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Entrepreneurs:
don't dream
it, do it

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Exploring El Salvador

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felix

The student newspaper
of Imperial College

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Wye student injured after drink contest

“Breath testing night” leaves one student in hospital after fall

Andy Sykes
Editor-in-Chief

A student was badly injured, and several others placed in danger, at a freshers' event at Imperial College's Wye campus when a “breath-testing night” got out of hand.

Wye's outgoing exec organised a Freshers' Ball for the new students at the campus, with one of the nights being based around breathalysing students who were drinking in the campus' bar. When informed by the exec of their plans, the Union President, John Collins, initially banned the event from taking place. However, the exec promised Mr Collins that the breathalyser would be “used as an educational tool” to demonstrate the effects of alcohol on those who are not used to over-indulging, and to raise awareness of drink-driving, which has been a concern in Wye over the years. The advertising for the event was amended to reflect this, and subsequently Mr Collins allowed the event to go ahead. The staff at the campus, including the assistant wardens, asked the exec not to run the event, but this request was declined.

A case of beer was offered as a prize for the person who scored the highest on the breath testing machine. The winner, who has not been named, scored 2.4 on the meter, indicating a very high blood alcohol content (BAC). The student, a first year, was walking home from the event, when he fell backwards and

cut his head open “quite badly”, according to the assistant warden at Wye Campus. The students he was walking with took him to a nearby hall of residence, where College Security were called. Security then called an ambulance and alerted the campus authorities. At the time the ambulance arrived, the student was in a semi-conscious state.

The student was rushed to the nearby William Harvey Accident & Emergency department and was placed in the Clinical Decision Unit (CDU) where he was monitored overnight and into the next day.

Another student was found lying in the main road near the campus, apparently unaware of his situation. A group of students found him and took him home, supervised by College Security, who made sure that when the student passed out he was laid on his side in bed, and that his friends stayed with him.

The event has been heavily criticised by both the Union and College authorities, with one member of Wye's campus staff calling it “irresponsible and dangerous”. The Union President, John Collins, has initiated disciplinary procedures against the Wye President and those responsible for the event, adding that he was “extremely disappointed” with the conduct of the organisers. Concerns have also been raised over the fact that students were still being served in the bar, despite being clearly drunk.

The disciplinary tribunal is scheduled to take place on 16 October.

There is some doubt over who will be implicated in any possible disciplinary measures, given that the Wye campus is unusual in that the outgoing exec organises the freshers events rather than the incoming exec, as is the case at South Kensington campus.

The Union's disciplinary procedures cannot remove a student's membership of the Union, and cannot expel them from the College. The Union Council can, however, remove them from their post should evidence of negligence be presented at the tribunal. The most severe punishment the tribunal can impart on those responsible is to hand the matter over to a College disciplinary committee, which has the authority to expel a student from the College. However, this is unlikely in this case.

Drinking culture in Britain

The drinking culture of this country has been a concern for this government, with some predicting the liberalisation of drinking hours would result in a mass increase in street crime. However, recent studies in the borough of Westminster have seen a substantial fall in the number of “violence against a person” incidents once drinking hours changed. However, a European cafe-style culture is still a long way off.

Rector tops out new Southside hall



ALEX ANTONOV

The Rector, Sir Richard Sykes, buried a sprig of yew in the last beam of the new Southside building last Thursday as part of a traditional building rite. The yew is supposed to bring good fortune to those that use the building in future. Sir Richard commented on how quickly planning permission was obtained to demolish the Grade 2 listed building that occupied the site. The hall, “the best hotel in South Kensington” according to Sir Richard, will be open to house students at the start next year.



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So you want to be an investment banker?

"Investment banking. The mere name is a synonym for the big green bucks and your own self-image at thirty, on your way to the Wharf or the City in the brand new Maserati that last month's bonus easily covered."
PAGE 5



Imperial's bright young things

"After a summer lazing about watching *The Apprentice* or *Dragon's Den* you could be forgiven if you thought starting a company was simply glorified self-humiliation. A dynamic new organisation created by active student entrepreneurs from within Imperial wants to change that for the better."
PAGE 6

Caffeine addiction

"It's illegal in parts of Northern Thailand, hospitals and universities run on it, endurance

athletes enhance their performance with it, and 300 years ago, it could be used as grounds for divorce. Only the oil industry has a greater volume of worldwide trade."
PAGE 7

Doing it yourself

"Thanks to the internet (amongst other things) it is now easier to find bands, have them play at a show or put out a record by them. This way of taking control away from the established music business has been around for ages."
FEMM, PAGE 4



Civil Engineers explore El Salvador

"In 2001 several large magnitude earthquakes shook the small Central American Republic of El Salvador. The effects were devastating on an already struggling country where civil war had ended less than two decades earlier."
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Reading physics department to close

Andy Sykes

The University of Reading is to close its physics department by 2010, with this month's intake of 30 students being its last.

A review of the subject by the University suggested that it was "no longer viable", having recruited just 30 students for 42 places. The University's press statement expressed regret at having to make the decision to close the department, adding that this was brought about by "the current funding context" for higher education institutions in UK, requiring that the limited resources of the university should be focussed on "academic areas of comparative strength", suggesting financial woes are the reason for the decision.

The Institute of Physics (IOP) has been very critical of the decision, with Science Director Peter Main saying: "The Institute of Physics deeply regrets the proposed closure of Reading University's physics department." In an interview with the *Guardian*, Mr Main discussed the impact of the A-level choice of sixth-formers in determining which subjects would be funded: "the future of Britain's science base rests on the university choices of sixth-formers."

The IoP's press release warned that if universities continue to allow physics departments to close, there would be a shortage of physicists within a few years. The Institute says that since 2001, 30% of university physics departments have either closed or merged. The last department to be closed was at Newcastle University, in December

2004, which sparked controversy within the national press.

The head of the department, Professor John Blackman, said that he had been fielding calls and visits from unhappy students and parents concerned over the future of their course. He made clear in a statement that no current students would be affected by the closure, and that any student enrolled in the course would be given a chance to complete it.

The decision to close the department will not be taken until the University Council meets in December. Professor Blackman, commenting on whether the decision will be confirmed, commented that this would depend on the reaction to it: "We will wait to see whether the university feels that the whole thing is worth a rethink."

Opposition to the plans has been strong both on and off campus. Dave Lewis, President of Reading University Students' Union (RUSU), sent an email to the entire student body, questioning the validity of the university's decision, saying that the union was "shocked, appalled and disappointed". He refers to an earlier statement by the university, stating that they were committed to a future for physics at Reading, made six months ago, and that the arguments presented then for keeping the department open (good student satisfaction, good financial income, and strategic importance) are still valid today. He also organised a number of events and talks, including as speakers Professor Blackman, the head of the Student Physics Society, and representatives from university

management. RUSU has also set up a blog, physicsatreading.blogspot.com, which keeps students up to date on developments.

The department has recently received a £5m investment, which went into refurbishing laboratories, and the creation of a high-tech ultra-fast laser lab and advanced microscopy centre. In addition, the department, in collaboration with the chemistry department, has received two out of 40 Research Council UK Academic Fellowships, which are "designed to reward institutions with innovative research strategies". These two posts were advertised in the same week as the closure, and remain on the Reading Physics website. Many students and staff are puzzled at the rationale behind the closure when the department appears to be succeeding.

The closure also ignores a recommendation made by the Science and Technology Select Committee, a parliamentary committee, that "it should be mandatory for universities to alert Hefce [High Education Funding Council for England] to proposed departmental closures in Stem subjects not less than 18 months before the changes in provision are due to come into effect". In April 2006, Reading University assured students and staff that physics was central to its plans, and abandoned this view "without consultation" according to RUSU's statement.

Physics and chemistry departments around the country have been under threat for several years, with admissions falling as undergraduates settle for what are seen as "easier" degrees.

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As enrolment is on a first-come-first-served basis, you do not need to wait until the special advice session to book your place on the course.

For more information contact the Evening Classes Administrator at eveningclass@imperial.ac.uk or tel +44 (0)20 7594 8756



PHILIPA STANGER

No, that's not photoshopped – some students have decided to steal the P from the physics building.

Union website up!

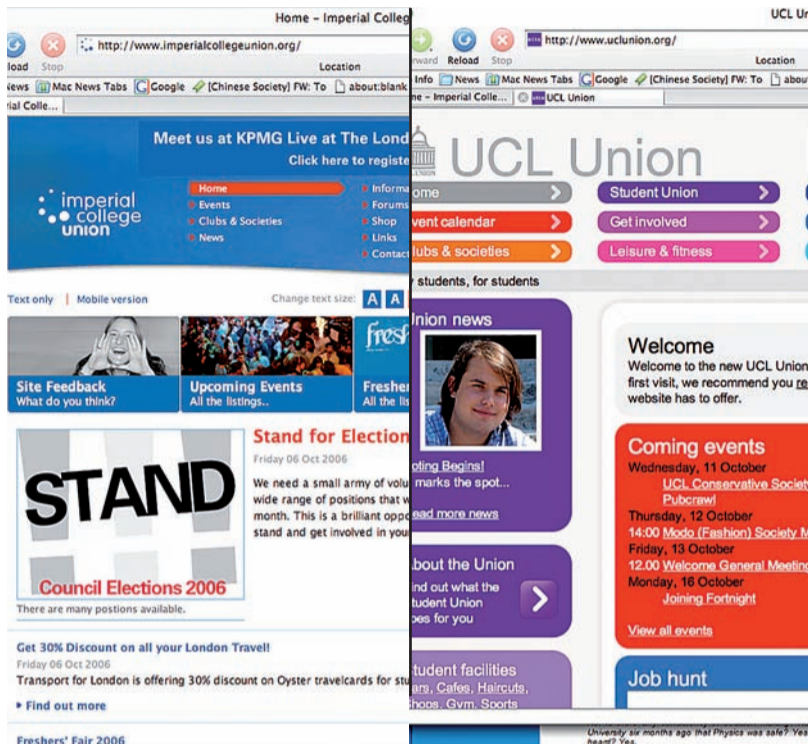
The new Union website has proved to be worth the rather steep asking price, comparing favourably with UCLU's new site

The new Imperial College Union website (www.imperialcollegeunion.org) has proven to be a great success over the last month, taking almost £38,000 in club membership and event ticket sales. The site has also won praise within the more technically inclined members of the student body for conforming to modern web standards.

The website cost £40,000 in total to build, and went live at the start of this term after extensive testing over the summer vacation. The Union bought extra capacity for the site, in order to cope with the rush that was expected after Freshers' Fair with students joining and re-joining clubs and societies. So far, the site has coped admirably with the almost 27,000 page impressions per day.

Though the vast majority of payments for club membership went through without problems, around ten students found their payment being declined when the system was in fact taking payment. This problem was identified quickly, as the site is being closely monitored to ensure it is functioning correctly, and the money was returned to the students without them even realising what had occurred.

In addition to the online payment of club membership, the new site has become a far more valuable resource for clubs and societies officers than the previous website. Some club content is currently missing from the site, though this is mainly societies that are defunct, or did not submit information for the Clubs & Societies A to Z.



The ICU website (left), and the more expensive UCLU site (right)

The response from students and club officers has been strongly positive so far, with a number commenting this reporter that the site has "made our lives easier". Instead of having to fill out forms and cash and track the money they receive from club members, the online system allows the money to be deposited directly into the clubs' accounts. Additionally, the Student Activities Centre is encouraging students to use the site to sign up members, as it reduces the amount of paperwork

their student volunteer staff has to deal with. However, not enough students are using the site to sign up yet, though the number is rapidly increasing as awareness of the new functionality spreads.

The new University College London (UCLU) website reportedly cost around £80,000, or twice the amount that the Union paid for the new site, and has been widely criticised on the UCL campus for being, as one disgruntled student put it, "crap".

Sabbatical team in disarray?



The sabbs at Council; Shama Rahman (DPGS) is second from right

Tempers are running high in the sabb team, with tensions reaching a head on Tuesday, with at least two members of the team drafting resignation letters.

At Council on Monday evening, the sabbaticals and the Felix Editor presented their first reports, detailing their actions over the preceding months to those attending. The Deputy President (Graduate Students), Shama Rahman, faced a number of questions from several members of Council, including her fellow sabbaticals.

Questions were put to Ms Rahman during the presentation of her report about the upcoming Graduate Student Association (GSA) elections. So far the elections are giving every appearance of becoming a farce, as the traditional publicity for the elections has been minimal, and only one person is standing, in the role of Communications Officer. Asked if she knew how many people were standing for positions, she replied that she did not know to a somewhat stunned Council and referred the question to the Union President, John Collins.

A member of the sabbatical team raised questions over Ms Rahman's

performance at Freshers' Fair where she was manning the GSA stall. It is reported by *Felix's* sources that Ms Rahman arrived well after the fair started, and was seen packing up at around 3pm. This no doubt antagonised the other sabbaticals, who were clearly visible on the site from set-up to tear-down. Mr Lai's report to Council also noted that he had received complaints about the GSA stall.

Felix has learned that, allegedly, some sabbaticals drafted their resignation letters after Council, though it is not clear whether this is in protest at what they perceive as Ms Rahman's poor performance in recent weeks, or whether they feel the team is no longer viable. The sabbaticals contacted by this reporter denied that any resignations would be taking place.

In Ms Rahman's defence, she did not have a handover, and the current team could not rely on Luis Hui, the previous DPGS, to provide training. Some disgruntled hacks have suggested that perhaps the other members of the sabb team should have made more effort to ensure Ms Rahman understood her role.

IC ranked 9th in the world

Priya Shah

Imperial College is the ninth best university in the world according to the latest Times Education Supplement, having soared from thirteenth place in last year's survey to become the only newcomer in this year's top ten.

Most of the leading universities have maintained their positions with Harvard retaining the top spot above Cambridge and Oxford, which ranked second and third place respectively. Indeed, American institutions continue to dominate, filling 11 out of the top 20 slots as well as being well-represented throughout the table. However, despite their world-beating private funding, this year America has given way to a greater number of European and Asian universities in the top 20. Furthermore, the seemingly unbeatable Harvard University has reduced its lead from a sizable 10% to less than 4% from its nearest rival.

Imperial's rector, Sir Richard Sykes, has commended Imperial's high ranking: "this underlines Imperial's status as an internationally leading centre of knowledge and scholarship, and is an excellent position from which to enter our Centenary year. Above all, it's a tribute to the world-class staff we are able

to attract, both academic and non-academic, and I hope all members of our community will join with me in celebrating." Imperial's recent decision to split from the University of London and become independent by 2007, its centenary year, is reinforced by the Times' results, given that they far outranked all other London institutions: LSE finished at seventeenth place, UCL at 25 and Kings College at 46.

Whether or not prospective students choosing universities can rely on these figures is debatable. The difficulty of sourcing truly international data and agreeing on a comprehensive framework has meant that global ranking of universities still remains a controversial issue. Yet, in the face of increased globali-

sation, there is a definite need for a reliable ranking system as universities shape an international identity for themselves. But different methodologies and criteria have led to many different lists that have variable rankings for the same university. In Newsweek, for example, Imperial was ranked considerably lower in seventeenth place.

The Times ranking is based on both qualitative and quantitative measures including but not limited to: peer review by academics, the number of citations per academic and the ratio of students to academic staff. Encompassing both research and teaching quality, it aims to give a reliable picture of where universities stand on an international platform.



The College beat US universities like Princeton to claim 9th place

Felix shortlisted five times in four categories for Guardian Student Media Awards 2006



Left to right: Chris Miles, Rupert Neate, and last year's *Felix* design

Felix and its staff have been shortlisted in the prestigious Guardian Student Media Awards. The newspaper itself was shortlisted in the "Newspaper of the Year" category. *Felix's* companion science magazine, *I, Science*, was shortlisted in the "Magazine of the year". The *Felix* editorial team of the previous year have also been nominated individually. In what may surprise some of those he antagonised in the Union and College, the previous editor, Rupert Neate, has been nominated twice, in the "Reporter of the Year" category, and the "Travel writer of the year" category. Mr Neate made this comment to *Felix*: "I am over the moon that *Felix* has been nomi-

nated for so many awards. I would like to thank everyone who worked for *Felix* last year. It is thanks to all of their hard work that we have been shortlisted for these prestigious awards. I'm elated to have received this recognition as our hard-hitting investigative journalism did not win me many friends in College or Union bureaucracy. I won't miss the all-nighters every Tuesday, but it looks like they were worth it."

Felix's news editor during Mr Neate's term, Chris Miles, has also been shortlisted in the "Reporter of the year" category, giving *Felix* two entries compared to one from the other student newspapers competing.

You are going to pay me how much?

Should we worry about the increasing trend of graduates forsaking further education for a city career?

Will Piovano
Business Correspondent

Jane is in her final year of Mechanical Engineering. She has got a good master's degree coming, is the president of two societies, and all her friends say she is golden company. After three brain-crunching years of polymers and stress-analysis, the opportunities of the wide world are open to her. NASA? Nah. R&D? Wrong. No, Jane is off to become an investment banker. Why not; after all, the pay is stellar and most of her friends are doing it too!

Her friend Nasser has got the top score in Physics. Theoretical physics, particle physics, you name it – he has been through it. And where is he going to work? You guessed it. Nasser studied neutrinoless double-beta decay and quantum teleportation, and yet he is sitting with Jane on the Equities Floor of Morgan Someguy, cracking out his seventeenth hour of derivatives trading.

Investment banking. The mere name is a synonym for the big green bucks and your own self-image at thirty, on your way to the Wharf or the City in the brand new Maserati

that last month's bonus easily covered. Work hard, play hard, they say; sounds just right for Imperial students.

But what is this banking world; more than a cluster of skyscrapers where the financial elite trade in invisible shares worth more than anything you have ever, correction, will ever, own?

To me, it's an academic black hole. I don't know about other places, but at least 75% of my department's graduates migrate to investment banks. That's a lot of minds gone to the wind. It is also the driving reason behind half of our MEng students changing to the three year BEng course. That sounds like kidnapping to me.

Now, before things are taken the wrong way, let me say this: investment banking can be very intellectually challenging. Believe it or not, some people are born and bred for these positions – trust me, I know a few. But is it not puzzling (and perhaps worrying) that Jane and Nasser have all this specialised knowledge under their belts, but we still find both of them clicking away stocks from NASDAQ? Where is our average Joe 'LSE' Johnson?

Has he grown bored of the suit-and-tie and fled to a PhD in neutrinoless double-beta decay?

I don't know. All I know is that the banking world has more perks to offer than any of its competitors. I know, I've been there. Where else can you get paid such a ridiculous – it really deserves a grander adjective – salary. One gags on one's tongue when reading the contract. "Yeah, I don't think I'll take it..." Ka-ching! Dollar signs slot down over the eyes. "I could just do two years, then go on vacation..." Before you know it, you're sitting in the toilet cubicle on the fourteenth floor, absently reaching for the roll of twenty-pound notes, which have replaced toilet paper, and counting the seconds lost away from the trading desk.

Variety is the spice of life. If we all become bankers, life will be boring, and everything will be expensive. Make sure it's what you really want to do. Ah, but who are we kidding? When that phone call arrives, and the sweet voice of Ms HR whispers into your ear, I'll hear that same old phrase which shatters every man's resistance: "You're paying me what?!"



The newly opened Tanaka Business School demonstrates the increasing demand for finance sector jobs

This week's business news

■ A US federal judge made an historical ruling against tobacco companies. A claim filed in 2004 alleged that products were misleading consumers by marketing "light" cigarettes as comparatively safe. The ruling in favour of this claim could pave the way for a class-action suit that would include millions of smokers, making it the largest civil law suit that America has ever seen. Share prices in tobacco companies fell sharply.

■ Oil prices rallied after representatives from the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) informally agreed to cut output by 1 million barrels per day. The move was the first reduction since 2004, and was widely anticipated after Nigeria and Venezuela announced they would step down production. The move came amidst concerns that oil prices would fall if the market became oversupplied.

■ Eurozone interest rates are likely to rise before the end of the year. The comments came from Jean-Claude Trichet of the European Central Bank (ECB) after an meeting in Paris. A quarter of a percent rise is set to come about before the end of the year. The Dow Jones Industrial Average reached its highest level since January 2000. Some economists are critical of the index's capacity as a barometer for the US economy since it is comprised of only thirty share prices.

■ Rupert Murdoch, owner of News Corporation, announced plans to release a version of MySpace™ in



US federal judge makes historical ruling against tobacco industry

China. He bought MySpace™ last year as part of his digital-age strategy. MySpace™ became one of the most visited sites on the internet because of the ease with which people could share text, pictures and video. Mr Murdoch said MySpace™ China was likely to have local partners who would own fifty per cent.

■ The share prices of online gambling firms collapsed after new legislation was passed stopping banks and credit card companies making payments to them. This has effectively banned American punters from using such sites.

■ Sony's share price fell sharply after two new companies – Toshiba and Fujitsu – reported problems with laptop batteries having the potential to overheat. The issue was brought to light when an IBM lap-

top caught fire at a Los Angeles airport. Subsequently, Dell and Apple recalled the battery model.

■ The days of market rumours spread on exchange floors are numbered as market gossip has found a high-tech forum. A new automated system will sift through forty million sources each day, from blogs to newswires. The platform, called Monitor110, is to be run by a former Deutsche Bank executive who is selling the software to hedge funds.

■ Europe's biggest low-cost airline, Ryanair, launched a takeover bid for Aer Lingus. The Irish airline made its stock debut last week, prompting Ryanair to begin the acquisition by purchasing 16 per cent of the shares on offer.

Banking in brief

Michael Olymbios
Business Editor

There are two distinctive types of banking: commercial banking and investment banking. Commercial banking involves financial intermediation, i.e. the borrowing and lending of cash between individuals and smaller companies.

A commercial bank's role includes the finding of those seeking to borrow and to lend, the drawing up of contracts, and calculating the probability of the debtor being unable to pay the loan. The greater the risk that the borrower will default on the loan, the higher the interest rate will be. The banks profit by charging a higher rate of interest to borrow than they pay out to those depositing funds.

Investment banks do not have inventories of cash for the purposes of lending. Although the structure varies from bank to bank, broadly speaking, there are corporate finance, financial instrument sales and trading and syndicate divisions.

The corporate finance division is responsible for equity (shares), debt underwriting and mergers and acquisitions (M&A). These activities involve raising capital for companies by selling shares in the company or by selling debt products, and advising on and implementing the joining of or selling-off

of businesses.

The job of a trader is to facilitate the buying and selling of financial instruments, e.g. stocks, bonds, currencies and a vast range of products. Traders provide 'liquidity', allowing traders to buy and sell on demand, without having to wait for an individual executing the opposite trade. Propriety traders take positions on behalf of the bank. This means that they buy and sell in the hope of benefiting from a rise or fall in the market directly.

This introduction will have hopefully sparked interest and given you an insight into the banking world.



Wall Street: the place to find most investment banks

Do you have an idea for a business but do not know where to begin?

www3.imperial.ac.uk/entrepreneurship/entrepreneurschallenge

Imperial's bright young things

Imperial Entrepreneurs describe how it is changing perceptions of the business world and how a selection of industrious students have cleared their debt and made a very tidy profit in the process.

After a summer lazing about watching *The Apprentice* or *Dragon's Den* you could be forgiven if you thought starting a company was simply glorified self-humiliation. A dynamic new organisation created by active student entrepreneurs from within Imperial wants to change that for the better. Sumon Sadhu, President & Co-founder of Imperial Entrepreneurs, who previously worked under *Dragon's Den* judge Doug Richard, explains further: "The perception of business plans and suits is dated. Real entrepreneurs define themselves in terms of what they've actually done when opportunities arise, not what they procrastinated. We're here to address that image."

Indeed, some of the biggest businesses in the world didn't follow their first business plan. Microsoft, founded by Bill Gates and Paul Allen in a Harvard dorm room in 1975 would have folded had it followed its original plan to avoid operating systems in the first place. The stories of Microsoft, Dell, Google and Apple all started in dorm rooms, and illustrate what's possible by going beyond the lectures and problem sheets. "There's probably no better time to start a venture than now, surrounded by some of the smartest people you've ever met, and some of the best opportunities," says Sebastian Wolf, co-founder of Imperial Entrepreneurs.

Apart from acting to change the perception of entrepreneurship, the society has made headway in the entrepreneurial world itself. It has already established significant partnerships with The Glasshouse, described as 'the epicentre of London's internet scene' and TiE-UK, the UK branch of the largest entrepreneurial network in the world. These partnerships will open unique opportunities for IE members to network, find mentors and above all, learn from real-world entrepreneurs. In addition, the society's

website, imperialentrepreneurs.com, is powered by the 'Synergy' database. This database allows all members to list their interests and actively seek out potential partners to start ventures with.

"Entrepreneurs are real people, and they're probably some of the most interesting characters you'll come across as they're always striving to think differently. We want to connect our members to the community that exists here in London," says communications officer, Mahmoud Usman.

The registration-only Launch Party for Imperial Entrepreneurs will provide the ideal opportunity for IC students to come in contact with the London entrepreneurial community. Building its reputation, the society has attracted big names such as Alex Tew (founder of milliondollarhomepage.com), Michael Smith (co-founder of Firebox.com and MindCandy Design CEO) and Charlie Osmond (founder of Freshminds) as speakers for its launch event on October 19.

Imperial Entrepreneurs forms the sixth society in a network of nationwide entrepreneurship societies, acting to change the culture at UK universities. This group includes Oxford and the LSE, with whom the society is hosting events later this year.

"Imperial Entrepreneurs is here to provide people with the inspiration, education, networking and experience to empower their ideas," Wolf says. "We're already seeing startups everywhere around Imperial. This gives us an opportunity to link together students who are thinking different."

"With or without grand visions of the future, or an idea ready to go, entrepreneurship can become very real for anyone who chooses it," Wolf explains, "And that's just it. Entrepreneurship isn't a job, it's a mindset. Even if you don't want to start a company, you can still nur-



Entrepreneur Alex Tew, creator of milliondollarhomepage.com, enjoying a hearty breakfast.

ture the inner entrepreneur. Talk to the beautiful stranger, find the best in each problem, don't stop at setbacks in any walks of life – in short, grab life and live it!" The future for Imperial Entrepreneurs at this university definitely looks bright.

The Imperial Entrepreneurs launch party is on October 19 at 7.00pm in the Tanaka Business School. Register for free at: www.imperialentrepreneurs.com

Don't dream it, do it

As far-fetched as it sounds, it's possible to set up a profit making venture in an afternoon. GimperialClothing.com was founded by IE committee members to prove this point. In a single Saturday afternoon, IE's President, Sumon Sadhu, and Secretary, Sebastian Wolf, composed T-Shirt designs, created a website and advertised the venture on facebook.com. By Monday, a profit had already been made. "People may have thought it was just a great idea. We actually went out and did it for fun," Sadhu says. "That's the message we want to convey: Don't dream it, do it." The following is a selection of entrepreneurs who didn't just dream.

Alex Tew, Milliondollarhomepage.com
Dreaming up ways of funding his way through his degree, Alex ended up with the intention of finding a way to earn a million dollars. He came up with the idea of creating a website with one million small pixels which would be sold to advertisers for \$1 each. Rather than throwing the idea out as crazy, Alex decided to take a leap of faith and start it off. Interest in the idea snowballed and Alex used this to his advantage culminating in him making \$1million in just 5 months. Alex only had time to attend two lectures that term, because of his success.

Michael Smith, Firebox.com & MindCandy Design
After leaving university, Michael and his friend Tom Boardman imagined creating a website solely focussed on selling boys' toys and gadgets. The pair invented the shot glass chess set which propelled sales from Firebox.com allowing Michael to turn the company into the one of the fastest-growing internet companies in the UK. Now Michael has started up MindCandy Design, creators of www.perplexcity.com. Two years on and [MindCandy](http://MindCandy Design) has raised a cool \$6 million in investment!

Charlie Osmond, Freshminds Ltd
Holding a number of top job offers with management consultancies, Charlie had a dilemma – should he stick with a job or start his own company? Fortunately he made the right decision, and together with fellow engineer Caroline Plumb founded Freshminds, a recruitment consultancy for top students. After starting in their parent's spare bedroom, the pair grew the company to £1 million a year in sales in three years!

Inspired? See Alex Tew, Michael Smith and Charlie Osmond speak at the Imperial Entrepreneurs launch party.



Michael Smith, co-founder of Firebox.com and MindCandy CEO.



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Caffeine addict confessions

Illegal, immoral, and worth as much as oil. Well after all, heroin is so passé

Krystyna Larkham
Science Editor

It's illegal in parts of Northern Thailand, hospitals and universities run on it, endurance athletes enhance their performance with it, and 300 years ago, it could be used as grounds for divorce. Only the oil industry has a greater volume of worldwide trade. As I drain my coffee cup a fourth time this evening and feel renewed strength running through my veins, I look back at the humble caffeine molecule, and what makes it so dear to our faster beating hearts.

The story goes that around 850BC, an Ethiopian goat herder, Kaldi, noticed his goats getting high on some pretty red berries, and decided to give them a taste himself. The craze soon spread, and before long coffee trees were being grown all along the Arabian peninsula. The drink soon took on religious connotations, being used as a meditative drink within the Muslim tradition. It was so sacred that those caught drinking coffee in Constantinople, home of the world's first coffee house, were beaten the first time, and if caught again, thrown into the river sewn in a leather bag to drown.

The caffeine molecule itself mimics the shape of adenosine, a neurotransmitter involved in suppressing many cell pathways. It binds

to adenosine receptor molecules in the synapse, allowing chemical pathways to continue unhindered, hence caffeine's stimulatory role. An overdose can be fatal, and even at 'normal' (student) consumption, caffeine can result in reduced fine motor co-ordination, increased heart rate, insomnia, nervousness and dizziness. The blocking of adenosine receptors causes the body to manufacture extra ones to compensate, so a drop of caffeine causes oversensitivity to the neurotransmitter. This results in a dramatic drop in blood pressure, leading to the 'give me coffee' headache around half past three.

It's not all bad though. A cup of coffee a day makes you significantly less likely to top yourself, and it does wonders for the sex life of the elderly.

Meanwhile, a tiny espresso taken with a Gauloise and a hefty dose of French philosophy is almost certain to get you laid in certain circles, and even the most dyed-in-the-silicon computer scientist won't mistake the meaning behind 'Do you fancy coming up for a coffee?'

So put the kettle on, put your feet up, and give thanks to the humble coffee bean, preamble of first dates and saviour of students. After all, heroin is so passé.

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Wake up and smell the coffee

Best of the rest

Gosh! You mean after a whole week of lectures you still want more? Well, you've picked a good week for it. Starting tonight, at 18.30, David Bullock is talking about "Conservation on the grand scale" at Birkbeck College. Be there, or be whatever is the opposite of green.

If you're a scientist, but want to make money, find out how on October 17 at the Tanaka Business School. Dr John Hassard, an Imperial alumnus, is coming to talk about his very successful company delatadot. The event is free, sponsored by IC Entrepreneurs.

For over 18s only, the Dana Centre is holding a two-day event "Fairground: Thrill Laboratory-Pleasure" starting October 17. The event costs £10 and includes live experimentation on the "Miami Trip" as well as canapés, fizzy pop, oh, and a number of talks.

And finally: reading list looking too long? No need to read the entire IC library, just mosey on down to G16, Sir Alexander Fleming Building at 6.30pm on Thursday, October 19, hand over your £8, and listen to Dr Armand Leroi, Maggie McDonald, and Tim Radford who'll tell you what you need in their talk "The best science books ever".

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All about... Fees. The fight is not over

It's a new academic year and change is everywhere in Imperial. The JCR no longer resembles an airport lounge, pink appears to be College's favourite colour and new undergraduates are now paying £3000 for the privilege of coming to study at Imperial. Yes, after the demonstrations, lobbies and media frenzy over top-up fees two years ago they are finally arriving on campus. After all, what better way to celebrate the College's centenary than by giving that most special of gifts; debt. Several years hence the bright-eyed Freshers that appeared on campus last week will emerge bleary eyed into the real world with not only a degree but up to £44,000 of debt.

The principle of free higher education is dead. Fees have been with us since 1998, in the intervening years student debt has rocketed and more and more students have had to take part time employment to ensure that they can survive at university. This increased pressure on time and money prevents students from making the most of their time at university with both academic and social lives suffering. If this is the legacy of paying up to £1200 in tuition fees, then the impact of top-up fees will be far worse.

Of course, the outlook could be even poorer. When top-up fees were introduced our Rector was one of those arguing bitterly that £3000 simply wasn't enough - why not charge more? Why not charge £12000 more? Of course, he hasn't changed his mind since then. Top up fees are capped at £3000 (give or take inflation) until 2010, at which point the government had promised a "review". The College, along

with other leading institutions, has already begun lobbying hard to remove the limit on the amount they can charge students. Four years may be an awfully long time in politics, but if we are to win the battle against the complete marketisation of education we need to start fighting now. And we can't afford to rely on the public's sympathy for poor, starving students - we need solid arguments to support what we know to be right.

We need to remind the government and the general public that a university education doesn't only benefit the individual. The benefit to industry, business and society as a whole cannot be understated. The students of today will be the leaders of tomorrow in fields ranging from politics to nano-technology.

To start the debate, NUS are organising a national demonstration as part of a wider campaign against top-up fees and raising the cap on Sunday the 29th October. Despite not being NUS members Imperial College Union will be joining the demonstration. More details and publicity will be heading your way in the not too distant future, but if you want any more information or would like to get involved in organising this campaign please get in touch with me at dpew@imperial.ac.uk.



Ben Matthews
Deputy President
(Education & Welfare)
dpew@imperial.ac.uk

A Message from the President

Dear All

As Ben is writing the lion's share of this week's page, I will try to keep my column brief. My main message to you this week is that the deadline for elections is fast approaching (nominations close this Sunday night) and there are still a handful of vacant positions up for grabs. This month we are running elections for IC Union Council members, Faculty Union Officers, Graduate Student Association Officers and ULU Delegates. Being a Union Officer can be an interesting, fun and enjoyable experience and holding a position of responsibility will encourage you to develop new skills and interests. Becoming a Union Officer can also be a great way of improving your CV - I regularly receive phone calls and emails from graduate employers who tell me that they specifically target students who hold positions of responsibility in the Union and other extra-curricular activities. So, if you are interested in standing then please go to our website www.imperialcollegeunion.org/vote and if you want to know more about these elections and the positions that are open for nominations this month then please email me at president@imperial.ac.uk.

If you want an opportunity to question the candidates who are running for these positions, then please come along to our public hustings. These will be taking place in the JCR at lunchtime and the Reynolds bar in the evening on Thursday 19th October. Finally, please remember to vote in these elections - all voting is online and only takes a moment of your time. I will send you an email as soon as voting opens towards the end of this month



John Collins
President
president@imperial.ac.uk

STAND

Stand in the Council Elections 2006

Places are available for Ordinary Members of Council, Equal Opportunities Officer & Welfare Campaigns Officer and ULU Delegates. Also Graduate Students' Association and Faculty Unions.

Look online for more information at imperialcollegeunion.org/elections

Nominations close Sunday 15th October at 23:59.

felix



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- Reviewers for all our review sections, including music, film, arts, books, games, food, fashion, nightlife, and others.
- Writers for our news-related sections, like business, science and politics.
- Feature writers, willing to research and draft feature articles.

Contact us.

You can e-mail us at felix@imperial.ac.uk, stating what you are interested in, or just to ask for more information.

Comment & Opinion

NUS: Is there any point?

Stephen Brown voices his concerns about student politicians abusing their mandate in an attempt to further their chances of fulfilling their political ambitions.



Stephen Brown
Comment Editor

“At times the NUS seems to act less like a representative body for students and more like a graduate recruitment programme for the Labour Party.”

Those of you new to IC may be unaware that our student body is notoriously apathetic. You wouldn't have noticed this if you were accosted at the Freshers' Fair by one of the many individuals armed with clipboards seeking your signature for a petition for a referendum on affiliation to the national student body. Well its good to know there are so many volunteers committed to the spirit of public debate that they will give up an entire day to promote one. Was that not selfless of them? Everybody loves a good argument and I was so impressed I even signed myself. However I was slightly saddened to find out that in retrospect this was nothing but a stunt by an assorted collection of Marxists, New Labour apologists and the plain naive. Unsurprisingly, these groups are all strongly in favour of joining.

At the last referendum on whether or not we should affiliate to the National Union of Students the result was an overwhelming 72% in favour of ICU retaining its independence, preferring instead to stick with ULU for external representation. With Imperial leaving the University of London we are no longer eligible for ULU membership so again our involvement with student collectives is up for discussion.

Depending on whom you ask, the NUS will be described in various ways. Those in favour of joining speak of it as a nice fluffy organisation of discount cards and individuals who dedicate their lives to the student welfare cause. Others are more sceptical, instead seeing it as nothing but a talking shop for wan-

nabe waffle spewing politicians.

If we are going to have a debate let's go back to first principles and try and define what the NUS is actually for. What does it mean for it to be a "National Union"? Apparently one of the benefits of joining is that NUS representatives can lobby ministers. I find this a rather strange concept since education policy has now been devolved to Edinburgh and Cardiff. This makes it a bit silly for the NUS to claim that it can effectively lobby on behalf of the whole of the country. If they let the Scots join in the party then why not the French, Mexican or Sri Lankan universities? The truth is that the NUS spends a lot of time (and students' money) on debating and passing motions with little direct relevance to us. According to NUS records in January 2006 a motion was passed which seems to give them a mandate to campaign against the renewal of Britain's nuclear deterrent. Pros and cons of nuclear weapons aside, I'm sure we can all agree that this has absolutely nothing to do with life on campus. It just serves to illustrate how useless an organisation it is when the NUS has absolutely no impact on the issues that matter, such as top up fees, but its officers seem to have plenty of time to waste debating and campaigning on what could best be described as ethical niceties. I would love to be paid to sit around to pontificate the world but I don't think its an appropriate use of our money.

Now we need to discuss what it means these days to be a student. A recent league table ranks Imperial as one of the worlds leading academic institutions. This should

mean we have a far more powerful voice than your bog-standard university. The top universities in the UK have interests so far removed from some of the current members of the NUS that the link between us all as students is at best tenuous. Our needs are different from most. We have a far greater number of research and overseas students than your average institution. Employers are perfectly aware that not all universities are equal. If we joined the NUS then our voice would carry equal weight to an institution that matches us in terms of quantity but not in terms of quality of students. With around 50% of school leavers now entering higher education the idea that they will all have the same priorities that NUS representatives lobby for is a bit far fetched.

In conclusion, unless you are particularly worried about nuclear missiles being stationed on Queens Lawn, then the NUS is irrelevant to you. At best it is a well meaning, but ultimately feckless, (top up fees are here to stay, well done NUS!) lobbying group. At worst it represents what we hate about career politicians the most as at times it seems to be acting less like a representative body for students and more like a graduate recruitment programme for the Labour Party. The question we will all have to ask ourselves is do we want our money spent so that some of our more politically ambitious colleagues can sanctimoniously grandstand on our behalf or would we rather the money was kept in South Kensington? Personally, I'd rather spend the cash buying everyone a pint than giving one penny of it to a bunch of self-serving politicians.

Halls watch



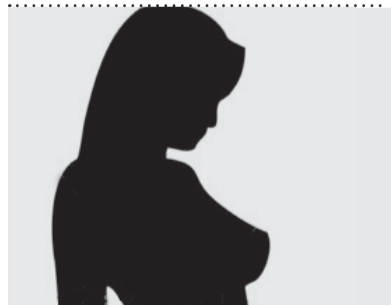
Vasa Curcin

When joining any wardening team you're bound to get told that it is a stressful but fulfilling experience, that you need to keep your wits about you at all time and that the first weeks can be very hectic. It is this last point that invariably gets overlooked. When the hall seniors move in you end up in some sort of a teambuilding scenario – rafting, paintball, camping, depending on the Warden's levels of sadism – and start doing a million and one things that transform a hall from a hostel into something approaching a home.

Now, Piccadilly Court is what we call an "outlying" hall, which usually leads to a large number of questions before term starts, that go along the lines of: "I really hoped to live next door to College and roll straight out of bed into the lecture hall. Could you do something about it? Yours truly, xxx". To which I usually reply with a reflection on the beneficial aspects of book-reading on the Piccadilly Line. Adding a book recommendation, if I feel wordy. Still, once people move in, they tend to see the good sides of their predicament too – the West End, Camden, a 55" plasma screen and a courtyard to name a few.

The idea of the first week of term is to get students to meet as many other residents as possible. There are some tried and tested ways of achieving this, like the boat party. The principle underlying the boat party is that a group of people will turn to each other for comfort and support, if left with no other option. Since our budget does not allow us to stage a fully-fledged *Lost* re-enactment and hire a tropical island, placing everyone on a boat for good five hours is an acceptable alternative. Our crowd this year seemed to have enjoyed themselves, helped by an enthusiastic DJ who took upon herself to teach the entire room some latino moves. Later this term we'll be taking the students to a gala evening with a masquerade theme and to a string of other events. The other, less visible but more important, side of wardening starts now as well. Many of the students who moved in will run into problems with their course, the new surroundings and cultures. We try to step in when we notice this happening and we are always on hand for help. Plus, we don't mind being woken up at 3am for a good reason. Honest.

So you think you want to be a doctor?



Seema Pattni

“Doctors and medical students seem more geared towards selfish gain than patient care.”

Its 6.45am. Most students are still asleep or just crawling into bed but for the poor sod that is the third year medical student, life is different. The daily grind consists of early mornings and late evenings in a place where anonymity and lack of identity is rife. Where one is expected to enjoy humiliation, where the expectation is to don a white coat and creep to impress seniors. One should not speak one's mind or talk out of place. One should be seen and not heard. One should only speak when spoken to. One is expected to accept that they are insignificant and should remain humble and grateful if anyone notices them. One should understand the concept that the Consultant is God, the only God and that no other God exists. One should always be God-fearing. God is always right, God is allowed to be late and God is allowed to bully you and say what he likes about you in front of the angels that work for him. God is not so merciful and

forgiving anymore.

The angels rush about stressed and sweaty, taking blood, asking patients 'targeted questions' and squirm whenever God enters the ward looking angry. The difference between this God and these angels and those that are believed to reside in what is currently a grey and cloudy sky is that key desirable qualities (compassion and empathy) have faded. The focus of hospital medicine is somewhat corrupt – it's less about care for the patient and more about personal profit.

Competitiveness is the universal theme, a drive to be the best academic, the best at networking. It's terribly ironic that in a place which is meant to be about caring for people who are sick; caring people are far from being omnipresent. Humanity, also, is a rare gem. The job has become a lot more mechanical, a robot could do it now – actually, some robots are doing it now.

Doctors and medical students seem more geared towards self-

ish gain than patient care. 'Doctor' comes from the Latin word "docere" meaning "to teach". Shouldn't doctors be using their knowledge to help people? I went into Medicine thinking it was about being part of a service to others. I thought doctors would show humility and compassion. I was naive enough to think that doctors and medical students would have a genuine motive behind their work and actions.

Only now, dumped in the midst of it all, do I realise that being a thoughtful, attentive and caring doctor is not easy in the hospital environment. It takes someone who has decided to train as a doctor out of sincerity. It takes someone who can endure all the financial and time pressures that the NHS prescribes sparingly and free of charge, someone who can rise above the dog-eat-dog, back-stabbing environment. It takes someone who wants to care. Unfortunately, it seems that this model is temporarily out of stock and too expensive for the NHS.

Wielding the mighty organ



Andy Sykes
Editor-in-chief

Editorials. At least 300 words of varying coherence about either a) the editor's recent exploits, or b) some kind of topical comment on a recent issue. Inspiration was sparse the morning I wrote this, so I took a little drift through the archives to see what prior holders of this post wrote. They vary from the dry and informative (cf. Dave Edwards) to the rather vitriolic rants about the College's latest idiotic move (cf. Alex Coby), via cathartic diary-esque confessions (cf. Will Dugdale). Being, as I am, gradually sobering up from numerous glasses of ICU house wine, I thought: hey, I could do all of those at once.

First up: dear diary. When I stood for this position, many, many moons ago, it hadn't really filtered in to my consciousness that the workload would be so overwhelming, despite having seen editors come and go. However, I will not whinge about my lack of a social life outside the confines of this Union building, or about the fact that my house has become somewhere I merely shower and sleep. I will however, whinge about the fact that life loves to kick you over and over again, in the crotch, when you least expect it.

Secondly, I'll be informative. Although it's been repeated countless times to the point that it's become dangerously clichéd, *Felix* is your student newspaper. You may have noticed the first two issues of the term were rather skinny, and some of you made your feelings clear on the matter while I was distributing the newspaper around campus. If you want to write features, help me research news stories, write reviews, start a new section, vent your thoughts onto medium-quality newsprint, or help design the newspaper, then get in touch with me. I'm in the office most days, in the bar most nights, and you can always e-mail me on felix@imperial.ac.uk. We're a friendly bunch in the West Basement.

I would rant here about some idiotic move of the College or the Union, but it appears that both bodies are either horribly corrupt and incredibly good at hiding it, or are in fact doing quite a good job. The new Graduate Student Association elections have the appearance of becoming a complete farce, with a single person standing and very little advertising. Though the redevelopment of Da Vinci's was rushed to open, the bar is beginning to look more homely by the day, and your editor has high hopes that it will become a rather nice drinking establishment before the term is out. The sabbats are beaver away quietly, and Freshers' Fair was really quite enjoyable.

On the subject of freshers: man, you guys look happy. I sincerely hope that your good spirits aren't broken by either your departments or the rather mopey older students. I've found you both approachable and cheerful in my travels around campus. Keep it up.

felix

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Power over principle?

Do politicians really believe in what they tell us? Hugh Stickley-Mansfield discusses whether politicians sell out in pursuit of power.

Earlier today I was astonished to hear previous Conservative leader William Hague on the radio, sounding perfectly reasonable. What was even more astounding was that this was the second time in recent months that this has happened.

Of course, what I would consider to be reasonable is not the same as what many others would, and I do not doubt that thousands of people considered much of what he said whilst leader of the opposition to be every bit as reasonable as I see him to be now. However, that I should agree with everything he had to say is certainly surprising, given how rarely I did so beforehand is quite striking.

The shift may well be at my end, it certainly is not unusual for someone's political leanings to err more toward the right as they grow up, but it seems unlikely. I hold fairly centrist views now, and have never been much of a supporter of the left, even as a naïve youth (or, if you prefer, as a more naïve youth), so the change seems more likely to have

there are principled politicians in this country, and I was terribly moved by his death not too long afterwards. A cynical mind might claim that I simply dislike politicians, only seeing the good in them once they had had their wings clipped or fallen on their swords but, knowing myself far better than this hypothetical observer, I would disagree. I think it more likely that so many of the politicians with whom I disagree hold similar views to my own, but are fully aware that they would be thoroughly unelectable if they told the public that whilst they were looking to come to power, or even to retain it.

This comes back to a point I touched on earlier, in that it may well paint me as somewhat naïve in believing that everyone in power secretly agrees with me. But of course, I don't believe everyone in power does, merely that there are more who do than is apparent from their rhetoric. More significantly, the thought is far from a happy one since the core of it is that even those who (perhaps) think as I do cannot be seen to pursue policies that I would support,

which would make the whole situation seem utterly hopeless, were it anything more than idle conjecture.

Unfortunately, my theory is backed up by the party with whom I most associate being almost universally accepted as being entirely unelectable. Understandably then, I have noticed a worrying tendency in myself to consider watering down my principles in order to make myself more appealing to potential voters, should I ever stand for election (to be fair, it would be a damn sight easier than anything else that might do so, such as not shouting at people with whom I disagree, writing more concisely or making less oblique jokes).

However, what I find most disturbing is the one piece of evidence that most shows my arguments to be more than a little flawed - as David Cameron settles in, he seems more and more to be aligning himself with my own positions on many issues.

The upshot of this is that, at least initially I would be happy for him to win the next election, which is not something about which I am entirely happy.

"I find it very disconcerting to find a man I had long considered anathema to my own position echoing my views so closely."

occurred at Mr Hague's end. Regardless of where the change may lie, I find it very disconcerting to find a man I had long considered anathema to my own position echoing my views so closely.

This is by no means the first time I have found this to be the case; for a long time I considered Robin Cook to be a thoroughly unpleasant chap, but his resignation restored my faith that



William Hague, a perfectly reasonable man, now he's not a politician.

Letters to the Editor

Dear Felix,

Having just spent the last hour of my life running around chasing swipe cards and discovering that not only does it state my details from my UG but as a result was sent to completely the wrong department. Consequently, I've been missing the all important bit of plastic but then, having gone to the ID card desk, I find that the problem is with registry who a) have the longest queues in the world, can they please hire a new member of staff and generally sort their lives out, and b) forgot to tick one box on my profile which, had it been done in the first place by someone competent would have saved myself a great deal of time and effort and reduced their queues.

In summary, Registry is a big heap of steaming...surely they could at least hire a temp for the start of term when they are in particular demand. Can we please destroy it and replace it with a service with greater capacity, shorter

queues and more and better staff? I will happily volunteer to start doing a Berlin wall job and tearing it apart with my bare hands. Why does it have to suck so much?

Peter Burgess

Dear Editor,


Hugh Stickley-Mansfield makes a valid case against the increasing racism targeted towards Americans. Such an attitude is both reactionary and missing the point. A little like Hugh's article. Opposition towards the American nation from those of us who care about global injustice and inequality stems not from a lack of friendliness or intelligence of those Americans we meet on holiday, nor from a jealousy towards America's 'success' since they 'kicked the British out'. America is a country with much to offer the world and has a culture which every other society could learn much from.

However, current antipathy towards

the country is driven by its political system - one that requires Senators, Congressmen and Presidents to be multimillionaires with extensive corporate backing; that produces a president with too much control over international affairs; that pursues global hegemony ruthlessly and imposes democracy upon sovereign nations in the face of national, regional and world opinion.

To most of US critics, the US is a country run by corporations negligent of humanity and the environment. Whether you believe it is through ignorance, religious zealously, propaganda or disillusionment, the government have successfully secured the support of the citizens they can rarely be said to represent. It is this system that most of us despair against. Anti-Americanism should never mean the rejection of the American people themselves, but the role of their government and its military across the world.

Darryl Croft



Some think
it's about nibbles.

**We think
it's about
networking.**

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 12" / JAZZY BEATS
 L.P. / HIP-HOP N-Z
 12" HIP-HOP / FZ
 12" HIP-HOP / N-S
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 12" HIP-HOP / N-Z



femm

felix music monthly

femm

Friday 13 October 2006

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felix live TONIGHT!

If you head into the Union tonight (Friday 13th October) you can see three bands for FREE before 9pm. After 9pm it is £3 so get there early. Onstage at 9pm is The Sailplanes, a band hand picked by *Felix* to support two bands selected by the Union Ents. The headliner is Ross Copperman who The Sun said about his debut EP, *'Effortless Falsetto and Soaring Guitars. A Top Debut.'* As well as all of this we are going to give away 10 FREE TICKETS with TWO FREE BEERS with each ticket.

In order to claim these free tickets with two free beers each all you have to do is email music.felix@ic.ac.uk asking for a free ticket. We have 10 to give away. So be quick since you only have one day to get to it. You have until 7pm today to get in touch. Good luck and we hope to see you there. Read the editorial above for more info.

Help Wanted

We plan on bringing *Femm* out every month otherwise the name will just be a lie, which will make baby Jesus cry. So we really need your views, reviews, features and interviews to keep up the content.

Music is so vital to many people's lives and it is generally something that everyone has an interest in or opinion on. In order that we represent our audience and produce quality journalism.

You can contribute in any way. If you would like to help with design it would be much appreciated as currently only the editor-in-chief does design and occasionally needs to do his degree. Please email music.felix@ic.ac.uk if you want to help. Or just come down to the *Felix* office in the West Wing of Beit Quad.



Matty Hoban

Hello and welcome to the first ever *Felix Music Monthly* or *Femm* as I have dubbed it. It is *Felix's* music-loving girlfriend – but don't tell them that we've have them both neutered. If you haven't guessed by the name this is a pull-out that will occur every month. The role of this pull-out is to discuss music past a few reviews and inane comment from yours truly. We care about music and hope you do too, so we are going to present features to you as well as reviews.



Gregory Mead

Are you bored of constantly listening to music you hate on the radio? Or maybe you like listening to music but don't have the time or energy to actively search out new bands that you may like the sound of? Tired of listening to lame recommendations of crap bands from your friends? Probably. I could go on all night with the rhetorical questions, but that's not the point, the point is they don't matter. There's no need to watch the pap filled commercial shite music TV stations any longer. If you don't believe me, I suggest you smash up that radio churning out mind numbing XFM 'alternative' crap and get yourself over to Last.fm. (It's a website by the way).

For those of you who have been living underneath an internet music rock, helping Rupert with the curse that it Myspace, or even worse, iTunes; there is salvation for you. Last.fm solves all the above problems and more in one go. The idea of Last.fm is simple, you install a plug-in into your iTunes/media-player/whatever and it logs the music you listen to, the plug-in then sends this log to your personal Last.fm page (similar to a Myspace page) and over time, it builds up a profile on your listening habits. It even works with iPods.

You can see all the music you've been playing since installing the plug-in. It also builds charts showing your habits, tells you your favourite stuff on a weekly basis and you can check your overall top artists, top tracks, and top albums as well as weekly top artists and top tracks. You can see what you've listened to recently or even what you are listening to right now! It makes you graphs, tables, charts, album art mosaics, spinning wheels of doom and yep, everything.

This week we will be looking at the DIY 'scene' in London in the section that is funnily enough called *The Scene*. It will hopefully be a regular section unearthing new movements, record labels or things of interest. We will also have a regular section called *Bitrate* – which you can see below this editorial. In this section we will have someone (Gregory Mead if he has time) to talk about some of the technological ways in which music is presented. This week Greg discusses the internet phenomenon that is Last.fm; it is a clever music player plug-in which compiles all the music you listen to, thus deciding your personality.

Our other feature is a long overdue retrospective of three of the summer's festivals; Reading, Get Loaded in The Park and Escape Festivals with all three covering the spectrum of how festivals could turn out. What with no Glastonbury this year, the focus was obviously diverted to Reading and yet it didn't completely disappoint despite an unimpressive line-up.

We always need contributors in the music section of *Felix* and if you have any features or you want to raise some issues then that is what *Femm* is for. We always have plenty of free CDs up for review and free gigs are available to those who want them. Music journalism is a tough business and this is a great way to get into it if you ever wanted to. All you need is enthusiasm.

To celebrate the launching of *Femm* the Union has allowed us to put on a band as part of a line up tonight (Friday 13th October) and called the night *Felix Live*. Popular act at the minute, Ross Copperman (www.rosscopperman.co.uk) will be headlining around 11pm. There is another band that is to be confirmed on before them and at 9pm, the first band on will be The Sailplanes, a band we picked. They are from London and are currently making a brilliant noise in the vein of Sonic Youth and Sleater Kinney. It is free to get in before 9pm so turn up early to see The Sailplanes (www.myspace.com/thesailplanes). It is £3 to get in after 9pm so I do strongly recommend turning up early.

We are also going to run a competition so you can get FREE entry all night and TWO FREE BEERS. We have ten free tickets with two free beers for each ticket to give away, all you have to do is email us at music.felix@ic.ac.uk asking for a free ticket. Nothing more, nothing less. Since we go to press on the day of the gig, you better be quick with the emails. See below left for advertisement.

To get a free download of a Ross Copperman song text ROSS to 81330. He is signed to Sony BMG and has gone down so well at other universities that he has extended his tour of them. Also, we at the music section will be DJing throughout the night!

'But oh no!' I hear you cry, 'Now my elitist musical friends will be able to see I've played Britney Spears and S Club 7 on loop for 18 hours straight!' Well, fear not, because the lovely people who made the site even allow you to delete any embarrassing entries from record, so we can still pretend that our taste in music is uber-tastefully cool and hip.

Anyway, back to the problems I first outlined, I mean, who cares if I can see what music I've listened to right? Surely I know that anyway, and I can just tell my friends it too, assuming they care. Well, luckily for you, you ungrateful, demanding scamps, if the amazing charts system still isn't enough to convince you to join, there are a plethora of other functions, most based on the simple method called 'tagging' that the website uses to categorise the bands. Basically, helpful users tell Last.fm what genre of music they think a band is. It's that simple. After tens of thousands of users have told them what they think an artist is like, be it indie, hip hop, electronica or whatever, you can pretty much be sure that the top ten genres it lists for them (yes, a band can be classed as more than one genre don't you know) are going to be correct, the huge number of 'taggers' makes any silly prankster who might categorise your favourite Coldplay track as death-grindcore totally insignificant.

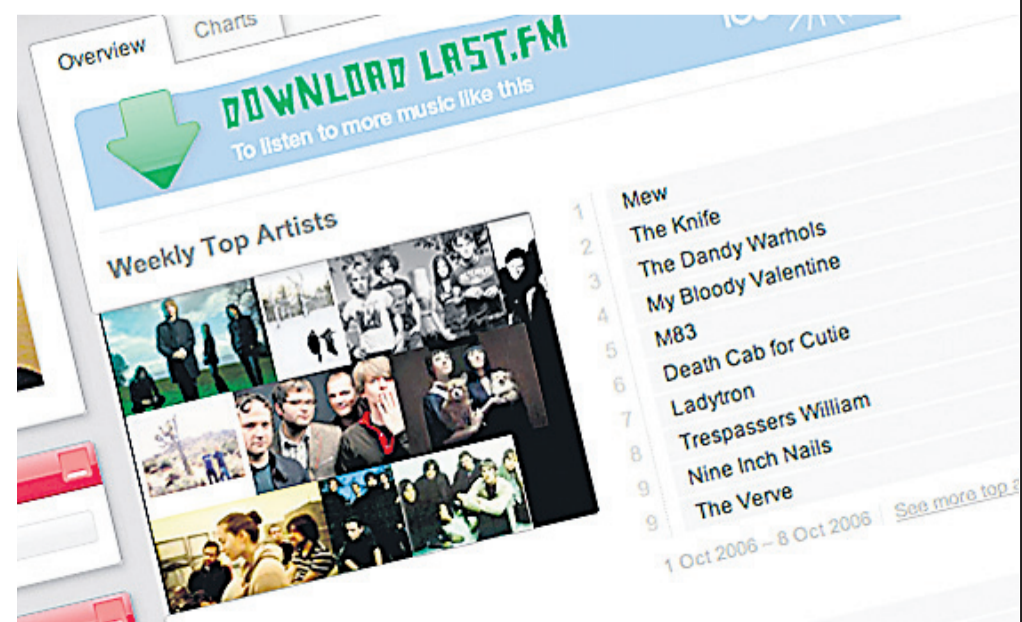
So, in theory this means no more blanket terms that cover 23,784,276 different artists to describe a band you like. If you listen to post-hardcore-glitch-techno-electro-grime cut with cartoon soundtracks played through a vocoder and 8 different effects filters, then this is what it'll be categorised as. Not 'alter-

native music' or 'shit'.

Well great, now that my favourite bands are correctly categorised, big deal, so what? Well I ask, do you possess all knowing knowledge of all similar bands? Do you know every single artist who plays your favourite genre? Can you tell me all the artists who rap with a classical orchestra in the background? No, I didn't think so. I'm the only person who can do that, but anyway, this system allows Last.fm to recommend similar artists to you, which you can then go out and buy after checking the free sample tracks they provide, and deciding if you like them. This also forms the basis of their online radio station, which only plays (theoretically) music that you'll enjoy, even if you've never heard it before.

Not only does it recommend similar artists to you, but it even tells you other users (known as 'neighbours') who have the same music tastes as you do; you can then add these users as friends just like on Myspace. So now you can chat to your heart's content with people with the same music taste as you and you can impress them with your superior knowledge of all things musical; basically anything you can possibly imagine.

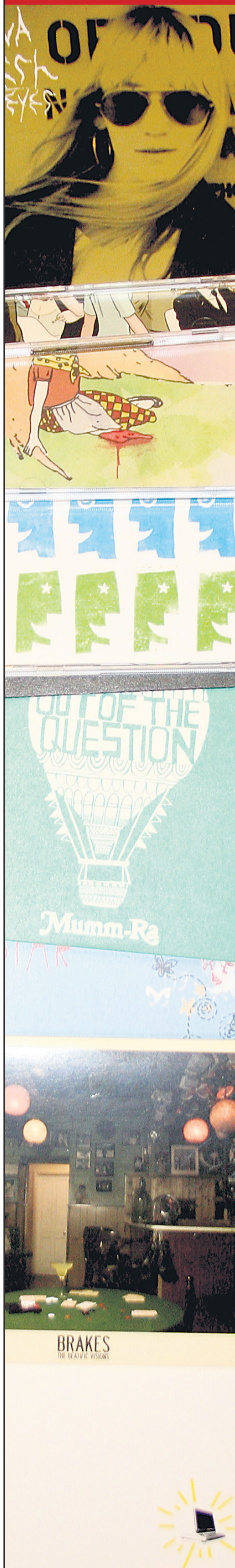
Finally, for those money grabbing cheapskates out there, grabbing their purse strings shouting, 'How much? How much? How much?' Don't worry, it's all free and there is no spyware or adverts in sight, in fact for all you computer science students out there, it's even open source so you can modify it to your hearts content. By the way, I don't work for them.



Last.fm user weekly top artists.

editorial

bitrate



Four Tet
Remixes
(Domino)
★★★★☆

album

Kieran Hebden (the sole member of Four Tet) is seen by many as a pioneer and yet not many (outside of muso circles) have heard his music. Those who do know about him have developed a platonic love for his music. If I very rarely DJ at anything I often put on *Smile Around The Face* and whilst many will dance to it they are still baffled by it, and pretty much every time someone will accost me and ask, 'What the hell is this?' Whether this is a good reaction or not, I'll let you decide.

However, the first time I heard *Pause* (his first album) I pretty much had the same response as the inquisitive soul above. There is something unique about hearing Four Tet for the first time.

There is also something unique about

Four Tet
Plastic People, Old Street

Nowadays you can't buy anything for six quid. For example, that is just enough to cover two trips on the tube, or a large McDonald's meal and not even two gallons of diesel. So naturally I was well chuffed to have only paid six of the Queen's finest to see Four Tet last night (October 4th).

For those not in the know, Kieran Hebden aka Four Tet is a master of electronic music, a well spoken middle class guy sporting jewfro and crafting some of the most beautiful songs ever. His second album, *Rounds*, is a must have for any record collection. I was quite excited about seeing him live, not only because I am a pretty big fan, but also the gig was at Plastic People, a hole in the ground cum club just off Old Street.

Arriving at doors open we found that in fact they weren't open, so we looked to Cargo just around the corner for some sneaky refreshments. Returning half-an-hour later there was a small rabble milling around the metal grill of a door that was the entrance. While we waited a young guy came out of the Vietnamese restaurant next door, and pops in the club past the bouncer before suddenly reappearing. It turns out it is Kieran himself. How cool, he does it a couple more times with excited whispers going around the expectant fans every time, until we are allowed to filter into the club itself.

Once inside he reappears, this time with a JD and chatting to the crowd, to start with it was kind of surreal but as time went by and the dubious fat-guy-from-Hot-Chip-look-a-like DJing played more and more obscure tracks I came to appreciate how great the atmosphere was. People weren't mauling him and he wasn't being a pompous tit; there was just a great vibe. Now let's talk about the set, and oh what a set, brandishing two laptops and creating complete sonic mayhem, Keiran crafted a symphony of out of each track, moulding them from a mix of chirps, beeps and feedback.

Classics such as *Smile Around the Face* were recreated in the most original ways live and unlike many electronic artists it turned out to be a real performance and not a case of just pressing play. *With Hands* finishing a set that also covered *Spirit Fingers* and *A Joy*, along with almost everything else he has done in one guise or another, it couldn't have been a better set or more intimate setting. With a wave and a thank you he went into the 'back-stage' area, basically an alcove behind where he performed and check his phone, like a real person. I can't

live

Hebden, he has used his position of remote popularity to dedicated people to promote music as much as he can. He has been involved numerous times with the promoters *Eat Your Own Ears* and the exposure of countless brilliant acts.

Kieran Hebden has also recently collaborated with legendary free-jazz drummer Steve Reid. It was a collaboration that somehow made a lot of sense since Hebden has shown glimpses of his free-jazz-loving-side in his live shows and on longer tracks on his albums. So it comes as no surprise that the first track on *Remixes* is a remix of *Tics* by Lars Horntveth. It sounds similar to the Hebden/Reid collaboration and is delightful to hear organic laptop manipulation, as I didn't know it was possible to use a laptop and sound that organic.

To those not familiar with such obscurities (and to be fair, I wasn't familiar until I discovered this music through Four Tet and others) the second track is a remix of the Radiohead track *Skatterbrain*. One of the more accessible remixes with a straight hip hop beat and lots of reverb on Yorke's vocals makes the originally tedious and frankly, whiny song more emotionally powerful.

For hip hop fans, the remixes of two Mad-villain songs; *Money Folder* and *Great Day* add a refreshing approach to the genre. The attention to detail in the samples is what made hip hop so great in the first place and

Four Tet's approach shows a lot of respect. *Money Folder* is also brilliant to put on and nod your head like all good gangsters.

The remix of *Carmella*, originally by Beth Orton has a big Phil Spector beat and sounds like it could've come out of Tamla-Motown. The diversity of sounds in all the tracks is what is brilliant and displays all sides to Four Tet's musical appreciation. Hebden doesn't just handle more obscure material, he also reworks *So Here We Are* by Bloc Party and puts an emphasis on the jazzy ride cymbal. He also manages to produce the wall of sound that should've been on the original by playing the main riff forwards and then backwards. The remix makes a point of holding off the drums and creating a building tension until the drums erupt at the end in a perfect climax. It's all rather coital.

Remixes is a 2 disc package and the second disc is called *Remixed* and as you can guess, it consists of many artists remixing Four Tet songs. The opening track features *Percee P* on MC duties and makes the original sound all the darker and more driven. It must be incredibly difficult to remix a Four Tet track since there is so much going on; you'd be afraid to lose something in the remix. But even tracks like the boring *No More Mosquitoes* get a brilliant reworking.

Matty Hoban

describe how normal he was or how great it felt to mingle with the artist before the show but out of it all I think everyone in the audience now harbours ultimate respect for one of the most likeable guys in the industry.

Nick Simpson

Private View
The Comedy, Leicester Square

On a cold September night traffic is heavy, lights glisten off the gleaming wet bus lanes. Overhead the vast expanse of Piccadilly Circus neon signs shine down on the countless faces below. Some are tourists, some are in suits, some are freshers exploring their new surroundings, and some are on their way to see Private View, the recently re-named Indie Rock trio of Goldsmiths fame.

The venue's stairs lead down to a cramped basement with stocky walls. The diminutive man at the door has all the fans fooled. This guy has the power to book bands for the Metro Club on Oxford Street. Most think he's just another landlord who plays host to wannabe rock stars or anyone who's willing to make a stand and entertain the masses. Look how wrong you can be. The bands tonight are uncommonly good for a pub event. The Neon Eyes keep the growing crowd lucid in the tightly packed venue, people forget themselves and the shrinking room that slowly encases them. Then it's time for Private View.

Things start happening. As the band set up on stage the tall, elegant figure of Charlotte Cray graces the stage. The band's a trio but there's an extra mic set up. An impromptu alteration makes the trio a quartet. The expectation grows as final preparations take place. An unintelligible mumble comes from the stage and then, it happens. It comes from out of nowhere. One minute quiet expectation, the next everyone in the room has the sense knocked out of their bodies. It's like a bomb just hit in a perfectly executed, synchronous assault on the mind, the stomach and every sense in the body. Using lucid phrasing on the guitar and well weighted lyrics Cray turns this immense power into a strangely uplifting blaster of a rock song.

The bassist, Chris Sharples has gone nuts. NME's best description of the man is 'on the cusp of genius and insanity'. You can tell why, he's everywhere. Any more inspiration and this lot would be a jumbled mess of indistinguishable genius. This experience was augmented by Miss Cray's backing vocals, whether she'll stay in the band I don't know, but I hear she has been in the studio

with them.

Look out for Kick Me Out, Just Like We Planned and The Only Girl I Want. Go to their Myspace page; www.myspace.com/mypictureband.

David Ellis

How's My Pop
The Gregson Centre, Lancaster

A packed room full of ebullient teenagers from Lancaster's Indie scene sporting outsized necklaces, big glasses and stripy knee high socks, cigarette smoke wafting into the rafters and a ripple of excitement as How's My Pop come onto the stage. The drum beat of the hugely popular *Laura Laura* kicks in and the audience go mad. 'Laura Laura are you gonna get home tonight?' they scream at Andy Raven, the charismatic lead vocalist. It's like we've all been injected with an amazing concoction of Pro-Plus and Lucozade.

We all know a Laura. Drinks alcopops to get smashed, tears up a club dancefloor and passes out into taxi cab. This is one of the band's biggest strengths. They sing like they mean it, and make us believe it. I came here not knowing anything about the band but a murmur of hype and I'm loving it. The atmosphere is electric with girls throwing themselves at the stage and singers stage-diving off.

The best song for me though, is the perky *Turn off your Television (Turn on your brain)* with its insanely catchy guitar chords and cleverly written lyrics. A cross between Razorlight and The Ordinary Boys with an electro twist, meet pop-rock group How's My Pop. Comprising Tom Diffenthal mastering the keyboard and synth, Chris Macneil on the drumset and Matt Canty strumming the bass. Citing Bob Dylan and The Jam as their influences they joined their musical talents alongside Raven whilst studying at college and now are gigging with a full set of massive dirty guitar chords, plinky Northern notes and a huge amount of enthusiasm.

If you like your rock and indie, I definitely recommend checking this band out. They're rocking out venues all around the North and hopefully will be coming down here too. They usually have CDs at gigs too for less than a fiver, so it might be worth digging out those coppers and taking one home. Try www.myspace.com/howsmypop for a taster. The band are awesome live and deserve to be signed to a label. Snap them up while you can!

Priya Garg

Doing It Yourself

Thanks to the internet (amongst other things) it is now easier to find bands, have them play at a show or put out a record by them. This way of taking control away from the established music business has been around for ages. What is it all about? By **Matty Hoban**.

Obvious furniture and Ikea jokes aside, doing it yourself or DIY in music encompasses an ethical code and outlook as opposed to an actual sound.

Back in the day – I'm not sure which day it was, let's say Monday – the idea of a music business was new, and then before you knew it, it was the 1970s. This decade saw the arrival of supergroups, prog-rock and so many other evils that Jehovah's Witnesses were practically foaming at the mouth at the thought of the rapture finally arriving. What the people needed was music to get back to its grassroots after a period of time consisting of saxophone and guitar solos. As many know, punk was the inevitable reaction to the corporate face of stadium rock, and along with the back to basics approach to music that was punk came the ethics of DIY. Record labels such as Factory were more than a label; they were an ideology. Record shops such as Rough Trade popped up in 1976 and sells records by more obscure acts focussing on creativity rather than accessibility and remaining firmly independent.

The decade of excess and privatisation that was the 80s brought a refinement of music and it was inspired by punk and it was called New Wave. Music was heading in the right direction but these bands quickly went to selling out stadiums and thus formed the cleverly-titled No Wave scene in New York. The music varied from angular atonal noise to noise attached to classic punk beats a la Sonic Youth. DIY was never always about music and the No Wave Cinema movement in New York was influential on underground cinema throwing up Jim Jarmusch and Steve Buscemi amongst others. The central idea is reject the accepted rules and to take control of music by giving bands who deserve exposure – but might not be that accessible – and give them that exposure without working for a profit. This is a major tenet of DIY, being not-for-profit and pro-creativity.

So DIY had established itself as a way to do things; put on gigs, put out records and make small magazines all celebrating a love for music and not money. There are a lot more to the ideas and ethics behind it and has a long and interesting history with many great bands. It is not the only way to do things, nor is the right way to a lot of people. To more modern and local things, there are many people in London putting on gigs with a wide variety of bands/artists/acts. One of these people is Christopher Tipton who founded Upset The Rhythm; they put out records and put on shows with bands predominantly

from the US. He is also an Imperial alumnus (he studied Biology) and was President of the Alternative Music Society – a highly-esteemed position that this journalist held. He took the time out of organising Frieze Music 2006 – on tonight and tomorrow (13th and 14th October) featuring Sunn O))), Burning Star Core, Liars and Erase Errata – to express his views on what he thinks DIY is all about.

There is no real one way of going about doing things yourself as it obviously varies with the person who is doing it, and not everyone shares the same beliefs. This comes across when Chris says, 'I don't really believe in the DIY aesthetic if this means something is defiantly amateur. Things have moved on since the early nineties. As much as I love K records (independent label based around Olympia, Washington) etc, this isn't the only model of DIY available to us.' One problem with DIY is that not many people are aware of it. This breeds a certain snobbery and 'There are a lot of people out there who use obscure music and the concept of DIY to be cool but it shouldn't be about elitism. It's not cool by virtue of the fact that barely anyone knows about it.'

Upset the Rhythm started, 'Because bands I loved were having a bad time in the UK, were playing bad shows, were poorly paid and some were even avoiding the UK on their touring schedules to Europe, because of the costs and the hassle. I knew there was an audience for these artists and couldn't believe someone else wasn't doing something. So I did it myself.' Many other promoters (such as Damn You! in Nottingham) took this affirmative action in relation to overseas bands. Chris and the rest of Upset the Rhythm started by working everything out for themselves as they didn't know many promoters when they started or how they worked. However he did '...have an immense amount of respect for Tony Green from Rare Pleasures. He used to do a lot of shows in London and his heart is in the right place.' Chris continues that, 'I used to see him at shows, handing out flyers for his own shows that he had made himself and he would talk to you about the upcoming shows, what they would be like. This enthusiasm and attention to detail inspired me. As a result I don't hire flyerers and do it myself or with other Upset the Rhythm members.' One of the focuses of DIY has been to establish a community that results in a dedicated audience for bands and 'They are the lifeblood.'

There are other promoters in London who work in a DIY way and are doing similar things. There is Miles of Smiles put on bands who vary from avant-rock in the form of Enablers to elegant folk in the form of Viking Moses. The bands tend to be from the US and abroad with local bands supporting. There is also Undereducated and Unluck who respectively cover alternative-indie



One of the pillars in the Notting Hill Rough Trade displaying posters for shows, you can display these posters for free and they even give you a staple gun

noise and post-rock-noise bands. All this talk of noise is not to deter you, those who make noise in a pretentious way aim to challenge the listener and those use it as a way to heighten the music. Also of note are Silver Rocket who put on brilliant gigs of heavy-rock bands from home and abroad with a brilliant dancing session afterwards.

One thing you may have heard of as well is the festival called All Tomorrow's Parties. This is an independent festival hosted in holiday camps in Camber Sands and now Dorset. It started off with Barry Hogan – suspiciously similar-looking to my name – wanting to get bands over from the US to curate or hand-pick the bands that will play at the festival. The bands or people that curated brought over many brilliant bands and the next festival is in early December and Thurston Moore is curating, expect some avant-garde legends to be playing. All Tomorrow's Parties also put on gigs in London with people such as Ennio Morricone, Calexico and Isis taking part.

However in regards to a scene Chris Tipton thinks that, 'There isn't really a scene per se.'

But 'There are people doing similar things and you see this when you book UK tours, other people doing shows like yours who really care. London is more fragmented and driven by commercial promoters and club nights, there is competition rather than cooperation in the main. There are a couple of promoters we have worked with but relationships are casual.' The word scene is often associated with journalism to generalise what is happening. I may come across as a hypocrite by calling this section *The Scene* and you'd be right, I am a hypocrite. But then so are all of us and it is silly to suggest otherwise.

Instead of a scene there is more of an ethic associated with DIY. This ethic can be seen as anti-capitalist and I guess it is, where capitalism stands for competition and profiteering, the DIY ethic is about helping each other out for mutual benefit and if you happen to make money at the end of the day, you put it back into your enterprise or pay the bands more.

To get an insight into the ethics Chris offered up this, 'Ethically, you have to be



conscious of the fact that most people you deal with are doing this for their day job. It is their life's work and you need to treat it with the respect it deserves. In the UK in particular, music is seen as a hobby or a passing fad.' This last point is very noteworthy since magazines like the NME promote new and up-and-coming bands. This creates an atmosphere of disposability – although ironically it seems these days that said publication seems to put the same bands on the cover despite being about new music. Great bands who keep going out of passion for what they are doing without much recognition rely on passionate music fans who share their vision. The nature of up-and-coming can be seen as redundant in a climate where albums and bands will always remain classically brilliant.

You can find out more about the ethics on various websites that I will provide below also with links to the DIY promoters websites. I also recommend you go to record shops where they put up gig posters on the two pillars in Notting Hill. The Covent Garden Rough Trade has posters all over the wall. You can also see posters in various Music and Video Exchanges – Notting Hill being one of the best for displaying posters. There should also be flyers dotted around. I recommend that you have a look around and go to one of the gigs. They are usually very cheap to get in and it is amazing that more people don't just take a risk sometimes. Also in this article I mentioned quite a few bands that might be a bit obscure. I hope this doesn't put you off and you investigate as much as you can, not to sound patronising but you more than often get out what you put in.

If you fancy putting on your own gigs or putting out your own records then it is very easy to do. In London though, because there are lots of people doing their own thing you should look to what you can provide that is different from all the others. This may sound obvious but you want to cultivate an audience and it's good for people to know where to go for a certain genre or what to expect. Another point raised by from Chris is, 'If you know there is an artist you want to see and they haven't got a show in your town, put the show on yourself. It is a lot easier than you might think. If you want to see them there is a likelihood other people will want to as well.' Also small DIY promoters tend to be friendly, passionate and enthusiastic about music so if you want to start out then I'm sure they'd be happy to help you.

Now to more local things. This may be shameless self-promotion but you can get involved in putting on gigs through the Alternative Music Society at Imperial. I am responsible for organising the gig night *Kids Will Be Skeletons* and we bring in many bands from all over the country and occasionally abroad. It is a great way to get involved with music through the practical runnings of promoting bands and gigs. We work for a DIY ethic by making the entry cost for the audience as cheap as possible so that all the money goes to covering the transport costs for the bands. A lot of bands who play at these shows tend to want only basic costs covered such as transport. If you would like to get involved then tell the society. There is a poster for the next gig night on the back of *Femm*.

Another DIY legacy is the zine, this is a small magazine of reviews and features that talks about small bands usually and you'll find many music zines on the internet. The idea of the zine has been around for a long time starting with black and white A4 typewritten sheets. With the internet it has become easier to spread the word with online zines.

I could devote a whole article to zines – and I probably will – but part of the music section at *Felix* are involved with www.TheMusicZine.com. This website along with many small zines is run by voluntary contributions so if you'd like to contribute then get in touch.

I hope this article has given you an insight into what DIY is all about. Like I've said, it varies from person to person but what it means to most people can be summarised in Chris Tipton's words: 'DIY is a state of mind and a declaration of intent.'

the scene



The aftermath of a XBXR at Upset The Rhythm (top) and the other pillar in the Notting Hill Rough Trade (bottom)

DIY Promoters and Useful Links

Some Promoters/Labels/Venues

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Zines/Online Sources of Information

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www.llss.tv
www.dustedmagazine.com
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/DIY_ethic

Festival season is over. For now.

Checking out festivals large and small this summer, Reading fares well in 2006, despite a less than average line-up. Get Loaded In The Park fails to impress and Escape Festival impresses all. **Honey Monroe, Nick Simpson, Simon Haywood and Gregory Mead** all share their experiences.

This year was my ninth consecutive hurrah at Reading Festival. I think I decided at about my fifth year I was determined to make it ten in-a-row, and fingers crossed there doesn't seem to have been much that has stood in my way or as yet stands in my way of making it - festival apathy due to the increasingly downhill line-ups, aside. In fact, the festival is such an old haunt of mine that in order to do this year's festival justice for the purpose of this review I shall attempt to imagine the experience through the eyes of a festival newbie. This won't be that easy. But then considering I spent most of the festival in a drink and smoke filled haze of insanity, I don't think it will be so hard either.

I shall begin my review at the festival Main Gate on Friday at about 1pm. (Yes, yes a bit late for a 'first timer' I know but after almost a decade I don't need the extra days in a tent to warm up to it all.) Here goes nothing. After the weeks of saving up and then waiting for the ticket to arrive and then feeling it in my grubby hands and all the mental planning and sleepless nights of excitement, Reading Festival here I come! It's just like I always imagined. Only with more strange smells. So many people, so many, many people, some strange looking and some just like me. Everybody was herded like ants or weird Amazonian, brightly-coloured flies in the same direction, generally carrying at least twice their body weight in either booze or other such related paraphernalia destined to help them survive the next three days.

We proceed to march confidently through the gates of fire, past the people trying to get a ticket and the touts trying to sell you one, past the people handing out leaflets on Christianity and how to avoid the lure of the devil. Then past the yellow day-glow jacket wearing arena staff wafting the crowds this way and that and along the long dusty dirt road into the camping area. WOAH! No, that's not my reaction to the sheer size of this small city in a field, comprised mainly of balloon-like coloured pebbles, that is the cry of one caught in a breeze of portaloos stench and it's only Friday. Wahey!

Undeterred and our tent up, we're ready to grab a piece of the action. First up on our list of bands to see is Belle and Sebastian. We fight our way through the masses to a quiet pocket to the front-right of the Main Stage crowd and with only part of my view blocked, braced ourselves to begin jumping around like happy indie sweethearts to all our favourite suicidal lullabies. Although the band certainly do have bags of sing-a-long shoegazing melodies in their repertoire, I didn't feel this late afternoon slot on the largest stag did them justice. Everything sounded a bit same-y to me, even for them, and I felt watching them was more of a nostalgic exercise than a satisfying musical moment.

The Mystery Jets however, were re-

ally tight and definitely on form. I saw them open the Carling Tent last year and it is really great to see how their fanbase has blossomed and how much confidence they have gained. They played some of the stuff off the new album and it was a pleasure to see it all working with their usual style. Definitely a band to catch now while you still can get to see them in a venue you won't get lost in.

To be honest I felt like the days highlight's were going to be The Yeah Yeah Yeahs, The Vines and Primal Scream, and I certainly wasn't disappointed. Apart from one of our crew having a major white out during *Maps*, I couldn't have asked for my experience to be more rockingly festival-tastic. Uninspired by the line-up we had all been a bit liberal with our alcohol intake and I'm pretty sure it was during our early evening sing-a-longs while linking arms and fisting the air, that I remember vaguely remarking to myself that this was starting to seem like the bona fide time I had been promised.

The crowd lapped up the YYYs, the majority of which were made up of 16-19yr olds suitably and impeccably dressed and accessorized. The band played like they had been waiting all year for this slot and they were the perfect prelude to the rest of the weekend, if only there had been something a bit less of a letdown than The Chiefs to follow their stomping footsteps. In my personal opinion the Chiefs are the most overrated thing since Hovis started mixing flour, yeast and water, and to be honest looking at the waning size of the crowd at the Main stage, I'm probably not alone in my thinking.

Whether you love or hate Craig Nichols, The Vines are a band who are very good at what they do, and the atmosphere in the tent was forgiving as well as vibrantly loyal. They may have been off the map for a while but the first 15 rows of the Radio One tent at least knew all the songs and sung to nearly every chorus. A long time coming perhaps, but the steady fanbase and sophistication of the band live prove they obviously haven't been resting on their laurels.

Saturday's highlights will be easy for me to recount seeing as for me there were only about a handful of bands I wanted to see. Main Stage headliners Muse, of course, because it seems no matter how many times you see this band there will always be something dramatic, fresh and untamed about their performances. With a huge selection of work to get through they picked a varied but mostly *Hullabaloo*-era set and the crowd loved it.

Sunday was all about the dance tent and the lead up to headliners Soulwax's *Niteversions* set of 2 Many DJs and Vitalic was just about enough to send us into orgasmic overload. Sadly, the Vitalic set wasn't all I had dreamt of it being and although the temperature and atmosphere inside the tent was rising fast, the sweat from dancing mixed with jets of cold water sprayed by the security at the front gave it an Alton Towers twist I wasn't so sure I enjoyed. For our finale, 2 Many DJs were greeted with the kind of screaming appreciation that an internationally revered live dance act could expect and they gave us back exactly what we were after. In short, they rocked!



ALL PHOTOS BY GREG MEAD

From top to bottom; Main Stage, Festival desperation, Vitalic and finally Muse

Get Loaded in The Park

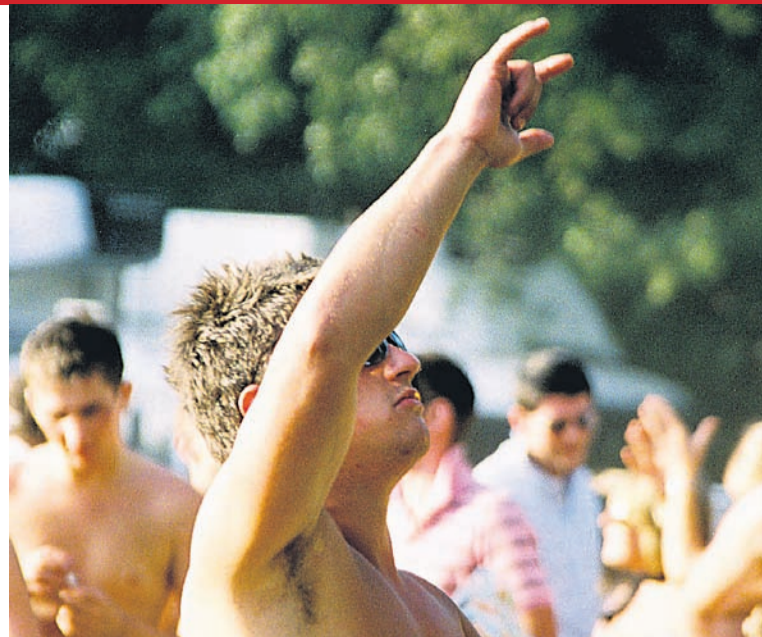
When you are young, summer is glorious; six weeks of holidays to play about in the sun, maybe even go to Butlin's or the beach; a time of innocence. Then you get older and instead of basking in the sun or day-tripping to natural wonders such as Cheddar Gorge you prefer to stand in the rain in a muddy field all bank holiday weekend, while camping in a bog next door, justifying the whole affair by calling it the 'festival experience'. Admittedly festivals are very cool, wonders such as T in the Park and Leeds consistently have excellent line-ups ready to entertain you all day and night. But in recent years there has been a rash of new festivals cropping up all over the place and one such festival is Get Loaded in the Park, part of the Metro Weekender (yes, that's a festival ran by a free newspaper). Running on the Sunday of August bank holiday it follows on from South West 4, a 'dance' festival on the Saturday, aptly named after the local postcode.

This festival is a bit of an oddity, located on Clapham Common there is no camping over the weekend, not that any one would want to anyway since both days lie at different extremes of music taste. Because there are no campers so there is no feeling of continuity across the event and none of that happy go lucky atmosphere that permeates every facet of Glastonbury.

Turning up an hour after the event started, the site was dead. I saw more press photographers than bona fide audience members although some did have mighty fine cameras. But festivals are about the music I hear you cry, so lets talk about the line-up. It was all very generic; Lilly Allen, Babyshambles, the Buzzcocks, James Lavelle and the list goes on. The artists were all of a certain quality and I was mildly excited about the whole thing, they even had 65 Days of Static and Vitalic playing tent sets. Adam Freeland and Juice Alheim was one act I was certainly looking forward to and as soon as I arrived I bought an over-priced programme (like V, the only way of knowing what is on is paying through the nose for some laminated cardboard). To my horror the genius organisers had decided to put one of the most talented acts on the main stage at 12 noon, i.e. playing to a plastic bag and about ten thousand fag butts trodden into mud.

Disappointed and heart broken I wandered about, avoiding the Cuban Brothers on the Main Stage and looking in empty tents until I got so bored I went to Sainsbury's. Then a sandwich and a McDonalds later (plus a free Coca Cola glass!)

I returned to the 'arena' for more fun and games. Vitalic played a reasonable set but it was mid-afternoon and the mood was none existent. Perhaps it was just not a good day for electro, so I went over to see 65 Days of Static. On arrival some gypsies were on the stage and playing in the slot for 65DoS. On closer inspection they turned out to be a band, not gypsies and were covering the gap in the schedule where 65 had dropped out! Could it get any worse? Not really, I studied the programme some more and sat down to read the Sunday Times for a good 30 minutes, basking in



ALL PHOTOS BY GREG MEAD

Escape Festival (Clockwise from top-left); Random dude, Erol Alkan and crowd for Pendulum; Babyshambles at GLITP (below)

the sun like the the good old days.

Finally, I gave up. The last act was on at 8pm, presumably because none of the residents living around the park would want rock blaring from the common at 11pm, the time was currently 5pm and there was no way I was going to hang around for another 3 hours for the gamble of Babyshambles actually turning up at all, so I caught the 345 home and had a Nesquik.

I think I maybe being a little harsh to the whole event, if you do like Lilly Allen and the in your face style of comedy which had its own tent all day, or in fact the feel good indie bands and general off centre alternative pop then Get Loaded in the Park is for you. Otherwise I recommend going to a more established event.



Escape Festival Swansea

For those of you who don't know, it's a one day dance festival organised by Godskitchen, and pretty damn sweet it is. Running for its 7th year in a row, the place was packed out and considering the line-up, it's not surprising. It's not every day that so many world class acts turn up in Swansea. Only once a year and we were there.

The festival being in Wales, and us being in London unfortunately resulted in us starting our mission at the obscenely early hour of 9am. Setting off from Euston station, with only a bottle of vodka to keep us company, we gradually watched the train fill up with more and more festival goers, all wearing sunglasses and most of them babbling in some form of incoherent Welsh accent, but that didn't matter, it was great fun. 3 hours later and we were there.

The first thing that struck me about the site on arrival was how full of people it was already, after only being open for 2 hours, obviously it was pretty popular with the locals. The second thing that struck me was the temperature; it felt like my face was about to evaporate whilst my skin caught fire. Perfect conditions to dance in for 8 hours straight!

The acts we were planning on seeing didn't come on until in early evening, so we explored the site. The site is basically on a huge hill with two fields in it, with the Radio 1 Stage at the bottom of one and the Godskitchen Stage at the bottom of the other with Raveology and Urban Arenas in covered tents half way down, and random attractions dotted around the place.

With 4 or 5 beers in me it was about time to check the place out. We caught the end of Akira The Don on the Urban stage which was great, despite the crazy heat in the tent, the lead singer kitted out in orange jump suit with orange goggles to match. They also had the honour of being the only act with a guitar at the festival.

Getting more into the party mood when Tall Paul came on, we felt more compelled to

join the ranks of the dancing. We finally did when Marco V hit the stage and began to blare out some beats that we couldn't resist, everyone was enjoying every minute. Yet our time at the Radio One Stage was soon to end, for the Raveology Arena was calling us. The late afternoon sun brought with it the start of a packed night of raving, the time for some Drum 'n' Bass was upon us.

The Raveology arena was a slight surprise but mostly a good one. It wasn't quite as full as I expected, yet it meant like all the other stages you could freely get right to the front and have room to dance. In effect it had exactly the right amount of people to give it the atmosphere needed and not feel claustrophobic. We were there to catch the beginning of Pendulum, one of the acts at the top of my list and they didn't disappoint.

The final plan for the evening was to catch the end of Erol Alkan's set, even though we see him every week at Trash, his set was largely more electro in style (predictably) and followed on perfectly to Mylo where we could catch the last of the summer sun whilst enjoying some relaxed and funky beats. This truly was one of my personal highlights, as again we strolled right to front of the crowd to join the masses. The sun, sound and setting were perfect for that point in the evening and I'm sure all those in attendance would agree.

We then caught the end of Armin Van Buuren, Groovrider and Fabio, and the rest of the night till close was lasers, bass and air horns galore, what else can I say? Not much. I was enjoying myself too much at this point to note anything more.

All good things come to end. With most people having vacated the site by midnight in a manner that has been applauded by the police, which is a credit to everyone. So off it was to buses, taxis and the like, with many heading back to hotels. Or for those like me who forgot to book one, it was off to a club to continue the party until 4am, before strolling the cold streets of Swansea waiting for the first trains.

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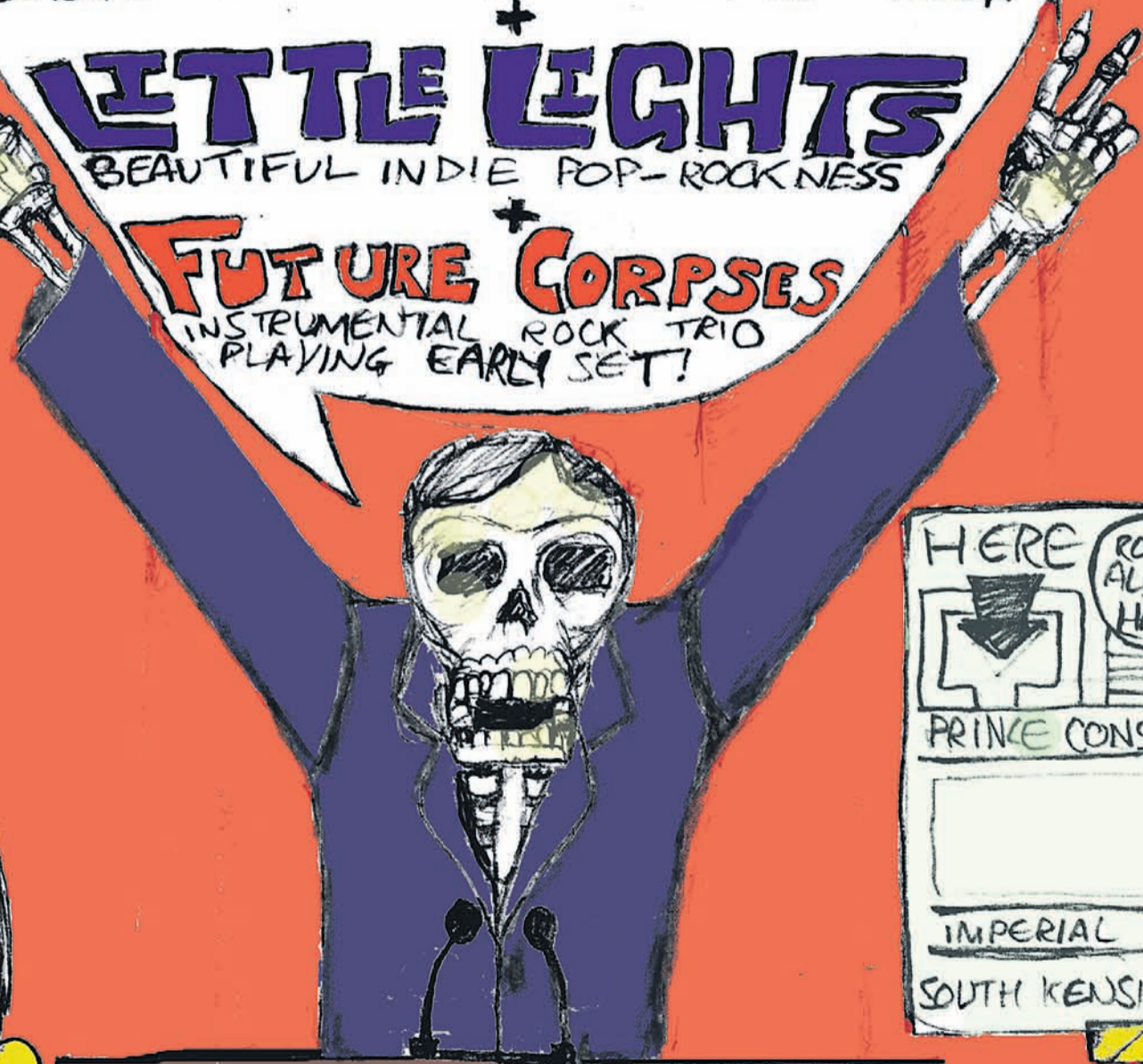
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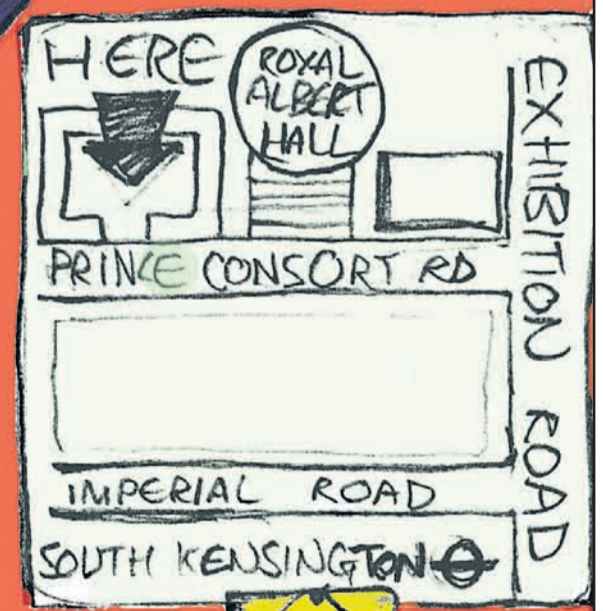


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Jewels in the Serpentine

Tony Heywood's embellished sculptures are giving a little sparkle to Hyde Park



SuperAlgal Bloom by Tony Heywood. On show next to the Serpentine Bridge in Hyde Park until the end of the month.

Emily Lines
Arts Editor

Something strange is growing in the Serpentine, and it isn't mould from a tramp who fell in and drowned last week. No, it's sculptor Tony Heywood's newest piece, SuperAlgal Bloom.

Inspired by microscopic photography of phytoplankton and zooplankton, and by the blue and green algal blooms that regularly appear

in the Serpentine, Heywood has created a set of serenely colourful pieces that dance gracefully on the surface of the lake.

Catching your eye as you cross the bridge, they glitter like crystals in the sunshine, and reflect so perfectly that it's hard to tell where the bejewelled forms end and the lake begins.

Despite being based on algae, the forms are strangely reminiscent of mutating watery forms. From glid-

ing swans to clam shells, they seem perfectly in harmony with their surroundings, and Heywood has avoided the easy trap (so completely fallen into by Jim Lambie's 2005 Turner work) of making sculpture which is garish and tacky.

But the sculptor had a darker motivation in this piece. He wants to comment on the appearance of mutant algae strains in reaction to changing environmental conditions. Indeed, one can imagine in

the half-light of dusk that the sculptures would take on an eerie fairytale-like quality, gliding across the lake like a deformed sea monster.

The sculptures will be there until the end of October. If you crave respite from the pressures of university life and have an hour or two to spare I highly recommend that you take the time to wander through Kensington Gardens (head towards the Serpentine Gallery) to see them.

Calling all theatre lovers

Emily Lines

If you know anything at all about theatre and the performing arts, you'll probably have heard of the Laurence Olivier awards. They are by far the most prestigious awards in Theatreland, and are handed out each year to the most exceptional theatre, dance and opera productions.

Since 1976 the awards have been given out in more than 20 different categories to the most legendary and iconic performers to grace the London stage, as well as the most impressive and innovative productions.

What's this got to do with me, I hear you cry. Surely these high-brow cultural events are beyond the influence of the theatre-going public.

Not so, for each year the judging panel, as well as including the cream of the theatre world, includes 14 members of the public.

There are eight available positions on the Theatre Panel, two on the Opera Panel, two on the Dance and two on the Affiliates Panel.

If you are lucky enough to be selected you will spend 2007 going to all the biggest and most exciting shows, and ultimately deciding who gets the awards.

Applications are now open, and although a passion for the theatre is a requirement, the positions are open to any and all, regardless of age and profession.

To apply you'll need to write a 150-word review of a production you've seen recently and also provide a list of every production you've seen in the last 12 months.

You can pick up an application form at a West End theatre, or go to their site, olivierawards.co.uk.

The cacophony of Piano/Forte

Piano/Forte
Royal Court Theatre
Until Saturday, October 14

Usually, theatre reviews are intended to give the reader an idea of whether a given play is worth going to see. Once they have been given a few hints as to the plot, the cast, and the quality of the production, the reader may be tempted into seeing a play that they wouldn't otherwise, or to avoid a disgusting piece of self-conscious pretentiousness.

By those criteria, this review will be almost utterly useless. *Piano/Forte* finishes its month-long run on Saturday, which is the day after this edition of *Felix* will be published. That gives you, dear reader, two potential nights to buy tickets and see this play. I urge you to sell your dead grandmother's gold teeth if that's what it takes to get seats for *Piano/Forte*. You will not see such a vivid, chaotic and furiously engaging stage production for quite some time.

Terry Johnson, fresh from sending up the godfather of cinematic suspense in *Hitchcock Blonde*,

writes (and directs) *Piano/Forte* especially for its two leads: Kelly Reilly (*Pride & Prejudice*, *The Libertine*) and Alicia Witt (*Cybill*, *Vanilla Sky*).

The opening scene shows Abigail (Alicia Witt), a disturbed, agoraphobic, quiet (the Piano of the title) but astoundingly gifted pianist (Alicia Witt is a concert-standard pianist and plays all of the music that is heard onstage). She is alone in the oak-panelled house in which she was raised and now lives, looked after by her mother's Australian brother Ray (Danny Webb).

This peaceful idyll is then utterly destroyed by the return of her sister, Louise (Kelly Reilly), an equally disturbed, angry, maniacal hell-raiser (the eponymous Forte in the title), whose only skill is causing chaos. This prodigal homecoming is precipitated by the impending wedding of the girls' father to a vacuous page 3 model. The marriage symbolically coincides with the anniversary of their mother's shotgun suicide in the barn outside. When the couple arrives, the heated verbal exchanges shift to a barrage of vicious semi-accusatory barbs from

a topless Louise, ceasing only when the father leaves the stage.

From this point onwards, the movement turns into a chaotic crescendo, and to describe it would do it no justice. We are then left to pick over the obviously broken lives onstage; a set of hurt and damaged people, for whom normalcy is not possible. Blame becomes irrelevant. When the end comes, it does so in a totally different kind crescendo, and finishes in a gunshot. Abigail is alone onstage, playing Ravel. The beauty of the play lies in the disturbed lives and minds of characters who have failed to move on from the suicide of the person that they all loved. The play becomes a stunning study of the varying types of insanity that trauma can engender, especially the martyrdom-obsessed and dysfunctionally furious personality of Louise (Kelly Reilly deserves a special mention for her tempestuous portrayal) and the quiet madness of Abigail.

Piano/Forte has a range like few other plays, from the chaotic farce to pathos, romance, vicious wit and angry youth.

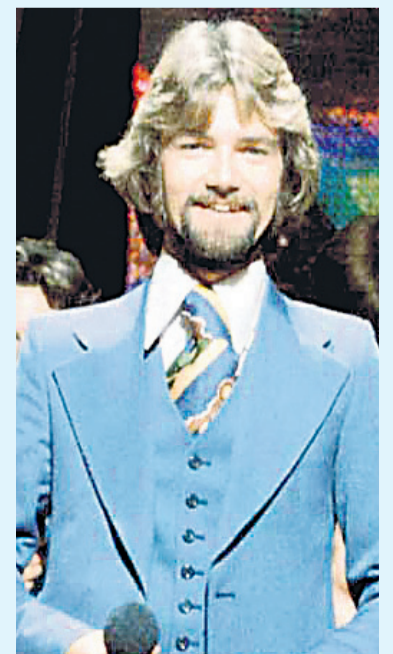
Andrew Somerville

WIN Noel, he'll make you Happy

OK, so he's not going come into your bedroom and sing the 'Mr Blobby' song to banish your blues, but if you've seen Noel Edmonds recently on *Deal or No Deal*, you'll know he's chirpier than ever (if that's possible). Well, it turns out he's started doing something called cosmic ordering, which apparently changes your life and gets you a slot on daytime TV and into housewives' hearts.

We at *Felix* are constantly worried about the effects of stress on IC students, so we've teamed up with Noel to offer one lucky end-of-their-tether reader a signed (yes SIGNED) copy of Noel's new self-help book, *Positively Happy*.

To win, just answer this simple question: "What was the name of Noel's hit 1990s TV show?" Send me your answer by Tuesday 5pm to arts.felix@ic.ac.uk. Signed photos for two runners-up to drool over.



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Introducing 'The Guardian'

Ashton Kutcher and Kevin Costner team up for an action-packed adventure.

Yuen Ai Lee
Film Editor

Kevin Costner returns to the silver screen with *The Guardian*. Taking the lead as Ben Randall, he is a legendary Coast Guard Rescue Swimmer and we join Ben at the scene of his unravelling. At the height of a massive storm, Ben Randall loses his best friend and the rest of his rescue crew when he attempts to save a boat of shipwrecked fishermen.

Sent on an unwanted sabbatical to recuperate from the accident, he is forced to teach a new batch of recruits who want to be Rescue Swimmers like himself. At 'A School', the academy to train rescuers so that others may live, Ben Randall locks head with cocky swimming champion

Jake Fischer (Ashton Kutcher). Jake is a mystery by himself, he is a swimming champion and he has been offered scholarships to Ivy League universities but he has chosen to eat humble pie as a Rescue Swimmer. He proves to be the strongest and the fastest among all the recruits and yet he fails to obtain Ben's approval until a bar fight turns these rivals into comrades.

The Guardian is a story about the unsung heroes from the U.S. Coast Guard, which has been aptly described by Ashton Kutcher as one of the few branches that the U.S. Government trains only to save lives, not take them. It must be

noted that the action scenes in the storm benefited tremendously from Andrew Davis' meticulousness and expertise in cinematography.

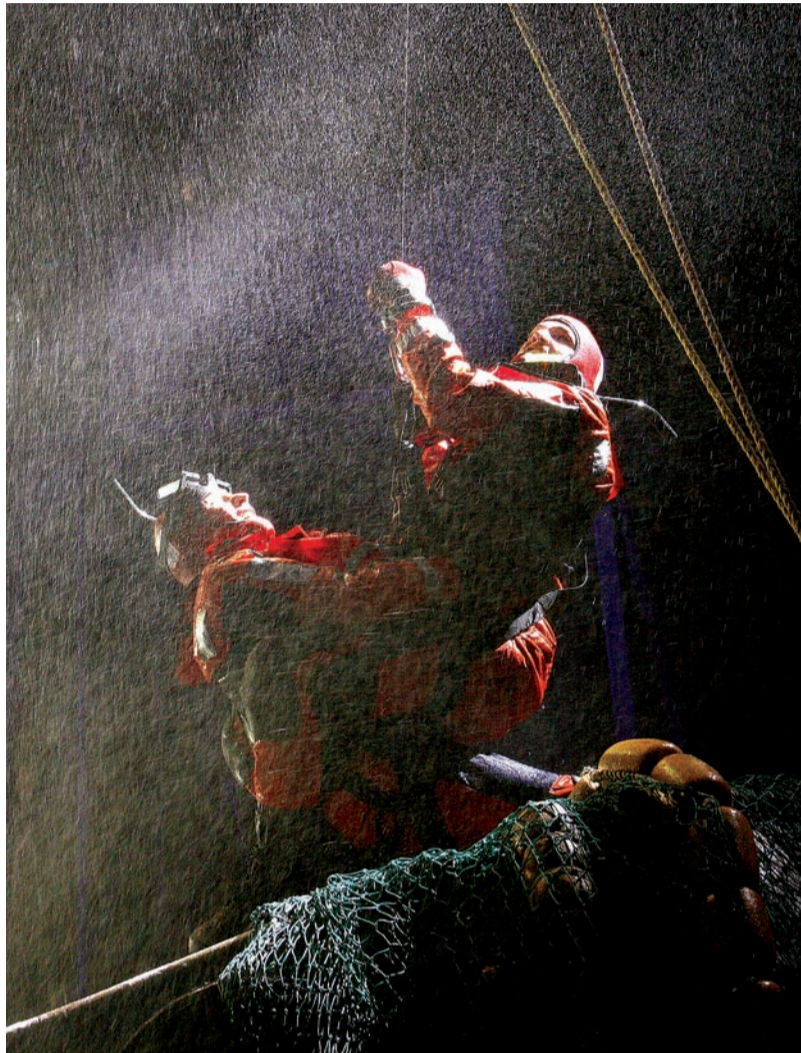
Unfortunately for *The Guardian*, the story is largely predictable and it is a strange mixture of *Top Gun* and Ashton Kutcher's famous comedic personality. The length of the film was also a bit of a drag and the cheesy ending left the audience with a bitter aftertaste. However, Jake Fischer's confrontation with Ben Randall was extremely realistic and demonstrated a side of Ashton Kutcher's talents which have not been immediately obvious in his previous films.

Fortunately for *Felix*, we managed to ask Ashton Kutcher his opinion on the films he has made so far and the kind of films he prefers to be in henceforth.

Ashton: As a young actor, you don't have a lot of choices in the beginning. However, now that my choices have grown, I like to be in movies with a story I like to tell. It does not matter if it's a romantic comedy, horror or action film. It is the story that matters.

Another interesting piece of news is that the U.S. Coast Guard set up a recruiting booth at the official opening of *The Guardian* in Chicago.

It is rather inspirational to watch people risking their lives to save others. However, will it encourage you to do the same? You be the judge when the film opens on October 20.



Ashton Kucher and Kevin Costner star in *The Guardian*.

Ewan McGregor in sexual scenes? No.



Some people just don't know when to give up.

Yuen Ai Lee

At first glance, you might wonder why *Felix* has dedicated its film section to reviewing a pornographic film. Despite the title, there is no sex at all in the film. *Scenes Of A Sexual Nature* is a movie about relationships, an interwoven net of emotions of seven different couples who were all spending a sunny afternoon in Hampstead Heath.

Andrew Lincoln stars as Jamie, a middle-aged married man who suddenly becomes transfixed with a schoolgirl's underwear. This turn of events does not bode well with his wife, Molly (Holly Aird) who had just voiced her doubts about their marriage. The brilliant aspect of this scene is the indirect method with which Molly expressed her worries. Unfortunately true for the rest of the world, some women can be dreadful bush-beaters but not all will be as ingenious as Molly to mention it with the help of *Cosmo*.

Other notable couples in the film include an elderly couple, Iris (Eileen Atkins) and Eddie (Benjamin Whitrow). When visiting their favourite viewpoint in Hampstead Heath, they meet and discover they were each other's dream lover 40 years ago. Seizing the rare chance of getting to know a stranger you fell in love with, they spend an afternoon getting to know each other. It is not always a good idea to meet the person of your dreams. Funny man, Noel (Tom Hardy) tries to chat up Anna (Sophie Okonedo) who has

just been dumped by a commitment-phobic. Can someone please get this guy a copy of *Chatting Up Girls For Dummies*?

To some people's dismay, Ewan McGregor did not sing or dance in this film. Instead of his usual cheeky mischievous girl-chasing self, he is trying a new sport i.e. boy-chasing. It might be shocking to imagine how trendy playing a gay character is in the film industry. However, the biggest shock comes from how realistic and convincing Ewan McGregor is as the promiscuous homosexual, Billy. His life-partner, Brian (Douglas Hodge) is desperate to have Billy all to himself. However, Billy demands a high price for his commitment. He wants to adopt a baby. Brian doesn't want a baby but will he compromise his own desires for the sake of love? Not to be cynical, but it isn't even a blood agreement.

The film is interesting and it is a light-hearted way to spend 93 minutes. However, the lack of change in scenery does lend a slight monotonous disadvantage. While the script is highly entertaining, it is a film without a true conclusion. When you watch this film, it feels like you have just been given a strange intimate perspective of these seven couples' lives for an afternoon. Its best advantage is it lacks the happily-ever-after and cheesy characteristic that usually defines a romantic comedy. In this case, *Scenes Of A Sexual Nature's* uniqueness might leave the audience semi-puzzled at the end of the show.

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Paid Previews

**Barnyard (PG) (RT 1h50) Sat/
Sun only: 11.10 13.40 16.00**

**The Guardian (12A) (RT 2h40)
Sat/Sun: 18.30 Thurs only:
17.30 20.40**

Subtitled Shows

**The Queen (12A) (RT 2h5)
Tue 18.30**

Audio Description

**The Queen (12A) (RT 2h5)
Daily: (13.40 16.00 Not Sat/
Sun) (18.30 Not Sat/Sun/Mon)
21.40**

New releases

**Texas Chainsaw Massacre:
The Beginning (18) (RT 1h55)
Daily: (11.45 Sat/Sun only)
14.05 16.20 18.50 21.15
Sat only: 23.40**

**The History Boys (15) (RT
2h10) Daily: (10.40 Sat/Sun
only) 13.10 15.50 18.20
20.50 Sat only: 23.30**

**Open Season (PG) (RT 1h50)
Daily: (11.00 Sat/Sun only)
13.30 15.40 18.10 20.20**

General showings

**The Devil Wears Prada (PG)
(RT2h10) Daily: (10.30 11.30
Sat/Sun only) (13.00 Not Sat)
14.00 15.30 16.30 18.00
19.00 20.30 21.30
Sat Late: 23.00**

**The Departed (18) (RT 2h55)
Daily: (10.00 Sat/Sun only)
13.20 14.20 16.40 17.40
20.00 21.00**

**Click (2006) (12A) (RT 2h10)
Daily: 12.20 (17.50 Not Thur)**

**The Queen (12A) (RT 2h5)
Daily: (13.40 16.00 Not Sat/
Sun) (18.30 Not Sat/Sun/Mon)
21.40**

**Hoodwinked (U) (1h45) Daily:
(10.10 Sat/Sun only) 12.10**

**The Children of Men (15) (RT
2h15) Daily: 15.00 (20.40 Not
Thur) Sat only: 23.15**

**Talladega Nights (12A) (RT
2hr10) Sat only: 22.30**

at the union october 13 - 26th

▶ **Wednesday 18th & 25th**

▶ **Thursday 26th**



SPORTS NIGHT

Every Wednesday At The Union!
Carlsberg, Tetley's & Blackthorn only
£1.30 a pint  only

Free entry before 9pm, £1 thereafter, free cloakroom for sports bags



Oculo Garden

Live Band Night

▶ **Friday 13th**

▶ **Friday 20th**



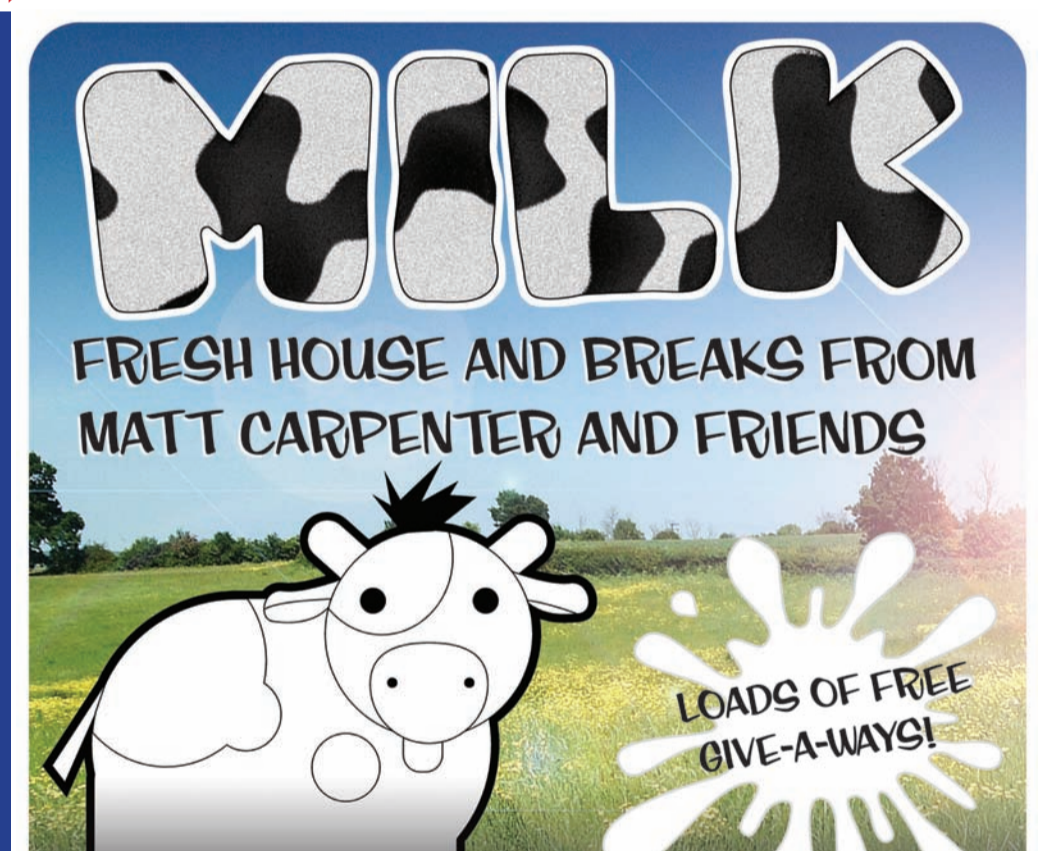
felix live!

Ross Copperman
(Sony BMG)

Rushmore

 the sailplanes



MILK!

FRESH HOUSE AND BREAKS FROM
 MATT CARPENTER AND FRIENDS

LOADS OF FREE
 GIVE-A-WAYS!

▶ **Also on this fortnight**

Fri 13th	Felix Live
Tue 17th	Da Vinci's - Quiz Night
Wed 18th	Fight Club - Bouncy Boxing!
Fri 20th	Milk! Fresh House and Breaks
Tue 24th	Da Vinci's - Quiz Night
Wed 25th	Sports Night
Thu 26th	Oculo Garden - Live Band Night
Fri 27th	Walking Dead Zombie Foam Party

▶ **Coming Up Next Week**



WALKING DEAD

HALLOWEEN
 SPECIAL
 FANCY DRESS
 ZOMBIE FOAM

Fabien Spacca
Money Broker, Interest Rate Options

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Raising our voices

In the spirit of Southside... let us defeat Imperial apathy

João Vitor Serra
Environment Editor

During my first two years at Imperial, I became depressingly aware of the Imperial College students' apathy.

During anti-war campaigns we went unnoticed in the hoards of students who had travelled from around the UK. At the Campaign against Climate Change, five year old children were clearly more entertained, and entertaining, throughout the march.

But worst of all, and this the freshers should particularly look down on us for, at the top-up fees marches our Students' Union took no significant role in representing the students and we ourselves never lifted a finger.

As a result of this apathy, places like Southside have become mere legends to most student. For those who had the pleasure of experiencing the halls (and bar) you will never forget their intricate maze-like design. It was possibly the easiest building to get lost in, yet as a result one of the most fun to walk into.

But Southside should teach us all a good lesson. Imperial was not always the dull quiet place that it is today. It would probably shock most of you to find that Southside was designed to prevent riots. Scarily enough, it would probably shock the students who first lived

in Southside even more to find that our generation did nothing more than sign a petition when the halls were knocked down and the bars closed forever.

Be a little less apathetic and bring back the Southside spirit by sharing your views.

As former *Felix* editor, Rupert Neate, wrote on the subject "even in my wildest imagination I cannot think of any cause against which we Imperial students would riot. Perhaps the library not being open 24 hours any more?!"

But I'm not here to complain about our students, I'm here to encourage people to be a little more like our predecessors: a little more vocal. We are not a lost, but we have to work a little harder at being heard.

As many may already know last year the Environmental Society organised the first ever Green Week. With a large group of students concerned with the College's disregard for its own environmental responsi-

bilities, Green Week aimed to raise awareness and asked the College to committee to certain targets. As a result, this is the first year that students can find recycling in all departments.

Others will also remember the HIV/AIDS campaign Positively Red Week organised by MedSIN, another student society. The week was filled with workshops and lectures and the students flaunted Red ribbons to show support for the cause.

In the coming year, this section hopes to become an open arena for discussing topics varying from global health to global warming and from education to poverty.

Societies are welcome to write about their events and campaigns, the purpose of this section is for you to have a means to communicate with students. Individuals are equally welcome to speak their minds or tell a story.

I encourage all students and staff to be a little less apathetic than we have recently been and bring back the Southside spirit by raising their voices and sharing your views. Who knows, maybe some time in the future the College will have to rebuild Southside so as to cage the beasts that are Imperial students.

To find out more or to write for this section, get in touch: environment.felix@imperial.ac.uk



Southside: initially built to contain riots, but now this legend merely represents a time when students still had an opinion.

Medsin starts the year with the Global Health Forum



Approximately 600 million people are at risk of contracting schistosomiasis because they live in tropical regions where water supply and sanitation are inadequate or non-existent.

Anenta Ratneswaren
Medsin Imperial

Medsin-Imperial is a group of students motivated to raise awareness of humanitarian and health related issues on a global and local level by organizing projects and campaigns, and we have been running for more than 8 years!

Medsin is the UK branch of the International Federation of Medical Students' Association (IFMSA), made up of local branches at all the major medical schools in the country.

At Medsin-Imperial, through our campaigns covering issues such as HIV/AIDS and sanitation, we raise awareness and lobby for change. We also run a wide range of hands-on projects throughout the year. Learning sign language, teaching

CPR to children in schools, encouraging people to donate bone marrow or volunteering at orphanages in the Balkans are just some of the things you can get involved in, but if that's not enough, you could even set up your own project.

Some of the many events and activities we have planned for the year include: Positively Red AIDS Week, running from 26th November to 1st December 2006, as well as the new Global Health Forum, which is a program of fortnightly Medsin events aiming to stimulate interest and promote awareness of important issues in international health through diverse talks, debates and films.

Our first event this year, held last Tuesday was 'The Vicious Cycle of Worms', a lecture given by Prof Alan Fenwick OBE. Professor Fen-

wick is a leading expert in tropical parasitology and the direct of the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative.

We have also just launched a new project called Sexpression, enabling medical students to raise awareness about sexual health issues both in local schools and within the university.

If you're interested in any of our projects or campaigns, or if you just want to find out more about Medsin, visit us at our 'Medsin Explained' event on Tuesday 17th October, 6.30pm. Room G34 and Room 120, Medic Building, South Kensington Campus.

Also, feel free to find out more by visiting our website, www.union.ic.ac.uk/medic/medsin. Or you can email Natalie and Ruvandhi (our co-presidents) at imperial@medsin.org.

Did you know?



■ More than 300 million people (approximately 50 times the population of London) live on US\$1/day.

■ Approx. 1.4 billion people (around 1 in 4 people) do not have access to clean water and 3 billion (1 in 2) live without basic sanitation or electricity.

■ 49 of the least developed nations have gained nothing from the past decades economic boom and their living standards are lower than 30 years ago.

■ The UK consumes 12bn cans every year – placed back-to-back they would stretch to the Moon and back!

If you have any facts to share you can contact us on environment.felix@imperial.ac.uk

This month

Thursday, October 12
Launch Event 2006/2007
6.00pm Room 542 - Mech Eng

A fantastic opportunity to find out more about Engineers Without Borders (EWB) and how it can be a stepping stone for a career in international development. Hear about recent exciting projects and placements from around the world. Discover how you can get involved. For more information on the IC branch of EWB, you can visit the website at www.ewb-uk.org/imperial or email joao.serra@imperial.ac.uk.

Tuesday, October 17
Medsin Explained & Fairtrade Cafe
6.30pm, G34, SAF

Tuesday, October 24
"Could stepping up the current response to HIV do more harm than good?"
6.30pm Biology LT - SAF

Discussing the need for a holistic treatment plan for all with HIV. Dr Elinor Moore, MSF. Ms Jennifer Swan, Newham Hospital NHS Trust. Nibbles provided.

 **medsin**
GLOBAL HEALTH • LOCAL ISSUE

Clubs & Societies

Civil Engineers explore El Salvador

Repairing the earthquake of 2001 with an NGO in El Salvador; concrete, gangs, spiders and more concrete

In 2001 several large magnitude earthquakes shook the small Central American Republic of El Salvador. The effects were devastating on an already struggling country where civil war had ended less than two decades earlier. In 2002, students from Civil Engineering at IC volunteered to work on a development project in one of the poorest communities. Since then, the project has developed into a pioneering annual student-community participation scheme working with a local Non Government Organisation (NGO).

The volunteering projects, working with the Salvadorian NGO, REDES, involve students from several universities and disciplines. Students travel to El Salvador and work with the community for five to seven weeks on various development projects.

Over the past five years the projects have included a seismically resistant adobe pre-school, concrete block model house, construction of pit and compost latrines, construction of drainage pits, retaining walls, steel frame houses and various social welfare projects.

This year's team, comprising of 11 students of the Civil Engineering Department (first year to PhD) and two architecture students from UCL, travelled to El Salvador to work on four separate projects. The project was completely organised by the students and funding gained from industrial sponsorship. Once again, it was in conjunction with REDES but also included other NGOs in keeping with the group's hope to expand. These projects included the expansion of a school and nursery in Santa Marta, a radio station in Victoria and a compost latrine project in Pepto, Gualcimaca.

A bit about the projects

The projects in Santa Marta include the construction of more classrooms in their local high school and nursery - over time we came to know these as the Escuela and la Guarderia. As many of the older generation were lost to the war, Santa Marta is a fairly a youthful village being largely populated by people under 20. Thus the school is important in bringing together and strengthening the community.

Outside of Santa Marta, in the closest town, our other project in Victoria required us to build a new radio station. The objective was to help the community rebuild their radio station, a valuable cornerstone to the surrounding isolated villages like Santa Marta. It provides information about the outside world such as current affairs, public services and announcements that are free from government censorship. A new and larger station would provide extra room for more volunteers to work and large areas to hold seminars and education programs for the local people.

Our fourth project brought us with CIRES (a different NGO) to a remote settlement called Pepeto North East of Chalatenango. It could only be reached on foot or in a 4x4 on a good day meaning transportation of building materials was tricky. CIRES, unlike REDES, concern themselves with medical aid and they are not engineers. Their projects mainly raise health awareness and supply aid to places which have no free government care due to inaccessibility.

Our aim was to build five compost latrines to improve health thereby reduce disease and illness such as diarrhoea, vomiting, headaches and dizziness.

The extent to which the community was deprived meant that sanitary facilities were very limited and we had to walk for ten minutes to get a wash.

This village had little in the way of hygiene and sanitation, consequently providing compost latrines is a big step forwards. Unlike the projects at Santa Marta and Victoria where we had a Maestro, here, we were given full flexibility for the engineering of the latrines. The concrete mix, the foundation size and the mortar and blocking of the latrines were all coordinated by ourselves.

Next year's group

There is great potential for future years. This year's group had managed to establish and strengthened more ties with local NGO's and new communities in El Salvador.

The various projects in conjunction with ADES, CIRES and REDES for 2007 could include: water collectors near San Miguel; libraries and computer labs for schools; and construction work with El Salvadorian Students.

Though the structures designed by REDES are modern block and reinforced concrete buildings the only thing not so modern about it was the way in which they were built. Excavations, concrete mixing and pouring, bar bending and soil compacting were all done by hand. But this experience isn't only about manual labour.

REDES feel that this volunteer programme is as much about our experiencing the country and its culture as about the engineering side. They organise a punishing schedule of tourist excursions that you would never get out of a guide book, from Mayan ruins to the beach and also talking to some of the most interesting people you are ever likely to meet. With the work during the week you can sometimes feel like time off.

It may not be a large country but you'll soon realise that six weeks is not long enough.

For more information about the projects (past, present and future), upcoming presentations or about participating in this scheme please e-mail: neal.turkington@imperial.ac.uk

Paul 'la cabeza' Wong: fourth year, scared of spiders and MS 13 (a local gang), built like a Greek god



"It has been over six weeks since I returned from El Salvador, and how can anyone forget: making concrete in blistering heat, being stalked by little monkey kids during dinner, having your life flash before your eyes when encountering the local gangsters, watching a guy taking a dump in his own backyard (while he was suppose to be 'mining' for aggregate), fabricating our own building tools and, of course, our favourite pastime in El Salvador, making sweet and sexy concrete. In one of the most beautiful yet troubled countries I have ever encountered, I have had one of the greatest experiences of my life. And if anyone were to embark on this trip, they will never forget this lovely country and the lovely people that live in it."

Dan 'ear licker' Woodier: currently spending his fourth year in Paris. Responsible for inflicting a bunch of students on a country that has many worse problems

"I'm currently spending fourth year in Paris and responsible for inflicting a bunch of students on a country with worse things to worry about. I went to El Salvador in 2003 and had such a good time I decided to go back. I miss the banter with the various characters we worked with, my lively family and kicking back at the tienda after work with a well deserved pilsener. With this project you get out what you put in and more, so would recommend it to anyone who doesn't mind a few spiders in their boots."



Myrto 'Mamasita' Papaspiliou: now doing a PhD, formerly the 2006 Santa Marta sex symbol

We returned from El Salvador about one and a half months ago and since then a lot of people have asked me about the trip. I have not yet been able to find the words to make others see what a wonderful time I had as all these "you should have been there" stories come to my head. Work was quite hard under the burning sun, but even that was fun. I could not actually believe that making concrete and digging can be so enjoyable, although then the weekends came and it was even greater with a lot of sight-seeing, Pilseners and rum!



Alice 'no days off' Clarke: now in the second year of Civil Engineering, suffered from pizza sweat



"It was seeing the report from the group who went out in 2004 that made me decide to come to El Salvador. I think I was seduced by the picturesque sunny beaches and lush green mountains and the idea of working on such an exotic construction site; it felt like the furthest place possible from London. There was much more to the El Salvador project than manual labour. We had dinner in the home of a famous El Salvadorian artist, attempted to learn salsa in the clubs of San Salvador. I had such an amazing time I didn't really want leave."



Outdoor Club Summer Fun



The Outdoor Club enjoy a brief moment of respite in the fluffy snow

"Come on, get up! Time to go!" Alex's 4am wake-up calls filtered into my barely conscious head. Sluggish limbs shook off sleep and attempted to pull on clothes for the mountain. Conditions were good: we could set out to conquer our highest peak yet. Boots were done up, crampons fastened, backpacks put on, the rope tied into, and soon we were off on the 1½ hour walk to the base of the beast: the Barre des Ecrins peak.

We trudged single file in the darkness, illuminating sparkling snow with our head torches, treading carefully over the crevasses. Arriving at the base of our climb, we set a steady pace and managed to overtake many of the other people on the same route. Our three hour ascent took us past amazing snow sculptures ('meringue' formations), a particularly deep crevasse, and close to the summit, a long row of huge icicles hanging precariously. All our efforts were rewarded by the incredible views at the top: mountains extended in every direction. We were on the highest point for miles around - 4,015m to be precise! In the very distance, mountain ridges looked unreal, with a two-dimensional, cardboard cutout quality. For most of us, this was the mental and physical high point of the trip. This year's Outdoor Club summer tour to the Ecrins National Park in the southern French Alps was a truly action packed two weeks, where activities such as mountaineering, hiking, rock climbing and mountain biking were experienced.

A couple of days after our arrival, we seized a weather window and eagerly headed up to the glacier. After a couple of hours walk we set up camp above the Glacier Blanc refuge (2542m) to allow us to acclimatise. The next day started at 6.30am - for all except Bernard, that is, who had to be shaken from his bivy - something that became a fairly regular occurrence on the trip! We continued our trek up, arriving at the base of the glacier Blanc, where we donned crampons and walked up the path past huge fissures and crevasses. By the time we had set up camp, complete with an expertly crafted snow wall, it was still early so we got in some practice by walking up to the col beneath Pic du Glacier Blanc (3,463m).

Our four days spent on the glacier transported us into a different world. It was a desert of snow and rock; freezing at night and burning hot by day - I was naive in thinking I'd never get a sun tan on a glacier!

There were a few more things to get used to. Firstly, our strange hours: up at 4 or 5am, bed at 6pm. Then there was the mountain food: chocolate for breakfast (sometimes a bit difficult to stomach!), peanuts and raisins for lunch and a cooked meal in the afternoon (a choice between noodles, couscous or pasta with tuna or corned beef) plus powdered deserts (custard being the favourite). There were also lots of skills to pick up from the more experienced members of our group: crevasse rescue (conducted at base camp, care of a fairly rotten looking tree!), ice-axe arrest (acts as a brake if you fall over), how to walk in crampons, how to tie into the rope and taking care to avoid tripping over it.

For the majority of us, it was our first experience at that altitude. While no-one suffered severe effects, we all quickly learnt the importance of looking after yourself in that environment. When you consider a mountaineer expends 300-800 calories and can lose up to a litre of water an hour, you need to eat and drink properly.

The second day on the glacier was spent climbing up to the col Emile Pic (3,483m), after which we did a ridge traverse (over some very loose rocks!) to Pic de Neige Cordier (3,614m). Glissading down from the col was definitely another highlight. Rain back at camp sent most of us sheltering in the tents, but it didn't stop Bernard, Matt and Joe exploring some rock routes on the slabs behind. More rain delayed our start the following day, but it cleared up later and we decided to climb the ridge on the right side of the col beneath Pic du Glacier Blanc. This was quite exposed at points, giving us fantastic aerial views of the glacier below. Most of us descended after the first part of the ridge, but Alex, Ben, Bernard and James continued up to the top. We watched from camp as their tiny silhouettes climbed on pinnacles along the ridge. Our final day in the mountains saw us tackle the Barre, after which, everyone except for Ben, Alex and Bernard went down from the glacier. They stayed to climb another ridge the next day while the rest of us descended the 2,500m back to base camp for some rest and relaxation.

continued on page 97

To find out more about how to get involved with Outdoor Club contact Daniel Carrivick carriv98@imperial.ac.uk



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Time and Date:

18:30, 19th October 2006

Location:

Holiday Inn, Kensington Forum,
97 Cromwell Road, London SW7 4DN

Achieving more together



Sudoku 1,359

Complete the grid so that every row, every column and every 3x3 square contains the digits 1 to 9. E-mail your solution to sudoku.felix@imperial.ac.uk by Tuesday 9am. We will randomly select a winner to receive either a 128MB USB stick or a crate of beer. You must claim your prize within a week.

	6			7		5		4
			9	4			7	
		7			5	6	3	
	3	9	4		8			
			5		9	4	6	
	2	3	1			8		
	8			9	2			
7		1		5				2

Solution to 1,358

5	8	1	6	7	2	3	4	9
3	4	7	5	8	9	6	2	1
6	9	2	1	3	4	8	5	7
9	6	4	3	1	7	2	8	5
7	3	5	2	4	8	1	9	6
1	2	8	9	6	5	4	7	3
4	1	9	8	5	6	7	3	2
2	7	3	4	9	1	5	6	8
8	5	6	7	2	3	9	1	4

Jotting Pad



Thanks to everyone that entered. **Marine Pomarede**, a winner is you! Keep those entries coming in!

This Week's Horoscopes

Scorpio (23 Oct – 21 Nov)



You're compelled to buy a shiny axe. However, you can only offer a week old Mars Bar to the owner. He amazingly accepts only for you to see said mouldy confectionery on eBay going for £3,092. You take your own life with the axe.

Sagittarius (22 Nov – 21 Dec)



You join the Armenian mafia. They want 50 golden statuettes of Elvis and 19 pints of blood from an epileptic chimp or they are taking both your kidneys. You are caught in London Zoo, needle in hand, by the rozzers and ironically are shot in the kidneys.

Capricorn (22 Dec – 19 Jan)



This week you infiltrate North Korea. Having eaten a plate of the country's finest battered schnauzer, your skin begins to boil and bubble. A song breaks out of your crackled lips: "Bow-wow-wow yippy yo, yippy yay, where my dogs at? Bark with me now."

Aquarius (20 Jan – 18 Feb)



You have the feeling that your room mate watches you whilst you sleep. You set up your webcam to record him in the night. To your horror you manage to record 72 hours of badger mating calls. You ask to switch rooms, immediately.

Pisces (19 Feb – 20 Mar)



A freak lab accident causes small hairs to grow on your skin and you can stick to walls. Sticky residue also appears on your wrists even after a week of not doing the bad thing to your good self. Hook up with Kirsten Dunst. Make \$114 million at your opening weekend.

Aries (21 Mar – 20 Apr)



You finally unpack your suitcase full of clothes. Lying at the bottom is your Dad's, russian bride's, Mum's, sister's, pimp's, prostitute's G-string. You try it on and discovering that it is blood soaked. Draping it over your face, the smell intoxicates you.

Taurus (21 Apr – 21 May)



You become obsessed with fantasy novels. and refer to everyday objects such as scissors as the "The Might Blade of Twain of Mount Xarthuria" and a cheese drater as "The Hallowed Mesh of Steel Pain". Wizard Legadyk kills you with an apple peeler.

Gemini (Jan 20 – Feb 18)



Your boyfriend begins to find exotic calligraphy more attractive than you. You attempt to win him back by having your body tattooed with every known font. Now so excited when he sees you he has premature ejaculations. You hate yourself and so does everyone else.

Cancer (22 Jun – 22 Jul)



You realise you joined every society. You are £2500 in debt. Congratulations, dumb-ass. You are a waste of space. Watch yourself, keep your back to the wall and keep one eye open when you sleep. People with scythes are coming for your virginal blood.

Leo (23 Jul – 22 Aug)



You spend £3.12 on food today in the canteen. The grains of rice begin to climb over the mountainous chicken breast battleground. Coriander leaves are flung from one side of the plate to the other as war breaks out in your Indian cuisine.

Virgo (23 Aug – 22 Sept)



I you-you-you-you-used to pl-pl-pl-pl-play on my ol-ol-ol-ol-ban-jo-lo-lol. But, n-n-n-n-n-n-now wow-wow-wow my strilla-la-l-ings are bro lol-lol lo oken. I-I-I-I can-can-can no-no-no-no-not re-re-re-remember the rest of the bloody words.

Libra (23 Sept – Oct 22)



ROLF "Harris" MAO. Bam! Headshot! Oh yeah, you're going down bitch! LOL. Wha-bam! Eat it! Every final bit! Eat it! Check me out! Oh yeah! You suck! Owned! LMAO! Boom! Suck it down! That's that shit right there! Boo ya... Coming, mom.

Felix Crossword 1,359

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			

ACROSS

- 1 Setter is is with fifty others in city of foolishness (10)
- 6 Strip and follow a follower (4)
- 10 Fear of god (5)
- 11 Screwdrivers from Idaho? (9)
- 12 Adjusting king after work, during tea (8)
- 13 Lump of mixed French spice (5)
- 15 Add to feds between gold and time (8)
- 17 Garbled news as a city (7)
- 19 Motion moved nick of time, oft removed (7)
- 21 Water gods look after Docklands (4,3)
- 22 Confused, Adrian lost his head at lowest point (5)
- 24 see 30
- 27 Mixture I purport to mix without heat (9)
- 28 Provide one hundred at Eritrea (5)
- 29 In this, how to display (4)
- 30 & 24 Score an eighth? (3,7,3,5)

DOWN

- 1 Mischievous children behead procurers (4)
- 2 Dry 6 leads and follows the crowd (9)
- 3 Two companies and a bean (5)
- 4 Socialist breaks down iron stilt (7)
- 5 Dispersed as great dispersal agent (7)
- 7 Open, for the love of God! (5)
- 8 Neglects criticism concerning (10)
- 9 Broken hip sways in canals (8)
- 14 Mischievous child in attempt to hijack anapests (10)
- 16 The id of Irmgard (8)
- 18 Viewer of Boris's organ (9)
- 20 Disorganised charging with no end of humiliation (7)
- 21 Horrifying disfigured children ending abruptly (7)
- 23 Horrifying disfigured children ending abruptly (5)
- 25 Tinned Peruvian? (5)
- 26 Dry king in assistance (4)

Scarecrow

Solving a crossword takes considerably more skill, intellect, time and, quite frankly, charm than does solving a sudoku. This much is self-evident. However, those with the wherewithall to solve are clearly deserving of a good deal more recognition than they have received until now, comparable to the sudoku's ethos of a "small prize". Something along the lines of a parade in honour of the successful solver would be in order, I feel. And a choice of memory stick or case of beer too, perhaps. That doesn't seem unreasonable to me. This week's clues, however, most certainly are. **Scarecrow**

Solution to Crossword 1,358

R	E	N	A	M	E	D	R	E	D	R	E	S	S
H	A	P	I	E	N	U							
O	N	T	O	P	A	F	I	N	T	E	R		
M	A	R	L	R	N	E	G						
B	L	I	E	D	E	T	E	C	T	O	R	E	
U	V	C	S	O		Q							
S	E	R	V	A	N	T	H	E	X	A	G	O	N
A	M	E	R	I	C	A	B	E	C	A	U	S	E
N													
N	A	M	A	L	G	A	M	A	T	E	D	L	
U	G	T	U	P	E	I	I						
L	I	E	G	E	L	K	D	R	O	O	P		
U	N												
S	E	T	T	L	E	R	N	O	W	H	E	R	E

Send your answers to sudoku.felix@imperial.ac.uk or bring this page down to the Felix office in the West Wing of Beit Quad. Each week, we'll print the winner's name, thus providing them with almost unlimited kudos and self-satisfaction. **David Bartram**, a winner is you! Everyone who provides us with a correct solution will get an entry into our prize draw at the end of the year.

Going underground with IC Caving

Sandeep Mavadia

Only nine months since I started caving, here I was: the first person ever to set foot in this passageway, 200 metres below the surface of an Austrian mountain.

I was there with members of Imperial College Caving Club, and this was the final trip of the expedition. We had passed an obstacle that stopped us last time, a 9m vertical drop in the cave floor. My caving buddy hammered a bolt into the wall and we tied on a rope so we could abseil down. Once at the bottom we were in a never-before explored part of the cave, walking into the unknown.

Clambering over the boulder strewn ground we noticed the gaps between the rocks, wedged together 2m above the 'real' floor. Unsure how stable our footing was we treaded with caution further into the cave. We felt the character of the passage change; an eerie draught started sucking along the passage, our voices starting to echo off something a very long way away. As we passed the last corner we suddenly emerged into the blackness, our lights swallowed up by the sheer enormity of the chasm that opened up before us.

We hurled a chunk of rock into the pit, counting the seconds until it reached the floor. One... two... Still nothing. Three... boom, rattle, rattle! Fifty metres deep. This was a real monster, and would need more time to conquer than we had. Longer underground would risk worrying the rest of the team who awaited our return, snug in our mountain-top camp, so we had to leave. Five hours later the two of us were standing at the entrance to the cave, cold and exhausted but with an immense sense of achievement. We staggered back to our camp, navigating by cairns that had been erected over the previous 4 weeks in good time to join our friends around the campfire, to chat

elatedly about our discoveries over fantastically warming curry before collapsing into our sleeping bags.

Does the cave continue beyond that last enormous drop? Nobody knows. There could be kilometres more to find, or it could end around the next corner. It will take another expedition in another year to find out – only this time you could be there as well.

Although caving is certainly challenging, both physically and psychologically, it is neither competitive nor macho. Caving is the perfect team sport: since everyone's safety depends on the group, there is no room for showing off. The aim is to use people's different skills in cooperation, to further common goals of exploration and enjoyment. No prior experience is required: all the necessary training is done within the club, drawing on the experience of our older members. All trips are tailored to the skills and wishes of those taking part and you will never be asked to do things that you are unhappy with or that we do not feel you are ready for yet.

ICCC runs regular weekend trips to caving destinations around the UK – usually costing £25-30 inclusive of all training, equipment, transportation, accommodation, food and leadership. As well as our summer expedition (normally to Slovenia), we have a week-long tour in Easter to somewhere warm, and long-weekends to destinations around Europe in the spring and summer. We meet weekly on Tuesdays in the Union from 7.30pm to discuss past events and future excursions over a pint or two. There will also be additional rope-climbing practice in the trees in Princes Gardens during this term.

To find out more about how you can get involved in Caving check out the website, www.union.ic.ac.uk/rcc/caving/ or e-mail ICCC President, Sandeep Mavadia at ic.caving@gmail.com



MARK SHINWELL

Snow? Underground? How wonderfully bizarre. Watch you don't slip, my son.

AdLib

by Tevong You

