatre entertaining upper-class twit (5)
- Make a commoner count? (7)
- Fresh lime is like a cold shower, for example (6)
- Finished bowling (4)
- Bird's hiding in hawthorn - it hiccuped! (8)
- Broadcast a clear, cute 'baa' in exam (13)
- Bishop and I have a go at being pirates (8)
- Dogs providing areas of research (4)
- Replace leader of heavenly host with English Marxist (6)
- Dot and Nora playing Twister (7)
- Heard Firth groan (5)
- I study Buddhism outside as a member of the community (7)
- Library member, one giving lectures (6)
- Historian of science is said to be a bushy-tailed character (4)
- Lost one's sense of smell (4)
- In which fat cats try to get the cream? (4,5)

Down

- Change order, cutting out 100 (4)
- Lied about Arabic uprising to throw one off the track (6)
- Monk heard film star's account (7)
- Help with a wager (4)
- Cricket match, one of four organized by communists (13)
- Greedy person has to get over girl (6)
- Ersatz yo-yo regularly fetching minuscule sum (5)
- Dabbling duck has drink at lake (4)
- Pollen and dust mites, perhaps, observed using new large lens (9)
- Be base, as a succubus might? (8)
- Get round boat I've capsized (7)
- Particular officer (9)
- Deathly horse carrying chaise (7)
- Might different uric diet have such an effect? (8)
- The Greek Spanish painter (2,5)
- I'd made new crown (6)
- Droop after bottle of wine? (6)
- Nasty Squirrel Nutkin intensely disliked Eeyore, initially (5)
- Two sorts of old margarine (4)
- Mostly crazy, mixed-up tyrant (4)
- Generous type (4)

In an interstellar burst, I'm back to set another crossword. This one's a bit different from the usual, as you'll have noticed. This type of puzzle is called 'barred' (as opposed to 'blocked'). The most important feature of barred puzzles is that very few letters are left unchecked, i.e. without confirmation from another answer. This has two tangible consequences. The first is that they often include more recondite words (eg 7 down), as the grids are harder to fill. The second is that their clues can be easier to solve, as you can have fewer blanks. These two militate against each other, and I hope that here the balance is in favour of the second. Happy solving!

Snufkin

Issue 1311 solution

J	E	P	A	P	T
L	A	M	I	N	A
N	N	R	L	L	O
O	U	T	S	T	R
A	T	O	H	N	S
G	R	E	E	N	T
Y	I	A	I	I	I
I	N	D	I	A	N
S	N	D	B	M	
O	U	T	B	I	D
M	A	E	M	X	O
F	A	B	R	I	C
T	E	E	G	I	M
S	R	I	L	A	N
A	Y	T	E	L	S

Last week's winners are 'The Three Kings', Physics and Maths I. Send your answers to coffee.felix@ic.ac.uk or bring this page down to the Felix office in the West Wing of Beit Quad. Each week, we'll choose a winner and print their name, thus providing them with almost unlimited kudos and self-satisfaction. Everyone who provides us with a correct solution will get an entry into our prize draw at the end of the year



sport.felix@ic.ac.uk

Sport

Doctor Doctor, I feel like a frisbee...

ULTIMATE FRISBEE

Warwick Bears Indoor Tournament

By Ian Ballantyne

The Disc Doctors, Imperial College's Ultimate Frisbee team, met at Euston Station to catch the 19.40 train to Coventry for a wild weekend at the Warwick Bears Fun Indoors Tournament.

At 19.35, the Disc Doctors (DD) guys were a little worried that George still wasn't there. So, reluctantly, they made their way to the Virgin train. With 30 seconds left until departure, a rather calm George had hopped on and started walking down the carriage. His estimate of getting across London in 40 minutes on a Friday at rush hour was a little unrealistic!

Finally at the destination on the Warwick campus, DD headed straight for "the bar". No really, that was the name! At least there was no confusion as to what kind of things happened on the premises. DD took a trip to the union where they ripped up the dance floor, showing the Warwick students how to dance, Doctors style! After an hour or so of dancing and drinks, the guys left to sleep on a kitchen floor. Luxury! Waking up only about four hours later, DD headed over to the sports hall, there of course to run around and play some indoor Ultimate!

Angels 7
Disc Doctors 1

Angels were a team from Brixton, London, yet we

ended up travelling 100 miles from home in order to play them!

The fellow Londoners, who were seeded second in group C, set the day's standard by throwing a zone. It only took a single mistake from DD for Angels to capitalise and score. A change of tactics broke up the zone, allowing Stas to score the first point for Disc Doctors.

Although DD were 5-1 down, they didn't give up the fight and kept up a great deal of pressure during the 7th Angels' point. The point lasted for a long time, wearing down both teams and causing Angels to throw away a lot of discs.

This was a tough first game, as was apparent from the large number of people staggering off the pitch at the end.

Disc Doctors 3
Bears 3

The next game was against Bears Thirds. Home support can become a little overwhelming, but DD kept their cool, gaining many of the turnovers by forcing Bears to make mistakes.

It didn't take the home side long to get their rhythm back, scoring two points against DD. But Imperial turned the scoring around quicker than George W could rig the US election.

The pace picked up with all the players having to run hard to keep up with their marks. Doctors scored a point and Munky caught two great passes from Stylish, both of which were outside of the blue lines! It really didn't help



The Disc Doctors: thankfully they were indoors this time

that the sidelines blended in quite nicely with the blue colour of the sports hall floor.

Determined not to step out for the third time in a row, Munky stood in the endzone, reaching out to score DD's second. The tight score elevated tension, and the shouting on pitch was immense, but this didn't stop the Doctors increasing their score to three points. With the seconds disappearing like an open packet of crisps in the pub, Finnish and Stylish thwarted the Bears' last-ditch overhead attempt. Disc Doctors had won the game, and a very close one at that!

Red 11
Disc Doctors 2

Even before DD were on the pitch, the Red team looked very experienced, a characteristic that was only empha-

sised by their third place seeding.

On the pitch, they were better than on paper, making scoring look like child's play. The determined Disc Doctors picked up the pace, pushing to subdue the Red guys who were always one step ahead.

Just when it looked as though one of Red's better positioned players would get Stylish's overhead, Stas reached that tiny bit further, beating his mark to score DD's first point.

In the last minute, observers watched as three overhead attempts were intercepted by players, one of which involved Stylish admirably prising the disc out of the air, sandwiched between two Red players.

Both teams had a fantastic game, which fortunately ended in time for everyone to head over to "the bar" to watch the football!

Whiplash 12
Disc Doctors 2

It was apparent from the previous game that the Disc Doctors didn't have a fool-proof plan to eliminate cheeky overhead passes and, as Red had picked up on this, so did Whiplash.

They sent direct passes to their players in the corners of the endzone, who caught them with minimal fuss. As Whiplash went ahead, Disc Doctors struggled with organisation, allowing a few silly points to be scored. The lack of good cuts from DD players made it a little hard for the DD handlers, but the guys still managed to score two points.

The game ended with Disc Doctors in need of medical treatment caused by a good whipping! Nevertheless it was worth playing the team.

Airwolf 9
Disc Doctors 5

The crossover game of the day, which could have pulled DD out of the bottom group, was against the Ironman team (a team without substitutes), Airwolf.

Unfortunately, DD were on a bit of a low from the last two games, but as the Ironmen got worn down, DD got more enthusiastic as more and more chances came their way. Play was aggressive but safe and even included the odd ambitious throw.

As DD came back, Stylish threw an overhead pass with ten seconds on the clock, which was magnificently caught by Matt right in the corner of the endzone. Although they had been beaten, DD were still pleased with their monster comeback. Hats off to Airwolf, who looked truly knackered!

The Party

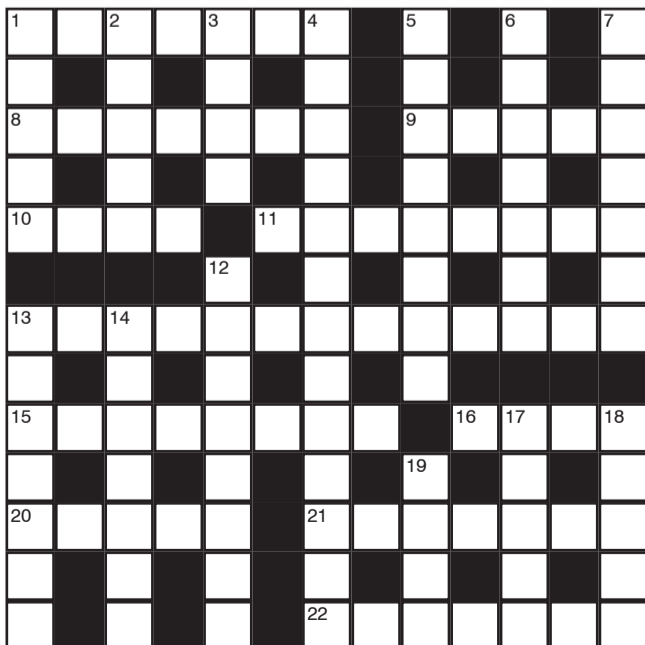
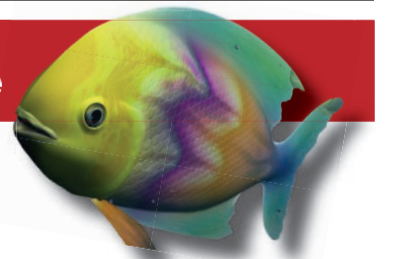
As the games finished, the whole team began to focus on party aspect of the tournament. Being a fun tournament, everyone could let loose and party to the early hours! The guys went for plenty of food and drink to make up for the energy exerted during the day.

It was Boogie Nights at the union, with the DJ spinning up some classic disco/funk for the masses. The place was buzzing with more people than a night at LSE on a Friday, but due to the tremendous size of the union there was loads of space to sit and chill.

In ultimate style, Stas and **Continued on page 23**

Quick Crossword

by Fishface



Across

- At the top of a car (7)
- In the open air (7)
- 180 degree rotation (1-4)
- Repeat (4)
- European country (8)
- Naughtily (13)
- Doubtful (8)
- Incite (4)
- Beggar (5)
- Large ferocious cat (7)
- Athletes (7)

Down

- Fumes (5)
- Indentation (5)
- Woodwind instrument (4)
- One who predicts your future (7,6)
- Large fish (8)
- One, four, nine, sixteen... (7)
- Dream (7)
- Mathematical statements (8)
- On horseback (7)
- Female voice (7)
- Stage of development (5)
- Travels (5)
- Thug (4)

Send your answers to coffee.felix@ic.ac.uk or bring this page to the *Felix* office in the West Wing of Beit Quad

Issue 1311 solution

